

Report on the First Nations Research Workshop Held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 15-16, 2003



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Acknowledgements

Meegwetch to Joan Glode for graciously co-hosting this research workshop within her Mi'kmaw territory. We would also like to acknowledge Joan's assistance in obtaining and including the two local Mi'kmaw elders who opened and closed our two day event with a prayer and friendship dance.

Heart felt thanks for the success of this Research Workshop must be extended to all the Research Liaisons and presenters who flew into Halifax from all across Canada on such short notice.

Many thanks also to Clement Travel in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for doing a fantastic job of making the Flight arrangements. Everyone who needed to be there arrived on time and safely.

We are grateful also to the hospitality of the staff of the Casino Nova Scotia hotel.

The FNCFCS would like to thank Andrea Klymasz for her valuable assistance in making this a successful event. Andrea was hired on a temporary part time basis to assist the Director of Research with making event and travel arrangements as well as taking care of clerical duties and recording the minutes for this event. Her enthusiasm and efforts did not go unnoticed by all in attendance! Thank you Adrea for your valuable assistance and for the new found friendship! Best of luck to you in your other endeavours!



We will be hosting more workshops in the future – please visit our website for more information and updates on our future research workshops. The Research Workshop Agenda as well as a copy of this final report can be found on our website at www.fncfcs.com.

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Held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 15-16, 2003**

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Report on the First Nations Research Workshop

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Introduction

The First Nations Research of the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare together with the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society hosted a second First Nations Research Workshop in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 15-16, 2003. The event was held at the Casino Nova Scotia Hotel on the waterfront, downtown Halifax. Twenty-five (25) First Nations Research Liaisons from across Canada were invited to attend as either a participant or presenter.



Picture courtesy of Linda Burnside

Research Workshop Objectives

The goal of this workshop aimed at encouraging more networking between First Nations Child Welfare agencies and Aboriginal researchers from across Canada on how best to share information, build research capacity, learn, and obtain feedback and/or recommendations on how to collectively strengthen the role of research in the First Nations child welfare field (see Appendix A).

Staff Involved in Planning the Event

This event is the result of the combined efforts of the staff of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. Cindy Blackstock and Samantha Nadjiwan contributed significantly by providing context to the development, public education and research carried out by the Caring Society in their presentation on the first day of the Workshop (see Appendix B). The majority of the events were pulled together by the Marlyn Bennett, Director of Research at the First Nations Research located in Winnipeg with the assistance of Andrea Klymasz. Ms. Klymasz, while not an employee of the Caring Society was hired on a temporary basis (4 weeks) to assist in putting this event together.

Location



http://explore.gov.ns.ca/aboutns/morephotos_3.htm

The Research Workshop was hosted in Halifax Nova Scotia at the Casino Nova Scotia in downtown Halifax (the image of the hotel can be observed from the above noted picture in between the sail boat and the two towers). The hotel is directly connected to the downtown business district via an indoor pedway call the “downtown link” and is accessible to shopping, various restaurants and historical maritime sites of Halifax. A block of rooms for research participants and presenters as well as meeting facilities was booked one month in advance.

Halifax was ideal location to hold this workshop for a number of very specific reasons. Firstly, we wanted to honour one of the Caring Society’s longest standing board members, Joan Glode, for her commitment in creating the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society and her subsequent support of staff and the organization development of the organization. We could think of no better place than to hold our second research workshop in Joan’s homelands on Mi’kmaw territory. Secondly, we wanted to invite Dr. Marie Battiste, a well known Mi’kmaw scholars, to participate in our event as our keynote presenter. We capitalized on the fact that she was already in Halifax where she was slated to present a few days earlier at a Anthropological conference hosted by Dalhousie University, which played nicely into our plans for hosting this workshop.

More information about the hotel can be obtained from www.casinonovascotia.com.

