

ENACTING RESEARCH ETHICS IN PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN CANADA: “DO IT IN A GOOD WAY”

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ABSTRACT: TWO STUDIES CONDUCTED THROUGH community-campus partnerships demonstrated emerging frameworks for ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. Both projects involved multiple Indigenous community partners whose interests in promoting children’s development and fathers’ involvement motivated the projects. The Indigenous projects were conceived within a broader social agenda of restorative justice and self-determination of Indigenous peoples in Canada following centuries of colonial government interventions. Guiding principles included community relevance, community participation, mutual capacity building, and benefit to Indigenous communities. Memoranda of Understanding negotiated with each community partner specified the roles of community and university partners and research team members in each phase of the research. Testimonials obtained from community representatives before and after the research projects indicated the success of the projects in yielding benefits to the communities in the form of substantive knowledge and strengthened capacities to engage in collaborative research through community-campus partnerships. The larger collaborative research projects in which these two Indigenous projects were embedded created challenges and opportunities due to varying recognition within these networks of the primacy of relationships as a foundation for research and the indeterminacy of outcomes when ownership of data and control over dissemination is in the hands of community partners.

KEY WORDS: ethics, partnerships, Indigenous, culture, consent, Memoranda of Understanding, fatherhood, child development

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E NACTING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES in research involving Indigenous peoples is among the most contested issues in the current research environment in Canada. Research involving Indigenous peoples occurs within a historical context of exploitation and misrepresentation by non-Indigenous scholars, artists, journalists and colonial government agencies. A chorus of Indigenous community leaders and national organizations representing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations is calling for an end to research conducted ‘on’ Indigenous peoples for the benefit of non-Indigenous scholars and agencies without meaningful engagement of Indigenous peoples. Researchers interested in engaging with Indigenous individuals, communities, and organizations are being challenged to recognize that, in addition to methodological choices, there are ethical dimensions in their choice of research topic, employment of research assistants, and dissemination strategies. Within this agenda, community-campus partnership research has emerged as an approach that is particularly well-suited to learning new ways of conducting research that avoid the expert-subject dichotomies and de-contextualization often associated with research conceived and conducted solely by academics.

Preeminent funding agencies in Canada have innovated new programs of support for investigations that demonstrate partnership approaches. For example, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada has innovated a Community-University Research Alliances program. The Canadian Institute of Health Research has an Aboriginal Peoples’ Health Institute supporting partnership research involving academic institutions and Indigenous communities. Indigenous leaders, organizations, and community groups have become active as lobby groups and gatekeepers, specifying research projects worthy of funding, time, and resources. Within many funding agencies, Indigenous people sit on proposal review and selection committees where their choices and concerns play a large role in decisions about what research is funded. Research involving community-campus partnerships are typically given preference.

Although the number of Indigenous researchers is increasing, most research about Indigenous peoples continues to be led by non-Indigenous investigators. Many researchers remain poorly informed about historical and ongoing government policies that have stripped Indigenous communities of self-government and certain individual human rights. Nevertheless, memories and contemporary instances of destructive relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people influence interactions and affect possibilities for establishing trust. Researchers must demonstrate new forms of engagement that restore power to Indigenous people in their dealings with mainstream institutions and individuals in the dominant culture, recognizing the rights of Indigenous peoples to make decisions regarding their children and families and to control the flow of information from them to researchers and from research to the public. Most researchers and university research ethics committees (RECs) are unsure of what is required to negotiate research agreements with Indigenous peoples, to follow cultural protocols, and to respond constructively to Indigenous peoples' concerns regarding research. Gradually, however, more researchers are becoming cognizant of special issues surrounding research with Indigenous peoples and are seeking new understandings about how to proceed in ways that embody mutually accepted ethical principles.

A growing body of literature by Indigenous scholars, organizations, and national research funding agencies offers various frameworks of ethical principles and practices to guide research with Indigenous peoples. Elements of these frameworks helped to shape the approach used in the two studies described in this article. For example, the Aboriginal Capacity and Research Development Environment programs established in many provinces in Canada has proposed that four 'r's—respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility—provide a principled framework for developing academic initiatives with Aboriginal people (B.C. ACADRE, 2007). The National Aboriginal Health Organization, representing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada, has promoted four criteria for research involving Indigenous people: ownership, control, access, and possession at the level of the participating community (Schnarch, 2004). At the University of Victoria, the graduate program on Indigenous governance has encapsulated recurring themes in the evolving discourse on Indigenous research ethics into three guiding principles: protection, participation, and partnership (University of Victoria Indigenous Governance Programs, 2003). Subsequent to the research projects illustrated in this article, the Canadian Institutes of

Health Research (2007)—one of three major federal funders for scholarly research in Canada—published a set of guidelines for research involving Indigenous peoples. This framework urges investigators to seek a negotiated agreement with Indigenous community administrators or organizational representatives regarding the purpose and plans for a proposed project.

Joining this groundswell of activity led primarily by Indigenous scholars (Castellano, 2004; Piquemal, 2000; Ten Fingers, 2005), some consortia of Indigenous communities have created formal protocols governing the conditions of their involvement in research (e.g., Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, 1996; Aurora Research Institute, 2002; Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch, 2007; National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2002; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1993). These protocols call for agreements that specify active roles for the Indigenous partners in all phases of a research project. Many of these principles and procedural requirements raise new ethical concerns, for example, how to protect confidentiality when data is retained by a community and how to extend to individuals opportunities to participate in research when community leaders decline an invitation at the community level. They also raise practical concerns, for example, the time added to project schedules in order to build relationships and negotiate community-level agreements. For some, it is difficult to accept the uncertainty about whether the academic partner can count on being able to disseminate results after a project is completed or whether the community partners will achieve the outputs they hope to receive from the research. Applying new approaches creates additional challenges when projects are components of larger collaborative or networked investigations, especially when these involve non-Indigenous partners who do not agree with or may not be aware of research ethics involving Indigenous partners, as was the case in the two projects described subsequently.

Although extensive consultation preceded the publication by the Canadian Institute for Health Research of guidelines for research involving Indigenous peoples, there is no singular framework for research ethics promulgated by Indigenous leaders and agencies in Canada. Lack of consensus on a specific set of guidelines can be seen as positive, given the current need to stimulate broad local, national, and international debates and to bring more Indigenous groups and perspectives into the discussion. Notwithstanding, there is general agreement on the super-ordinate goal of advancing self-determination, control, and benefit on the parts of Indigenous individuals and communities that participate in research. Indigenous leaders in Canada, as in

many countries, insist that relationships between researchers (whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous) and Indigenous people must in themselves be part of a larger process of decolonization and restorative social justice (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2002). “*Nothing about us without us*” is commonly heard among Indigenous peoples, underscoring the principle of *inclusion* around which considerations of ethics in research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada now pivot (Ball, 2005). Investigators and community partners must begin by negotiating the values, conceptual frameworks, methodologies, ownership issues, and approaches to disseminating results that will be part of a research investigation (CIHR, 2007). Community-campus partnerships are a promising approach for research guided by the advice given by many Indigenous Elders to “*do it in a good way.*”

Two recently completed community-campus partnership projects were the sites for demonstrating principles and methods for ensuring ethical practice in research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada. Both projects were situated in the province of British Columbia, which is home to about one-third of the one million Indigenous peoples in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006). Institutionally, both projects were housed at the University of Victoria within the first author’s ongoing program of research involving several community-campus partnership projects (Ball, 2008). The goals of this research program are: (a) to strengthen both community and university capacity for ethical, productive research involving Indigenous peoples; and (b) to create and mobilize knowledge of Indigenous and racialized minority child and family development. The University of Victoria’s Research Ethics Committee provided oversight of the ethical conduct of the two projects. The projects’ main activities took place in the participating communities.

