

**BRINGING OUR MINDS TOGETHER FOR THE CHILDREN
FRIDAY, JULY 8, 2011 @ RAMA MASK**

Question 1: What are the strengths in our community?

a) What do we do well?

b) What are some of our best practices?

c) How do we apply them?

Highlighting items indicate response was mentioned more than once

- A) -Aboriginal training programs and support
-Understanding client concerns, listen don't judge
-No labels
-Acceptance
-Communication
-Sensitivity
-Gatherings, sharing information and knowledge
-From same culture / history (connection)
-Desire to help each other
-Dedication
-Accommodate, adapt and blend
- B) -All inclusive, FNMI, being role models
-Recognize gifts
-Never alone, always someone to help
-Able to refer clients to appropriate culture services
-Respect others at all times
-Knowledge is in the community (Elders)
-Utilize our tools (technology, models, wheels, teachings)
-Planning and developing
-Taking programs and adapting them for us
-More flexibility
-Continuous growth and development
-Team work
-Providing services to our community
-Willingness to go beyond 9-5
-Ceremonies
-Talking / sharing circles
-Daily contact (check-ins)
-Using limited resources effectively
-Consistency
-Involving elders
-Maintaining intergenerational links
-Humor

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- Acknowledgement
- Kindness, respect, etc...
- Educating key partnerships / networking

C) -It is applied holistically

- Workers use own experience of culture
- We go to people
- Sense of pride
- Provide tools, resources, education to empower
- Change their lives
- Guide book for best practices
- Regular team meetings
- Education
- Training, culture practices
- Regular reporting
- Debriefing
- Representational boards
- Workshops
- Elder advisors
- Medicines
- Infiltrating mainstream best practices
- Good self care
- Living the culture sharing and strengths
- Natural laws of kindness and honesty
- Encourage clients to reconnect with culture
- Offer safe environment
- Strong positive role models
- Raise the bar on expectations of wellness with ourselves, staff and each other
- Building capacity of our people
- Mandate
- By doing
- Effective preparation
- Surveys, evaluations, client and program feedback
- Participatory management
- Feed the people
- Celebrate

2. On what basis do you refer clients to any other agency or program?

- Does not fit your program criteria (program mandate)
- Can't provide what the client needs
- Conflict of interest (professional invasion)

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- Can't fix immediate crisis (need help from others)
- Personality clash
- Client request
- Other program workers referring other clients to other organizations (sharing)
- Reputation
- Work ethics
- Primary health care (Chigamik)
- Traditional healers
- To mainstream: Last resort

3. What do you see as barriers to referrals to other agencies?

- Transportation
- Spaces (may be limited)
- Culturally appropriate
- Funding
- Wait list (times, crisis)
- The intake process (long forms, seeing multiple people)
- Communication barriers (language, disabilities)
- No longer gets a person when phones, automated services
- Reputation
- Identification / Status
- Lack of commitment to Aboriginal best practices from mainstream
- Trust / confidentiality
- Sharing responsibility (client dumping)
- Children and Youth parent consent (lack of)
- Limited resources
- Negative feedback / experience(s)

b) What can be done to overcome these barriers?

- Bring back human touch / contact (reception)
- Person with knowledge about agency at first contact
- Refer to appropriate person
- Process guide book
- Lobbying for more funding
- Advocacy
- Community volunteers
- Practical incentives
- Lobby for policy change
- Respond to any negative experiences
- Have a common intake/referral process

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- Support client by going to alternate agencies with them
- Hire more people
- Help interpret the information that is given
- Service workers need to stay updated
- Service gaps can be addressed

4. Do you find inter agency meetings / workshops are effective?

- Yes!
- Improve agency relationships
- Father up date information, changes in program or policies of other agencies
- Find out about new funding (pass along to those who fit criteria)
- Stay connected
- Build relationships and partnerships with others
- Community capacity building
- Retreats (self care) ceremonies
- Networking
- Information and resource sharing
- Think outside the box / mandates
- Agenda, stay focused
- Speak the same language (terms that everyone can understand)
- Feel listened to and heard at workshops
- Need to follow through with ongoing process – networking

Responses to hand out

1. Are you aware of any myths / stereotypes that should be addressed?
 - Lazy, we don't want to work, drunks, addicts, uneducated
 - Free handouts from government (housing, education, health care)
 - Dishonoring status card
 - Gamblers or own casinos
 - Native staff are not professional
 - Native services are not well organized
 - All natives are the same
 - FNMI historical context and generational impacts
 - Everything is "free" for us
 - That we are given LOTS of money
 - That all "Indians" are wise and all old people are "elders"
 - Stereotypes about where we live, our cultural practices etc...
 - Aboriginal youth are all "hard-asses" and "tough / aggressive"
 - Irresponsible
 - No knowledge to make priorities such as budgeting

