URBAN INDIGENOUS SCHOOL SUCCESS: THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF HOME, SCHOOL AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY

THIS LITERATURE REVIEW WAS PREPARED FOR UNITED WAY, CALGARY, ALBERTA BY BLUE QUILLS FIRST NATIONS COLLEGE, ST. PAUL, ALBERTA

DEDICATION

As writers of this literature review, the Blue Quills First Nation College Team dedicate this work to children. All children; red, white, yellow, and black. We thank United Way in Calgary, Alberta for their cutting edge, community based leadership in seeking to address the wholistic needs of children by reaching out to parents, schools, and all community based service agencies. May we all remember that we have a collective responsibility to address the needs of all children.

In the words of the late Chief Dan George, (1974) our job is to help all children take their rightful place in society:

> There is a longing in the heart of my people to reach out and grasp that which is needed for our survival. There is a longing among the young of my nation to secure for themselves and their people the skills that will provide them with a sense of worth and purpose. They will be our new warriors. Their training will be much longer and more demanding than it was in [the] olden days. The long years of study will demand more determination, separation from home and family, will demand endurance. But they will emerge with their hand held forward, not to receive welfare, but to grasp the place in society that is rightly ours. (p. 91)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the Creator and our ancestors, the grandmothers and the grandfathers in the spirit world who provide spiritual guidance in the work we do. Thank you for reminding us, through our 'blood memory' of our responsibilities to serve our people. We thank our resident College Elders for their prayers and guidance, and collectively, all of our colleagues for helping in this writing journey. This work would not have been possible without a college team effort. Many staff were involved, from the researchers and writers, the typists, the editors, and especially, to those providing technical expertise in producing the final product. We thank the writing team for generously sharing their unpublished work at this time. Thank you all Blue Quills First Nations College Team (William Aguiar, Patricia Makokis, Diana Steinhauer, Sharon Steinhauer, Vince Steinhauer), and families of the team, who kindly accepted the many hours of 'extra' time put into this project at their expense.

The writers have collectively chosen to develop this literature review as an intense examination of critical elements that contribute to the Indigenous experience in education, both the failure and the success. While the final product is more extensive than is required by a literature review, the writers believe that the success of Indigenous learners and the supports required by their families can only be understood within a deeper understanding of the complex interactions of broad and enduring practices that undermine Indigenous success and diminish the potential of Canadian society as a whole. To all the researchers we cited, we thank you for your commitment and dedication.

To the United Way Calgary team, we thank you for believing in the Blue Quills First Nations College.

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A NOTE TO OUR READERS

Blue Quills First Nations' College has sanctioned the use of the first person plural point of view (we) in many of these chapters as the information contained therein reflects the collective experience of indigenous communities and families.

CHAPTER 1

INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW

During a nationally broadcast television series in 1991 Bill Moyers asked, "What do aboriginal people have to offer the western world?" Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Onandaga Nation, confidently replied, "We have a long perspective of Turtle Island…" This long perspective is true for the Onandaga Nation upon their ancestral lands of the eastern shores of Turtle Island, current day Canada and United States, and it is also true for the Cree, Blackfoot, and Assiniboine peoples of the interior plains regions. We have a long perspective to share with the people who have arrived to settle upon our territories over the past 125 years or more, earmarked by Treaties Six (1876), Seven (1877), and Eight (1899). This long perspective has been passed down from one generation to the next, within our oral tradition, and now, in written form, as well. This chapter of the literature review guides the reader through a brief sketch of the indigenous construct, treaty relationship, and subsequent historical impacts. The indigenous context is set for the reader to help better understand the current day experiences of urban aboriginal people, and to demonstrate what best practices are present in the literature to guide educators in their relationships with aboriginal children and youth in schools today.

The Indigenous Construct

The Indigenous worldview is a way of life that has its beginnings in the teachings of *mâmâtawisit* (the Great Mystery). Within our cosmology, our relationships with the spiritual and physical worlds are informed; in this world, the peoples were the last to be created, hence, are the most frail and fragile of all of creation. Indigenous knowledge continues to be transmitted by elders, whose roles are very firmly implanted in the social order of the indigenous worldview.

Elders' experiences that culminate in wisdom gleaned from their long years of living, position them to be the true educators of those who would inherit all that was protected and maintained, the children. As inheritors, the children are guided to hone their gifts and to realize the purpose of their existence which they had pledged to *mâmâtawisit* prior to being born into these lands.

Elders are older people who have lived a full life and through their years have accumulated experiences. These lived experiences are valued by the younger generations who are seen as embarking upon the journey of life and seek the wisdom of the elders to guide their movements. Elders are a vital link from one generation to the next and maintain continuity for the oral transmission of knowledge and practice. Amongst the many roles ascribed to elders, they have been identified as repositories of knowledge (Medicine, (1983); Stiegelbauer, (1996); Couture (2000); RCAP, (1996). Stiegelbauer (1996, p. 66) in consultation with the Native Center Elders' Advisory Council, Manitoba, itemized an elder's role and attributes as:

1) is knowledgeable about tradition including ceremonies, teachings, and process of life; is ideally a speaker of a native language;
2) lives those traditions;
3) is old enough to have reached a stage of experience at which it is appropriate for them to communicate what they have learned from life and tradition;
4) is recognized by the community for their wisdom and ability to help;
5) is still an individual with varying knowledge and skills;
6) is able to interpret tradition to the needs of individuals and the community;
7) is often asked to represent indigenous views as symbols of the culture or through active involvement with issues and individuals.

Hence, elders' skill sets and presence are rightfully accorded respect by all generations of people for their richness of wisdom in indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous knowledge is defined in the literature as a localized understanding of place, time, and relationships between people, the land, and the cosmos (Couture, 1990; Dei, 2002; and Deloria, Jr, 2001). It encompasses holistic representations of the interrelatedness of all life forms inclusive of the social order, economic, political, and spiritual collectivity. Relationships are

vital to the maintenance of balance, reciprocity, values and beliefs, and human and environmental interplays. Ermine (1995) describes the relatedness between understanding at a deep spiritual level: the incorporeal (inner self) and the outer reality of self in relation to others and the environment.

Maintenance of roles and responsibilities of men, women, children, and elders are delicately balanced in the interplay of the social order. This balance necessitates the use of circular structures of kinship hinged upon interdependence. At the core of the circle - spiritual laws and beliefs - are the compacts, renewed season upon season through ceremony (refer to Indigenous Societal Structures diagram below). Ceremony is at once practicing the laws, giving thanks to the higher power, and passing on the traditions to the younger generations through a pedagogical approach that has love at the center. (See figure 1)

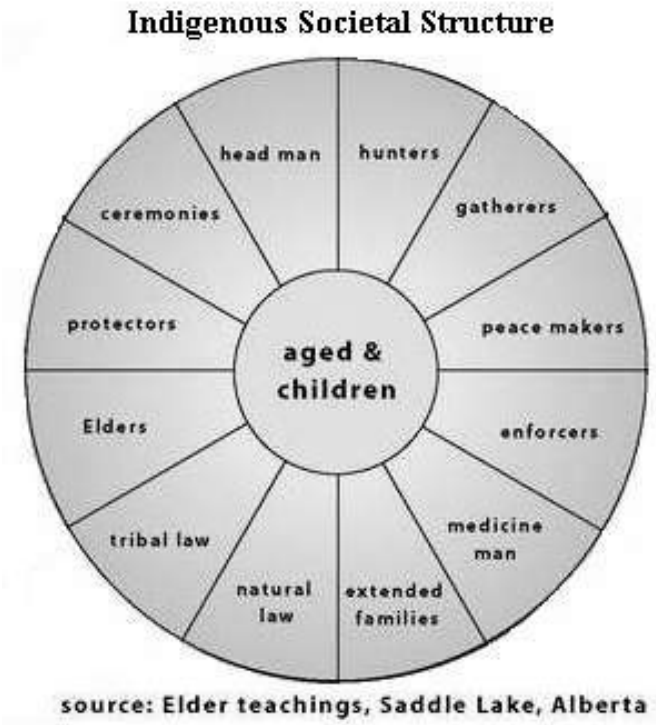

Figure 1

Indigenous pedagogy is informed by the values and beliefs of love, honesty, sharing, and strength through prayer (First Rider, 1999). Inculcating the next generation into the spiritual foundations inherent in these laws is paramount in all interactions between the adults and children. Viewed as gifts from the Creator, children are born with their personality and character intact (Sinclair, 2001). They are seen as having a purpose and belonging to a family, clan, and spiritual guide. These attributes give the child a place and a sense of belonging within the social order.

The family includes the child's birth parents, siblings, extended family relations, and community; all share the responsibility of guiding, disciplining, and mentoring the child in a life long educational process. Pedagogical approaches include daily activities that require the child to observe, listen, and learn. Reciprocally, a child's attributes are observed from birth to identify their inherent gifts. Depending on their gifts, children are apprenticed to adults who mentor them to hone their gifts. With the guidance of a mentor, children practice until they achieved mastery of newly acquired skills and abilities in the context of real activity. Hence, children enter into subsequent stages of their lives through experiential learning and teaching practices.

In the indigenous construct, there are seven stages in life, marked from birth to death. Each stage is celebrated through a rites of passage ceremony that heralds the individual's place in the community. The first stage of life is called *happy life* where the birth of the infant is celebrated in a name giving ceremony. The child is nurtured through this dependent phase of life by the parents and extended familial relations. The second stage, *fast life*, is marked by the child's progress through childhood where they enjoy "total autonomy and freedom" (Sinclair, 2001) to explore, and watch and learn as daily life unfolds. Through the rites of passage into manhood or womanhood, children enter into the stage of the *wondering life*. In this part of life's

journey, they master their gifts and begin to search for their purpose. Through this search, they enter the *truth life* where the youth, now equipped with the tools and skills necessary to contribute to the society, earn their place as adults. Woman at about the age of 20 reached physical maturity and became adept at the women's roles and responsibilities. Men reached maturity at about the age of 30, mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The next phase of life is marked by the marriage ceremony during the *time of decision*. Life time marriage alliances require that both the man and woman be prepared in all aspects to enter into the next phase of life, *planting time*. At this point, the cycle is renewed as children are gifted to the couple; with the guidance of elders, parents are prepared to guide new additions to the family. The seventh and final stage of life, known as *wisdom time,* is when individuals are grandparents, having lived through many experiences, granting them ascendancy into wisdom. The final ceremony of an individuals' life is their passage into the next world where they return home to the spirit life.

Indigenous knowledge, such as this teaching on the seven stages of life, is transmitted orally from one generation to the next through stories. Storytelling is an integral aspect of societal regeneration. Within each ceremony dwells a story specific to the season, its spiritual aspect which explains the reason for celebrating that particular aspect of the life cycle. A story that represents the cycle of life is about the little Eagle Child who moves through the different stages. Through Eagle Child's movements and transformations, many aspects of life are revealed including lessons of the relatedness of the physical and spiritual worlds, the seven stages of life, the healing ceremonies, discipline, resiliency, and how to live as an individual in a collective society.

In the story, as the lone survivor of a catastrophic event, Eagle Child was nurtured by means of alliances with the animals of the region. Recognizing difference in physical appearance, Eagle Child sought guidance from the four directional grandmothers and grandfathers of the spirit world. Visiting each in turn, Eagle Child was repeatedly gifted and sent back to his original place of birth to reclaim what was lost in the catastrophe. Starting from nothing, relying on his own resiliency and gifts, Eagle Child is guided once again by bird relatives to seek a vision in the mountains. Disciplined preparation allows Eagle Child to be taught the order to life from birth to death in the physical world by the spiritually wise speakers, the rock grandfathers. Retracing his footsteps back to his birthplace, Eagle Child is shown the ceremony of the sweat lodge to use for continued dialogue with the spiritual world to renew the self and seek healing. At the end of his journey, Eagle Child practices the laws and traces the journey of the life path to find what it means to walk the sweet grass trail. The blades of the sweet grass are braided and "with its three strands represents a harmony which is necessary between the Giver of Life, all that lives, and Mother Earth. It is a harmony which cannot be deliberately imbalanced or separated by man" (Treaty Seven Elders and Tribal Council, et al., 1999, p. 12). Hence, the sweet grass trail is a metaphor for journeying on a good path or *mîyo pimâtisiwin.*

The story of Eagle Child metaphorically illustrates the intuitive search made by all indigenous peoples who are stirred to discover their roots. This timeless story is as relevant to learners today, as it was in the past. The theme of searching in every possible place for a semblance of truth, and finding it back at home - intrinsic to the self when interconnected to the plants, animals and birds of the land, with help from the spiritual world - is commonplace. It speaks about how the journey of life is finding one's place in creation. The story reveals our

resiliency and resourcefulness in facing adversity courageously, with our feet firmly planted in a worldview steeped in the truth of our existence.

It is from this stance that we begin to tell the story of the treaty relationship between our ancestors and the Queen of Great Britain, her subjects and subsequent heirs to the treaty. This story reveals adversities and traumas experienced by indigenous peoples in the colonial period of Canada, the impacts of this legacy on our peoples, and the current day situation.

Treaties: The Oral and Written Texts

To understand the experience and context of urban indigenous youth, one must begin by exploring the relationship at its origins – the treaty making process and agreements. When our forefathers were discussing the processes of entering into the treaty negotiations, the laws of the Creator were strong, enacted and embodied by the trusted leaders chosen by the grassroots people. In indigenous societies, the power lies with the grassroots people; like the grass, the Creator's power is humble. The people chose the leaders on the basis of their ability and responsibility to live by the Creator's laws. This was especially important in the negotiations with the representatives of the British Crown. Our forefathers were strong and closely united in collective bands. The unifying force was in knowing and living the laws set forth by the Creator, and handing down, through the oral traditions and ceremonies, these truths so that the next generation of indigenous peoples would also lead purposeful and fulfilled lives in respect of the Creator. This process of extending the laws to successive generations is inherent in the structure of indigenous peoples' way of life.

Since the signing of the treaty, our peoples have witnessed rapid change through the exposure of living side by side with the Crown's people who settled upon our lands. Aware of these rapid changes, our forefathers centered the challenge upon each new generation to keep the

spirit and intent of the treaties intact. The people knew, at the treaty signing, of the events that would attempt to turn our world upside down and lead our people in different directions. Minding the laws of the Creator, it is our inherent right to determine our futures amidst the growth and change that we have experienced; this inherent right is closely linked with the sacredness of the spirit and intent of the treaty agreements. For the indigenous peoples, the treaty means more than the words written in a document. The treaties represent and carry the message of the truth of our lives as the Creator's peoples set upon these lands for time immemorial.

Indigenous peoples' languages define the people and our purposes. Indigenous philosophies contain the teachings given to us at the time of creation from our Creator. These teachings include the laws that have remained intact as a result of the care and responsibility ensured by each generation to live and abide by them. The laws are still the same because of the integrity of the generations who have passed them to each successive generation, retaining this inherent right to the sacredness of life. The methods of teaching and learning these laws are in the stories and legends of the people, as told in the indigenous languages. The spirit and intent of the treaties is in the story that is told to remind us of our purpose - that is to maintain the sacred balance of life and to pass it on to the next generation.

Hence, the grassroots people continue to challenge the leaders of today to bring to fruition the intended purpose of the sacredness of the treaties as determined by our ancestors. The grassroots people stand by this inherent right to live and abide by the Creator's laws in order to forge a truthful life in a modern context. Our peoples respect the three parties present at the signing of each treaty: the indigenous leaders, official representatives of the British Crown, and the spirit world. Treaty Six was signed in 1876 at Fort Carleton and Fort Pitt with the treaty

commissioner, Governor Alexander Morris. Treaty Seven followed in 1877 with Governor Laird at Blackfoot Crossing. In 1899, Treaty Eight was signed. The pipe ceremonies that preceded the negotiations and signings set into motion the bundle of rights that would be held in trust forever by the two nations of people who participated in the treaties. Thus, a relationship of kinship was forged based upon the "doctrine of *wahkôhtôwin*"(Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p.34).

Recorded in the written text of the treaties were the summarized negotiations. Additionally, in the oral attestations recorded in the journals of the treaty commissioners address the presentations between all parties. Within the oral histories, our peoples have also recorded the extent of the negotiations. Both interpretations of the treaties demonstrate differences in what was settled upon. In accordance with the oral interpretations, the indigenous bundle of rights included the water, air, animals and plants, and the fire (hunting, fishing, and gathering). Our peoples agreed to share our lands to the depth of the plow, with the exception of some lands which would be reserved solely to continue our own livelihood and governance upon. The indigenous peoples also requested health benefits, relief in times of pestilence and famine, and assistance in the transition to a new economic lifestyle because they knew that the future generations must come to understand the Crown's subjects. Additionally, the Crown offered to extend opportunities of schooling whenever the people should desire it (Hendersen, 1995, in Battiste). The Crown claimed taxation, settlement, and government in the bundle of rights for her own subjects. These terms of the treaty were basic necessities for life to continue for both parties. The terms set down the path for the indigenous peoples and those subjects of the Crown to live side by side and share the land. It was believed that the paths were distinct in that the indigenous peoples firmly held to continuing to live by the laws of the Creator.

Over time, and particularly as a consequence of the Indian Act, Canada, and Canadians, have come to see the land as theirs, and to see indigenous people as an ethnic minority, known as aboriginal people. However, this view does not match up with the indigenous perspective, nor does it match up with international law, or even Canada's own Constitution (1982).

The idea of indigenous title to Turtle Island (root title, not the fee simple title which people transfer back and forth such as when you buy or sell property off the reserve) is, at the level of international law, connected to something called an autochthonous constitution. 'Autochthonous' simply means, 'rooted in the land' or 'of the land'. In societies with oral, rather than written traditions, the 'autochthonous constitution' is detailed in so-called traditional religious practices. In effect, the cycle of ceremonies which carry us around the year, literally describe, embody, and display our constitution.

The Canadian constitution claims that 'root title' belongs to the Queen of Canada, also the Queen of the United Kingdom, formerly Great Britain. However, there is a slight problem at the international level: Her Majesty cannot claim having an 'autochthonous constitution' here on Turtle Island because the whole world knows she's English and not indigenous to Turtle Island. If there is any group of people who can show that they, indeed, have an 'autochthonous constitution', which they keep alive through continuous practice of their spiritual beliefs, then that group of people can, at the international level, honestly claim 'root title'.

There is only one way in which 'root title' can be legally extinguished. A nation can voluntarily, with full knowledge and consent, relinquish title to territory – a reminder that the treaties are about sharing not relinquishing. Canada's history of Indian policy shows a steady trail of efforts to extinguish root title. Indigenous people can give up 'root title' by converting to Christianity and unanimously and deliberately abandon their own spiritual traditions. By

switching to Her Majesty's religion, indigenous people voluntarily relinquish the spiritual practices and beliefs which define the 'autochthonous constitution'. Then, all claims to title will shift to Her Majesty's claim, making her claim 'root title'. Similarly, by entering into a Land Claim agreement, drafting a new constitution, or any other of the proposals put forth by the government of Canada, indigenous people can be seen as having voluntarily extinguished "root title", and voluntarily accepting ethnic minority status as Canadian citizens.

Canada's basic approach is to first systematically exclude indigenous people from economic activity, and then dangle dollars as bait. We are being pushed to write our own constitutions. However, at the international level we already have an "autochthonous constitution", acknowledging our 'root title', which we maintain through our traditional spiritual practices, and which we will nullify by writing a new one.

In the 1860s, Big Bear said, "If you want to trap a fox, you spread meat around the trap. When the fox is in the trap, then you knock him on the head. We want none of the Queen's presents: let her representatives come and talk to us like men" (Morris, 1991). Big Bear's words are very prophetic; in 2004, our statistics on quality of life, as measured by the United Nations Human Development Index, puts indigenous people inside of Canada behind countries like Brazil, and Thailand, around number 64, while the Canadian mainstream quality of life is consistently at number one.

What do the numbered treaties say about root title to land and resource? There is a famous "cede, release, surrender, and yield up" clause in each treaty text. What do these words mean? The numbered treaties, including treaties six, seven, and eight, are many things. They are a spiritual commitment to share the land in territories where indigenous peoples have been

placed by the great mystery. They are agreements on how to go about making the transition from indigenous-only usage, to a shared usage.

They can also be read as straightforward international commercial lease agreements. In 2004, indigenous peoples may not act like shrewd business people, but if we say that our indigenous ancestors were not shrewd business people, then we have missed the whole point of these treaties, and the two hundred years of trade relations between Europeans, and indigenous people which preceded the numbered treaties. Switlo (2003) contends that the "cede, release, surrender, and yield up" clause is standard commercial lease terminology still used today. It refers to 'outside deals', say between the Blackfoot Nations and the United States of America. In the treaty negotiation period, the United States was pressing for entry into and ownership of indigenous territory. Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont turned back an American expeditionary force coming up from Minnesota.

Look at the treaty text just before the "cede, release, surrender, and yield up" section, and you see the words "for Her Majesty the Queen and her successors forever". If our ancestors had been selling the land, there would be no reason to mention the Queen's heirs, although euro-centric historians will beg to differ (Alberta Learning 2002).

In international law, Treaty Six sets a standard for negotiated agreements between Euro-derivative states and Indigenous Nations. The United Nations (U.N.) studied our treaties (described in more detail, below, under 'Historical Impacts') and agreed completely with what our elders have been saying all along (Martinez, 1999). Neither sovereignty, nor root title to land had been surrendered in our treaties.

The treaties very specifically defined what was being shared, (agricultural use of land, only), where that land lies, and which pieces of land are being "reserved" from the commercial

lease (hence “reserves”, another common commercial lease term still in use today). Treaties also indicate that the connection to the land is, for indigenous people, a spiritual relationship, governed by such elements as the sun, wind, grass, and water, and in the situation of treaty seven, the mountains. This kind of relationship is not for sale, is non-transferable, and cannot be extinguished. Our ancestors made this agreement with the pipe, at a time when the pipe meant something to absolutely everybody.

The treaties are sitting stuck between the implementation stage and the enforcement stage (Makokis 2001; Steinhauer, 2004). The Federal Indian Act as a unilateral legislative construct, violates the treaties, as well as indigenous basic human rights. This is all well explored in both the legal and the political sense. Canadians continue to receive the benefits of the treaties, while indigenous people’s treaty benefits are illegally suppressed.

As the legal and moral beneficiaries of the treaties, our life’s work is to find a balance for our customs and traditions in a world of complexity. For the indigenous people, this challenge has not been forgotten. We cannot forget. There is no failure. We must succeed. The grassroots people who maintain the sacred trust of the treaty agreements pledge to continue to meet this challenge set forth by our ancestors. The spirit and intent of the treaties is foremost in our struggle to succeed and meet this challenge as our basic and inherent right of self-determination. This challenge is our inherent right to pursue and succeed no matter what the odds. In the next section, the traumas and atrocities wrought onto indigenous peoples in the name of colonization are described.

Historical Impacts

Urban indigenous youth are caught in a complex web of spiritual responsibilities due to the difference between their elders’ teachings about the relationships between the people

indigenous to this territory and what they are being taught in school. Miguel Alfonso Martinez, Special Rapporteur to the U.N., released a report, June 22, 1999, that is the product of 25 years of studying treaties, combining the previous efforts of Martinez Cobo's U.N. Study Of The Problem Of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations. The study in its entirety is of paramount relevance to this literature review. In particular, in discussing historical impacts, we draw attention to these three points made by Martinez (1999),

> 201. In this context, let it be said that the Special Rapporteur's historical research has shown, in his view, that not all indigenous nations made the wisest choices at all times. That is to say, at some crucial moments in their history, some indigenous nations were not capable of putting the need to unite among themselves over their individual interests, even though unity was necessary to confront property encroachment on their sovereign attributes. This was true even when the ultimate intentions of the newcomers were already apparent. The terrible consequences inherent in allowing themselves to be divided appear not to have been totally perceived.
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> 202. In addition, on more than one occasion they seem not to have recognized the advantages and disadvantages, in all their dimensions, nor the final consequences, of a policy of alliance with European powers. This can be said both of those who adopted this policy in line with their ongoing fratricidal struggles and of those who decided to favour one of the non-indigenous powers over the others in the military confrontations that took place in their ancestral lands.
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> 203. Further, it is also apparent that they could not fully appreciate (or that they widely underestimated) the questionable role played, and still played in many cases, by religious denominations or their representatives as effective instruments of the colonial enterprise in its various stages.

Martinez marks attention to the consequences of colonization, drawing specific attention to the fall out resulting from 'divide and conquer' strategies. Bureaucratic genocide is described, (Neu and Therrien, 2003) - also referenced in the literature as structural and cultural colonization - (Kellough, 1980) as practiced unabatedly by governments and religious denominations upon indigenous people.

The centerpiece of Canada's genocide by bureaucracy was, and still is, the Indian Act. The Indian Act was unilaterally designed to abolish our status as independent, self-governing people by legislating the rules for band membership, abolishing traditional political systems, imposing federally controlled election systems, banning spiritual activities, and creating residential schools. The Department of Indian Affairs, initially established by parliamentary order in 1880, has instituted paternalistic policies over the years of its inception. Included among these policies was the practice of urbanizing indigenous peoples through various means; one example is relocation, whereby incentives were provided for off-reserve housing, training funds, clothing vouchers, and moving costs associated with migration into cities.

The Indian Act epitomizes institutionalized racism. It has caused the numbered treaties to become frozen in time. That deep freeze has caused, and continues to cause, genocide. In all fairness to the Indian Act, and the modern nation of Canada, genocide was already well under way on Turtle Island by 1876; 383 years worth of genocide had already gone by.

By following the history of genocide and colonization on Turtle Island, we see that our indigenous ancestors in the plains region were protected from immediate destruction by our remoteness from colonial centers, for instance, Toronto. The most remote people are last to be destroyed. On the southern part of Turtle Island, indigenous people in remote regions of Ecuador, Bolivia, Brazil, Columbia, Peru and other Euro-derivative states, are currently going through the open mass slaughter stage of colonization (Robles, 2002; Galeano, 1997). On the northern part of Turtle Island, a small group of Cree people, the Lubicon Cree, in northern Alberta, (Wasacase, 2003) are being subjected to the polite 21st century Canadian version of 'divide and conquer' military and political strategy as well as legal rhetoric meant to stall the process of negotiating. In British Columbia, entire nations of indigenous peoples are being

robbed of lands and resource, while false treaty negotiations, pre-supposing indigenous status as defined by the Indian Act, are dragged out. In the Arctic, an economic genocide - well underway - temptingly invites indigenous people to abandon their life forms in favour of diamonds and oil.

These so-called remote regions are not remote from the indigenous people who have lived inside of them for millennia although the decision makers remain remote from witnessing the destruction visited upon the people and their lands, remote from the real human impacts of their decisions. These regions are just remote from the bank accounts of the owners of Shell, Exxon, BP, and other global corporate giants. Through the combined political, economic, and military power wielded by their corporations, this handful of wealthy individuals will make sure that those remote areas do not stay remote.

The current phase of genocide in indigenous territories resembles hypothermia. We are all asleep, vital signs gradually slowing down, as the deep freeze of colonization penetrates deeper and deeper into our souls. 127 years in the deep freeze...why are we not completely finished off, yet? Where is the source of warmth and sustenance that has kept us alive, so far? It does not exist in anything Euro-derivative. It cannot be explained in English or French, in Christian or scientific thought, or in writing on paper. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) does not have a 'program' which can deliver it to the people locked up on reserves or in urban ghettos (Richards, 2001).

It is our relationship with the Creator which keeps us alive. The great mystery has given us our indigenous law.

Indigenous law is not the only law prevailing within the geographical area known as Canada. A common understanding referred to as the international "rule of law", formulated over a 5,500 year period, from Ancient Greece, up to today, and ongoing, sets a stage for nations to

develop constitutions, and to govern themselves internally, as well as acting as a guide for international relationships. The Canadian Constitution, developed out of principles of the rule of law, defines federal, provincial, and municipal roles and responsibilities, while also defining and regulating individual rights and responsibilities.

John Borrows, B.A., M.A., LL.B, LL.M. (Toronto), D. Jur. (Osgoode Hall), recognized as Canada's leading indigenous legal scholar, has raised some questions about Canada's underlying title to, and overarching sovereignty over the geographical region commonly thought of as "Canada". His observations coincide with the findings of the U.N. Study On Treaties, Agreements, and Constructive Arrangements Between States and Indigenous Peoples, showing that Canada, and all other "settler" states in the world, have not conformed to the rule of law, or (in Canada's case) the Canadian Constitution (1982), in securing title and sovereignty.

Borrows' argument (presented in 'Questioning Canada's Title To Land: The Rule Of Law, Aboriginal Peoples And Colonialism', first appearing on the Law Commission Of Canada's website, on their B.C. Treaty Forum, and now published in, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (2003)) demonstrates that the Indian Act is unconstitutional by the standards of both the 1867 and the 1982 Canadian Constitution. Having studied the U.N. document, Borrows' article documented evidence of genocide in the Americas. Additionally, Burrows concluded that the Indian Act is indeed "illegal" in every possible sense of the word, whether viewed from the perspective of indigenous law, constitutional law, or the international rule of law. If the Indian Act is illegal, then it follows that the federal structure known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and its predecessors, is also illegal. Therefore, much of the socio-economic and political activity which has taken place in Canada under the 'authority' of the Indian Act, is also illegal.

The current indigenous reality is that our homelands are illegally occupied by an invading foreign power. The current indigenous reality is that resource from our homelands is being illegally removed, while we are being subjected to genocide (Churchill, 1997). In simple terms, this is armed robbery and murder.

The Redcoats (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) pledged to protect us under treaty. Instead, they act to protect the colonizers who are subjecting us to armed robbery and murder. Just try to stop Royal Dutch Shell, or Exxon Mobile, from removing oil and gas from Treaty Six, Seven, or Eight territory, and you will see which side the Redcoats are on. In fact, our protectors are directly implicated in the murders of indigenous peoples. It is not in the indigenous value system to take another person's life. We have no standing army, no military equipment manufacturing, and no organized indoctrination system to prepare our young for war.

We mysteriously continue to exist under a five hundred and ten year and counting genocidal campaign, without putting up an armed resistance. The general Euro-Canadian population does not want this genocide to continue any more than we want it to continue. Only the enforcement of treaty will change that.

The treaties speak of peaceful co-existence, not war. Our Cree ancestors agreed to share the land, and to help protect the nation of Canada. We did not agree to surrender our sovereignty, spiritual relationship with the land, or identity as indigenous peoples. We have shared the land. We have helped protect the nation of Canada.

All of the Euro-Canadian public living inside of the treaty territories benefit from our compliance with treaty. In the year 2000, the municipal property tax assessment system valued the property within the boundaries of Treaty Six at over $114 billion. In Treaty Seven, the value of Calgary, alone is over $56 billion. In Treaty Eight, the world's second largest reserve of oil

lies in the tar sands, in volume just behind Saudi Arabia. This means that Euro-Canadians personally benefit from the genocide being conducted against us. Euro-Canadians don't even seem to know that genocide is going on. If they realized it, they would demand a change. Why, then, does the genocide continue?

We have to look back into the history of colonization to find our answer. A hidden elite group attacks us, and the Canadian public, under the camouflage of globalization. Globalization started in 1492, when the curse of Columbus was unleashed upon the world. This carefully designed and managed attack involves control of all military, economic, and cultural resource. Using the stolen wealth gathered through genocide and colonization, this wealthy elite exercises their power through the institutions of war, knowledge, economy, and governance, over which they claim ownership.

The only people who would want the genocide to continue are the ones who are gathering wealth from the stolen resource, and most of them are not even Canadians. For this small handful of international investors, it is not a matter of genocide, but a matter of profits. They do not link what they are committing to genocide. They link what they are doing to profits and economic activity which they believe, or try to convince us to believe, benefit everyone.

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue, and things changed. He was lost, and now we are, too. Our lands were invaded (Churchill, 1997), colonization was started, cultural and physical genocide was committed, new nation-states were formed; survivors of the genocide were placed in permanent captivity, generation after generation, with a low-grade genocide continuing to function. The survivors of that genocide are subjected to a vast social engineering project, to literally re-shape an entire human group...molded into the image desired by the colonizers. That brings us to the present. We are surviving a low-grade ongoing genocide, and

we are constantly being subjected to a social engineering project designed to shape our identities. It has been going on for so long that we have 'normalized' it. The reified images include 'Indians' as lazy, drunk-and-stoned, welfare-dependent, incompetent, violent, sexually-abusive, child-abandoning, self-destructive, highest suicide rate, pagan criminal savages, who desperately need the salvation of western civilization.

We have been convinced to accept this description, and we join in blaming ourselves, and our people, for all this type of behaviour. In fact, these social conditions which we find ourselves in, are a consequence of a 'Crown' strategy spanning centuries, going back to the beginning of the colonial effort.

In 2003, the Canadian Government's attempt to 'ram' the *First Nations Governance Act* bill through Parliament, along with a 'train' of legislation designed to complete the job that Trudeau and Chretien started in 1969 (with their infamous 'White Paper Policy on Indians' - the termination agenda) without consultation or consent from indigenous peoples trapped within the boundaries of the modern nation-state of Canada, was an open display of the deep, deep level of racism operating within Canadian society. In Canada, it seems that it is 'beneficent' to do things and believe things about Indian people that it would be unconscionable to do or believe about any other group of people. Likely this is because we represent the only obstacle to unfettered access to resources: we stand as a reminder to the wrongs that have been committed in the name of profit and government progress. We are a mirror to what has gone terribly awry, spiritually, with this relationship, this society.

In 1997, Canada issued an official apology following a massive Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report that was initiated in 1992. Recommendations were made, but that all seems to have been swept under Canada's little 'rug'. Canada gets to feel guilty while continuing

with its genocidal policies, ruthlessly pursuing the single goal of full assimilation of indigenous peoples into Canadian society.

Neu and Therrien (2003, p. 99), in *Accounting for Genocide*, quotes Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department and that is the whole object of this Bill.

Continuing unabatedly, Scott's deep sentiments towards indigenous populations are revealed:

> the happiest future for the Indian Race is absorption in to the general population, and this is the object of the policy of our government. The great forces of intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native custom and tradition (*quoted in* Neu & Therrien, 2003, p. 102).

Educational and bureaucratic genocide are further explored by Wasacase (2003), in *The Empty Mirror: Western Theories of Identity and the Attack on Indigenous Peoples* by researching the role of schools in furthering the cause of cultural genocide and assimilation. The author quotes a lengthy transcription of church and government officials during a conference called the Residential Education for Indian Acculturation (1958):

> Canada being a democracy, Indian communities being valid communities, (as far as the Indian themselves are concerned) [sic], it seems much more human and practical to deal with them as such rather than attempt reconditioning each individual child; in other words, aim at acculturating the community and, through it, the coming generation...The program would be something like this:
> (1) - Determine the kind of culture present in the community as well as the socio-economic opportunities on reserve and in the vicinity.
> (2) - In a realistic way and through a "tailor-made" curriculum, train the bulk of prospective "bread-winners" and "baby-carriers" for maximum use of these opportunities the "canadian" [sic] way.
> (3) - Acknowledge and reinforce in the children whatever cultural traits and traditions of the community that do not interfere with socio-economic progress but can help the sound personality-development of the children and eventually be a positive contribution to the canadian [sic] culture at large.

> (4) - Specific traits and traditions that would interfere with socio-economic adjustment within the canadian [sic] culture must be singled out, acknowledged as valid and respectable in the "old way" but as impractical under present circumstances. Specific training given into the new ways.
> (5) - At the same time, raise the socio-economic standards on the reserve through appropriate adult education, group action, etc. Particular care given to increasing the contact with the dominant culture through T.V., radio, movies, libraries, visits, etc. If possible, have some of the grown-ups participate in the schooling of the children through P.T.A., curriculum discussions, school visits, talks to the children on the "old ways" as well as on the necessity to learn "new ways".
> (6) - When the children graduate, particularly when they marry and have children of their own, follow them through. Help them secure a job, on the reserve or nearby, and establish themselves in homes where they can put in practice what they have learned in school. The canadian [sic] problem in Indian education is not primarily one of schooling Indian children the same way other canadian [sic] children are schooled, but of changing the perservering [sic] Indian community into a canadian [sic] community. When Indian children will not help but grow-up to be culturally canadian [sic], then the average canadian [sic] school will meet their educational needs (p. 34 - 36).

The Wasacase (2003) article delineates the government's agenda in relation to determining the legal definition of who can and cannot claim Indian ancestry. Hence, there is long standing pain and subsequent disputes over this issue of Indian identity, as determined by early Indian Acts and Bill C-31 (1985), concerning intermarriage and the identity of the subsequent generations. The bottom line of both the education and intermarriage strategies serve to take, "the "Indianness out of the Indian," or preparing Indians to integrate into Canadian society and become "good Canadian citizens"" (p. 34).

In 2004, full assimilation is held out as the only possible solution to Canada's 'Indian problem'. Never mind that forced assimilation is named as a cause of genocide in the U.N. Convention on Genocide. How are Canada's social engineers going to reshape the average Canadian's personality, erasing all of their racist indoctrination which keeps us behind an invisible fence? What will the Canada's social engineers do about "white privilege" (McIntosh 1988), the phenomena invisible to whites whereby they "naturally" hold all the positions of

wealth, power, and prestige, lead social discourse, and set direction for society at large, including being able to mobilize military and police forces to do their bidding? Just how will indigenous peoples "assimilate" into this kind of society?

Canada's problem is very simple. Canada does not have root title to the lands it claims dominion over, nor does it have over-arching sovereignty in these territories. Canada has participated in genocide, along with Western Europe, and the other modern nation-states established in the "Americas", for instance the United States of America. The problem is simple, but the solutions are complex. How can the international ruling elite retain power, wealth, and privilege, while resolving Canada's little "Indian problem?" (Chrisjohn et al: 1997)

Money is one source of power for the wealthy investor class. Knowledge is the other source of power for them. They have figured out how to control money. They also have figured out how to control knowledge as expressed in Euro-derivative languages. They are trying to eliminate or control all other languages. This is why indigenous languages were the main targets of the residential school program. After saying 'Sorry', the Canadian government started the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. However, this foundation is not allowed to fund language projects. Universities and linguists are archiving our languages, pretending to teach them while in fact teaching about them while not supporting their real use.

This is also why the Canadian Government is trying to get indigenous languages recognized as 'minority languages', inside of the nation of Canada. Can we be a minority group inside of the nation of Canada, and a sovereign nation at the same time? If our language helps define who we are as a nation, then our indigenous languages contain information which is very threatening to the elite power group, the international investor class.

Speaking our indigenous languages is the most powerful form of resistance possible because it is not about the colonizers, or the colonial process, at all. Speaking Blackfoot, Dene, Cree, Stoney, Ojibwe, or any other indigenous language, simultaneously heals the wounds of colonization while affirming our existence as sovereign people. In a healthy society, mothers teach their babies language. When we look at the roles that the great mystery has given to men and women, we see that the most important jobs have been assigned to women. Conceiving, bearing, and nurturing children is the most crucial task involved in human society. Without it, there is no human society.

As mentioned earlier, indigenous people exist under a genocidal attack launched in 1492. In 2004, this genocidal attack focuses on children and their mothers. Children and their mothers are the most vulnerable group in human society. In residential schools (Chrisjohn et al 1997), along with the destruction of language, the destruction of indigenous spiritual beliefs, and the indoctrination into Christianity, another key target was the ability to parent children. Of course, there were the obviously genocidal actions like forced starvation, forced transfer of children, and forced sterilizations (Annett, 2001). Those kinds of tactics are explicitly named in the U. N. Convention on Genocide (1948).

Less obvious is the breakdown of ability to function as parents. When you cannot raise your own children, then what happens? Will future generations actually be indigenous peoples? The physical attempts at genocide have failed, but the cultural genocide is speeding along at a terrifying pace.

Our indigenous forms of life revolve around women. Language transmission, complete with the knowledge stored in that language, and the cultural identity bestowed by that knowledge, is all done by women. Men can, and should be assistants to the work that women do.

Because of the effects of colonization (Memmi 1967), instead of being assistants, indigenous men join in on the genocidal attack on indigenous women and children.

Treaties Six, Seven, and Eight were given to us by our ancestors, caught in a desperate situation. That is what they did for us to try to offer us at least protection against the onslaught that they saw coming. Our situation is still desperate. What will we do for our seventh generation? We can maintain our indigenous integrity through language and ceremony. Standing on this foundation, we can speak to our brothers and sisters. Through this dialogue, we can build unity. As a unified group, we can speak to the world about treaty enforcement from inside of the indigenous knowledge paradigm. This knowledge can handle the small group of international investors who think they are doing the right thing by monitoring personal profits, instead of peoples, non-human beings, the eco-systems we all share, and the over-all health of Mother Earth.

The knowledge contained in this section offers a fundamentally different paradigm than what is generally available to or generated by the education system. The old colonial story, the one perpetuated in the curriculum, continues to oppress indigenous youth. If we continue to consign our youth, indigenous and non-indigenous, to an educational system that does not honour this knowledge, we become complicit in the act of cultural genocide. When our story is not represented, society adds more artillery to the war against Indians, indigenous to the territories that we call, “Canada, the land of the free”.

CHAPTER 2

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ERA

Dr. Patricia Makokis' (2000) dissertation, *An Insider's Perspective: The Drop Out Challenge for Canadian First Nations,* has been used as the primary source to describe the residential school era, including residential school aftermath, and inter-generational trauma and soul wounds. Pages 32 – 47 from her dissertation have been adapted to offer the following insights.

The Residential School Era

Understanding current Indigenous education should compel us to look at Indigenous history. In the late 1800s and early 1900s various church groups, including the Roman Catholic, Baptist, Anglican, and United Churches assumed responsibility of Indian education. They did so in partnership with the Department of Indian Affairs. Since Indian Affairs was responsible for educating treaty Indians, they partnered with the churches. Both church and state thought Indian people were "barbaric and savage" (York, 1990, p. 23). Accordingly, they thought the Indians needed to be Christianized and abandon their traditional spiritual beliefs and adopt Western beliefs. Clearly, both interacted with the Indians from their world view and imposed that view sanctimoniously.

An example of opposing world views is demonstrated in the words of Henry Bird Quinney (cited in York, 1990) of Saddle Lake:

> The burning of sweet grass and tobacco was "heathen" ritual, but praying with their burning incense was supposedly the only sacred way. Songs with the Drum were "barbaric," but Latin chants were okay. Dancing to honor the return of the birds in springtime was wrong, but kneeling in the dark confines of chapels with rosary beads was right. (p. 42)

At this time the federal government employed Indian agents who held legal authority over Indian people; they in turn delegated their power to the churches. Both parties dealt with Indians and spoke of them as the "Indian problem" (Dehyle & Swisher, 1997, p. 115). Dealing with the Indian problem can best be summarized by the assimilation strategies identified in the following quote:

> The idea was the best way for Indians to become American was to remove the children as far as possible from the influences of their homes, families, and culture. The use of native languages by children was forbidden under threats of corporal punishment; semiskilled vocational training was encouraged for Indians; students were placed as labourers and domestics in White families' homes during vacation time; and native religions were suppressed. In a very real sense, the schooling package that provided literacy for Indians also required becoming "White." While the structure has changed somewhat, this practice has changed very little in the past 100 years. (Dehyle & Swisher, 1997, p. 115)

York's *The Dispossessed* (1990) noted the following:

> Blue Quills, a Catholic residential school, began operation in 1931 near Saddle Lake reserve in northeastern Alberta. Its Indian students were required to follow a strict daily schedule, rising at 6:00 a.m. and going to bed at 7:30 p.m. They had to maintain complete silence during meals. If they tried to run away from school, their heads were shaven and they were kept barefoot. Students from the school's early years remember the teachers using a pictorial catechism, showing white people ascending a road to heaven and Indians descending on a road to hell. The children were told that they should prevent their parents from going to Sun Dances because the Sun Dance was forbidden by God. (p. 41)

The Indian Act is the federal government's official legislation pertaining to First Nations' people. The original Act dates back to the 1800s. Over the years, the Act was amended to accommodate the federal government's goals. Thus, for example, the Indian Act was amended several times to make school attendance compulsory. What better way to ensure control of the Indigenous population than to force school attendance? Just in case Indigenous parents did not cooperate, the government also had the authority to jail or fine parents for non-compliance.

As a result of the government's strong iron hand, First Nations' peoples were severely restricted by the powers wielded by the Indian Act. Consequently, during this period attendance at residential schools jumped by 110%. In the 1940s, approximately 8,000 Indian children attended 76 separate residential schools across Canada. Ten years earlier, in 1930, three-quarters of the children were in grades one through three. Hence, approximately, 6,000 children were deprived of the opportunity to be with their parents and siblings at such a crucial developmental phase in their lives. This legally enforced relocation of children supports Duncan's claim of abolishing Canada's Indian population. It appeared as if the children were kept long enough to de-program their Indianness.

Only three out of every one hundred, for example, went beyond grade six (York, 1990). One can only speculate that the government agents felt 10 years was long enough to remove the savage from the child; many children were removed from their families when they were 6 years old, loaded into the back of farm trucks like cattle to be "De-Indianized," then discarded like trash when they were 16, if they survived that long.

Although the residential school era thrived from the late 1800s until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the impact on the lives of First Nations communities will continue to be felt for generations yet to be born. Clearly, this was a time of attempted cultural genocide as government sponsored atrocities included forced abandonment of children through segregation and separation; physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuses; blatant attempts at extinguishing the language and culture; and the use of mental, emotional, and physical torture coupled with severe forms of fear and guilt. These facts, documented in the literature (Haig-Brown, 1988; York, 1990), are supported in the experiences of survivors of residential schools such as those shared by Cree Elders Joe P. Cardinal and Mike Steinhauer, both of Saddle Lake First Nation.

As well, for the purpose of this literature review, Leona Makokis, President of the Blue Quills First Nations College, has included her residential school experience.

A Residential School Narrative

By Leona Makokis

The term 'life force' is used to describe the indigenous people's connection to our Creator, to our relationships with the plants, animals, the cosmos, all of humankind, to the face to face interaction of people within a family and extended family, and the world of intimacy and friendship. In indigenous societies, our 'life force' encompasses everything: the child's birth in the home; the raising and socialization of children; the teaching of relationships, ceremonies, traditions, and rites of passage; the world of work; and the total immersion in the rhythms of the seasons. Our indigenous worldview is clearly distinctive and ordered in a circular pattern of interrelated parts, the whole being greater then the sum of these parts. Our societies were set up in that model and the remnants of this worldview still remain. However, colonization proved to be a very disruptive force.

The government's implementation of the colonial policy to remove all children from their parents, "in order to take the savage out of them and Christianize and educate them," was the beginning of a confused way of thinking, believing and living. A 'forced institutionalized life' was imposed on thousands of children across Canada. Thousands of our people were destroyed as through this process of legally enforced assimilation, our culture, our spirit, our identity, our language, our humaness, our traditions, our relationships, and our ability to parent were extinguished. Life after the residential school experience had no meaning.

This gradual imposition of a foreign value system has resulted in impoverishment (material and spiritual) and pervasive sense of hopelessness in all of Canada's First Nations'

people. The use of legislation and institutions shifted our living in an interdependent state to that of dependency on a foreign colonial system. How we arrived in the present state of dependency and loss of identity is best described in the following metaphor by Daniel Quinn (1996):

> Systems thinkers have given us a useful metaphor for a certain kind of human behavior in the phenomenon of the boiled frog. The phenomenon is this. If you drop a frog in a pot of boiling water, it will of course frantically try to clamber out. But if you place it gently in a pot of tepid water and turn the heat on low, it will float there quite placidly. As the water gradually heats up, the frog will sink into a tranquil stupor, exactly like one of us in a hot bath, and before long with a smile on its face, it will unresistingly allow itself to be boiled to death. (p.258)

Like the boiled frog metaphor, gradually and consistently, the residential school policy removed us from the influence of our parents with the intention to assimilate us into the mainstream society. Indeed, it successfully removed our Creeness - our Indigenousness from us; furthermore, the policy did not provide us with the education to help us adjust to the demands of the modern world. Our experience in residential schools transformed us into wounded lost souls. Ashamed of our Cree identity, we were no longer connected to our life force, so we felt disconnected from our Cree world. Additionally, without the education that was designed to assimilate us, we were not accepted into the mainstream world. We were left floating - not fitting, and not belonging.

I will share a few clips of my story with the intention of bringing to reality the processes by which our people were handled as Awards@ of the government. This story represents the experiences of First Nations' children multiplied a thousand fold.

My family history of the residential school experience started with my maternal grandmother. Orphaned at a very young age, she attended a French convent in the early 1900's for fourteen years. My mother too, was sent to residential school from 1929 - 1937 for eight years.

I attended school from 1952 – 1965; nine of those years were spent in a residential school.

These are examples of three generations of children removed from a world regulated by an indigenous life force and transplanted into an alien totalitarian institutional environment.

> On a very sunny August morning in 1952, my parents brought me to the Saddle Lake churchyard in a wagon.
>
> The yard was filled with horses and wagons, parents stood around conversing, and children ranging from 5 to 18 years old waited.
>
> I didn=t know what I was waiting for. My parents informed me that I was going to school. School had no meaning to me as I was only seven years old.
>
> The wait wasn=t too long. A grain truck pulled up. All the community members and children gathered around it. The Indian Agent had a list from which he began calling names. As each child=s name was called out, he or she was lifted into a small opening at the back of the truck. The screaming and crying started. I saw children kicking and waving their arms as they tried to struggle free.
>
> My brother=s name was called out, and I walked with him and my parents to the truck. I heard his name called again. He was lifted into the rectangular opening, I also found myself being lifted by my father. As he placed me in, I turned to look for my mom. My dad looking guilty, sad, and helpless, whispered, AMy girl, don=t cry,@ Eyes fill with tears, he turned his back on me and walked away. I was obedient; I did not cry. I tried to peak from inside the walls of the grain truck but couldn=t find any holes, so I looked up. There was no where else to look. As I looked up I found that my throat was no longer excruciatingly painful; I had found the trick to choke back my tears. As more children were lifted into the opening of the grain truck, the screams got louder. Some of us felt suffocated as we were packed tight, like a can of sardines.
>
> This ‘legalized kidnapping’ of children seemed to take forever.
>
> Eventually, the truck started moving, causing the chains on the side of the truck to rattle, and we had to grab for them in order to maintain our balance.
>
> The residential school was located 20 miles from our reserve.
> We finally arrived; the truck parked in front of this massive three story brick building. As we were lifted out of the truck, we were instructed to walk up the front stairs. A committee of nuns standing on the stairwell directed us into the building. As we walked in, I observed the sterility of the long hallway; we could hear the echoes as we marched down this long hallway. The boys were directed

> to one side and the girls were directed to the opposite side. That was the last time I spoke to my brother. The only time I saw him was at meal time.
>
> We had no sooner gathered into a large room, when we were asked to stand in line. Clothes were distributed to us: a brown cotton print dress, a broad cloth petticoat with a pocket sewn in front, an undershirt, a bloomer, brown woolen stockings, a pair of elastics for garters, and a long flannelette bathing gown. All the items had a number on them. My number was 78. Our personal clothes were bagged and removed. Two years later I became number 45.
>
> After all clothes were issued, we were asked to put on our flannelette bathing gowns. We were again stood in line, but now according to number. I didn=t know how to count, so a nun placed me in line according to my size and my number.
>
> We were again marched into a bathroom area where there were 25 sinks in a row. As each number was called, we went into a section where there was a nun with a scissors. Many of the girls had long braids. As they went ahead, I saw the nun take one braid at a time and chop each braid off. Then we proceeded to the next station where a nun stood in front of a very large basin; I remember the whole room stunk from kerosine oil. It was used as delousing medicine. The process began again: a number called, we marched forward, got deloused. We had to keep this medicine on our heads until the next morning.
>
> Upon completion of this task, we were issued a towel, a toothbrush, and a comb with our engraved number. We then hung them up on hooks marked with our number.
>
> By the end of the first evening, I looked around, and there was a replication of me in various sizes and forms: same hairdos, same brown print dresses, same brown woolen stockings. To counter the “uniform” look, some very fashion conscious girls designed their stockings to reflect their tastes; some rolled up to their ankles, some neatly folded, and some designed the slouched stocking look. Those stylish looks were quickly discouraged and once again we were the same.

Starratt (p.33), in explaining the relevance of education, believes that the meaning gained from knowledge and learning must connect to a sense of something intrinsically human. He states, AWhat is important to human beings are answers to questions such as: How should I live my life: How can I maintain my autonomy, my identity as a singular individual who takes responsibility for myself and at the same time belong to a community that grounds the meaning of life?@

The meaning of education in residential school did not connect to the 'life force' experience we brought with us from our reserve communities.

> Soon we quit talking about our experiences and our families; our memories of them began to fade.
>
> Instead, we quickly learned that Asilence was golden.@ From that first day, we lost our voices. Lost is probably not the right term, because when you lose something you may assume that you might have misplaced it, and you may eventually find it.
>
> Our voices were silenced. We spoke when we were spoken to. We never had an opinion. There was never an argument. Creativity was discouraged. Lining up single file, or two by two, and marching was to be the order of the day. This was always done in silence. Like Pavlov's conditioning experiment with dogs, we were conditioned to line up at the sound of the bell. We lined up for prayers, we lined up for mass, we lined up for classes, we lined up for meals, we lined up for chores, we lined up to use the washrooms, we lined up for walks, and we lined up to go to the dorms. We learned to be silent. Order, consistency and predictability were strictly adhered to.
>
> An appropriate theme song would have been AWhen ants go marching two by two."
>
> The times we were allowed to play in the yard gave us moments of freedom. We made sure we were far from the building, and away from the nuns. We teased, giggled, played, and the very brave ones spoke the Cree or Dene language.
>
> Our schooling was made up of rote memory, spelling bees, and multiplication. The nuns taught. We listened. We remembered. This was very different from our parents and grandparents kiskinohamawasowina (learnings and teachings) - teaching a child by modeling, showing, experiencing, and interacting.
>
> Instead, we read ADick and Jane@ and learned about their dog, Spot. They lived in a white house with a picket fence, and they had an immaculately kept yard. They did not have a mosom or kokom; they did not have a large extended family. What we read had no meaning to our own experiences and our own world. Our schooling was not connected to anything that we brought with us from our communities; our schooling totally disconnected us from our life force.

Our schooling was the total opposite of Starratt's (p.35) view that AOur world is shaped by the understanding that the learning in the school must be connected to the major cultural projects facing our society.@

How has this affected our communities?

We still feel voiceless, we still fear disagreements, we still keep our opinions to ourselves, we still fear expressing creative alternatives to our problems; unconsciously, some of this dysfunctional passive style has been passed down to our children.

As a result of this 'forced institutionalized life' experience, we came home to our communities wounded, our spirits weakened: we have passed these soul wounds down several generations. Many reject their own culture to this day, and many have not had the opportunity to learn their own language and culture. Consequently, many parents have also lost the confidence in the school system, and our work as educators is defined by some of these experiences.

We are now challenged to address the effects of the intergenerational wounding; at the same time, we must bring back the foundation of our culture. We must move forward with new visions for meaningful education for the survival of our children, our grandchildren, future great grand children, and the seven generations yet to be born. As educators, we have to work with our elders to recapture this 'life force' by utilizing their knowledge and incorporating this "sacred" knowledge into our educational system.

Residential School Aftermath

The residential school aftermath is unwinding in the 1990s as survivors unveil the secrets that tormented them during the residential school era (RCAP, 1996). People are sharing horrific stories of childhood abuse, including mental, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. The type, severity, and intensity of the abuse varied. For example, in one case, a child had a needle pushed through his tongue by a teacher for speaking his Native language (York, 1990). In other cases, children reported being physically assaulted, being dragged around, having their heads shaved, and being forced to memorize hymns and bible verses.

The treatment varied as the majority of the children were looked upon as barbaric, savage heathens in need of Christianizing. They were not allowed to speak their languages, associate with siblings, or discuss their culture. They were punished physically if they were caught speaking their own language, discussing their traditions, or praying in the Indian way. As one survivor noted, "They whipped the hell out of us…they treated us like animals and they expected us to come out a happy person" (York, 1990, pp. 34, 35). An example of mental and emotional abuse included being told their families would go to hell for practicing spiritual ceremonies.

The effects of cultural genocide are still prevalent. Many Indigenous communities are just beginning to realize the long term impediments of this era. Some are just beginning to deal with the grief, and others deny the effects on themselves, their families, and their communities. Some suffer openly, while others suffer in silence. One survivor recounted, "I was broken in all areas of my life" (York, 1990, p. 28). Alcoholism, suicide, drug abuse, and other addictive behaviors are evident. Many parents never developed parenting skills as a result of being separated from their parental role models in childhood. The adults they knew were church officials who broke every bit of trust entrusted them by the very God they diligently served. The philosophy of the time is noted by Ditcham in 1904 (cited in York, 1990):

> The philosophy according to which the residential schools operated was diametrically opposed to the traditional Indian philosophy of education. Before the arrival of the missionaries, Indian children learned by watching their parents and elders. Their family and their community were intimately involved in their education. The myths and stories told by their elders were an important part of the process of learning. (p. 33)

Today, many are convinced residential school experiences are a major contributor to the crippling pain that has, in a sense, paralyzed First Nations' communities (York, 1990).

Spinks, a residential school survivor, recounted the tragic consequences: "It affects your spouse, your children, your children's friends. It goes on and on. They've lost their identity.

They feel confused about themselves. They feel they're not accepted by their own people. They feel they don't belong in either world" (York, p. 35).

The residential school era affected everyone: the grandparents were the initial survivors who transmitted the woundedness to the parents, who in turn passed it on to the grandchildren. Everyone is traumatized - overtly or covertly - because the grandparents lost the skills to parent (York, 1990). Feelings of inferiority, lack of self-respect, lack of self-confidence, and shame are not uncommon. In adulthood, the shame may manifest itself in the form of addictions to chemicals, sex, food, work, or gambling (Recovery Foundation of the Southwest, Inc. [RCOSW], 1997).

The pain of the residential school era is overflowing and festering like a pus oozing through an open sore, in this case, communities. It oozes in various ways including addictions and other forms of woundedness and social pathologies as communities try to come to grips with the after-effects. The addictiveness people experience serves to keep them from experiencing their inner self, the feelings and the awareness to challenge the source of the pain, suffering, disease or oppression (RCOSW, 1997). In other words, the addictions simply numb the pain they may be experiencing internally.

Inter-Generational Trauma and Soul Wounds

"Inter-generational trauma" and "soul wounds" are words that come out of the works of Dr. Eduardo Duran, a Native American psychologist. He proposed that the residential school era severely wounded Native Americans, the results of which will be felt for generations to come. Duran's second book, *Transforming the Soul Wound: A Theoretical/ Clinical Approach to American Psychology* (1990), outlined how history has significantly impacted the lives of Native

Americans. He calls the wounds "soul wounds" and makes reference to the effects of inter-generational trauma.

Dr. Duran's work dates back to the early 1980s when he was a doctoral candidate. His published dissertation, *Archetypal Consultation: A Service Delivery Model for Native Americans* (1984) is based on his ethnographic research with Native Americans of central California. His background is psychology; however, the data is applicable in the field of education since his research is based on the psychological impact of woundedness. That woundedness is played out daily in the lives of children who enter classrooms all over the nation.

Dr. Duran's work is one of the earliest research studies to address the issues of the Native American community from a Native American perspective, with a model developed by a Native American. His work provides a strong socio-historical perspective of the problems encountered by many Native Americans.

Native American history, according to Duran (1984), is laced with ethnocide and genocide experiences of cultural hegemony. In later works (1990) he referred to the European impact of education: "The systematic destruction of the Indian family was attempted under the guise of educating Indians in order that they would assimilate as painlessly as possible, while at the same time inflicting a wound on the soul of Indian people that is felt in agonizing proportions until this day" (p. 28). Effects of inter-generational trauma are experienced years after the original residential school era through the oppressed adopting the foreign cultural context and enforcing the oppressor's rules on their own people. They are the oppressed who become oppressors (Freire, 1993).

Duran's 1984 work laid out some of the possible causes for the mental health problems faced in the Native American communities. Changes have occurred rapidly in a time span of approximately 100 years:

> The trauma of the loss of land, culture, and people has never been resolved and has merely been anesthetized by alcohol and other drugs. Indian people suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as a consequence of the devastating effects of genocide perpetuated by the U.S. government. (Duran, 1990, p. 93)

Duran emphasized that trauma can be felt inter-generationally. His research gave the pains of the residential school era an official diagnosis: inter-generational trauma and soul wounds. As a result of his diagnosis, many survivors could begin to escape in their healing journey; their pain was validated. Furthermore, it is imperative that agencies, schools included, understand the long term effects of inter-generational trauma and soul wounds, the result of ethnocide and genocide during the residential school era.

Duran (1990) cited an example of the long-term effects of inter-generational trauma and soul wounds, utilizing a treatment example:

> We not only treat the client but are also treating our ancestors, since it is only in this plane of existence that we get to accomplish resolution of life events. If we don't work out a resolution for our ancestors, we can then only insure that our children will be left to continue struggling with the problem. (p. 95)

Another way of saying the same thing is "one generation's trauma causes another generation's grief"; when people are healed, the spirits of the ancestors and their future generations are also healed" (RCOSW, 1997, p. 21).

In order to understand Native American people, he differentiated the Indian world view (which he called cosmology) from the European world view:

> The core of Indian awareness was the place where the soul wound occurred. This core being essence is the fabric of soul and it is from this essence that the mythology, dreams, and culture emerge. Once the core from which soul emerges is wounded then all emerging mythology and dreams of a people reflect the

> wound. The manifestations of such a wound are then embodied by the tremendous suffering that the people have undergone since the collective soul wound was inflicted half a millennium ago. Some of the diseases and problems that Indian people suffer are a direct result of the soul wound. (Duran, 1990, p. 29)

Conflicting world views affect how we see and experience the world. Some distinctions between the Indian and European world view include temporal versus spatial thinking. Western thought distinguishes world history along a linear temporal sequence where time has a beginning and an end, whereas Native Americans think about events as a function of space, or actuality, where the event actually took place. Another major difference is around process versus content thinking. Process is more action, event-oriented and consequently more people oriented, whereas content is individualistic, focusing on object relationships.

Another example that demonstrates the effects of differing world views is offered by Rupert Ross, a non-Native lawyer, seconded to Justice Canada, a department of the federal government. Most jails are filled with Aboriginal people; Ross' task was to look at the justice system and determine how it served, or did not serve the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. His text, *Return to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice* (1996), illustrated the importance of process orientation versus content orientation. He calls process "how" one lives, versus the "dog-eat-dog perspective" (p. 82) of some Euro-Canadians. Ross reiterated the importance of trying to understand the Aboriginal perspective. Differing values and different lifestyles impact how the two world views interact, how people treat each other, and the pain and heartache they cause each other.

Ross (1996) called speaking from the heart "heart speaking" (p. 167) and noted the differences in how the two world views communicate in this regard. Accordingly, heart

speaking is risky, but it is still maintained by those who experience “oneness with the world” (1984, p. 54).

Duran (1990) described another difference he called compartmentalization. In the Western world, people often separate the mind, body, and spirit. In Indian culture, the mind, body, and spirit are not separated; they are thought of in totality. Consequently, the Indian world view is one whereby the individual is part of Creation and part of one system. This categorization and naming causes conflicts with the Indian world view of harmony and balance.

The final difference Duran (1990) explored was the approach to healing in the Indian and European world. In contrast to the European approach, which connects healing with the linear passage of time, Indian healing relies on the intensity of the healing process to alleviate the individual’s pain. Understanding the Indian world view is crucial, according to Duran, because “treatment or intervention is not possible unless the provider or agency has cognizance of socio-historical factors that have had a devastating effect on the dynamics of the Indian family” (p. 28).

Ross (1996) also reiterated the need to understand the individual. He noted: “I could not deal with him effectively until I understood all the traumas that had affected him, his family, his community and his people” (p. 121). Duran (1990) concluded that therapists - and I dare include educators - are “co-conspirators” (p. 28) if they proceed to work with Native families with the “blaming the victim” mentality (p. 28). Some of the research around Native dropouts recognizes this perspective.

This section provides a foundation for the reader to understand the issues associated with indigenous families and their children. As well, it prepares the reader to have an understanding of how historical trauma continues to plague all indigenous people in many forms. This

literature review addresses these issues as well as the potential to heal the soul wounds – at the student, family, or community levels and in connections between all three.

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF URBAN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES: COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AS A RESOURCE

> From an Anishinabe perspective striking out against a woman is like striking out against everything we hold sacred, our life, our future, our customs, and beliefs, because our women represent the power which is contained within all these concepts. By weakening women, we are weakening our people. (Morrisseau, 1999, p. 40)

The primary purpose of this chapter is to guide readers on our collective journey toward a rediscovery of the "sacred"; what was once considered sacred, our relationships with each other and the universe, was destroyed by a school system whose sole purpose was to assimilate our people (cultural imperialism). The Canadian educational establishment, given its historical role in undermining Indigenous family systems and subjugating the minds of our people, can play a pivotal role - under the guidance of decolonized Indigenous scholars and elders - in helping Indigenous families move beyond an immobilized state of woundedness through the rediscovery of the "sacred", in their relationships. This chapter attempts to shed light on this process: how this "striking out against everything we hold sacred" came to be, and the path to reclaiming the sacred in our family relationships.

Any attempt to address the needs of Indigenous children and youth within the school system must be done in conjunction with their families. This approach is intrinsic to the Indigenous belief in the concept of wholeness, namely that all things are connected. Therefore, to truly understand and address the problems Indigenous children and youth are presenting in the school systems, we must also attempt to understand and address the problems their families are coping with. Rupert Ross (1996), a former Assistant Crown Attorney in northern Ontario,

eloquently elaborates on this principle of wholeness/ interconnectedness in *Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice:*

> Traditional teaching suggests that the principle-or-law of wholeness applies not only to the nonhuman realms, but to the human one as well. When people cause problems, for instance, this law of interconnectedness requires that a justice system investigate all the factors that might go back much further in time that is the custom in Western courts and it must encompass a greatly expanded circle of friends, family, employers and other influences. Further, any plan of action must involve not only the individual doing what he or she can with his or her problem, but the whole, larger group doing what they can about their problem. Disharmony within one individual is seen as everyone's disharmony, for it "infects" all relationships, which involves that person. The principle of wholeness thus requires looking for, and responding to, complex interconnections, not single acts of separate individuals. Anything short of that is seen as a naïve response destined to failure. (p. 64)

Ross (1996) clearly states that any plan of action directed at an individual's problem must simultaneously involve all members (community) working on their problems, as "Disharmony within one individual is seen as everyone's disharmony", and infecting all relationships tied to the person. (p. 64)

It is precisely because of this inattention to the law of wholeness, that the endemic problems faced by urban Indigenous youth (the disproportionately high dropout rate, gang membership, addiction, abuse, violence, teen pregnancy and suicide) have proven to be so unresponsive to any form of intervention put forth by educators, social service agencies, and the justice system.

These problems are typical of both urban Indigenous families as well as Indigenous families residing on reserves all across Canada. The issues our youth face are a collective call for help, reflecting the collective pain of Indigenous families. Because of colonization and the residential school experience, the intergenerational transmission of trauma and shame is deeply entrenched in the collective psyche of Indigenous families in the form of emotional aftershocks

that reverberate to this day in our families through pervasive lateral violence, addiction, and hopelessness, experiences that are considered to be a normal part of growing up in an Indigenous family environment.

Given the reality we are dealing with a population whose history and world view are unique - relative to the rest of the immigrant populations, as indigenous minorities within settlement dominions - this chapter sheds light on the following areas:

- The historical impact (collective shame and trauma) of colonization and the residential schools on Indigenous people.
- The nature of interactions in shame-bound family systems and how these interactions affect the developing brain, self-regulation, parent-child attachment patterns, and the personalities of adult children of trauma.
- The process of rediscovering the "sacredness" in our relationships.
- The role of schools in facilitating the rediscovery of the "sacred".

The Historical Impact of Colonization and Residential Schools on Indigenous Families

We could write extensively on this topic given the volumes of material available on the subject. For the sake of succinctness, however, we will limit ourselves to two resources, the personal story of a former student of B.Q.F.N.C when it was a residential school, and Rupert Ross' perceptive analysis of the source of abuse in Indigenous communities today.

First, we define the term "cultural assimilation". This politically acceptable term, from an Indigenous perspective, is actually a euphemism for denial, a denial engaged by the political establishment, the justice system, the educational system, and the religious institutions. Indian Residential Schooling, the main vehicle for ensuring the assimilation of the Indigenous population, was an act of genocide. Our use of the word "genocide" is not for the purpose of

shocking the reader; rather, our intention is to share with the reader our perception of our historical reality. After all, rare are the history books studied by Canadians written from our perspective. Our attention is drawn to Article II of the United Nations Genocide Convention (1948), under which the following actions are specified as constituting genocide (*quoted in* Chrisjohn et al 2001, p. 233):

> a. Killing members of national, ethical, racial, or religious groups;
> b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
> e. Forcibly transferring children of one group to another group.

According to documented evidence (Annual Reports to DIA, 1905-20) provided by Peter Bryce, Chief Medical Officer to the Department of Indian Affairs (and author of *The Story of a National Crime: Being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada),* "government health policy was causing the unnecessary deaths of far too many of the government's Indian charges" (*quoted in* Chrisjohn et al 2001, p. 233). In 1922, Bryce summarized the government's injustices in a pamphlet in which he certainly would have used the word "genocide" had it been available to him. The authors go on to assert, "Indian Residential Schooling in the period 1948 to 1986 constitutes genocide as defined in international law. Canadian governments most certainly did legislate Indigenous children away from their parents, forcibly transferring them to other groups, the churches. It perhaps bears repeating that any, not all of the acts under Article II constitute genocide" (ibid).

This is our perspective of Canadian history; we can now turn our attention to the impact of the government's genocidal policies on our people. The well known African writer, Ng*ug*i wa Thiong'o (1986, p. 3), refers to the impact of dominant cultures on Indigenous cultures:

> The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people's languages rather than their own. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish.

Reflecting on the African experience of colonization while elaborating further on the metaphor of the "cultural bomb", Thiong'o asserts, "In my view, language was the most important vehicle through which that power (the power to dominate the minds of the colonized) fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (ibid).

Indian Residential schooling inflicted irreparable damage on our souls by desecrating our Indigenous languages and thus engaging in the "spiritual subjugation" of our people; the collective impact of this "cultural bomb" on our people to this day can be summed up in four words: trauma, shame, and unresolved grief.

Let us explore this theme of trauma, shame and grief as reflected in the story of a residential school survivor and in Rupert Ross's perceptive analysis of the origins of abuse in Indigenous communities.

The following brief narrative was shared by Alex Janvier (Canada's world renowned Dene painter) about his childhood experiences while attending Blue Quills Residential School located near St. Paul, Alberta. These reflections were shared with the staff of Blue Quills First Nations College on June 9, 2003.

I am Alex Janvier. I represent death. I represent abuse. I am a survivor. Many of these who went to school here with me are now dead. Their spirits were twisted, broken or torn away from them. It was here where I learnt to shut down my feelings.

When you're between 5 to 10 years old, and you're told day in and day out, "Christ died for your sins," this message repeated time and time again, messes up your mind and destroys any sense of cultural identity because you grow up with a deep sense of shame. Worst of all, you're made to feel ashamed of your parents and grandparents because you were repeatedly told they worshiped false gods. So when you return home, instead of feeling love, you feel confusion. Worse still, because your parents have turned to alcohol to cope with the trauma of losing their children, your shame at them becomes reinforced and you grow up hating everything Indian.

We used to get beaten up regularly. I've lost 60 percent of my hearing in one ear and 20 percent in the other because they used to slap us so hard.

When I left here, my spirit was broken and I turned to alcohol. Only when I discovered my gift of painting did I slowly recover my spirit and sense of self. I painted the pain of myself and my people for a long time. Through art I recovered the voice of our ancestors and their stories, for these stories were lost as there was nobody to tell them to when the children were taken away.

Mr. Janvier's experience is not unlike most of his generation, who were victimized by an inhumane system. Craig Brown, the lead lawyer in a class action lawsuit representing the survivors of the residential school, describes the experience of his clients. "The essence is child abuse: systemic institutional child abuse that deprived the children of a normal family life and of their language and culture and often subjected them to the most egregious and severe sexual and physical abuse on a systematic and routine basis" (*quoted in* Frank 2003, p. 34).

Having honored a former victim of our college by allowing his story to be heard, we can now turn our attention to Mr. Ross's (1996) insightful analysis of the origins of abuse in Indigenous communities across Canada. We have chosen to present a portion of his chapter entitled, "Healing Inside the Whirlwind of Sexual Abuse" (pp. 40-48). We ask our readers to

take their time to read the next few pages. Hopefully you will gain a deeper appreciation of the source of our trauma and shame and the resulting problems that plague our communities.

Carl and the Cancer of Abuse

This story is about a boy from another community, a boy I will call Carl, though that is not his real name. When he first came to the attention of the justice system at age fifteen, Carl stood charged with forcible confinement and with the sexual abuse, both anal and vaginal, of two girls. They were four and six years old.

Carl was one of five children growing up in a remote reserve of some four hundred people. His community had no airstrip, no sewer system, no running water, virtually no employment-and only one telephone.

In his first five or six years, a number of events began to shape him. He saw his Dad repeatedly beat and rape his mother in drunken rages. He, in turn, was regularly beaten by his father, sometimes for trying to protect her. His mother also beat Carl, on orders from his father. She did it, he believed, only to keep from being beaten herself. His Dad also forced him into oral and anal sex with him, then forced his mother to join in or be beaten herself.

While these acts were being repeated, Carl learned a number of things. He learned how his Dad blamed his Mom for his own rages, screaming that it was always her fault. He learned that his father justified his anger by pointing to her "failures" as a wife, mother, housekeeper, cook and so on. Carl began to see things in the same way, to believe that the violence was all her fault, that she "deserved' it.

More than that, he learned how to endure all the violence within his family in total silence. In the words of the probation officer, he "lived in dread of what would happen if he ever told or shared the family secret." At the same time, Carl began to develop a real anger towards his neighbors and his community because, as he phrased it, "They didn't see, and thought Dad was so nice."

Unable to reach outside the family for help, he came to rely on his brothers. On one occasion, they all joined together in attacking their father to rescue their mother from another brutal assault.

It should come as no surprise that they all began to sniff solvents, especially gas. It was the only way to escape.

When Carl was five or six, it became known to outsiders that his Dad was sexually abusing one of his older brothers. As a result, a child protection agency placed Carl with his grandparents in another reserve community. He stayed there until he was eight or nine, separated from his brothers and sisters, his only allies. Unfortunately, living with his grandparents did not result in an end to the abuse. A male cousin some six years older than Carl forced him into oral and anal sex on a regular basis, often bribing him with cigarettes and drugs. That abuse continued sporadically until his final arrest in 1992, at age fifteen.

When he was eight or nine, Carl's Dad remarried and quit drinking. He took Carl home, and for a while things were fine. The new wife was a good person, whom he trusted. Then, in the second year there, his Dad started drinking again, and the violence returned. On one occasion when his Dad struck him, the new wife came to protect him and his Dad turned on her. She was pregnant at the time and lost the baby as a result of that assault. Carl blamed himself for the loss of the baby. Not surprisingly, he began sniffing solvents more frequently.

Then, by his own admission, he started taking his anger out on people less powerful than himself. At age nine, he forced intercourse on a six-year old girl, and did so some four or five times. At age ten, he forced anal intercourse on a five-year old boy.

Then, when Carl was about ten or eleven, his Dad's new wife arranged for him to return to his grandparents, apparently afraid for him, but unaware of what had happened there before. He stayed with his grandparents until he was nearly thirteen. During that period, the male cousin who had sexually assaulted him resumed his abuse, supplying him with marijuana and hashish as rewards this time. He grew to use them almost daily. Another boy, who was about five or six years older, forced him into acts of oral and anal sex on four or five occasions, pretending to others that he was there to teach him martial arts. At the same time, Carl began to threaten his grandparents and to steal from them to buy drugs. He also continued to abuse others. He forced intercourse on a nine-year-old girl after watching a porno movie. He also forced intercourse on a girl his own age, a girl whom he says he liked. He also began to think about suicide, later telling the probation officer: "I remember feeling ashamed and wanting to kill myself. I'd tell myself that I was no good and that I should just kill myself."

In fact, he attempted suicide several times, later saying" I was having bad memories of Dad slapping (the new wife) around, and being sexually victimized as well." Because of the suicide attempts and threats of violence to others, he was placed in a group home a couple of

months before his thirteenth birthday. That, however, changed nothing. While there, he learned that his Dad's new wife had committed suicide. He had now lost the one person who had not abused him, the one person he trusted, and he blamed himself for her suicide.

Then, in spring of 1991, at age thirteen, he went back to his Dad. He was using hash and marijuana on an almost daily basis, smoking with his brother, his uncle, his cousins- and even his Dad. He also resumed his own abusive behaviour. He again forced intercourse on his younger cousin, sometimes being assisted by one of his brothers. It was also at this time that he committed the offences that brought him to court- forcing anal and vaginal sex on the two girls aged four and six, keeping them imprisoned for several hours. In his words later, it was "as my father had done to us." He was charged with those offences.

In the words of the probation officer who prepared the evaluation report for court, Carl had learned a number of things growing up in such conditions: (1) "He learned as a young child to both lie and pretend, to protect himself from his father's violence." The primary lie was that his family life was good, while secondary lies involved such things as why he was staying away from home. (2) "He...learned to become a sexual perpetrator. His victimization experiences lead him to de-value himself and his very existence. It was only a matter of time before he started de-valuing the needs of others. In his own words: "I told myself that I was no good. I'm a nobody. I'll only end up in jail anyway, so I'll do what I want... I victimized to regain the power I lost when I was being victimized."

In summary, this fifteen-year-old boy was sexually victimized by at least four people: his father, his mother, and older cousin and another older boy. At the time of his sentencing, he acknowledged victimizing at least the following seven people: a six-year-old cousin, repeatedly; an eight-year-old girl some four or five times; a five-year-old boy, once; a nine-year-old girl, once; a same-age girlfriend, several times; and two little girls, age four and six. Since his sentencing into custody and treatment, he has now acknowledged sexually abusing at least another six people. This boy is only fifteen.

As this one painful story illustrates, the cancer of sexual abuse, as long as it remains hidden, spreads from generation to generation, multiplying as it goes. In many communities, health-care workers estimate that such sexual abuse spans three or four generations. It is considered an illness because it is passed from one person to another as victims try to

compensate for their own degradation by degrading others. This was the situation facing the people of Hollow Water, although they didn't know its full horror at the time.

As Hollow Water has learned, however, it is impossible to deal with the Carls of this world simply by prosecuting their abusive fathers. Instead, it is necessary to ask how those abusive fathers got that way, how the illness that erupts as sexual abuse got started. Until that is done, until the factors that first spawned such disharmonies are identified and dealt with, the illness will continue to afflict one generation after another.

The most basic question, then, is: Where did it all begin?

At this early stage there is one thing I would like to make clear: all the evidence I have seen thus far sends me the unequivocal message that such widespread abuse was not a part of traditional life. In fact, it appears to have been a very rare occurrence, and the object of strong condemnation.

For instance, many early explorers, like David Thompson, were moved to comment on how much love and protection children were afforded and how much they were the healthy centre of a strong and caring society. At the same time, sophisticated measures designed to prevent such abuse were prominent in traditional society, and these are still used in communities where such traditions have been maintained. In the Midewewin Lodge of the Ojibway, for instance, a place in the circle remains reserved for the Deer Clan, despite the fact that no members of the Deer Clan have existed for centuries. The disappearance of this most gentle, song-filled and poetic clan is traced in Ojibway storytelling to their refusal to heed the Creator's warning against incest, even when their continued misbehaviour sent them afflicted children. As a result, the Creator was left with no choice but to see to the disappearance of the entire clan. The vacant place that still remains within the Midewewin Lodge thus stands as a reminder from those ancient times that incest is abhorrent in the Creator's eyes.

There are a great many other practices and traditions that were clearly established to prevent sexual abuse-including the prohibition of direct communication in some groups between fathers and daughters during adolescence. I leave it to others to present them more completely than my knowledge permits. I only wish to indicate my present view that the plague of sexual (and other) abuse that afflicts so many Aboriginal communities is not a "natural" event within what the settler nations called a "pagan" society. On the contrary, I see it as an almost inevitable consequence of historically labeling everything Aboriginal' as pagan, of declaring at

every step in every way that every aspect of traditional life was either worth less than its European equivalent-or just plain worthless.

Losing the Centre

One event in particular began to guide me towards this most uncomfortable conclusion. A few years ago, I heard an Ojibway women tell her story at a workshop on sexual abuse. She told us that she had been born into a tiny community that survived on its trapping, hunting, fishing and rice harvesting. Then, at age six or seven, she was taken away to residential school, along with all the other school-aged children. She stayed there until she was sixteen. Contrary to what I expected, her sexual abuse did not begin at that school. While there were unquestionably many schools where the physical abuse of children, sexual and otherwise, seems to have been commonplace, she was in one where "only" the children's language, spirituality, culture and worldview were abused-as the priest and nuns tried to train the "Indian" out of them. This woman was not sexually abused until, at the age of sixteen, she was released from school and went back to her tiny village. First it was an uncle, then older cousins-her own people.

She spoke to the workshop about how she handled the abuse of her "Indian-ness" by the nuns and priests and the abuse of her body by her relatives. She first went into the predictable downspin of alcohol and drugs, winding up on the streets of a city, abusing herself in virtually every way. Then, to the surprise of many, she did what she calls a "complete flip." She got sober, went back to school, graduated from university, got married and had children. She thought everything was fine.

Then, she told us, a day came when one of her daughters returned from school with a straight-A report card. She asked her daughter why there were no A-plus marks on it. The daughter's tearful response was to ask why they had to be better than everyone else, and in everything they did. It was at that point that her mother understood that she was still hiding from her sexual abuse, that she had only traded alcohol and drugs for perfectionism. She began to understand that she still had not come to grips with the pain, the guilt and the "dirtiness" of being a victim of sexual abuse. Needless to say, the fact that she had been abused by her own people did not help.

In the years that followed, she returned to her tiny community and began to speak openly about what had happened to her, about the sexual abuse that had caught so many people in its

web. Despite hostility and fear, she persisted. She sought guidance from the elders about how to face up to realities, how to put the pain behind her, how to embark on healing both for herself and for the community. It was, she told us, the elders who helped her understand the reason why it was her own people, her own family, who had abused her that way. "I began to learn," she said, "that the people I came back to at age sixteen were not the same people I had left at age six. The change began on the day we were taken from them."

I will never forget how powerfully her simple declaration affected the room. I could almost feel everyone being jolted into sharing her realization: her abusers, Aboriginal people all, did not abuse because they were Aboriginal people, but because they were changed Aboriginal people. If that was so, then there was something they could do to reverse the downward spiral that had everyone so firmly in its grip: they could look back to see when the changes began, what they were, how they touched people-and how they might be reversed. In other words, there was a chance that they could rescue themselves.

As she spoke, it became clear that residential schools were not the solitary cause of social breakdown amongst Aboriginal people. Rather, they were the closing punctuation mark in a loud, long declaration saying that nothing Aboriginal could possibly be of value to anyone. That message had been delivered in almost every way imaginable, and it touched every aspect of traditional social organization. Nothing was exempt, whether it was spiritual beliefs and practices, child –raising techniques, pharmacology, psychology, dispute resolution, decision making, clan organization or community governance. In time, even economic independence was stripped away as governments built community schools, which made it impossible for families to tend traplines often a hundred kilometres back in the bush. Even the law added its voice to the degradation, making it illegal to possess medicine bundles, vote in Canadian elections, hold a potlatch to honour the assistance of others or (difficult as this is to believe) hire a lawyer to even ask a court to force governments to honour their treaty obligations.

Taking the children away to residential school was, in a way, just an exclamation mark ending the sentence that declared: All things Aboriginal are inferior at best, and dangerous at worst. When the children were gone, however, so was the centre of life for everyone left behind. I find it impossible to imagine the feeling that must have swamped all those mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers. Some of them thought that such a drastic step was necessary for future generations to gain the skills needed to survive in the non-Native world.

Some of them, however, still rage at the arrogance of such a move and lament the loss of social and personal health that followed for everyone concerned. No matter how much the outsider's education was desired, what was left behind for all the adults was a gargantuan hole, out of which many were unable to climb.

Those of us in the criminal justice field are familiar with studies of what happens in one-industry towns where the mine or mill closes. When those jobs suddenly vanish, the unemployed are robbed of one source of self-esteem: the ability to provide adequately for their families. Alcohol and drug use increase measurably, along with the rate of family violence. If the loss of that one source of self-esteem can have such a significant effect, what must have been the effect on all of Canada's Aboriginal people as our institution attacked every aspect of their lives?

Try a short exercise in role reversal, imagining a non-Aboriginal mine worker whose job was taken away by all-powerful outsiders. Imagine that he knew he had no realistic chance of ever qualifying for another one. Imagine that he was unable to go for comfort and help to his own churches and his own psychiatrists and hospitals, because those same outsiders had made them illegal. Imagine that, whenever he went to their versions of such helping places, the professionals who staffed them could not speak his language, but demanded that he learn theirs. Imagine, as well, that all those powerful outsiders held him, his language and his culture in such low esteem that they forcibly removed his children, to raise them to be just like them. Imagine, at that point, waking up to silence throughout your entire community, where only the week before there had been the raucous voices of new generations. What reason would there be to even get out of bed?

And what happens when you are told, from every direction and in every way, that you and all your people have no value to anyone, no purpose to your lives, no positive impact on the world around you? No one can bear considering themselves worthless, essentially invisible. At some point people bought to this position stand up and demand to be noticed, to be recognized as being alive, as having influence and power. And the easiest way to assert power, to prove that you exist, is to demonstrate power over people who are weaker still, primarily by making them do things they don't want to do. The more those things shame and diminish that weaker person, the more the abuser feels, within the twisted logic of victimization, that they have been empowered and restored themselves. Further, nothing is more attractive to those who need to

feed off the denigration of others than the road of sexual abuse, and the safest and easiest sexual abuse is of children (Ross, 1996, pp. 40-48).

The present reality of our inherited legacy is a legacy of shame, trauma, and unresolved grief transmitted from one generation to the next, to the point where we the victims end up victimizing our own children thus ensuring that another generation of adult abusers comes into being.

The personal testimony of Mr. Janvier, combined with Rupert Ross's perceptive analysis help our readers appreciate our present day reality: "The rates of alcoholism for the Native American Indian population can be understood only in the context of annihilation imposed by those who sought to eradicate their very culture and traditions" (Tafoya and Del Vecchio *quoted in* Hudak et al 1999, p. 458).

Given this shameful and troublesome historical context, it is no surprise that our child-focused families of the past have been transformed beyond recognition into the addiction-focused families of the present: these are the families whose boundaries are too rigid or too diffuse, where roles are frequently reversed or inappropriate, where distorted patterns of behavior and communication become the norm, whose children are in a chronic state of grief because of unmet dependency needs, and where the emotional climate is dominated by fear, anger, mistrust, guilt and sadness (Hudak et al 1999, p. 464).

Given these prevailing characteristics, let us now get an "insider's" look at how shame, trauma, and unresolved grief influence family interaction patterns thus ensuring the transmission of family dysfunction for generations to come.

Understanding the Nature of Traumatized Shame-Bound Family Systems

In functional families, members participate and contribute to the community, routines ensure predictability, and parents provide clear limits for their children's behavior. A system of accountability "provides commitment, fulfillment of obligation, repair of wrongs, and forgiveness" and the experience of relationship is "one of ongoing dialogue over time and reliability and consistency"(Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 28).

Families that are in a state of perpetual crisis, however, are families that have experienced the impact of abandonment, abuse, and despair over generations (Kagan and Schosberg 1989, p. 5). This section of the chapter conveys how trauma, addiction and shame are transmitted from one generation to the next by exploring the following areas:

i. Family rules of shame-bound systems.

ii. The effects of shame and trauma on the developing child's brain, on its ability to engage in self-regulation, and on child-parent attachment patterns.

iii. Personality characteristics of adult children of trauma and addiction.

Rules that Govern Shame-bound Family Systems

The term "rules" is used by family therapists to describe observable and repeated predictable patterns of interaction among family members. Unlike functional families, which are governed by spontaneity, openness, trust, and respect, shame-bound families are governed by rules of interaction that ensure the transmission of shame, trauma and addiction over generations. The understanding of the persistent problems urban Indigenous youth present in the schools and the community at large can only be facilitated in the context of their day-to-day experience of family interaction.

In *Facing Shame,* Fossum and Mason (1986, p. 87) describe eight rules that serve as "guidelines for developing a dehumanizing shame-bound regime in any human system, whether a nuclear family, a staff work group, a corporation or an elementary school... Relationships in this system don't support a sense of personhood; rather they undermine the faith that "I am a person" and inhibit the growth of a self-accepting outlook." We remind the reader that many of these rules are reminiscent of the rules that governed the relationship between Indigenous children and school personnel in the residential school system. As the authors unequivocally state, "The abuse of the past often exists as the shame of today" (ibid). Accordingly, some families, depending on the inherited level of shame, may manifest more of these rules than others. Let us now examine these rules.

Control:

Be in control of all behavior and interaction. This is the principal rule of the shame-bound system and "all the other rules flow from it and support it". In many families, this rule is manifested if the form of a " primitive drive for domination and submission', and the satisfaction is in experiencing the power to impose one's will upon others" (p. 22).

Due to an undeveloped self, relationship skills (self -disclosure, trust, open communication, respect) are non-existent, so the domination-submission roles "provide a primitive formula for getting together with another person" (ibid). This demeaning and overt form of control is usually exercised tyrannically by one or more members and is reflected in the typical abuser-victim pattern because these are the only roles they are familiar with due to having grown up in such a family system. These are adults with an undifferentiated self, inadequate relationship skills, and misconstrued notions of intimacy. In his book, *Into the Daylight,* a

testimony of his own healing journey from a traumatized childhood, Morrisseau (1989, p. 41) reflects on the nature of his relationships while under the influence:

> Whenever I drank alcohol, it created a person I did not want to be, and yet I had no control over becoming this person. I lived on selfishness and greed. I was like a tornado uprooting all the relationships in my life path. I created a prison and called it love. To love me meant to give up yourself because I needed you to fill the great hole in my spirit, and I expected no less.

This "giving up of self" that the author refers to or "one self gaining at the expense of the other" is a common phenomenon in Adult Children of Residential School Survivors or ACOA's or any group of adults, who as children, were subjected to considerable trauma due to a chaotic and abusive family environment.

As a result of the domination-submission model of relationships, spontaneity, and authenticity are absent in family interaction; family members are always on guard and engage in behaviors either to evoke a desired response or convey an impression. Because "people hold unconsciously to a narrow range of repetitive responses that serve to conceal rather than reveal themselves to each other, we see a family of images, eternal strangers to one another" (Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 89).

Perfection:

The shame-bound family is perfectionistic. Fossum and Mason (1986, pp. 25-26) describe this family system as one in which mistakes are unpardonable. "A strike against you is a strike forever". Mistakes can be brought up to a person years after they were committed. Failures and hurts accumulate along with the accompanying power struggles, anger and resentment. Due to this unyielding demand for perfection, family members live with a high degree of anxiety. Every activity is subject to a form of judgmental monitoring: eating, cleaning, school grades, personal grooming, how money is spent, and one's physical and mental health.

Usually these families are also characterized by overt or covert conflict between parents over expectations of children's behaviors. These unresolved conflicts tend to undermine the adults in their function as parents. As a result, in the chaotic version of this system, there is a complete absence of structure. In these extreme versions of the disorganized family system, "there is no accountability because there is no expectation and little cohesion or relationship developed. People come and go without acknowledgement and without explicit expression of meaning to one another. Agreements are kept or not kept at random" (p. 27). The authors conclude such families are a by-product of "situationally and structurally overwhelming stresses over a long period of time, even generations of time."

Blame:

If something doesn't happen as you planned, blame someone (yourself or someone else). According to Fossum and Mason (1986, p. 95), "Blaming is pervasive in all relationships which have a strong shame component". Blaming behavior, so typical of controllers, allows the blamer to cover his/her shame or project it onto others. Another version of the blame game is self blame which can be highly controlling in relationships as "it keeps the blamer in charge of the interaction and thus reduces surprise". Morrisseau (1998, p. 41), reflecting on the damage inflicted by alcohol and drugs on Indigenous families, shares his understanding of how this debilitating rule was passed on from one generation to the next:

> As we began to abuse our elders, women, and children, we convinced ourselves that the victim was the one responsible for it. The cycle of violence continued from one generation to the next, passed down from father to son, mother to daughter, in an unchecked spiral that would destroy our children. Instead of passing down the teachings of our people, we passed down the noxious effects of trying to become people we were not. The denial of responsibility for our own feelings by blaming others became the first step in our own self-destruction. Losing touch with our feelings, we became unable to teach our children how to properly deal with them.

Denial:

Deny feelings, especially the negative and vulnerable ones like anxiety, fear, loneliness, grief, rejection, neediness and caring. In its most extreme form, "The denial rule produces a very cold system of relationships. People don't acknowledge genuine personal feelings even to themselves. In effect the members of this system don't know they have feelings at all" (Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 97). This rule is manifested in the way family members interact with each other. Thus one family may be task oriented and members get their jobs done, another family may emphasize the performance of roles such as living up to the expectations of the role associated with being a mother, father, sister or son.

According to the authors, "When emphasis on role is combined with perfectionism principle, people try to be the perfect parent or perfect son or daughter… The sad product of this system is that each family member's sense of personhood is undeveloped and is fertile ground for shame" (p. 98).

The roots of denial and the "[t]he undeveloped sense of personhood which is fertile ground for shame", are embedded in the residential school experience. Leona Makokis, President of Blue Quills First Nations' College, shares her childhood experience as a former resident student:

> Our voices were silenced. We spoke when we were spoken to, we never had an opinion, there was never an argument, and creativity was discouraged. This had an impact on our communication styles, and some of that has been passed down to our children. Today, we as educators must acknowledge this loss and address it. Lining up single file, or two by two, and marching was to be the order of the day. This was always done in silence. We lined up for prayers, we lined up for mass, we lined up for classes, we lined for meals, we lined up for chores, we lined up to use the washrooms, we lined up for walks, we lined up to go to the dorms. Silence, order and control were very important for the nuns (Leona Makokis, Residential School Narrative, 1996).

What was the impact of "silenced voices" on generations of children exposed to the residential school experience? Middleton-Moz and Dwinell (1986, p. 8) describe the experience of traumatized children in alcoholic family environments in their book, *After the Tears*. "In order to feel safe and protected a child develops personal resources and defenses prematurely, thereby continuing to protect a fantasy ideal of the "powerful and protective" parent. The child learns to "shut off" the experience through detachment, and with it, her or his own development process".

The authors refer to denial as the "hallmark of an alcoholic family and the home environment as depressogenic" The lives of children in these families are a "rehearsal for traumatic events" (p. 9) and leave them vulnerable to emotional problems as they mature:

> The survival adaptation which these children develop can be likened to "chronic shock syndrome" with the attendant psychic numbing, restricted affect, hypervigilance and recurrent intrusive dreams and flashbacks of earlier traumatic experiences…. These homes (depressogenic environments) lack ego support, prevent the development of healthy self-reliance, create hostility and block its release, promote feelings of guilt and cause the child to feel lonely and rejected. Such an environment engenders a chronic, pervasive sense of loss which tends to be out of conscious awareness and predisposes children raised in these homes to problems with depression in adolescence and adulthood. (Middleton-Moz and Dwinell 1986, p.9)

In the latter part of this chapter we will explore the lifelong impact of childhood trauma on adult personality characteristics, characteristics that are a by-product of family interaction patterns that perpetuate trauma and shame from one generation to the next.

Unreliability:

Don't expect reliability and constancy in relationships. According to Fossum and Mason (1986, p. 99), this rule is manifested in shame-bound systems in the form of "individuals who repeatedly disappear on their emotional connections."

Additionally, family members learn to accept extremes in mood swings as a normal part of the relationship pattern. When unreliability is the norm in day-to-day interactions, especially more so in an addiction focused family, "[c]hildren growing up in this family will not learn to expect a relationship to provide continuity or reliability of contact. This is a pattern that we have often seen maintained in the families of adult children of alcoholics, even though they have never had a problem with their own alcohol use" (p. 100).

Another noted therapist, Jean Baker-Miller (2000, p. 62), author of The *Healing Connection*, supports Fossum and Mason's observations of the detrimental impact of this rule on the developmental needs of children. Because of their parent's addiction, "Children from alcoholic families learn not to count on adults to follow through on what they say. This produces a loss of trust and faith in relationships." The author goes on to describe these parents as being emotionally unavailable as they are depressed most of the time. Consequently their children blame themselves for their parents' depression. "They feel terrible about not begin able to help the parents with the obvious sadness" (ibid). The consequence of growing up with parents who are emotionally unavailable is a generation of children who grow up with a deep sense of helplessness and profound disconnection. These are the children who will one day become parents and transmit this legacy of "helplessness and profound disconnection" (ibid) to the next generation.

Two extreme forms of "individuals who repeatedly disappear on their emotional connections" are highly prevalent in Indigenous families, more so than in other families. These two extreme manifestations are parental abandonment of children and suicide. At Blue Quills First Nations' College, eighty percent of adult students have reported experiencing some form of abandonment and trauma as children. These are the adult children/grandchildren of Residential

School Survivors with families of their own. Their experience reflects the experience of our urban Indigenous families; the majority of these families are, in fact, extension of families who live on the reserve.

Recognizing the need to address the trauma and grief that is a by-product of parental abandonment, or "individuals who repeatedly disappear on their emotional connections", Blue Quills First Nations' College offers healing workshops to address the unresolved grief and trauma in the lives our students. Reflecting on her experience of a Grief and Loss workshop, one adult student agreed to share her experience of the process:

> My experience in the Grief and Loss workshop was very overwhelming. I honestly didn't believe before that I had issues with my late mother. I had moments when I missed her and wished she was alive and well. I would daydream about visiting her and sharing things with her, telling her my problems and what was going on in my life. I would come back to reality and tell myself to stop having such wishful thoughts. When reality hit, there would be this ball in the pit of my stomach which must have been there from childhood. In the workshop with the inner child work, I felt this ball get smaller. It doesn't feel like there is so much pressure anymore. The emotions I felt were hatred, resentment, abandonment, neglect all in one lump. To be able to release this pressure made me feel like I had been caring around baggage for years. I no longer feel this resentment or hatred towards my mother and I'm finding that I am accepting of her death. She's gone and I can just forgive and let her go. As I was writing this I could see a women and a little girl. The woman is scooping up the little girl and holding her in her arms and the little girl is hugging her back. They both look happy. My inner child has come to accept and forgive because the older me helped her to understand that mother had issues also. She probably did the best she could.

We will explore this healing journey more thoroughly in the latter part of this chapter.

Given the pervasive presence of unreliability in traumatized shame-bound Indigenous families, it is, therefore, not surprising that "suicide and self-injury are the leading causes of death for aboriginal youth and adults up to age 44. In 1999, suicide and self-injury accounted for 38% of deaths among youth and 23% of deaths in young adults. The suicide rate for Aboriginal people is three times that of the Canadian population" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People

1995). As Fossum and Mason (1986, p. 99) state, sometimes the disappearance of individuals from their families is activated by a deep sense of personal shame, "I'm not worthy or my behavior has made it too uncomfortable to stay in contact." Indigenous families to this day are paying a high price for this inherited colonial legacy of shame and trauma as reflected in this student's sharing, "My family has an established tradition of suicide. Thirty years ago my grandfather killed himself; since then, sixteen other family members (immediate and extended) have killed themselves. That is why I want to be a social worker".

Incompleteness:

Don't complete transactions. Shame-bound families accumulate baggage of disagreements "that go unresolved for years. Additionally family members are unaware that they leave so much unresolved...nor do they know how to resolve or complete a transaction" (Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 100). Endless unresolved disagreement is an everyday occurrence, or at the other extreme, disagreement is suppressed. The resulting tension is projected onto other members thus contributing to the development of symptoms in children.

Conflict in couples stemming from relationships with "incomplete transactions" are common phenomena in the lives of our adult students; after enrolling in our programs, they are finally able to "step back", observe the nature of their family interaction patterns, connect these patterns to their collective historical shame-bound legacy, and focus on self-change as the initial step in bringing about lasting change.

No Talk:

Don't talk openly about disrespectful shameful, abusive, or compulsive behavior. The "no- talk" rule ensures that harmful behaviors are never confronted or addressed; the "no-talk"

rule ensures that destructive family secrets such as incest get transmitted from one generation to the next in the form of continuous harmful behavior (chemical dependency, addiction, abuse, etc.). Fossum and Mason (1986, p. 103) unequivocally state that "family secrets form central pillars in the structure of shame-bound systems…. The "no talk" rule is based on feelings of shame, whether they are conscious or not, often there is a sense of no choice to disclose or hopelessness about disclosure".

Baker-Miller adds to Fossum and Mason's comments on the destructive impact of the "no-talk" rule (secrecy) on family relationships by linking secrecy with isolation:

> Secrecy tends to bind the abused to the victimizer. It isolates the child or family member from honest connection. Secrecy affects feelings of self worth and self-esteem, because children and family members tend to blame themselves for the crazy making or bad feelings they experience when holding secrets…Family member avoid subjects that would lead near the disowned, emotionally changed territory, which means they cannot talk about what is happening around them…Secrets isolate children and family members from the world-"they fear that people might find out'. Consequently, they lose access to outside support, which perpetuates the effect of trauma on the family system. (*quoted in*: Dayton 2000, p. 60)

This destructive rule, so prevalent in our families today, is directly linked to the shameful abuse our forefathers suffered as children attending the residential school system. Traumatized by the severity of their abuse, our parents and grandparents survived their trauma by abiding by the rule of silence:

> The result of having to cope with such experiences (public beatings, ritualistic washing of genitals by nuns and priests, forced abortions, rape) was that people became silent about the events. They did not talk to each other nor to their families about their experiences, especially about their pain. It became a conscious decision to keep a lid on that part of their lives for fear they would not be believed, or because of the shame and embarrassment many felt about their experiences. For many people, keeping silent became a way of coping long after they left school. (Assembly of First Nations 1994, p. 53)

Such is the power of this rule on both victims and perpetrators, that it was not until 1998 that the Government of Canada apologized for the abuses inflicted on Indigenous people by their policies, and to alleviate their guilt, set aside a pittance of $350 million to support community based healing projects.

In the meantime, our generation, the Adult Children of Residential School Survivors, experience on a daily basis, the carnage and havoc wreaked by the ghost of the "no-talk" rule on our families: suicide, rape, murder, AIDS, incest, etc. Chrisjohn et al (2001, p. 249) responds to the creation of the healing fund with the following question. "Canada had spent 119 years explicitly trying to destroy the Indigenous forms of life; does anyone pretend to believe that all the King's horses and all the King's men would be able to reconstitute such a thoroughly frappéd Humpty-Dumpty, even for $350 million?"

Disqualification:

When disrespectful, shameful, abusive or compulsive behavior occurs, use denial and disqualification to reframe or disguise it. This rule tends "to leave people feeling deeply isolated and with grave doubts about their self worth"(Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 104). Manifestations of this rule are the sexually abusive family where "abuse is disqualified as affection" or the abuser gets laughed at as a "dirty old man", or the victim of physically abusive behavior is a "rascal who always needs more punishment."

We've covered these eight rules in order to convey to our readers an appreciation of how trauma and shame, characteristics deeply entrenched in Indigenous families, shape the patterns of interaction in family members, and as a result, reinforce trauma and shame from one generation to the next. Children trapped in these shame-bound patterns of interaction experience a never-ending cycle of trauma as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

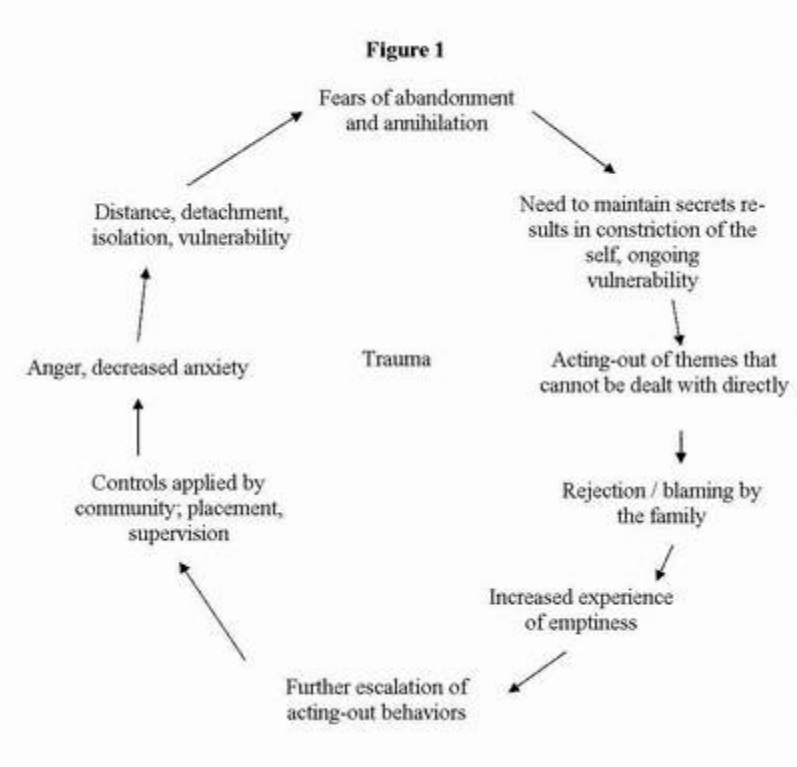

Figure 1: Juvenile Delinquency and Family Dynamics

Borrowing from Ausloos'(1981) observation of juvenile delinquency and family dynamics, Kagan and Scholsberg (1989, p. 10) describe this cycle:

> The recurrent experience of abuse, trauma, and violence leads to more primitive terrors of abandonment and fears of annihilation. The child growing up in such a family learns that trauma and abuse/neglect are unavoidable experiences, which must be kept secret. This leads to vague feelings of emptiness and unease and inability to deal with reality. If it can't be talked about, it can't be dealt with. When these feelings of abandonment, annihilation, and tension reach a threshold, someone in the family will act out tensions in the family, typically through behaviors, which are, metaphorical to the pain experienced in the family. Controls are applied by authorities when the family's problems threaten the community. This stabilizes the system and reinforces the family members' feeling that everyone is against them. This is accompanied by increased distance and a greater sense of detachment among family members, particularly if a child, youth, or adult ends up in placement, e.g., in a residential treatment facility, foster home, alcoholic treatment center, or jail. The ability of family members to deal with the family's pain remains at a minimal level as anxiety and pressures decrease.

The acting out behaviors of children and youth in schools and our communities can only be understood in the context of family trauma. We've attempted to convey to our readers a better understanding of the interaction patterns that differentiate traumatized shame-bound family systems from functional family systems. The family rules that govern these interactions, are "guidelines for developing a dehumanizing shame-bound regime in any human system" (Fossum and Mason 1986, p. 87), and because they are so deeply entrenched in the human psyche, it is inevitable that these patterns will be transmitted from one generation to the next. We are now ready to turn our attention to an even more disturbing aspect of shame-bound family systems: the impact of shame and trauma on a developing child's brain, the impact of trauma on a child's ability to engage in self-regulating behaviors, and the impact of trauma on parent-child attachment patterns.

How Childhood Trauma Affects Brain Structure, Self-Regulation, and Child-Parent Attachment Patterns

The transmission of shame, trauma, and unresolved grief from one generation to the next is a cycle that is very difficult to break in large part due to unresolved parent-child attachment issues that get replicated in adult marital relationships as well as the impact of relational trauma on the developing infant's brain. These in turn impact the maturing child/adult's ability to regulate behaviors and emotions in response to environmental demands. This section of the chapter explores the physiological impact of trauma on the developing infant's brain and how this impact influences the process of self-regulation and attachment patterns.

According to Perry et al (1996, pp. 20-21), the development of an infant's brain follows a predictable path, starting from its most primitive part, the brain stem and progressively moving on to the more complex parts such as the cortex. Because of this predictable, sequential course,

the healthy development of these more complex components of the brain is dependent on these less complex systems such as the brainstem and midbrain. Therefore, the relational experiences children are exposed to in their early years will impede or enhance the development of the entire brain system as the child matures. The author's conclusion is that "relational trauma during infancy and childhood has the potential effect of influencing the permanent organization - and all future functional capabilities - of the child."

Perry et al (1996, p. 4) assert that experience "literally provides the organizing framework for an infant/child's brain" because the neurons experience molecular changes in response to external sensory signals (sound, sight, taste, touch) thus allowing for the storage of information in the neural systems. Infants are thus creating (or making sense) an internal representation of the external world (sensory signals) through neural activity that senses, processes, and stores these sensory signals:

> The more frequently a certain pattern of neural activation occurs, the more indelible the internal representation.... Once sensitized, the same neural activation can be elicited by less intense external stimuli. In a very real sense, traumatized children exhibit profound sensitization of the neural response patterns associated with their traumatic experiences. The result is that full-blown response patterns (e.g. hyperarousal or dissociation) can be elicited by minor stressors. (ibid, p. 4)

How does repeated exposure to neglect, shame and trauma affect the self-regulation process? Marie Goulet, in her videotape *How Caring Relationships Support Self-Regulation* (1998) explains:

> Self-regulation is adapting and reacting to the demands of life, tolerating being alone for a reasonable amount of time, making friends, and sustaining motivation and interests in learning. Self-regulation consists of inborn and environmental processes. The brain and experience interact to produce the skills that are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and modifying emotions and behavior. Self-regulation can involve maintaining and enhancing emotional arousal as well as inhibiting and/or subduing it. Children can also increase or limit the range of responses. Self-regulation may include dampening or increasing the intensity of

> the emotion, slowing down or speeding up recovery, and limiting or persisting in the length of emotional response.
>
> Children use regulation to attend to, focus, and stay with tasks. Children regulate in order to tolerate high levels of their own emotional energy and the emotional vigor of others. Emotion regulation is the process of initiating, maintaining and changing the occurrence, intensity or duration of feelings. When children regulate their emotions and behavior, they are better able to adapt, cope, and achieve their goals. Children may regulate by managing stimulation and stress by processing and manipulating information, or by selecting a verbal or behavioral response. Individual differences exist in children's ability to regulate emotions and behavior. Biology and experience account for this difference: how children regulate is influenced by the circumstance, the people present, their goals at the time, their past experience, and their level of development. (Goulet, 1998)

Goulet points to research that shows a clear link between childhood trauma and a child's inability to engage in self-regulation. In contrast to nurturing parent-child relationships that promote healthy brain development, regulation skills, and resilience in later years, parent-child relationships characterized by neglect (or emotional unavailability of caregivers), shame, and abuse undermine brain development and the developmental process in general. Chronic stress undermines brain development because it contributes to an over production of the stress hormone, cortisol. Over-production of cortisol results in the destruction of neurons and the reduction of synapses which in turn affects a child's regulatory skills. This relationship between cortisol production, self-regulation, and a child's sense of control is clearly illustrated:

> Research shows how early relationships and cortisol production affect the child's regulatory skills. When the child receives sensitive care early in life, she is less likely to respond to minor stress with cortisol production. When stress does result in cortisol production, children nurtured in secure relationships can turn off the production of cortisol more quickly. Warm responsive relationships serve the child's development in the present and in the future. Secure relationships influence behavior, brain structure and resilience. We also know that an individual's sense of control affects brain activity. Perceived control reduces elevations of cortisol. Children who feel in control of stressful situations and who can generate strategies for coping show lower levels of the stress related hormone cortisol. When young children know that they can use self-soothing behaviors, their feeling of control and the ability to regulate are enhanced. Stress is reduced when children in responsive relationships know that they can make a difference.

Goulet even refers to the repeated use of shame (as a parental control strategy) and its impact on the brain's physiology and self-regulation:

> The experience of some emotions like shame results in neural hormonal changes that activate the inhibitory circuit and deactivate the excitatory circuit. When this happens repeatedly, the inhibitory circuit becomes stronger than the excitatory circuit and the child may lose the balance necessary to move easily from one system to another and to self regulate. Then the brain is prone to respond with inhibition; this accounts for some of the individual differences in children's ability to regulate emotion and behavior. The experience of shame does affect brain development through negative outcomes. When shame is used to teach and is over done, when the toddlers excited exploration is met with a shame inducing rebuke and followed by withdrawal of an angry caregiver, the toddler may learn that his excitement, his positive affect must be restrained. The repeated use of shame can result in increased development of the inhibitory circuit which can limit the child's flexible movement from high energy to low energy. This imbalance affects self-regulation and the child's feelings of security in the relationship. So it's important to realize shame will occur in the course of the toddler's life; however, it does not need to be used by caregivers as a control device.

Goulet (1998) concludes that chronic neglect, trauma, and shame in the early stages of a child's development, contribute to an overly-developed brain stem, thus undermining the capacity for self-regulation. An over-developed brain stem manifests itself in children in the form of anxiety, impulsivity, poor emotion regulation, and hyperactivity. An overly developed brain stem occurs at the expense of an under-developed fore brain which is associated with problem solving, the development of empathy, self-regulation, social skills, and learning.

Trauma and anxiety undermines the child's ability to self-regulate due to the physiological impact on the brain; however, these anxiety generating childhood experiences also undermine the emotional bonds that connect parent and child.

Summarizing the extensive research of Ainsworth and her colleagues (1971) in the field of attachment theory, Dr. John Bowlby, (1988) in his book *A Secure Base*, describes the principal forms of infant parent attachment by the age of 12 months and how they shape the

developing child. In the first pattern, secure attachment, the child is confident that his parent is emotionally available in case he experiences anxiety due to a frightening experience. Secure in his belief of the availability of his parent(s), he is, therefore, able to boldly explore his environment. Three and a half years later, these children (securely attached) were described by nursery staff as Acooperative, popular, resilient, and resourceful@. At 6 years, these same children are observed as having a relaxed and friendly relationship with their parents and capable of enjoying in free-flowing conversation with them. (Bowlby, 1988, pp.124-128) Children who fit the profile of the other patterns, however, exhibit behaviors that are in stark contrast to the securely attached child.

In the second pattern, anxious resistant attachment, because the child is uncertain about his parents emotional availability, Ahe is always prone to separation anxiety, tends to be clinging, and is anxious about exploring the world@. This pattern is promoted unconsciously by parents who threaten abandonment as a means of control. By the time they=re 3 2 years old, these types of children are described as Aunduly seeking of attention and as either tense, impulsive, and easily frustrated or else passive and helpless. At 6 years they Ashow a mixture of insecurity, including sadness and fear, and of intimacy alternating with hostility....anticipating a negative response from the parent, they try to ingratiate themselves by showing off, perhaps by being cute or especially charming." (ibid)

In the third pattern, anxious avoidant attachment, the child fully expects to be rebuffed by his parent if he seeks her out. By age 3 2, these children are described as Aemotionally insulated, hostile or antisocial and, paradoxically, as unduly seeking of attention. At age 6, having gotten used to a consistent pattern of an emotionally unavailable parent, these children Akeep their parents at a distance....engage in conversations that are impersonal,.... learn to keep

busy with other activities in their parent=s presence, and ignore or are dismissive of their parents= initiative@. (ibid)

In the final pattern described as disorganized or disoriented (a variation of pattern #3), infants are observed to engage in the following behavior patterns in the presence of their mothers: AOne infant appears dazed; another freezes immobile; a third engages in some stereotypy; a fourth starts a movement, then stops unaccountably@. Infants exhibiting such a pattern come from backgrounds reflecting severe abuse and neglect. By the age of 6, these children who at 12 months appear to be disorganized/ disoriented, are Aconspicuous for their tendency to control or dominate a parent....to treat the parent in a humiliating and/or rejecting way....to be solicitous and protective@. (ibid)

How persistent are these patterns in adult relationships? Bowlby cites studies that show personality characteristics associated with each pattern during childhood persisting into young adulthood.

The scientific research clearly demonstrates that early relational traumatic stress is Aimprinted in the right brain@ thus creating an Aenduring vulnerability to dysfunction - and a predisposition to post-traumatic stress disorders@. (Schore, 2002, p. 5)

What kind of adults do these children become?

Personality Characteristics of Adult Children of Residential School Survivors (or Adult Children of Trauma and Addiction)

For the majority of urban Indigenous families, the migration from a reserve lifestyle to an urban lifestyle is a journey fraught with difficulties. Wounded through the legacy of intergenerational trauma and addiction, many are uneducated, unskilled and reliant on welfare for basic needs. A common thread that links most of these families is a deep sense of shame at

the very core of their being; it is this deeply felt sense of shame, several generations in the making, that serves to reinforce their sense of isolation and an insatiable need to engage in self-medicating addictive behaviors as a means of coping with their intolerable inner pain, their soul wound. This "shame-bound" self explains why "Across Alberta, aboriginals make up 5.3 percent of the provincial population and 33 percent of the prison population (Purdy 2003, p. D8).

Our urban compatriots are our brothers and sisters. The majority are, in actuality, extensions of reserve-based families. The personality characteristics described in this chapter apply to both urban and reserve populations; we have a shared history of trauma. Our understanding of ourselves as adults with a history of trauma has been greatly enhanced by Dr. Tian Dayton (2000), a clinical psychologist with a childhood history of trauma. Her book, *Trauma and Addiction: Ending the Cycle of Pain through Emotional Literacy*, is an excellent resource for those who wish to explore this topic further. We rely on this book to convey to our readers the unique characteristics associated with adults who have experienced childhood trauma.

According to Dayton, the latest research in the field of trauma clearly demonstrates a link between addiction, chronic abuse and PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms as "addicts live secret debasing and humiliating lives, over which they carry great shame. And along with the addict, family members are dragged into emotional and psychological places of horror" (2000, p. 129). People subjected to chronic trauma, be they adults or children, undergo profound "personality changes that contribute to the generational nature of trauma and addiction-the endless cycle of parenting in ways that engender emotional and psychological pain" (p. 133). The author lists the following personality changes associated with PTSD:

Learned Helplessness
Depression
Disorganized Inner World
Cycles of Reenactment
Emotional Triggering
Loss of Trust and Faith
Loss of Ability to Take in Support
Emotional Numbness
High risk Behaviors
Development of Rigid Psychological Defenses
Desire to self-medicate
Anxiety
Emotional Constriction
Traumatic Bonding
Loss of Ability to Modulate Emotions
Distorted Reasoning
Hypervigilance
Fused Feelings
Loss of Spontaneity
Survival Guilt

Dayton identifies a total of twenty personality traits associated with trauma. We consider here ten of these twenty characteristics that have been the most evident in our adult student population.

Learned Helplessness

Children, who are sexually molested or brutally beaten by their parents or caregivers, cope with these horrendous psychological mutilations by emotionally shutting down or dissociating (mentally and emotionally leaving the body and going to another place). This is their way of defending themselves against people they depend on for their survival. Feeling powerless and faced with abuse inflicted by those who are supposed to protect and nurture them, they learn to give up. "This giving up can become learned helplessness in adulthood" (Dayton 2000, p. 134).

Anxiety

Children learn to engage in self-soothing behavior or self-regulation as a result of repeatedly being soothed by caregivers when they are distressed. However, the experience of being parented by addicts (addiction is a form of self-soothing behavior for the addict) undermines this developmental task in children. Thus as adults, their "inability to modulate their emotions and their fear of being emotionally triggered generate anxiety…adult children of

trauma can experience more than normal amounts of it that can also lead to panic disorders" (p. 135).

Emotional Constriction

In its most extreme form, adults with this trait are unable "to experience, name and share their emotions, or describe an emotional state with any detail". Deprived of their vitality, the language of their soul, these adults experience a deep sense of alienation from the world around them. The victims of Hiroshima "experienced a persistent state of numbness that was so powerful, it became a permanent part of their lives" (p. 138).

Traumatic Bonding

A relationship can be characterized as reflecting a traumatic bond when there is an imbalance of power in the relationship thus resulting in the isolation of the victim from other forms of support. Consequently, "such persons may not have solid working models for benign relationships. When they are treated with kindness, compassion and respect, they feel anxious and guilty; unlike those who have been well cared for, they have no working model to encompass such benign experience" (p. 140).

Traumatic bonding explains why sexually abusive adults are attracted to partners with sexual addiction issues. "The intensity of the bond pulls us toward those very experiences we found traumatic" (ibid).

Cycles of Reenactment

Typical examples of reenactment are abused children who, as adults, marry abusive spouses, or children reared in alcoholic family environments marrying alcoholic spouses. Besides the pull of the traumatic bond, other factors that contribute to the reenactment process are our attraction to the familiar ("we choose what we know, we do what we did"), and our

"unconscious attempt to finally get it right". According to Dayton (2000, p. 142), the unconscious is a potent force in making us "reenact the very circumstances that have repeatedly hurt us".

Loss of Ability to Modulate Emotions

Adult children of trauma are highly emotionally reactive beings. As spouses, when engaged in conflict, they tend to over-react by attacking aggressively, withdrawing, or shutting down. They are incapable of negotiating middle-ground solutions. This is because trauma victims are emotionally, psychologically and physiologically wired for intense overreactions. This explains why members of addiction focused families perennially feel as if "they are walking on eggshells" in the presence of the addict. They always live in fear of the explosion from without and within themselves (p. 142).

Distorted Thinking

This blame oriented distorted form of reasoning allows the adult to justify harmful behavior and make it seem acceptable to both perpetrator and victim. Dayton (2000, p. 145) shares with her readers the following examples of distorted thinking:

> "If my wife were nicer to me, I wouldn't drink"
> "Sexual liaisons that don't involve intercourse aren't sex".
> "Sex with prostitutes just relaxes me; I deserve it after a hard days work. No one knows, no one suffers. I keep myself happy, everybody's happy."

Hypervigilance

Trauma victims always seem to be awaiting the next disaster. They cannot allow themselves the luxury of enjoying the simple pleasures of life as they are haunted by feelings of fear and anxiety. As one of our students reminisced, "I remember in the middle of winter going to sleep with my winter boots tucked under my bed just in case my father came home in the middle of the night in one of his alcoholic rages ready to take out his anger on us". These are the

adults who “may have an exaggerated startle response flinching at loud noises, or startling awake when touched in the night” (p. 146

Loss of Ability to Take in Support

Given the family chaos, the emotional unavailability of caregivers, the highly emotionally charged family environment, the lack of predictability during their childhood years, and the lack of authentic human connections, trauma victims experience considerable difficulty taking in support from others. They have lost their trust and faith in relationships. It is not uncommon for Adult Children/Grandchildren of Residential School Survivors to “have lost one parent to addiction and the other to constant preoccupation with the addict’s behavior. They may have been forced to take responsibility for themselves or their siblings prematurely”. They lived in an environment where “One minute their parents were on duty taking care of their needs, giving love and discipline, the next minute they were left to wonder if their parents knew they were still alive”. Because of a chaotic, inconsistent, unpredictable, and anxiety evoking environment, these “children learn not to let anything feel too good, to mistrust support and to avoid making connections that could lead to further hurt and disappointment” (Dayton 2000, p. 147).

Depression

We have deliberately chosen this characteristic as last to be described and understood in the list of adult personality traits because of its widespread prevalence. Even in mainstream society, depression is referred to as “the common cold of psychiatry, depression leads more people to seek medical attention than even the flu” (Skog 1999, p. 20). Given its epidemic proportions in mainstream society, one can only imagine how much more widespread it is in Indigenous families, given the oppressive historical context.

For an understanding of the characteristics summarized above we rely entirely on Dayton's descriptions. For an understanding of the etiology of depression and its impact on children, we now turn to Middleton-Moz and Dwinell (1986, p. 56), clinicians and authors of *After the Tears: Reclaiming the Losses of Childhood*. Citing Bowlby (1980), the authors identify three factors in the family origin as contributing to depression proneness:

> The child has done his best in trying to win parental approval and affection, and nothing he does is good enough, leading to any subsequent loss being processed as just another failure.
>
> The child has been told repeatedly how unlovable, defective and inadequate he is. He sees all attachment figures as unavailable, punitive, rejecting, and fault-finding and in the face of adversity expects others to attack rather than be helpful.
>
> The child is more likely to have actually experienced the loss of a parent in childhood through circumstances over which he has no control, leaving him feeling impotent and powerless to affect any outcome through his own effort. (Middleton-Moz and Dwinell 1986, p. 56)

Replace "family origin" with "residential school" and it is quite obvious that all three factors are applicable to the residential school experience. The result of growing up in an environment lacking support, nurturance, and self validation is "the development of a youngster who is pseudomature, precocious, hyper-responsible, overly self-reliant, and totally out of touch with his own feelings and conflicts" (ibid).

These three factors are operant in the lives of the majority of Indigenous children and youth in both urban and reserve settings. A relevant question is "How are the lives of these depression-prone children affected?" The authors cite research contending that depression-prone children adopt one of the following three life positions:

> One life position has already alluded to, namely the youngster develops a pattern of placation and sets about a life course of being compliant and conforming to the perceived expectations of a Dominant Other. This usually follows a real or threatened disruption in the child's attachment bonds with that person, with his becoming willing to submit, work hard, and obey in exchange for conditional

> safety and security. Such a decision proves to be extraordinarily costly for the personality development. All of the individual's actions become predicated on the desire to win the love, applause, and approval of an authority figure, with the child becoming incapable of taking action based on his own wants and needs. He becomes like a tree which is bent more and more in one direction, achieving sometimes the status of special or favorite child in his family, but with a nagging underlying feeling that his value is as an object to repair his family's damaged self-esteem rather than as himself.
>
> The other two life positions are variations on this same theme. In the second one, the child unconsciously decides to eschew attempts to please significant attachment figures after trying and discovering that it simply doesn't work. Instead, he decides to pursue a Dominant Goal to the exclusion of affectional relationships with the unconscious belief that he will finally be worthy of parental love and approval when he has earned it by being rich enough, famous enough, esteemed enough.
>
> In the third position, the child in a sense "gives up" and opts for a lifetime of dependency on parents or parental substitutes. In exchange for the self, the individual expects safety, security and to be passively done for. Although all three life positions reflect a failure to emancipate from the family of origin, this life position is the most extreme and appears on first appraisal to be the most pathological until one looks behind the deceptively successful masks of the obedient and hard-striving adults of positions one and two. For each of these, "What had been lost is an environmental prop that allows the perpetuation of a needed state of self. The depressive does not appear to grieve for the other; rather, he grieves for himself-for being deprived of what the other had supplied. (Arieti and Bomporad 1978, pp. 24-28; 158 *quoted in* Middleton-Moz and Dwinell 1986, p. 56)

The afore-mentioned life positions certainly bear resemblance to the choices our youth exercise in their daily lives: the compulsive need to engage in abusive teen relationship patterns, teenage prostitution and addiction, and the attraction to gangs are all, indeed, variations of these life positions.

We have chosen to describe some of the more prevalent personality characteristics of Adult Children/Grandchildren of Residential School Survivors. The intent of this section is to convey to our readers the complex and terrifying world our children are expected to navigate, while also coping with the demands of surviving in school environments that are openly hostile

to their Indigenous identity. We conclude with a quotation that aptly summarizes the internal tensions our children bring into their school environments as a result of being raised by adults with PTSD personality characteristics:

> Stanley Greenspan, in his extensive research on child development (1999), speaks of growth-producing or growth-inhibiting environments. A growth-producing environment is one in which the parent is attuned to the child and the child can become attuned to the parent. It is one in which there is no great gap between what is said and what is done or between words and actions. Such environments, in which consistency and authenticity are the norm, allow children to internalize behavioral norms and routines that they can count on. This means that children's energy is freed up to meet the challenges and opportunities of their own lives. In the growth-inhibiting environment such as is found in an alcoholic family, the child's energy has to be devoted to developing strategies to ward off painful, confusing and inconsistent behavior. In such cases, children become internally preoccupied with bringing sense and order to external and internal chaos so that they can feel safe.(Dayton 2000, p. 95)

Let us now proceed to an exploration of the healing journey our families have to undergo so that seven generations hence, our children will be experiencing growth-producing environments. As our approach is holistic, we believe any approach to addressing the needs of urban Indigenous children and youth must, first and foremost, take into account the healing needs of the family unit. Healing our families will ensure a productive school-family partnership, which is our final goal.

Rediscovering the Sacred in Our Relationships: A Community-based Model that Addresses the Healing Needs of Indigenous Youth and Families

By now it is quite obvious that a holistic approach is a pre-requisite to addressing the needs of indigenous youth. This approach entails a family systems= perspective: social service agencies and educators, guided by the wisdom of indigenous Elders, will need to establish a community-based model that works with troubled youth and their families.

Given the collective experience of trauma (past and present), and the widespread prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorders symptoms in the indigenous population, the healing journey ahead is a rather complex process. While it appears that people can recover from traumatic events when they are given the time and resources to do so, it is also clear that Aboriginal people suffered "waves of trauma" so that they were never able to regroup their coping strategies. …one trauma is followed by another and one loss precipitates another loss. There was never enough time in between various traumas (colonialism, settlement, displacement, starvation, fur trade, economic disorganization, religious persecution, and eventually residential schools) to allow for the processing of traumatic memories still residing in their collective memory. With no access to resources to reformulate their culture and identity, the trauma became layered and accumulative, thus affecting successive generations. The primary goal of most trauma relating healing modalities is to "recover and integrate the past into the present (Wesley-Esquimaux, & Smolewski, 2004); this journey, therefore, involves a "recovery of awareness, a reawakening to the senses, a reowning of one's life experience, and a recovery of people's enhanced abilities to trust this experience. In a successful healing process, this will be coupled with the recovery of a social ability to create a cultural paradigm, to bring order out of what has been chaos" (ibid).

These principles guide the healing journey of people who participate in the community based healing model developed by Blue Quills First Nations' College. Recognizing that parents (Adult Children of Residential school Survivors) of shame-bound family systems resort to addiction as a dysfunctional approach to soothe their wounded souls (thus rendering them emotionally unavailable for their children), B.Q.F.N.C., with the help of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, has developed a community-based healing model that addresses the needs of these

adults. Central to this healing process is the belief that people heal best when they heal with each other. Through this Ahealing together@ process, lost, hurt, frightened, shamed people discover that relationships guided by the natural laws (humility, respect, kindness, honesty, strength, and compassion) are possible. Isolated, degraded, shamed, stigmatized, and dehumanized by their collective trauma, group members bear witness to each other=s pain and, in the process, reclaim their humanity.

Through a series of workshops, participants grieve a lifetime of accumulated and unacknowledged losses (eg. the loss of childhood innocence through sexual abuse), reclaim their cultural identity through the re-discovery of ceremony and spirituality, learn about the nature of healthy intimacy, practice conflict-resolution and healthier styles of communication, let go of their shame and guilt by exploring the historical context of their collective trauma (colonization, residential school, etc), reclaim their lost selves, and learn to implement the teachings of the Medicine Wheel in their daily lives.

The healing, transformative power of this group process has also been validated by Dr. Judith Herman, an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Director of Training at the Victims of Violence Program at Cambridge Hospital. Reflecting on her own experience as a facilitator of group therapy, Herman (1992:214) describes her observation of the transformative and empowering process of the group:

> Traumatic events destroy the sustaining bonds between individual and community. Those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others. The solidarity of a group provides the strongest protection against terror and despair, and the strongest antidote to traumatic experience. Trauma isolates; the group re-creates a sense of belonging. Trauma shames and stigmatizes; the groups bears witness and affirms. Trauma degrades the victim; the group exalts her. Trauma dehumanizes the victim; the group restores her humanity.

Herman uses the testimony of an incest survivor to corroborate her observations, “I’ve broken through the isolation which had plagued me all my life. I have a group of six women from whom I have no secrets. For the first time in my life I really belong to something. I feel accepted for what I really am, not my facade” (ibid, p. 215).

Hopefully we convey to our readers the nature of the process participants experience in our workshops, which are in a sense facilitated in the form of sharing circles. We will now turn our attention to a description of our healing workshop modules.

Family of Origin

Using the 3 - 4 generation family genogram as a primary resource, participants will gain a better awareness of their present level of family functioning and how this level of functioning is connected with the family history of both spouses. Areas that will be explored through the genogram data include the following: impact of loss on the family life cycle, patterns of functioning across generations (e.g. replication of the emotional atmosphere), anniversary reactions, parenting styles, relational patterns (e.g. triangles and fused relationships), gender roles and expectations, values and beliefs, and the nature of Indigenous kinship systems. Additionally, due to the trauma of the residential school experience spanning six generations, participants will gain insight into the nature of intergenerational trauma, the transmission process, the impact of trauma on child development, and the personality characteristics of adult survivors (characteristics that have been transmitted from one generation to the next).

Colonization/Decolonization

This is a workshop that will provide survivors and their descendants with information on residential school history (i.e. in our area, Blue Quills Residential School and the Roman Catholic Church), and the Federal government’s role in the following areas:

Collective and individual experiences
Effects of colonization (stereotypes, racism, inferiorities)
Language and culture
Family, community, economics
Relationship to addictive processes
Dehumanization
Social problems (psychic numbing, voicelessness)
Decolonization (giving voice, dialogue, empowerment, debriefing tools)
Re-claiming spiritual, cultural, political, social and economic control

Communication

This course requires participants to examine their own style of communication and distinguish between healthy and unhealthy styles of interaction. A strong emphasis is placed on practicing and mastering alternative approaches to communication that promote a supportive relationship environment as opposed to a judgmental and critical relationship environment. Other areas covered include constructive conflict resolution, the healthy expression of anger, and the process of reconstructing boundaries in relationships.

Cultural Camp

The cultural camp module will help participants to embrace what they lost as children when they were stripped of the traditional extended family lifestyle. Participants will reconnect to the land spirituality and physically. They will experience fishing, hunting, food preparation, crafts, storytelling, teaching circles, sweetgrass, sweat ceremonies and pipe ceremonies as healing ways. Indigenous scientific knowledge and teachings and astronomy lessons will also be incorporated.

Aboriginal Parenting/Enhancing Family Self-Esteem

Drawing heavily on teachings derived from traditional native parenting and contemporary literature on child guidance, this workshop is designed to teach parents a proactive problem solving process to the task of raising children. Areas that will be covered include learning about

and participating in traditional coming of age ceremonies such as rites of passage, reclaiming our traditional approach to parenting such as storytelling to teach values, learning and practicing age appropriate child guidance strategies, and learning and applying supportive communication skills in day-to-day family interactions.

Healing through Loss (8 to 10 participants)

This workshop is designed for adults who have experienced a traumatic childhood such as an alcoholic family environment. These adults have lost their childhood due to the "perpetual state of crisis" they experienced as children in an alcoholic family environment. With the help of traditional healing rituals, sacred songs, and a nurturing environment, survivors journey into the realm of their past, revisit their childhood memories of trauma (emotional, physical, sexual, etc.) and give voice to their painful legacy of shame and trauma. Through the discovery of their own voice, as well as a common voice, participants move from a state of isolation (brought about through self-shame) to a feeling of connection to others and a sense of belonging, and in doing so rediscover their humanity.

Reparenting the Self (8 to 10 participants)

Participants are expected to have completed the "Healing through Loss" workshop before they participate in this workshop. In the first half of the workshop, through the use of guided imagery, participants revisit their "hurt child" and are guided through the experience of nurturing this hurt child. Additionally, they also re-experience feelings associated with a particular childhood memories such as being scolded or beaten by a parental figure. The guided imagery allows for participants to reach out and comfort this "hurt child." The second half of the workshop provides participants with tools to help them engage in the reparenting process in their day-to-day interactions. Participants will be expected to utilize these tools immediately and

share their experience with each other. As participants learn to reparent the self "mainly through the process of nurturing their "hurt child," they will learn to connect as parents to their own children on a more meaningful level. Having learnt to hear, accept and love their "inner child," they will in turn learn to hear, accept and love their own children.

Couple Intimacy (8 to 10 participants)

All couples participating in this workshop are expected to have completed the workshops "Healing through Loss" and "Reparenting the Self." Through the medium of drawing, writing, and collages, couples explore the mental, spiritual, sexual and emotional dimensions of their relationships. In a safe and supportive environment, couples are encouraged to share the pain of their journey and let go of the past, while celebrating the joy that has kept them together despite their pain. Additionally, through role play, couples will learn to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy relationship patterns, learn to handle disagreements constructively rather than destructively, and learn the process of rebuilding healthy boundaries in their relationship with each other and their extended family. As participants explore the different dimensions of their relationships, they will gain a deeper appreciation of the true nature of healthy intimacy: intimacy that allows people to come together and meet their needs spiritually, emotionally, mentally and sexually without sacrificing the self in the relationship.

Community Wellness Leadership and Facilitation

This workshop will help participants learn leadership skills for facilitating wellness workshops. Participants learn how to help others choose wellness, how to organize community wellness activities, learn how to fund-raise, and prepare promotions and participate in public relation campaigns.

Choosing Healthy Lifestyles

Using the wholistic model of the medicine circle (including the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical elements) this workshop will engage the participants in learning about traditional medicine, nutrition, wholistic therapies including aromatherapy, message, reflexology, guided imagery, and meditation. Participants will learn about the importance of physical exercise/activity in the development of self-care plans. Choices and consequences with reference to physical health, diabetes, heart disease, smoking, and weight will be examined with the intent of teaching health restoration.

Celebrating Our Selves

In this workshop participants celebrate wholeness, utilizing healing ceremonies, and other ways of caring for self including: the medicine wheel of wholistic self care, the arts (learning about your creative self), filling the soul with beautiful things, inner child play, team building, being human, learning to laugh and play. In these activities participants will engage in physical play, role-play, drama, arts and crafts, etc.

Looking at the Wellness Wheel - Focusing on Physical Wellness

Taking a closer look at the composition and function of the physical body can bring about remarkable changes in the way we live. This module exposes five components of physical wellness: cardio respiratory endurance, joint flexibility, muscular endurance, muscular strength and body composition. You will learn about the health status of your body, how much energy your body uses in a day, the amounts of physical activity recommended for physical health, and the skills and insight into why we read food labels. This module also explores the active living lifestyles of our ancestors, and how we incorporated physical wellness into daily living.

“Wholeness” As a Guiding Principle

We end this section by discussing the philosophy underlying our use of these workshops as a therapeutic tool to promote healing, an approach that is radically different from the mainstream individualized psychotherapeutic model.