Study 1: Indigenous Fathers Project

The Indigenous Fathers Project was the first study in Canada to explore how Indigenous fathers conceptualize their roles with their young children and navigate the transition to fatherhood. Most Indigenous fathers today have not had positive fathering experiences and do not live in conditions that have been posited in non-Indigenous theories as foundational for positive fathers’ involvement. An emerging disposition among Indigenous community leaders and service providers toward strengthening fathers’ involvement is competing with entrenched stereotypes calling into question the potential

of Indigenous men to be responsible fathers. The Indigenous Fathers Project was seen by community and academic partners as a first step in moving beyond negative views by exploring the heterogeneity of Indigenous fathers’ experiences and identifying helpful resources and services.

Establishing Potential Benefit to Communities

Within emerging ethical frameworks, it is understood that research involving Indigenous peoples must advance internally-identified community development goals and yield knowledge that is useful to Indigenous communities and individuals. In both projects described in this article, potential benefits for the partner communities were confirmed at the outset by representatives of the community groups that decided to participate.

Impetus for the Indigenous Fathers Project came during a provincial symposium on Indigenous early childhood care and development. Grand Chief of the First Nations Summit in British Columbia, Edward John, had posed a challenge for practitioners and allied researchers when he declared:

Aboriginal fathers may very well be the greatest untapped resources in the lives of Aboriginal children. If we could support them to get involved and stay connected with their children, that would be a big protective factor for these youngsters as they grow up. (John, 2004)

Practitioners in community-based programs serving Indigenous children and families had previously identified outreach to Indigenous fathers as a priority. When an invitation came to the first author to join a nationally networked project on fatherhood, she asked a group of Indigenous managers of community-based child and family service programs for expressions of interest to form a cluster of community-campus partnerships to undertake a research project focused on Indigenous fathers. Five community groups came forward, including two land-based (on reserve) and three based in small urban centers in north-central British Columbia. Within this invitational context, it was explicit that the cluster of community-campus partnerships for the Indigenous Fathers project would be one of seven clusters in the national study of fatherhood.

Nationally Networked Collaborative Research Context

The Indigenous Fathers Project commenced in 2004 as part of the first national study in Canada of fathers’ involvement, initiated by the Fathers’ Involvement

Research Alliance (FIRA, 2008). FIRA is itself a consortium of community-based programs, non-government agencies, scholars and centers based at colleges and universities across Canada. Over a five-year period, the national FIRA study concurrently investigated seven populations of fathers: Indigenous fathers; gay fathers; divorced and separated fathers; immigrant and refugee fathers; new fathers; young fathers; and fathers of children with special needs. The study of each population was situated in one province and involved university research teams partnered with community-based agencies that serve families. All of the population-specific project components compiled demographic profiles of the population, explored the nature and determinants of fathers' involvement with their children, and examined federal, provincial, and community-level policies that may influence fathers' involvement. The research was funded by the federally administered Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as part of their innovative Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) program (SSHRC, 2008). CURA projects focus on problems and goals of specific communities or population groups in Canada, and they demonstrate research designs that combine the strengths of researchers and community members in ways of knowing, sources of knowledge, and applications of knowledge.

Study 2: Indigenous Child Project

The Indigenous Child Project explored how Indigenous parents, Elders, and practitioners in early childhood programs conceptualize conditions for optimal development of Indigenous children. It also gathered their perspectives on the value of monitoring, screening and assessment tools to determine whether a child may benefit from extra supports to achieve their developmental potential.

Establishing Potential Benefit to Communities

Like Indigenous fathering, parenting and community-based supports for Indigenous children's development are being revitalized after centuries of colonial government interventions that severed ties between Indigenous children and their families and cultural communities (Smolewski & Wesley-Esquimaux, 2003). Many community leaders and program staff are eager to introduce tools, curricula, programs, and services that will promote family well-being, community development, and child well-being. A university-based team initiated invitations to form community-campus

partnerships to undertake a project focused on the cultural appropriateness of developmental screening tools. The team reached out to selected communities based on publicly available descriptions of fairly well-developed infrastructure administered in these communities to support children's development. The opportunity to join the Indigenous Child Project was welcomed by four community groups that had placed a priority on comprehensive supports for child development within the parameters of community resources and cultural appropriateness. The project was seen by community administrators as an opportunity to gauge community members' and practitioners' receptivity to systematic approaches to observing and interpreting young children's behaviour in order to identify children needing early intervention services. The academic partner brought a long-standing interest in the cultural nature of child development and socialization, along with a commitment to developing culturally appropriate tools for assessing children's development. Reciprocity in these community-campus partnerships encompassed recognition that community and academic partners valued and could pursue different kinds of project outcomes. In both projects, it was understood that the academic partner had an interest in developing theory to encompass cultural diversity and to demonstrate new approaches and tools for research ethics and data collection.

We know that Jessica likes to write and talk about ideas and the process of how to do things and that's fine. We welcomed her to do that, just as long as we didn't have to do it too! Writing is not our thing. We don't have time for that. We are more about *what*—what should we be planning next to support our community members? What are they thinking and what are they needing and what are they ready for? We might have different reasons for being in the project, but can work on it together, pool our resources, to make it happen and to learn.
(Christine Leo, Lil'wat Nation)¹

Provincially Networked Collaborative Research Context

The Indigenous Child Project commenced in 2003 and was one project within a consortium of ten projects in the province of British Columbia that encompassed a wide range of aspects of child development, called the Consortium for Intervention, Health, Learning and Development (CHILD) project. All ten CHILD projects involved community-campus partnerships. The CHILD project was funded by the Social Sciences and

Humanities Research Council of Canada, under a program promoting interdisciplinary research, called Major Collaborative Research Initiatives (SSHRC, 2008). The larger collaborative context in which this project was embedded created several ongoing challenges to implementing new approaches to Indigenous research ethics. These are discussed later in this article.

Data Collection About Research Ethics

While not the primary focus, both projects described in this article were undertaken in part as pilot projects to explore and promote the application of emerging principles for ethical practice in community-campus research involving Indigenous peoples. In addition to ensuring relevance and potential benefit of the research with reference to community priorities, ethical pre-conditions for communities to partner in the research included developing trust with members of the university-based team and negotiating an agreement about how the community would be involved in every stage of the research. These steps set the stage for the first wave of reflexive data collection about experiences and expectations of research. This process is described next because it conveys the context for subsequent description of steps taken to ensure ethical practice throughout the research projects.

After agreements for research partnerships had been concluded, the two teams created for the two projects met together at the university for a series of meetings to discuss experiences and meanings of research in Indigenous contexts, research ethics, Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and various approaches to data collection, analysis and dissemination. Notes taken by the university-based team recorded commentaries by Indigenous team members about their experiences and perceptions of research and the ways they hoped the current projects would evolve. Four years later, at the conclusion of both projects, team members on the two projects completed individual questionnaires and convened as a group to debrief their experiences of the projects in terms of lessons learned for research involving Indigenous peoples. Their commentaries at the inception and conclusion of the projects comprise a source of reflexive data on the ethical practices and challenges that shaped team members' experiences of the research.

