



Ways of Knowing, Being, Doing and Feeling:
A Wholistic¹ Early Childhood Development Model

November 2017

¹ The use of the term wholistic refers to the root word whole - meaning wholistic, complete, balanced, circular taking into consideration the whole person including mind, body, and spirit (Absolon, 2010).

"Wholistic theory is whole, ecological, cyclical, and relational... (it) considers the connections and the concept 'we are all related' begins to make sense as we perceive each aspect in relation to the whole... peoples experiences can be framed and contextualized within a historical, social, political and economic framework... understanding the nature of balance, harmony and 'Bimaadisiwin' - living a good life," (Absolon, 2010, p. 75)

Absolon, K. (2010). Indigenous wholistic theory: A knowledge set for practice. *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, 5(2): 74-87.

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Preface

The Winnipeg Boldness Project is a research and development project that uses the tools of social innovation to develop, test and scale prototypes in the service of a bold goal:

Children and families in Point Douglas will experience dramatically improved wellbeing in all aspects of self: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual being.

At the Centre of The Winnipeg Boldness Project is the Wholistic Early Childhood Development Model. The Model is the community wisdom that drives solutions aimed at impacting large-scale systems change.

Acknowledgements

The Winnipeg Boldness Project does not take credit for the content of this document. The ideas expressed have been practiced for decades in the North End. This document attempts to summarize the value base and main attributes of promising practices shared through numerous iterative conversations by community leaders with decades of experience.

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Introduction

In February 2014, The Winnipeg Boldness Project began a series of conversations in the community to build a clear understanding and vision of the Point Douglas neighbourhood, its strengths, and its challenges. We asked leaders in the community to share their wisdom, knowledge, and experiences in working with families over the past few decades.

A common underlying value base emerged, as many of these leaders embrace traditional Indigenous teachings and worldviews, and/or hold congruent beliefs and values. Conversations regularly referenced the traditional seven teachings (see Appendix A) and the medicine wheel, which participants felt accurately reflect the underlying value assumptions involved in the best practices around working with families and children. The Indigenous perspective is reflective of the neighbourhood's demographic; it also holds an inherent respect of other cultures and is inclusive by nature. This is what we refer to as The Child Centred Model.

This document is comprised of three main sections:

Section one includes the primary components of the Model: 1) community definitions - the end goal and reason for the development of the Model; 2) Ways of Knowing, Being, Doing and Feeling - a philosophical framework; and 3) The Child at Centre - a worldview of society and ones place in it.

Section two outlines how to place the Model into action, which makes explicit: 1) core values; 2) attributes of promising practice, and 3) implications for designing and implementing programs and services.

Section three connects this way of working with: 1) The Truth & Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, and 2) the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Working in accordance with the values and principles of the Child Centred Model is the action that has been called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We believe this Model has the potential to mobilize systems and the community to dramatically transform the wellbeing of young children and their families.

1. Components of the Child Centred Model

1.1 Community Definitions

Even before exploring the way of working that best meets the needs of families, the starting point for the Project was to document what community residents living in Point Douglas define as success for themselves and their children. These definitions are the end goal and have served to inform a strength-based approach based on what is working well already.

1.1.1 Wellbeing for children

Children are the sacred gift at the centre of all that we do. Children's wellbeing is a wholistic experience that is supported through the healthy development of all aspects of self. This includes balanced development of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of self.

Children's wellbeing is supported through a nurturing environment that assists their understanding of who they are, where they come from, what their purpose is, and where they are going. This provides a sense of belonging and meaning that supports a strong self-perception and self-esteem. Like learning, developing a sense of wellbeing is a life-long process.

Children's wellbeing flourishes within relationships and environments that provide nurturing, safety, and hope. Children's healthy development is supported by positive interconnected and interdependent relationships. This includes relationships with parents, grandparents, extended families, informal networks of care, formal systems such as education, and communities. This also includes interconnected and reciprocal relationships with the land, , environment, plants, and animals. Children's wellbeing is deeply connected to their family's access to basic needs such as nutritious food, safe, affordable and stable housing, as well as a consistent and appropriate level of income.

Children's wellbeing is supported through the development of secure attachment, positive identity, and belonging. Success for children is linked to wellbeing, opportunities, and self-determination for children and families.

1.1.2 Belonging

Belonging is a feeling that one is connected to and supported by a community and knowing one's place within that community. Belonging is feeling loved and being accepted for who you are. Belonging is supported and experienced through kinship and meaningful, positive relationships with individuals, extended family, natural support networks and community. Belonging is a feeling of reciprocity and responsibility within a

community. For many, connection to culture and land are critical to a sense of belonging.

