


Conducting Ethical Research Among Aboriginal People

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Roots of Resilience study (funded by the Institute of Aboriginal People's Health, CIHR)

“We view resiliency as a dynamic process of social and psychological adaptation to life challenges. As such resilience is a characteristic both of individuals and communities, revealed as a positive outcome in the face of stresses and challenges. Resilience at individual, family and community levels interacts with larger social, historical and cultural factors to enable some individuals and communities to do well despite adversity.”



Resiliency factors:

- Spirituality
- Connection to land and place
- Family, clan, community, nation
- Language
- Teachings
- Traditional activities
- Cultural activities
- Political history




Reality check:

- Although Aboriginal people are facing some serious health issues, we need to build on the positive and look at why we have survived.
- Focus on resiliency as an “antidote to pathology.”



“Researched to death”

- Many Aboriginal communities are reluctant to participate in research because historically they had little control over how the research would be conducted and what the information would be used for.



Things to consider:

- Protocols
- Relationship building
- Capacity building
- Local research priorities
- Hospitality
- Honorariums



OACAP

- Ownership
- Control
- Access
- Possession

(National Aboriginal Health Organization)



CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People (2007)

- Aboriginal Ethics Working Group established in March 2004
- Contributes to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*
- Guidelines apply to those funded by CIHR

Guidelines for Ethical Aboriginal Research (GEAR)

Guidelines based on 7 grandfather teachings:

- Respect
- Wisdom
- Love
- Honesty
- Humility
- Truth
- Bravery



Ethics Reviews

- Developed workbook to assist researchers and review sub-committee
- Ethics review of 9 research proposals since 2005
- Committee continues to develop



Allies needed:

“I don’t need missionaries. We’ve had plenty of those in the North trying to save us. I’m not a powerless victim. I need allies, people I can partner with.”

- Sheila Watt-Cloutier



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