During these inaugural project meetings, commentary by Indigenous team members yielded a litany of abuses of historical research and exploitation of Indigenous knowledge primarily by non-Indigenous investigators. This history impacted the Indigenous

team members personally as they anticipated approaching individuals in their communities in their new roles as research assistants with requests for community members to participate in data collection activities. Some described trepidation about being seen by community members as having "sold out to the Man" or "collaborating with the enemy." All expressed a strong obligation to their communities to ensure that the research was done in a respectful way and would yield real benefits. These tensions, described by one Indigenous team member as "straddling two worlds that are often in collision," were almost overwhelming for team members at various junctures in the projects and in fact appeared to be the primary impetus for the resignation of both Indigenous project coordinators initially recruited for the two projects. They were subsequently replaced by Indigenous project coordinators with more experience in community development, previous employment within non-Indigenous agencies, and a longer history of participation in post-secondary education.

In Canada, Indigenous populations have been exhaustively studied and their expectation of realizing positive returns has all but expired. A comment by one of the Indigenous research assistants has been frequently heard in discourse among Indigenous scholars: "Research is a four letter word where I come from." One team member summed up a point also heard from participants in the Indigenous Child project:

We are tired of researchers coming in and documenting all the things wrong with our communities: youth suicide, child neglect, alcohol abuse, family violence, poor nutrition, embezzlement. You would think people would want to figure out how we survived white people for so many hundreds of years. How we kept our children alive, kept our stories, kept our knowledge about how to live on the land, kept our ceremonies, kept our fires burning with hope for generations yet to come. How about some research on what's right with us? About what makes us resilient?

Indigenous groups prefer research that focuses on "strengths" in child development and child-rearing and on assets in family and community life that enable and reinforce those strengths. Many communities have made enormous strides in their cultural recovery, social organization, and development of infrastructure to support child and family well-being, including health, education and social services, Elder care, and cultural centers. When approached to explore the potential for a research partnership, the administrator in one community said he thought the people there would be favorable: "Mainly

because I think the project will make us look good! We'd like other [First Nations] communities to see what can be done and to learn from us some promising ways to go about it" (Sheldon Tetrault, Lil'wat Nation).

Team members emphasized that the projects must make a positive contribution to community partners' goals for development, recovery from colonialism, and restoration of their cultural values. They pointed out that agreeing to participate in one of the projects must clearly and directly benefit each research participant (e.g., through a gift in return for an interview, new opportunities, valued information). One team member explained the insufficiency of "indirect" benefits of participation held out by investigators as an opportunity to contribute to knowledge for the "greater good." After generations of being subjects in research while being subjected to discrimination, many Indigenous people are beyond an altruistic commitment as volunteers in research. One team member wryly characterized himself as having "come from a long line of research subjects." He went on to explain that: "A lot of us feel we've been "researched to death, with no benefit to us. Researchers come, they take our stories, take up our time, and leave. We never see any returns from what we gave."

Several comments by Indigenous Fathers Project team members reflected upon the ethics of being asked to contribute to a national-level study. One father on the team who was enthusiastic about the project for the benefits it could yield for his community asked:

Why should we contribute to knowledge in Canada? Why should Canadians know about us? I don't call myself a Canadian and neither do lots of people in my community. We will do this [research] for us, but not for them [Canadians]. (Leroy Joe, Lil'wat Nation)

Another father on the project advised:

We will ask fathers if they want to give their stories to the national project, and if they say 'no' they should still be welcomed and allowed to be part of our project [on Indigenous fathers]. It shouldn't be presented as all or none. (Ron George, University-based project advisor)

Research Process

Developing Trust

Research is not only about the generation and application of knowledge; research is also a form of social engagement with political significance. The present time

is referred to by many as the beginning of a time of healing for Indigenous people (Long & Fox, 1996). It may also be seen as a time of self-confrontation for non-Indigenous people. Researchers have conventionally tended to distance themselves from *that which is to be discovered*, positioning themselves as experts and focusing attention unilaterally towards the *subjects* to be understood. Among Indigenous people in Canada, this unidirectional gaze is no longer tolerated; rather, researchers who hope to engage with Indigenous people need to be able to account for themselves, for example, by providing details of their ancestry, family life, scholarship, and intentions, not only during initial introductions, but throughout a project. Both research projects were founded on the development and ongoing reinforcement of trusting relationships between university-based and community-based members of the research teams. "The university research team's approach to building relationships with communities by hosting a gathering to share a meal together and introduce the project demonstrated their desire to ensure the project created a positive, inviting experience." (Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

It was evident to me that Dr. Ball was using principles of traditional First Nations "welcoming practices" such as hosting us in her own home for a meal and time to get to know each other before the training began, introducing each participant and allowing time for us to find the connections between our territories and families, giving us a tour of the campus so we would have some familiarity with our surroundings, giving us gifts of resources and books for our children, providing lots of good food at our meetings and encouraging us to take left-over food home for our families or people traveling with us for the training. We also began our sessions with traditional First Nations prayers. (Brenda Pielle, Sliammon First Nation)

The prerequisite of relationships of familiarity, trust, and mutual respect can create challenges for networked or collaborative research projects. In the Indigenous projects described here, large geographic distances between communities and the university meant that face-to-face meetings had to be carefully spaced because they were expensive and disruptive to the routine responsibilities of community-based team members and administrators. Meetings with teams in the larger collaborative studies fell outside of what could reasonably be expected of community-based team members, even with financial support for travel and time. This was understood in the FIRA study, where the seven component

projects were each located in a different province. The study was designed to avoid demands for direct engagement or collaboration between community and university partners in each of the component projects. Rather, each cluster group within the FIRA project was seen as a relatively independent project, empowered to make its own decisions about whether and how to collaborate with other teams and activities within the FIRA project. It was understood at the outset that the main collaborative component among the community-campus clusters would entail the provision of interview transcripts from each project to a previously designated *thematic analysis team* based at the University of Guelph. The timing and terms governing the thematic analysis team's use of the data were negotiated at the beginning of the project. Opportunities for Indigenous Fathers Project team members to engage with the larger network were provided, but not prescribed, over the five years of the project. This arrangement worked well and avoided calling upon community partners or team members to engage with researchers or communities with whom they had no opportunity to develop relationships of familiarity and trust.

In the CHILD project, the extent and form of collaboration between the Indigenous Child project and the other nine projects were unclear at the outset of the project, preventing community partners from knowing exactly what would be expected of them. Over the years of the project, requests to collaborate became increasingly insistent and prescribed. For example, invitations were communicated from the centralized CHILD project team for community and university partners in each component project to participate in centralized meetings involving all ten project teams. These requests came with expectations to share data, disseminate early findings, disclose experiences of the research process, and consider the possibility of community site visits from other project teams. As various ideas and requests for collaboration emerged, team members on the Indigenous Child project became increasingly uncomfortable. They had been unprepared for much direct involvement in project activity beyond their own communities, and they saw themselves as accountable to their communities to explain and seek approval of all the activities involved in the research, especially those activities that involved non-Indigenous, university-based investigators with whom they had no relationship.