Guest Speakers and Presentation Abstracts

We invited a diverse group of presenters (the majority of whom are Aboriginal scholars and/or practitioners) from across Canada to speak on a wide range of issues relevant to practice, policy and research within a First Nations child welfare context. A copy of the Agenda and abstracts of the presentations can be found at Appendix C of this report. Short biographies on each of our presenters as well as the summary of their presentation are captured below. Our invited speakers included:

Dr. Marie Battiste, University of Saskatchewan

Dr. Battiste is a professor at the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. A Mi'kmaw educator from the Chapel Island First Nation, Marie is well known for her research interests in Aboriginal languages, epistemology, curriculum, cognitive imperialism and research ethics. Dr. Battiste is a published author, some of her recent publications include: *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision; First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds; and Protecting Indigenous Knowledge* among many other books and articles. Her research and experience working in First Nations schools in administration, curriculum development and Aboriginal languages have provided a solid foundation for addressing the postcolonial challenges for the next century.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Dr. Battiste presented on the first day of the workshop and lead the participants through a round table discussion respecting the continuing role and importance of research in First Nations child welfare policy and community practice.

Shelly Thomas Prokop, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (First Nations University of Canada)

Shelley is a member of Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation in Saskatchewan and an Assistant Professor with the Indian Social Work program at the First Nations University of Canada (formerly Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) in Saskatoon. Most of Shelley's work has been in Indian and child family services research and community development.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Shelley reviewed her experience in program evaluations within the Indian and Child Welfare systems. She focused particularly on the development of an evaluation process respecting community based approaches, cultural appropriateness, and empowerment. Shelley also briefly discussed the partnership of the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium (PCWC) and its research agenda.

Larry Jourdain, Association of Native Child & Family Service Agencies of Ontario

Larry's presentation examined customary care from a cultural perspective wherein he described a model for customary care. The patterns, themes,

processes and procedures of customary care were reviewed as well as how these systems can be used in the development of Customary Care Programs. The information Larry shared with us described customary care and practice, delineated on the rights of children, portrayed cultural healing methods and techniques, depicted methods for social casework management and investigation of social problems, particularized traditional roles and responsibilities of the parents, family and community which augments social casework policy, procedures and practice. Larry stated that it was imperative that Aboriginal family service authorities expand these subjects, take advantage of their access to the elders and persons of cultural wisdom, maximize tribal knowledge of customary care and incorporate traditional caring systems into their programs and practice. After all, Larry notes, the whole intent of tribal family services has always been family preservation and community survival!

Larry W. Jourdain is a tribal member of the Lac La Croix First Nation and he is fluent in the Ojibway language and resides in Thunderbay with his family. Mr. Jourdain is a member of the Lynx Clan and his Anishinabe Names are Maminotequenab, Ogimamajiweb and Beshigwenab. Larry is also the Executive Director of the Association of Native Family Service Agencies of Ontario. He periodically works as a Resource Development Consultant who specializes in cultural competent and congruent training sessions. Larry owns and operates a consulting firm called Jourdain Associates.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Larry is a skilled and trained family services worker who utilizes conventional social work approaches with customary methods of traditional helping practice. He attained his Certificate in counselling from the University of Manitoba (1990), graduated (Honoris Affectus) from Laurentian University (1997) with a Honours Bachelor of Social Work and received two Certificates in Alternative Dispute Resolution: Queen's University (1999) and University of Windsor (2001). Larry researches traditional Aboriginal approaches to healing, customary methods to conflict resolution, tribal family systems and structure, traditional governance structures, traditional and customary law. He has authored several articles on traditional government, cultural predominance in Aboriginal child welfare, customary care and traditional Aboriginal healing theory and practice. Larry was the driving force in the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing program and the bicultural practice and approach at Weechi-it-te-wiin Family Services.