1.1.3 Secure attachment

Secure attachment is the ability to be and feel safe, secure, loved, and nurtured through the consistent development of positive relationships with caregivers. This is supported through meaningful interactions with stable mentors and loved ones that nurture a sense of self worth. Secure attachment is grounded in cultural mores, where interdependence is valued and children and parents learn and undertake their roles and responsibilities. When secure attachment is developed through this consistent nurturing environment children and families have the confidence and competence to connect with each other. This self-confidence provides a safe environment to engage in exploration that promotes positive growth.

1.1.4 Positive identity

Positive identity is a sense of self worth, acceptance and respect for self and others. This includes having positive pride and high expectations for yourself, and knowing that you can achieve and be successful in your choices. The right to choose your role is an aspect of positive identity that includes gender choice and sexuality. Positive identity is supported through learning about and being able to answer four questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? This can include learning about traditional foods, ancestral language and sustaining a connection to land. Positive identity is developed in part through knowing the histories of your family and community.

1.1.5 Self-determination

Self-determination is demonstrated by being in control of your life and the ability to make choices that support your own vision for your future. This is supported through a belief in self, ability to meet needs, having aspirations, and possessing the volition to move forward. Within this process there is also permission to make mistakes, to learn from them, and to incorporate this learning into future directions.

1.1.6 Success for children

Success for children is when they feel and know love including the development of the ability to love self and others. This culminates in empathy and compassion for all living things. Success is the development of reciprocity and generosity, allowing children to give back to their community. This includes contributing in a positive way to their community through service to others. Community acknowledgement of children and celebration of their gifts and contributions supports children's success. Success for children is signified through nurturing of leadership with opportunities for self-growth,

development of self-esteem, high expectations, purpose, and skills. Education is a critical factor for success and therefore must start from birth and continue across the entire lifespan. Successful children are able to connect positively with other, possess a belief in their own abilities, have a dream or vision for their future, and generally thrive in all aspects of life.

1.2 Ways of Knowing, Being, Doing and Feeling

Early in the Project, community leaders shared how they work to meet the needs of families and support them to achieve success. A philosophical framework and worldview are the foundation of this way of working. These leaders chose to express the philosophical framework of their work as: Ways of Knowing, Being, Doing and Feeling; and their worldview as one that puts the child at the centre of a social ecosystem.

Community leaders describe their way of working:

We speak of "doing things in a good way". In both the Cree and Anishinaabe languages, the word "promise" denotes a solemn intention, "I will show you how" (as in an apprenticeship), and implies a long-term relationship in that commitment. We also speak of "the good life", meaning the wholeness of life. These concepts are interwoven into our understanding of "promising practices", from an Indigenous worldview. (MacNeill, 2014, p. 28)

The following description of this philosophical framework is based on the interconnections of body, mind, and spirit to express wholeness and balance in ways of knowing (values and beliefs), being (how values are expressed), doing (practice based on values and beliefs), and feeling (the heart space). It draws from the wisdom of the wholistic Medicine Wheel, in which relational worldviews assume:

- A wholistic perspective
- The interconnectedness of all living things
- Connections to community and the land
- The dynamic nature of the world
- Spiritual immanence throughout the universe
- Expansive view of time and space
- Responsibility to the seventh generation to come

1.2.1 Ways of Knowing

Indigenous ways of knowing recognize the interconnectedness of all things; We are interconnected with self, others, all life forms, and Creator. Our knowing is derived from life experiences (our own and our ancestors), family and community interactions, languages, spiritual and cultural practices, stories, and formal education. Our learning is life long. Children's optimum development is within strong relationships with family and community and their culture.

1.2.2 Ways of Being

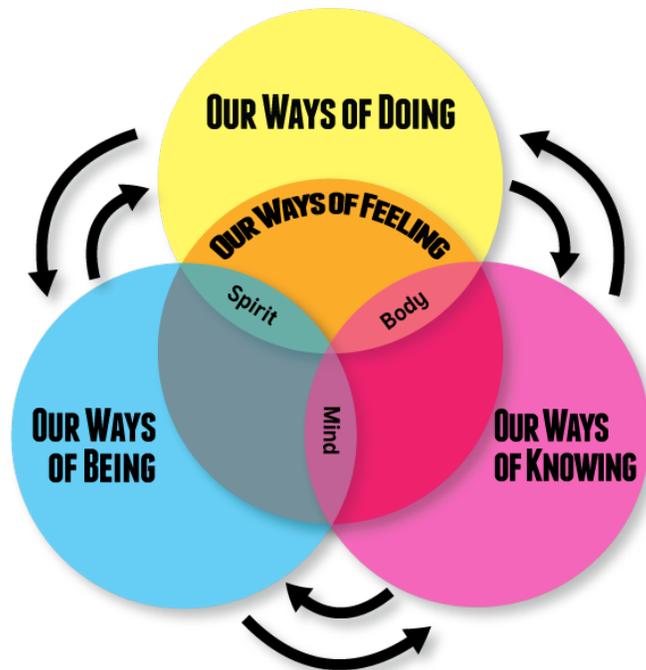
Indigenous perspectives on the nature of being are embedded in the relational worldview and principles of the Medicine Wheel and the Seven Teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Honesty, Courage, and Humility. These serve as a guide in our view of self, relationships with our families, communities, nations, the earth, and Creator. Families practice their cultural beliefs in various settings and ways, evolving with the times and influence of multi-cultural realities.