The idea of trusting relationships as a foundation for ethical engagement in research is easy to endorse but difficult to enact. Trusting relationships require geographic proximity, time, personal risks, funding, open communication, flexible programs of activity, and other

accommodations. This reality competes with other demands in a research project. For example, the CHILD project was funded by the federal government in part to train graduate students in research; the ten component projects of the CHILD project involved over 50 investigative team members including a large rotation of graduate students. Adding to a lack of knowledge in mainstream graduate education about Indigenous research ethics and about community-campus collaborative research, the sheer size of the collaborative CHILD project was not conducive to creating conditions for trusting social relationships to develop among the Indigenous community representatives and team members.

Further, Indigenous members of the university-based team working on the Indigenous Child project had several experiences early in the project of being the lone Indigenous person at meetings of the ten CHILD projects, which were located in unfamiliar territory in an underground university campus in an urban center far from the community partners. They reported feeling challenged about their values and concerns and unprepared to participate meaningfully in dialogue during meetings that were overwhelmingly dominated by university faculty and graduate students whom they didn't know. Their self-reports of these experiences evoked the concept of "cultural safety" discussed by scholars in Aotearoa/New Zealand working with Maori nurses (Kearns & Dyck, 1996; Papps & Ramsden, 1996), and in Aboriginal nursing (Reimer et al., 2002) and child and youth care (Ball, 2007) in Canada. Indigenous team members' reflections about their interface with a constantly changing cast of dozens of unfamiliar team members working on other parts of a large collaborative project suggest three steps towards good practice: (a) provide the conditions for Indigenous team members to experience cultural safety; (b) consider and support accountability by community-based research assistants to community stakeholders; and (c) negotiate collaborative research activities at the inception of a project. These steps will help to ensure that, when direct collaboration is required, team members have had time to negotiate understandings about activities and outputs, communicate these understandings to the bodies they represent, and develop trusting relationships with team members representing different component projects and community partners.

Institutional Ethics Guidelines and Review

Plans for the two research projects were approved at their inception by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Victoria. As well, a second-tier review

process was undertaken by an Indigenous committee within the university that applied a set of “Principles and Protocols for Research Involving Indigenous Populations” (University of Victoria, Indigenous Governance Programs, 2003). Both projects were components of larger research studies, with the first author listed as a co-investigator on the larger studies. Therefore, the research plan for the Indigenous Child project was reviewed by the REC at the University of British Columbia, where the principal investigator was a faculty member. The research plan for Indigenous Fathers project was reviewed by the REC at the University of Guelph, where the principal investigator was a faculty member. Neither of these universities had in place a specific set of guidelines or review committee for research involving Indigenous peoples. Given this lack of pre-existing protocols at these universities, it fell to the authors to explain and convince members of the other investigative teams of the importance of enacting emerging guidelines for research involving Indigenous partners.

Community Ethics Guidelines and Review

The primary tool for community partners’ approval of all aspects of the projects, including considerations about ethics, soundness of the research design, and practical logistics, was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU inscribed the involvement of Indigenous representatives in all the major phases of the research, including the purpose and plans for an investigation, the conduct of the research, the accountability of all members of an investigative team, the nature of data to be obtained from specific sources as well as the nature of data and data sources that must specifically be excluded, the jurisdiction over data regarding ownership, possession, storage, and access, and the primary decision-making over research outputs, including dissemination of knowledge yielded by a study.

Both projects began with the employment of an Indigenous project coordinator who worked alongside the non-Indigenous faculty investigator at the university. Together they developed a tentative plan for the projects, with consultation and feedback from Indigenous staff working on other community-campus partnership projects within the first author’s program of research housed at the University of Victoria (Ball, 2008). This initial step led to the creation of a draft MOU, supported by information packages about the larger collaborative research studies, including the broad goals, objectives, timelines, monetary resources, and principal team members that formed the larger collaborative

research environments for the projects. These documents were sent to the community partners for a first round of consideration and feedback. Subsequently, face-to-face meetings were held in each community to discuss, review, and revise the MOU. Participants in these meetings were invited by the community leaders with whom the university-based team had initially made contact. These meetings variously included: the First Nations Band Chief and Council, the Community Health Board, the Training, Employment, and Social Development Council, the Band Manager and staff, and the Early Childhood Program team. Following this MOU review meeting in each community, an agreement to move forward with a community-campus partnership research project was reached. A final MOU, customized for each community-campus partnership, was then signed by the faculty investigator and a designated representative of the community partner.

It was a respectful process from the onset with the university-based team initially attending a Tla’Amin Community Health Board Society meeting to present the research project and to be available for any questions that the Board or Band Council may have had regarding the project. (Laurette Bloomquist, Sliammon First Nation)

Deliberations about the MOU resulted in slight but meaningful differences in the final MOU signed by each community partner. Differences addressed several financial issues such as rates of pay for community members to be employed on the project, rates of overhead to be charged by the community partner to cover administrative expenses incurred through participation in the project, and allowances made for community-wide involvement through such events as dinners and forums. All of the communities aimed to streamline the burdens placed on them by delegating tasks and decision-making to a community member who was employed as part of the research team. All of the communities supported a wide range of dissemination activities, from summaries on community websites and in colorful brochures for community members, to articles in scholarly journals and books. However, they uniformly emphasized the need for community involvement in co-constructing or approving the general messages emanating from the projects. Dilemmas encountered in use of the MOU are addressed below.

PRE-EMPTING COMMUNITY INPUT FOR FUNDING PROPOSAL

Participation in fundamental decisions about the research plan is foundational to ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous peoples, and for community-based and partnership research in general. Yet, funding for

research depends upon a well-developed research design and funds need to begin flowing in order to finance travel for meetings with community leaders and stakeholders, as well as for employment of community members on the research team. In the current project examples, before participating in funding proposals, the first author had prior knowledge, through her ongoing program of community-campus partnership research and training programs, that the general project foci, goals, and involvement in research were priorities for many Indigenous communities in Canada. The proposals submitted to the respective funding agencies stated that the research objectives and methods were tentative and would be confirmed pending deliberations with community partners. Offsetting a concern about preempting community input by creating a draft MOU, the community bodies that participated in meetings about the MOU were unanimous in stating that they preferred to have a draft to reflect upon, rather than to start with a blank slate. Negotiations did not end with the signing of an MOU, but were perennial.

Throughout the project we were always encouraged to give input at any time during the process and in turn received full communication either by way of documents circulated for discussion and/or updates on the status of the project. (Laurette Bloomquist, Sliammon First Nation)

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MOU AS A TOOL

The MOUs proved to be invaluable tools for establishing understandings and embodying key principles for ethical conduct of research involving the Indigenous community partners. Open communication about the details of the projects, as well as points that remained ambiguous or subject to change, helped to establish trust between the university-based and community-based team members. Open communication also generated insights on both sides of the partnerships about what the community and the universities needed, wanted, and could bring to the work. Throughout both projects, community partners and university-based team members often referred to the MOU to recall or reinforce agreements. The MOUs also introduced new team members to the principles and procedures agreed upon for each community-campus partnership within the two projects.

Community Representation

Like the creation of a draft MOU as a place to start discussion among partners, a project needs to start with

some individual or group within each community. Investigators need to be mindful that no individual or body represents all the interests or points of view within a community. In the projects described here, the university-based team tried both to become aware of the individual(s)' reputation within the community and to become informed of the scope of responsibilities of individuals who described themselves as representing the community to ensure that the focus of the project was within their mandate. In the authors' experiences over a decade, projects may be proposed by non-Indigenous program staff, service providers, and administrative staff who perceive a "desperate need" but whose ideas may be out of pace or misaligned with culturally informed, community-identified development processes. Projects must be initiated or supported by individuals whom community members have entrusted, through their own community governance processes, to represent their interests.

