Promoting Resilience & Well-Being through an Outdoor Adventure Leadership Experience Designed for First Nations Youth

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PURPOSE & RATIONALE
Purpose

To develop, implement, and evaluate the impact of a 10-day outdoor adventure leadership experience (intervention) on the resilience and well-being of youth from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve.
Definitions

**OALE**
- Existing leadership program & OB-type adventure experience...
  
  ... developed & refined

**Resilience**
- The development of positive protective factors in the face of adversity, risk and negative experiences.

**Well-Being**
- ... next slide
Well-Being

SPIRITUAL
PHYSICAL

REHABILITATION

PROMOTION

EMOTIONAL
MENTAL

Elderly

Adults

Youth

Infants & Children

Purpose
Process
Findings
Implications

Holistic

Relational

Integrated

Community

Harmony

Growth

Balance

Nature

(Adapted from the Aboriginal Healing & Wellness Strategy of Ontario, 2008)
Rationale

Why OALE?
- Holistic Intervention
- Wikwemikong Prior Experience
- Efficacy: positive outcomes

Why R&WB?
- Holistic Approach
- Wikwemikong Health Priority
- Efficacy: unknown?
“There is a remarkable similarity between the anticipated outcomes from outdoor adventure programming and characteristics of resilient individuals.”

Resilience scholar Michael Ungar, 2005
PROCESS & APPROACH
Evolution of Community-Based Research (Wikwemikong & LU)

**Purpose**

- Elite Aboriginal Athletes
  - 2003-06

**Process**

- Youth Sport Participation
  - 2006-09

**Findings**

- Resilience & Well-Being

**Implications**

- Outdoor Leadership Training Program
  - 2008-10
## Research Design (Creswell, 2009)

<table>
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<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>CBPAR</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Phases</td>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>What is a culturally relevant OALE?</td>
<td>Does the OALE intervention promote resilience &amp; well-being for WUIR adolescents?</td>
<td>How does the OALE promote resilience and well-being?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1 - CBPAR

Question: 1. What is a culturally Relevant OALE?

Data Source:
- Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)
  - 17 Collaborative sessions (meetings, training, presentations)
  - 3 Community Research Steering Committee meetings
  - 2 Targeted Focus Group meetings

Analysis:
- Indigenous Coding / Meaning Units
- Categorization: Themes & Sub-themes
- Program Development & Implementation
Phase 2 - Quantitative

Question:
2. Does OALE promote resilience well-being for Aboriginal youth in one region of Northeastern Ontario?

Data Source:
- Self-report Questionnaire (9 - scales / 4 dimensions / 78 items)
- Pre & Post (4wk) administration
- 14-Item Resilience Scale (RS-14) - primary outcome

Preliminary Analysis: *MS Excel 8.0 (Mac) & SPSS 17.0*
- Characteristics of sample (n = 43)
- 35 complete data sets
- Paired T-test (two tail) on RS-14
Phase 3 - Qualitative

Question:
3. How does OALE promote resilience & well-being?

Data Source:
- Participant interviews (Key Informants)
- Daily Focus Groups & Talking Circles
- Participant Journals
- Film / Video / PI Journal / Observations

Preliminary Analysis:
- 14 Participant Interviews
- Principles of Analytic Deduction (Patton, 2002)
- Indigenous Coding / Meaning Units / Themes
FINDINGS
**Phase 1: OALE Program (2009)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 3 Goals</td>
<td>• 2 Weeks Staff Training (June)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 6 Leadership Training Modules</td>
<td>• 3 Canoe Expeditions (2 in July; 1 in August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 Implementation Phases</td>
<td>• 6 Travel Groups (2 Groups per Expedition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 14 Programming Principles</td>
<td>• 43 Youth Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 7 Grandfather Teachings</td>
<td>• 1 Celebration Pow Wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10 day canoe expedition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1: OALE Route
**Phase 2: Resilience Scale Scores (RS-14)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Sample Size (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-OALE Score</td>
<td>72.7*</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>52-95</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-OALE (4 wks)</td>
<td>76.1*</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>41-96</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS-14 Norms</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>35-98</td>
<td>782</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: RS-14 Norms are compiled from The Resilience Scale User’s Guide (Wagnild, 2009).*

*p = 0.028 (two tailed T-Test)*
Phase 3: Results Based on Characteristics of Resilience
(Wagnild & Young, 1990, 1993; Wagnild, 2009)

Self-Reliance (35 MU’s)
Meaning (103 MU’s)
Equanimity (30 MU’s)
Perseverance (42 MU’s)
Existential Aloneness (4 MU’s)
Self-Reliance

“I was thinking that it changes our point of view and how things go. You cannot rely on others. You have to help yourself and then you can help others.”