1.2.3 Ways of Doing

Our values, principles and worldviews are evident in our actions. Community work is seen as healing work that helps to restore dignity, cultural identities, and full realization of human potential: emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development and wholeness.

1.2.4 Ways of Feeling

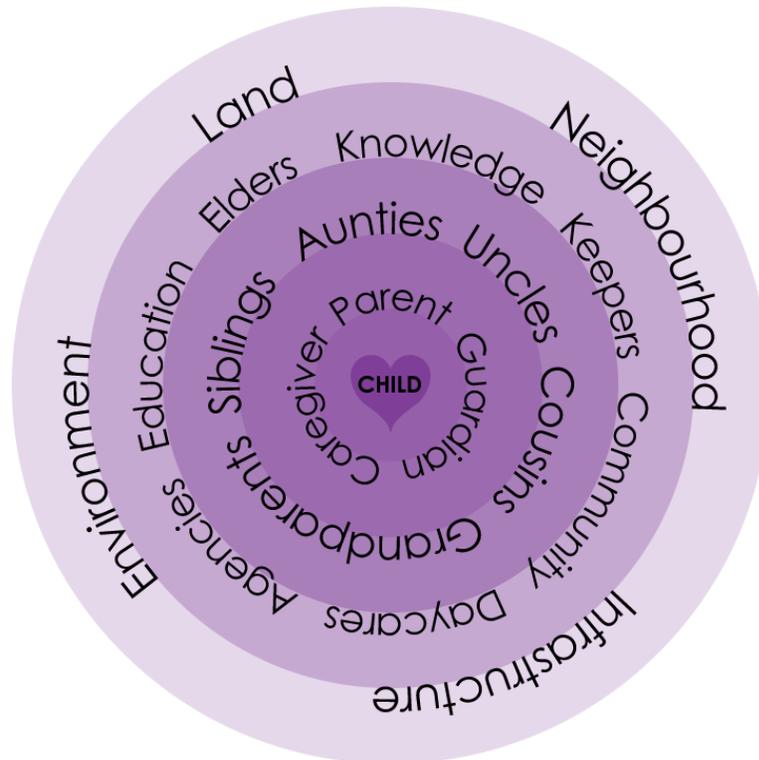
The body, mind and spirit are dynamically interrelated as a single, integrated whole system. When one part is changed, it sends a rippling effect throughout the whole system. This imbalance results in ill health.



1.3 Child at Centre

The concept of child at centre recognizes the priority of the healthy development of the child as well as those who surround the child. Children flourish within relationships and environments that provide nurturing, safety, and hope. Children’s healthy development is supported by positive, interconnected, and interdependent relationships. This includes relationships with parents, grandparents, extended families, informal networks of care, formal systems such as education, and communities. It is important for everyone that the child remains at the centre for the entire collective to remain a cohesive whole.

The graphic below shows concentric circles that depict the child at the centre. It reflects a value-base that places the sacredness of the whole child within the context of history, culture, family, community, their full human potential, and right to the fullness of life.



2. Placing the Model into Action

What does the Child Centred Model look like in action? How do we determine that the Child Centred Model is being used in a way that is helpful and supportive of families? Through consultations we have identified some of the Core Values and Attributes of Promising Practice implicit in the Child Centred Model to help answer these questions.

The model is a way of working with families that honours the strengths, knowledge, passion, and commitment that families bring to raising their children. The model honours this and provides opportunities to learn, build, grow, experience, and belong to a community. The underlying belief within the model is that children are at the centre of a community and members, organizations, structures, and policies that are a part of that community are in interrelated and interdependent relationships with children, families and communities. These relationships are important and need to be led by families and those who are in their circles of support.

2.1 Core Values

The following core values are the foundational beliefs that inform community practice:

Wholistic: People are viewed in consideration of all aspects of self: the body, mind, and spirit as dynamic and interrelated parts of a single integrated whole system. Likewise, the world, systems, communities, and people in it are interconnected and interdependent; when one part is changed, it sends a rippling effect throughout the whole system.

Interdependence: Strength comes from reciprocal love and support of others; when people are supported by others they gain the strength to return that love and support. People find purpose and meaning in relationships with others.

Strength-based: Focusing on strengths gives people energy to grow; regardless of an individual or group's situation in life, they have strengths. These strengths are valued, respected and nurtured.