Noni Classen, Child Find Manitoba

Noni Class is a teacher by trade and works and resides in Winnipeg with her husband and two children. Noni has a Bachelor of Education and currently teaches focusing on the middle years. Noni is also a special education teacher for high risk youths and has been a resource teacher for children in kindergarten to grade eight. She has administered and evaluated provincial science assessments; developed a program teaching conflict resolution skills to foster parents for Child

and Family Services; has published numerous articles on high risk youth as well as presented at SAG Teacher's conference on alternative education; and has facilitated the development and deliverance of an alternative program for high risk youth.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Noni Classen provided an overview of the "*Kids in the Know*" Safety Prevention Curriculum she helped design and develop for Child Find Manitoba. She reviewed the philosophy, goals, and key concepts behind the "*Kids in the Know*" Curriculum as well as discussed child victimization and the fear factor behind "Stranger Danger Misconceptions" currently being taught through other safety curriculums in Canada. Noni's presentation seeks to begin ways of educating all children and youth, including Aboriginal children in youth on personal safety at home, in the community and beyond. Noni articulated that special thanks should go to the National Centre for Exploited and Missing Children in Washington, DC for providing their education program *Kids and Company: Together for Safety* and effective safety programming guidelines as a model for the development and revision of the *Kids in the Know* Safety Program.

Dr. Daria Shewchuk Dann

Dr. Shewchuk-Dann has been active in social work practice for 30 years and has experience in a broad variety of settings. Daria has worked in various facets of social work, including child welfare, mental health, sexual abuse, child therapy, trauma work, addictions, crisis intervention, forensics and family violence, crisis intervention, work in inner cities, with First Nation communities and family violence. Dr. Shewchuk-Dann is the director of Shewchuk-Dann & Associates, a private practice serving multicultural clientele. She specializes in counselling children (ages 16 months and up), individuals who have been multiply abused (of all ages), and trauma treatment. Additionally, she provides treatment for individual who are either victims or offenders (or both) of sexual abuse. Dr. Shewchuk-Dann has testified as an expert witness in the areas of sexual abuse, child therapy, family violence and other areas. Daria is a skilled workshop presenter, and has taught courses at colleges and universities.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Dr. Shewchuk-Dann reviewed some of her previous research about children/youth who sexually assault others. She also reviewed the research about child abuse and Traumatic re-enactment and then touched on cultural differences that may need to be taken into account, when developing effective treatments. Dr. Shewchuk-Dann also discussed a research project she is beginning which looks at developing effective and culturally appropriate treatments for First Nations children/youth who sexually abuse others.

Kathy Absolon and Cam Willett

Ms. Kathy Absolon is an Anishinabe kwe from Flying Post First Nation in northern Ontario. Her Anishinabe name is Minogiizhigo kwe. At the time of this

workshop, she was completing her course work for her Doctoral studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, in the faculty of Education, Community Development and Counselling Psychology with a specialization in teaching and learning: Aboriginal Education. Kathy completed her Masters of Social Work degree in 1991 at Wilfrid Laurier University and has since been active as both an educator and community worker. As an educator, she has taught First Nations programs across Turtle Island. Her community practice involved the coordination of a Native mental health program with First Nations communities in communication education, community action, counselling and management. She is involved in her Anishinabe community and participates in the revitalization of cultural knowledges and practices.

Mr. Cam Willett was recently appointed an assistant professor at the First Nations University of Canada and currently finishing his doctoral studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Manitoba. His research focuses primarily on why Aboriginal people attend/drop out of post-secondary school. Mr. Willett's mother is a Cree from the Little Pine First Nation in Saskatchewan and his father is of Scottish/British ancestry from Paynton, Saskatchewan.

SUMMARY OF CO-PRESENTATION

Kathy and Cam's presentation focused on issues around research methodology specific to Aboriginal people. A brief historical analysis lays a foundation for the need for unique research methodologies as it pertains to Aboriginal people both as researched and researchers. Contemporary critiques by Aboriginal writers and communities will be presented in relation to the limitations and effects of Euro-western research methods. Kathy and Cam discussed the issues, possibilities and responsibilities around conducting research as Aboriginal researchers. Participants were invited to become involved in envisioning methodology that is uniquely Aboriginal.