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- Aboriginal's are always late, "Indian time"
 - Angry and uncooperative
 - A general Aboriginal Organization for ALL native people
 - We (everyone) receive a monthly allowance from the government
2. From your experience, are there some do's and don'ts that we should be aware of when working with FNMI communities?
- Don't pretend you know all the teachings
 - Understand what you can do for yourself and how to help people
 - Don't assume every family is traditional Anishnabe, accept families that are Catholic
 - Don't assume we know something about someone because they are Aboriginal. Aboriginal people come from all social classes.
 - Culture and Traditions sensitive, slowly introduce ceremonies etc...
 - Don't assume all Aboriginal's want to get services from an Aboriginal organization
 - Not to stereotype
 - Encourage Native's to reconnect with their own communities and use other resources that would be helpful
 - Don't force them, make suggestions
 - Receptionist should create a welcoming and friendly environment
 - Smile, look friendly
 - Doesn't try to help when help is not needed
 - Be sensitive to personal conflicts
 - Never assume or take for granted
 - Work from your client's perspective
 - Don't impose your values or beliefs
 - Do-have respect, keep an open mind, be helpful
 - Don't- Assume they know everything you do, force your ways upon them
 - Do-Let them tell the story
 - Don't- Expect measurable outcomes
 - Accept people as they are
 - Establish a healthy and loyal relationship
 - Always present tobacco when asking something from an Elder
 - Find out and follow community protocols
 - Compensate Elders when asked to take part
3. What have clients said is important for them when accessing programs and services from mainstream providers? I.e.) Environment, service delivery, etc.
- Wording in understanding what is asked of them
 - Comfort
 - Acknowledgement

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- Having medicines available for smudging
- Understanding and sympathetic
- LISTEN
- Do not judge
- Be respectful
- Open-minded
- Culturally appropriate and sensitive
- They partner with Aboriginal Service Agencies for support
- Safety
- Taking time to develop understanding of their needs
- Make them feel equal to yourself
- Do things quickly
- On own terms
- Transportation
- Accessibility to services
- Approachable
- Use appropriate vocabulary (so everyone understands)
- Financial assistance
- Patients
- Talk to a person and not a machine
- Face to face

4. What things are important to ensure a culturally safe environment for our people working in mainstream services to ensure it is culturally safe?

- To understand each other culturally and respect each cultural knowledge
- Keeping medicines in every building
- Posters that are culturally appropriate
- Encouraging client to bring advocates with them
- Cultural awareness training for that agency
- Knowing who you are hiring, employees are safe role models
- Keep in touch with cultural practices
- Respect
- Ability to smudge
- Talking Circle format (meetings)
- Thorough investigation into mainstream services
- Accompany client when they need to use mainstream services
- Create out own services
- FNMI representative within all mainstream organizations

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Mainstream services are not culturally safe 1. What kinds of questions come to mind when you're thinking of working with a First Nation, Métis or Inuit (FNMI) communities?

I also have questions of how to better link FNMI to cultural supports in our community and I, As a non-FNMI, find it difficult to connect with these supports in the community and be kept up to date on the programs that they have available for our first nation clients.

Is the family comfortable working with a non-first nations Family Home Visitor or Public Health Nurse?

Do I understand their culture? What and where can I learn more?

Do I feel comfortable asking the family about their culture and are they open to sharing?

Are they comfortable using English during our home visits and can I learn some of their language from them? ex.(key words)

Do they have a second language?

Is there anything I should understand about their culture before entering their home in order to not offend them?

What can I do to reduce any anxiety they may have when I am visiting?

Are they open to having the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program?

There are cultural traditions related to prenatal and after birth that would be good for Family Health Service members to know.

What are the best ways to engage with FNMI communities. Who do we connect with and what is the best way to approach them ie do they prefer we make an offering of tobacco when we want to engage with them

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How do I honour them for their unique history, culture, language, while not segregating them and making them feel as if they are apart from the general community. What are the barriers to individuals finding connection and opportunity within the community they are living in.

That I will have a great time working with colleagues and that I will have to educate mainstream Non-FNMI workers about how things work in the county, from organizations, governance, decision making.

What types of healing are specifically needed in particular communities?

Is there funding?

Building trust within the communities, are cultural beliefs and practices available to members of the communities, to help with the healing?

Understanding and teaching culturally appropriate programs in the communities for those that don't have the means of transportation to leave their communities?