Children are sacred: Sacredness is especially observed in children, who are closest to Creator. Babies are a gift and a responsibility.

Basic needs: Access to basic needs such as food, shelter, and safety is an unconditional right.

Self-determination: "We are put here by the creator to care for each other and for mother earth. We should therefore be responsible for ourselves, for our families, for the

next generation, and for our community.”² Having voice and volition to make choices to attend to individual needs leads to recognition of the responsibilities to family and community.

2.2 Attributes of Promising Practice

The following attributes, when implemented, lead to positive transformation for children and families:

Person Centred: Services are responsive in considering people as wholistic beings who have competing needs and differing priorities; therefore, services are flexible.

Relationships/Trust: Time and care is taken to develop relationships and build trust with individuals and families; it is the essential foundation required to be effective and respectful in dealing with all people.

Non-judgment: All people are welcomed and respected regardless of situation or circumstance. People are met where *they* are at: services recognize that people are at different stages in their own journey, face different challenges, and have varied gifts.

Peer-to-peer learning: Services provide opportunities for community members to build their capacity to become mentors for their peers; this respects the diverse gifts of peoples’ experiences and provides meaningful support.

Natural support systems: Are actively promoted and supported to provide sustainable and stable resources for individuals and families.

Families are experts in their own lives: This addresses the balance of power in healing relationships, which is often only available from “professionals”; it promotes self-determination by providing choices to effectively address a family’s needs instead of dictating requirements to receive support.

Options: A wide variety of resources and services are accessible and appropriate to effectively meet the diverse needs of families and individuals.

Prevention: In addition to crises support, services work toward addressing the underlying causes of crises and support people to maintain healthy and happy lives.

Restorative: Time, space, and opportunity for healing and self-care is available to people regardless of their socio-economic status; people in poverty are often denied

² KSCS (*Kahnawake Shakotiiia’Takehnhas Community Services*). *Aboriginal values and social services: The Kahnawake experience*. (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development) 1994 at 22.

any access to the respite and relaxation that most people feel is essential for their well-being.

Cultural safety: Beyond professional cultural competency, the recipient's point of view is the essential factor. The power to determine if a situation or interaction is culturally safe lies with the recipient of services.

Belonging and Identity: "Belonging means we feel connected, important, valued, part of the group. It feels good to know that others want to have us around."³ Identity is being able to answer four questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose? Services actively promote and incorporate these principles in dealing with all people.

Secure attachment: This is the essential bond between child and caregiver that enables healthy brain development. Secure attachment is the foundation for wholistic well-being of the child. Everyone contributes to the support of and is responsible for the development of secure attachment.

Equity: Certain individuals or groups face more challenges than others and therefore require more support. Specialized services, increased opportunities, and support is available to those who have greater need.

2.3 Implications for Designing and Implementing based on the Model

A key question for the implementation of the model is *how* you are upholding the values and principles of the model in the structures, funding, design, and implementation of programs and policies that relate to children and families.

Ultimately the design of *how* needs to privilege and include the voices of those directly impacted. Participatory processes are not simple, linear, quick, or straightforward. It requires facilitators, mediators, and safe spaces for people to feel heard.

Community leaders have shared the following recommendations for those seeking to incorporate the values and principle of the model into their work:

³ The Circle of Courage and Meeting the Needs of Youth Abridged Version
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/scott/CircleOfCourageMeetingNeeds.pdf>

1. Early childhood development initiatives will need to see the sacredness of the whole child, within the context of history, culture, family, community, their full human potential, and the right to the fullness of life.
2. Supports to parents must include teachings that affirm sacredness, dignity, value and worth, healing from trauma, and hope. Keeping families together must be priority. A variety of learning experiences must be accessible, affordable, culturally safe, and drawn from strength-based perspectives, with opportunity to spend some time on the land.
3. Healing strategies and modes of healing must integrate trauma counseling and restoration of balance in healing relationships between professionals and ones seeking help. The help of Elders, medicine people, sweat lodge ceremonies, healing circles, should be offered as an integral part of healing when the need is expressed.
4. Community Learning Circles should be implemented to share knowledges, wisdom, and worldviews of the community.
5. The community has its own answers. Service providers can only be facilitators in the process of building strong, vibrant communities. The community is enriched with wisdom, knowledge, and experience that can be drawn from in future initiatives.
6. Human resource development strategies must include multicultural proficiency (see attachment B) education and training.
7. The whole community of service providers, everything that touches the lives of our children, must be fully engaged with, and invested in the early childhood development initiatives.