(male, day 5)
Meaning

“But basically I found the importance of life. I am proud of who I am and where I come from. I love it out here, although it’s tough. Tomorrow I am going home but I have got a lot of friends and family that need to hear about the trip. I also want to get on the internet and look up Wikwemikong and learn everything about it.”

(female, day 8)
Equanimity

“…or the third night… because that’s when the bugs were bothering me and I was thinking holy ####, I just feel like sitting down relaxing, and it’s kind of hard to sleep because I’m used to sleep with a fan, and I think it was two days ago from now, that’s when I started to sleep good and then last night was good. I was actually having a good nap. So, I’m just starting to enjoy it.”

(male, day 5)
Perseverance

“When I felt tired from paddling, I wanted to stop there but I just kept paddling.”
(male, day 5)

“I feel really determined to finish this trip.”
(female, day 6)
Existential Aloneness

“The solo because I like having time to myself. I like listening to the waves and the sounds of the birds. I had a lot of time to think of stuff. Time just flew by for me. I realized that I love writing and I didn’t used to like it before but writing down my experiences and my thoughts and the importance of life. I just love writing about it.”

(female, day 8)
Phase 2 & 3: Does it work?  
*The research says...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Scale (RS-14)</td>
<td>Quantitative Quasi-Experimental</td>
<td>3.4 pt increase (p = 0.028)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Interviews (n=14)</td>
<td>Qualitative Analytic Deduction</td>
<td>4 of 5 resilience characteristics confirmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Phase 2 & 3: Does it work?

*The people say...*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Participants</strong></td>
<td>One-on-One <em>Field Interviews</em></td>
<td><strong>Yes,</strong> most youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Leaders</strong></td>
<td>Focus Group <em>End of Season</em></td>
<td><strong>Yes,</strong> unanimous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 of 14 acknowledged personal improvement in R&amp;WB</td>
<td>13 of 13 agreed that the OALE had a positive impact on youth R&amp;WB</td>
<td></td>
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Significance & Relevance

- At–risk population
- Mental Health Priority
- Holistic Approach
- Community Driven
- Documentary Video (2010)
- Program Evaluation: Comprehensive Research Design
Limitations

- Preliminary Analysis / Small Sample / No Control Group
- Cultural Bias
- Non-Aboriginal Frameworks
  - OB-type OALE intervention
  - 5 characteristics of resilience
- Short-term focus
- Generalizability
OALE - Into the future...

- Ongoing research
- Secure long-term funding
- Enhanced staff training
- Involve clinicians
- Expand to other clinical populations
- Partner with other communities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Canoe Expeditions</th>
<th>Number of Travel Groups</th>
<th>Number of Youth Participants</th>
<th>Special Trip Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1 JR. OALE trip (3 day – 32 km trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10 participants (8- 10 years old)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“On day 3, I told myself that I was going to be here for seven more days. I have to do what I have got to do. So I started thinking more positive about the trip. I remembered how my mom wanted me to learn my inner strengths. So I thought about my mom and she is my inspiration. I was thinking that if I wanted to go home, what would she think about it? So just thinking about that put me in a better mood. I made myself be happy and it was a nice day outside. So I bathed in the water. I felt clean and fresh. I had a whole new attitude. After I woke up, I changed, put the tents away, and cleaned up a lot. I remember the canoe ride and we went through a bunch of rapids. We fell in the water, got wet, and went through a bunch of storms. It was hot, it was cold, and we got some rain. After all that, I thought ‘wow, this is canoeing’. I enjoyed it. I loved it.”

(female, 15 yrs)
Collaboration Support

School of Rural & Northern Health

Laurentian University
Université Laurentienne
Collaborative Research Team

Rita Corbiere, Elder and Retired School Teacher

Lawrence Enosse, Program Manager, Wassa Naabin Youth Services Centre

Daniel Manitowabi, Mental Health Clinician, M’Chigeeng Mental Health Services

Duke Peltier, Coordinator Sport and Recreation Program and Elected Member of Council

Brenda Restoule PhD, Psychologist serving in Northeast Ontario, and Vice-Chair of the Native Mental Health Association of Canada

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Keith Russell PhD, Associate Professor in the Department of Physical Education, Health and Recreation at Western Washington University and Director of the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Research Cooperative

Robert Schinke DEd, Associate Professor in the School of Human Kinetics and Chair of the Research Ethics Board at Laurentian University

Nancy Young PhD, Canadian Research Chair and Professor in the School of Rural and Northern Health at Laurentian University
Miigwetch
Thank You
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DETAILED RESEARCH REPORT
AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST