



In This Issue

NAMHR 2008 ANNUAL MEETING	1
OUR NEW WEBSITE!	2
STAFF UPDATE	3
NEWS FROM THE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.....	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	3
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.....	3
SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS.....	3
PUBLICATIONS	3
FROM STILETTOS TO MOCCASINS.....	5

About the NAMHR

The National Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research (NAMHR) is a collaboration between academic and community-based researchers, mental health providers, and Aboriginal organizations. The NAMHR aims to build research capacity to address the mental health needs of Aboriginal people in Canada. The NAMHR was established in 2001 with funding from the Institute for Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

NAMHR 2008 Annual Meeting

— MORGAN KAHENTONNI PHILLIPS

From August 25-29, 2008, the NAMHR held its annual meeting and summer school in Indigenous mental health research at the Jewish General Hospital's Institute of Community and Family Psychiatry hosted by Dr. Laurence Kirmayer. The five-day event brought together NAMHR co-investigators, students, special guests and collaborators from as far away as New Zealand who participated in various workshops, and poster sessions leading up to the NAMHR annual meeting.

The opening reception got under way on Wednesday evening at 6:00pm. Tommy Teiowisonte Deer, Mohawk community member of Kahnawake, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the territory of the Mohawk people and recited the Mohawk traditional thanksgiving address acknowledging all of creation and setting the tone for a positive and productive meeting and gathering. Dr. Laurence Kirmayer (James McGill Professor of Psychiatry, Director of the Division of Social & Transcultural Psychiatry at McGill University and Director of the Culture & Mental Health Research Unit at the Jewish General Hospital) and Dr. Cornelia Wieman (MD, FRCPC, Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, Co-director of the Indigenous Health Research Development Program), the NAMHR Co-directors then made their opening addresses by welcoming everyone to the annual meeting and presenting the following awards: NAMHR Scholarships, the Gail G. Valaskakis Memorial Scholarship Announcement, the Joseph Couture Award, and the Gail G. Valaskakis Award. The opening reception then continued in the lobby area where refreshments were served during the poster

presentations. On the topic of healing and mental health services, Cornelia Wieman spoke about "moving forward": thinking and moving beyond stigma. She also addressed the issue of protecting Indigenous knowledge and ensuring that it is respected.



Dr. Laurence Kirmayer during the presentation of the Joseph Couture Award.

Day 1

The morning of day one began with a NAMHR investigator roundtable entitled Current Work and Future Directions with Nico Trocmé, Laurence Kirmayer, Colleen Dell, Cornelia Wieman, and Chris Lalonde, which was followed by a question period and discussion. Marlene Brant Castellano then presented: Truth and Reconciliation: Not Just About Residential Schools. In her presentation, Professor Brant Castellano referred to From Truth to Reconciliation (2008). For Brant Castellano, mental health research is still very much encapsulated in a bubble and she pointed out that education on the history of Aboriginal peoples

needs to take place at the primary and secondary school levels. “The message of the impacts of historical trauma needs to be conveyed to mainstream society”, she stated. She also pointed out that mainstream models should not be imposed upon Aboriginal people.

The afternoon presentations concerned the issues of suicide prevention. Henry Harder and Lincoln Heaney of the University of Northern British Columbia presented Building Community Support for Aboriginal Youth: Prevention of Youth Suicide Attempt and Personal Injury, Jitender Sareen of the University of Manitoba presented From Risk Factors to Culturally-sensitive Interventions: A Programmatic Approach to Aboriginal Suicide. Other presentations on suicide included Understanding and Acting on Aboriginal Suicide: A New Multidisciplinary Research Team by Laurence Kirmayer, Implantation et evaluation d’une stratégie pour assurer une meilleure protection de l’enfant en milieu autochtone by Michel Tousignant, Nathalie Morin and Denise Noël, and finally Resilience in Action: Community-led Youth Suicide Interventions by Carrielynn Lund and Dawn Caldwell. Laurence Kirmayer’s presentation focussed on the role of a multidisciplinary research team: address the issue of Aboriginal suicide by bringing together suicide researchers from various disciplines in order to investigate the causes of suicide and resilience-related mechanisms that can help prevent it.