Is there more funding available for cultural programs?

How do we work with families in a respectful manner? If we treat them differently with the intention to meet needs, would they appreciate that or be offended?

What is the best way to engage service providers in planning when they are already stretched in work load?

Is it valuable for service providers from "mainstream" join FNMI planning committees to better understand needs?

Are we doing a good job yet? Many changes are made to improve. Feedback is good for people to know to continue or to change the course.

How best to serve them, what would they like from us

Who are the leaders within the community? what are their roles? What are their current and existing strengths/ services offered? How can we build on existing strengths/services? How do we come along side of these people to build relationships and learn from them?

Cultural beliefs and practices with parenting.

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I think that it is good to be aware of the grandfather teachings and how we can incorporate health/parenting teachings within this. I would like to learn more about this and also the holistic approach to well being.

2. Are there myths and stereotypes that you know of that should be addressed?

FNMI peoples need to learn from us. We have much to teach them. They are of lower socioeconomic classes, most often.

How to deal with the negative stereotype that represent the specific community as uneducated, lazy, problem drinkers, substance abusers, unemployed / unemployable, always looking for hand outs / financial assistance from the government.

There are biases in society, Stereotyping related to work ethics, alcohol consumption and sources of income

They are all alcoholics.

There is violence in every home.

First Nations men are abusive to women and children.

They all fish/hunt, only eat wild game and have the knowledge to live solely off the land.

They all live on a First Nations Reserve.

They all hate white people.

They feel white people want to take their children from them and are abusive toward them.
ex History of Residential schools.

All First Nations people receive large amounts of money from both the Government and Casinos.

They are all under educated or illiterate.

They all have a clear understanding of their own culture.

They understand white society's culture.

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There are many myths and stereotypes about FNMI people. I think these can be addressed through training (such as the training that has already been provided to over 300 professionals in various organizations). What I would find more powerful is information on the great things that are happening in the FNMI communities and within service provider organizations that speaks to all the great work that is being done and focused on the strengths of the FNMI community, like the info on strengths presented on slides 5 and 6

That all FNMI people are not connected to their culture and history, that not all FNMI are proud of their heritage or that we know about colonization and the impact on our history, the present and the future.

About Aboriginals' all being alcoholics, unemployed and uneducated.

-more public education re: all Indians live off the government

-accurate information in schools re: history. Explain why and where stereotyping comes from. Members from FNMI do not trust all service providers- how can we build that trust to show we genuinely want to help?

Members from FNMI want their own services and providers (funding is limited and we may be better able to serve people by building capacity in systems to all do a better job.)

That Native people don't care about working and trying to reach their potential.

That they don't care about time and about meeting commitments.

That they want to be first seen as "Indian" then as human.

I think there is still a lot of misunderstanding and fear that anglo saxon people still have about Native people. Perhaps guilt is tied into it.

- That people of aboriginal ancestry are not all dealing with some form of substance abuse
- We are not all on Ontario Works or other forms of social assistance
- Indian Affairs and our home First Nation communities do not provide us with money if we live off reserve
- The perception that we have unlimited drug and dental coverage through Indian Affairs or First nation Inuit Health branch's non insured health benefits
- Everyone gets free post secondary education
- That we don't pay any taxes when living off reserve
- That we are all knowledgeable about Aboriginal culture and language

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3. From your experience, are there some do's & don't that we should be aware of when working with FNMI.

I think we need to be continually aware of their unique needs as individuals, culturally sensitive to them, continually recognizing that they know what is best for themselves and their communities. Aboriginal people are more comfortable with their own people delivering programs to their own people.

I think that as we work with individuals that we continue to ask them to be setting their own goals and also ask how they want to accomplish their goals. Each person might have differences in how important the cultural teaching is in the information that they want to be provided with.

Don't assume anything. Talk to the family and learn from them.

Do be aware of stereotypes and have an awareness about the culture, don't assume all families are the same regardless of their culture.

Be careful not to impose our process and rules on FNMI, processes are much more organic in the FNMI communities and we need to respect their values and principles of doing business. If this means that something takes longer, that is ok.

Do ask questions, don't assume, if not in the group, choose an FNMI person that can be asked.

Respect & and keep an open mind

respect cultural differences

be aware of how questions are asked

have the ability to handle crisis in different ways

Do include service providers who know their families best

Do include families as much as possible

When doing consultations, ensure that a trusted facilitator from the FNMI community leads the group and prepares the report

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Don't assume we know what is needed. Asking never hurts.