Community-Campus Research Teams

As soon as funding was obtained for each project, research assistants were hired in the partnering communities and an Indigenous project coordinator was hired at the university. The research teams for each project were comprised of the first author, who is a non-Indigenous university-based faculty member, an Indigenous project coordinator based at the university, and one member of each partner community.

The principal university researcher did two things that were very respectful of working with First Nations communities. One was that she hired a First Nations individual to partner with her at the University of Victoria, and the other important piece was that she invited the First Nations communities to hire their own members to conduct the research within each community. (Brenda Pielle, Sliammon First Nation)

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Community-based team members were nominated by leaders in each of the partnering communities and employed on a part-time basis as research assistants. In some cases, funds flowed from the university to the community, which then contracted and paid the community-based research assistant. In some cases, the community-based research assistant was employed and paid by the university. Their participation in customized training workshops for the project, attendance at conferences, and optional enrollment in post-secondary coursework

were budgeted parts of the research plan. In this way, the research aimed to contribute to the confidence and capacity of Indigenous partners to offer direction and, ultimately, to assume control of aspects of the project.

Excellent training was provided to the community-based collaborators. This took place at the University of Victoria and Dr. Ball did a wonderful job of welcoming folks to the campus and hosting us in her setting. (Connie Wilson, Lil'wat Nation)

MUTUAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is a top priority for Indigenous people across Canada: Indigenous researchers are urgently needed to take the lead on a range of projects in all fields that will contribute to equity for Indigenous people. Partnership in research can be an opportunity to learn new skills, explore topics of interest, and network with other individuals and organizations. However, this learning is not unidirectional. Research that is premised on principles of social justice involves commitments to strengthening capacity on both sides of a partnership. Through partnerships, there is much that non-Indigenous people can learn about themselves as well as about Indigenous ways of knowing, living, and communicating. This learning can expand ideas about research, the potential roles of dominant cultural institutions in restorative social justice, and about the topic under study.

COMMUNITY-BASED TEAM MEMBERS' ROLES IN ENSURING ETHICAL PRACTICE

As community *insiders*, the community-based research assistants were well positioned to advise on research strategies that were informed, respectful, and protective. In both studies, community-based research assistants planned and conducted participant recruitment. They announced the project in their community initially through flyers, posters, pamphlets, announcements in community newsletters, and events such as community dinners and forums. They identified vulnerable individuals and groups, emotionally evocative topics, and risky or intolerable procedures. They participated in the design of procedures for informed consent and carried out consent and data collection procedures in the communities. They were better able than outsiders to collect data involving face-to-face interactions because of their familiarity with most participants. They advised on how to show appreciation to participants, and ensured that participants received copies of reports of project findings.

Providing incentives for parents and caregivers to participate in interviews such as gift certificates and child minding demonstrated an understanding of meeting the participant's needs in a meaningful way and showing appreciation for their participation. (Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

Two-Tiered Informed Consent Procedures

In the Indigenous Fathers project, informed consent addressed two levels of participation: first to take part in the Indigenous Fathers project and second to allow the data the participant generated to be made available to the thematic analysis team in the larger collaborative FIRA study. All fathers who came forward to participate in the Indigenous Fathers project agreed to contribute their questionnaire and interview data to the national study.

In the Indigenous Child project, informed consent was requested in one stage, with participants being told that the project was part of the larger CHILD project and that their participation was being requested for the entire project. In retrospect, given the ambiguity about what was being asked regarding participants' contributions to the larger CHILD project, it did not seem justified to request their consent at the level of the collaborative study concurrent with consent to participate in the Indigenous Child component. When the value of data obtained in the Indigenous Child project to the larger project began to emerge, a second stage of informed consent could have been implemented at that time. Though onerous, when the details of a project are generated over time, iterative informed consent procedures as well as iterative submissions to RECs reflect the realities of community-responsive, negotiated research.

Participants in both projects were also asked if they wished to be anonymous or if they wished to have their names and possibly their communities attached to their data file and to any verbatim quotes or summaries of their personal story that may appear in project outputs. In both projects, over half the participants preferred to be named along with the names of their communities. As Indigenous scholar Kim Anderson explains, "Naming is part of Indigenous oral tradition that calls for identifying the source of knowledge and situating knowledge with reference to particular places and cultural communities" (Anderson, personal communication, October 15, 2007).

An oral rather than written consent procedure was used at each level of consent: participants were read or

asked to read a description of the project and what was being asked of them and then were asked to tell the research team member whether they wished to accept or decline to participate. In the presence of consenting participants, a project team member signed the informed consent package to indicate that they had witnessed the participant's consent. A copy of the consent package was subsequently given to the participant. In Canada, oral consent is a fairly widely accepted alternative to signed consent, especially in research involving Indigenous peoples, where history is replete with examples of deception and the misappropriation of Indigenous peoples' signatures in dealings with mainstream institutions.

Data Collection

Data collection and analysis methods and plans for knowledge dissemination for both projects were decided through consultations with community partners. Broad outlines of the research were agreed upon in meetings with community leaders and groups identified and invited by these leaders. Details of the research procedures were developed by the community-campus research teams

Both projects involved the development and administration of original questionnaires and semi-structured interview protocols used in face-to-face interactions with community members who volunteered to participate. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed by Indigenous members of the research team. Additional data collection activities involved documentation of services for children and families in the communities. The Indigenous Fathers Project also involved analysis of national data bases to develop a demographic profile of Indigenous fathers in Canada.

MULTIPLE METHODS

Applying ethical principles for research involving Indigenous peoples does not dictate any particular method, provided the methods are decided through a consultative process and carried out respectfully. There is currently a strong preference among Indigenous researchers for conversational and story-telling approaches in research with Indigenous peoples (Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Large-scale survey research is also being carried out successfully by some Indigenous organizations (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; First Nations Centre, 2005) and Statistics Canada (in press). In both projects described here, project teams chose a mix of fairly structured data collection methods.

INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS

Notwithstanding their diversity, Indigenous cultures in Canada have some commonalities with regards to values and worldview. Traditionally, they were collectivist societies. They tend to conceive of individuals as sharing spiritually in the lives of others, both living and deceased. Children's development is discussed in holistic terms, rather than in terms of a combination of distinguishable domains as are commonly found in European-heritage models of development. Children's well-being is seen as embedded in family and community health and wellness across generations. The family, or sometimes the community, is a more culturally fitting unit of analysis rather than the child alone. Many researchers import research questions, methods and interpretive frameworks that are predicated on non-Indigenous interests, theoretical models, and research paradigms. These imports must be recognized as an intervention that may run counter to the overarching goal of recovering Indigenous knowledge and rebuilding Indigenous ways of family and community life (Stairs & Bernhard with Aboriginal Colleagues, 2002).

To illustrate, a First Nations Elder in one of the communities explained how concepts that distinguish children according to age, stage, or abilities are not meaningful and not wanted in her community.