Carole Walker and Linda Deer

Carole Walker has been employed with Kahnawake, Shakotiiia'takehnhas Community Services (KSCS) as a Community Health Representative since June 1981 and became the Manager in 1987. Her past experiences include seven years as a secretary and nine years as the librarian for the Kahnawake Public Library. In addition to the intense CHR training program she has also completed a three-year Concordia University program and graduated in 1996 with a Certificate in Community Planning. Carole actively participates on various committees that are internal and external to KSCS such as the Research Council and Emergency Preparedness Planning.

Linda Deer's experience has been primarily in the area of office administration and human resources. Linda has worked in the area of secretarial bookkeeping. With this experience she advanced to the position of Executive Director of the Kahnawake Youth Centre, a position she held for 10 years. Linda began working

with KSCS in 1998 starting out as the office manager. Through the years she has held several key positions with KSCS that have provided Linda with a better understanding of the programs and the organization as a whole. Linda was recently took on a new role with KSCS as the Executive. Linda is involved in various projects and boards that are external and internal to KSCS. This community involvement includes Onkwa'takaritahshera, Caisse Populaire Kahnawake, and the KCSC Board of Directors as a staff representative.

SUMMARY OF CO-PRESENTATION

Carole and Linda shares their experiences in developing a Research Council comprised up of community members from Kahnawake, Quebec. The Research Council was implemented to deal with numerous requests to conduct research within the Territory of Kahnawake,. The purpose of Research Council is to ensure that any research conducted about or within the Kahnawake territory does no harm and is in the short, interim and long-run, beneficial and to the community.

Joan Glode and Dr. Fred Wien

Dr. Fred Wien completed his BA in Honours Political Studies and Spanish at Queen's University in 1966 and his MA and PhD in Development Sociology, Latin American Studies and Government at Cornell University in Itaca, New York in 1991. His appointments at Dalhousie University began at the Institute of Public Affairs in 1973 and continued at the Maritime School of Social Work in 1981 where he currently holds the rank of Professor. Dr. Wien served as the School's Director between 1981 and 1986 and on an acting basis more recently. In theyear 1988-89, Dr. Wien was appointed as a visiting scholar in the Program on Science, Technology and Society at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in Cambridge, massachusetts. In 1991, he received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Race Relations, awarded by the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship. Between 1992-96, Dr. Wien served as Deputy Director of Research with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples with particular responsibility for managing the Commission's research program in the area of employment and economic development. Dr. Wien has published many books and articles arising from research on the subject of the socio-economic development of disadvantaged communities. His most recent research involvements include projects sponsored by the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, Heritage Canada, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, the Shubenacadie Band and the Institute for Aboriginal Peoples' Health.

Joan Glode has been the Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Family & Children's Services of Nova Scotia for __ years. Joan has a BSW and an MSW from Dalhousie University. Joan teaches an Aboriginal perspectives course at the Maritime School of Social Work at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

SUMMARY OF CO-PRESENTATION

Joan and Fred discussed the effectiveness of the family group conferencing model carried out by Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia. They discussed ways of developing research capacity within the Mi'kmaw agency, as well as ways to continue the relationship between the agency and researchers at the Maritime School of Social Work, Dalhousie University. Joan and Fred noted that Family and group conferencing has been used in many other countries, such as New Zealand, Australia, Europe and the United States, as well as in Canada. It is an approach that appears to be particularly well suited for use in an Aboriginal context because of its emphasis on bringing all parties to a child welfare situation together to plan and accept responsibility for a course of action. The presenters feel that FGC is more compatible with Aboriginal cultures than alternatives such as mediation, which are rooted in a contending partners approach even as it tries to bring them together, and it is reminiscent of the alternative sentencing approach common in Aboriginal cultures in a justice context. It also shares similarities with Aboriginal talking circles. Joan and Fred will review how effective the family group conferencing approach has been as practiced by Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Service of Nova Scotia agency. Through this research they sought to learn from the research project how the Family Group Conferencing models needs to be modified and improved based on their experience with it.

