University-Organization collaboration for enhanced access to mental health services for First Nations peoples

Delphine Collin-Vézina, PhD
Mireille De La Sablonnière, MSW

School of Social Work
Center for Research on Children and Families
McGill University
Background

- May 2007: One of the first meetings between CRCF members and FNQLHSSC team.
- Health Canada and the Assembly of First Nations developed a national plan to address mental health issues.
  - In order to improve mental wellness in FN communities
- March 2008: Meeting of validation of the national strategic plan in mental health (province of Quebec).
Background

- What are the strong and weak points of the plan?
- What are the potential drawbacks of the strategic action plan?
- From the standpoint of an FN community, what are the components of a coordinated continuum of mental wellness services? (This includes traditional, cultural and conventional approaches to mental wellness and treatment of addiction).
- How can this strategic plan help first-line workers respond to the needs of clients with mental health and addiction problems?

See draft document
Background

- May 2008: Fund available through the *Aboriginal Health Transition Fund* (Health Canada)

**Adaptation**: to support improved adaptation of existing P/T health programs to the unique needs of all Aboriginal peoples, including those in urban areas and Métis settlements and communities.

**Integration**: to support improved coordination and integration between P/T health systems and federally funded health systems within Inuit and First Nations communities.
May 2008: Fund available through the Ministère de la Santé et des services sociaux (Quebec)

- Creation of a mental wellness team, in collaboration with First Nations and Inuit Health Quebec Region (Health Canada)
- FNQLHSSC team requested support to develop the projects and to write the proposals.
- Delphine and Mireille were involved in writing all three grant proposals…
- All three grant proposals were successfully funded!
Delphine and Mireille’s roles: Consultant and assistant-consultant.

To provide consulting support to the FNQLHSSC in all phases of the Quebec First Nations Mental Health Framework under the adaptation and integration envelopes.

In connection with the FNQLHSSC research team all along the process.

From May 2009 to April 2010…
Adaptation project

- **Adaptation: Survey of existing mental health services in the Quebec health and social services system**
- Create the list of existing mental health services of the Quebec health and social services system, more specifically those that take place within the health and social services regions affiliated with the 27 First Nations communities.

Mireille’s report on this process
Adaptation project

- Getting started with the Adaptation project
  - Gathering and organizing publicly available data (websites)
  - Contacting relevant institutions and organizations

- Challenges…
  - Role specification: Affiliation with two different institutions
  - Jurisdiction conundrum: Presentation of the project in a constructive way
  - Timing of the project: Data collection during the summer
  - Critical elements: Coordination and communication

- Output
  - Mental health services directory (180 pages)
Integration project

- **Integration**: Inventory of the current service offer within the First Nations communities

- Development of a research protocol (survey and interviews) for consultations with professionals and staff from health, social, and community services, as well as peoples from all FN communities in the province of Quebec.
  - Distribution of a survey to at least one worker per community for each of the 27 FN communities
  - Interviews with peoples from 15 FN communities (rural/ semi-rural/ urban)

Mireille and Abu’s report on this process
Integration project

- Getting started with the Integration project - Survey
  - Reviewing surveys that could provide relevant questions
  - Creating draft versions, consultation with advisory committee, and updates
  - Making the survey available online and creating the database for analysis

- Challenges - Survey
  - Multiple versions: Wording, layout/formatting, and languages
  - Sample size: From descriptive outlook to quantitative analysis potential
  - Distance and decisions: Responsibility for approval and distribution

- Output
  - FNQLHSSC mental health services in the communities survey
Integration project

- Getting started with the Integration project – Interviews
  - Identifying the objectives and questions to be covered (vs. survey)
  - Data collection preparation and organization

- Challenges – Consultations
  - Adaptation and flexibility: Decisions and organization by the FNQLHSSC

- What is coming up
  - First site visit (4 communities) scheduled in late November

- Output – Survey and Consultations
  - Report on the state of mental health services in the FN communities and their linkages with the provincial network
Next steps

- **Service Framework Elaboration**
  - Comparison of the range of services available for the general population of Quebec and the services available to FN communities.
  - Proposition of a mental health services organization framework

- **Model Validation**
  - Consultation with community members and counselors to validate the framework
Questions?

delphine.collin-vezina@mcgill.ca
mireille.delasablonniere@mcgill.ca

Thank you!