WISE PRACTICES

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

When youth suicide is understood in a colonial context, the narrative about how to prevent suicide shifts from an exclusive focus on individual problems, to one that CENTRES COMMUNITY STRENGTH AND CAPACITY in the face of oppressive policies and conditions (Alcantara & Gone, 2007; Hacket, Feeny, & Tompa, 2016; Isbister-Bear, Hatala, & Sjoblom, 2017).

Values associated with family, community, and cultural connectedness are significant in making this shift (Barker, Goodman, & DeBeck, 2017; Crooks et al, 2017). One way family and social connections are enhanced is through oral and storytelling traditions. Equally important is CONNECTION TO THE LAND and territory, which is not understood as instrumental or contextual, but as interpersonal, political, spiritual, and intimate (de Finney, 2017; Isbister-Bear, Hatala, & Sjoblom, 2017). The connection to the land extends to food, hunting, sustenance, spirituality, ceremony, mental health, healing, and enhances family relationships (Kirmayer, Sehdev, Whitley, Dandeneau, & Isaac, 2009). Loss of land must be recognized as a significant contributor to ongoing experiences of loss and oppression (Fast & Collin-Vezina, 2010).

The point has also been made by many authors that changing the narrative is not achieved by simply adding Indigenous practices and teachings to existing non-Indigenous systems, frameworks, and methods. Rather, it requires that INDIGENOUS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS, PROTOCOLS, PRIORITIES, AND PROCESSES transform the design *and* implementation of research, policy, and practice as it relates to life promotion (Bird-Naytowhow, et al, 2017; Chino & DeBruyn, 2006; Isbister-Bear, Hatala, & Sjoblom, 2017).

Rather than focusing on the alleviation of individual symptoms of depression, suicide prevention informed by Indigenous knowledge and wisdom would instead focus on ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS (Wexler, 2014; Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Chase, & Altschul, 2011). This opens up a range of potential collective actions which serve as important life promotion functions. Gone (2013) makes a strong case for "culture-as-treatment" (p. 697). For example, de Finney (2017) points to body and land sovereignty; and Gerlach, Browne, and Elliot (2017) recommend concrete policy changes that centre culture

PARTICIPANT VOICES

KEISHA PAULMARTIN (ATTIWAPISKAT, ON):

Some people are embarrassed to say 'I'm from Attiwapiskat' because of the media coverage. But I want them to say ' Yeah, I'm from Attiwapiskat' and be proud of it.

DR. SARAH WEIBE (VANCOUVER, BC):

That was the starting point for me, saying, 'this is how the community is being portrayed. What are we missing?' And that's when we started producing images.

KEISHA PAULMARTIN (ATTIWAPISKAT, ON):

It was just to show people how beautiful it was there. I think it was good for the people who participated because they got to express themselves in the way *they* wanted to with the photos *they* wanted to show. It was kind of therapeutic for them.

and equity. LaFrance and Nichols (2017) offer an Indigenous evaluation framework to support these and others' efforts to measure success using a framework that is congruent with Indigenous ways of being.

There is now a compelling array of community-based, culturally grounded initiatives that, taken together, CHANGE THE NARRATIVE about First Nations youth suicide to one of HOPE, RESISTANCE, and RESILIENCE (Hatala et al, 2017; Snowshoe et al, 2017). The Assembly of First Nations (n.d.) has documented many of these initiatives, from across Canada. Its introduction states: "This resource is the beginning of the AFN's efforts to work with communities in sharing stories of prevention and resiliency. It highlights examples of thriving collaborative, community-based, suicide prevention projects that are funded through the National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS). These projects remind us that our chances of success are greater when we work together, ENGAGE OUR YOUTH, and root our healing approaches in our community's knowledge" (p. 1).

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