3. Truth and Reconciliation & United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous peoples in Canada experience disproportionate amounts of poverty, violence, racism, and systemic barriers (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Frideres & Gadacz, 2012). At times the portrayal of these issues in mainstream media outlets can be bleak, belittling, and provide the aura of hopelessness. This couldn't be farther from the truth, or farther from the reality of the continued resistance that Indigenous peoples, in particular Indigenous women, continue to assert (Anderson, 2011; Simpson, 2013).

Powerful examples of resistance, resurgence, and reclamation can be witnessed through the work of Indigenous Grandmothers, Indigenous artists, Indigenous mothers, Indigenous community members, and Indigenous scholars who continue to rise up (Archibald, 2012; Baskin & McPherson, 2014).

Racism, marginalization, and exclusion: these are all experiences within the multiple institutions, systems, public spaces, services, and on the streets in our communities. These experiences have been built upon layers of beliefs and values accepted as “normal” expectations within our society. As the original peoples of Canada, Aboriginal people have experienced and continue to experience the impact of colonialism.

Colonialism is the evolving processes where we, as peoples of this land, face impositions – from genocide, to assimilation, to marginalization – of views, ideas, beliefs, values, practices, lands and/or resources. It is when we as peoples of this land, are stopped, hindered, cajoled, and/or manipulated from making and enacting decisions about our lives, individually and as a group because of being a person of the peoples of this land. These decisions include how we are going to be who we are, and how, if at all, we are going to incorporate the ideas, beliefs, values, and practices of other peoples (Hart, 2008; as cited in Hart & Rowe, 2014, p. 35)

Colonization has been enacted through legislation, structures, and policies. One example that has received national attention in the last two decades is the Canadian residential school system. The impact of residential schools on families and in communities are complex and can include for example: a disconnection from identity and a sense of belonging, substance abuse as a way of coping with unresolved traumas, loss of language, feelings of shame and resentment, self hatred, and lack of family supports (Ing, 2011). In spite of these experiences there is resistance, survival, and a passion to reconnect and rebuild a strong sense of identity, belonging, and community.

On 11 June 2008 Prime Minister Harper officially apologized on behalf of the Canadian State and ordinary Canadians to the survivors of the residential schooling system and Indigenous peoples, in general, for the many forms of abuse that happened in the schools and for the other negative impact inflicted on individuals, their families, and their communities. This apology recognizes that the impacts of colonial policies like residential schooling, are still ongoing in Indigenous communities. Contrary to what some might wish to believe, colonialism, and displacement on familial relations and nationhood, in particular,

the impact of these legacies on traditional ways of knowing, loving, caring, and nurturing (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011, p. 111).

There is a lot of discussion of intergenerational trauma in literature. This is helpful to acknowledge as it moves the discussion beyond individual blame, instead educating about the historical contexts and roots of challenges that are experienced. Less likely to be addressed and supported within the research are the intergenerational experiences of strength and resistance.

3.1 Truth & Reconciliation

One mechanism of resistance has been the opportunity for sharing experiences within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as a part of its findings, submitted 94 Calls to Action in order to, “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p.1). In particular for the purpose of this review the following Calls to Action are highlighted:

#5 We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

#12 We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

#18 We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

#19 We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic

diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

#24 We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

#43 We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

#44 We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. (TRC, 2015)

The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action address the need to shift the conversation from individual blame to ask Canadians personally and through political, economic and social structures to build understanding, knowledge, and even proficiency in the historically and structurally contextualized experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Reconciliation is potentially an end goal to this process. How we can achieve reconciliation has been a matter of conversation and debate. Reconciliation is not the only story that needs to be told however; another part of this story is decolonization and resurgence.

Leanne Simpson (2011) discusses resurgence of Indigenous ways,

If the over-arching goal of resurgence is to produce more life and to re-create the conditions for living as Nishnaabeg peoples following our own inherent processes and expressions of life, then our interventions into colonialism must be consistent with these core values of continuous rebirth, motion, presence and emergence. (p. 144)

Taiaiake Alfred (2011) discusses resurgence where, “the principle of courageous action against injustice, could replace the notion of seeking ‘resolution’ to the colonial problem,” (p.8). Resurgence is an influential process that can radiate and pulse to influence greater change. In the collectivization of resurgence, Simpson (2011) indicates, “ it moves from being an individual act, vision or commitment, to one that functions on the level of family. It then moves to a group of families, then to a portion of a

community, then a community, and so on” (p. 144). This connects to the teaching from Métis Elder Maria Campbell about the interconnected nature of resurgence and resistance,

(A)cts of resistance are like throwing a stone into water. The stone makes its initial impact in the water, displacing it and eventually sinking to the bottom. There is the original splash the act of resistance makes, and the stone (or the act) sinks to the bottom, resting in place and time. But there are more subtle waves of disruption that ripple or echo out from than the initial splash, but they remain in the water long after the initial splash is gone. Their path of influence covers a much larger area than the initial splash, radiating outward for a much longer period of time. (p. 145)