Given our collective traumatized and shame-bound identity (as discussed in the earlier segments of this chapter), we believe that a therapeutic approach grounded in the teachings of the Medicine Wheel is indispensable to our collective healing journey. The use of traditional teachings, related to our culture, spirituality, and Indigenous identity, as therapeutic tools in the prevention of substance abuse has an established history among the Nez Perce. Dr. Elizabeth Harris assesses culture as a preventive measure and a protective factor among Indigenous people:

> Prevention programming among the Nez Perce for the past decade had included Acultural therapy @, culturally specific activities designed to revive the traditional Nez Perce way of life and the concomitant protective factors once ingrained into their culture. By focusing on building connections to the community cultural therapy works toward reducing social isolation and developing a sense of empowerment within women. The provision of culturally relevant activities is theorized to nurture participants through promoting social bonding, interdependence, social competence and problem-solving skills. Open to tribal members in general and aimed specifically at program participants, cultural therapy activities are organized by prevention staff. Nez Perce prevention programming for the past decade has always sought to involve the community at large (adults and youth) in all cultural activities in order to foster a sense of interconnectedness among case managed clients and further promote a non-use norm among tribal members.
>
> Cultural therapy has at its core enhancement of the total person by building upon the unique identity of clients and their family members as Native Americans. In keeping with the Medicine Wheel, the physical side is nurturing by laboring to collect or create in a traditional manner; the emotional aspect is nourished through developing friendships with others and connections to the community. The intellectual needs of clients is expanded through learning about traditions and customs, and the spiritual side is stimulated by connecting with nature and reciting prayers related to various customs and giving thanks. The Nez Perce have a rich cultural legacy which Nez Perce Futures (funded through the initial CSAP grant in the early 1990's) was instrumental in reviving. Providing cultural therapy to the community encouraged tribal healing as a whole, along with family

> healing. As the Nez Perce strongly believe, the individual cannot be healed unless the family itself is healed. (Harris 2000, p. 8)

Blue Quills' workshops are designed with one singular purpose in mind, namely to disrupt the transmission of trauma and shame to the next generation, our children and youth of today. As such, through utilizing the teachings of the Medicine Wheel as our guiding principle, the workshops are designed to address the emotional, spiritual, mental and physical dimensions of the self. The emotional self is released from its traumatized and shame-bound identity through a process of reconnecting or moving from a sense of isolation to a sense of community. The mental self learns to engage in self-focus and self-change by mastering new skills (communication, parenting, etc.) and acquiring knowledge that promotes an understanding of self in the context of colonization. The physical self learns to nourish the body through exercise, proper nutrition and traditional medicines. And the spiritual self, connecting with its wounded soul through participation in traditional healing ceremonies, can finally begin the journey of self-discovery, a journey long overdue because of being held hostage to generations of trauma, shame and unresolved grief. Assuming that these workshops will be utilized as a resource (or any other community based healing model), the following issues need to be addressed:

- The training of Caregivers (Social Workers, Counsellors, Community Wellness Workers, and Family Liaison Workers) in the delivery of these modules

At present, Blue Quills First Nations College is the only College that trains Social Workers who experience this healing journey as part of their professional development.

- The creation of parent support groups comprised of eight to ten participants

Each cohort group will come together as a result of participating in the workshops described earlier. Based on our experience, given the emotional intensity of some of the workshops, we limit each group to a maximum of eight to ten participants. These groups are

facilitated by at least three trained caregivers, one of whom must be an Elder who has worked on his/her healing journey.

- Family Healing as an integral part of the Wellness Journey

This is the most important phase of the healing journey and to facilitate this process, we propose to adopt the Hollow Water healing model as described by Rupert Ross (1996) in his book, *Returning to the Teachings***.** For this model to work, participants will need to be reassured that any disclosure of abuse will not result in their prosecution for committing a crime. Rather than being prosecuted, they will, however, be expected to engage in a process of restitution, reconciliation and forgiveness involving all family members. For this process to come to fruition, it is quite obvious that all agencies including Child Protection Workers, Police, Crown Attorney and Judges, and Mental Health Workers, will have to work toward the development of a collaborative partnership that serves the interests of victims and their families, and other community members affected by the abuse.

- Literacy/Life Skills/Job Skills Training

Once these cohort groups have completed all the workshops, they will be better equipped to undergo a job skills (combined with life skills) training program that will prepare them for a career or trade that reflects the gifts given to them by our Creator. Bear in mind some participants may have to enroll in Literacy classes as well. For this phase of their journey, two cohort groups of parents can join together for a maximum class size of twenty; however, each cohort group will continue to meet weekly as a support group for each other.

We conclude this segment of the chapter with a quotation which epitomizes the healing journey our employees and students (who are mainly parents) undergo as part of their lifelong commitment to learning and healing:

> The antidote to traumatic stress, whether it experienced at the individual or the community level is to take control–strengthen social supports, talk with each other about the pain, enlist the elders, take action and most importantly take control over one's own health, the nervous system and thus behavior. This requires distinguishing between medicines that heal and those that just kill pain. Most important are the healing traditions and celebratory rituals that served our ancestors. These rituals may still initiate young ones into knowledge of the unseen world, where to remain in control of the rivers of one's own nerve guides whole communities to safety. (Korn 1997, p. 5)

Let us now turn our attention to the final section of this chapter, which describes the various models of successful school-family-community partnerships.

How Schools Can Contribute to the Rediscovery of the Sacred in Our Relationships: Connecting Schools and Families

We hope our readers have gained a better understanding of the unique needs of Indigenous families due to the legacy of colonization and the residential schools. We hope our readers have grasped the true meaning of this tragic reality, namely the transmission of trauma, shame, and unresolved grief over many generations due mainly to the denial of the reality of genocidal policies and their impact on Indigenous families. Finally, we hope our readers recognize the need for a holistic approach when addressing the problems urban Indigenous children and youth present within the school system.

This final segment, which explores the collaborative partnerships involving schools, families and communities has two parts: *part one* promotes an awareness of cognitive imperialism in our schools and the implications for change; *part two* examines the various collaborative partnerships as models to choose from if we wish to maximize the success potential of urban Indigenous children and youth.

Public School Education and Cognitive Imperialism

"What does God look like?" asked Chickasaw poet and novelist Linda Hogan, and she answered, "These fish, this water, this land." (*quoted in* Henderson and Ayukpachi 2000, p 254). In stark contrast to this view of the Divine, is the Judaeo-Christian view of God as a human image; hence God said "Let us make man in our image and likeness..." (Genesis 1:27).

Our understanding of the divine was (until recently) replaced by the Judaeo-Christian view of the divine. This is the essence of cognitive imperialism: "The imposition of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview" (Battiste 2000, p. 193). Because of cognitive imperialism, the Canadian residential educational system, instead of transmitting culture, values and mores to Indigenous children and youth, ended up transmitting shame, trauma, and unresolved grief. In her paper, "Mainstream Aboriginal Identity, Language and Culture in Modern Society", Marie Battiste (2000) describes this egregious form of control:

> Cognitive imperialism is a form of cognitive manipulation used to disclaim other knowledge bases and values. Validated through one's knowledge base and empowered through public education, it has been the means by which whole groups of people have been denied existence and have had their wealth confiscated. Cognitive imperialism denies people their language and cultural integrity by maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference. (p. 198)

Given the pervasiveness of cognitive imperialism in every aspect of our lives, it is not unreasonable to expect the Canadian educational system to engage urban Indigenous families as equal partners in the process of educating urban Indigenous youth. What we are asking of Canadian educators is nothing less than a paradigm shift of seismic proportions: one that requires mainstream educators to look to decolonized Indigenous educators and elders for guidance in the development of the partnership that we envision. We have a different worldview, and it is

reflected even in our approach to teaching our students at B.Q.F.N.C. "Teaching is really about finding face, finding heart, finding foundation, and doing that in the context of family, of community, of relationships with a whole environment" (Cajete 2000, p. 188). The implications of this worldview in the training of teachers who daily interact with Indigenous children/youth are too profound to discuss in this chapter, and indeed, is worthy of further exploration, especially as it pertains to the present B.Ed programs. Given our profoundly different worldview, and an educational establishment that systemically devalued this worldview, we propose a partnership equal to that granted the French immigrants who inhabit our land today. As Battiste (2000) asserts:

> Aboriginal communities should be encouraged to assume full control of their education with adequate resources and funding to create an educational system that will develop Aboriginal consciousness through the development of Aboriginal language, culture, and identity. Where Aboriginal communities have instituted language policies in education systems, these policies should be recognized and acknowledgment by the federal government, and financial resources should be available to develop these policies and link these systems to other agencies and services that permit the development of languages.

With this unequivocal understanding of the partnership we envision, we can now examine the community-school partnerships that have the potential to fulfill this vision.

Community-School Partnerships

In this final segment of the chapter we present an overview of seven proven partnership models that we believe would serve the needs of urban Indigenous youth and their families. For the benefit of those readers who wish to review other models, you may access this information through the evaluation of community schools conducted by Dryfoos (2000) at http://www.communityschools.org/evaluation/evaluation.html

Let us start by first presenting a vision of community schools borrowed from the U.S based Coalition for Community Schools:

> A community school, operated in a public school building, is open to students, families and the community before, during, and after school, seven days a week, all year long. It is jointly operated through a partnership between the school system and one or more community agencies. Families, youth, principals, teachers and neighborhood residents help design and implement activities that promote high educational achievement and positive youth development.
>
> The school is oriented toward the community, encouraging student learning through community service and service learning. A before and after-school learning component encourages students to build on their classroom experiences, expand their horizons, contribute to their communities, and have fun. A family support center helps families with child rearing, employment, housing, immigration, and other services. Medical, dental, and mental health services are readily available. College faculty and students, business people, youth workers, neighbors and family members come to support and bolster what schools are working hard to accomplish – ensuring young people's academic, interpersonal, and career success.
>
> Ideally, a full-time community school coordinator works in partnership with the principal. This person is responsible for the delivery of an array of supports provided by local agency partners and participates on the management team for the school. Over time, most communities schools consciously integrate activities in several areas to achieve the desired results: quality education; positive youth development; family support; family and community engagement in decision-making; and community development. (Dryfoos 2000, p. 2).

This vision certainly reflects our vision of the ideal community school. We now present the models that fit this vision: Joe Duquette High School; the Hi Pass model; School of the 21st Century; the Comer style School Development Program; the COZI model which combines the Comer and school of the 21st century models; California Healthy Start; and the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program.

Joe Duquette High School

All of the information pertaining to this school is derived from *Making The Spirit Dance: Joe Duquette High School and an Aboriginal Community* (Haig-Brown et al 1997). This Indigenous urban high school based in Saskatoon is our model of an autonomous Indigenous school under the umbrella of the Catholic School Board. The autonomy is reflected in the role of the Parent Council, made up of 15 Indigenous adults drawn from an urban

Indigenous community defined "not by a common culture, land base, or language but rather by the common experience of being Aboriginal people living in this city and by a commitment to identifying as Aboriginal" (p. 152).

The Parent Council plays a central role in the development of the school's programs as its members are the "Keepers of the vision" entrusted with making and implementing decisions related to policy issues. At the very core of the school's policy is the emphasis on the cultural dimension of education with Indigenous spirituality as a guiding principle. Other duties the Parent Council is entrusted with include the planning of activities which reinforce Indigenous culture and identity; the selection of Elders, community resource personnel, teachers and administrators; and approval of any program changes (p. 153).

The relationship between the Parent Council and the school's principal certainly reflects and confirms the autonomous status of these "Keepers of the vision" as reflected in this statement by one of the Council members:

> I think he actually does whatever the Council suggests. Also he goes after information. He'll come to us and say here is some more information which I have learned. Look at it, digest it, ask some questions, talk about it and make a decision… I don't think he is in the position to actually make decisions for the school. I think he would ask us first and then get our direction. (p. 154)

This view of an autonomous council under the umbrella administration of the Catholic School Board is confirmed by the Catholic Schools' Superintendent:

> The parent Council has input a great deal of input, in selection of staff, their part in the interview process for staff. They have a great deal of input in the day to day operation of the school and also in determining programs for the school… And cooperatively with the Parent Council and ourselves (the Catholic Board) we've been able to make changes at the school, make additions to the school, modifications of the school over the twelve or fourteen years it's operated. That has made it into quite a successful school. (Haig-Brown et al 1997, p 154)

In addition to its autonomous nature, other factors that distinguish this parent council from mainstream parent support groups include the following:

- Investing time in the school through activities that reflect their expertise (e.g. teaching traditional crafts).
- Starting every monthly meeting with prayers and the sharing of food as part of the process of re-establishing contact with one another.
- Inviting interested community members to attend their meetings and networking with Indigenous urban agencies/organizations.
- Identifying and reaching out to funding sources that reflect their ethics.
- Having elders actively involved as decision makers.
- Ensuring that Indigenous beliefs play a central role in the education of students. This approach ensures the school has a "nurturing effect on students, like a mother teaching her children to do well, to try to live right by each other, and probably I think they teach by the Creator because they have ceremonies and sweetgrass and they have healing circles" (Board member's comments *in* ibid, p. 166).
- Finally and most importantly is the redefining of "success" as students find out where "they sit with the Creator" (Council member's comments *in* ibid, p. 168).

It is this final quality, this concept of a successful student, that separates Joe Duquette from the rest of mainstream schools: "For each and every student to be able to say in her or his heart, 'I am on my red road to success' would provide the affirmation of Aboriginal spirituality, culture and education that the people in the school call success" (p. 168).

The HiPass Model

Unlike the community-school partnership models developed at the university level, the Hi Pass model was developed at the local community level by principals and teachers who shared an ethnic background (African-American, Mexican-American) similar to the families of their students, most of whom were considered low socioeconomic-status (SES) students. According to James Scheurich's (1998), study "Highly Successful and Loving, Public Elementary Schools Populated Mainly by Low SES Children of Color", the HiPass model was developed by the principals and staff of these schools because of "their deep love for their children and their passionate commitment to make a difference for these children". The results of this "love" and "passion" are astounding given the low SES background of these students and the grassroots origins of this model: "these students do exceptionally well in state-based high stakes tests thus placing them in direct academic competition with what are considered the better Anglo-dominant schools in the state" (Scheurich 1998, p 452).

In researching the reasons for the remarkable success of low SES students enrolled in the HiPass models, Scheurich writes of five interrelated core beliefs (as identified by the principals) that are "the absolutely necessary foundation for achieving high academic success with low-SES students of color". It is these core beliefs that make HiPass schools "superior to academically high performing Anglo schools" (p. 460). Let us now take the time to examine a summarized version of these core beliefs.

Core Belief 1: All children can succeed at high academic levels – no exceptions allowed.

This belief that all children are capable of performing highly successfully is based on the revolutionary assumption that the "natural condition of all children is high performance and that this high performance is not based on pushing children but on providing loving, facilitating

conditions that deliver learning in a way that fits, supports, engages, and energizes the child." The author adds that the educators in these schools are "fiercely" committed to ensuring that all their students achieve high levels of success. They personally "assume responsibility for ensuring that their students achieve that excellence" (p. 461).

Core Belief 2: Child or learner-centered schools

Every aspect of schooling is adapted to ensure that every student succeeds at a high level. Put into practice this belief means that the "pedagogy, the curriculum, the organization of the school itself, the conduct of students and staff, parental involvement, and staff development are driven by whatever it takes to achieve high levels of academic success and a positive healthy environment for all students" (p. 462).

Core Belief 3: All children must be treated with love, appreciation, care, and respect - -no exceptions allowed.

All of the staff agrees this belief is "the most powerful factor in the success of these schools". As one principal stated, "We must truly love all of our children; all our students need to know they are loved by us, and we need to constantly communicate this to our children" (p. 462). Another principal admitted that the most important quality she looks for when interviewing new staff is the ability to bond with the rest of the family. Without this quality, regardless of the excellence of their credentials, they would not be able to contribute to the success of the school (p. 471). HiPass personnel act like parent surrogates thus contributing to a nurturing family like environment in the schools. Scheurich attributes this sense of family to the collective historical experience of oppression shared by these minority groups. Thus "the plight of the children is their plight, the needs of the children are their needs, and the successes of the children are their successes". As most of the staff admitted, "they constantly see themselves in

their children". Scheurich (1998, p. 463) concludes that this "lovingness" is rooted in a "specific historical crucible of experiences."

Core Belief 4: The racial culture, including the first language, of the child is always highly valued -- no exceptions allowed.

This belief shapes the approach to teaching. As such teachers strive to incorporate the "home culture" of their students in a substantive manner. This recognition and celebration of the "social, linguistic, and cultural heritage help in the development of a positive self-concept and ethnic identity" (p. 464).

Core Belief 5: The school exists for and serves the community -- there is little separation.

The traditional separation of school and community is non-existent in the HiPass model. The community and the school merge into a "community of commitment". As such "these schools experience themselves as being in union with the community - the community's needs and dreams are their needs and dreams, and vice versa".

This merger of school and community is visibly manifested in the following ways: parents and teachers work alongside each other in every class; staff-parent meetings occur in the community; teachers ride the school bus (first day of school) and at each bus stop, take the time to greet the parents; and finally schools are transformed into community centers and offer non-school related activities (p. 466). Commenting on this relationship of the "school in the community" one principal stated "that the school's commitment to the well-being of its community was its first and primary commitment, taking precedence, if necessary, even over its academic commitments to the children. Commenting on the nature of the relationship between the staff and the parents, Scheurich (1998, p. 467) concludes that "these schools have developed

the six qualities that Raywid (1993) contends are key features of building community: respect, caring, inclusiveness, trust, empowerment, and commitment."

Implications of the HiPass model

What are the implications of the HiPass model schools, "living examples of organizations that are both loving and high-performing?" The author identifies two implications for mainstream education. First, the high degree of success enjoyed by HiPass schools, designed specifically to address the needs of low-SES students and their families, challenges the assumption that the ethnic/cultural background of low-SES students does not adequately prepare them for the challenges that await them in mainstream education. Because the traditional mainstream model of schooling does not work for low-SES minority students, it is therefore unethical for educators to impose an unworkable model on this group (p. 476).

The second implication is that the HiPass model, "a living reality" offers a better approach to educating all children. In comparing the HiPass model to the dominant Anglo model, Scheurich (1998) points to the following differences:

> This model is also better, in my opinion, than high-performing, traditional, Anglo-dominant schools. Although high scoring, they are tracked and stratified; they do not serve all of their children equally well and they certainly do not believe that all children can succeed at the highest levels. They do not highly respect the racial culture and the first language of the child unless that culture is the Anglo culture and that language is the English language, and they are not deeply loving, caring places in which to work or school. Finally, the HiPass model is better because it does not, like most schooling, reproduce academic differences by race, class, or gender. In these successful schools, children of color do not perform more poorly on average than Anglo children, low-SES children do not perform more poorly on average than middle-class children, and girls do not perform poorly on average than boys. Instead, these schools are passionately committed to high academic success for literally all children, and they fulfill that commitment. It is ironic, indeed, that a better way of schooling has emerged from low-SES schools and communities of color. (p. 447)

Having presented our readers with an overview of an autonomous Indigenous community-school partnership and the Hi Pass model developed by Afro-American and Mexican-American principals and staff teaching in schools attended mainly by low socio-economic-status (SES) students of color, we will now proceed with a presentation of U.S based community-school partnerships that have had a significant impact on the quality of life of low income families and their children. What follows are findings to date of evaluations of these programs and brief descriptions of each of the programs.

School of the 21st Century

The School of the 21st century (21C), a creation of Edward Zigler of the Bush Center for Child Development, Yale University, is a model for school-based child care and family support services to promote the development of children aged 0-12. Core components include preschool child care, before, after-school and vacation care for school age children, information and referral services for families, training of child care providers, and guidance and support for new parents. This model has been implemented in more than 500 schools in 17 states since 1988. Connecticut and Kentucky have statewide initiatives to open Family Resource Centers in schools. Programs differ in schools; in some communities, 21C acts as the umbrella for coalitions of family support services, adult education, youth development and social services.

Many evaluations have been undertaken over the years. According to the Bush Center, many benefits have been documented. Children in a 21C school who participated for at least three years had higher scores in math and reading than in a control non-21C school. Children who participated by age three started kindergarten ready to learn. Parents who received 21C services were able to improve their child development practices, were less stressed, spent less money on child care, and missed fewer days of work. Parents gave 21C schools high marks for

academic focus, caring, and collaborative decision making. Principals in 21C schools reported less vandalism, increased parental involvement, better teaching practices, and improved public relations with the community because of expanded services offered in school. *Contact*: Jennifer McGrady Health, 203 432 9943

The School Development Program (Comer model)

The School Development Program (SDP), created by James Comer, Yale Child Study Center, and tested in the New Haven Schools in the early 1980s, mobilizes the whole "village" to help children grow. Specifically, SDP attempts to transfer mental health approaches to schools where "change agents" must be created by strengthening and redefining the relationships between principals, teachers support staff, parents, and students. The formation of 3 teams is basic to the Social Development Program:

- School Planning and Management Team

Parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students develop a comprehensive plan and coordinate all school activities.

- Mental Health Team

School psychologists and other support personnel integrate and provide direct services to children, advice to school staff and parents, and access resources in community.

- Parent Participation Team

Parents are hired to work in each classroom on a part-time basis and volunteer as teacher aides, librarians, run newsletters, and organize social activities.

A number of evaluations have been conducted. A summary of earlier studies conducted by both Comer and outside evaluators showed increases in student achievement in SDP schools compared to similar schools, higher averages in math and better grades in reading and math. All

of these schools observed to have full implementation of the model, with access to a well-trained facilitator. A recent study of SDP in 10 cites, conducted by the Yale Child Study Center, showed that SDP had a positive impact on student behavior and achievement, especially at grades 3, 4, and 5. An intensive study of the implementations of the Cormer model in six elementary schools in Hatford, Connecticut was less encouraging. Researchers Neufield and LaBue concluded that the process had not been adequately implemented. The SDP has made little difference to children in any of the schools and was unlikely to move forward in ways that might significantly benefit children without considerable restructuring of the effort at the central office, the schools, and between central office and the schools. James Comer and colleagues believe that the success of the SDP depends on a full-time program facilitator designated by the school superintendent to work in the district, one school at a time.

Contact: 203-737-1020

COZI (Comer-Zigler)

Combining 21C schools with the Comer model resulted in the CoZi model, now being developed in pilot communities. The merger of the two programs produces a focus on school-based, collaborative decision-making, parent and child outreach, universal access to quality child care, and parent involvement and literacy training. The parents as Teachers approach to home visiting is incorporated in this approach, along with a health clinic and referral services.

Evaluations were conducted over the period 1996-1999 at the pilot site in Norfolk, Virginia, using surveys, interviews, and school records to compare the Bowling Park Elementary School with Oakwood, a comparison site with a slightly more advantaged population. The effort was somewhat hampered by small, nonrandom samples, and low response rates. Nevertheless, researchers found that the COZi initiative was positively associated with higher levels of

academic achievement. Very young children at the intervention school in preschool and kindergarten, scored 9-15 points higher on picture-vocabulary tests than at the control school. For 3rd and 4th graders, the impact on basic skills was also significant. Bowling Park School outscored all schools in the school district with similar populations over the same three-year period.

Teachers reported a greatly improved school climate on such measures as decision-making, leadership, and staff dedication to student learning. The parents saw an improvement in caring and sensitivity, academic focus, and reported much higher levels of participation

Further analysis of these results associated higher implementation of COZi with improved school climate and innovative teacher communication strategies with parents, suggesting that COZi has a strong impact on teachers' actions. For parents, those who had participated in the Parents as Teachers programs were more likely to engage in interactive behaviors with their children and more likely to participate in the classroom and the school.
Contact: Matia Finn-Stevenson, 203-432-9944

California, Healthy Start

Beginning in 1991, Healthy Start grants were provided by the State Department of Education to local school systems and their collaborative partners to integrate child and family services. Grants are awarded to schools and their collaborative partners to create more child and family centered services systems, at or near school sites. The initiative is built around the premise that educational success, physical health, emotional support, and family strength are inseparable goals. A special emphasis is placed on improved school performance.

An early evaluation by SRI showed that student behavior, performance, and school climate improved in Healthy Start Schools. Families' unmet needs for basic goods and services

were reduced by half, and children and families gained access to a broad array of services. Currently, there are about 400 grantees with almost 1,200 school sites. All grantees are required to submit an annual report of school wide data for each school as well as information on core clients. A recent evaluation (1997) based on 138 grantees showed the following:

- Test scores for schools in the lowest quartile improved substantially with reading scores for the lowest performing elementary schools increasing by 25% and math scores by 50%. Middle and high school students who were most in need improved their grade point averages by almost 50%.
- Students' health issues, especially preventive care, are being addressed where they previously ignored.
- Families reported improvement in filling basic needs such as housing, food and clothing, transportation, finances and employment.
- Students receiving Health Start services decreased their drug use.
- Family violence was decreased.

Healthy Start's report features a number of statements from providers. John Nelson, the principal of Vista Square Elementary School, Chula Vista, CA reported his school's approach to student monitoring:

> We look at each and every child, every quarter, to find out their academic progress, their behavior progress, their social needs, and their emotional needs. . . we have meetings with each of the classroom teachers to discuss each and every child, we develop plans for those children identified at-risk. Those plans become the accountability for the staff to insure that we make referrals either to the Center …homework center, nurse contacts, Student Study Team contacts or to counseling. Then we follow up and monitor on a quarterly basis, so the individual plan becomes almost like a hospital chart for monitoring the progress of a patient. This…insures we are matching services to their needs. We are a low-income and a very high English-limited school… (yet) three of the four grades tested at grade level…Healthy Start is a major component in student achievement. (*quoted in* Dryfoos 2000)

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John Malloy, California Department of Education, 916-654-6446

New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program

The New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), developed by the New Jersey Department of Human Resources in 1987, was the first major state program that gave grants to community agencies to link education and human services, health, and employment systems. The "one-stop" program has been initiated by schools and community agency partners in 30 school districts (at least one in each county) and is about to be expanded to more. Each site offers a range of services including crisis intervention, counseling, health services, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, employment services, summer job development, and recreation. Some offer day care, teen parenting, vocational services, family planning, transportation, and hot lines.

In 1995, with support from the Annie Casey Foundation, the Academy for Educational Development began to conduct an evaluation of the state policy context of the program and of outcomes in six sites. The research found that School Based staff participated in many school teams and committees, help with school events, conduct classes on high risk behaviors, advocate for special groups, and provide considerable counseling. Students in the six study sites were at very high risk for negative outcomes. SBYSP was successful at reaching those students at the highest risk. Statistically significant levels of positive change were observed in the following outcomes: smoking and drinking, and property damage. Educational benefits were less strong than psycho-social effects, suggesting that educational problems may need to be addressed more intensively by the schools.

Students appeared to "check out" the School Based staff prior to confiding in them. As one girl said "It's a lot easier to talk to the School Based people than to teachers because teachers

gossip." SBYSP staff has built collaborative relationships that go beyond individual relationships to take on school wide issues such as tension between different ethnic groups and conflict between school cliques.

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Summary of the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Community based programs

All of the programs described are intended to improve youth educational outcomes, youth social behaviour, school attendance, family functioning and parental involvement, school and community climate, and access to support services. Outcomes in all these identified areas were evaluated as reflected in the following summarized data:

- Learning and Achievement

Measurable gains in math and reading test scores were observed over a period of 2-3 years. This was especially so with students who received services such as case management, intensive mental health support, or extended day sessions.

- Attendance

Students with a record of higher truancy rates prior to the conversion to community schools improved their attendance significantly additionally the suspension rate of students plummeted dramatically.

- Social Behavior

Improvements in social behavior were quite noticeable as reflected in decreased rates of substance abuse, teen pregnancy and disruptive classroom behavior.

- Family Functioning and Parental Involvement

Generally speaking, programs with intensive family intervention programs reported considerably more parental involvement as reflected in the increased amount of volunteer hours.

The best example is a Missouri based program where volunteer hours increased from 43 in 1996 to 2008 in 1998.

These family intervention programs also improved family functioning in tangible ways such as improved parenting skills, less family stress, and improvement in filling basic needs such as housing, food, etc.

- Community Life

Access to child care improved significantly along with improved health services. Some programs even reported lower violence rates and safer streets in their communities.

Conclusion

All of the models we've reviewed fulfill the vision of community schools presented earlier; as such we envision the creation of a school-community partnership that originates at the grassroots level of our urban Indigenous communities. Consultations with Indigenous elders, educators, agency staff and parents that reflect and serve this population base is a first step in this direction. The dissemination of information contained in this document is certainly part of this consultation process.

With the guidance of our Creator, the spirits of our ancestors, and the wisdom of our elders, we truly believe a community-school partnership model that reflects the best qualities of all the models reviewed earlier will come to fruition.

CHAPTER 4

THE STATISTICS: WHAT'S THE COST OF NOT PURSUING SUCCESS?

Successful Indigenous education is complex, multi-faceted and relies on no one measure as a means to success. There are many factors that contribute to the current state of Indigenous education across the world (Makokis 2000, Frideres & Gadacz, 2001, Final Report of Minister=s National Working Group on Education, 2002, Lindberg, Campeau, Makokis, 2004, Richards & Vining, 2003, Edmonton Journal, December 2003). Swisher and Tippeconnic III (1999) noted AA field as complex as *Indian education* is not easily defined and packaged into one book@ (p. 295), thus we lay out some of the statistics, keeping in mind that the topic is complex and intricate. Suffice it to say, Athe education of Indigenous people is complex given the various circumstances and cultural differences of students and their families@ (Swisher, et al, p. 296), especially in urban centres as is the case with this literature review.

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People noted the effects of the colonial legacy on Indigenous People as they relocated to urban centres thinking life would be better there:

> The despair wrought by Aoppression of poverty, the oppression of being without work, the oppression of racism and sexism, the oppression of colonization@ is immense and its effects need to be better understood. Moving to an urban centre does not remove the burden of a colonial history. Aboriginal people in Canada who have moved from Indian reserves, Metis settlements and Inuit communities to the city may experience further cultural dislocation, economic hardship, discrimination and powerlessness, with disastrous social and political consequences, since the pressures to integrate with mainstream society are more pervasive in the urban milieu, and the resources and structures to support their continued development as Aboriginal people are less evident, if not non-existent.@ (Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, cited by Ward and Bouvier (2001), pp. 9 - 10)

A report by the New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee on Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia reported similar concerns. In

Mainly Urban: A Report into the Needs of Urban Dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Islander People (1992), the authors noted, AThe cultural isolation of most Aboriginal people in urban and especially metropolitan centres is further aggravated by the fact that many of these Aboriginal people lack the support of family and kinship network....@ (cited by Ward and Bouvier, 2001, p. 25).

In April of 2000, the Auditor General of Canada corroborated the urgent state of First Nations= elementary and secondary education (as cited in the Final Report of the Minister=s National Working Group on Education, December 2002):

> (...) action is urgently needed. Today=s urgency will be exacerbated by increasing demands for education services as a result of demographic changes in Aboriginal communities. In the absence of satisfactory progress, there will be an increased waste of human capital, lost opportunities, high financial cost in social programs and a degradation of the relationship between the government and First Nations peoples. (p. 39)

The increased migration of Indigenous people from their rural based homelands to urban centres such as Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Saskatoon, is indeed a cause for concern.

In *Not Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples,* Newhouse (2003) notes the demographic changes of Canada=s Indigenous populations making city life an integral component of Aboriginal peoples= lives in Canada (p. 5). The importance of understanding the demographic changes have long term implications for researchers, policy makers and educators. This is supported by Frideres & Gadacz (2001) who point out that the effects of urbanization upon Aboriginal Canadians has not been adequately studied although the 3 levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) are now more actively involved as a result of programs and services offered to Aboriginal peoples (p. 143). They point out that unemployment rates for off-reserve Aboriginal people is five and six times higher than for non-Aboriginal people living in urban areas (p. 148). Higher unemployment rates, inadequate job training and lower educational

levels result in a greater need for social service programs (p. 148) and greater economic dependency. Frideres & Gadacz (2001) point out that the province of Alberta Ahas had few Indian graduates from the regular provincial school system over the past decade@ (p. 107), and this will not change unless collective strategies are utilized.

The study, *Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner City High Schools* (Silver, Mallett, Greene & Simard, 2002), outlines the economic cost of students leaving school before graduation. The authors, citing McCluskey et al. (2001), estimate that Athe cost of allowing 11,000 poor youth to leave school early over a 20 year span was $23 billion in lost income and productivity, $9.9 billion in lost taxes, and $1.4 billion in unemployment and social assistance payments.@ A study in the city of Los Angeles estimated that one year=s cohort of early school leavers Acost $3.2 billion in lost earnings and more than $400 million in social service@ (Silver, Mallet, Greene & Simard, citing Rumberger & Larson, 1994, p. 142).

In a presentation on March 7, 2003, (to the Expanding Prairie Horizons - 2020 Visions Symposium, in Winnipeg, Manitoba) the Honorable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P. accentuated the importance of Canada=s large urban Aboriginal population noting ACanada=s urban Aboriginal population offers the potential of a large, young and growing population - one that is ambitious and increasingly skilled. Let us work together to ensure that urban Aboriginal Canadians are positioned and empowered to make an ongoing contribution to the future vitality of our cities and Canada.@ (back page of *Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*, 2003). With this in mind, let us look at the significant demographic changes to Canada=s urban Indigenous population in a relatively short time frame of approximately 50 years.

> In 1951 the Census of Canada showed that 6.7 percent of the Aboriginal population lived in cities. By 2001, that proportion had increased to 49 percent. Now 245, 000 Aboriginal, or 25 percent of the total Aboriginal population reporting Aboriginal identity, live in 10 of the nations largest cites: Winnipeg,

> Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Saskatoon, Regina, Ottawa-Hull, Montreal, and Victoria. (p. 5)

Depicted another way, see figure 3 below for the visual impact of the demograhic changes from 1951 to 1996. (See http://www.ualberta.ca/NATIVESTUDIES/research/urban/UrbanProject.pdf)

Aboriginal People in Major Metropolitan Centres, 1951-1996

	1951	1961	1971[1]	1981	1991[2]	1996
Halifax	--	--	--	--	1185	1110
Montreal	296	507	3215	14450	6775[3]	9960
Ottawa-Hull	--	--	--	4370	6915	11605
Toronto	805	1196	2990	13495	14205	16100
Winnipeg	210	1082	4940	16575	35150	45750
Regina	160	539	2860	6575	11020	13605
Saskatoon	48	207	1070	4350	11920	16165
Calgary	62	335	2265	7310	14075	15195
Edmonton	616	995	4260	13750	29235	32820
Vancouver	239	530	3000	16080	25030	31140
Victoria	--	--	--	2800	4435	

Sources: Statistics Canada, various years.

[1]The 1971 data do not include the Inuit.

[2]In 1991 and 1996, these statistics refer to individuals who identified with an Aboriginal. Counts for previous years refer to individuals with Aboriginal ancestry. Because of changes in the questions on which these counts are based, statistics are not strictly comparable across years before 1991.

[3]Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver had, within their boundaries, reserves that were incompletely enumerated in either 1991 or 1996 or both, affecting the counts for those years and cities.

Figure 3

Figure 4 depicts projected population growth on and off reserve across Canada. Since many Indigenous families migrate to urban centers these projections are important for planning purposes. (See http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/sts/reg_e.html)

Summary Table of Results By Canada and DIAND Regions, Average Growth, 1998 and 2008

The estimated and projected total populations of Registered Indians by on/off reserve for Canada and DIAND Regions, 1998 and 2008 is presented in the following table (Average Scenario):

	1998			2008		
Region	Total	On	Off	Total	On	Off
Atlantic	25,544	16,828	8,716	29,717	20,882	8,834
Quebec	61,975	43,955	18,020	72,008	54,834	17,174
Ontario	150,806	78,416	72,390	173,780	98,030	75,750
Man.	102,674	67,800	34,874	132,502	93,668	38,834
Sask.	103,306	53,402	49,904	129,660	73,306	56,355
Alberta	82,501	55,025	27,476	105,447	75,361	30,086
Yukon	7,560	3,853	3,707	8,440	4,463	3,976
B.C.	109,513	57,725	51,788	129,390	75,275	54,114
NWT	14,945	10,874	4,071	17,268	13,058	4,210
Canada	658,824	387,878	270,946	798,211	508,876	289,334

Figure 4

In December 2003, the Edmonton Journal devoted a section to Aboriginal people. Section D, entitled *Strangers in their own land, Cities of dreams and despair: Canada=s urban aboriginals at a crossroad*, outlined the many challenges Aboriginal people (and municipal governments) are facing as more families make the move to urban centers.

The journal reported that 30% of First Nations live on the reserves and receive 90% of the monies (more than $7 billion of the total Ottawa distributes annually), with the balance Adistributed to aboriginals off-reserve through 80 different programs in 22 different government departments@ (p. D2). Jurisdiction is an issue; however, Goodale notes ALets park the jurisdiction argument at the door, we may get to it another day. But we have crime issues, social development issues, education issues - lets pool our resources@ (p. D2). Recognizing that there are no simple answers, the Edmonton Journal noted Agrowing numbers of aboriginals are leaving reserves to escape poverty, shabby housing and unemployment. But often they find the same obstacles in urban Canada, plus a new one - lack of support@ (p. D2). Elder Christine Daniels

believes that part of the answer lies with Indigenous youth, Athe future lies with aboriginal youth, who can be successful through education@ (p. D2).

In March of 1992, Brenda Lafleur authored The Conference Board of Canada=s report entitled *Dropping Out: The Cost to Canada.* The report had two objectives: 1) to raise awareness amongst the business community regarding the cost of high school dropouts on society, and 2) to motivate all stakeholders about the need to invest in the labour force of the future, in Canada=s youth. Lafleur reported that as an investment vehicle, Aeducation has a higher rate of return than almost any alternative investment project@. She projected that by the year 2000, Canada could have saved $26 billion by reducing the dropout rate from 34 percent to 10 percent. One has to wonder what that figure is in 2004.

The fact that Alberta Learning has just released several major documents to address the educational needs of all Albertans (First Nation, Metis, and Inuit included) is indicative of the seriousness of the challenge before all Canadians. All the Alberta based reports (*Every Child Learns. Every Child Succeeds: Report and Recommendations; Alberta=s Learning Commission on Learning, October 2003; First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, February 2002;* and *Removing Barriers To High School Completion - Final Report, September 2001)* outline the challenges and the goals of Alberta Learning in attempting to increase the number of graduates in Alberta schools.

In *Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future,* Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern (1990) summarize the importance of helping youth attain school success:

> The costs of supporting our dropouts and dumpouts as illiterate, unemployable, violent or mentally ill citizens are staggering. We no longer can afford the economic drain of disposable people. The youth whom we are casting aside today are part of a small generation who will have to support a large cohort of retired citizens as the twenty-first century unfolds. We are literally abandoning the persons whom we will ask to support us in retirement. (p. 3)

Suffice it to say, for whatever reason we choose, we must help all youth achieve school success. This collective responsibility is a moral imperative involving individual adults, the family, and the business community which includes major business corporations. Collectively, our future is dependent upon helping all young people achieve school success. Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern (1990) speak of youth Apatroniz[ation].@ They note, AOne of the most patronizing statements that adults make about youth is that Athey are our future citizens@ (p. 20), when in fact, they are our responsibility, and it is our responsibility to help teach them responsibility.

CHAPTER 5

IDENTITY AND SPIRITUAL CONNECTEDNESS

What makes us who we are? Bergstrom, Miller, and Peacock (2003) pose this question on the topic of *identity.* Accordingly, the dictionary defined *identity* as Athe distinguishing personality or character of an individual@ (Bergstrom et.al., p. 26). The authors go on to define *identity* development from an Indigenous worldview. AIdentity development from an Indigenous perspective has less to do with striving for individualism and more to do with establishing connections and understanding ourselves in relationship to all of the things around us@ (p. 26). They conclude that this wholism becomes the basis for a Astrong sense of self@ leading to a life filled with harmony and balance mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically (p. 26).

This sense of *interconnectedness* is reflected upon by Alex Wilson, an Opaskwayak Cree scholar (as cited by Bergstrom et. al., p. 27). She notes the importance of the land and relationships in the context of one=s identity. AEach of our traditional world views recognizes the deep interdependency between humans and nature, that our origin is in the soil of the land, and that we are bound to each other in an intimately spiritual way. This shared understanding of the world shapes the life experiences of North America=s Indigenous peoples and, in turn, their identity development@ (p. 27).

Spirituality is not something that Indigenous youth speak directly about; however, they speak about dancing, singing, drumming and prayer (Bergstrom et.al., p. 32). Since these are all elements of spirituality, the authors recognize that spirituality is all around them; it is not confined to the four walls of a specified room where Areligion@ occurs. In other words, our spirituality is connected to everything around us. This interconnectedness can help Indigenous

youth recognize that their own personal well being begins by looking after themselves by striving for inner harmony and balance.

Bergstrom et.al share this meaning of interconnectedness as reflected in the following quote from one of their youth participants in their study (Werlth-Kerish-Nah (Hoopa):

> I had to look within myself, inner self, figuring out that these things happen. There are things in life that you=ll be dealing with, and if you let them carry you and destroy you and take you down, then that=s where you=re gonna dwell. But if you learn and understand them, then you will gain from them. You=ll gain strength. And it=s helped me out a lot, mainly when I went back to the religion, the religion of the Indian people, and started understanding the meanings again, because for a period there I was blind to it. I had forgotten.@ (p. 32)

Bergstrom et.al further note, those students who are connected Aspiritually@ are more likely to stay away from drugs, alcohol, and other forms of trouble not associated with living the ARed Road@, or the Good Path (p. 34). This is further supported in another study entitled *Our Children=s Songs: American Indian Students and the Schools,* by Peacock and Albert (2000). The study focused on listening and honoring the collective voices of 36 American Indian high school students in reservation and urban Indian communities, tribal and public schools throughout the state of Minnesota (p. 12). In fact, the authors report that very little research is undertaken from the students' point of view, what they refer to as Atheir collective song@ (p. 12). Their study undertook interviews with 3 student groups: students doing well academically, students not doing well, and students suspected of having gang involvement. Three separate interviews occurred on such topics as student=s background and experiences; instructional and non-instructional issues; and student perceptions of successful schooling, classroom practices, and ways to improve education for American Indian students (p. 12).

Not surprisingly, Acultural identity@ emerged as a control theme. Shane, one of the participants, speaks to the importance of the Adrum and culture@ in his educational success:

> Middle school was fun, I went to the American Indian Magnet School. That=s when I first found out about my culture. I learned to drum and sing and now I=m the lead singer for my drum group. When I was in eighth grade, my dad really surprised me on Christmas. He brought out a big box, and in it he had a drum. It had both my brother=s and my name on it. That=s the drum we=ve used ever since. He said we made him so proud when we sang, so he made us a drum. I=m seventeen and have never used alcohol or drugs my whole life and I think it=s because I really believe in my culture. Everyone in our drum group is alcohol and drug free and that=s part of the respect about being around the drum@ . . . .AI really don=t think I started growing up until I got my culture, cause it=s always like, you=re always missing something until you find your beliefs. And then the culture is like the first building block. And from there I just kind of went up. (p. 14)

Bobby, another student, shared the importance of cultural identity and inter-connectedness as he reflected on his schooling: AMy grandma knew about our culture and she=d tell me a lot about that. I started singing on the drum and dancing. The drum really kept me going. In order to sing on the drum I had to go to school and that was a good way to keep me in@ (p. 14).

Many studies support the need for successful schools to incorporate spiritual identity and connectedness into the curriculum. Clearly, this can be done by incorporating curriculum and school programing that honors the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical well being of the Awhole child@. The stories shared by several students here indicate the importance of spirituality as expressed through song, dance and prayer within the confines of schools.

Research clearly demonstrates the importance of incorporating Indigenous identity with the goal of achieving greater school success (Chisan, 2001; Silver, Mallet, Greene, & Freeman, 2002; Groome & Hamilton, 1995; Battiste, 1998; Educating Urban Indians: A Summit for the Future , 2000; Bergstrom, Miller Cleary & Peacock, 2003; Miller Cleary & Peacock,1998).

CHAPTER 6

RESILIENCY: FINDING THE WARRIOR WITHIN

En route to finding and nurturing *the warrior within* it is imperative that students, parents and school staff understand and embrace the multi-faceted meaning of resiliency, referred to as the >resiliency mandala= by Drs. Wolin and Wolin (1993). Their text, *The Resilient Self* (1993), is based on clinical interviews with 25 resilient survivors encountered during their combined years of medical and therapeutic practice.

While it is a recognized fact that many Indigenous students come out of homes experiencing >woundedness and pain=, it is more important to recognize their means of survival, commonly referred to as *survivors pride* by Drs. Wolin and Wolin (1993). When life dishes out >bruises and wounds= how is it that many are able to jump back from trauma and succeed in school?

This section will address this multi-dimensional view of resiliency. What is resiliency? What is the damage model? How is the damage model different from the challenge model? More importantly, how does understanding these *models* and the seven skills of the resiliency mandala impact student successes?

Defining Resiliency

According to Wolin and Wolin (1993) *resiliency* is Athe capacity to rebound from hardship inflicted early in life (p. vii). As a medical doctor and a psychiatrist team, Drs. Wolin and Wolin invite the reader to move out of the traditional means of diagnosis where clients and their problems are >the problem= and they are referred to as >dysfunctional= and in need of repair. To grasp the extent of the negative impact of this Aproblem@ oriented approach to

diagnosis in the academic and therapeutic realm, Wolin and Wolin (1993) cite Lois Murphy=s (1962*)* observations in her book, *The Widening World of Childhood*:

> It is something of a paradox that a nation which has exulted in its rapid expansion and its scientific-technological achievements, should have developed in its studies of childhood so vast a Aproblem@ literature: a literature often expressing adjustment difficulties, social failures, blocked potentialities, and defeat. . . . There are thousands of studies of maladjustment for each one that deals directly with ways of managing life=s problems with personal strength and adequacy. The language of problems, difficulties, inadequacies, or antisocial or delinquent conduct or . . . anxiety is familiar. We know that there are devices for correcting, bypassing, or overcoming threats, but for the most part these have not been directly studied. (p. 12)

Are we still labeling children as the >problem= or are we in fact looking for a more proactive, and positive way of looking at how children succeed amidst the challenges many face daily? The beauty of resiliency is that it invites a very different way of working with children whether one is a school teacher, a school counsellor/social worker, school administrator, or a therapist. Having noted this, let us now look at the damage model then the challenge model (see figure 5).