The idea of early childhood and ideas like disabled children, or that some children have special needs and some children are gifted—these ideas don't come from us. They are not Aboriginal ideas. They come from white people, and from cities. All children have gifts and are gifts from the Creator. We don't like to box people up and separate them out. We've seen how that can be used as a way of getting rid of people, of boxing them up and shipping them out, out of the community to special schools, or what have you. Until we were forced to send our children away to [residential] school, we always kept all our children with us, and all together, in families, and we want that again. (Marie Leo, Lil'wat Nation)

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

Ethical practice with Indigenous populations relies on understanding the history of traumatic experiences among Indigenous people and taking care not to trigger traumatic memories and fear by what participants are asked to do. Questions that call up memories of childhood, school, and parenting are particularly sensitive for participants who attended Indian Residential Schools (which closed as recently as 1993). For example, in the Indigenous Fathers project, Indigenous fathers on the

project team anticipated that participating Indigenous fathers may tell their story of becoming a father for the first time. All of the fathers on the team had experienced negative impacts of government interventions that separated children from their families, and they had struggled with their own experiences of being fathered and of becoming fathers. These men were sensitive to the possibility that participants might be “triggered” or re-traumatized by memories with father figures or as fathers themselves, and were concerned to approach data collection in this inaugural study of Indigenous fatherhood cautiously. Also, they felt ill-equipped in terms of their training and the paucity of community-based services to provide substantial support to participants during or following an interview. The team decided to use two short, structured questionnaires followed by a structured, conversational interview, with all questions clearly presented as optional, and in total taking no more than one hour to complete. The research team decided to keep the interviews *upbeat* and not to ask direct questions about fathers’ problems or their previous history with their own fathers, although all fathers volunteered information about these issues. An open-ended question at the end of the interview offered fathers an opportunity to give additional personal information or comments. Similarly, the setting for group forums, interviews, or testing can be a sensitive issue. Some Indigenous adults panic at the prospect of entering a school building. In both projects, interviews with parents took place in their homes or other non-school settings.

In both projects, community-based research assistants were more able than most non-Indigenous *outside* researchers would have been to respond with genuine empathy and social support for participants who told of incidents that had been distressing. Ron George, a member of the Indigenous Fathers Project team, commented:

The project is a good example of decolonizing practice. At no time did the project barge ahead with questions just because the national study was promoting them or because of some theory. Every community has its own information needs and its own history and issues. The project respects that and is open to what fathers and communities bring up as important for us to understand.

In addition to extensive involvement by the community-based research assistant, ongoing consultation with community representatives yielded important feedback about how to focus questions and ensure respectful, sensitive data collection procedures.

The research team provided draft documents to the partners for input, emphasizing the value of community-based collaboration throughout the life of the project, including draft interview questions to ensure the questions were appropriate for our participants. (Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Indigenous team members worked with the university-based faculty to construct interpretations of findings derived from qualitative and quantitative data analyses. These interpretations were regarded as tentative until they had been discussed with members of each of the partner communities in meetings held at the university and in communities, as well as through online review of draft reports.

When Europeans arrived in North America, they claimed to ‘discover’ new lands. They soon positioned themselves as sovereign over the land now called Canada and the original inhabitants, casting Indigenous people, socially and in terms of governance, as *subjects*. Research involving Indigenous children and families has involved countless replications of this colonialist pattern, including claims to discovery and ownership of knowledge that in fact has been passed down through generations and forms part of the birthright of Indigenous children. Many social scientists have asserted their singular authority to interpret and represent Indigenous child rearing, development, and family life, often in ways that have been used to justify apprehension and placement of Indigenous children in residential schools and foster homes (Deloria, 1995). Indigenous people in Canada have joined global efforts by Indigenous peoples to advance principles governing the control of their intellectual property (Couture, 1998; Schnarch, 2004).

Dissemination

Community partners participated in reviewing, editing, and approving draft reports of findings before any form of distribution (e.g., presentation, publication). Community control of the outputs from the research projects entailed lengthy turnaround times for community review and feedback, expenses, and indeterminate outcomes. Although not typical in many research projects, these processes were expected as part of community-campus partnership research and anticipated in the MOUs governing both projects. Within the larger CHILD project, however, this critical step conflicted with expectations of a free flow of information from the

Indigenous Child project to collaborators in the larger CHILD project that had presumably been taken for granted. Expectations that outputs could flow quickly to the larger group of investigators in the CHILD project and that the university-based faculty member would routinely take the lead may be understood as part of the “usual” practice in university communities and funding agencies which privileges the university-based academic. However, requests to distribute up-to-the-moment, written progress reports of “key findings” and critical reflections of the study in progress to members of the nine other component research projects created ethical conundrums for the Indigenous Child project team.

Juggling these conflicting demands was the most difficult aspect of enacting ethical practice, as understood within the Indigenous Child project. Ultimately, priority was given to honoring commitments to community partners in the Indigenous Child project not to disseminate findings from either project until the communities had vetted them and participated in constructing interpretations and recommendations. Constant vigilance was needed to prevent premature dissemination of findings from the Indigenous Child project through the larger CHILD project to university classrooms and policy tables in which other investigators in the CHILD project were involved. At the same time, questions were raised in the larger project about whether it was ethical to withhold knowledge that was being generated in the Indigenous Child project and whether it was ethical to join a collaborative project and accept funding for a research project in which there was no guarantee that any substantive findings would be approved by community partners for dissemination. Conceived in part as a demonstration project to explore Indigenous research ethics, the university-based team of the Indigenous Child project devoted ongoing efforts to raise awareness within the larger collaborative study of the ethical principle of community involvement in data interpretation and control of dissemination. This principle is quite widely practiced in community-campus research and is becoming a more widely recognized expectation in research involving Indigenous peoples.

To sum up, the ethical position taken in the projects illustrated in this article was that research outcomes and products must be accepted as indeterminate, with the Indigenous partner making final decisions about what results will be shared within and beyond their community organization, when, by whom, and in what ways. Some might argue that true partnerships do not prejudice the interest of any one partner. A counter-argument is that within these collaborative partnerships,

the interests of the Indigenous partner organization or community take precedence over the interests of the researcher and her or his sponsoring organization. Without them, there would be no data. Valid, useful findings and the larger goal of restorative social justice can flow only with partners as active participants in generating and interpreting data and shaping plans for knowledge mobilization.

Knowledge Mobilization

Following through on the ethical principle that research must yield tangible benefits to Indigenous peoples, after the results and recommendations constructed from the research were approved by the community partners, discussion turned to approaches for mobilizing the knowledge to create positive social change. In both projects, community representatives agreed that their priority was to convey the study results to their communities as a whole. In both projects, this took the form of written reports given to participating parents, practitioners, and community leaders, as well as short summary reports distributed through the communities’ websites and in brochures. The short reports included a synopsis of findings specific to each community.

Reports were forwarded to us for dissemination to the parents of the children who took part in the process. Overall, the assessment piece is instrumental in the holistic view of early childhood development. To be aware that initially it is not always the way it appears is important. After true consultation and collaboration we are then able to better support parents and those workers who support the development of children in our communities. (Laurette Bloomquist, Sliammon First Nation)

Community partners proposed a division of labor in these undertakings. They sought support from the project to create tools such as pamphlets, newsletter articles, and slide presentations, creating efficiencies as they prepared to share project conclusions within their own communities and networks. They encouraged the university-based team members to translate the findings into policy briefs for federal and provincial agencies and to communicate findings in scholarly journals. Their goal was to secure the inclusion of Indigenous children and families in policy decisions, theories, curricula for training practitioners, and future research. Many Indigenous fathers suggested the production of a documentary DVD, as well as print resources, for Indigenous men and community-based programs, conveying “our own stories of struggle and hope in our own

words” (Bruce Edmonds, Lil’wat Nation). Several fathers also requested a follow-up project focused on training for Indigenous fathers to lead workshops for Indigenous men in the transition to fatherhood.

