

Aboriginal Practice Standards Redesign Project
Quarterly Update
Project Lead Activities
April 1 to June 30, 2011

The primary activity during this quarter was drafting the third and fourth sections of the practice standards for presentation at a face-to-face Working Group meeting to be held in the Fall.

Activity Category: Meetings/Admin

- *Working Group Meetings* – Working group meetings continue to be held monthly, by teleconference. We prepare the agendas and other information related to the practice standards.
- *Partnership meeting and Steering Committee Meeting* – The project Lead also gave a brief update regarding the Practice Standards redesign, the review process with the Working Group and the community information exchange session.
- *Research Assistants* – One RA is now working full time for Surrounded by Cedar. The other has completed her task.
- *Attend Partnership Quality Assurance Working Group* – Sharon Hume represents the Project Lead Team on the Partnership QA Working Group and as such attends the QA meetings.

As well, two members of the Project Lead team took part in a one-day QA session on assessments on June 29, 2011 and presented a summary of the practice decision points in the draft practice standards as they relate to assessment of safety, harm, needs, strengths, etc.

We have asked several agencies how they assess risk/safety. Current AOPSI standards make reference to use of a “standardized culturally relevant assessment tool”, however to date none exists. Some agencies are using Signs of Safety but most use BC Risk Assessment Model for assessment of immediate safety and of risk. MCFD is currently implementing Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools, which include an actuarial risk assessment tool as well as several other assessment tools (not predictive) designed to assess safety, strengths, family needs, and the like. The QA working group met to consider options for adoption of an Immediate Safety Assessment process. Both SDM and Signs of Safety were discussed, as was the notion of an integrated SDM/SOS approach.

Quality assurance practices have a bearing on the draft practice standards and vice versa, hence it is important that the two initiatives remain connected.

Activity Category: Drafting practice standards

Activities associated with drafting the practice standards include:

- Ongoing research related to assessment models and other key aspects of the standards
- Continued work on Sections 3 and 4 of the practice standards
- Drafting of diagram/flow chart depicting the flow of decision making in the new standards

- Meeting with MCFD lawyers and MCFD staff regarding legal review of draft standards

Activity Category: Community meetings

We continued the second round of visits with communities to present our work to date so that community members can see what we have done with the information they provided us and to confirm that this is a direction that makes sense to them. As well we are asking for communities to provide feedback on implications for practice. During this quarter, we visited the following communities/Delegated Agencies:

- Gitxsan
- Carrier Sekani, Burns Lake
- Usma Nuu-Chah-Nulth
- Surrounded by Cedar and Métis - joint session
- Ayas Men Men, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services, and Xyolhemeylh - joint session

We have had several discussions with Haida Child and Family Services about the possibility of holding a session there. HCFS has a research team that has spent several months gathering information and stories from community members and now want to proceed with integrating traditional knowledge as part of their social work practices. We concluded however, that to assist one agency with a very specific task such as this is outside the terms of our contract and have instead suggested the agency contact other Directors who are engaged in similar work.

In addition, we met twice with Lalum'utul, Smun'eem to discuss their reengagement in the Working Group process and to review their Best Practices file management system.

We have heard a desire expressed by some Delegated Agencies to meet to discuss practice related issues. There is a sense that agencies are individually addressing common themes, for example integration of traditional practices, involvement of community, use of culturally relevant assessment processes and practices, and the like. Some have expressed an interest in sharing their learning/knowledge with each other in a face-to-face session and/or identifying areas for further exploration.

Anticipated activities for next quarter

We anticipate that for the next quarter (July to September, 2011), the focus will be:

- Continue researching the practice standards
- Completion of the draft standards
- Provide an update on the practice standards to MCFD Regional Executive Directors of Practice
- Conduct a focus group with youth in/from care to obtain their thoughts and feedback on what has made a difference for them and/or what they think would make a difference for them and their families
- Continued attendance at QA meetings
- Face to face meeting with Working Group members to review the completed draft standards
- Completion of Literature Review Phase II