In order to build on the energy of the radiating circles of resistance and resurgence, Simpson (2011) shares that as Indigenous peoples we need to make a significant shift and reinvestment in our own Nations ways of being. This means,

(R)egenerating our political and intellectual traditions; articulating and living our legal systems; language learning; ceremonial and spiritual pursuits; creating and using our artistic and performance based traditions... it requires us to reclaim the very best practices of our traditional cultures, knowledge systems and life-ways in the dynamic, fluid, compassionate, respectful context within which they were originally generated. (p. 18)

A strong foundation for regeneration lies with visionaries who have skills to excite, inspire, and illuminate the unity of Indigenous peoples (Simpson, 2011). This will require consistent and committed action by individuals, groups, families, communities, and Nations. Linda Tuhwai Smith (1999) defines projects that are working within a framework of self determination based on the four areas of healing, decolonization, transformation and mobilization.

In particular Smith’s (1999) description of intervening, Indigenizing, reframing, and framing relate to the work of the Child Centred Model. “Intervening takes action research to mean literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change. Intervention-based projects are usually designed around making structural and cultural changes,” (p. 147). Intervening requires that institutions and systems that work with Indigenous peoples shift to better meet the needs of Indigenous peoples rather than making people change themselves in order to fit into the structures that were created.

Smith (1999) also describes Indigenizing, where the focus is on Indigenous identity and cultural action, where the Indigenous worldview and value systems are the central driving force for change. In another example, Smith (1999) includes a project of reframing. Reframing requires that Indigenous peoples take control over the way that

Indigenous peoples, issues, and social problems are discussed and handled. Smith (1999) asserts that a key factor in the continual perpetuation of Indigenous *issues* is in the framing of the problem itself. “For example, governments and social agencies have failed to see many indigenous social problems as being related to any sort of history,” (p. 153). An additional example asserting self-determination is in framing. Framing an issue means that decisions are made about the parameters under examination: what is in the spotlight and what is in the background. This framing allows for examination based on different priorities and sources of knowledge to understand the issue at hand. “Many indigenous activists have argued that such things as mental illness, alcoholism and suicide, for example, are not about psychological and individualized failure but about colonization or lack of collective self-determination,” (Smith, 1999, p. 153).

Overall the projects outlined by Smith (1999) are about who has the control in directing, implementing, re-interpreting, completing, and analyzing issues impacting Indigenous peoples. This locus of control must remain with Indigenous peoples. Communities have the knowledge, experiences, and answers – though they are often dismissed by those who hold the power or the finances to undertake the work itself.

The strength of the movement is to be found in the examples of how communities have mobilised locally, the grassroots development. It is at the local level that indigenous cultures and the cultures of resistance have been born and nurtured over generations. Successful initiatives have been developed by communities themselves using their own ideas and cultural practices. Considerable reserves of confidence and creativity within many communities have generated a wide range of social, educational, health, and artistic initiatives (Smith, 1999. p. 110).

3.2 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Since its adoption in 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has been an area of assertion globally, including in Canada. UNDRIP, of which Canada is a signatory, enshrines within the principles, rights that are held by Indigenous individuals, groups, communities, and Nations. Within the 46 Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples the following Articles relate to the implementation of the Child Centred Model described in this document:

Article 3

Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 4

Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

Article 5

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions, while retaining their right to participate fully, if they so choose, in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.

Article 9

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right to belong to an indigenous community or nation, in accordance with the traditions and customs of the community or nation concerned. No discrimination of any kind may arise from the exercise of such a right.

Article 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 15

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

2. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

Article 21

1. Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, in the areas of

education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

Article 23

Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

Article 43

The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world.

Gladys Rowe & Michael Anthony Hart (2014) suggest the following list of activities be implemented within the social work profession. This list could reasonably be transferred to other helping professions and within the structures and institutions themselves. The list of activities is not meant to be exhaustive, but to provide a framework for transformative acts of reconciliation and decolonization that can be built upon:

1. Educating self about oppression in general, and colonial oppression specifically;
2. Learning about the untaught First Nations history;
3. Developing critical reflexive skills, as well as critical analysis skills;
4. Honestly looking at one's unconscious participation and/or erroneously informed participation in the oppression;
5. Educating others on oppression through social action, informal dialogues, and sharing of information;
6. Developing an understanding of First Nations Peoples, cultures, perspectives, and experiences;
7. Creating space for First Nations contributions and developments which requires encouragement, acceptance of differences, and concrete support;
8. Challenging the profession on its privileges, whether those privileges stem from the types of practices that are utilized, the theoretical perspectives that are taught and learned, or the values and belief system that is followed;
9. Supporting the continuing development of Indigenous social work practice, perspectives, and theories; and
10. Making space for Indigenous participation in all segments of the profession (p. 36).