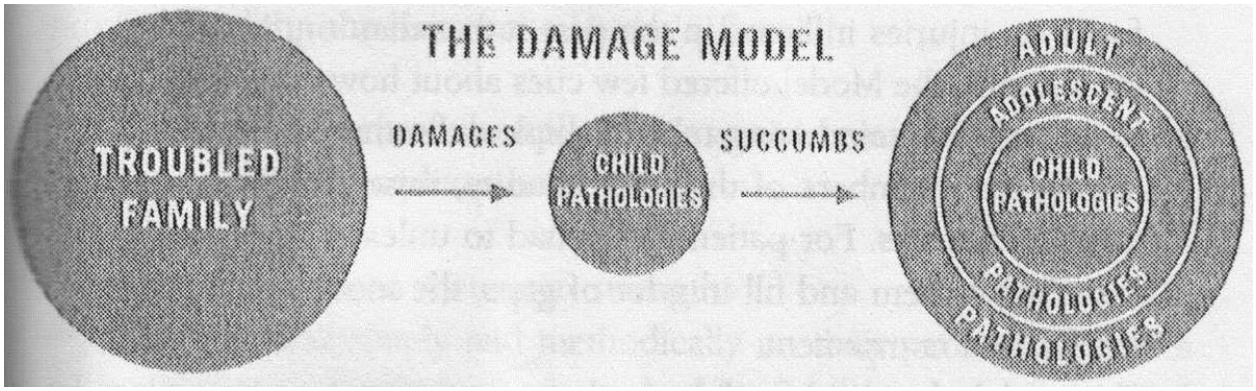


Figure 5

The Damage Model

The damage model portrays individuals as *victims* who are trapped in their own faults and weaknesses; blame for one=s life is often placed upon parents, and self is seen and lived out as

damaged. Energy is placed in fault finding and labeling. Initially Dr. Wolin (a psychologist) found herself stuck working out of the damage model, using the *language of disease,* and looking at clients from a pathological perspective: clients were looked upon as having *disorders* versus using language like *health* (p. 13). To quote her, AI conceived of health as the absence of illness and referred to people who were well as Aasymptomatic,@ Anonclinical,@ Aunhospitalized,@ or Ahaving no severe disturbance.@ In retrospect, the worst offender was the term Aunidentified,@ as if the only way I could know a person was by his or her sickness (p. 13). Thus, the damage model is very much about identifying, categorizing, and labeling diseases (p. 13). She goes on to note that Atroubled families are seen as toxic agents, like bacteria or viruses, and survivors are regarded as victims of their parents= poisonous secretions@ (p.13).

Under such a model, children are vulnerable, helpless, and cannot get out of their family situations. Essentially, they are locked in. One can cope, or contain the family=s influence at a personal cost resulting in symptoms and behavior problems (p. 13). The role of the therapist (and educator) then becomes that of helper to repair the harm by understanding it (p. 13). Essentially, this model allows clients to get bogged down and become their own helpless victim, diverted away from working towards changing.

The Challenge Model

The challenge model, unlike the damage model, does not dwell on the *damage* one has suffered. Blame is not placed on anyone, and clients (students) do not fall into the *victim=s trap.* The challenge model permits survivors to demonstrate survivors' pride as shared by one client, AYou could regard my home life as a prisoner-of-war camp or as basic training. I prefer the latter (Wolin & Wolin, 1993, p. 10).

In the challenge model, Wolin and Wolin (1993) recognize that two forces are at work as children and their families interact. This interaction is seen as jointly dangerous and as an opportunity. They note ASurvivors are vulnerable to their parents= toxic influence, and they are also challenged to rebound from harm by experimenting, branching out, and acting on their own behalf (p. 16). In the challenge model diagram (see figure 6),

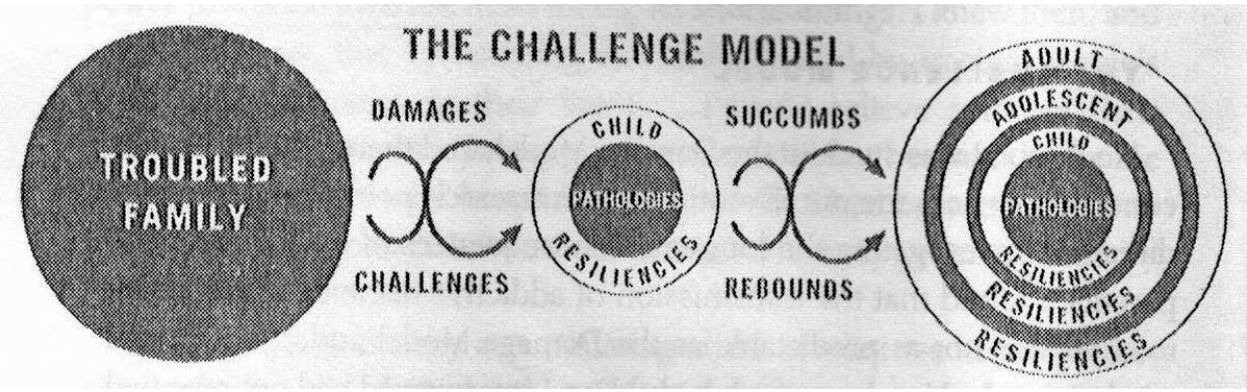


Figure 6

they describe this interaction as contrasting elements of vulnerability and resilience of the inner self (as noted by the shaded and non-shaded areas in the challenge model). Wolin and Wolin go on to describe the importance of *mirrors* in how children deal with vulnerability and resilience.

Distorting Mirrors and Alternate Mirrors

Psychological researchers believe that children see thir reflections in the faces of those who care for them. If children Asee love, approval, pleasure and admiration@ in the eyes of their parents (caregivers), then they internalize this as AI am lovable, I am good@ (p. 16). The opposite may happen in children of wounded families. When parents say things like Ayou are bad, you are ugly, you are not lovable@, children may internalize this message and say to themselves@I am bad, I am ugly, I am not lovable@ (p. 17).

Thus, the essence of the Challenge model is to help us not become Aa nation of emotional cripples@, but a nation capable of rebounding from adversity. The authors use the mandala to

depict the teachings of resiliency. Accordingly, the mandala represents Apeace, harmony, and health (p. 20). According to Navajo tradition, the mandala is believed to cure illness by bringing inner harmony into the life of an ill person. The mandala depicts seven resiliencies that form a protective circle around the self.

The Mandala and the Seven Resiliences

The seven resiliences are insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity, humor, and morality (see figure 7). Within each resiliency the authors outline how we evolve

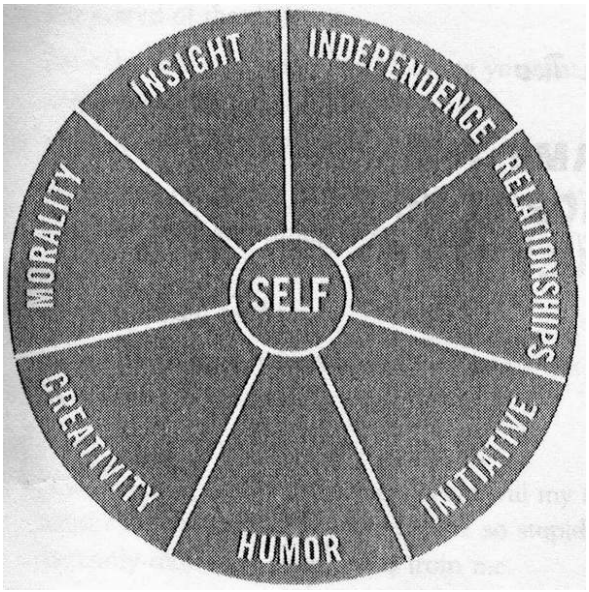


Figure 7

through each in three stages in our lives, namely childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. We briefly describe each of the seven resiliences below. *Insight, a*ccording to Wolin and Wolin (1993), is Athe mental habit of asking searching questions and giving honest answers@(p. 67).

Insight has three separate elements that correlate with the three developmental stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. In childhood, insight begins with *sensing* or the child=s ability to intuitively recognize that family life is strange and untrustworthy. Children are able to sense danger by Areading@ their parent=s walk, dress, breath or tone of voice (p. 67).

Essentially, *sensing* is having a A nose for trouble@ (p. 73); it=s that ability to figure out things are not quite normal even though the child does not have the power to change the circumstances. In adolescence, sensing becomes *knowing;* the teen is able to name what he or she sees. The teen now understands the extent of troubles that exist within the family, and recognizes the implications in his/her personal life. In adulthood, resilient survivors come to recognize insight through a deeper *understanding* of themselves and others. Figure 8 depicts the three separate sections of the insight portion of the resiliency mandala.

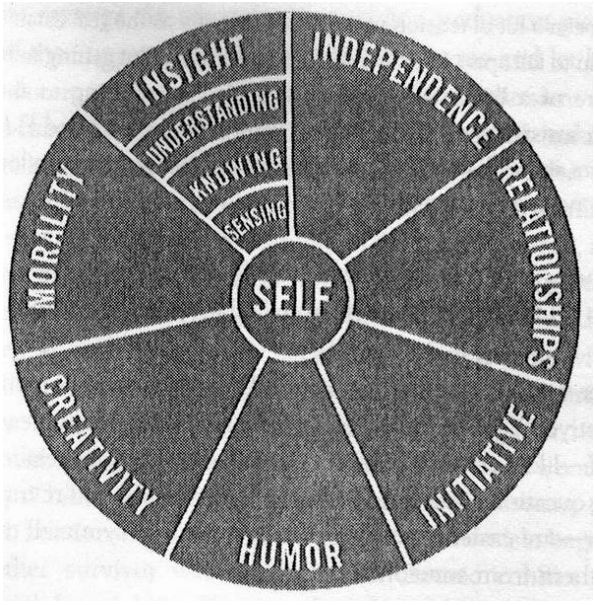


Figure 8

Dr. Norman Garmezy (as cited by Wolin and Wolin, 1993) states that resilient children are our Akeepers of the dream@ as they are Aour best hope for learning how to use the lessons of the past to help ourselves in the present@ (p. 85). Refer to page 87 of *The Resilient Self: How Survivors of Troubled Families Rise Above Adversity* for specific questions on *sensing, knowing and understanding* relevant to insight. These questions are especially pertinent to educators who wish to better understand *insight*.

The second resiliency wedge in the mandala is *independence* (see figure 9).

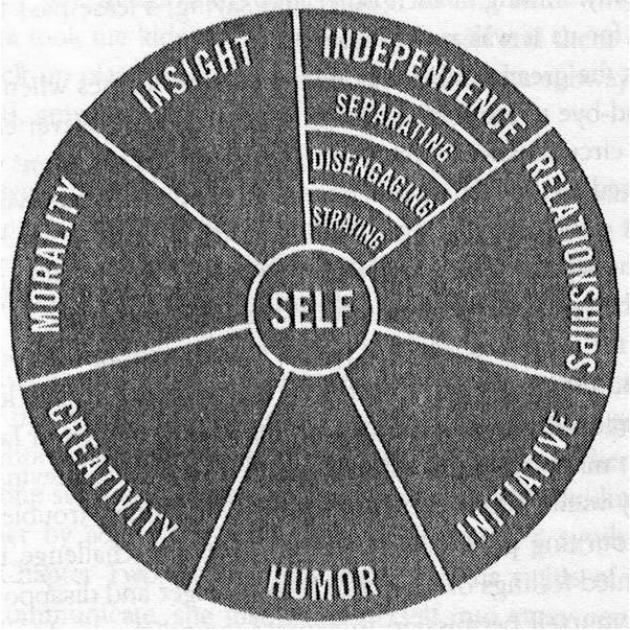


Figure 9

Wolin and Wolin (1993) define independence as Ayour right to safe boundaries between you and your troubled parents, the dictates of your conscience, and your longing for family ties@ (p. 88). The three elements of *independence* are straying (in childhood) which is the earliest display of independence in resilient children, disengaging (in adolescence) which is the survivors= ability to hold themselves apart from their parents= crises or family disequilibrium - often referred to as Athick skinned@ or having a Abuilt-in shield@ (p. 99,100), and separating (in adulthood) or practicing Aemotional pragmatism@ (p. 104).

To facilitate a better understanding of independence, Wolin and Wolin share the story of seven year old Alan, who used to go to the library every day after school instead of going home:

> I went through every picture book, but I never took any out. I just hung around he children=s room and browsed. My favorite book was Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel, but I even got into books for girls, if you can imagine that! I really liked Madeline, probably because she lived in a convent without any parents. The librarian got to know me and would put new books on the side for me. She must have gotten my number, although I never said a word about my home life or my unhappiness. I sensed that people in the neighborhood knew about my mother (p. 96).

Refer to page 109 and 110 for greater clarity regarding *independence.* The questions posed on this page allow the reader the opportunity to further explore the independence section in the resiliency mandala.

The third resiliency wedge in the mandala is *relationships* (see figure 10).

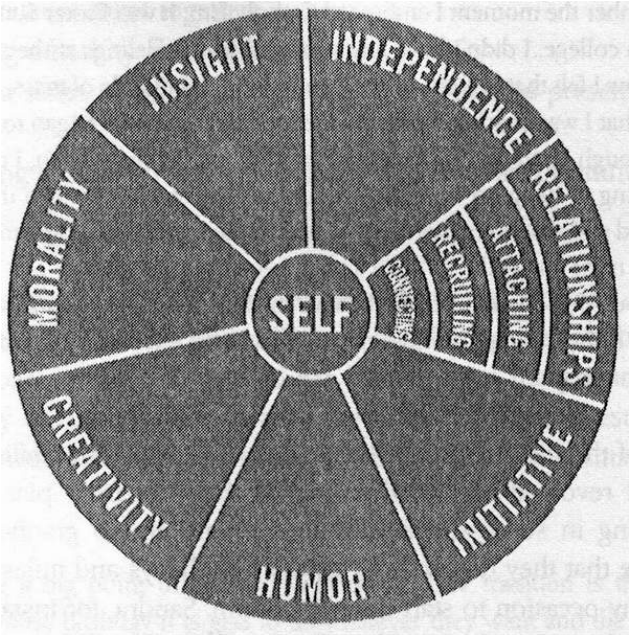


Figure 10

Wolin and Wolin (1993) define relationships as Aintimate and fulfilling ties to other people@ (p. 111). It is one=s ability to both love and be loved, despite one=s family background. In early childhood, relationship connections are demonstrated by the youngster=s ability to search out love by *connecting* or attracting the attention of available adults (p. 111). Often connecting plays out in the form of finding someone Awho is there for you@, who gave you a shoulder to cry on, or someone who boosts your confidence when times seem rather bleak (p. 112). In adolescence, young people actively *recruit* friends, neighbors, teachers, and other parent substitutes. Later on in adulthood, the resilient survivor demonstrates his/her resiliency by *attaching.* Attaching is the ability to form and maintain mutually gratifying relationships (p. 111). Wolin and Wolin (1993)

share Sandra=s story of her Aparent substitute@ (p. 112). Her childhood nurturing relationships involved a neighbor, Mr. Berkowitz, noted as a Alife saving@ figure:

> My savior was an old man who lived next door, in a row house attached to mine. His name was Mr. Berkowitz. I think he felt the vibrations of my unhappiness coming through the common wall between our apartments. Mr. Berkowitz felt sorry for me, and during the warm months, when he sat on the porch reading the newspaper, he befriended me. I sat on his lap, and he told me stories that I could listen to for hours. If he didn=t see me for a few days, because I was sick or something like that, he came to look for me. In the winter, when he Agot some air@ by walking instead of sitting on the front porch, he took me along. My regular afternoon stroll with Mr. Berkowitz was the high point of my life as a young child (p. 112).

For detailed questions pertaining to *connecting, recruiting and attaching* see pages 134 and 135 of the *Resilient Self: How Survivors of Troubled Families Rise Above Adversity.*

The fourth resiliency wedge in the mandala is *initiative* (see figure 11).

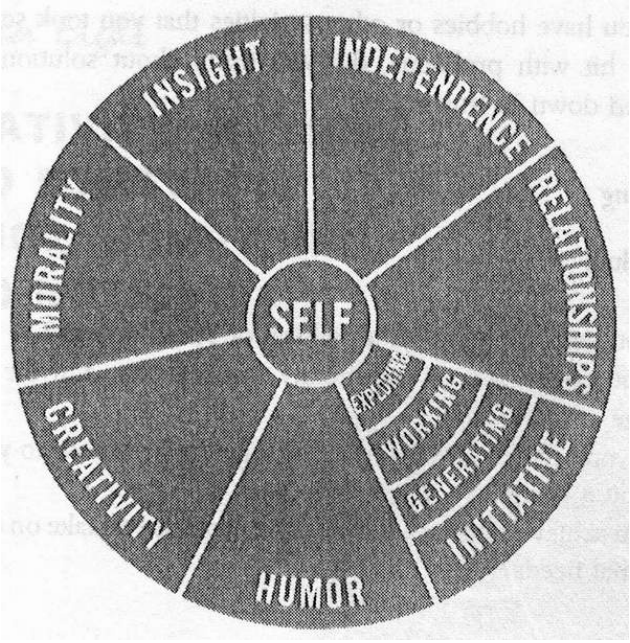


Figure 11

Wolin and Wolin (1993) describe initiative as Athe determination to assert yourself and master your environment@ (p. 136). In childhood, resilient survivors demonstrate initiative in their ability to turn away from the frustrations of their troubled parents and go *exploring.* Their

curiosity allows them the opportunity to achieve a sense of effectiveness (p. 136). In adolescence or later school years, this characteristic evolves into *working.* Working is often demonstrated in the young person=s Afocus, organization, and goal directed activities@ (p. 136). In adulthood, resiliency is displayed through *generating* Aprojects that stretch the self and promote a cycle of growth@ (p. 136).

Segal and Yahres (cited by Wolin and Wolin, 1993) define resiliency as Athe capacity of children to conquer the Apsychological Everests that loom in their developmental paths@ (p. 136). Wolin and Wolin share Noreen's, (a medical student) story of Aconquering a psychological Everest@ - her alcoholic home during childhood. She survived by immersing herself in many activities:

> I saw myself as separate, different, and resistant to my family=s troubles. Not that they didn=t hurt me. They did; I certainly had my share of misery, but I tried to validate myself by finding something that I could control. No matter what the problems were, there was always some small part that I could chip away and manage to solve. I wasn=t overcome by the feat of reaching the summit - which was for me getting out, being on my own, and having a different kind of life. I just closed out the chaos and focused on one thing at a time, and I believed that I would eventually get there (p. 138/139).

Janet, now an adult, shared a story of her childhood resiliency, one that portrays her sense of *exploring.* Like many young children from troubled homes, she feared the AHalloween costume contest@ because she could not rely on help from her mentally ill mother. Such annual events often send shivers of fear down the spines of children in wounded homes. They cannot rely on families to help them prepare, or bring foods, etc. to the school activities. Janet demonstrates her sense of exploring in the following story:

> I felt guilty about ever asking my mother to do anything because of her sickness, so I reconciled myself to something totally inadequate like putting a hanky on my face and being a bandit. Two days before Halloween, I went into the kitchen to throw something away, and I spotted an empty cereal box in the trash. I took it out and started to do the puzzle on the back. Slowly, I got an idea. . . . . I found a

> carton, draped a plastic table cloth over it and cut a hole so I could stick my head through. Then I pasted the cereal box, a napkin, a spoon, and a light plastic bowl on the top surface. Eureka! I was a table. To top it off, I tied a basket to my head with a ribbon and stuck a banana in it. I won first prize for the most original costume (p. 145/146).
>
> Resilient survivors treat their pains as problems to be solved, not as problems to be dwelled upon. Surviving the pains of childhood, adult survivors may generate worthy projects that stretch the self, produce personal growth and provide a sense of competence and effectiveness. In adulthood generation leads to pleasure, affirmation and a better quality of life (p. 158).

On pages 161 and 162 of the text *The Resilient Self: How Survivors Of Troubled Families Rise Above Adversity,* the authors provide questions regarding the initiative wedge of resiliency specific to *exploring, working, and generating.* These questions provide the reader with the opportunity to further explore the resiliency of initiative.

The fifth and sixth wedges of the resiliency mandala are *humor and creativity* (see figure 12).

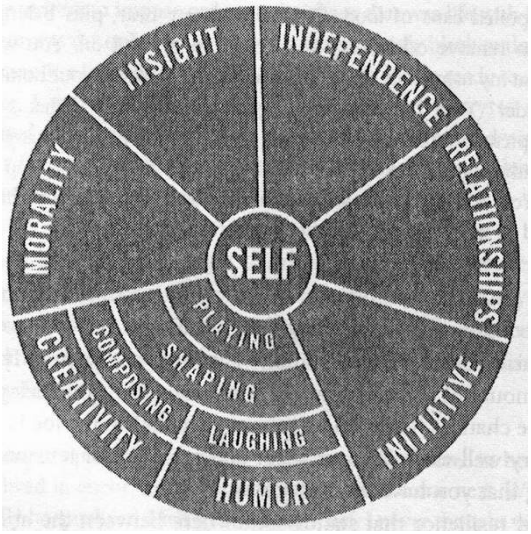


Figure 12

These two wedges - conjoined in childhood and adolescence - focus on roles of *playing and shaping* as survival mechanisms. Both provide Asafe harbors of the imagination where you can take refuge and rearrange the details of your life to your own pleasing@ (p. 163). *Playing*

allows the survivor the opportunity to pretend: to play out the superhero, the princess, the space explorer, or the mean beast for example. Later in adolescence, this imaginative energy is channeled into *shaping* or into various forms of art such as writing, music, painting, or dance: this creative energy allows survivors a socially acceptable medium to deal with their own hurt feelings. In adulthood, *creativity* may be manifested in survivors by the ability to *compose*, while *humor* is demonstrated through *laughter*. Invariably, creativity and humor are a good combination, mixing the absurd and the awful and being able to laugh at the combination.

Tanya, a resilient survivor, shares a personal *creativity* story where she displays her composing abilities as outlined below:

> One of the greatest highs I can have is reading something I=ve written that really sings. Sometimes I read the same passage over and over, just relishing the idea that I wrote it. I figure, if I can do something this beautiful, there must be a lot of good inside me. …For me, writing is like the love affair between a caring, sensitive mother and her very young baby. When I sit down to write, I cry out into the dark, where words are waiting to answer. They come at my will, bringing delights and comfort and form for my unshaped thoughts. Writing is hard, sometimes excruciating hard, but it is the elixir of my life (p. 166/167).

Wolin and Wolin (1993) describe resilience as Asoaring on your own juices rather than crashing on alcohol or drugs@ (p. 167). Creativity and humor can turn Astruggles into strengths, pain into pleasure, defeat into triumph, irrelevance into significance, something into nothing, and nothing into something@ (p. 167). The authors further describe resilience as Athe capacity to shape your awful experiences at home into art and convert a victim=s posture into a proud and beautiful stance@ (p. 172).

At the end of the section on *humor and creativity*, Wolin and Wolin (1993) pose questions for the reader in search of greater understanding of these two resiliencies. See pages

182 and 183 of *The Resilient Self: How Survivors Of Troubled Families Rise Above Adversity* for greater depth and understanding.

The last wedge of the resiliency mandala is *morality* (see figure 13).

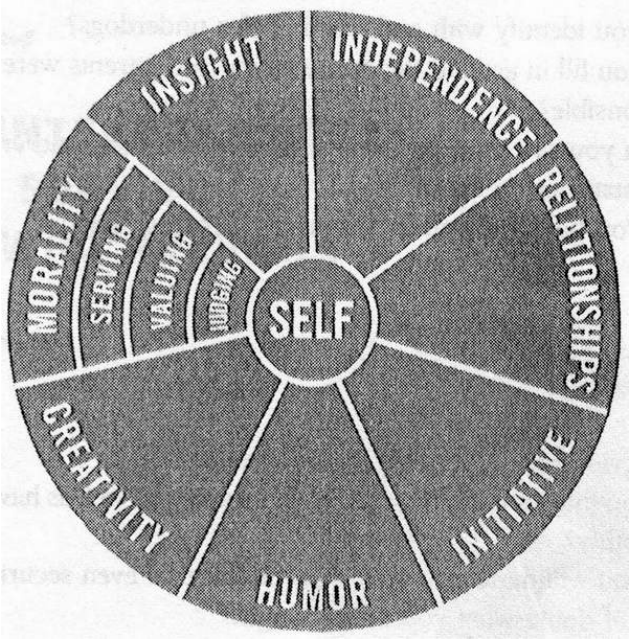


Figure 13

Morality is described as Athe activity of an informed conscience. @ (Wolin & Wolin, 1993, p. 184). The authors explain that the seeds of morality are sown early in the lives of children as manifested when the children are inquisitive and begin *judging* right from wrong (p. 184). In adolescence, morality is demonstrated by the teenagers sense of *valuing* as confirmed by their respect for decency, compassion, honesty and fair play (p. 184). They champion the Aunderdog@, dedicating themselves to the Acause@ (p. 184). In adulthood, *serving* is significant to the survivor as noted in their devotion of time and energy to various organizations. Essentially, morality Aaims to repair an injured self and to improve the world as well@ (p. 184). We all need a sense of purpose; we all need to know why we are getting up in the morning. The clearer our personal answers are, the more resilient we are. In childhood, morality is displayed

by the child=s ability to *judge,* or his/her ability to tell right from wrong. AJudging puts the badness in your family outside you and helps you hang on to the goodness inside@ (Wolin & Wolin, 1993, p. 189).

Dan, a resilient survivor, shares one aspect of his moral self, despite the mistreatment he experienced as a child at the hands of his mother:

> In thinking about The Wizard of Oz I realized that the really powerful thing was…good triumphed over evil, which was wonderful to see…and secondly was that Dorothy had on ruby slippers all along. She just didn=t know that was the case, and I can remember saying to myself . . . AIt=s the same with me…I have on [something] like ruby slippers. If I want to make things right in my life, *I can do it!* It was a very clear sense…the power was always there, you just had to *know* it was there (p. 190).

The second section in the *morality* wedge is valuing. Valuing is the adolescent's ability to give despite the fact that he/she has received very little. The personal benefits are self respect and a sense of personal attachment to something of significance. Noreen, a resilient survivor, shares a story that depicts her sense of morality:

> It was a matter of tolerance. I saw all the suffering and I couldn=t abide it. The worst was the way my father would go after the younger kids, the little ones who couldn=t defend themselves. He was a bully - a coward at heart - and once he saw that he wasn=t getting to me, he went after them. I felt that I had to protect the little ones. It was a moral obligation, something I couldn=t avoid, something any decent person would do (p. 195).

She goes on to further describe the details of how she helped her siblings:

> … I taught them the tricks of the trade. I would tell them how to spot my father=s bad mood or know when he was drunk so they could get away. Or I helped them avoid his temper about food. Like taking a half a slice of cheese from the middle of the package or watering down the juice so my father wouldn=t notice his special foods missing from the icebox. If something got broken, I would make sure it got fixed or taken out of the way. If they did not do their chores exactly right, I helped them so they didn=t get the full brunt of his anger, because they were so little. When there was a fight, I felt like it was my role to remove them from the violence and entertain them so they would forget what was happening. I would take them upstairs and read to them or get some puppets and

> we would do a play. I distracted them while the house rocked with my parents= fighting (p. 196).

Noreen displays her sense of morality by taking the responsible role in a family when her parents were irresponsible. Essentially, they (child survivors) are Afighting corruption on the home front@ (p. 197) according to Coles (as cited by Wolin and Wolin, 1993, p. 197). Serving, the last piece in the morality wedge, is described as trying to make the world in which we live a better place by spreading Aemotional and material wealth@ (p. 198). It is having compassion and concern for others while watching out for oneself.

Wolin and Wolin (1993) provide the reader with questions specific to morality in the areas of *judging, valuing, and serving.* Refer to pages 203 and 204 for greater details specific to this topic.

While we recognize and embrace the detailed work of Wolin and Wolin on resiliency in helping students attain school successes, we would be remiss if we did not connect their research to that of scholars on the topic of Acultural resilience@.

Cultural Resiliency

Iris HeavyRunner (an Indigenous scholar) and Kathy Marshall (2003), in *Miracle Survivors=: Promoting Resilience in Indian Students,* speak of Acultural resilience@. In response to the question, AWhat explains a student=s educational persistence in the face of odds?@ they share a story about a young Indigenous student who graduated from College with a degree while also looking after her ill father full time. Part of the success lies in Acultural resilience@. Like Wolin and Wolin, they define resiliency as Athe natural, human capacity to navigate life well@ (p. 15). We all have this innate capacity, wisdom, common sense, and the understanding of our own inner spirit and sense of direction (p. 15) which are key attributes of resiliency. Essentially, resiliency is very ordinary (according to Masten, as cited by Heavyrunner &

Marshall, (2003); however, for the most part, many have been trained to see Athe problem@ versus recognizing that the solution is within each individual.

Defining Resiliency in the context of Indigenous Language

HeavyRunner and Marshall expanded resiliency research and have taken their work one step further to include cultural factors that Anurture, encourage, and support Indian students, families, and communities@ (p. 16). Examining resiliency from an Indigenous language context, they asked Indigenous language speakers to define resiliency in their various languages. The authors discovered that the meaning of resiliency, as defined in the Indigenous language context, is far more significant, heartfelt and impactful as Athe languages of our people unlock[s] the philosophy of our miraculous persistence@ (p. 17). To demonstrate the power of words, let us look at what resilience means in Blackfeet, as shared by bilingual consultants Floyd HeavyRunner and Stuart Bear of Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana. According to the Blackfeet language, *Pi saats si kaa moo taan* means Amiracle survivors.@ Sherry Red Owl notes that in the Lakota language, resiliency is *wacan tognaka (strong will),* while in Ho-Chunk, Leila Picotte notes resiliency translates as *wa nah igh mash jah* (*strong mind).* In Cree, the meaning of resiliency is *sohkatisowin* (to be strong spiritually, physically and emotionally) and *sohketamowin* (to be strong mentally). These terms demonstrate core spiritual laws and beliefs. (For more detailed explanation refer to section one, the Indigenous Worldview.)

While all of these Indigenous languages depict a different translation of the word Aresiliency@, in all of the Indigenous languages one gets the sense that resiliency means far more than simply our ability to bounce back in times of adversity. The challenge for all educators and other service providers is to invite various Indigenous language speakers to dialogue about the

depth of the word Aresiliency@ in the various Indigenous languages. For some, it may mean going to the Elders and practicing the Indigenous protocols and asking for their stories regarding the translations. In any event, this is a powerful opportunity to invite Indigenous speakers to help Indigenous students find their place in the context of Aresiliency research.@

In 1993, while working with Native prevention specialists on cultural factors that help prevent drug and alcohol abuse in Indigenous families, HeavyRunner and Marshall identified the following cultural factors, recognized as Aspiritual protective factors@:

> Indian people believe spirituality has been the corner stone of their survival through generations of adversity and oppression. Spirituality includes our interconnectedness with each other (relationships), the sacredness of our inner spirit, our efforts to nurture and renew ourselves daily (prayer), balance and harmony (awareness), and our responsibility to be lifelong learners (growth) (p. 16).

HeavyRunner and Marshall put their cultural resiliency theories into practice by implementing the Family Education Model in Montana tribal colleges. They found that AParticipants in the center trainings say they experience increased reflection and spirituality, an improved sense of personal well-being, better relationships with others, and greater satisfaction with their environment@ (p. 16).

Essentially, their model focuses on Aretention interventions focused on students= strengths@ (as demonstrated with Indigenous College students). Their model emphasizes the following six areas: 1) culturally-specific family activities that invite the families of students to the campus, 2) counseling strategies that take into consideration family issues, 3) formal or informal mentoring, 4) seminars or workshops on family life skills, 5) networking, and 6) evaluation (p. 16). Clearly, their research, and Wolin and Wolin's research indicate that it does Atake a whole village to raise the child@.

Schools must invite the entire family and community into the school in order to help the students in a way that fosters caring support, provides opportunities for participation, and encourages high expectations - protective factors of resiliency (p. 16) - while helping students recognize the need to Adraw upon that internal strength of their ancestors@ (p. 17), their cultural/spiritual resiliency.

Fostering Resiliency in Schools

Bonnie Benard=s (1997) *Turning It Around for All Youth: Moving Risk to Resilience* describes how educators and school systems (community included) can foster resiliency in youth. Postulating that all students have Ainnate resilience@ and that all adults must have Apositive beliefs@ in the possibilities of all students (p. 1), Benard (citing Werner & Smith, 1992, p. 202) refers to Ainnate resilience@ as Aself-righting mechanisms@ with skills including Athe ability to form relationships (social competence), to problem solve (metacognition), to develop a sense of identity (autonomy), and to plan and hope (a sense of purpose and future)@ (p. 1).

Essentially, Benard is suggesting we all have the power to transform and change our lives despite our risks, and teachers and schools can play a very big role in this transformation. Benard (citing longitudinal research of Werner & Smith, 1992) has demonstrated that children who grow up in Afamilies with alcoholism, drug abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and mental illness@ (p. 2) do grow up to become successful, Aconfidant, competent, and caring@ individuals.

Roles of Schools and Teachers

Over and over, stories are shared about the roles teachers play in the lives of children, moving them from risk to resilience. Key factors positively impacting the lives of children include teachers who focus on Acaring relationships@: these teachers engage in sincere listening, validate student feelings, and genuinely display kindness, compassion and respect. Teachers

who provide Apositive and high expectations@ are student centered, building on Astudents= own strengths, interests, goals and dreams@, and providing Aopportunities to participate and contribute@ by treating students as the responsible individuals they are (p. 2).

Research has repeatedly demonstrated (Benard citing Children=s Express, 1993) that a Adeeper level of relationships, beliefs, expectations, and a willingness to share power@ (p. 2) builds resilience. School systems need to nurture caring relationships on all levels: educator and student, student to student, educator to educator, and educator to parent (p. 2). This finding was repeatedly found in the doctoral research of Makokis (2000), *An Insiders Perspective: The Dropout Challenge for Canada=s First Nations.* This study found that First Nations students drop out of provincial high schools for many complex reasons (over 50 cited); however, at the same time, the study found that the development and maintenance of genuine student-teacher Arelationships@ is paramount to students experiencing school success. Students are more likely to stay in school and experience success if they have even one caring person who takes the time to develop and maintain a positive relationship with them.

Benard (1997) found that teachers/schools that implement Asmall group processes, cooperative learning, peer helping, cross-age mentoring, and community service@ (p. 2) were more likely to enhance student resiliency. Such school environments were looked upon as being like Afamily, home, community and sanctuar[ies]@ (p. 2).

At the school level, teachers need administrative support in order to nurture resiliency in children. Administrators need to promote the same caring relationships among staff as teachers do for children. Like students, teachers need a sense of positive belief, high expectations, and a sense of trust. They require on-going opportunities to work in small groups, time to dialogue, (including work group reflection time), and opportunities for collective decision making.

Benard suggests teachers need to develop their own resiliency through the exchange of personal resiliency stories that depict Aovercoming the odds.@ The first step in creating schools that fosters resilience begins with teachers reflecting upon their personal beliefs around resiliency, and later collectively reaching consensus that resiliency is Ainnate@ (p. 3). This is true for most effective change processes in Indigenous communities; the community must see the workers Awalking their talk@ so to speak. When the Indigenous community sees the workers sharing their personal stories, they are more apt to see change become a reality.

In the classroom, teaching to student strengths rather than deficiencies focuses on their intrinsic motivation and keeps their sense of positive momentum. With the help of teachers who recognize their innate resiliency, students will learn to recognize how their Ainternalized negative environmental messages@ hamper their sense of innate resiliency (p. 3). Teachers need to provide Agrowth opportunities@ through self reflection, critical thinking skills, dialogue, experiential learning, creative expression, and involvement in curriculum(p. 3). Involvement to this level of classroom decision making (including participatory evaluation) is very inclusionary and empowering for students, to the point that they are more self reflective (p. 3).

Benard concludes, AWhen teachers care, believe in, and embrace the Acity kids,@ they are not only enabling their healthy development and successful learning, but creating inside-out social change; they are building a creative and compassionate citizenry (p. 4). Critical to this whole process is the willingness of teachers to release their sense of tight control, to be patient, and trust the process.

CHAPTER 7

ASSET BUILDING: FROM CHILDREN WITH PROBLEMS TO CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Research tends to search out a problem, then look for solutions to the problem. Asset based research invites the reader to make a paradigm shift by moving from a problem based to solution based approach. Thus, asset building research moves the reader to searching for, and developing developmental assets in children.

Gilliland=s (1999) *Teaching the Native American* notes the importance of recognizing the positives of Indian education, Aa great deal has been written about what is wrong with Indian education, but too little emphasis has been placed on positive ideas for making education better and more relevant to the needs of these students@ (p. xvii).

Since we believe that all Indigenous children are AGifts of the Creator,@ it is our obligation to help children recognize and determine what their specific gifts are. Thus, we are moving away from seeing children and the challenges they face as problems that need reduction, or in need of controlling their Arisky behavior through prevention and intervention@ to working with children who have assets amidst the challenging world that they face daily. Therefore, asset based research (Search Institute, 1997) supports our belief in honoring the Agifts or assets@ of each child; our challenge as parents, educators, and community support services is to build on the assets of each child.

Below, we share the definition of Aasset building@ and the A40 developmental assets@ as researched by the Search Institute.

Defining Asset Building

The Search Institute defines asset building as Aan approach that challenges communities to tap the caring, creative energies of families, neighborhoods, schools, congregations, workplaces, youth organizations, and groups of people like you to begin the important work of transforming our communities into united, healthy environments committed to youth@ (p. 1-6). Essentially we are Ainoculating@ our children when we build on their developmental assets: we are boosting their natural ability to tackle the risks and challenges of their well-being, thus infusing them with the power to be resilient, competent, and responsible (p. 1-7).

The 40 Developmental Assets

The Search Institute studied Adevelopmental assets@ in children and youth since 1989. Using a survey entitled, *Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* in 1996, the institute identified the current 40 developmental assets. Their research was based on surveys conducted during the 1996-1997 school year when they surveyed 99, 462 public school students in grades 6 through 12 in 213 towns within 25 different states.

The Search Institute (1997) outlines the following 40 Developmental Assets that help youth grow up to become healthy, caring, and responsible young adults. The assets are reported in 2 separate categories, external and internal assets, with 4 separate categories within the two groups (as outlined below).

External Assets include the following 4 categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time. These four categories pertain to the positive developmental environments and experiences that young people experience through formal and

informal contacts with parents, extended family, and other caregivers (including teachers).

Within each of the four categories are the following 20 specific sets:

External Asset: Support

1. Family support - family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication - young person and her/his parent(s) communicate.
3. Other adult relationships - young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood - young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate - school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling - parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

External Asset: Empowerment

7. Community values youth - young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as resources - young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others - young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety - young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

External Asset: Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries - family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person=s whereabouts.
12. School boundaries - school provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries - neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people=s behavior.

14. Adult role models - parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

15. Positive peer influence - young person=s best friends model responsible behavior.

16. High expectations - both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

External Asset: Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities - young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.

18. Youth programs - young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community.

19. Religious (spiritual) community - young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious (spiritual) institution (setting).

20. Time at home - young person is out with friends Awith nothing special to do@ two or fewer nights per week.

Internal Assets include the following 4 categories: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. Parents and other caregivers (teachers and community service programs) nurture these assets in children by encouraging their natural curiosity; in their teen years, these developmental assets help them with an Ainternal compass@ that helps them in their decision making, essentially helping them make Awise choices@ (p. 1-8).

Within each of the four categories are the following 20 specific sets.

Internal Assets: Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement motivation - young person is motivated to do well in school.

22. School engagement - young person is actively engaged in learning.

23. Homework - young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

24. Bonding to school - young person cares about her or his school.

25. Reading for pleasure - young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Internal Asset: Positive Values

26. Caring - young person places high value on helping other people.

27. Equality and social justice - young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

28. Integrity - young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.

29. Honesty - young person Atells the truth even when it is not easy.@

30. Responsibility - young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

31. Restraint - young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Internal Asset: Social Competencies

32. Planning and decision making - young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.

33. Interpersonal competence - young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

34. Cultural competence - young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.

35. Resistance skills - young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

36. Peaceful conflict resolution - young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Internal Asset: Positive Identity

37. Personal power - young person feels he or she has control over Athings that happen to me.@

38. Self-esteem - young person reports having a high self-esteem.

39. Sense of purpose - young person reports that Amy life has a purpose.@

40. Positive view of personal future - young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Developing Assets in Children

The Search Institute (1997) suggests six guidelines to facilitate the asset building process in children, all of which are cost free and require no special training. *First* and foremost, they suggest that everyone can build assets in children. Essentially children need to *hear consistent messages* across the community. Everyone plays a role; whether a child, young person or an adult, we all have a role. *Secondly,* they suggest *all young people need assets.* Whatever a child=s economic background, all young people need assets. *Thirdly, relationships* are crucial. For children to develop strong assets, it is imperative that concerned adults help them develop relationships between themselves and adults, within the peer group, and between young children and older youth (mentors). Makokis= (2000) study clearly outlines the urgency and importance of helping young people develop positive relationships as a means of dropout prevention. In fact, her research found that relationship development is a protective factor against students dropping out of provincial high schools. Research by Chisan (2001) denotes the same conclusion, Arelationships are key, as is the need to build on student strengths and help them find their Gifts". One of her participants shared the following:

> When I first began, I was allowed to open myself, ... someone told me that I=m there for you, [I will] listen ... Hearing that and then knowing that I can trust, I did. So, I find that in my studies too, I am more successful than I was previously. I never thought I would be getting A=s, and it felt really good that first term seeing [them] and knowing that this was because I opened myself for help, and I let my mind expand. (p. 65)

Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with educators, other peers, and adult role models is critical if Indigenous students are to embrace successes in school. *Fourthly*, the Search Institute suggests that asset building is an *on-going process. Fifthly, consistency in messages* is crucial. Young people need to hear consistent messages about what is important in terms of the behaviors, attitudes, and values that parents, teachers, and community support workers expect of them. Adults confuse them when we say one thing, then do or say something else. They need to receive consistent messages from all their caregivers to enhance their developmental assets. *Finally, intentional redundancy* is important. We need to continually reinforce across the years and life of young people the developmental assets.

Assets in Practice

The Search Institute provides stories specific to both the external and internal assets. For the purposes of this research, we share the following *positive identity* based asset story. (The authors entitle it ATeens want to know you believe in them.@):

> Brenda Holben, prevention coordinator for Cherry Creek School District in Colorado, knows that building assets for youth requires input from youth. That=s why she started a youth advisory board comprised of teenagers from each of the seven high schools she works with. At the end of the retreat, one boy commented, AThe thing I=m going to take back that I remember most is that you adults didn=t treat us like kids. We were all like one.@ Holben added: AThat=s when= it hit me. Kids don=t want to be criticized - they want to know you believe in them@ (Section 2, Stories, p. 2-18).

Ms. Holben, the Prevention Coordinator at Cherry Creek School, is in the process of developing these assets in her students: community values youth, youth as resources, service to others, caring, and personal power.

Young people want adults to believe in them. They want to be treated with respect, and be allowed *space (air time)* to legitimately voice their concerns. We say youth are our *future*

leaders; however, there are times that adults do not allow them to practice their leadership skills. Asset building is the empowerment tool that builds on student strengths, thus empowering them.

CHAPTER 8

LEARNING STYLES: FINDING, NURTURING AND HONORING OUR GIFTS

Honoring our Gifts

Prior to European contact, Canada=s Indigenous people lived off the land by utilizing the gifts of every tribal member. Children were considered Gifts of the Creator, and they were loaned to the parents. Tribal survival meant that the gifts of each member were utilized and honored in a shared manner as part of the collective good.

Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, and Peacock=s (2003) research, *Native Students Speak About Finding the Good Path: The Seventh Generation,* outlines the stories of 120 (Indigenous) youth from across the United States and Canada. They interviewed Indigenous youth who attended public, tribal, federal and alternative schools in urban, rural, and reservation schools over a three year period (1997 to 2000). Utilizing student stories, their research covers topics such as identity, challenges of life, resilience, honoring our gifts, making it in school, what it means to >live= the good path, and lessons for teachers serving Indigenous students.

In honoring students, and their multiple ways of learning, Bergstrom, et al. start by sharing a traditional hunting metaphor:

> In many Native cultures, both males and females contributed to the good of the community by hunting, and many different talents were needed to make the hunt successful. The young hunters needed sharp eyesight and observation skills to see the slightest movement on the horizon or in the woods. They needed spatial gifts to use the lay of the land to hunt effectively. They needed logical and mathematical gifts to consider the numbers in herds and figure out possibilities in the hunt. They needed physical gifts to move as graceful and powerful hunters. And they needed the gift of language to learn from the stories of past hunts, told by their elders around campfires. But even these skills were not enough for a successful hunt. Hunters needed to have a keen knowledge of the others in the hunting party to figure out when silence was necessary, when words were not possible. They needed the gifts of understanding and predicting nature in order to tell the difference between a dust whorl and dust raised by a herd, to read clues in animal tracks and to listen to the wind and know how its direction might affect the

> hunt. Some hunters needed musical intelligence to sing the songs of the hunt and discern the meanings behind the songs of the birds. And they needed spiritual intelligence to understand the meanings in their dreams and the guidance of their ancestors. Finally, they needed self-understanding to recognize their own individual strengths and know when and how to use them to best benefit their tribe. A hunter with a particular strength needed to know when to stay in the background until his or her particular talent or leadership was needed. Hunters used these gifts in harmony with one another (p. 88).

Culture and Learning Styles: Myth or Reality

Acknowledging that Indigenous children are Gifts of Creation, educators must embrace, nurture, and enhance the many gifts they bring to the classroom. Recognizing that Indigenous children come with a different worldview, learning style is critical to their learning process, and more importantly, to their success in the classroom. Children of Indigenous descent view the world through a wholistic lens that includes the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual realms (Ningwakwe Learning Press, 2002; Rhodes, 1988). Rhodes= (1988) article, *Holistic Teaching/Learning for Native American Students* (citing Wallis, 1984), Apleads for a holistic approach for Indian students@ recognizing that Indigenous students Aappear to indicate a different thought process for Native Americans than for the population in general@ (p. 22). Swisher and Dehyle=s (1989) article, *The Styles of Learning are Different, but the Teaching is Just the Same: Suggestions for Teachers of American Indian Youth*, suggests that cultural differences play a significant role:

> It is our premise that people perceive the world in different ways, learn about the world in different ways, and demonstrate what they have learned in different ways. The approach to learning and the demonstration of what one has learned is influenced by the values, norms, and socialization practices of the culture in which the individual has been enculturated (p. 2).