Day 2

Historical Trauma Theory and Research: Promise and Challenges: Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart of Columbia University has done extensive research in the area of historical trauma. In her presentation she described how historical trauma causes cumulative emotional wounding across generations and how Indigenous peoples have (and

are) responding to challenges resulting from genocide and colonization. She also discussed her research experiences with American Indian adults and parents and shared some of her research findings, the effectiveness of interventions, and some of the challenges of historical-related research, as well as suggestions for further research.

Other presenters included Mike DeGagné of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. On the topic of community-based research, Tom Hengen of Building a Nation Family Healing Centre presented The Medicine Wheel as a Model for Counselling and Case Management and Heather Ochalski and Bonnie Nungnik presented Volatile Substance Abuse: Learning from Inuit Youth to Adapt Existing Research into Innovative Solutions.

The afternoon consisted of updates from NAMHR’s Roots of Resilience project: Transformations of Identity and Community in Indigenous Mental Health (see separate article in this newsletter). After the break the topic was Substance Abuse. We heard presentations from: Colleen Ann Dell and Sharon Acoose entitled Starting from the Beginning – Our Team’s Balance Approach to Research, and Sherry Steward and Mark Zahradnik on Clarifying the relation between exposure to violence and alcohol misuse in a community sample of Mi’kmaq adolescents: Role of posttraumatic stress and resiliency. Acoose and Dell emphasized that drug addiction research must be conducted by, for and in balance with the women and communities the research is about. Using a holistic approach, the presentation focused on the actual voices of First Nations’ women who participated in the research.

Both Dr. Kirmayer and Dr. Wieman, the NAMHR Co-directors made closing remarks to wrap up the week’s events. Tommy Teiowisonte Deer of Kahnawake then con-

cluded the meeting with a traditional Mohawk closing address that again acknowledged all of nature, and those who took the time to come to this event. He wished everyone a safe journey back to their communities.

New NAMHR website!

– STÉPHANE DANDENEAU

The National Network for Aboriginal Mental Health Research launched its new website on August 29, 2008. Along with providing the NAMHR with a facelift, the website has added a number of useful resources, namely the Mental Health Programs Database (found under the Resources menu item). After a lengthy process of gathering information about any and all mental health programs in Canada, the database has finally been made easily accessible to anyone connected to the internet. One of the greatest benefits of the database is its search capacity, which allows one to search for mental health programs using several factors to make it easy to find what one is looking for. Whether for the search involves an Inuit elders’ group on recreational safety, or a program developed for on-reserve Aboriginals in Manitoba with outpatient mental health characteristics, it can be found at the click of a mouse button.

In addition to the new Mental Health Programs Database, the NAMHR website has information about the NAMHR mentors and co-investigators with whom future graduate students can work. It gives an overview of the current research projects in which the NAMHR is involved (see Research menu), information about the popular Summer Program in Social and Clinical Psychiatry (see Training menu), as well as many links to useful resources for anyone involved in Aboriginal mental health research (see Resources and Links menu items). <http://www.namhr.ca/> or <http://www.mcgill.ca/resilience/>