Project Impacts

Community response to the Indigenous Fathers project was overwhelmingly positive. While they represented a diverse group, fathers who participated shared a willingness to volunteer because they wanted to bring Indigenous fatherhood out from the shadows and illuminate the need for outreach and inclusion of fathers in programs for children and families, as well as for local and national for policy reforms. As news of the study spread, more and more Indigenous fathers initiated contact with the project team, offering to participate. Whereas the project had been funded to involve 40 fathers, it concluded with 80 fathers. The project findings and products developed to mobilize knowledge created in the project have been disseminated throughout Canada and internationally in scholarly literature, practitioner training curricula, a community program toolkit, and resources for Indigenous men.

Community response to the Indigenous Child project was more qualified. As described, several challenges were encountered during the process, and some disappointment was expressed about the outcome. Although not an explicit goal of the project, some community leaders had entered into the project hoping that the project would lay the groundwork for developing a new tool for assessing Indigenous children using Indigenous knowledge of child development. It was bittersweet to accept the valuable insights gained in the project about the heterogeneity among community members with respect to goals for children’s development and perspectives on the roles of formal assessment tools. Also, within two partner communities, professionals and parents diverged in their views.

The experience as a community partner brought to light the views of the families being served in our community regarding screening and assessments, as the project provided an organized means for learning what those views are. Participating as a community partner provided a tangible learning experience that cannot be achieved if just reading a research report. (Corrine Sagmeister, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

Consistent with community and campus partners’ goals for the project, knowledge created from the project is beginning to find its way into policy dialogues and

new projects to advance training in culturally safe practices of screening and assessing Indigenous children and in research.

Additional Challenges

Significant differences were experienced within the two projects with respect to the effort required to ensure a “good” experience for all involved. The Indigenous Fathers project was much less challenging than the Indigenous Child project for three reasons: (a) the subject matter; (b) the clarity of expectations at the inception of the partnerships for involvement in the larger collaborative studies; and (c) the extent of direct engagement of the project team at a community versus individual level. These challenges are discussed below.

First, Indigenous fathers are an under-recognized population with almost no previous research or programmatic attention. Indigenous fathers were extremely pleased to be asked to participate in the project and share what they were learning about fatherhood. In contrast, Indigenous children have been the focus of intense scrutiny by child welfare agencies, schools, and criminal justice agencies. Indigenous communities are acutely aware of the need to protect them and to prevent further incursions into community control of Indigenous children and families.

Second, as discussed, the embedding of the projects within larger collaborative research studies raised new challenges for ethics review, informed consent, relationship building, and control of intellectual products. Clear expectations are a key to establishing trust and to supporting Indigenous community team members’ ability to report back to their communities. In the Indigenous Child project, the nature, extent, and timing of involvement by the Indigenous project team with the other projects within the collaborative study were opaque at the outset, whereas these aspects were clear and unchanging in the Indigenous Fathers project. Ultimately, expectations for the Indigenous project team to engage with the larger group of investigators and community partners became much greater in the Indigenous Child project than in the Indigenous Fathers project. Members of the Indigenous Child project team were not prepared for this, and the evolving expectations were presented as non-negotiable and as if they should have been anticipated implicitly as part of established practices in mainstream academic research.

Third, the Indigenous Child project involved a more direct and extensive community-level engagement of the university-based team with the community partners. In contrast, in the Indigenous Fathers project, once MOUs

were signed, the project team engaged almost exclusively with individual fathers until the final stage of the project, which involved review, feedback, and approval of data interpretations. Greater community-level involvement occasions more practical negotiations involving finances, among other things. Financial transactions often signify trust and recognition. Yet, in the bureaucracy of a post-secondary institution, policies, procedures, and timing governing matters such as travel advances, expense claim reimbursements, payroll time sheets, honoraria for Elders, cheque disbursements, and food purchases can seem labyrinthine and protracted even to the most conditioned employees. Procedural ambiguities and the slow pace of resolving some practical matters created tensions throughout the Indigenous Child project. These tensions needed to be understood within the context of Indigenous research assistants and leaders casting their lot with a major non-Indigenous organization, in some cases, for the first time.

Addressing these challenges required: (a) recognition of historical and ongoing colonialism that can shape how expectations, performance criteria, and mundane procedural matters can be interpreted by Indigenous team members and communities; (b) frank discussion between community and university partners as issues arose; (c) good faith efforts to learn about one another's work ecologies and to measure responses based on these understandings; and (d) humor. Across all critical and quotidian events, the MOU was an invaluable tool especially when tensions arose about roles, responsibilities, and finances.

Post-Project Reflexive Data

At the conclusion of both projects, team members and community signatories to the MOU were asked to provide their evaluation of how the project was conducted. Many of their comments indicated that they thought the projects were timely and had been done "in a good way."

The research was done in a respectful way that felt safe and enjoyable for the fathers who participated. The focus on fathers was timely and everyone in the community appreciated how several community groups involved with the men were consulted and asked for input. The results are meaningful and the resources are going to benefit fathers and people who work with them. (Rob Koepke, Terrace Dad's Group)

Tla'Amin Community Health Services Society enjoyed its participation with the Indigenous Child research project. We were impressed with various aspects of the

process followed in the way the research was conducted. (Brenda Pielle, Sliammon First Nation)

Several comments, such as those below, evoked the concept of cultural safety mentioned earlier.

This project was very participant directed and owned. There was care taken to provide comfortable, safe forums for fathers to share their views, opinions, and issues. The whole project used ethical methodologies. (Joyce Schneider, Prince George Aboriginal Head Start Program)

Being a part of a research project that respects and appreciates the values, manner and customs of our people helped me to appreciate and enjoy research with an open mind and see that research does not have to be an intimidating and daunting undertaking. (Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

Partners were particularly emphatic about the value of community participation in the research as a benefit in itself to the community, as one community administrator commented:

We are working hard in Lil'wat Nation to develop our human resources and to create strong programs for children, and I think that having the interest from the university in what we're doing here is very positive. It holds a mirror up for everyone to see what we're doing, and it amplifies the excitement. We want to retain the staff we have helped to develop and keep qualified people working in our community, and so for them to hear from researchers that other people are interested in what is going on here, and that we are doing things here that can be useful for others to learn from, that's good. It makes a few people here who might have thought about looking for work in a bigger centre or in the city realize that this is a really good place to work. And especially in the way that the research is being done—developing long-term relationships, making sure everyone knows what they are agreeing to, and ensuring benefit to the community itself, and not just beyond the community—there is a mutuality and respect that I think is exemplary. (Sheldon Tetrault, Lil'wat Nation)

Indigenous team members' understandings of research ethics cast the need for articulating and demonstrating ethical principles in research involving Indigenous peoples within a historical, post-colonial, social justice agenda that requires a long-term commitment. For example, an Indigenous father who worked

as a community-based research assistant commented on how Indigenous fathers' voices have rarely been heard in research or in community programs and how the project offered that opportunity to listen to Indigenous fathers. Interestingly, this was voiced by the same father quoted earlier who questioned the need for Canadians to learn about Indigenous fathers.