Their research describes different Native American tribal groups, including Navajo, Oglala Sioux, Yaqui and Kwakuitl and includes specific examples of how children learn differently within their specific tribes. They invite the reader to look at the uniqueness of each

Native American child=s cultural background noting, Awhen viewed as cultural strengths and not weaknesses or deficiencies, the natural skills and abilities of Indian children contribute to providing a total picture of a child=s learning style (p. 4). Their article, along with More=s (1987) *Native Indian Learning Styles: A Review for Researchers and Teachers* suggests that a small body of research examines Native American learning styles. Swisher and Deyhle (1989) suggest there are some Acommon patterns or methods in the way these students come to know or understand the world. They approach tasks visually, seem to prefer to learn by careful observation which precedes performance, and seem to learn in their natural settings experientially@ (p. 5). Their conclusion that AAmerican Indian students come to learn about the world in ways that are different from mainstream students@ (p. 5) has implications for educators since most Aeducation for American Indian children is still characterized by a curriculum presented from a purely Western (European) perspective that ignores the cultures and values of American Indians, a situation resulting in academic failure and extremely high dropout rates (Van Hamme;1996, Steinhauer, 1999; Makokis, 2000). In fact, Van Hamme=s (1996, citing Apple & Weis, 1986; Ogbu, 1987) article *American Indian Cultures and the Classroom* argues that Amulticultural education today is a result of the failure of the traditional American school system to promote academic achievement in students whose cultural backgrounds are different from that of the dominant orientation. American educational institutions have long functioned under the notion that the responsibility for the widespread underachievement of minority students lies within the students, rather than with school practices which disempower students with different cultural backgrounds@ (p. 24). She warns against generalizations which can result in A... American Indian children being viewed as either very shy and withdrawn or as passive, unmotivated, and uninvolved in the learning process@ (p. 28) as these generalizations can lead to

further stereotypes: Acare must be taken to ensure that learning styles are evaluated in an objective way for each individual in order to avoid having Alearning style@ become just another way of stereotyping students" (p. 29, Van Hamme, 1996, citing Guild, 1994). Van Hamme goes on to note Athe curriculum content and teaching methods in American schools have served to perpetuate the cultural and social values of the dominant society at the expense of those whose cultural values, traditions, and ways of experiencing and learning about the world conflict with this worldview@ (p. 24). Rhodes= (1988) article *Holistic Teaching/Learning for Native American Students* warns against assuming that all children learn the same, AAs educators, we most often assume that all students learn basically the same, as do most textbooks. We assume that the Astudent learning process@ is basically similar to the way we learned when we were that age. AIt worked for us, so it must work for everyone@ (p. 25). These authors clearly recognize the importance of honoring Acultural diversity@ with the resultant implications for teaching to varied learning styles. In fact, Van Hamme and others note (Chisan, 2001; Makokis, 2000; Makokis, 2001; Steinhauer, 1999; Wilson, 1992; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997;) AResearch on the education of American Indian and other minority group students has shown that schools that respect and support a child=s culture demonstrate significantly better outcomes in educating those students@ (p. 21). In fact, Deyhle and Swisher=s (1997) *Research in American Indian and Alaska Native Education: From Assimilation to Self-Determination* notes the strength of cultural inclusion, ARather than a barrier to overcome, research suggest[s] that a strong cultural identity enhances school success@ (p. 126).

These findings have long term implications for educators as they grapple with the unique diversity of urban Indigenous children while recognizing that school learner success is enhanced, Aif the school system is to support and respect a child=s culture, it is necessary that there be an

understanding of the world in which the child actually lives@ (p. 26), including each child=s unique wholistic, multi-faceted learning style. Van Hamme (1996) notes AThe most important implication of the research on learning styles and their interaction with teaching styles and the educational process is that each child must be taught in a way that maximizes his or her potential by identifying and building on individual cognitive strengths@ (p. 29).

Steinhauer=s (1999) Master=s thesis explores the factors that affect academic achievement. Although her qualitative study focuses on First Nation students residing and attending First Nation schools, she too stresses the importance of Alearning styles@ in helping students achieve success. Curriculum, cultural worldview, learning styles, and communication patterns all have implications for student success. Steinhauer (1999, p. 28) (cites Baker, 1983, Wood and Clay, 1996) notes that ASchool curricula are generally structured and geared to serve white middle class students. The curriculum content and instructional strategies do not take into account students= cultural backgrounds (Baker, 1983). The cultural belief systems, learning and communication styles, and perceptions of school and education of minority groups are incompatible with Anglo cultures, leading to cultural conflict more particularly cultural detachment, alienation, isolation, and lowered self-esteem in Indian students@ (Wood and Clay, 1996).

As there is enough research to confirm that all children learn differently, Ahow do we honor the gifts of all children in our classrooms from diverse cultural backgrounds? Certainly, those gifts will not be nutured by doing more of the same and incorporating the >chalk talk= method that many of us learned at the various teacher education post secondary centers of learning. Gilliland=s (1999) text *Teaching the Native American* speaks to our need to adapt to varied learning styles:

> AAll children have their own learning style, the way in which they learn most easily. Some are auditory learners, others visual. Some find kinesthetic experience most effective. Some of these differences are differences in innate ability. Others are caused by a learning disability in one area. For most children, however, the differences are cultural. That is, Athey are caused by a difference in early learning experience@ (p. 7).

As children are the creator's gifts, one of the greatest challenges for teachers is to honor the learning style of children entrusted to their care by accommodating their teaching style to the needs of children.

Learning Styles: What do we mean?

For the sake of this literature review, we adhere to More=s (1987) definition of learning style. In his article, *Native Learning Styles: A Review for Researchers and Teachers,* More defines learning style as Athe characteristic or usual strategies by which a student learns" (p. 18). Having conducted interviews and workshops with both teachers and Native parents, he found that both groups define learning style broadly, including conditions that surround the learner, the type of instruction, the thinking processes, the relationship that exists between the teacher and the student and beyond Asensory mode and physical setting@ (p. 18). Such a definition allows for multiple learning styles to co-exist. He defines learning style as AThe characteristic or usual strategies of acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding by an individual" (p. 19) as explained below:

> The definition allows for a number of Learning Style=s to simultaneously be present; it also allows one to refer to Astronger@ and Aweaker@ Learning Style=s as well as Apreferred@ Learning Style in the second definition admits, addition, that each Learning style/ability may be stronger or weaker. Learning Style includes more than sensory mode (hearing, seeing, touching) or physical environment (heat, light, time of day). It entails each cognitive process by which the student learns, including internal cognitive processes and relevant external conditions (p. 19).

This definition allows for a broad, wholistic approach, inclusive of the multiple intelligence research of Goleman (Goleman, 1998). Researchers Deyhle and Swisher pose the question, AHas the research on learning styles been too general and instead limited the opportunities for Indian students to be fulfilled?@ (p. 182). This is a question each educator and school system might reflect upon as we continuously look for better ways of serving all children in every classroom.

Multiple Intelligence Theory and Indigenous Learners

Multiple intelligence theory assumes there are more ways of learning besides the traditional verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical approach. According to Gardner 1997 (as cited by Stanford, 2003), there are eight intelligences; he suggests educators Aview intelligence as the capacity for solving problems and fashioning products in context-rich and naturalistic settings rather than place the traditional importance on the ability to produce a large quotient@ (p. 81), because multiple intelligence work allows for children to be viewed as Aequals regardless of a quotient produced from an intelligence exam or of academic areas for which they develop competence@ (p. 81). In fact, Stanford, 2003 (citing Janes, Koutsopanagos, Mason & Villaranda, 2000) suggests that Aunsuccessful, unmotivated students have experienced academic growth when exposed to multifaceted interventions and techniques principled by MI theory@ (p. 81). What are those multifaceted interventions and techniques? Stanford (2003) outlines the eight multiple intelligences (MI) as follows:

1. Verbal/linguistic intelligence *or word smart*: the production of language, abstract reasoning, symbolic thinking, conceptual patterning, reading, and writing. According to the Alberta Teachers= Association (ATA) (2001) (citing Gardner), this is the most widely shared human competence and is evidenced in the works of poets, novelists,

journalists and public speakers.

2. Logical/mathematical intelligence *or number smart*: the capacity to recognize patterns, work with abstract symbols (e.g., numbers, geometric shapes), and discern relationships or see connections between separate and distinct pieces of information. Logical intelligence is most often very developed in mathematicians, scientists, and detectives (ATA, 2001).
3. Visual/spatial intelligence *or art smart*: visual arts, navigation, mapmaking, architecture, and games requiring the ability to visualize objects from different perspectives and angles. Examples of spacial intelligence include sailors, pilots, sculptors, painters, and architects (ATA, 2001).
4. Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence *or body smart*: the ability to use the body to express emotion, to play a game, and to create a new product. Examples of bodily/kinesthetic intelligence include athletes, dancers, surgeons, and craftspeople (ATA, 2001).
5. Musical/rhythmic intelligence *or music smart*: capacities such as the recognition and use of rhythmic and tonal patterns and sensitivity to sounds from the environment, the human voice and musical instruments. Examples of musical/rhythmic intelligence include composers, conductors, musicians, vocalists and those considered >sensitive listeners= (ATA, 2001).
6. Interpersonal intelligence *or people smart*: the ability to work cooperatively with others in small group, as well as the ability to communicate verbally and nonverbally with other people. Teachers, social workers, actors, and politicians demonstrate aspects of interpersonal intelligence (ATA, 2001).
7. Inteapersonal intelligence *or self smart*: the internal aspects of the self, such as

knowledge of feelings, range of emotional responses, thinking processes, self-reflection, and a sense of intuition among spiritual realities. Psychologists, spiritual leaders and philosophers demonstrate intrapersonal intelligence (ATA, 2001).

8. Naturalistic intelligence or *nature smart*: the ability to recognize patterns in nature and classify objects, the mastery of taxonomy, sensitivity to other features of the natural world, and an understanding of different species. Examples of persons with this gift include explorers and scientists such as environmentalists, botanists, and zoologists (ATA, 2001). [1]

9. Existential intelligence: the human response to being alive in all ways (Gardner is still not satisfied that he has enough physiological brain evidence to conclusively establish this as an intelligence) (p. 81).

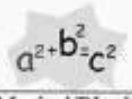
It is important to note that Stanford (2003), (citing Armstrong, 1994) notes that the following four points are very important in MI theory. First, all persons possess each of the multiple intelligences; secondly, all persons have capacities in all eight intelligences; thirdly, all of the intelligences function together in ways unique to each person; and finally, some people seem to exhibit high levels of functioning in all, or most of the intelligences, while others appear to lack all but the most basic elements of the intelligences (p. 81). While MI theory has been recognized as a Aphilosophy of education or an attitude toward learning@ (Stanford, 2003, p. 81) it is important to note that most schools place greater emphasis on Averbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical@ (p. 81), while the research is clear that eight exist. Thus, we have much to learn about how to effectively meet the needs of all learners. The research (Stanford, 2003;

[1]See *Exploring Multiple Intelligences Booklet (2001) by Alberta Teachers= Association for detailed self-assessment entitled > my intelligence profile= and student profile, along with sample lesson plan inclusion.*

Alberta Teachers= Association, 2001) clearly implies that we must move away from the traditional Achalk talk@ standing in the front of the classroom, writing information on the board, asking questions on the assigned readings, and using work book activities (at the elementary level and having students regurgitate information) to classrooms that Ashift methods of presentation from linguistic to spatial to musical, and so on, often combining intelligences in creative ways@ (p. 82).

In fact, MI theory makes a great contribution by proposing to teachers that their repertoire of teaching techniques, tools and strategies move beyond linguistic (p. 82); in many respects MI theory forces educators to look beyond how they have learned, to new ends as they search out new ways of meeting each student=s unique learning style. In a major study conducted across the United States, John Goodland (1984, as cited by Stanford, 2003) found that nearly 70% of classroom time was spent on Ateacher talk@: teachers talking *to* students through lectures and instructions for workbooks and worksheets rather than stimulating, or Aawaken[ing] the slumbering brains@ (p. 82) that populate our schools.

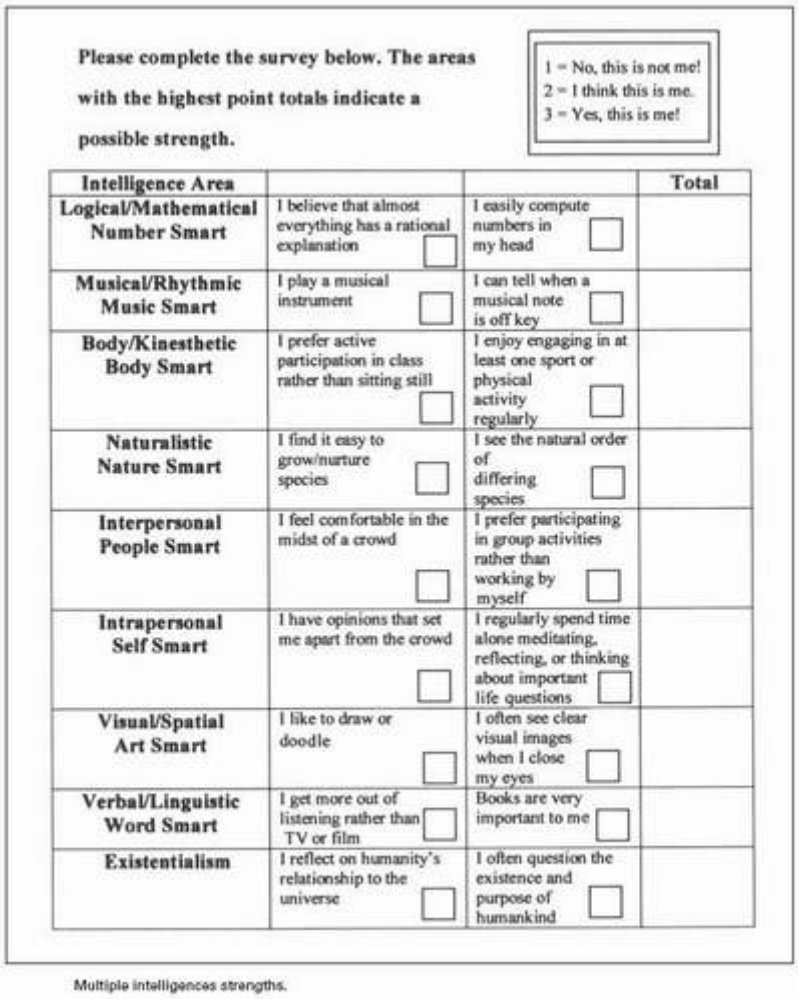
To be effective in our classrooms, MI theory requires an expanded assessment method that moves beyond the traditional pencil paper tests to alternatives such as logs, journals, graphic organizers, observational checklists, video samples, rubrics, miscue (mistake) analyses, and portfolios (p. 82). These examples offer students alternative forms of demonstrating learning as opposed to the traditional simple paper pencil tests, while at the same time requiring educators to Arethink how students can show what they know@ (p. 83).

Intelligence Area	K-2	3-5	Middle School	High School
Logical/Mathematical Number Smart 	Divide and numerically represent the division of pizza, a large cookie, a pie, etc.	Describe and evaluate a recipe	Multiply a recipe for a larger group	Use graphic organizers to generalize computational attributes of fractions
Musical/Rhythmic Music Smart 	Use a metronome to discuss 4/4 and 2/4 measures of music with whole and ½ notes	Additional complexity as developmentally needed	Break a set of tones into various groups to learn division of fractions	
Body/Kinesthetic Body Smart 	Use manipulatives to represent whole, 1 of 2 (1/2), 2 of 4 (2/4), etc.	Skip/dance using musical complexities	Use drama to depict fractional concepts	
 Naturalistic Nature Smart	Study the anatomy of a flower; explore the core of an apple, orange, etc.		Use a telescope/microscope to see parts of the greater whole	
 Interpersonal People Smart	In small groups discuss what happens when 1 piece of 4 is missing	Describe how being a team member contributes a part to the whole		Discuss the "Whole is greater than its parts" concept
 Intrapersonal Self Smart	Reflect on common experiences in a school day and how much time is spent on each part (e.g., ¼ in listening, ½ in centers, ¼ in specials or transitions)		Budgeting personal time	Time management
 Visual/Spatial Art Smart	Use playdough to represent basic fractions; different colors and various textures could also be used	Vary textures and complexities		
Verbal/Linguistic Word Smart 	Write and draw about basic fractions; use a spreadsheet program to illustrate and write basic generalizations about fractions	Write a poem about fractional concepts, and write "Guess what I am" descriptions whereby learners describe a fraction	Write jokes or oxymorons about fractional concepts	
Existentialism 		Demonstrate understanding of whole and part	Articulate understanding of existence within society as a whole	Articulate understanding of existence within universe

Multiple intelligence activites related to the topic of fractions.

Figure 14

Figure 14 depicts multiple intelligence activities related to Afractions@ and how one might help the student learn aspects of fractions at the various grade levels. The following graphic is a multiple intelligences strengths survey tool as depicted by Stanford. [2]



Please complete the survey below. The areas with the highest point totals indicate a possible strength.

1 = No, this is not me!
2 = I think this is me.
3 = Yes, this is me!

Intelligence Area			Total
Logical/Mathematical Number Smart	I believe that almost everything has a rational explanation ☐	I easily compute numbers in my head ☐	
Musical/Rhythmic Music Smart	I play a musical instrument ☐	I can tell when a musical note is off key ☐	
Body/Kinesthetic Body Smart	I prefer active participation in class rather than sitting still ☐	I enjoy engaging in at least one sport or physical activity regularly ☐	
Naturalistic Nature Smart	I find it easy to grow/nurture species ☐	I see the natural order of differing species ☐	
Interpersonal People Smart	I feel comfortable in the midst of a crowd ☐	I prefer participating in group activities rather than working by myself ☐	
Intrapersonal Self Smart	I have opinions that set me apart from the crowd ☐	I regularly spend time alone meditating, reflecting, or thinking about important life questions ☐	
Visual/Spatial Art Smart	I like to draw or doodle ☐	I often see clear visual images when I close my eyes ☐	
Verbal/Linguistic Word Smart	I get more out of listening rather than TV or film ☐	Books are very important to me ☐	
Existentialism	I reflect on humanity's relationship to the universe ☐	I often question the existence and purpose of humankind ☐	

Multiple intelligences strengths.

Figure 15

Multiple Intelligences: Immediate Action

The Alberta Teachers= Association 2001 (citing Lazear, 1994) suggests educators take immediate action in the following listed simple ways to implement multiple intelligence theory in our classrooms:

[2]*See Stanford, P. (2003) and Alberta Teachers=s Association (2001) for excellent teacher, student assessments, including lesson plans on MI theory.*

- $ teach students about multiple intelligences
- $ vary your instruction by teaching with multiple intelligences
- $ provide assignments that require students to work in the various intelligence areas
- $ use a variety of assessment devices appropriate to the multiple intelligences, including portfolios, projects, performances, and journals
- $ build a set of student intelligence profiles and keep anecdotal reports on student progress
- $ give students many and varied opportunities to develop their intelligences and to practice using them in lessons
- $ set up intelligences stations or centres or packages which contain the materials, supplies, and tools of the various intelligences
- $ involve students in designing assignments
- $ provide students with variety and choice in their learning
- $ experiment with Adomain@ projects, displays, exhibits, and performances. Specify that each of these must include each of the intelligences
- $ invite Aexperts@ into the classroom to share their talents

Indigenous Approach to Learning

Ningwakwe Learning Press (2002) *Native Learning Styles* (revised edition) used the Master=s thesis of Diane Hill as the foundation of their work around Aboriginal Learning Styles. Her thesis, entitled *Holistic Learning: A Model of Education Based on Aboriginal Cultural Philosophy*, recognizes the need for a holistic approach to learning that encompasses the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of being as illustrated in the figure 16 graphic.

Figure 16

This graphic is a medicine wheel with the four directions: the physical (body) is associated with *action* where the primary learning occurs best by Adoing@; in the intuitive (spirit) *or the visioning or seeing*, the primary learning occurs best by Atrusting inner knowledge@ and incorporating what we already know, feel, and are doing; the emotional (relational) is the *feeling or relating to*, and the primary learning occurs best by seeing, hearing and through dialogue; and the mental (mind) is *understanding or knowing* where the primary learning occurs best by seeing written words (p. 20 and 26). Like MI theory, she suggests that we are always working with any combination of the four aspects of the *Aboriginal Approach to Learning model.* According to her research, physical learners (doing/action) require tasks and activities that include:

$ handouts with exercises, review, able to write, check off information

$ change of pace (activities need to change often)

$ loose framework

$ information relevant and to the point

$ use of videos

$ small group work

$ hands on projects

$ personal, experiential stories with variety

Emotional (relational) learners require tasks and activities that include:

$ role play

$ writing/retelling personal stories

$ joke sharing/telling

$ scavenger hunts

$ use of circles (as means of dialogue)

$ theme bingo

$ developing comic, picture, story books

$ charades

$ teaching with props

$ volunteering to work with special events (spelling bee)

$ video/audio recordings

Intuitive (visioning or seeing) learners require tasks and activities that include:

$ self assessment test

$ experience-sharing discussions

$ games (cross word puzzles, trivial pursuit, jeopardy, scrabble)

$ debates

$ book discussions

$ videos

$ oral history

$ self awareness exercises

$ values and beliefs activities

$ individual and group work

$ role plays

Finally, according to Hill, (as cited by Ningwakwe Learning Press, 2002) the mental learner (learner of seeing written words) require tasks and activities that include:

$ debates

$ role plays

$ field trips

$ film activities

$ audio books (read-along)

$ computer games

$ organizing events

$ clearly defined tasks[3]

Hill concludes that in order to bring about educational change, Aeducation can, and does, affect people [Hill, p. 7] and when infused with an aboriginal philosophy, the outcomes can be measured quantitatively (mental and physical outcomes) and qualitatively (spiritual an emotional outcomes)@ (p. 40).

[3]See Native Learning Styles, Revised Edition (Ningwakwe Learning Press, 2002) for Learning Styles Assessment Tool

Thus, the end result is that learning styles, multiple intelligence theory, and an Aaboriginal perspective@ utilizing the medicine wheel do make a good fit when looking at multiple, creative ways of serving Indigenous children in classrooms. Gilliland (1999) best sums up the need for a wholistic approach to teaching/learning:

> AEvery student has his or her own unique learning style, the way in which he or she learns most easily. Some are auditory learners, others visual. Some find kinesthetic experience most effective.
>
> Research has shown that students taught through their preferred learning style achieve more academically, are most interested in the subject studied, like the way the subject is taught, and want to learn other school subjects in the same way. It is our responsibility to learn as much as possible about the learning styles of each student in our classroom and to adapt our instruction to those learning styles.@ (p. 59)

CHAPTER 9

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Traditional Approaches

In most traditional societies, young children learned through Anatural consequences of their actions@ (Gilliland, 1999, p. 110), in an unstructured manner, and more through consequence, and suggestion, than authoritarian direction. Different tribes had different cultural patterns of self and social control. Jeanne Bearcrane, a Crow woman (cited by Gilliland, 1999) shares the following teaching around discipline:

> It is common to see American Indian children, even the very young, running freely at traditional settings such as pow wows, hand games, feasts, certain ceremonies, and athletic events.... To those unaware of American Indian parental permissiveness, the children may appear unruly and their custodians apathetic. However, such permissiveness and the children=s free-spirited behavior are not outside the norms of traditional American Indian settings.@ (p. 110)

We share this story as a means of demonstrating differing views of child management. To a person unfamiliar with different cultural patterns, children running around Afreely@ might be considered unruly, or undisciplined; the reality, however, is that Afree-spirited@ behavior occurs within established boundaries.

Behavior Support Strategies/Plans

Successful teachers of Indigenous children have some cultural knowledge of the Indigenous children; they know and incorporate the cultural patterns of control from which the children come (Gilliland, 1999). Therefore, successful classroom management of Indigenous children requires some cultural understanding of the Nation with which one is working. Gilliland says, AIf students are interested in their studies, there will be few discipline problems@ (p. 123). Equally important, if students feel that their teachers are interested in their cultural backgrounds, are they more likely to report less discipline challenges?

This would appear to be the case as shared by Carol, a Navajo student in the study conducted by Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, & Peacock (2003). As reflected in the following quotation, students are more likely to enjoy classes where teachers acknowledge their culture (and one could assume, be less of a discipline challenge):

> Last year, I had one teacher, Mr. S-----. He was a history teacher, and I like usually don=t like my history teachers cause they never teach anything about Native Americans. I walked into the room, and all I saw on this walls were pictures of Native American people. And I think, AOkay, I=m going to like this guy.@ And then, when we got to Native American subjects, I think he spent about four weeks…I liked that guy, he was pretty nice. And the weird thing about it was, he=d always ask me after he said something if that was right. (p. 162)

Effective teachers of all children are more unlikely to encounter behavior challenges simply because they are finding multiple creative ways of challenging the positive energies of children, while eliminating boredom, which can lead to Abehavior problems@ as shared by Norm Dorpat, a non-Native teacher in the northwest (in Miller Cleary & Peacock=s 1998 study of teachers):

> If they don=t find meaningfulness and a method of instruction that is responsive to their growing edge, they turn off, and tune out, and drop out, or get pushed out, or they end up being Abehavior problems@. Kids don=t come that way. We make them that way. I think the system has a responsibility to be more responsive to kids. The curriculum is so linear and structured, and you look into our classrooms, even as young as kindergarten, and you go in there and the desks are in rows, columns, and kids are doing ditto sheets, and this lock-step curriculum doesn=t fit where they are as people. They ultimately get squashed, and give up, or they rebel, or they become like little zombies going through the system, and that=s the worst-case scenario. (p. 212)

AConnecting@ to students certainly helps in our student/teacher relationships. Bergstrom et.al., declare that, AWhat makes otherwise average teachers good teachers and turns good teachers into great teachers is their ability to connect with students effectively and often@ (p. 161).

Having noted this, one might speculate that effective teachers and teaching practices detract from Adiscipline or behavior problems@ in the classroom. In fact, Gilliland (1999) (citing Wayson 128) notes, AA study of 500 well-disciplined U.S. and Canadian schools found that these schools focused on positive attitudes and prevention, not punishment; problems, not symptoms; faith in their students and their teachers; and they emphasized that their schools were places to do valuable, successful, productive work@ (p. 118). They go on to report that achievement is motivated positively through interest, self-esteem, self respect and not through fear of punishment (p. 118).

This is supported by many of the student voices in Bergstrom, Miller Cleary and Peacock=s research (2003) of over 120 American (Indigenous) high school students across the United States and Canada. Students must feel a sense of belonging, and a sense of equally consistent >fair treatment= in discipline practices. Megan, an Ojibwe participant in the study, reported on inconsistent discipline practices and the sense of >not belonging= and hints of racism:

> Oh, I=ve seen it like millions of times, you know, like a Native student late for class or something, and they write that person up. They=ll say, AWhy are you late?@ And they may give them a tardy slip to get detention, and a White student may walk in and they=ll say, AWell, why were you late?@ And [the White students will] say, AOh, my locker got stuck,@ and the teacher will be like, AOkay, well don=t be late next time!@ I=ve seen that happen, seen Native people get yelled at more for like the same things that White students may be doing. If a Native guy=s wearing really baggy pants, you know, they=ll make him go home, or they=ll suspend him because they=ll think, AOh, he must be in a gang. Oh, must have a gun.@ And then, if some basketball players wear baggy pants, if some White kid is wearing baggy pants, he might not get suspended: AOh, he=s a basketball player. He won=t be hiding any guns.@ (p. 46)

Bergstrom et al. note, AIf students feel they are a part of the school, are treated fairly by teachers, and feel close to people at school, they have better emotional health and lower levels of involvement in risky behavior@ (p. 160).

According to Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern (1990), AResearch on effective schools has shown that a key characteristic of programs that foster *good discipline* is the creation of a Atotal school environment@ rather than adopting isolated practices to counter behavioral problems@ (p. 31). In fact, these authors note that successful community schools have shared beliefs, rituals and ceremonies (p. 31). They believe that all relationships become consistent with the schools clear value system (such as Indigenous People=s belief in the Creator=s Natural Laws of honesty, kindness/caring, sharing, strength/determination) thereby ensuring Apositive relationships@ do in fact develop.

Gilliland (1992, 1999) makes the following *culturally acceptable classroom management* suggestions (For further details see the noted textbook chapters 7, and 8 respectfully as noted by publishing years):

Follow cultural patterns of control

i) use unstructured discipline

ii) stay calm and easygoing

iii) use praise, affection, and understanding

iv) don=t reward bad behavior

v) let children get their attention from good behavior

vi) isolate the problem child

vii) make punishment immediate, then forgive

viii) whisper

ix) build mutual respect

x) use peer group control

Build interest, a love of learning, desire to achieve, and mutual cooperation

i) teach decision making

ii) encourage self discipline

iii) help students develop their own goals

iv) let students make many decisions for themselves

v) focus on problems, not symptoms

vi) work on one thing at a time

vii) let students know your expectations

viii) emphasize character

ix) set the example

Gilliland (1999) makes a very important point that is supported in the voices of the students in Bergstrom, Miller Cleary & Peacock=s research. AClassroom control is ninety-five percent motivation and interest and only five percent Adiscipline.@ Motivation depends upon our learning the students= needs and interests. If we meet their needs, students will work willingly. If we provide for their interests, they will be enthusiastic.@ (p. 115)

Quoetone (Ojibwe student) shared a little story that demonstrates the importance of being interested in students:

> One of my favorite teachers…[is] over at the [Area Learning Center] right now. He=s just a really neat guy. He=s working on his doctorate in education. He=s somebody you can talk to just about anything. He=s like also the librarian over there. [We] talk about books, philosophy, issues, anything, pretty much. His first wife was Lakota, so he has a little bit of understanding. That=s kind of cool. (p.165)

Quoetone goes on to share the importance of sparking student curiosity and respecting students which in turn has the potential to eliminate discipline issues:

> I got this 12 page paper to write on the Women=s Rights movement, and I was just wracking my brains trying to think about what to write about. So we talked a little about it. Then we talked about postmodernism yesterday. That was a pretty interesting discussion. And then we went up on a field trip a couple of days ago, a men=s retreat. And we had a big discussion with 20 guys, pretty much all of different backgrounds. And you really see postmodernism in effect. That was kind of cool. [The teacher] respects my intelligence for the most part, not speaking down to me. That helps because you have teachers that speak down to you, when they are the idiots. And that=s something I can=t stand. That=s the quickest way to get me out of the classroom. (pp. 169, 170)

Gilliland (1999) notes, AIf we can develop in our students a real curiosity about things we teach so that the majority of the students are really interested and motivated, they will take care of discipline. They will work with us and will censure anyone who interferes with what they want to do most, which is learn.@ (p. 115)

From this section on classroom management, it would appear that if we find creative ways to engage our students, we lessen the chances of encountering classroom discipline challenges. Certainly, the voices of the students and authors in this section support this notion.

CHAPTER 10

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THEIR ROLES IN STUDENT RETENTION

What part do teachers= perceptions play in student retention? Rick Gilson=s (1997) (University of Alberta) master=s thesis, entitled *Teachers= Perceptions Of Their Role In Student Retention,* explored the perceptions of teachers' roles in influencing the retention rate among urban high school students in individual high school courses. He interviewed six high school teachers who worked in an urban school setting with a staff of over 60. All of his participants had taught core subject diploma and non-diploma courses at some point in their teaching career. Three of the six teachers were considered to have a low drop out rate (over a four year period), while the other three had a high dropout rate over the same period.

He set out to determine which behaviors of teachers, consciously or unconsciously, help retain or drive students out of their specific courses. Clearly, teachers' choices influence how they deal with students, consciously or unconsciously, and those choices impact students.

Gilson (1997, quoting Wehlage, 1896) reports AThe problem is not simply to keep educationally at-risk youth from dropping out, but more importantly to provide them with educationally worthwhile experiences@ (p. 6). Further on he cites Diero (1996) who shares the importance of *caring for students*:

> Educators may need to think about teaching and schooling in unfamiliar ways. More teachers need to discover and advocate appropriate ways to become meaningfully involved in students= lives. Educational administrators need to find ways to support and encourage teachers who are developing caring relationships with students. School restructuring efforts need to include development of caring school environments as a priority. If this is done, teachers can help buffer the negative impact of high-risk situations that students face and, in turn, enhance the healthy development of at-risk young people. And we educators will play a fundamental and significant role in making a difference in their lives. (p. 10)

Gilson (1997) points out, every teacher must make a very conscious effort to keep students in their class for the duration of the course (p. 13). In other words, we all have to do additional work beyond simply >teaching= classroom subjects as reflected in one of his participant's observations:

> I think we owe the kids more than they owe us. Like I=m here to teach. This is a service job. And there are some times that you will be doing something for nothing but a kick in the teeth. And you better learn to accept that because that=s what this job is and you do the right thing; you take the kick in the teeth and let the guy walk away. You don=t have anything more to say about it. It=s done. (This teacher was referencing cutting deals with students who were unable to meet assignment deadlines, or attend classes regularly.) (p. 38)

Another of his participants shared the following:

> I think a lot of it is up to the teacher because most students that don=t remain in class don=t have support from home telling them to remain in class. So I think kind of the last resort is for us as teachers to try to get them through the course or try to get them to remain in school. If they are 16, 17 years old and are dropping out of school it=s obvious to me that they don=t have much support from home. So I think we as teachers may know more about the students than the parents do just about because even though we only see them for one block a day I think we have a pretty good feel for what=s going on with the kid, his attitude in class, how alert he is, if he=s attentive or if he=s sleepy or whatever-that gives a pretty good hint as to what type of home life that individual has. (pp. 38, 39)

Gilson (1997) found 5 themes that emerged from his teacher interviews: retention based on *school policy, practice, perceptions, pupils as people, power and principle.*

In the area of *school policy,* AEach of the teachers indicated that their decisions, their responsibility, their practice and their attempts to retain students in class are impacted by school policy@ (p. 28). They justify the fact that it is the >policy= that determines if a student leaves their class, thus avoiding ownership of their actions.

Extreme caution needs to be exercised in the area of A*school policy@.* Peggy Wilson=s ethnographic study, *Trauma in Transition* (1992) looked at Sioux First Nation students leaving

First Nation schools in Manitoba where they had been academically successful, and followed them as they moved to provincial high schools. Implementing policy requires integrity as young lives are severely impacted by our decisions. Students in Wilson=s study experienced *racial prejudice* and shared the view that white parents and students knew how to use the system; their view is supported in Gilson=s study as the teachers spoke of parents phoning the school to ensure their children=s absences were Aexcused@:

> AThey told of how the attendance policies in the school were used to get rid of kids who did not fit in. Often teachers had discretionary power to enforce the policies. Classes in the high school were large, and as soon as Indian students reached their allowed 10 absences, they were withdrawn from the class list. Indian students said that they knew of white students who had as many as 20 absences who were allowed to remain in class.@ (Wilson, 1992, p. 51)

Regarding *classroom practice* the teachers varied in their opinions of rigor, teaching style, student centeredness, rigidity on deadlines, flexibility (assignments), teaching practice (academic vs. non-academic instruction), and punctuality. One teacher noted the Aonus for retention@ rests with the teacher...he focuses on Adynamic lectures, making the material presented interesting in some sort; be it lower end level of course or higher end level, you have to relate to the kid=s experiences, to family values, to their work@ (p. 33). Classroom practices ranged from one extreme to another as indicated in the attitudes reflected in these quotes: AIt=s no big deal@, AWith me it=s black and white and I don=t have much gray@ (p. 36).

The third theme that emerged was on the *teachers= perception of their own role, and other teachers= roles in retention*. In our opinion this theme might be referred to as attitude.

All six teachers held differing opinions on *students as individuals.* Some empathized with students having individual problems and adopted different methods of instruction. All teachers recognized that Astudent challenges@affect their class attendance. Likewise, teachers face daily challenges trying to manage schedules, prepare and present lesson plans, address

student issues, and cope with high class numbers. The following stories depict varied challenges and opinions, and ultimately, teacher perceptions about their roles in student retention:

> If you personalize their education...what I try to do is I try to talk to kids on a personal level so that when they come to my classes as much as they are concentrating on the academic curriculum side of things, if you intersperse that with questions about their personal life how things are going they will find that, yes, they have to go to school but they will be coming to a class that they are at some point the focus of attention. (p. 41)

> You find that already you=re setting a negative tone in terms of you cannot get around to really give the attention you need to each of these kids and some of them, I=m sad to say, they drop right in the first month. Just because the numbers are so high that they feel that they=re not, that they are a number, and they=re not getting the type of attention they need so that they feel that they are important. (p. 42)

> AI think we owe the kids more than they owe us…@ (p. 43) A…if you want immediate feedback and immediate reward and affirmation in this job you=re in the wrong profession.@ (p. 44)

The last theme in Gilson=s (1997) study dealt with *power and principle centered leadership.* Gilson (1997), citing *The Power Principle: Influence with Honor*, speaks to varied leadership styles and the impact upon those around the leadership practioner. Lee says AIf you coerce people, they will make choices based on what they hope to avoid; if you negotiate with people, they will make choices based on what they want to get or hope to obtain from you; if you live the Power Principle, people will be inspired to make choices based on what they value or prize the most@ (Gilson, 1997, citing Lee, 1997, p. 327).

Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern (1990) warn against rigidity and coerciveness. They note, Arigid procedures turn professionals into clerks and technocrats@ (p. 84) while warning us about the dangers of insecurity. AOnly adults who are secure in their own sense of personal power can exercise strong yet noncoercive influence over children. Staff who feel insignificant and powerless will seek power over children as an artificial means of gaining

importance@ (p. 84). There certainly is a connection between an authoritarian power style (due to an insecure self) and the drop out rate, which leaves room for personal reflection on the part of all educators.

Finally, the teachers= style of Aprinciple centered leadership@ appeared to influence how they felt about students being in their classes as reflected in the differences expressed in the following quotations:

> I think place the responsibility of attendance squarelyn on the student and not allow outside sources to bail them out. Why should parents be excusing kids who are 16, 17, 18, and 19 years of age? They don=t excuse them on anything else. Society doesn=t excuse them; that=s why we have the Young Offenders Act. (Gilson, 1997, p. 47)

> I think in a lot of cases the students who perhaps aren=t doing as well, a lot of times it has nothing to do with academics... a lot of times it has to do with other things. If the student can be shown that they can succeed it sure makes staying in the school a lot easier. Because some of them drop out simply because they feel they=re going to be a failure anyway. There=s no way that anyone should fail. (Gilson, 1997, p. 50)

The teachers in Gilson=s (1997) study recognize they make a difference in the retention of the students in their classrooms. He concludes by noting, AThe teachers in the study displayed an understanding that their practices, interpretation or adherence to policies, use of power and understanding or ability to treat students as individuals impacted on their ability to retain students.@ (p. 53)

The findings of this study raise more questions. Clearly, the teachers in this study were concerned with Aschool policies@ pertaining to attendance. In their opinion, school policies raised Ainequalities@ for some students. Some of their better students were released from class, while students who may not have been working as hard stayed because their parents fought the attendance policy. The teachers who had lower dropout rates felt strongly that in the end, the choice to remove a student from a class should rest with the teacher, despite school policy. They

had the do Awhatever it takes to get the student through@ attitude (p. 56). Gilson recommended that Asharing with each other what is working for you in your relationship with common students may strengthen retention across the entire school.@ (p. 60). In high schools where teachers are busy with teaching, planning, sitting on committees, coaching, etc., taking the extra few moments to share common successes with all students makes sense. Clearly, all teachers in this study recognized the importance of care and the need to know their students.

Teacher Stereotypes/Beliefs/Attitudes

Racism and stereotyping hurt. Every day Indigenous children go to public schools where they are misunderstood and faced with stereotypes, propagated by the media, books, television, radio, the internet, etc. One of the most popular images is of Indigenous people as natural environmentalists: people born and raised in the bush, people who live off the land, who hunt and trap, are totally knowledgeable about the land, and protectors of our Mother the earth. While there are many that still live this lifestyle, many children, their parents, and even their grandparents reside in urban centers where the children may not have opportunities to be on the land as readily. Additionally, within the cities we have diverse cultural differences between Indigenous Nations such as the Blackfoot, Blood, Cree, Stony, Slavey, Dene, Ojibwa, Metis, and Inuit to name a few. Therefore, when our Elders, parents, and community organizations say Aget to know the Native people you work with@, this advice should not be taken lightly. Recognizing stereotypes often result when we have not taken the time to get to know people of different cultures, Gilliland (1999) stresses the importance of knowing the people you work with:

> If you, as the teacher, are to be respected by your students, then you must first demonstrate your respect for the children and their culture. However rich and worthwhile the culture of a people, if you, the teacher, do not know and understand the cultural background of your students, you not only will fail to adapt to their experiential background, their motivations, and their values, but whether or not you are aware of it, you will be exerting pressure for change, and

> giving the students the feeling that you do not respect either them or their culture. (p. 5)

Warry=s (1998) *Unfinished Dreams: Community Healing and the Reality of Aboriginal Self-Government* warns against the dangers of stereotypes. A…we might consider how images of welfare dependency and alcoholism serve to sustain our belief that Native people are incapable of acting on their own behalf…We must be aware of how stereotypes either romanticize or infantilize Aboriginal people. Both these processes of projection undermine our ability to see Aboriginal people as contemporary equals.@ (p. 23)

The welfare dependent stereotype is challenged by non-Native teacher, Ingrid, who speaks to the huge Aeconomic@ benefit Indigenous people are to towns and cities. This is noted in Miller Cleary & Peacock=s (1998) study:

> Native Americans don=t really seem to fit in anywhere. I was just appalled at how Native Americans were considered when I moved out here. I mean, to people outside of the res: ANative Americans are drunks…@On the other hand, the border towns depend very heavily on the economic support of the reservation. If everybody in ____ stopped buying things in ____, ____ would close down, liquor, mall, groceries. Everybody, when they get paid, goes to ____ and spends their money, no matter what color they are. There was an article about that in the paper a few weeks ago; somebody assessed the economic impact of people on the res going down to ____ and buying things. It really would create a tremendous economic depression in ____ if everybody stopped buying things. (pp. 71, 72)

Celeste, a Seneca Native American student in the Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, & Peacock=s (2003) study, shared a story of stereotyping and its effect on her. The story takes place in her history class:

> It was American History in 11th grade, and the teacher wrote, AAll Native Americans turned to alcoholism to ease their pain,@ and she put *all* in big letters and underlined it twice, and I said that was f---ed up. And I walked out, and then I got suspended for three days, and she didn=t even have to apologize to me or nothing. Then, when I played softball, well, I don=t play anymore because I missed one practice, and they called me an alcoholic. (p. 45)

Ironically, Warry (1998, citing Simpson, 1994), found that Apeople who have little direct contact with Aboriginal people are more likely to support Aboriginal causes than residents living in close proximity to Aboriginal communities.@ (p. 26) This has been our experience as well. Stereotypes, negative attitudes and beliefs open everyone up to pain and heartache. Just ask any person who has been the victim of stereotyped beliefs, perceptions or attitudes.

CHAPTER 11

TEACHER / STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships, positive or negative, can make or break our chances of assisting students to succeed in school settings. From the beginning of time, Indigenous peoples= survival depended on establishing and maintaining >positive relationships= within the tribe. Over time, this has been the case elsewhere too. Positive relationships bear positive results.

Positive Relationships Lead to Positive Results

Research has demonstrated that first and foremost, Indigenous students appreciate the development of positive relationships over teacher knowledge and classroom activities. Thus it is safe to say that relationships do not just happen; they take concerted effort and planned commitment, resulting in students not caring what you know, until they know that you care! Miller Cleary & Peacock=s (1998) study on teachers of Indigenous children noted:

> AThe relationship between students and teachers is probably more essential than what is taught and how it is taught. For many American Indian children, learning cannot begin until the teacher is perceived as safe and caring@ (p. 245). Caring does not just happen; teachers have to demonstrate caring through their actions as students have the ability to recognize a truly caring teacher-student relationship. Genuiness is not Afakeable@.

Harslett's (1997) *Relationships, Relationships, Relationships: That=s what sells school to Aboriginal students and parents* depicts preliminary findings of a joint study between the Edith Cowan University and the Education Department of Western Australia. Funded by the Australian Research Council, the partnership=s focus was to identify Agood practice@ that would improve attendance, retention and learning.

The study looked at children between the ages of 6 and 12 in Ametro and regional@ primary and secondary schools. Over 500 student questionnaires were administered in addition to interviews with students, teachers, parents, and community in 11 separate schools. Their

study (again preliminary findings) focused on the positives, on relationships versus focusing on Adeficit theory@ (p. 3).

Teachers need to Areflect on such fundamentals as personal and pedagogical relationships …(p. 4) including effective practices that enhance student, teacher, parent, relationships. We have summarized some of their preliminary findings below:

$ a clear understanding of the students being taught, and their history

$ working on developing good relationships

$ having (and using) a good sense of humor

$ being fair, and consistent

$ having an appreciation for student >differences= or uniqueness=

$ being a good listener

$ not jumping to conclusions

$ not chastising or embarrassing students in front of others

$ negotiating classroom rules and consequences

$ setting academic standards at achievable and challenging levels

$ providing classroom support in culturally relevant manner in both curriculum and classroom interactions

$ schools need to be pleasant places that upon entering there is a physical presence of Indigenous >presence= in the facility

Again, preliminary findings of this study indicate, AA clear message emerging from the Quality Schools for Aboriginal Students Project and reinforced by the literature is that relationships based upon understanding, empathy and sensitivity, together with positive expectations built upon rejection of deficit thinking an recognition of individual and cultural

strengths that students and parents bring, points the way to greater school effectiveness@ (p. 4,5). Further on, they conclude Aschools with a student rather than an academic orientation portray all the characteristics commonly associated with effective schools@ (p. 5). The study clearly conveys the belief that effective schools need to focus on developing and maintaining student relationships, prior to focusing on other aspects of Aeffective schools.@

Regan & Brooks= (1995) study (as cited by Makokis 2000), *Out of woman=s experience: Creating relational leadership*, which spanned a 20 year period examined effective leadership characteristics of 11 women in various organizations. Referred to as *relational leadership,* the authors concluded that collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision were all elements of relational leadership. Together, these aspects of relational leadership helped the women in the study to be some of the most effective leaders in the organizations in which they worked. These studies, along with student and teacher voices in the work of Miller Cleary & Peacock (1998) and Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, & Peacock (2003) all stress the urgent necessity of establishing and maintaining effective student, teacher, parent relationships.