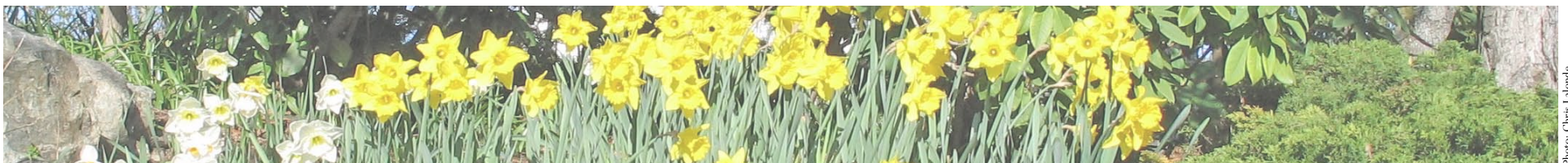


Photo: Chris Labonde

Staff Update

Colette Isaac (colette.isaac@mail.mcgill.ca) has recently joined the Network as Program Coordinator. She is a Pottawatomi from Moose Deer Point First Nation on the shores of Georgian Bay in Ontario. She is recently graduated from Trent University with a BA Honours in Geography and Indigenous Studies, having completed an honours thesis that explored the relationship between place, cultural continuity and Aboriginal youth suicide. Previous lives include cartographer, ICT advisor, First Nation administrator, and most recently a community and land use planning consultant to various First Nations. She is also the primary developer of a demographic projection model that is being used across Canada to understand the implications of Indian Act legislation on First Nation populations.



Moose Deer Point

Photo: Colette Isaac

News from the Centre for Research on Children and Families

— ELIZABETH FAST

First Nations Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect - 2008

The CIS is a national study designed to provide estimates of the scope and characteristics of reported child abuse and neglect in Canada. There are 24 Aboriginal child welfare agencies and 118 mainstream agencies participating in the 2008 study. The final research report, to be released late in 2010, will explore specific issues surrounding the incidence of and response to maltreatment of Aboriginal children.

Quantitative Methods for Aboriginal Child Welfare Research

On May 19-22, 2009, the Centre for Research on Children and Families hosted the 2nd annual workshop on the use of quantitative methods for Aboriginal researchers. Participants from across Canada included child welfare managers, workers, university students and researchers. The Aboriginal component of the 2003 Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect was used to teach participants the possibilities of working with quantitative information about children and families. It also provided support on the design of research projects at local and community levels.

Upcoming events

The NAMHR Annual Meeting (August 13-14) and Summer Institute (August 10-12) will be held in Montreal.

Training Opportunities

NAMHR SUMMER STUDENT INTERNS

- 2008: • Morgan Kahenttonni Phillips with Dr. Laurence Kirmayer
• Michelle Wyndham-West with Dr. Naomi Adelson
- 2009: • Elizabeth Fast with Dr. Nicolas Trocmé
• Nathalia Gagnon with Dr. Laurence Kirmayer
• Geoffrey McKee with Dr. Chris Lalonde
• Michelle Reid with Dr. Chris Lalonde
• Nicolas Sheppard-Jones with Dr. Laurence Kirmayer
• Marsha Vicaire with Dr. Jacob Burack

Scholarships/Awards

SCHOLARSHIP/FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

- 2008: • Amy Bombay (Ph.D.)
• Dr. Stéphane Dandeneau (Postdoc)
• Krista Maxwell (Ph.D.)
• Morgan Kahenttonni Phillips (M.A.)

- 2009: • James Allen (Ph.D.)
• Amy Bombay (Ph.D.)
• Jody Burnett (Ph.D.)
• Stryker Calvez (Ph.D.)
• Dr. Stéphane Dandeneau (Postdoc)
• Elizabeth Fast (Ph.D.)
• Lily Lessard (Ph.D.)
• Krista Maxwell (Ph.D.)
• Christopher Mushquash (Ph.D.)
• Morgan Kahenttonni Phillips (M.A.)
• Janice Victor (Ph.D.)

AWARD RECIPIENTS

- 2008: • Andrew R. Hatala (Gail G. Valaskakis Award)
• Christopher Mushquash (Joseph Couture Award)

Recent Publications

- Adelson, N. (2008). The Shifting Landscape of Cree Well-Being. In: *Pursuits of Happiness: Well-Being in Anthropological Perspective*. Gordon Matthews and Carolina Izquierdo, eds. Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 109-123.
- Adelson, N. (2008). Discourses of Stress, Social Inequities, and the Everyday Worlds of First Nations Women in a Remote Northern Canadian Community. *Ethos* 36(3): 316-313.
- Adelson, N. (2008). Toward a recuperation of souls and bodies: Community healing and the complex interplay of faith and history. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 272-288). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Adelson, N. & Lipinski, A. (2008). Models and Metaphors of Healing in a Maritime First Nations Community. In: James Waldram, ed. *Aboriginal Healing in Canada: Studies in Therapeutic Meaning and Practice*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, pp. 9-30.
- Brass, G. M. (2008). Respecting the medicines: Narrating an Aboriginal identity. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 355-380). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