Laury Fontaine

Laury Fontaine is an Ojibway woman from Keeseekoowenin First Nation in Manitoba. She is a mother of six children (nine to eighteen). She has been employed for fourteen year by West Region Child & Family Services, which is an First Nations child welfare agency serving nine First Nation communities in western Manitoba. Laury also serves as a liaison for the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative, which is currently overseeing a restructuring of the child welfare system in Manitoba. Laury is currently working on her Masters of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Laury is a skilled workshop presenter and often uses the Medicine Wheel Approach in all areas of life.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Laury will provide an overview of the restructuring of the child welfare system in Manitoba. The restructuring of the child welfare system was in response to the recommendations set out in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry Initiative tabled in 1991. The restructuring of child welfare in Manitoba will now involve a jointly coordinated child and family service system that recognizes the distinct rights and authorities of First Nations and Métis peoples and the general population to control and deliver their own child and family services province-wide; that is community based; and reflects and incorporates the cultures of First Nations peoples, Metis and the general population respectively. Laury's presentation will focus primarily on the experience of the Southern First Nations involvement in the restructuring process.

Expressing Our Thanks

Each of the presenters were provided with a gift carved by Anishinaabe Artist, Gabriel Beaulieu, who hails from the First Nation community of Sandy Bay in Manitoba. The gift presented was a bear carved in soap stone. The FNCFCS also presented one presenter and the Elder, Rose Morris, with an original limited print of the Caring Society's logo. The stone bear and limited prints were also accompanied by a certificate of appreciation for their contributions to this event and their support of the Research Site and the work of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society (see Appendix D).

List of Workshop Participants

One "Research Liaison" from each of the provinces was appointed by the representative member sitting on the Board of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada to represent their respective provinces and to assist in disseminating information gathered from the workshop to the communities they service and live in. The Provincial First Nations Research Liaisons appointed to attend this event were as follows:

- Sandra Grier, Peigan Child & Family Services, Alberta
- Colin Rope, Saskatchewan
- Laury Fontaine, West Regions Child & Family Services, Manitoba
- Larry Jourdain, Association of Native Child & Family Service Agencies of Ontario
- Carole Walker, Quebec
- Donald Glode, Mi'kmaw Family and Children's Services of Nova Scotia
- Peter Vlahos, British Columbia
- Gary Sacobie, Kingsclear Child & Family Services, New Brunswick

Three of the Researchers Liaisons above (Laury Fontaine, Larry Jourdain and Carole Walker) did double duty as guest presenters as well. All participants received a certificate of appreciation for attending this event (see Appendix E at the end of this report).

Program Agenda

Agenda – Day 1

9:00 am	Opening Prayer – Elder Rose Morris
9:15 am	Welcoming Remarks – Marlyn Bennett
9:30 am	Overview of FNCFCFS Initiatives – Cindy Blackstock, Samantha Nadjiwan, and Marlyn Bennett
10:00 am	<i>Break</i>
10:15 am	Dr. Marie Battiste
12:00 pm	<i>Lunch – Provided</i>
1:30 pm	Joan Glode and Dr. Fred Wien
2:15 pm	<i>Break</i>
2:30 pm	Shelley Thomas-Prokop
3:15 pm	Kathy Absolon and Cam Willett
4:00 pm	<i>Break</i>
6:00 pm	<i>Dinner</i>

Agenda – Day 2 (Revised)

9:00 am	Opening Prayer – Elder Rose Morris
9:15 am	Sharing Circle
12:00 am	<i>Lunch – Provided</i>
1:00 pm	Laury Fontaine
2:30 pm	Carole Walker and Linda Deer
3:30 pm	Larry Jourdain
4:30 pm	<i>Break</i>
4:40 pm	Dr. Daria Shewchuk-Dann
5:30 pm	Noni Classen
6:00 pm	Closing Prayer – Elder Rose Morris

Evaluation of Research Workshop

A total of 24 people attended this event. There were 2 Elders, 12 presenters, 8 research liaisons and 4 FNCFCFS staff who attended this event. Participants were provided with an evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix F). Only seven out of a possible 18 evaluations were received (a 38% return). All presenters and participants attending the research workshop were asked to fill out the evaluation questionnaire which was set out in two parts.