Considering ongoing experiences and structures of colonization, the Calls to Action asserted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, UNDRIP, and the continued resistance and resurgence undertaken by Indigenous peoples, the development of the Child Centred Model is being shared as a way of working that has been creating positive shifts in the North End of Winnipeg. This is being shared as a framework that has the potential to nurture personal, family, and community

resurgence as well as a framework for developing policies and ways of working in systems that can remove barriers that families experience in the current environment as it stands.

Conclusion

Closing Words from Community Leaders:

Our community work is seen as healing work, as the restoration of dignity, as affirmation of identities within our cultural contexts, and holistic health and well being of individuals, families, and communities. We can offer our best help by living in balance with body, mind and spirit. As service providers, it is imperative that we “walk our talk”, and to take care of our own health and wellbeing, in order that we help others achieve their optimum health. For this reason, strong networks of service providers are formed, where mutual support and exchange can occur. We attend ceremonies to keep us healthy and to ground us in our work and commitment to the people we serve.

We are instructed by Elders to approach community with humility and great diplomacy. We do not have the answers for their lives; only they have the authority to make necessary changes that will benefit themselves and their families. The life stories entrusted to us by those in need of services are sacred. Trust is earned over time, and is also sacred. We use metaphors and analogies that are familiar to the culture, in order to make strong connections with the people we serve. We do not interrupt their tears, but rather, let the emotions flow freely, without judgment or attempt to intervene. Rather, we allow the space for them to seek solutions; we are the facilitators to the process of healing and restoration. We seek to build strong connections with the community, by creating a presence in the community we serve. We do this by attending community ceremonies, gatherings and celebrations. Our way of being stems from ancient teachings that are very compelling and still relevant in today’s society.

These are only beginnings of a life long journey of learning and living the Seven Teachings. We will discover deeper meanings of these throughout each stage of life. Teachings vary from nation to nation, but are similar in their emphasis of individual responsibility to the collective whole, and to the great law of respect for the earth and responsibility for preserving earth’s resources for seven generations to come, and of the interconnectedness with “all my relations”. These are not rooted in dogma or authoritarian schema. Rather, they are to be expanded upon, through growing awareness of ourselves within the context of self, and our connections with our families, community, nations, the earth and Creator. Our ever-expanding world includes all Four Nations. We have a responsibility to build bridges of understanding, acceptance and respect for all nations.

These ways of feeling, knowing, being and ways of doing are a life-long journey of learning, adapting and implementing the knowledges, wisdom and experiences of ourselves, our communities, our nations. We invite people of all nations to learn from our ways, as we yearn to understand others’ unique ways of being in the world. We want to do this, because our children are part of the global community, and we want them to go forward into any society of their choosing with the full knowledge and understanding of who they are, where they come from, their purpose and direction in life. We will work together in a good way, to ensure that the young children of Point Douglas community, in particular, are given optimum chances to grow and develop in ways that will prepare them for later life. We want all children of every nation to enjoy “Pimatisiwin”, the fullness of life. That is our sacred responsibility.

“We are thankful to our ancestors who entrusted us
with the care of this generation, and the generation we will never know.
Give us the strength to do what we know is right”.

(MacNeill, 2014, p.29)

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Appendix A – The Seven Teachings

We understand our ways of being to be embedded in the Seven Teachings, of the Anishinaabe nations:

To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.
To know love is to know peace.
Respect is honouring all creation.
Bravery is to face challenges with honesty.
Courage is to face life with integrity.
Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation.
Truth is to know all these things.

~Elder Mary Roberts, Roseau River First Nation

We will discover deeper meanings of these principles as we progress throughout each stage of life. Teachings vary from nation to nation, but are similar in their emphasis of individual responsibility to the collective whole, and to the great law of respect for the earth and responsibility for preserving earth's resources for seven generations to come, and of the interconnectedness with "all my relations". Our ever-expanding world includes all Four Nations. We have a responsibility to build bridges of understanding, acceptance and respect for all nations.

These principles are not rooted in dogma or authoritarian schema. Rather, they are to be expanded upon, through increased awareness of ourselves within the context of self, and our connections with our families, community, nations, the earth and Creator. These principles are only beginnings of a life long journey of learning and living.