- Chandler, M. J. (in press). Cultural Continuity and The Social-emotional Wellbeing of First Nations Youth. In F. Trovato and A. Romaniuc (Eds.), *Aboriginal demography, epidemiology, and sociology*.
- Chandler, M. J. & Lalonde, C. E. (2008). Cultural Continuity as a Protective Factor against Suicide in First Nations Youth. *Horizons – A Special Issue on Aboriginal Youth, Hope or Heartbreak: Aboriginal Youth and Canada's Future*, 10(1), 68-72.
- Chandler, M. J., & Lalonde, C. E. (2008). Cultural continuity as a moderator of suicide risk among Canada's First Nations. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 221-248). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Fiske, J. A. (2008). Placing violence against First Nation children: The use of space and place to construct the (in)credible violated subject. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 140-159). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Gone, J. P., & Kirmayer, L. J. (in press). On the wisdom of considering culture and context in psychopathology. In T. Millon, R. F. Krueger & E. Simonsen (Eds.), *Contemporary Directions in Psychopathology: Toward the DSM-V and ICD-11*. New York: Guilford.
- Hallett, D., Want, S. C., Chandler, M. J., Koopman, L. K., Flores, J. P., Gehrke, E. C., (2008). Identity in flux: Ethnic self-identification, and school attrition in Canadian Aboriginal youth. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 29(1), 62-75.
- Holton, T. L., Brass, G. M., & Kirmayer, L. J. (2009). The discourses of resilience, 'enculturation' and Identity in Aboriginal mental health research. In T. Teo, P. Stenner, A. Rutherford, E. Park & C. Baerveldt (Eds.), *Varieties of theoretical psychology: International philosophical and practical concerns* (pp. 194-204). Concord, ON: Captus.
- Hoglund, W., Lalonde, C.E., Leadbeater, B. (2008) Social-cognitive competence, peer rejection and neglect, and behavioral and emotional problems in middle childhood. *Social Development*.
- Iarocci, G., Root, R., & Burack, J. A. (2008). Social competence and mental health among Aboriginal youth: An integrative developmental perspective. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 80-106). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Brass, G. M., Holton, T. L., Paul, K., Simpson, C., & Tait, C. L. (2007). *Suicide Among Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Lemelson, R., & Barad, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Understanding trauma: Integrating biological, clinical, and cultural perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Brass, G. M., & Valaskakis, G. G. (2008). Conclusion: Healing / Invention / Tradition. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 440-472). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Fletcher, C., & Watt, R. (2008). Locating the ecocentric self: Inuit concepts of mental health and illness. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 289-314). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kirmayer, L. J., & Valaskakis, G. G. (Eds.). (2008). *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kral, M. J., & Idlout, L. (2008). Community wellness and social action in the Canadian arctic: Collective agency as subjective well-being. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 315-334). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kirmayer, L. J. (in press). Culture and context in human rights. In M. Dudley, D. Silove & F. Gale (Eds.), *Mental Health and Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCormick, R. (2008). Aboriginal approaches to counselling. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 337-355). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Tait, C. L. (2008). Disruptions in nature, disruptions in society: Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the "making" of fetal alcohol syndrome. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 196-218). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Tanner, A. (2008). The origins of Northern Aboriginal social pathologies and the Quebec Cree Healing Movement. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 249-271). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Waldram, J. B. (2008). Culture and Aboriginality in the study of mental health. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 56-79). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Waldram, J. B. (Ed.). (2008). *Aboriginal Healing in Canada: Studies in Therapeutic Meaning and Practice*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.
- Wieman, C. (2008). Six Nations Mental Health Services: A model of care for Aboriginal communities. In L. J. Kirmayer & G. Valaskakis (Eds.), *Healing Traditions: The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (pp. 401-418). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Williamson, K. J., & Kirmayer, L. J. (in press). Inuit ways of knowing: Cosmocentrism and the role of teasing in child-rearing. In C. Worthman, P. Plotsky, D. S. Schechter & C. Cummings (Eds.), *Formative Experiences: The Interaction of Caregiving, Culture, and Developmental Psychobiology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Comments, Suggestions, Submissions

If you wish to submit an article or have information about projects, organizations, announcements or upcoming events, that you would like published in Widening the Circle, please contact us at katya.petrov.namhr@gmail.com. Articles should be 300-350 words and contain contact information for the said project or organization.