Part I

The first part of the evaluation questionnaire required participants/presenters to rank their satisfaction with 7 aspects of the workshop along with an overall evaluation of their satisfaction with the workshop. That part of the evaluation was set out as follows:

	(--)			(++)	
1. The CHOICE of presentations and topics of discussions, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
2. The nature of the RECOMMENDATIONS and DIRECTION suggested for the future:	1	2	3	4	5
3. The CONTENT of the discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The RHYTHM of the day (time allowed for each point, agenda, breaks).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Flight arrangements:	1	2	3	4	5
6. Hotel accommodations:	1	2	3	4	5
7. Meeting room facilities:	1	2	3	4	5
8. Your OVERALL EVALUATION :	1	2	3	4	5

The following breakdowns how the participants/presenters ranked the event using the above noted chart:

1. Choice of Presentations:

The majority (5 out of 7) classified the choice of presentations at level 4, indicating that they were fairly satisfied with the topics presented during this workshop.

2. Recommendations and Directions:

All of the participants (7) measured their level of satisfaction regarding the recommendations and directions for the future at the second highest level of satisfaction, at 4, which appears to show that the participants/presenters were fairly satisfied with the recommendations and directions laid out during this event.

3. Content:

3 individuals rated their satisfaction with the content of the Research Workshop at 4, while 1 participated ranked the content of discussions at 5. Two ranked their satisfaction at level 3. It should also be noted that one participant felt the question really was not applicable as this individual felt there was not enough time for dialogue during the workshop.

4. Rhythm of the Day:

2 individuals felt that the rhythm of the day was a level four, which indicates that they felt fairly satisfied. Five participants rated their satisfaction with the rhythm at a level three, which indicates that the majority of the participants felt somewhat satisfied with the rhythm of day and the possibility that there could be room for

improving this aspect. One individual ranked the rhythm at 2 while also indicating in writing that participants needed more time to either ask questions or breaks for meals.

5. Flight Arrangements:

5 of 7 participants were extremely satisfied with the flight arrangements made for this event, while 2 respectively ranked their satisfaction with flight arrangements at the 3rd and 4th level.

6. Hotel Accommodations:

The hotel accommodations were highly ranked by a majority of the individuals attending this workshop. Again, 5 of 7 participants felt extremely satisfied with the choice of hotels for their accommodations. The remaining participants (2) ranked the hotel at level four, indicating that they were fairly satisfied with the choice of hotel arrangements made for their accommodations.

7. Meeting Room Facilities:

Again, 5 out of 7 participants/presenters ranked the meeting room facilities at the highest level possible (5). Two participants ranked the meeting facilities at level four.

8. Overall Evaluation:

Three ranked this event overall at the highest level of satisfaction, five, while one ranked their satisfaction at 4 and another did not answer the question.

Part II

The second part of the Evaluation Questionnaire required detailed written responses to a series of questions and any other comments and suggestions. Each of the questions below capture the written responses of the participants:

1. What did you enjoy about the speakers?

“Excellent Speakers! Although I kept wondering how Daria’s presentation related to Aboriginal research? It seemed all from a non-Native perspective and did not seem to contribute or fit with the work that is happening around the table. Also, Elders should be acknowledged and brought in as soon as they arrive.”

“Some were very knowledgeable.”

“Many Speakers spoke from their heart; easy to understand; experienced in child welfare.”

“Knowledge and experience; Uplifting to hear how far First Nations have come educationally – I’m very proud of all of us!”

“The subject varied. How subjects had a flaw. Some of the new innovative aspects of service delivery and the ways people are looking at servicing the communities.”

“A good variety of backgrounds and research initiatives. Some impressive and engaging speakers and knowledgeable participants.”

“Speakers were well prepared – hand outs, etc! Time for discussions was not enough as speakers had lots to share. Geographically – from all over Canada – good representation!”

2. In addition to the online data base and workshops such as this one, what other suggestions do you have to enhance research capacity in First Nations CFS agencies?

“Writing workshops – Research also involves writing – as First Nations we need to share the issues and challenges we face in writing in research. Fears, anxieties – how we write what we write.”