Don't assume that they want to identify with "traditional ways" when they seek support from FNMI affiliated organizations. But these organizations need to do as much community outreach as possible to be known and accessible to those who need them. There needs to be consistency and reliability from these organizations. Also, the organizations need to stay current as to what the different groups within the FNMI needs are ie. Age, gender, geographical area.

- Don't assume that people have money to spare for bus or taxi transportation
- Don't assume that people have access to a vehicle
- Don't assume that people have a computer or web access or high speed connectivity
- Don't assume that we all live at or below the poverty line
- Don't assume we are late for everything and run on "Indian time"
- Don't assume that they know a lot about First Nation, Métis and Inuit culture
- Don't assume that we all grew up on the reserve
- Don't assume that Aboriginal people all look like the "Hollywood" version.
- Try to be positive and upbeat
- Don't "talk down" to the person

4. Are you aware of any best practices?

Not specifically, but the FNMI community would likely be the best source of this info
Increased understanding of the teachings and practices

<http://www.newrelationshiptrust.ca/downloads/governance-report.pdf>

Accept individuals as an individual - learn about their specific individual beliefs

Information from Best Start booklets re: aboriginal culture and fostering learning, nutrition, and development in children are very good. eg. Founded in Culture, Let's be healthy together booklets.

Discusses Aboriginal learning styles and how to support early learning.

Strategies from booklet Founded in culture: Strategies to promote early learning among first nations Children In Ontario pg 21, -understanding First Nations history; culture, and social

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contexts; creating a welcoming environment; building a relationship with parents and families; involving parents in decision-making; working from strengths; encouraging learning at home; linking to community; respecting the diversity of cultures; supporting children with special needs; and learning from and about the land.(Many of these things we already do)

As above) When doing consultations, ensure that a trusted facilitator from the FNMI community leads the group and prepares the report

Include members from FNMI on planning committees which affect families directly

Many teachings are best practices for all (example- developing the Nutrition policy for Raising the bar- Aboriginal Canada Food Guide

Communication in any form teaches us all!

Yes, FNIHB, National Native Mental Health Association, Ontario Association of Social Workers.
Ceremonies & smudging

Follow the 7 Grandfather Teachings

Daily smudging

Attend community events, pow wows, socials, ceremonies.

5) What information should be included in the cultural awareness/safety ie: environment, etc. and the cultural competency checklist? Ie: individual and organizational

- environment to be culturally safe and culturally competent service environment for Aboriginal peoples (and builds capacity within mainstream)

- Inclusion of trained staff and Board members/Elders and wherever possible members from Aboriginal community on the staff team

- All staff members to be trained in cultural awareness from front line to management

- Literature within all organizations to compliment cultural awareness

? Supporting each other, we walk the earth together. We have to break the cycle of violence and racism. Assuring people in our communities we work together.

There are several resources available to help our people, more knowledge.

Hopefully the input included here is helpful. Thank you and good luck.

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Individuals experience and perception

Training

Does the environment reflect culture?

Is there integration in practice?

Respect for all differences in cultures

Cultural awareness/safety includes creating opportunities to educate regarding the impact of colonization, racism and oppression. As an FNMI person I have learned that when I am angry in a group or meeting it is related to my feelings of not being heard or valued, which in turn results from the oppression and colonization I have experienced. Organizations can inflict lateral violence on people when there is no awareness of anti-oppression and anti-racism approaches to interacting with people.

Medical practices ex. ancient medicine.

Sleeping environment for the babes ex. do they sleep in a crib? Do they co-sleep?

Are they in the habit of using car seats. (are laws different on a Reserve?)

Are there safety resources offered in their first language?

The importance of supervision.

Community serves ex. Health Connection, Telehealth, 911, Crisis Lines, etc.

Starting solids information/Canada Food Guide.

Cultural competency checklist - pieces that FNMI people want for nonFNMI people to know and respect about themselves and their culture.

Interested in aboriginal cultural awareness / sensitivity training if it is offered in the future

What have clients said is important for them when accessing programs and services from mainstream providers?

Warm open environment

Make the reception area open and not closed off to people. i.e. speaking from behind a glass partition

Talk like they are important and be direct and honest.

Help in some way, even if it's sharing information. Don't just "pass the buck" without

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fully explaining why they are being referred to another person

Be on time for appointments

Make sure you clarify that the person has understood your advice or instructions. Many times people won't ask for clarification. If needed write it down.

Be knowledgeable of the Aboriginal specific services that are available in the local area.

If possible establish a personal contact within each of the service providers

What things are important to ensure a culturally safe environment for our people working in mainstream services to ensure it is culturally safe?

- Undertake Cultural awareness training/Native way training for staff and administration
- Recognition that not all aboriginal people are "Indian experts"