In the voice of Native American teacher, Bart Brewer (p. 236) of the Miller Cleary & Peacock (1998) teacher study, one gets the sense that he needs to have a good relationship with his students in order to set expectations, while using his own sense of Regan & Brooks= relational leadership characteristic, intuition:

> Some kids want to try to take the easy road out, basically get by with the least amount of work, and I try to throw in little road blocks. I try balance - I push them and yet I try not to push them too much. It=s kind of intuitive. There=s some people that you can push a little bit, but if they start pushing back, you have to back off; otherwise, they=ll start escalating to where I=m fighting with the student.

Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, & Peacock=s (2003) student study describes the importance of student - teacher relationships in the voice of student Fred (Choctaw) speaking about things that >clog our minds= and the importance of how teachers deal with students in such situations:

> There are two ways to feel bad: on the outside, if you=re sick, and on the inside, if you=re having an emotional problem, and teachers will sometimes ignore [the inside]. If, let=s say, a teacher asks you a question, and you have so many thoughts in your mind you didn=t pick up on the question, some teachers will snap and get mad. A teacher needs to decipher, to watch people carefully. (p. 53)

One final student story on the importance of positive student-teacher relationships is shared by Jerome from Makokis= (2000) *An Insider=s Perspective: The Dropout Challenge For Canada=s First Nations* study.

Jerome shares what would have helped him stay in school, then describes a Agood@ teacher, one who Adeveloped relationships@ with students:

> I asked one time if I could get all my books and work with one teacher and for him just to tell me what to do and I would do it for every subject and they said they can=t and I said why? Like I got along with this one teacher real good and that=s why I said that because when they use to send me out of class or something, I would say can I go sit in this teacher=s class and they just say no, go to the office. Then I would see this teacher come to the office and I would ask him and he would just take me to his gym class, I would just play with them or whatever they were doing or sometimes he would say just sit there and I would just sit there. (p. 112)

Jerome said this teacher was Adifferent@, so what made him different? Was it the fact that he worked on developing relationships with all students, since Jerome was not a student in any of his classes?

> It seemed like he was the only one that never gave me a hard time, like he seemed like he would help me out even though he wasn=t my teacher in any of my subjects because he was a good guy. He would come up to you and talk to you and I just go along and everyday too. Other teachers don=t even come up to you and say hi and this guy will come up to you and talk to you and even sit down and talk to you.@ (p.112)

Jerome concluded, Aa good teacher is one who would help you out when you need it, and tells you what to do, you get along with him and you listen to him, he listens to you, just things like that.@ (p. 112)

Trust as a Protective Factor

Protective factors, like resilient factors, make a positive difference in the life of students as they help them stay in school and succeed despite the many challenges they face.

So how is trust a protective factor? Miller Cleary & Peacock (1998) note the importance of understanding Aeffects of oppression@ (discussed extensively in section two) on students, and thus, the importance of building trust as a protective factor. What can teachers do to establish Atrust@ as a protective factor? The authors suggest the following:

> Teachers should build trust in their students by demonstrating in their actions and behavior that they are worthy of trust. They should be fair and consistent in their treatment of students. They should become knowledgeable of the people and issues in the American Indian community, as well as get to know their students on a personal level by assessing where students are on Maslow=s hierarchy of needs. …They shouldn=t be afraid to go to the homes of their students to meet and confer with caregivers. (p. 95)

From our experience as Indigenous educators, once trust is built and established with students, more times than not, you have a friend for life. Trust, built in part by connecting with students, is crucial in the life of the students as indicated by Valerie=s (Seneca) comments, one of the students in Bergstrom, Miller Cleary, & Peacock=s *Native Students Speak About Finding the Good Path: The Seventh Generation*:

> I get along with my English teacher very well. She understands where we are coming from. She gives a lot of support and guidance to us. She spends a lot of time with us, you know, explains things that I don=t understand. She=s very understanding about when we have our ceremonies and stuff like that. Usually, some of them are for five days, you know, for like a whole week. She=ll give me time to make up my work, so she=s understanding about things. (p. 166)

The importance of building trusting relationships is shared by several students in Ardy Bowker=s (1993) *Sister=s in the Blood: The Education of Women in Native America* study. The study, specific to 991Indigenous females (residing on 5 reservations, in three separate states), looked at factors contributing to student success in school, and those factors that lead to dropping out.

They point out the importance of Along term, trust based@ relationships:

> Several of the women spoke about developing long-term relationships with teachers who were special to them. One woman discussed making a trip to see a former teacher who lived out of state: AWhen I was in school, I could always tell her anything. She never disapproved of me, no matter what I did or what my family did. She just encouraged me. Sometimes she invited me to her house for dinner; . . . sometimes she took me on picnics with her kids. I felt like I was one of her kids. I stayed in school because she cared about me and wanted me to get an education. Last year, she got sick. I drove to Denver to see her. She said my visit made her well.@ (p. 248)

Much research exists around the need for caring, trust filled relationships as part of student success (Bowker, 1993; Chisan 2001; Fisher & Campbell, 2002; Demmert, 2001; Harslett, 1997; Makokis, 2000; Steinhauer, 1999)

Creator=s Natural Laws: Knowing and Practicing

Many Cree people believe (different tribes throughout the land have similar teachings) and follow the teachings of our ancestors and the Creator=s Natural Laws. Accordingly, the Creator=s Natural Laws are believed to include the values of sharing, honesty, kindness, strength, and determination through prayer. Figure 17 depicts a graphic that shows the teachings of the Natural Laws as shared by worldly elements in our natural surroundings, on our Mother, the Earth.

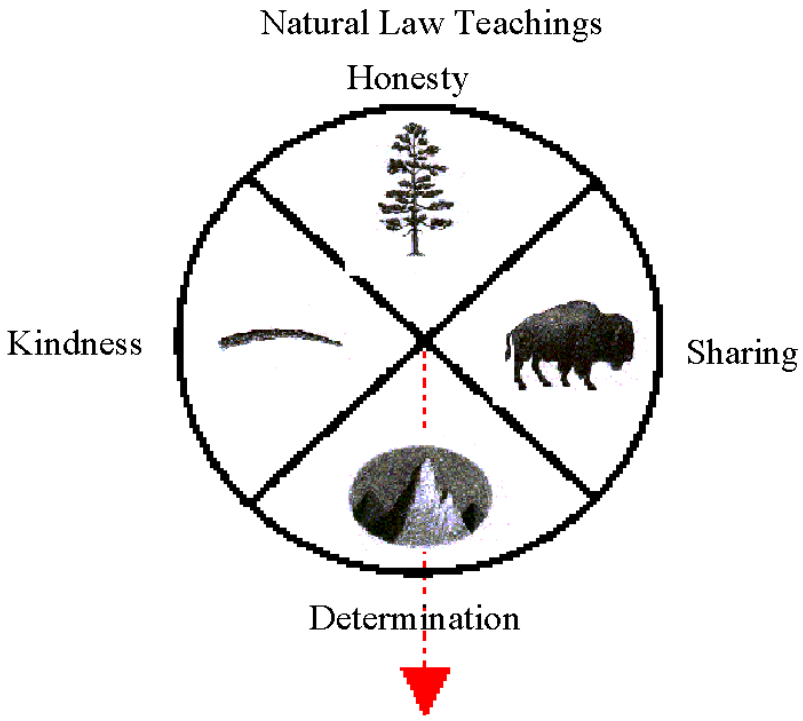


Figure 17

The teacher of kindness/caring is sweetgrass, a natural grass grown in the prairies and used for spiritual purposes. Elders say that the grass is an excellent teacher of kindness, for we walk on it, we stomp it, we burn it, we cut it, and it keeps growing and coming back to blanket the land. Makokis and Steinhauer=s (1993) academic paper *Entrenching Indigenous Values in the First Nations Learning Communities* demonstrates the importance of grass. AThis constant revival is believed to be humility, forgiveness, and especially kindness, displayed by the grass spirit@ (p. 3). The teacher of sharing (opposite the grass in figure 1) is the buffalo, who graciously shared his life so we could live. The buffalo (animals) have always shared of themselves, so as Indigenous Nations, we are still here today. Makokis and Steinhauer (1993) note the importance of animals, AIt is they who openly share of themselves, graciously giving their own lives for the sustenance of the people. In an intricate balance of nature, people take these gifts from the animals, always being sure to give something back to the spirit of the

animal@ (p. 4). We need to be mindful of the fact that since the beginning of time, animals have always been inter-connected to our being, to our existence as Indigenous people. We depend on them for our survival; they do not depend on us to survive.

The teacher of honesty is the tree. According to the Elders, trees, standing straight and tall, symbolize honesty. Opposite the tree in figure 1 is strength/prayer as depicted in the rock of mountains. Mountains stand strong and together; the tree and the rock give us the strength (and ability to offer prayer) by using the pipe.

Collectively, the grass, the animals, the trees and the mountains lend us many life giving experiences and life lessons. From a wholistic point of view, these teachers of kindness/caring, sharing, honesty, strength and prayer can lead all mankind to very balanced ways of interacting with one another and our collective Mother, the Earth. If we practice these Laws, we will not only find balance and harmony with one another, but with the other elements of this world.

All caregivers of children have the potential to interact with children in ways that demonstrate kindness/caring, sharing, honesty, and strength/determination. Student/staff relationships are more likely to be enhanced by living these Natural Laws. Over and over, students have said that modelling and applying these virtues in their daily interactions has made a difference in student success. Bowker=s (1993) major study of factors contributing to female student success concluded, AFrom this study, it is clear that the single most important factor as to whether a girl stayed in school and graduated was the linkage with a caring, competent adult who not only modeled appropriate behaviors but also encouraged the adolescent and served as an advocate when necessary.@…In many cases, the adult was an open, caring, nonjudgmental teacher. (p. 276)

CHAPTER 12

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The Role of a Safe, Secure, School/Classroom Environment

Much has been written about the importance of providing a safe, secure school/classroom environment (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990; Deyhle & Swisher, 1997; Fisher & Campbell, 2002; Harslett, 1997?; Jefferies, Nix, & Singer, 2002; Makokis, 2000, Morganett, (?); Strand & Peacock, 2002, Silver, Mallett, Greene & Simard, 2002) Gilliland=s (1992, 1999) textbooks entitled *Teaching The Native American* provide practical suggestions based upon the collective teaching experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators' elementary through high school experiences. Gilliland=s chapter entitled *"Culturally Relevant Education"* offers suggestions that enhance Asafe, secure school/classroom environments@.

The United States, 1991, Indian Nations at Risk Task Force noted that Native American students are challenged to overcome barriers such as, AAn unfriendly school climate that fails to promote appropriate academic, social, cultural, and spiritual development among many Native American students…Gilliland (1992) notes, AThere are no easy answers, no simple changes that would give all Native Americans an equal opportunity for the success that others achieve. Each tribe is different, and each individual student is different. But there are teachers who have been innovative and understanding enough to succeed.@ (pp. 2, 3)

Gilliland (1999) offers nine points that enhance the possibility of student success in the school and the classroom.

1. Provide a multi cultural education for all children

Gilliland (1999) (citing Kirkness and Barnhardt,1991) speaks to the importance of Ainclusive@ education for all. They note, A…What First Nations people are seeking is not a

lesser education, and not even an equal education, but rather a better education - an education that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives@ (p. 3). School environments that honor all children or those accepting of diversity are more likely to ensure that children feel a sense of safety and acceptance within the school, thus not having to choose between their own culture, or mainstream culture, but where their culture is embraced, as are all cultures. Such schools become safe havens for all children.

2. *Become familiar with and accept Native American ways*

Indigenous children can be at an advantage when teachers recognize that the students know and live in two cultures. Teachers who believe that Indigenous children are Adisadvantaged@ can make those children disadvantaged in their classroom if they are relying solely on Aone culture@ assuming that Aone culture@ is Asuperior without any real thought or study@ (Gilliland, 1992, p. 4). Safe, secure schools/classrooms make it a point to get to know the cultural backgrounds of the children they serve.

3. Value the student=s background and provide additional experience

We all want to feel a sense of belonging, and one way school systems/classrooms can do that is by valuing the backgrounds of the students. Where possible, gather more student information ensuring that when Indigenous students look around the school and classrooms they see images of themselves. Schools need to reflect the lives of the children they serve. Do Indigenous children see/experience Indigenous ways in their surroundings?

4. *Identify and emphasize positive Indian values*

5. Develop the student=s self-concept

6. *Promote relaxed communication*

7. Develop a culturally relevant curriculum

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood=s policy paper on *Indian Control of Indian Education* included the following statement relating to *curriculum and values.* AUnless a child learns about the forces which shape him - the history of his people, their values and customs, their language - he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience, should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian. (Sterling, 2002, p.5, citing NIB, p. 9)

8. Adapt instruction to students= learning style

9. *Work with parents and the community*

Indigenous Presence in School Settings

When students and parents walk through the doors of schools, what do they initially experience? What might they see, and what might they feel? Do they experience a sense of warmth and welcome as a result of the surroundings (staff, pictures, furniture, ornaments, etc. that are culturally appropriate)? Wilson=s (1992) study *Trauma In Transition* looked at the transition of First Nations students from reserve schools, where they had been very successful academically, to off reserve high schools. In her description of the two schools (the reserve school and off reserve high school), one gets a sense of Indigenous presence in the reserve school:

> AThe school was built in the shape of a circle with the four main entrances opening to the four directions - a powerful and significant symbol in Indian culture. Local residents, following the direction of a professional Indian artist, had created intricate basket weavings and colorful quilts which, along with pictures of students in their traditional powwow clothing, decorated the hallways. (p. 48)

The off reserve school, on the other hand, “was designed in a linear fashion, with rectangular classrooms, tiled floors, and locker-lined hallways@ (p. 48).

What role, if any, do physical surroundings play in the Indigenous presence of our schools? Do children, and their families see pictures, crafts, etc. as described by Wilson, or do the parents and grandparents have a sense of the cold, residential school settings that many attended as children?

What role, if any, does the smell of smudges burning have in welcoming children and their families in to the schools? What about the music of drums, etc. on the school intercom systems? What about graduation photos of older brothers and sisters, and Indigenous role model posters depicting the many professional careers that students can aspire to joining? And what about the physical presence of Indigenous teachers, teacher aides, Elders in the classrooms, and other school support staff? How important are all of these role models in the lives of students reaching for school success? What are we doing to ensure that such an Indigenous presence is felt mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically? We believe all of the questions posed are important factors that contribute to the Indigenous presence in schools serving Indigenous students and their families.

The Power of Stories: Racism

I awoke one crisp and clear fall morning from a sleep within which I had a dream. In this dream I worked in our local school at Saddle Lake Reserve #125. I walked through all the classrooms and was quite astonished to see white children being educated alongside Indian children. Throughout all the classrooms, this strange phenomenological sight greeted me. In the classrooms, the teachers were all of *nehîyaw* descent and spoke *nehîyawewin* while delivering

their pedagogies. All of the students were attentive, and the subject matter was the three "r's": read'n, rite'n and 'rithmatic, all being taught in *nehîyawewin*.

Ok. Now, I am in reality, here in the 21st century. What red-blooded settler Canadian is going to want their progeny being educated alongside Indians, especially in "Indian Speak" and on a reserve in Canada? I didn't think too much of that dream as I went about my business as "centre administrator" in that very school. Why centre administrator? Well, it was pointed out that I didn't have the credential of a bachelor's degree to work in that institution, so I couldn't be a 'principal'. My duties are all that of a principal and vice principal, but my title was different. I go about my daily ritual of administration in a cultural way, adding the dimension of Indigenous epistemology to this mundane existence.

As I lay my weary soul to sleep, I think about last night's dream. What did it mean? I drift off to the safety and the darkness of sleep time. This time I am shown a science class, and there I am lying on the bench awaiting my fate. There, smiling down upon me is a nice, friendly, non- threatening brown face. I smile back at this young native boy as he prepares to do, 'god knows what,' to me in the science lab. At this moment, I hear a booming voice in the distance, "Ok class, it is time to put your frogs to sleep. Place the chloroform on the towel and place the towel on your specimen until you see your specimen stop breathing. Hey, Joe! Try not to club your frog and don't eat him either." My heart rate raced as I learned my fate: I was to be an experiment for the day. As I lay there awaiting my expiration, I wondered who this Joe person was. The booming voice of instruction drew nearer, "Hey, Joe! You dumb savage, I said to kill your frog and don't eat him." I heard quiet snickers from the rest of the class grow into howls of laughter. I looked up at the once smiling young countenance only to see that it had turned to a

look of twisted pain and tears. This youngster, that was to be my scientist for the day, had been broken by the ugliness that was aimed at him.

I awoke the next morning troubled by what I had seen and heard in that science classroom. Where was that classroom? Was that teacher in my school? Why did that teacher single out Joe? Why was I given that dream?

All day long I was troubled by the visions that had come to me. I took those visions with me to bed that night, wanting answers to the questions that were piling up in my head. I drifted off to sleep and was shown a space that was lit by the brilliance of the colour of yellow. There, within that space were a lot of my ancestors that were once part of the earthlife but had now gone on to inhabit that space known to us on the earthlife as the spiritworld. Feelings of peace and tranquility filled my very essence as I became that colour of brilliant yellow. There within that juncture, the old school of Blue Quills came into view. There on the grounds of that school were these people, looking very scared, very hurt, very angry, and yet very determined. I could hear their prayers as they lifted their pipes, "*mâmâtawasit,* help us as we take control of our futures. For too long the *môniyawak* have educated us and were not successful in their attempts. We do not have our own doctors or lawyers; all we have are Indian Chiefs. Help us Creator!" I realized that what I was seeing and hearing was the time of the take-over of Blue Quills Indian Residential School by my progenitors in 1970.

When I awoke that morning, I felt like I was being shown something of great importance. But what could be so important and what could I do about it? These thoughts permeated my being for that whole day, and with the Indigenous epistemological knowledge that all things happen in a series of four, I anxiously awaited my next dream.

That night I was hurled into scenes of horrific violence, with a gentle yet deafening hum that accompanied the whole dream sequence. The space looked and had the feel of a Nazi concentration camp. My grandfather and aunts and uncles were a part of that war; it was supposed to be the war to end all wars. It was the war against race and racism. These relations of mine would speak of the devil and how he would march men, women and children to their doom in the huge of ovens of destruction. My *mosôm* had shown me photographs of this phenomenon, and I remembered seeing pictures in my grade six social studies textbook as well. I witnessed a group of young children in black and white imagery being marched somewhere. Along the way a young lad, who couldn't have seen more than six summers, resisted being told where to go. The guard in a flowing black robe took the boy, and savagely pushed the boy along, hurtling him down the stairwell to his final destination. There at the bottom of the stairs, I heard a hideous crack as the boy lay limp and out of time. I looked at the boy in horror as the rest of the children were in a state of terror. The black robe yelled at the rest of the children to keep moving or else…

Throughout the entirety of this dream was a droning hum that I could feel throughout my core. This hum would increase and decrease in decibels as the voices of the beings within my dream would rise and fall like the sounds of a distance choir, singing their heavenly praises to the lord thy god. A voice pierced this heavenly intonation, "We shall take the Indian out of the Indian and solve the Indian question once and for all." Was that the voice of the devil that my progenitors had spoken about those so many winters ago? With this utterance I realized I wasn't witnessing a death ritual at a Nazi concentration camp; I was in an Indian residential school. I was in that exact same school that my progenitors helped to liberate in the early 70s.

That morning, a troubled soul awoke from a garish nightmarish dream. I took out my pipe from my sacred bundle and raised my pipe to the creator for help in deciphering my path. While I prayed, I called for guidance from my guides and offered my total being for answers. As I smoked the pipe in my small bedroom, a thick cloud of smoke arose from my smudge bowl, my lungs, and my pipe. The smoke filled the room and engulfed my being, making me feel safe and secure in my haze of sacredness. When the smoke cleared, there sitting before me was an old being.

"t*anisi nôsesay, nipetan kikâkîsimowin ôte,*" she addressed me. To which, I replied, "n*imosôm namôyah ninistotan kakîyaw nehîyawewin, mačika nikakî akayâsîmon či*?" With this the old one laughed and said, "Of course I can speak the white language".

I asked the old one what those dreams were about and why was I the one to receive those dreams? The old one looked at me long and hard before she started to speak, "n*ôsim*, I am your dreamer or dream keeper, and I was chosen by m*âmâtawasit* to guide you through this dream sequence. I was disheartened when the first dream did not have the impact that I wanted you to receive, when you were given the dream in human form. I returned the next night and gave you the dream in the form of an animal because in times of great need, our relations within the animal kingdom intercede on our behalf and give us the teachings, but once again you were so dense as to not receive the message.

I then returned on the third night to give you the dream in the colour that I hoped you would understand. In the west where the sun rises is the colour of yellow; it is the colour you raise to get the teachings of honesty, and by showing you the answer flooded in the colour of yellow, I prayed you would receive what we in the spirit world were trying to show to you. Finally, I came on the last night with the hum of creation. I was elated that you were beginning

to understand, that you were going to be given another message, but I was disheartened after showing you once again the answer to life's problems, a problem with humanity, you still did not get it.

Coming into your dreams with the hum of creation was the last step in the dreaming process. Step one, the answer is revealed in a human form. Step two, the answer is revealed by our animal relations. Step three, the answer is revealed through colour, and the final step is sound. When a person does not respond to any of these messages from the spirit world, then the person stops dreaming and is shown the way through another ceremony. Was I ever happy when you raised your pipe and asked for guidance through your pipe."

I thought about what the old one had to say and asked myself, "Am I that dense, not to receive the answer after four consecutive nights of dreaming?"

"Yes you are" replied the old one.

"You can read my mind?"

"The mind speaks loudly" was her reply.

"Ok then, why all the dreams?"

"The answer *nôsisim* is what you people call, Racism. It is humanity's problem. In your first dream, we showed you how good things could be for all humanity if only all peoples could learn from one another. Your reaction to this was how absurd this is. You, my grandson, are racialised".

"What do you mean I am racialised?"

"n*ôsisim*, you work in a school; you should read your books. Racialization is the process of growing up in a space that is inherently racist. When racism informs and shapes legislation and policy then racism is institutionalised. In your ancestors' time, our relations from Europe

came to this land. They needed the natural resources for their use in their homelands. They saw how plentiful the lands were, so they signed treaties with your progenitors. This whole process is now known as colonization, and at the heart of each colonialist is the belief, 'our race is better then your race'. This type of racist thinking is what informs racist ideology, and racist ideology has been around for thousands of years. However, scientific racism has been around for only the past hundred years. But, *nôsisim*, there is only one race; it is called the human race."

I asked the old one how come she knew so much. She replied, "All these old dead white guys, these so called great philosophers, come to see the creator when they die. They all have to explain themselves to the creator, and all of us in the spiritworld get to hear what they have to say. The creator reminds them that when they were given the opportunity to be on the earthlife, they promised the creator they would love all of creator's creation equally. Love is the greatest gift that the creator has gifted to all of creation, so that there is balance on the earthlife. So when these dead white guys come home, the creator asks, "Why?", and the answer that is mostly given is, "Forgive me father, for I have sinned". We all have a great chuckle at this reply, because in the spiritworld there is no gender. Gender is a human construction, and the creator is a great mystery. It is always assumed that the creator is a man, but who on the earthlife can bear children? It is women that can bear children. So then, we in the spirit world strongly believe that the creator is a woman, but there is no gender up here!"

Elaborating further, she stated, "In your second dream you were some poor frog waiting patiently. The frog is a close relation to the turtle, and it is upon the turtle's back that the earthlife dwells. The frog is the little brother of truth and honesty, and what I tried to show you is how could an adult treat a child so unfairly? There, entrusted with developing the next group of citizens, is the ultimate in rationalism…the teacher. In *nehîyaw* culture the teachers are the

elders, the old kind caring ones. In this mainstream culture, the teachers are steeped in rationalism, but I have to ask you, what kind of rational being could treat another human being in such an irrational way? Why? Because of the spectre of racism, that teacher doesn't want that Indian child to be educated. If she were to become educated, then there would be a shift in the power relations that racism and racist ideology upholds.

The next dream I showed you was the take-over at Blue Quills Indian Residential School. Your ancestors that are over in the spirit world are still being rewarded for standing up for what they believed in so many years ago. What is wrong with teaching people their culture and language that was handed down to the people by *mâmâtawisit*? Yes, you were right about the people living in fear at that time, because racism robs people of their self-esteem and their self concept. It dehumanises all people, the people that have to live under the racist onslaught day after day, and the racists who practise racism just to feel good about themselves, holding a power relationship over the 'othered'."

"Wow, you know a lot," I said to the old one. Her reply, "Go read a book". I asked, "Why should I go read a book when you are right here and I can converse with you. I can develop a relationship with you. I cannot have a relationship with a book!"

"Ah, *nôsisim* once again, it is all racialised. All they know is what they know and all their knowledge is tied up in their books. What you say is true, but they only privilege their knowledge. Meanwhile, they go and wipe out millennia of indigenous epistemology because they do not understand, and they fear what they do not know."

"*nohkôm*, what is the meaning of that last dream?" I queried.

"What I tried to show you was a historical look at what was done in the name of assimilation and nationalism to your progenitors. Killing one's language and making them

assimilate into another nation in the name of strengthening a nation or nation building is racially problematic. Nationalism is a thinly disguised form of racism. Nationalism is supposed to be good for the nation being built, but what about all the nations that experienced a genocidal impact on their societies? You thought the dream was about Nazi Germany, but it wasn't. It was about Blue Quills Indian Residential School. And *nôssiim*, at least in Nazi Germany, when the war was over, the Germans had to pay for their indiscretions. In Canada, are the churches and the government paying for their roles in the Canadian holocaust?"

"I never thought about it as a holocaust, but, yeah, I guess it is genocidal in nature," I replied outloud.

"n*ôsisim* go read a few books, get the language, their language, and criticize what they have. When I say criticize I do not mean all negative, for there is some positive in everything that happens. As for the question of why you were chosen, we chose you because we knew something would be done. e*kosi pitama nôsim*."

I lowered my pipe and thanked all of creation and *mâmâtawisit* for all the information that was shown to me. The task is now to look for references and information, in true empiricist form, to show to the mainstream that the Indigenous knowledge that was shared by the 'old one' is information that has scholarly rigour and robustness.

Colonialism and the Classroom

In researching what the 'old one' had to say, I came across a whole discipline of post-colonial studies. Post-colonial studies were developed as a discourse by Indigenous peoples that had the 'fortune' of being colonized by the colonizing countries of that time. Colonialism is not a recent event, but it has been practised throughout the ages. Bishop (2002) writes about the

prehistoric process of colonization occurring in fifth century B.C., where warring societies overran peaceful agrarian societies and developed a hybridised culture of expansionism.

Within the academic world, many theorists to date have researched the discourse of colonialism. Colonialism is the takeover of lands, cultures, and societies through an unjust power relationship that supposes one's culture is superior to another culture. It is within this perverse logic that racist ideology is so predominant.

Colonialism affects the classroom through the teaching of ethnocentrism to unwitting children. Ethnocentrism is based on racist ideology, and it is this racist ideology that is infused throughout the colonialist project. "Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (Fanon, 1963, p. 257).

The process of (re) educating individuals to fit into the greater society is a process known as socialization. The institution within society that is charged with developing citizenship is the school system. The Indian residential school system was a tremendously successful alienating force as the Canadian and the religious institutions attempted to assimilate Indian children into Western society.

"It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness…in these schools…which is geared towards the final solution of our Indian problem." These words were uttered by Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs in 1910 (*quoted in* Annett 2001), and were a direct attack on Indian culture and Indian peoples.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1995) referred to schools as a "banking system" for education. Banking education is like being a gas attendant at a gas station. The motorist

(student) comes to the station (school) with an empty tank (the mind) and I, the attendant (teacher) fill the empty tank (the mind) with gas (an education). Add to this scenario a racialised teacher who thinks he is there to save the savage, and there is a volatile mixture in a supposedly safe, caring, sharing and learning institution.

Voices from the Casket

It seems like every time there is a dissenting voice in Canada that is not of English descent, the army is called into squash the rebellion. It happened to my relative, Louis Riel, twice. It happened to the Quebec Nationals in the October 1971 crisis in Quebec. It happened to the Mohawks in the early 90s and to the Shuswap in the mid 90s. This historically entrenched hostile pattern to indigenous dissent is quite obvious: every time someone speaks to the unjust conditions here in Canada, he/she is murdered. How about the late Dudley George who was killed in the Ipperwash shooting?

If you were a native child attending an unjust school and you were being 'raced' against, would you speak out? Makokis (2000), in her doctoral dissertation, interviews several Indigenous students, parents and elders from a First Nation in northern Alberta. What the document says about the level of racialism evident within the school system is startling but not surprising. In *nehîyaw* culture, it is easier to leave an adverse situation then to cause more trouble. Who would want to stay and fight when the army is going to be called? I realize this is a stretch of the imagination but the mind can only wonder…

Mutant Message from Down Under

My apologies to the original author of the book "*Mutant Message from Downunder*" Morgan (1991), but I just had to use this title as an adjective to describe the "Racism No Way!" experience of the Australian peoples. What the Australians did was realize there was a problem

of racism in the school system and took measures to do away with their problem. The activities evident within their school system that were considered racist included uttering racist remarks, and actions or behaviours that marginalized and alienated people of colour. Field research, in the form of interviews, was done to find proof of racist activities in the school system in Australia. Many of the ethnic minorities that were interviewed responded that racism was a problem within their school, and it not only was a phenomenon between students, but it was also experienced from the faculty of the schools.

The report was comprehensive as it elaborated on how multiculturalism plays a role in furthering racist ideologies by depicting Indigenous folks and other ethnic minorities in outfits that are outmoded and leave the people whose images are represented looking backward and primitive as an example. The report is commendable as the researchers are taking on one of societies' biggest problems, that of racist ideology. This is why I draw the comparison to the title, *Mutant Message From Downunder*. What other group of peoples on this planet are taking action to deal with racism?

Here in Canada, there are many reports that touch on the fact that racism does exist, for example, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and a literature review by St. Denis and Hampton (2002), entitled, 'Racism and the Effects on Aboriginal Education.' In Canada, there is a tradition of denial around the issue of racism; this denial is embraced by the people with the political power and authority to do something about it.

Australian school authorities are doing something about racism, but are they doing enough? Two key issues that the Australians turn a blind eye to are the teaching of the English language and the formation of nationalism. Thiong'o (1986:18) wrote, "English in Africa is a cultural bomb that continues a process of erasing memories of pre-colonial cultures and history

and as a way of installing the dominance of new, more insidious forms of colonialism." Colonialism is a worldwide phenomenon, so the question needs to be asked, 'Is the colonialism in Africa any different than the colonialism that is occurring in Australia?' The Australians are promoting Indigenous languages but in actual actions and behaviours, the real message is, "If you want to be successful in Australian society, then you need to learn Australian English." This leads to the second problem, the concept of nationalism which Gilroy (2001) describes as "the stable juridical institutions of the nation-state to the anarchy and violence where raciology was first codified and institutionalised as a principle of (good) government"(p.85). It is the type of nationalism that is prevalent in all nation states that have been founded through colonialism. Nationalism is a thinly disguised form of racism and the Australians conveniently turn a blind eye to this form of racism while refuting the obvious forms of racism. Where to from here?

wahkôtôwin

In the Cree language of *nehîyawewin*, the term that defines relations is *wahkôhtôwin*. Within *wahkôhtôwin*, we believe we are related not only to the rest of humankind but to all of the creator's creation, 'we are all related'. Once humankind cognitively realises this simple yet complex concept of ontology, we can move forward and get along with living the good life that is *mîyo pimatisôwin*.

Bishop (2002) talks about becoming an ally, "Just as the twelve step programs teach that the process of healing from addiction is never finished, so it is with the process of unlearning oppression. A white person never becomes non-racist but is always a "recovering racist," more often referred to as 'anti-racist'" (p.115). Marx (1848) calls this coming into consciousness: when people come into consciousness, fully conscious people can then make conscious decisions about their destiny. We, as the human race, need to make a conscious effort to learn about our

past; this is what the role of social studies and history should be in our school systems. We then need to go beyond the boundaries that have kept us chained to past racist ideologies. Once we have transcended these archaic and insidious ideologies, then we can unite as one race, the human race and truly live the good life *'miyo pimatisowin ota nikawiynan aski.'*

CHAPTER 13

CURRICULUM RELEVANCY

Freeing Ourselves From The Chains That Bind Us

Stereotypes hurt. Time and again, we see the wounds of racial stereotypes played out in the curriculum that is taught in schools across the land. In the recent Grammy Awards (February 2004), North American families were entertained by the stereotypes of the Anoble savage warrior with his maiden by his side@ as a group of hip hop musicians sang before millions of people, world wide. What did we see? A man and a woman (non-Indigenous), both decorated with feathers and fringe, dancing to hip hop music. How does this degrading media image shape the audience=s perception of Indigenous people? The image conveyed is that contemporary Indians dress in buckskin and fringes, their bodies barely covered and topped with feathers in their hair. Even more insulting is the implication that hip hop music reflects Indigenous culture. How many Indigenous people do we know who wear such regalia everyday, as we walk in the malls, in our schools, in our communities? However, thanks to television, this is just one example of a stereotype that many people have of contemporary Indigenous people: we all run around half naked with feathers in our hair.

Stereotypes get played out daily in our curriculum either intentionally or innocently. In any event, be cautious because with one slip of the tongue, there is much potential for Awounding@ innocent children.

Celeste, a Seneca student in the Bergstrom, Miller Cleary & Peacock study (2003), shares one example of the harm of stereotypes. This takes place in her grade eleven history:

> It was American History in 11th grade, and the teacher wrote, AAll Native Americans turned to alcoholism to ease their pain,@ and she put *all* in like big letters and underlined it twice, and I said that was f---ed up. And I walked out, and then I got suspended for three days, and she didn=t even have to apologize to

> me or nothing. Then, when I played softball, well, I don=t play anymore because I missed one practice, and they called me an alcoholic. (p. 45)

Travis, a Dakota student, shared the Indigenous worldview about AWounded Knee@, not the one that is taught in social studies, but the one that Indigenous people know to be their truth:

> I had a history class, and the teacher never taught anything about Native American, except maybe one chapter that lasted one day, when you spent weeks on other chapters. So I was kind of upset cause kids really didn=t know what the real story was. And so, we had to choose a topic in history, what we wanted to do. Anyway, we had to get up in front of the class and explain what happened. So, everyone chose World War I and World War II, the Civil War. [When it came to] Wounded Knee, almost every kid in the class looks at me, and I was like, AAll right.@ So I got in front of the class, and I had pictures of a Gatlin gun, [which] they used on the women and children…I turned all the lights off, and I told them to close their eyes, and I told everyone. I told the story about what happened, some of the detail: the soldiers walked up to a baby, put a gun to his head, point blank, and shot it. And sometimes, to save bullets, they=d beat the heads in with the butt of the gun. Everyone was in tears. I guess that made me feel better because now they knew just one part of what Native American people had to got through. (p. 45)

The media has done a wonderful job of portraying Indigenous people as heartless savages. How many have heard stories like the one that Travis shared here? How has our curriculum contributed to the stereotypes?

Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Recently, while speaking with a young woman, we reflected on the effects of stereotyped images in the school curriculum as we discussed the founding father, John A. MacDonald. In social studies, students are taught to admire John A. MacDonald, one of Canada=s founding fathers, a visionary who ensured Canada became a Confederation. Contrast this idealized view of MacDonald with the Indigenous experience of his government's policies. How many of us were also taught that John A. MacDonald wanted to exterminate the Abarbarian ways of the Indians?" Makokis (2000, citing Pauls, 1996, p. 36) found the following on John A. MacDonald=s views pertaining to Indians:

> In 1874, Sir John A. MacDonald introduced the original Indian Act saying; AIndian children should be taken away from their parents so as to eliminate their barbarian influence and expose the children to the benefits of civilization. The teacher has been sent out as an educational missionary to introduce cultural changes in the Indian societies.@ (p. 17)

Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Department in the early 1900's was noted as saying, AOur objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and therein no Indian question.@ (Makokis, 2000, p. 18, citing York, 1990, p. 23) This is the same Duncan Campbell Scott, whose writings are being studied in some postsecondary Canadian institutes because he is considered an excellent author.

Given the idealization of Canadian politicians (past and present), we must be very vigilant in ensuring that the curriculum is culturally responsive. Dr. Marie Battiste, (1998) an Indigenous scholar along with other authors of *Enabling the Autumn Seed: Toward a Decolonized Approach to Aboriginal Knowledge, Language, and Education,* warns of the dangers of current curriculum; AIn effect, the curricula serve as another colonial instrument to deprive Aboriginal communities of their knowledge, languages, and cultures A (p. 16).

Dr. Battiste explains that Aboriginal languages and knowledge are excluded in most educational systems. Provincial curricula Adisinherits Aboriginal languages and knowledge@ (p. 17), essentially not acknowledging Indigenous peoples' being. In essence, by ignoring Indigenous knowledge and language, mainstream educators are validating the view that there is no place for such knowledge and language in provincial curricula. Research indicates that all children must see their achievements within their learning context; yet for the most part, this is not the case with Indigenous children. With almost half of the Indigenous student population

attending provincial schools, why is the Indigenous Avoice@ deliberately excluded from the provincial curriculum?

Indigenous Nations recognize that provincial curriculum is culturally biased and not meeting their needs because of the unwillingness of mainstream educators to A…preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal people to use, practice, and develop Aboriginal languages and knowledge in Canada through education.@ (p. 20) Battiste states that provincial educational guidelines are but the latest form of Acognitive imperialism@ or Acognitive manipulation@ (p. 20). She maintains that such manipulation A[is] used to discredit other knowledge bases and values and seeks to validate one source of knowledge and empower it through public education@ (p. 20).

How does this happen? Again, Battiste asserts that this is done through provincial legislation. AThe required adoption of provincial guidelines and curricula, school standards, and teacher certification by Aboriginal educators is the newest manifestation of the grip of cognitive imperialism that needs to be understood in the context of Aboriginal education.@ (p. 20)

This is why, in 2004, social studies still teaches that John A. MacDonald was a famous, worldly founding father, and Oka and Wounded Knee had to end as they did with bloodshed. Heaven forbid that Indians could have a real Alegitimate cause@ for standing up as they did, against the state. According to Battiste, Eurocentric education is perpetuating our Ainvisibility@ while perpetuating our Apsychic disequilibrium@, (p. 20). Because, we remain invisible, our history, our being, our worldview is not present in the curriculum.

This situation, is now receiving some attention in Alberta. The current Learning Commission report, (prepared for Alberta Learning) entitled, *Every child learns. Every child succeeds. Report and recommendations Alberta=s Commission on Learning, October 2003*,

promises curriculum changes. Recommendations 38 and 39 speak to language, culture, and curriculum specifically.

Recommendation 38, *Develop and implement expanded Aboriginal language and culture programs,* notes that AIt is important for Aboriginal children and youth to have opportunities to learn and retain their languages and to have their traditional cultures reflected in their curriculum and learning environment.@…Recommendation 39, *Ensure that First Nations and Metis are directly involved in the development of curriculum and learning resources for and about Aboriginal people in all subject areas,* states, AThis is consistent with the direction of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Policy Framework and provides an important way for Aboriginal people to be directly involved in the development of curriculum and learning resources. It also ensures that the content provides an accurate portrayal of First Nations and Metis history and cultures.@ (Recommendations 38, 39 Learning Commission Report) The Learning Commission Report outlined 95 recommendations, some very specific to Indigenous people. The First Nations, Metis and Inuit Policy Framework is Alberta Learning=s response to the Commission, and ultimately, the document that outlines the Asolutions.@

Let us heed Battiste=s words regarding *decolonization.* AIt is becoming clear to Aboriginal educators that any attempt to decolonize ourselves and actively resist colonial paradigms is a complex and daunting task. We cannot continue to allow Aboriginal students to be given a fragmented existence in a curriculum that does not mirror them, nor should they be denied understanding the historical context that has created that fragmentation.@ (p. 24)

Time will tell just how seriously the Commission report is taken to ensure that their recommendations become our reality. Our children, present and future, deserve to learn in classrooms where the curriculum is developed by and for them, a curriculum that embraces the

Indigenous worldview. Indigenous children deserve to see themselves in the beauty of their ancestors, in their culture, in their ways, as told by their relatives.

Let us all remember the National Indian Brotherhood=s policy on >curriculum and values@ back in 1972:

> Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school, his whole school experience, should reinforce and contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian. (p. 5)

What progress have we made in 32 years?

CHAPTER 14

COMMUNITY SERVICE SYSTEMS SERVING URBAN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES

Indigenous Worldview

In traditional Indigenous societies, the entire tribe was responsible for the well being of the collective. The children and the aged were nurtured and cared for by the hunters, the gathers, the peace makers, the medicine people, and the tribal protectors. The tribe was governed by the Creator's Natural Laws, and there was a shared sense of responsibility. In order for the tribe to survive, everyone had roles and responsibilities that were taken seriously and with honor. In contemporary times, this collective responsibility is expressed in the proverb, Ait takes a whole village to raise a child.@

Calliou (1993), in researching community, analyzed 30 selections written by various authors. Her research *Toward Community: The Community School Model and the Health of Sovereignty* analyzed 30 selected authors spanning 50 years (1939-1989) by 24 Euro-American theorists. She compares their work to aspects of the Indigenous worldview regarding community. She offers several definitions on the composition of community, all depicting the wholistic nature of Indigenous communities:

> …First Nations have recognized the interrelationality of all species, considered sacred, who Aall have their own laws@…Chief Luther Standing Bear (1933) stated that Akinship with all creatures of the earth, sky and water was a real and active principle,@ where all species shared a sense of kinship and Aspoke a common tongue@ (pp. 195-196). Tatanka Yotanka (Sitting Bull, Sioux Nation) said at a council held at Powder River in 1877 that we are all seeds from the same mysterious power and so Awe therefore yield to our neighbors, even our animal neighbors, the same right as ourselves, to inherit the land@(McLuhan, 1971, p. 90). …Olsen (1954) states that any Acommunity is really a set of human relationships@ (p. 83). Community from a First Nations worldview would add the understanding that all sacred beings live in a universe in which each entity is simultaneously autonomous, intimately and spiritually related, and interdependent. (Black Elk, cited in Churchill, 1082, p. 148).

Given the primacy of relationships – our interconnectedness with our fellow human beings and all the creatures of the Earth – let us further explore the relationship building process and its relevance to community service systems.

Relationship building: Why it is so important

To demonstrate the importance of building relationships in Indigenous community development work, we share a rather long but true story that offers important lessons, lessons that we see re-occurring time and again in Indigenous communities. Why do they keep reoccurring? Could it be that people are still not getting the message, so the lesson keeps reappearing?

Hodgson-Smith=s (2000) *Issues of Pedagogy in Aboriginal Education*
is a paper about differing world views around the topic of pedagogy presented at an educational conference in Montreal. The author was part of a group of four Aboriginal women addressing the topic of pedagogy. The author first defines pedagogy according to the Concise Oxford dictionary as Athe science of teaching@. One of her companions shares with her Cree grandmother the news that they are preparing for an academic presentation. Annie, the grandmother, says Awe teach what we know as an act of love, so for Annie, Apedagogy is an act of love@ (p. 157).

Our point in sharing the following story has to do with community development and the art of relationships and listening (with love). Often community development results first in our listening, then scooping the information as we build the relationships.

Kathy=s true story offers lessons; we just have to be open to learning the lesson. It is her **Epilogue** in her article *Issues of Pedagogy in Aboriginal Education*.

> Two years ago I attended a strategic planning workshop at a local high school. This particular day was set aside for the Aboriginal community to voice its

opinions regarding future organization of secondary education in Saskatchewan. About thirty-five Aboriginal people attended, including Elders, parents, teachers, students, and concerned community members. By the afternoon session, there were only about fifteen people remaining. Elders and parents were the first to leave.

Upon arriving at the meeting, participants were given a folder that contained the pre-set agenda; forms to gather information regarding the history and background of the participants; questionnaires; and sheets on which to write down their concerns and ideas. Desks were arranged in a circle, and participants were asked to complete the first sheet, which contained questions like: What schools have you attended? What grade did you complete? What is your highest level of education? How have you been involved in the educational system prior to today=s meeting? Participants read over the sheet, and some took pens from their handbags or pockets. Those of us who had pens immediately began to help the Elders to fill out their sheets. The room remained virtually silent, and the air became thick with frustration and concern. Many of the participants had not received more than Grade 3 or Grade 4 and were hesitant to place this on their sheet. Elders felt this data collection was wasting their time, and they wished to speak to the issues at hand. Finally, one woman stood up and suggested that this sheet was too difficult for many people to complete and that we should get on with a discussion about current educational issues. She questioned the purpose of filling out forms when so much of importance needed to be said. The workshop organizers became quite defensive about the validity of the forms but, after some consideration, agreed to move on with the agenda.

The next thing on the agenda was a getting-to-know-one another game. It was like a bingo card with all kinds of little anecdotes. You were to go around the room and find participants who could say they had travelled to the United States in the last year or who knew the words to a Beatles song. Again, the same woman stood up and suggested that we go around the circle and introduce ourselves instead of playing the game. The organizers again regrouped, after some words of support for the game, and we moved on down the agenda.