I think it's really important that Indigenous people are heard in this survey and I was honored to be asked to take part in this. It was such a touching and moving research project. To hear the stories, glad or sad. It was so awesome. The more that we do this, the more that we work on hearing the voices of Indigenous males and other males in Canada then the government will get a better understanding of what it is they're dealing with . . . instead of telling us what we need to be doing, asking us what we, you know asking for input from us and getting out of what all the men we talked to were saying. Put it all together and you're going to get some answers, and programs and services are going to be put together in a way that's going to come from down in the ground here. (Leroy Joe, Lil'wat Nation)

Doing Research in a Good Way

Researchers are knowledge brokers. Researchers have the power to collect information and produce meanings which can support or undermine values, practices, and people, and to construct legitimating arguments for or against ideas, theories, policies, or practices. This power needs to be shifted to the communities that are the partners in research and the focal point for data collection. Community-campus partnerships are a promising approach to ensuring that topics under investigation are identified as priorities by Indigenous people, reinforce Indigenous values, are informed by Indigenous frames of reference, and yield benefits to Indigenous individuals and groups. Rather than a unidirectional gaze by non-Indigenous researchers upon Indigenous children and families as subjects, the projects described here illustrate a bilateral process of mutual learning, sharing, and knowledge production.

This article illustrates approaches to ethical principles of inclusion, reciprocity, and relevance in partnership research with Indigenous communities. These efforts contribute to creating a post-colonial era in Canada. However, there are hundreds of culturally distinct First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities and urban Aboriginal groups in Canada with tremendous variations among

them in terms of history, economic and social conditions, and development goals. Indigenous people do not subscribe to a singular framework for research ethics, and there are no universal criteria for evaluating the performance of ethical research. An over-generalized, *pan-Indigenous* set of practices for enacting ethics in research involving Indigenous peoples is to be avoided; rather, each investigation should begin with relationship building and dialogue about how to proceed "in a good way." In the two projects illustrated in this article, a key was the attitude that university faculty, community leaders, and project team members brought to the work, including a willingness and ability to listen to the concerns, needs, and goals of all involved. The greatest challenge within these negotiated partnerships is the need to remain open to emergent opportunities, needs, and concerns, while also establishing a sufficiently clear and stable structure so that community partners and research participants know what they are agreeing to and do not feel blindsided by unexpected objectives or demands. Strong relationships of trust, nurtured from the inception of a project, are the backbone for ongoing negotiation of ethical practice in partnership research. Relationships developed through true partnerships, filled with warmth, humor, and genuine concern for the well-being of Indigenous children and families, do not end when the research project is complete.

It was a pleasure to participate in the Indigenous Child project and we appreciate the continued relationship with members of the research team.
(Audrey Wilson, Laichwiltach Family Life Society)

Promising Practices and Implications for Education

Environments for research with children, and with different cultural groups, are always complex. They involve multiple stakeholders including individuals, families, communities, institutions, funding agencies, and other organizations, as well as multiple, sometimes competing, agendas. There are always practical constraints surrounding time, money, other resources, capacities, language barriers, and locations. It is beyond the scope of this article to address the many challenging situations that invariably arise in research with children or in cross-cultural research. The learning points offered below are intended as much to stimulate discussion as to guide research projects. The overall goal is to strengthen all our capacities to engage in research with integrity and respect as allies in co-creating knowledge that is socially useful.

1. An important aspect of ethical research practice is the choice of values, assumptions and concepts that underlie and motivate research questions and methods. Indigenous scholars have been vocal about the need for researchers to consult with Indigenous people about whether the research questions hold meaning, whether plans for carrying out data collection follow cultural protocols and resonate with Indigenous ways of knowing, whether the measurement tools are culturally fair and transparent, and what frames of reference will be used to interpret and communicate results.
2. Consultation with community partners about ethical issues as they arise will most often yield mutually satisfactory resolutions.
3. Researchers who wish to address issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples need to become familiar with the socio-political history of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.
4. Non-Indigenous researchers need to acknowledge that as members of the currently dominant culture and as researchers—typically with funding and university positions—they are in positions of power. The potential to oppress and exploit Indigenous people must be a matter of concern and deliberate efforts should be made to level the playing field in negotiating research relationships.
5. An invitation or request by an Indigenous group provides a good context for exploring a research engagement. Alternatively, the researcher needs to seek a process of introductions and consultations with appropriate Indigenous individuals, communities, or organizations.
6. Cultural literacy is prerequisite to establishing a partnership with an Indigenous organization or community. Researchers need to observe cultural protocols when approaching an Indigenous organization or community to explore their interest in a research project. Indigenous scholars and community-based agencies are often able to facilitate connections between prospective researchers and groups of interest.
7. Researchers need to recognize that relationships of trust are the foundation for ethical research practice, and these relationships require substantial amounts of time, self-disclosure, and care as discussions about research get underway. Both community and academic partners must define who they are, the scope and nature of their authority over knowledge sources and methodologies, their purposes, plans, and expectations in relation to the project.
8. The researcher must be prepared to show specifically how Indigenous people will benefit substantially within the foreseeable future. Demonstrations of benefit must be conveyed to research participants, and possibly to their community as a whole, in terms that are readily understandable and can be directly experienced (e.g., report, presentation, program innovation, material improvement). A process must be made available for research participants to provide feedback and request changes to research outputs.
9. Community-involving research is not a panacea. Researchers who work successfully with Indigenous communities tend to have an open-ended and flexible program of research that can shift in focus to accommodate emerging needs and requests from community partners. This grounding in community contrasts with researchers who prefer to pursue opportunities for hypothesis testing within a pre-conceived and tightly structured program of research.
10. Memoranda of Understanding reflect negotiations about how Indigenous representatives will be involved alongside academic team members in nearly all project activities.
11. As part of the collaborative process, the researcher should take responsibility for learning and co-developing research skills with members of the partnering community or organization.
12. The people participating have an absolute right to exercise control over the information they have volunteered. This includes the right to control it, to restrict access to it, or to withdraw part or all of the information from the actual research project findings. It is the researcher's responsibility to clarify with research participants how this control might be exercised.
13. Researchers must ensure protection of Indigenous participants and communities including as far as possible protection from any negative impact that might result from the findings of the project being made public. This may include placing a moratorium on the research material for an agreed period of time or keeping certain material confidential.
14. The findings should be presented in a format that is readily understandable and accessible to Indigenous stakeholders, including those who participated in the research. This may include oral, written, and visual forms of presentation to Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.
15. Co-presenting and co-authoring research reports are widely accepted approaches for disseminating findings. An Indigenous collaborator can discuss the significance and applications of research findings with reference to their intimate personal knowledge of the contexts of culture, community, governance, and politics of the subject matter.

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Authors' Biographical Sketches

Jessica Ball was the university-based faculty investigator in the two projects described in this article. She is Canadian of English-Irish ancestry. Jessica holds graduate degrees in clinical psychology and public health, and is Professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria in Victoria, Canada. Her national and international research and practice explore community engagement in the development of culturally-based programs to support children's health and development within the contexts of their families and broader ecologies.

Pauline Janyst was the university-based coordinator of the Indigenous Child project described in this article. She is of Kwakiutl ancestry and belongs to the Da'naxda'xe First Nation on Harbledown Island, British Columbia. Pauline holds a graduate degree in Leadership. She has managed several community-based research projects involving Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, and provides consultation and advisory services to a large number of community-based, provincial and federal programs serving Indigenous children and families.

Endnote

¹Quotes are from participants in the projects, some of whom wished to be quoted by name. All those who are quoted were interviewed in 2003 and 2005. Those who are not named preferred to remain anonymous.

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