Wisdom

- Seek knowledge, strive to think your highest thoughts, which is to say, regard yourself and your family, community, nation, the earth, with respect and understanding of our connections
- Strive to live "a good life", a respectful and well-ordered spiritual life, live in balance with yourself, walk your talk, live by your truth and creed
- Seek guidance from all nature, our teachers, and the Elders, family and community, and always remember our ancestors who have gone before us, and seven generations yet to come
- Take time to reflect on what you learn, be a critical thinker, feel deeply, seek to understand others and your place in the world of your choosing

Love

- Love Creator and yourself foremost; this will increase your capacity to love others
- Expand your scope of compassion to include all living things on the earth
- Caring for others, inspiring hope, promoting peace and harmony are manifestations of love
- Understand there are many kinds of love, many expressions, patterns and ways of loving; respect them all, honour diversity
- Service to others is the enactment of love; share your gifts for the benefit of others, generously

Respect

- Know that you are part of creation, not more or less than all living things; do not be arrogant towards nature or take from Mother Earth more than you need
- Foremost in your mind, when making decisions or taking actions, must be the needs of succeeding generations; our responsibility is to ensure sustainable resources for the seventh generation to come
- Creator has given us a different understanding of ourselves; cultivate that knowledge and live humbly by it; practice your cultural and spiritual ways
- Every human being, from every nation, has their unique perspective and brings something of value and worth to the Circle of Life

Honesty

- Be truthful with yourself, walk the path of integrity
- Be truthful and honest in all your dealings, even when no one is looking; do not speak with a “forked tongue”
- Be just, earn the trust of others through honourable conduct
- The more congruent your words and actions, the more you belong to yourself (live authentically)

Courage

- Cultivate your life with integrity; congruency with your core values, words and actions yields a highly principled life
- Face yourself honestly; have an honest appraisal of self, know your strengths and weaknesses, aspire to reach your full human potential spiritually, emotionally, physically and intellectually
- Prepare yourself to bear the brunt for peace like a true warrior (one who takes defensive action only to protect that which one loves)
- Speak, act on, your truth no matter how difficult; in the end you will be able to face Creator “with straight eyes”, and be prepared to live with the consequences of living by your own creed

Humility

- You are a sacred part of creation, honour your sacredness
- Honour the sacredness of others, acknowledge their gifts, contributions and the added dimensions they bring to your life and community
- Do not be arrogant toward anyone who may be struggling in their journey; each person, even those who may need your help, carries wisdom, experience and their own sacred story that are of value; they can teach us, there is no need of an hierarchical arrangement between ourselves
- Remember the responsibility given to us by Creator to take care of Turtle Island – the land, plants, minerals, water and air, the animals, birds - all are a sacred part of creation – we need to ensure the survival of the seventh generation through a respectful relationship with all creation

Truth

- Think with your heart, and speak from your heart
- Honour the beliefs of others, do not impose your beliefs on others
- Reflect thoughtfully before you speak, listen “with both ears” and try to understand others
- Honour your words with actions, journey with truth as your constant companion

(MacNeill, 2014, p.22)

Appendix B – Cultural Proficiency

Our Journey Toward Cultural Proficiency



Cultural proficiency is a journey that is central to the Child Centred Model. In order to work with families in a way that implements the values and attributes of the Model there is a process of education and growth that needs to be facilitated. This is a meaningful journey as it incorporates activities such as learning about the history of colonization and the ongoing impacts in Canada. This involves understanding the roots of intergenerational trauma. The journey to cultural proficiency also involves understanding families from a strength-based perspective and putting the values and attributes of the Model into daily, lived expressions of action. There are seven areas that need to be travelled within this journey to enacting the Child Centred Model.

Cultural Humility - a lifelong commitment to self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-critique to restore balance of power in relationships

Cultural Awareness - developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group, involving internal changes regarding attitudes and values

Cultural Knowledge - familiarization with selected cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems, and behaviours of the members of another ethnic group

Cultural Sensitivity - knowing that cultural differences as well as similarities exist, without assigning them values such as better or worse, right or wrong, etc.

Cultural Proficiency - a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals to enable individuals and systems to work and operate effectively in cross-cultural situations

Cultural Safety - is about power in relationships in the service delivery system setting, that affirms the integrity, dignity and cultural expression of respect for both the service providers and the recipients of services; unsafe cultural practice is 'any action that demeans, diminishes or disempowers the cultural identity and well being of an individual ' (Cooney, 1994).

Promising Practices - a process or program that has demonstrated, through qualitative and quantifiable evidence over a sustained period of time, to be the most efficient way of accomplishing a goal; is continually analyzed, reassessed and refined. In Ojibway and Cree languages "promising" means "I will do as I say", and "I will show you how", and implies a long-term commitment. Community-based service organizations in North End Winnipeg have, for decades, developed and implemented promising practices, derived from Indigenous world views, with positive, measurable outcomes. These have evolved from community wisdom, knowledge and experience. They have been implemented over a broad spectrum of community service organizations, over a long period of time, and have been determined by community consensus, as yielding positive results, and are widely accepted as a "promising practice".

[The information shared here is adapted from the Community Learning Centre for Promising Practices Community Steering Committee and Community Learning Circle discussions held in 2009 and 2010, the Maori experience, and from website <http://www.bigsisters.bc.ca>]

(MacNeill, 2014, p.27)