The next item on the agenda was a question that was something like this: What do you see as the relevant issues in secondary education? Workshop organizers had two flipcharts set up at the front, and they asked that we share our opinions so that they could organize and record our responses on the flipchart sheets. The first spoke about her grandson who was having such a hard time at the school. She told of her observations of him and the concerns he had expressed to her. It was a very moving account of her grandson=s struggles, and she was obviously struggling to find words to express herself. The workshop organizers questioned her in order to clarify a few items, and then, when she was done, they began the task of rewording and shortening her story into point form for the flipchart sheets. The paraphrasing was difficult and, in the end, did not summarize what she had said. The whole undertaking took about half an hour. Finally, I stood up and

suggested that we forego the flipcharts and just have a discussion in which the organizers could contribute. I asked that they stop writing and just listen to the speakers. There would be plenty of time to record responses later, but for now it was important to allow the discussion to flow. Many of the words that followed were adults= stories of their children=s experience or of their experience as teachers of Aboriginal students. Suggestions were made regarding the handling of students issues, but little of the discussion fell under the headings I have suggested in this research document. Much of the discussion was in the form of narrative, and I daresay that the organizers felt that the participants had not stuck to the agenda or addressed the questions for which they sought answers. And so the day unfolded. It was a very frustrating day for all of us, and I wonder what was really achieved.

The Aboriginal people who spoke that morning told their personal experiences and their children=s personal experiences in the educational system. They could not/did not speak of corporate agendas or of learning styles or of pedagogy, as such. They spoke, instead, of alienation and loneliness and frustration. They spoke of the pride they felt for their children=s accomplishments and of their inability to help their children with algebra and physics. They spoke of the dreams they had for the Aboriginal youth and the need for them to get an education. They spoke of love.

When we broke for lunch, many of the participants spoke privately about their dissatisfaction and suggested that nothing of importance would happen here. It was just a waste of time, they said. So they went home. When the final report on the strategic planning meetings came out, it was clear that none of their concerns had significantly influenced the direction of the school. There was one small section on the concerns of the Aboriginal community that nominally reflected what had taken place that day; for the most part, the report reflected other concerns much more clearly.

Drop-out rates of Aboriginal students in Canadian schools have remained high despite the vast amount of research conducted in an effort to alleviate this problem. Aboriginal parents are still on the periphery of education decision making regarding their children=s education. Communities continue to battle over local control of educational policy and the language of instruction, and they have limited resources with which to put their visions into practice. Pedagogical issues remain at the heart of the matter because students make the final judgment and students themselves remain voiceless. The hegemonic point of view continues to control the questions, and the answers seem to leave us with nowhere else to go.

Where does research go from here? Can research advance the needs and perspectives of Aboriginal people better that this local school board? Are the agendas already established, or is there room to accommodate and further the vision of Aboriginal people? Are we really listening, and are we prepared to act

> on what we hear? Do our current educational research methodologies allow us to listen and to advance creative approaches and to invent new practices? Is there room in the system to make the necessary change? If we answer any of the foregoing questions in the negative, then perhaps no more research needs to be done. Unless there is a paradigm shift, concerned individuals will continue to be frustrated and confused, and the possibilities will remain clouded and hidden. (pp. 165, 166, 167)

We include this story as a very specific example of why it is necessary to really Alisten@ to the voices of the Indigenous community. Community partnerships do not happen in isolation; in fact, MacIver (cited by Calliou, 1993, p. 29) says Acommunity is not just people, but people in relationships.@ One must understand the protocols/practices of working in Indigenous communities. Kathy=s story is the story of many Indigenous community members.

Be cautious, yet curious. Get to know your Indigenous partners; work with them, not against them, nor in isolation. Shared decision making, coupled with community supports, goes a long ways in partnership programs.

Calliou (1993) stresses the importance of community education as a means of liberation. She asserts AIf education is to be emancipatory, devoted to creation of transformative change and social justice, then curricular experiences will need to demonstrate the respectful acceptance of different points of view and knowledge, the inclusion of all voices in decision making, and the overt demonstration that power is to be shared and not hoarded (p. 41).

Asset Based Community Development

Indigenous people throughout the world have experienced (and continue to experience) a needs driven, deficiency based approach to community partnerships. They, and the communities they live in, are viewed as being the Aproblem@ and in need of repair. A community building response would use asset based approaches that focus on capacity development. Kretzmann & McKnight=s (1993) book *Building Communities From The Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding*

And Mobilizing A Community=s Assets invites communities to take a capacity-orientation to community partnerships:

> …all the historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort@…The key to neighborhood regeneration, then is to locate all of the available local assets, to begin connecting them with one another in ways that multiply their power and effectiveness, and to begin harnessing those local institutions…(pp. 5, 6).

Addressing Problems by Building Solutions

Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) use a Acommunity assets map@ which inventories the gifts, skills, and capacities of all community residents. In this asset mapping process, one first looks at the gifts of the individual, the citizen associations, and finally, the local institutes. It is necessary to go house by house, block by block to get a true picture of the individual talents and productive skills in building community capacity. This is especially important for people who have been marginalized, for sometimes, they too have failed to recognize their resiliency and the skills they do have as gifts in their survival. The entire approach is asset based, internally focused, and relationship driven. One of the pillars of asset mapping is the strong neighborhood approach rooted in working with the various *community based partners*. A basic premise is that every person has capacities, abilities, and gifts. This premix reflects the belief of most Indigenous people: every person comes into this world with gifts and over our life=s journey we discover and develop our gifts. This belief removes the deficiency based thinking and embraces the asset approach, tapping strengths.

Kretzmann & McKnight (1993) argue against Aneeds surveys@ which they call Adeficiency inventories@ (p. 14). Needs surveys tend to identify what=s wrong with a community rather than what is right, and describe what is missing rather than what is present. Needs surveys do not tap the energy of citizens and channel this energy towards community

building; rather these surveys tend to build services and create clients. The capacity inventory model, originally designed to identify skills and abilities of people in an older Chicago neighborhood, has now been successfully used in communities throughout North America as it can be modified to meet the specific needs of a group or community, in this instance a school community. The authors report that most groups discover capacities come in the form of Askills@ in a wide range of categories learned through paid work, volunteering, or personal experience; Aabilities and talents@ including art, gardening, teaching, sports and more; Ainterests@ such as the sharing of skills, exploring new ideas and activities; and Aexperiences@ gained through travel, education or life experiences providing personal and unique perspectives.

Typically, asset inventories are organized into sections that document these skills, interests, and experiences as well as identifying personal hopes for new learning or for entrepreneurial enterprise. People identify their priority skills and those they would be willing to share with others. Through interviews (relationship building), the process is one of engaging people in identifying their gifts and matching them with initiatives or individuals who can benefit from the contribution of those gifts. Consistently, communities experience both tangible and intangible outcomes contributing to the overall well-being of the community. In *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents* the authors (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) describe the process and outcomes in several communities. An example (p. 45) is a coalition in Seattle who did three types of inventories (The Individual Capacity Profile, The Youth Capacity Profile, and The Group / Program Capacity Profile as one-to-one conversations) which resulted in connections between Alocal seniors, community organizations, residents, and an elementary school. The neighborhood had no easily accessible facility where seniors could meet for social activities. The community groups, residents, and

seniors worked together to gain community support, funding, and planning assistance for a senior center which opened its doors in January of 1995. The program B Seniors at Lowell: Bridging the Generations - is located at Lowell Elementary School and provides a place where seniors gather for social activities, classes, exercise, and opportunities to connect. In return for space provided by the center, seniors spend 30 hours per month tutoring children who are students at the school. The opportunities to A build community@ are numerous and achievable from an asset based, relationship driven, and internally focused approach that has universal application benefiting all children.

Comprehensive and Integrated

Support for engaging the community is expressed by Alberta Learning in its *Health and Life Skills Guide to Implementation (K-9)* in the section on Comprehensive School Health which calls for an integrated approach that includes a broad spectrum of programs, activities, and services that take place in homes, schools, and communities in order to help children and youth enhance their health, develop to their fullest potential, and build productive and satisfying relationships. The programs, activities, and services developed with comprehensive approaches involve young people, families, schools, agencies and organizations concerned with children and youth (p. 29).

Literature Reviews by both AADAC and the Alberta Mental Health Board offer support for comprehensive interventions and supportive (home, school, community) environments that reduce risk factors and build protective factors (capacity) that promote well-being and mental health across the life span.

Community and Family Connections: What Does the Research Tell Us?

While the literature indicates that family, school, and community connections can benefit children and youth across their whole schooling experience, it is equally clear that there is a great deal of work that needs to occur to clarify the concepts and outcomes of these connections to achieve full potential.

One organization that leads the challenge of synthesizing the research on these connections is The National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools created in Austin, Texas in December 2000. The Center serves as a national resource to schools, community groups, research organizations, policymakers, and families, linking people with research-based information and resources. They have produced three research synthesis documents to date with another two planned. These documents are well worth reading in their entirety as they focus on different aspects of connections (relationships and impacts) as well as the references to the various studies and programs. The documents produced to date are:

> *Emerging Issues in School, Family & Community Connections* (annual synthesis 2001, by Catherine Jordan, Evangelina Orozco, and Amuy Averett
>
> *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, & Community Connections on Student Achievement* (annual synthesis 2002), by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp
>
> *Diversity: School, Family & Community Connections* (annual synthesis 2003), by Martha Boethel

The 2004 synthesis (as stated in Emerging Issues, p. 3) examines community organizations in the process of transforming schools into high-performing learning communities, and the 2005 topic will be connecting families and schools to support successful student transitions throughout the education system. The full reports are available at www.sedl.org/connections/resources

Developing a Common Language Defining Connections: On Whose Terms and for What Purpose?

In the 2001 research synthesis, *Emerging Issues in School, Family, & Community Connections*, the authors point out that a general knowledge of the research is no longer sufficient for those who are initiating action in this area. They reviewed more than 160 publications and highlighted critical areas where clarification, agreement, and further developments are needed, as well as promising new directions that are emerging. The document presents the general problem of multiple and overlapping definitions and differing expectations of "parental involvement" given the emphasis on school-centered definitions of family and community involvement and the tendency to focus on school-directed initiatives which reflects "the natural advantage schools have over other stakeholders and the policy structures that support it" (p. 2).

Various outcomes have been identified in the literature with a range of results. While common definitions are lacking, *Emerging Issues* found that the literature expressed student outcomes as academic achievement, other achievement in school, social functioning, addressing barriers to learning, creating networks of support, or creating new learning opportunities. School outcomes were described as impacts on school reform efforts, school climate, access to resources, and increased instructional capacity and curriculum development. Outcomes for families and communities were expressed in terms of changes in skills, knowledge, and beliefs; acquisition of resources; and increased civic capacity and community development.

The terms "family connections with schools" and "community connections with schools" describe a wide range of activity and differing levels of engagement depending on expected outcomes which, as already stated, are often poorly defined or have not been developed through a collaborative and shared decision-making process by the various stakeholders. There is even variation in the way "community" is defined, understood and expressed by everyone.

Differing connections can have different results which cannot be generalized across different areas of achievement, and it is clear there is need to continue measuring the particular effects of specific strategies in order to ensure maximum impact on student and school success. In addition to the many outcomes, there is also a need to measure the process of creating successful connections with schools. "Researchers and observers point out that successful partnership efforts often depend on the existence of strong, trusting relationships between schools, parents, and community members… in some cases, building these relationships necessarily must come before more traditional measurable outcomes can be observed…" (p. 24, 25)

This synthesis offers the conclusion that "much of the emerging theory and practice of family and community connections with schools encourages a rethinking of our understanding of how children develop and how the various people and contexts fit together to support that development. A new orientation in emerging in the field, from a school-centric focus toward the creation of reciprocal connections among schools, parents, and community members. These connections (must be) mutually beneficial and reflect the shared goals of all stakeholders." Several authors they reviewed "argue for the need to develop an "asset" model, in which parents and communities are considered equal contributors to the education process and are viewed by school personnel as resources instead of as obstacles…(and) suggest there might also be a need to re-conceptualize roles that various people play in the life of a child: not as positions or functions, but rather as the natural product of an individual's strengths and assets, regardless of whether it is a parent, a teacher, a community member or a religious leader" (p. 14, 15).

Current State of the Research

The current body of research in family-school-community connections is in an early stage of development. A caution is put forward that most studies to date have been looking for:

> "family patterns and fixed characteristics, such as parent education, socio-economic level, and relationships at home…(and that) focusing on family patterns has narrowed results to those characteristics that "good families" have that help children succeed academically. Schools then shape their programs around these results, such as by offering classes to teach "not so good parents" how to read to their children and help them with homework, in the ways that "good parents" do. From these studies researchers have portrayed families through deficit model lenses: some families are broken and need to be fixed. Usually, this pattern merely serves to reinforce racial, ethnic, and class barriers…" (p. 26)

Research is evolving and is yet unclear. "Most critical is the development of more cohesive theoretical models and frameworks that can be used to develop and test hypotheses that can inform theory. The use of a variety of research methods and designs, appropriate for the types of questions that need to be explored, is also critical" (p. 25). "…new models (must) consider local context, including geographic, socio-economic and cultural contexts. It is unlikely that one model can explain the interactions between all communities, families, and schools" (p. 31).

The writers go on to recommend that additional models for family and community connections with schools should draw from theoretical advances, concepts, and ideas from other disciplines beyond education. They reference a study (Coleman, 1988, as cited in Hjo Sui-Chu, 1997) using social capital theory as a way to understand and study the strategies that are needed to integrate family and community involvement in the change process in urban public schools. More studies are looking at the greater urban context in which schools exist or examining the growth and decline of cities and their impact on educational development. "Researchers must recognize the close relationship between an economic situation, family structure, and educational participation" (p. 31).

A New Wave of Evidence

The 2002 synthesis, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, & Community Connections on Student Achievement*, looked at 51 studies and one overarching conclusion emerged:

> Taken as a whole, these studies found a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and education backgrounds and for students at all ages. Although there is less research on the effects of community involvement, it also suggests benefits for schools, families, and students, including improved achievement and behavior. (p. 24)

Prior to listing the eight key findings, the writers express caution that many studies of high-performing schools identify several key characteristics associated with academic improvement of which "engaged parents" was one. These include high standards and expectations for all students and curriculum, as well as instruction and assessments aligned with those standards. They also include effective leadership, frequent monitoring of teaching and learning, focused professional development, and high levels of parent and community involvement.

As described in a one page summary that the authors offer, the key findings about Impact are:

> Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.
>
> The more families support their children's learning and educational progress, both in quantity and over time, the more their children tend to do well in school and continue their education. Families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can, and often do, have a positive influence on their children's learning.
>
> Family and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.

The key findings about Making Connections are:

> Programs that successfully connect with families and community invite involvement, are welcoming, and address specific parental and community needs. Parent involvement programs that are effective in engaging diverse families recognize cultural and class differences, address needs and build on strengths.
>
> Effective connections embrace a philosophy of partnership where power is shared – the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.
>
> Organized initiatives to build parent and community leadership aimed at improving low-performing schools are growing and leading to promising results in low-income areas and the rural South.

The key findings have lead the authors of this synthesis to put forward a number of recommendations for action (pp. 61 – 72). They state these as:

1. Recognize that all parents, regardless of income, education level, or cultural background, are involved in their children's learning and want their children to do well in school.
2. Create programs that will support families to guide their children's learning, from preschool through high school.
3. Work with families to build their social and political connections.
4. Develop the capacity of school staff to work with families and community members.
5. Link family and community engagement efforts to student learning.
6. Focus efforts to engage families and community members in developing trusting and respectful relationships.
7. Embrace a philosophy of partnership and be willing to share power with families. Make sure that parents, school staff, and community members understand that the responsibility for children's educational development is a collaborative enterprise.
8. Build strong connections between schools and community organizations.
9. Design and conduct research that is more rigorous and focused, and that uses more culturally sensitive and empowering definitions of parent involvement.

Diversity in Education

> The need to improve academic achievement among diverse student populations – notably African American, Latino, Native American, immigrant and language minority students, and students from poor families – is one of the most persistent and challenging issues that education faces. (p. 1)

The 2003 research synthesis, *Diversity: School, Family, & Community Connections* examines the differing definitions of diversity and "from the universe of possibilities, focuses

specifically on three categories: race or ethnicity, culture (including language), and socioeconomic status. The report also explores barriers to involvement for minority and low-income families, strategies that have been used to address those barriers, and recommendations that local education leaders can adapt to address their specific needs.

The author wrote this synthesis primarily for practitioner leaders – superintendents, principals, curriculum supervisors, lead teachers, family involvement staff, community leaders, and others who may be responsible for or interested in helping shape local policy or practice regarding school, family, and community connections. The report is organized so that, depending on their needs and interests, local leaders may quickly access practical information or explore the topic in depth. Secondary audiences for the report include local and state policymakers, program developers, professional development providers, and researchers. (p. 1)

From the array of information across 64 studies (incumbent again with a lack of common definitions around concepts), the author identified seven broad findings that summarize the overall knowledge base related to family, community, and school connections among minority and low-income populations. While the caution remains that the research base is thin, the author does offer recommendations that are still subject to local wisdom and further research.

The recommendations (described in pp. 71 – 75) are put forward in two broad categories:

Building relationships among schools, communities, and families

- adopt formal school- and district-level policies that promote family involvement, including an explicit focus on engaging families who reflect the full diversity of the student population, and which may address:
  1) adapting materials and activities to accommodate the needs of families of all backgrounds, languages, and circumstances
  2) giving families in school planning and decision-making processes
  3) training teachers to work effectively with families
  4) offering to help families build their own capacities to support their children's schooling

- demonstrate active and ongoing support from the school principal who can show support by:

1) communicating often with families (in their native language) through school newsletters, bulletins, and other written materials
2) holding informal meetings with families to seek their perspectives and to keep them updated on school policies and practices
3) maintaining a strong presence at parent-teacher meetings and at other school-sponsored events for families
4) making the implementation of family-involvement policies a priority
5) and emphasizing that commitment with both families and school staffs

- honor families' hopes and concerns for their children
  1) find ways to let families know that you recognize and value their efforts
  2) let them know that you appreciate the fact that their concern is for their children's general well-being
  3) in orienting staff and community organizations to family-involvement strategies, include information on the varied ways in which families support their children's learning, as well as to the varied perspectives as to what family involvement should address

- acknowledge both commonalities and differences among students and families, a challenging but essential process for everyone involved
  1) the research suggests that there are more similarities than differences in families' hopes and concerns for their children, no matter what their background; however, differences do exist in families' experiences, cultural values and practices, and world views.
  2) It is important not to simply ignore issues related to diversity or to act as if differences don't exist; "institutional silence", an atmosphere in which race is never mentioned, can lead to unspoken perceptions of discrimination and inter-group tensions; group differences must be acknowledged
  3) Acknowledging diversity means more than celebrating food or holidays; it means making room for a range of voices, perspectives, resources, and styles of interacting.
  4) Strategies for valuing diversity is to use families as cultural resources, ensure your staff reflect the varied makeup of your community, make instructional materials relevant to students' "community culture"

- Strengthen school staffs' capacity to work well with families
  1) include instructions on how to partner with parents and community

- provide supports to help immigrant families understand how schools work and what's expected of both families and students
  1) use both formal and informal strategies to help families to get oriented

- make outreach a priority; take the extra steps necessary to make it possible for families to get involved at school, as well as at home
  1) facilitate communication in the language of comfort for families
  2) hire teachers, teacher aides, recruit volunteers who speak languages other than English
  3) provide written materials in families' native language
  4) post welcoming signs and other information in the languages spoken in the community
  5) make it easy as possible for families to participate in school activities such as scheduling meetings to accommodate working parents, having volunteers help with transportation or child care issues, develop parent mentors (family to family)
  6) find multiple ways for families to get involved
  7) get out into the community through home visits, community activities such as social or civic events

- recognize that it takes time to build trust as many minority and low-income families have had frustrating experiences with schools and other public institutions. Until real commitment is

shown, they may be unwilling to risk much in the way of time and energy or to speak their minds

1) don't be discouraged by skepticism, suspicion, or criticism, or by low initial numbers; it takes time for trust to grow

Helping Families Strengthen Student Achievement

- Provide families with training and resources to support early literacy
- Help families use specific communication and monitoring strategies to support their children's learning such as tutoring, supervising homework schedules, and focusing conversations on encouraging their children to set and pursue goals
- Encourage and supports students' involvement in a range of school- and community-sponsored extracurricular and after-school activities as some studies show a direct correlation to higher achievement
- Help low-income families obtain the supports and services they need to keep themselves safe, healthy, and well fed

Future Directions

Some proven approaches that have been well documented elsewhere and are compatible with the Indigenous paradigm have not been examined as part of this review. These are strategies relating to peer support and peer led programming, mentoring programs, community service learning, and internship or work experience programs that allow students to experience their world in an affirmative and connective way.

There are also indications that applying developmental theory to research and practice is having a positive impact on the way that services and programs are connecting as the role of schools is increasingly viewed within the larger context of youth-serving organizations.

It is apparent that the whole area of connections – family connections, community connections – is one that a great many school jurisdictions are consciously pursuing as a means to achieve greater success for all students. While this review has sought research relevant to urban aboriginal youth, the research is thin, particularly in terms of success. We have therefore attempted to capture current knowledge and identify elements that resonate with the needs of our Indigenous students.

As with other researchers, we concur that the research needs to continue so that we can create the knowledge we need to build better outcomes, not only for Indigenous students, their families and communities, but for all children.

CHAPTER 15

TALKING CIRCLES

Talking circles in contemporary society organizations are one of the most effective means of transforming organizations. In the busy-ness of our work lives we are often not taking time to really talk, and really listen to one another. We give lip service to the importance of relationships, but do we really listen, and talk from the heart? Using talking circles takes some training, practice and trust; we need to slow ourselves down, sit in a circle, and intently listen, without interference, as we each take our turn speaking about whatever the issue is. In traditional society ANative Americans knew they lived in an interconnected system and had methods to solve and resolve conflict, according to Don Coyhis (Simonelli, 1999, p. 19).

Coyhis, a member of the Mohican Nation, shares his corporate experiences regarding talking circles. One of the first things that all humans need is respect: ARespect means you don=t define me by my earthsuit. It means you look at what is inside me. Human beings need respect, trust, love, caring, understanding, acceptance, patience and a learning environment@ (p. 19), and effective dialogue occurs within our organizations, when we collectively recognize our Ainterconnectedness@, something he says we do not always do.

According to Coyhis (1999), the talking circle evolved over time amongst Native Americans. Talking circles take practice; utilizing circles can create life changing experiences. He notes, AOnce we sit and listen instead of talking at each other and judging, we start to relate to one another@ (p. 20). He comments on the power of the circle in helping people connect:

> A talking circle allows people of differences - different opinions, different backgrounds and different cultures - to come together and sit in a circle in order to work towards and experience unity. Each person in a talking circle is free to speak and express themselves without being interrupted. A talking circle can be taught and practiced on a regular basis in organizations or in the workplace. When we sit in a circle we begin to interconnect with each other. We find we can

> learn what we have in common and what the differences are just by sitting and listening to one another. (pp. 19, 20)

Using Talking Circles

Anyone can use a talking circle; the basic premise is that everyone within the circle has equal voice. No voice is greater in the circle, and we collectively have the right to be heard and listened to, despite our position within the organization. Circles have no organizational hierarchies.

Rupert Ross, an Assistant Crown Attorney, and author of *Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice* (1996) was a circuit lawyer in northwestern Ontario in the early 1990's. Frustrated, and overwhelmed at the number of Indigenous people (many youth) coming into the judicial system, he set out to find alternative measures. What he found were various aspects of the Indigenous worldview, contrary to his western law training, and in many respects he shares A…I have found myself strongly attracted to certain Aboriginal approaches…@ (p. xi)

One of those Aboriginal approaches is the talking circle. He lays out the following rules Athat govern the circles he=s involved in@ (p. 197):

1. One person speaks at a time.
2. The Laws of the Creator govern the person speaking; these laws are honesty, kindness, sharing and respect.
3. All persons speak in turn, and no one interrupts the speaker. Others listen.
4. If desired, a person may pass when it is her/his turn to speak.
5. All participants should be attentive to the speaker (No side conversations, etc.).

Note: College talking circles usually proceed with any person starting off the circle (volunteering), then we proceed to the left (clockwise, in the direction of the sun) from that person. Additionally, because we have resident College Elders, we usually start with a smudge

and a prayer. This is something that the user of the circle will have to check with the protocols of the geographic, tribal area.

Talking Circles and Success

Bazylak, (2002) a Metis teacher in Saskatoon undertook a study entitled, *Journeys to Success: Perceptions of Five Female Aboriginal High School Graduates*. In the study, his method of data collection was the Asharing circle.@ He concluded that part of his success in gathering his data (and as a classroom teacher) was due to his use of the sharing circle as reflected in his observation that, AThe sharing circles were among the most rewarding, exhausting, and fulfilling experiences of my years as an educator.@ (p. 135). Specific to his study, he notes that the Alevel of trust and comfort in the circles emerged early...@ (p. 135). Since trust is a protective factor in dropout prevention and student success, this is worth highlighting.

Bazylak=s use of the circle allowed him to quickly establish a relationship with the participants; working in collaboration, they identified the following factors that encourage success as opposed to the factors that contribute to failure (Table 1 (p 149):

Factors that encourage success	Factors that encourage failure
a new understanding of spirituality	contrasting world views
family involvement	lack of parental involvement
Friends	lack of engaging curriculum
development of self-identity	schools are goal-oriented
multicultural environment	lack of cultural content in school
support programs	low teacher expectations
drug and alcohol avoidance	drug and alcohol use
Aboriginal teachers	loss of Native language instruction
Grade 12 diploma	placement into alternative programs
relevant curriculum	lack of career counselling
supportive and flexible teachers	lack of teacher flexibility
nurturing a gift	

Table 1

Ironically, Bazylak=s use of the sharing circle in performing research lead him to much more. Over and over, we hear about the importance of positive student-teacher relationships. The talking circle revealed, AStrong, healthy relationships built on trust and mutual respect contribute to the educational success of Aboriginal students. The strength of the student-teacher relationship often dictates the level of success the student achieves in school. Melnechenko and Horsman=s (1998) study of Aboriginal students' success in grade 6-9 concluded with similar findings: Ahealthy student-teacher relationships@ contribute to student success. The findings are unequivocal: one of the most significant factors in student success is *healthy student-teacher relationships* (Bazylak, 2002, Melnechenko, & Horsman, 1998). Bazylak, (2002), (citing Phelan, Davidson, & Cao, 1992), concluded AStudents want to feel connected personally to their teachers…they want to know that teachers have thoughts, feelings, and experiences that both enliven and go beyond the academic content of the classroom@ (p. 146).

How would teachers know that students are thirsting for positive student-teacher relationships, apart from taking the time to share with students, and what better way, than using the sharing circle!

CHAPTER 16

SUCCESS IN A COMPLEX WORLD

Defining and achieving success is complex. How is success defined? Is success defined by the number of high school graduates we promote through our high schools, regardless of their academic abilities? Are we successful by increasing the number of Indigenous students who take provincial achievement exams? Is success defined by assisting Indigenous students to be the best they are able to become mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically (at a certain age in their lives)?

Defining Success

This remains a very complex topic and one without easy textbook answers. In attempting to address success, we discover that perceptions of success differ significantly. For example, Melnechenko & Horsman=s (1998) study *Factors That Contribute To Aboriginal Students Success In School In Grades Six to Nine* outlines different opinions of the meaning of success. Citing Goulet (1996), who argues Asuccess in one culture may not be defined the same as it is in another@ (p. 7), the authors share the definition embraced by the Aboriginal communities, Asuccess [is] mastering a curriculum and retaining cultur[al] heritage, while a European opinion might measure success by Aacademic achievement@ (p. 8). Sheryl, one of the students in Melnechenko & Horsman=s (1998) study shared her thoughts on success:

> My uncle, he=s very successful, he doesn=t smoke, he doesn=t drink, he has a good job, he makes sure he gets food on the table. My mom would say that I am intelligent, smart, and talented. At home I just go in the bedroom cause you=ll just get distracted by the television and you know that=s self discipline. Those are both examples of success@(p. 8).

While Linda (another student) shared, AI=m a hard worker, I=m intelligent, I=m a caring person, I guess. I=m respectful and I=m respecting, I guess that=s it.@. . . . Ann thought her

success was being in regular versus Aspecial@ classes, AI=m not in any special classes. I=m in a regular math class, and all of my friends are in a different math class, and there are five First Nations people in a regular class. I don=t get into trouble a lot, and I think I do what I=m told.@ (p.8) Ironically, all three students define success in a different manner.

Bruno's (2003) (an Indigenous scholars master=s thesis) *Aboriginal Women: Journey Towards A Doctorate* found similar conclusions. Her qualitative study looked at the academic journey of four Indigenous women who either had a doctorate degree, or were finalizing one. Ironically, not one participant defined success as receiving Athe academic doctorate degree@; their success was in the context of their self discovery journey which included cultural identity and a rededication to serving the Indigenous community at large.

Paula, and Justin shared their opinions of success:

> When I look at my journey...my success is getting to know myself better. My ability through these lessons that the creator has provided me with...those lived experiences have helped me to be more compassionate, to be more understanding, more loving and giving, to practice those natural laws instead of getting all twisted with jealousy and the anger...that to me is a sense of success; never to forget who I am and where I come from, my obligations to give back to our community, to help women, to help our children. (p. 58)

Justin believes success is different for all people, and it includes happiness:

> Success is happiness when you have peace of mind, peace of heart when you feel like you are balanced within the four quadrants. That is what happiness is. That is what I=m looking for B life that would allow me to feel balanced yet challengedB balanced mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Challenged in those ways as well... Someone may hold success to be one thing... Achieving a PhD is success in one of those ways. It was a challenge before me and completing it was a form of success, but it is one accomplishment on the road towards all those other things. Balance is the key to the happiness... The piece of paper does not make me successful, I have to feel that I am going to continue to contribute. (p. 58)

Talk of Awhat constitutes success@ requires care, and the parameters need to be defined by the stakeholders. The Indigenous community's definition of success may be quite different from simply Aacademic achievement.@

Factors That Inhibit Success

Before one can accurately understand the factors that contribute to success, one must review those factors that inhibit school success. What follows is a summary of three major studies (*Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner City High Schools*, (2002); *Meeting the Educational Needs of Aboriginal Adolescents*, (1995) and *Factors That Contribute To Aboriginal Students Success In School In Grades Six to Nine*) that identified a number of themes.

The Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner City High Schools (2002) study is based on interviews with 47 Aboriginal students in inner city Winnipeg, 50 Aboriginal early school leavers, 25 adults and 10 teachers (7 Aboriginal). The research team used interview questionnaires and focus groups to gather information.

The following themes emerged from their interviews: strong parental support exists (despite the fact that parents do not actively get involved in the schools), students have goals and expectations (irrespective of the fact that few are graduating), there is a need for improved relationships with teachers (two separate worlds appear to exist), and the curriculum needs major revisions. As one student expressed, "Schools should not bring out the >Indian stuff= once a year and say this is curriculum. All it does is feed into the stereotyping of Aboriginal people." The participants argue that knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture has to be infused throughout the curriculum@ (p. 21), the school climate needs some work, as does the issue of racism. Almost one third of the participants interviewed felt that racism exists in their schools. The researchers noted, AOvert racism exists in Winnipeg=s inner city high schools, and it is

hurtful to many Aboriginal students, and it must surely exacerbate the cultural/class/experiential divide that separates many Aboriginal students from the process of formal education.@ In fact, they suggest that some students are choosing to reject school for this reason. They further suggest that institutional racism exists because of the Aoverwhelming predominance of non-Aboriginal personnel working in the educational system - - even in those inner city schools where Aboriginal students comprise a very high proportion of the total student body.@ (p. 25) The research team suggested that Aboriginal students need support in obtaining part time jobs. Inner city Aboriginal youths – ages 15 to 24 - were unemployed at a rate of 35.1%, (in 1996) while the overall unemployment rate was 7.9%. Another real issue for many inner city residents is Athe struggle to survive@ The last theme to emerge was Aresisting school@, which implies that some students choose not to succeed, rejecting school as a form of resistance to mainstream, middle class school curricula, etc. Thus, Athis is an issue less of >failing= in school, than of >choosing= not to succeed in a school which feels, and often is, alien@ (p. 28). The last three issues that were identified were: colonialism and education, Aboriginal teachers and teacher training, and finally, Aboriginal curriculum.

Similar concerns came out of a major study in Australia entitled *Meeting the Educational Needs of Aboriginal Adolescents* (1995). Interviewees aged 10 to 15 years old in twenty-two urban primary and secondary schools in several Australian states participated. The authors noted, Ain general, Australian schools are not meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal adolescents@ (p. xii). Issues included lack of academic achievement (attainment), attendance, retention, and overall, schools and teachers are not meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal students and their parents" (p. xii).

Finally, the study *Factors That Contribute To Aboriginal Students Success In School In Grades Six To Nine* (Melnechenko & Horsman, 1998 cite Johns, 1994; Barnhardt, 1994; Pelletier, 1993; Rampaul, Singh & Didyk, 1984) found the need to deal with racism, feelings of alienation, individual effort, teacher expectations and classroom behaviors.

Reams of studies and reports point out similar concerns throughout Indigenous Nations worldwide. The real challenge is to identify studies that focus on factors that contribute to school success. In fact, we suggest that there are but a handful of studies that are specific to "urban Aboriginal school success".

Factors That Contribute to Success

Again we reiterate the fact that limited research exists that specifically addresses "urban Aboriginal school success". This field is emerging, and for the most part, Indigenous scholars (and scholars in general) have focused on various aspects of success (see the table of contents).

Melnechenko & Horsman=s (1998) study *Factors That Contribute To Aboriginal Students Success In School In Grades Six To Nine* is one of the few that is specific to success in Canada's schools. Coincidently, much of what the authors report in their study is what we included in our search as factors that we believe contribute to Indigenous student school success.

Their study included 18 students in grades 6-9 in rural and urban schools in southern Saskatchewan. They concluded 5 separate individual and/or group interviews over a four month period in March through June of 1997. Listening to the voices of the students, they identified factors that students believe help them to succeed in school.

They found four major themes, with sub-themes as follows:

1. *Family influence was key*. Significant factors included healthy communication, parental expectations, respect and affection.

2. *Good (healthy) relationships with teachers was paramount*. Included was good interpersonal repertoire, flexibility, teachers as strong classroom leaders, friendliness, understanding, teachers who did not demonstrate uncertainty, dissatisfaction, or criticalness. Teachers who allowed freedom in their classrooms built on those healthy relationships, as did cooperativeness and healthy boundaries.

   Student relationships were enhanced when teachers were empathetic, caring, compassionate, believed in every child, and believed that all children learn, teachers were good listeners, were respectful, trustworthy, maintained confidentiality, understood the student=s world, set standards and maintained control, while adapting instruction to meet their individual needs. Equally important was how relationships were formed. Respect, fairness, safety, trustworthiness, humor, and achievable challenges were significant in developing and maintaining healthy student - teacher relationships.

3. *Programming and curriculum was demonstrated as important.* Adapting curriculum, varying instructional practices, enhancing the learning environment, providing varied learning activities and building a community in the classroom were all important. Curriculum needs to be positive, reinforcing, complimenting contemporary and historical values/beliefs, and needs to reflect the Indigenous worldview.

4. *Peer support is significant*. Youngsters in grades 6-9 want to feel a part of trusted groups. Peer support was seen as important as family and teacher-student relationships.

Students need to have positive, satisfying supportive relationships not only with their families (care givers), but with school personnel as well. They need role models; they need teachers who will advocate for them, who will help them (not fail them), believe and have confidence in them, and be their teacher advisors. As teacher advisors, teachers need to help them academically, help them feel a strong sense of belonging, and be the communicator between school and the community. Incidentally, students prefer active, community based learning opportunities.

Excellent teachers were those who were sensitive to the family make up, to cultural influences, were genuine, could be trusted, were accepting, good listeners, had strong problem solving skills, empowered students, and saw their students as partners and cohorts. Teachers who demonstrated knowledge of students, pedagogy, curriculum and resources, and who varied their instructional methods to reflect varied interests, culture and language were all recognized as significant in achieving school success.

The authors concluded their study with the following 5 recommendations:

1. Schools need to expand their thoughts and practices on success, and adapt assessments accordingly. They suggest looking at multiple intelligence theory (see our section on multiple intelligence).
2. Build relationships with students and their families. Students, their families, and culture need to be in schools (see our sections on relationships).
3. Encourage networking between students and teachers. Share successes between teachers

and students; build strong, cementing, trusting relationships. According to First Nation educator Sheryl Farrell-Racette “you will know that you have established a positive relationship with your Aboriginal students when they tell you about and want you to meet their family”. (p. 26)

4. Curriculum and programming needs to demonstrate care. Children need to be able to see themselves in the curriculum. The authors suggest moving the curriculum into the community where children can explore their own rich culture.
5. Teachers need to focus on promoting healthy peer relationships. Peer support came out as a significant factor impacting student success.

Melnechenko & Horsman (1998) cited Johns, 1994; Barnhardt, 1994; and Pelletier, 1993 who noted success factors can be categorized into external and internal sources: Aoutside factors@ include the need for favorable government policies, family support, encouragement, supportive peer friendships, adequate and family incomes community. Internal school/classroom factors include community involvement, positive student support services, culturally relevant curriculum, accommodating varied learning styles, and providing a culturally responsive learning environment. (p. 2)

The *Aboriginal Education In Winnipeg Inner City High Schools* study (2002) put forth four powerful recommendations:

1. reach out to Aboriginal parents (teachers need to go into the communities)
2. support Aboriginal adult learning centres
3. develop community economic development strategies that support Head Start, literacy for adults, and after school programs
5. help Aboriginal high school students find part time employment while in school

In addition to these specific recommendations the researchers made three broader suggestions: there is a need for more Aboriginal teachers (who understand colonialism and its impacts), add Aboriginal content to teacher education programs, and integrate Aboriginal content into the curriculum (must be infused).

Long term systemic change included a centre for Urban Aboriginal Education, more Aboriginal teachers, training university instructors, and hiring Aboriginal staff to teach Aboriginal history, culture, spirituality, colonialism, racism. Universities need to design courses in Aboriginal history, culture, spirituality, colonialism, racism and anti-racism. High school curriculum needs to be re-vamped. Core courses should have compulsory Aboriginal content, with courses developed specific to Aboriginal people (history, culture, literature) and finally, there should be Elders and artists in schools.

The researchers stated AWhat Aboriginal people have said to us about the educational system is *not* that Aboriginal people should be forced to change in order to fit into and >succeed= in school, but rather that the educational system needs to change@ (p. 3).

CHAPTER 17

OTHER FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

Change and Resistance to Change

The collective partnership between schools, communities and corporations towards achieving greater Indigenous student success in provincial schools will require Achange@ - one of the greatest challenges we all face. How do we cope withor accept change? Do we go with the flow, or do we resist change? Have we been involved since the initial stages? If not, we may ask, how is this change going to impact us personally? Research indicates that during the change process, staff want to know how they personally will be affected by change, so this most crucial concern needs attention. Change arouses emotions that are both positive (exhilaration, risks, excitement, renewed enthusiasm) and negative (fear, anxiety, panic, losses).

Fullan, (2001), author of *Leading In A Culture of Change,* and leading Canadian guru on change suggests Aleaders in business and education face similar challenges - how to cultivate and sustain learning under conditions of complex, rapid change@ (p. xi). Having noted this, Fullan is recognized world wide for his change research and work in Aschool improvement@, more specifically around improving student literacy.

Fullan contends we are Aliving in chaotic conditions@ (p. xiii), where leaders need to operate under complex and very uncertain conditions, thus requiring strong, sustained collective leadership. He outlines five components of leadership in the move towards positive change. (See figure 18 for his leadership change framework).

LEADING IN A CULTURE OF CHANGE

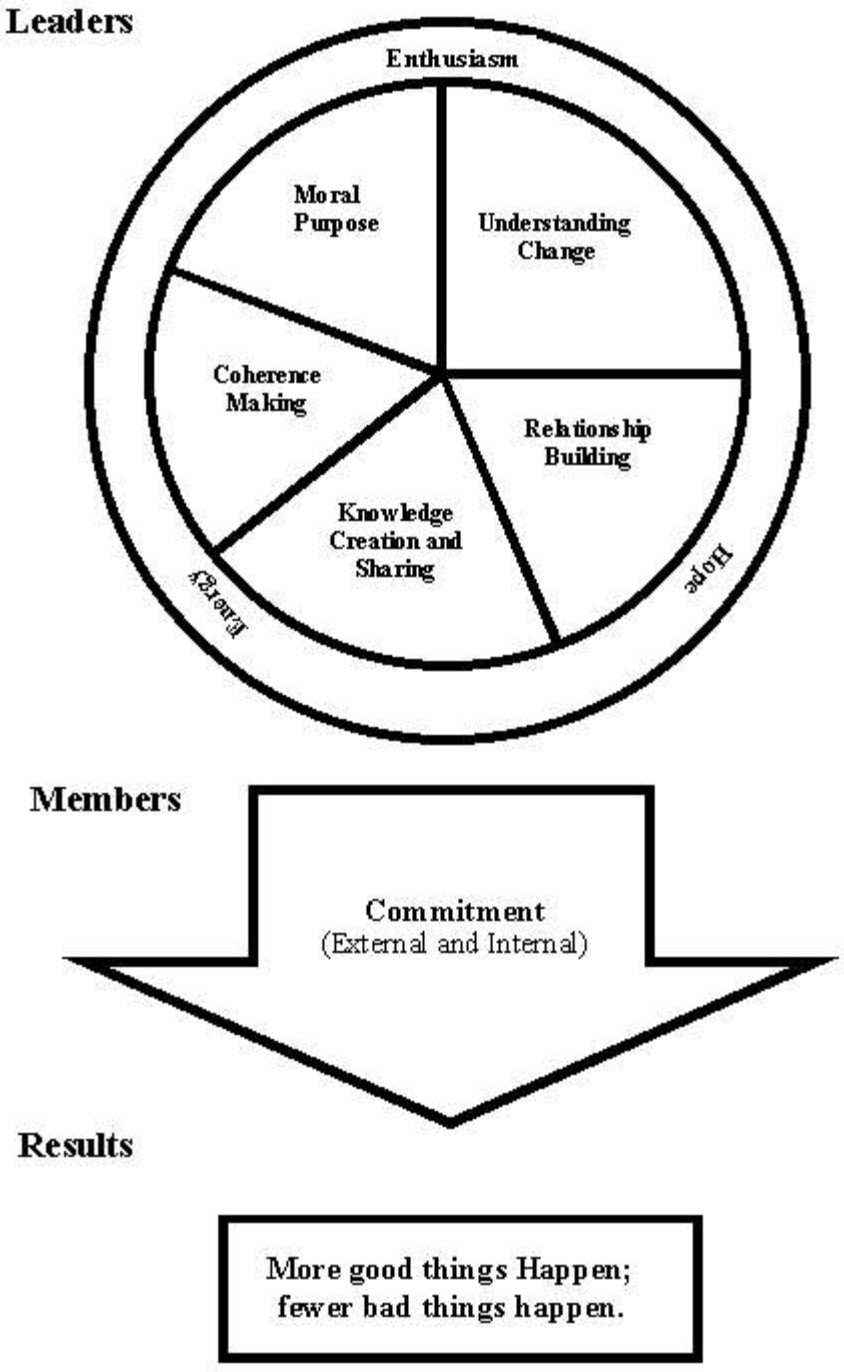


Figure 18

He outlines the following five leadership attributes:

1) moral purpose (defined as Aacting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole@, (p. 3)

2) the need to *understand change*

3) the need to *build relationships,* (especially with people who are different than ourselves)

4) *knowledge creation and sharing* (our need to take others with us on the journey), and finally

5) *coherence making* (ensuring that we have some sense of consistency, amidst the disequilibrium)

All five leadership ingredients need to work in concert

Surrounding the five leadership components are personal characteristics of *energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness.* (See figure 18)**.** Collectively, all elements within the framework bring greater commitment, both internally and externally, creating results.

Understanding Change

It is often said that change is a process, not an event. We don=t just walk into schools and suddenly experience multiple activities to accomplish success, however one defines the term. Change stirs emotion associated with resistance; thus it is important to understand the change process. Fullan identifies the following six aspects of change that one must recognize in developing the proper mind set leading to positive action (pp. 34-46):

$ *the goal is not to innovate the most* (be cautious of the AChristmas Tree School@, those with significant numbers of projects, but sometimes not too much depth, or coherence)

$ *it is not enough to have the best ideas* (ideas are one thing, effective team implementation is another)

$ *appreciate the implementation dip* (the dip in performance and confidence that occurs

while staff learn new skills and gain new understandings to do their jobs). As people learn to adjust, their speed, accuracy, and confidence may dip; two things may be occurring: 1) social psychological fear of change, and 2) the technical skills to make the changes necessary may be initially deficient.

$ *redefine resistance* (listen to the resistors, they may have something very important to contribute to the change process)

$ *reculturing is the name of the game* (changing the way things are done, reculturing is common in effective organizations now)

$ *never a checklist, always complexity* (change doesn=t come with a step by step set of instructions; expect and plan for challenges)

Fullan (2001), citing Goleman (2000), suggests there are at least six leadership styles to be aware of in the change process (p. 35):

1. Coercive - leader demands compliance (do what I tell you)
2. Authoritative - leader mobilizes people toward a vision (come with me)
3. Affiliative - leader creates harmony and builds emotional bonds (people come first)
4. Democratic - leader forges consensus through participation (what do you think?)
5. Pacesetting - leader sets high standards for performance (do as I do, now)
6. Coaching - leader develops people for the future (try this)

Fullan (2001) suggests that two of the six styles of leadership require caution; the coercive may create resentment and resistance, while the pacesetting style may cause burnout and a sense of being overwhelmed. This in turn may affect the organizational climate and ultimately performance.

Simonelli=s (1999) *A Native American Approach to Diversity: An Interview with Don Coyhis*, suggests that in addition to training, we need to change our thinking. Coyhis notes, AWe find to make long lasting changes, people must learn to change their thinking. Training by itself does not make the change occur. Ghandhi said it best when he said, >You must be the change you wish to see in the organization or in the community.= (p. 20)

Coyhis goes on to suggest that large organizations must be able to change "on a dime" in these times. However, one must recognize the importance of how individuals are impacted by change, and how staff interact, and get along; otherwise the best ideas or plans get laid to rest on some shelf and collect dust. He asserts, AIf you do not have harmony between people, especially if your organization is made up of different people, (*referring to diverse staff,* our emphasis*)* every time you try to make a change, you will have an uproar of diversity issues@ (p. 21).

Keeping all of these leadership concerns in mind is more likely to make the Achange journey@ more pleasant, and focused on the real issue, of ensuring Along term Indigenous student success.@

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