“Training sessions in doing research in the community; encouraging agencies – advocating for agencies to prioritize research respecting community.”

“Bulletins and newsletters.”

“Newsletters, bulletins on what is emerging on news across native country.”

“Perhaps some sort of summary might be done of this workshop and posted in PDF format to the website. Perhaps a message board might be created or a network of Aboriginal researchers via the website.”

“How to P.R. this Research Site to communities that don’t have access to computers, etc. To get this information to the grass-roots; planning session on how to do this and come up with recommendations.”

3. What areas of professional development would you like to see at future workshops?

“Hands on work relating to specific workshops (i.e. medicine wheel approach to research, First Nation languages [need research on this]; FAS)”

“Follow up on successful projects and programs and the impact it has had on their communities.”

“Follow up workshops to keep dialogue going.”

“Definition of qualitative and quantitative research methods – when to use certain methods.”

“Adoption issues; addiction issues; bullying issues; media impact issues (i.e. media images from dominant cultures and its impact on First Nations children and youth)”

“Writing – forms of narrative and creative forms of research.”

4. Are there any other First Nations child welfare issues or research topics that you would like to see covered in future workshops?

“Queer issues”

“Ethical issues; decolonization in practice”

“Youth protection; young offenders; how communities handle/deal with these ... new initiatives to share.”

“Unsure.”

“Kinship system (again); Healing workshops (i.e. story stick); Residential Schools (youth don’t even know what this is all about, they need to know their history – this is part of them [this is an important issue])”

Any other Comments and Suggestions?

“Excellent workshop Marlyn – I really enjoyed the time here!”

“Thank you!”

“More time be allocated to discussion and feedback on presentation topics. This process can develop recommendations and vision for research.”

“Excellent hospitality! The food was very nutritious and delicious and an unexpected treat. The thoughtfulness of giving gifts to presenters showed how you value others.”

“This was the first workshop I have attended for child and family services and found it to be very informative.”

“Thank you for your work. I thought that you did an excellent job of organizing and facilitating the workshop.”

“I really enjoyed this conference/workshop. It’s very interesting to meet other researchers. I met up with some very good people. I was very well taken care of; Have more break out groups for sharing of info (i.e. the sharing circle). Meegwetch!”

Lessons Learned

As this event was an Aboriginal initiative and essentially the second Research Workshop hosted by the First Nations Research Site, being true to the cultural aspects of our collective nations, an opportunity for feedback and participation is necessary for those attending the workshop.

One of the biggest oversights in organizing this Research Workshop was the fact that we did not leave enough room in which to have meaningful dialogue to share what we learned with each other. We attempted to allay this oversight by conducting a sharing circle on the second day. The Sharing Circle was aimed at creating a community environment and leaned toward sharing our humanity through the simple act of focusing, reflecting, speaking, and listening to what each of us learned and know from the previous day's topics. This simple act strengthened and deepened our understandings, both individually and collectively.

Sharing circles are a way to build community and allowed participants to know each other and be known in ways that lead to a sense of belonging and meaning in their relationship to this event. Each of the speakers articulate briefly the essence of what they learned and what was important to them. Each person had the opportunity to speak without being interruption and no one spoke a second time until each person has had the opportunity to speak.

As this was a traditional sharing circle, minutes were not taken to respect that people were sharing from the heart. However much of what was shared by the people within the circle touched upon many of the following issues:

- Belonging/Community, Listening, Junctures and Choices, Discipline, Guides and Teachers, Living with Fear, Working for a Living, Places and Spaces, Kindness, Liberation/Freedom, Letting Go, Sacrifices, Leading/Following, Prayer, Peace, Service, Forgiveness, Hope, Reclaiming Religious Words. Living Simply, Finding Courage, Claiming Happiness, Relationships and Intimacy, etc.

Although the sharing circle put us off track in terms of the second day's agenda, we are grateful for this important feedback and know that it was defining moment for the workshop organizers, participants and presenters. Dialogue can be so powerful and we know that the sharing circle was both necessary and important for not just the words, emotions and feelings shared; it is an essential ingredient and will assist in improving communications between participants, presenters and organizers for future workshops!