“From Stilettos to Moccasins” a song from Violet Naytowhow and a unique group of Aboriginal women

— COLLEEN ANNE DELL

The premiere release of the song entitled “From Stilettos to Moccasins”, sung by Violet Naytowhow, and which portrays the healing experiences of Aboriginal women who have struggled with drug abuse and addiction, is available at www.nnafp.org/. An unplugged version was played for a CBC radio interview on May 13 and can be downloaded at www.cbc.ca/morningedition/2009/05/from_stilletos_to_moccasins.html. The song was officially released at a public gathering later that evening in Saskatoon, SK. If you would like to provide any feedback on the song, you can send it to: fromstiletostomoccasins@live.com

In collaboration with Naytowhow, the song was written earlier this year by Aboriginal women who are healing from illicit drug abuse and problems with the law, and those who are helping them on their journey. The song is part of a CIHR funded addictions research project being conducted by the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, Dr. Colleen Anne Dell at the University of Saskatchewan and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. The research project examined the role that identity and stigma play in the healing journeys of criminalized Aboriginal women in treatment for drug abuse at centres across Canada. The words in the song are based on the project findings.



Photo: Laurence Kirmayer

A training workshop and video for women currently accessing treatment is in the planning stage and will be available in Fall, 2009.

Lyrics: *From Stilettos to Moccasins*

*I survived through the pain
Many emotions like waves
Laughing and crying again and again
Honesty, strength, friends and devotion
Showering gifts of hopes to reclaim
Walking the streets dragging my heart
Wandering with my head held down in shame
When and how did my family fall apart
Who am I, what is my name?*

Bridge:

*Surviving the street lost and alone
I started a journey to find my way home*

Chorus:

*From stilettos to moccasins
Our spirit dances within
On our way to resolution
We find our peace
And this is who I am
Broken barriers and new discoveries
My spirit I now reclaim
Coming home to who I am
Taking honour in my name
No longer a prisoner lost in this world
Look within my shell
To find that pearl*

Chorus:

*From stilettos to moccasins
Our spirit dances within
On our way to resolution
We find our peace
And this is who I am*

© Violet Naytowhow & the CIHR Project Research Team — Aboriginal women drug users in conflict with the law: A study of the role of self-identity in the healing journey.

NAMHR Mailing List

The NAMHR mailing list is for researchers, health professionals, and others interested in Aboriginal mental health and is a useful place to post announcements, post questions or locate resource people.

To subscribe to the NAMHR listserv please contact Katya Petrov, NAMHR Communications Coordinator at katya.petrov.namhr@gmail.com.

Contributors

Stéphane Dandeneau, PhD is post-doctoral fellow and Scientific Coordinator of the Roots of Resilience project, one of NAMHR’s numerous collaborative projects. He is Métis from St-Boniface and lives in Montreal with his spouse Catherine Fagan.

Morgan Kahentonni Phillips is a Kanien’kehá:ka (Mohawk) from the community of Kahnawake and is currently an MA candidate in the department of Sociology & Anthropology at Concordia in the area of Indigenous Mental Health Research. She has been part of the Stories of Resilience research team since June 2007 as a Community-based Research Assistant. She is also a member of Kahnawake’s Health & Social Services Research Council (Onkwata’karitáhthsera) and McGill University’s School of Social Work First Nations & Inuit Steering Group.

Katya Petrov, B.Sc., B.F.A., Dip. Ed. is the NAMHR Communications Coordinator. She has been working on projects concerning health and education for many years.

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