Appendices



Appendix A

May 15, 2003

Dear Research Liaison/Guest Presenter:

Welcome! Auneen! Tansi! Kwey! Bonjour!

The First Nations Research Site of the Centre of Excellence of Child Welfare together with the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCS) is pleased to host the 2nd First Nations Child Welfare Research Workshop in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 15-16, 2003. In making arrangements for this event, we have tried to accommodate your travel requests as best we can based on the availability of flights into Halifax from your home destinations. For those of you who did not get the exact flight you wanted our sincerest apologies for the inconvenience. In any event we hope that your trip to Halifax was a pleasant one!

The goal of this research workshop is to encourage networking between First Nations Child Welfare agencies and researchers from across Canada on how best to share information, build research capacity, learn, and obtain feedback and/or recommendations on how we can collectively strengthen the role of research in the First Nations child welfare field. We have invited a diverse group of presenters (the majority of whom are Aboriginal scholars and/or practitioners) from across Canada to speak on a wide range of issues relevant to practice, policy and research within a First Nations child welfare context. Many of you have been appointed as a "Research Liaison" by a board member of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada to represent your province and as a result were invited to attend this event. We hope that over the next two days we will be able to answer any questions you might have respecting your role and responsibilities as a "Research Liaison" in connection with this event and the collective goals of the First Nations Research Site and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada. For those invited to present at this Research Workshop, our sincerest appreciation for taking time out of your busy schedules to accommodate our event.

If at any time during the workshop, you require assistance, please do not hesitate to approach Marlyn Bennett or Andrea Klymasz or any one of the staff of the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society – we would be happy to assist! We sincerely hope you enjoy the Research Workshop as well as the sights and sounds of Halifax. On conclusion of the Workshop, we ask in advance that you kindly complete and submit the evaluation questionnaire in your information packages (see neon green paper) and submit to Marlyn or Andrea before you leave. Meegwetch! Ekosi! Merci! Thank you once again for attending our knowledge retreat by the sea!

Sincerely,

Marlyn Bennett
Director of Research
First Nations Research Site
Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare

Cindy Blackstock
Executive Director
First Nations Child & Family Caring
Society of Canada Inc.

Appendix B

PowerPoint Slides from Presentation by Cindy, Samantha and Marlyn.

Appendix C

Research Workshop Agenda

Appendix D

Certificate of Appreciation (for presenters)

Appendix E

Certificate of Appreciation (for presenters)

Appendix F

First Nations Research Site, Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare and The First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc.

Evaluation Questionnaire

May 15-16, 2003

The First Nations Research Site of the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare and the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada Inc. are interested in your feedback regarding the Research Workshop held in Halifax, Nova Scotia from May 15-16, 2003. The goals of the Research Workshop were to share information, network, learn and to receive your advice and recommendations about ways to strengthen the role of research in First Nations child welfare policy and practice. Your completion of this evaluation will help us plan future First Nations Child Welfare related research workshops.



For each point, please circle the number that reflects your level of satisfaction (5 being most satisfied).

	(--)			(++)	
1. The CHOICE of presentations and topics of discussions, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
2. The nature of the RECOMMENDATIONS and DIRECTION suggested for the future:	1	2	3	4	5
3. The CONTENT of the discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The RHYTHM of the day (time allowed for each point, agenda, breaks).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Flight arrangements:	1	2	3	4	5
6. Hotel accommodations:	1	2	3	4	5
7. Meeting room facilities:	1	2	3	4	5
8. Your OVERALL EVALUATION :	1	2	3	4	5

Please comment:

1. What did you enjoy about the speakers?
2. In addition to the online data base and workshops such as this one, what other suggestions do you have to enhance research capacity in First Nations CFS agencies?
3. What areas of professional development would you like to see at future workshops?
4. Are there any other First Nations child welfare issues or research topics that you would like to see covered in future workshops?

Any other Comments and Suggestions?

Meegwetch! Ekosi! Merci! Thank-You!