Culturally Appropriate Care— A Multicultural Task: Assessing the Needs of Inuit Youth in the Care of Child Welfare Services

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ABSTRACT

Over 30% of children in Nunavik have been reported to child welfare services by professionals, community workers, and/or community members due to possible need of protection, according to a recent report that identified important gaps in the system of care for Inuit youth in Nunavik (Sirois & Montminy, 2010). The objective of this qualitative study was to assess the perspectives of various actors regarding the needs of Inuit youth living in a residential facility in Montreal. Our methods included non-participant observation; semi-structured interviews with youth, residential staff, therapists, and a culture broker; and video production with youth. Adopting a systemic approach, we discuss how the various perspectives converge and diverge and the place that is given to culture in the discourses. We conclude that developing culturally appropriate care for Inuit youth in the care of child welfare is a multicultural task, as it involves multiple groups of individuals influenced by their professional and personal cultures. We suggest the merging of perspectives as a potential for creating innovative practices that are culturally sensitive.

KEYWORDS

Inuit well-being, youth, child welfare, cultural competence, needs assessment

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INTRODUCTION

Over 30% of children in Nunavik have been reported to child welfare agencies. Professionals, community workers, and/or community members have identified these children as needing assessment to determine whether their safety or development is being compromised (Sirois & Montminy, 2010). The number of reports kept for evaluation by the Nunavik child welfare system doubled between 2006 and 2010 (Sirois & Montminy, 2010). Because of housing shortages and lack of specialized resources, the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services requested funds from the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services to open a residential program in Montreal for Inuit youth 12–18 years of age. The goal was to develop a culturally and clinically adapted program that would eventually be reintegrated within Nunavik.

Out-of-community placement is common among Aboriginal youth across Canada, including Inuit youth from northern Canada. Out-of-home placements have been criticized for being a colonialist approach with potential long-term and devastating consequences on communities and cultures (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005; Carriere & Richardson, 2009; Cross, Earle, Echo-Hawk Solie, & Manness, 2000; Lafrance & Bastien, 2007; Libesman, 2004). Some have compared the current welfare system to the residential school system of the 20th century, an experience that has left marks on generations of Aboriginal families—including Inuit families—partly by breaking the intergenerational transmission of parenting skills and culture (Bennett & Blackstock, 2002). The question therefore becomes how to develop services that are both culturally safe and clinically appropriate for high-risk Inuit youth in order to maximize individual and collective well-being in a setting where non-Inuit individuals and organizations can offer both the infrastructure and human resources required for such programs. Former Auditor General Sheila Fraser highlights the lack of culturally adapted services for Aboriginal youth in Canada (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2011). A priority recommendation is to determine the needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth and define culturally appropriate care.

This study aimed to assess the needs of Inuit youth living in an out-of-community residential facility, by adopting a systemic and cultural perspective in both the data collection and analysis. The needs analysis focused on the similarities and differences in the perceptions of various actors—educators, therapists, cultural broker (an Inuit educator), and youth—as well as on the place given to culture in their discussions. The project is meant to guide stakeholders directly or indirectly impacted by child welfare agency practices to help determine how best to address the needs of at-risk youth in Nunavik.

METHODS

Residence

Due to a lack of foster homes and specialized social and health services in the northern region of Quebec, child welfare services in Nunavik have struggled to offer stable placements to high-risk youth. Youth may be transitioned to out-of-community placements when in-community placement is not possible.

In 2010, a residence was developed with the goal of offering clinically relevant and culturally appropriate care to Inuit youth presenting high-risk behaviours, including alcohol and drug use, suicidal thoughts or attempts, and delinquency. The program was created in an urban area due to the lack of infrastructure and human resources in the more rural northern region of Quebec. The program was meant as a pilot project that would be transferred to the north once a suitable building was constructed.

The residence was developed specifically for adolescents aged 12 to 18. Although a few placements were done on a voluntary basis, most were court-ordered (for more information, see Fraser, Vachon, Arauz, Rousseau, & Kirmayer, 2012). Parents and family members were involved in decision-making and interactions with the residence to varying degrees, depending on the reasons for the placements.

The rehabilitative residential program was developed by non-Inuit individuals. In the initial months of the program, an Inuit Elder and an Inuit educator were invited to give feedback on program development and implementation. During the first nine months of the program, the Elder participated in activities on the boys' unit and offered weekly sessions of storytelling and discussing the Inuit way of life. The Inuit educator worked mainly on the girls' unit, offering sewing classes, a "girls' talk" activity with discussions about the experience of being an Inuit girl/woman, and traditional cooking. The educator also helped staff with translation, and youths often asked for one-on-one time with her. All other educators were non-Inuit. Educators were responsible for most of the youths' care throughout their stay, facilitating activities and accompanying them throughout the day.

The program directors adopted the Circle of Courage as the guiding philosophy for the residence (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990). The authors of this philosophy describe it as a "model of youth empowerment supported by contemporary research, the heritage of early youth work pioneers and Native philosophies of child care" (Reclaiming Youth International, n.d.). It is meant to foster four core values: courage, mastery, independence, and generosity. This model was chosen by the program directors for two main reasons: 1) it incorporates elements of Aboriginal cultures, and 2) it was being piloted in other child welfare programs in the region. The residence was hosted and supported by a psychoeducational organization. In Quebec, psychoeducation is a profession and an approach that views difficult behaviours as a contextual experience. Rehabilitative services focus on helping youth in daily life routines and activities through shared experiences. The psychoeducational model encourages the use of highly structured schedules with a variety of school, clinical, cultural, leisure, and routine activities including wake-up time, meals, and getting ready for bed (Gendreau, 2001; Renou, 2005). Youth must take part in all planned activities and must abide by the residence's rules, with disciplinary measures taken when necessary.

Procedure

The primary author of this paper was hired as a research consultant to design and supervise a program quality assessment. The methods were developed and discussed with the three partners involved: the residential managers, the agency involved in program development, and the regional health administrators. The administrators made final decisions regarding the methods used. Qualitative interviewing methods were chosen to obtain in-depth information on multiple issues and to allow for flexibility of the themes discussed as a function of the interviewees' perceptions. Another benefit was that methods appealed more to the youths in residence who were uncomfortable with questionnaires that they often felt were tedious and difficult to understand.

The primary author and two assistants took part in ethnographic observations between January 2010 and August 2011. Data collection and interviews took place between May 2010 and August 2011. The primary author and her team analyzed data for internal quality assurance purposes. They presented results to the program directors, the interviewees, the regional health administrators, and the Regional Partnership Committee (comprised of Inuit representatives from Nunavik institutions and organizations).

The regional health board and the Research Ethics Committee at the Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec, gave approval to further analyze and publish the results of the study. Consent was obtained from the regional health board and the residential program. It was not possible to obtain consent retroactively from youths and for this reason no direct quotations from youths are cited in this paper.

Data

Professionals' perceptions of youths' needs: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a) six educators; b) two therapists,

specifically an art therapist and a psychologist; and c) the Inuit educator/cultural broker who facilitated all cultural activities. Interviews were approximately 45 minutes long and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The interviews covered a series of questions related to youth, the program overall, how the program was developed, and how the program met or did not meet the needs of youth.

Youths' perceptions of their own needs: The Inuit educator/cultural broker interviewed six youths using a semi-structured interview protocol. Interviews were conducted in a room outside of the units on campus with four girls and two boys; each met separately for approximately one hour. The interview covered subjects such as previous placements, boredom, suicidal ideations, aspirations, and spirituality. Interviews were conducted in both English and Inuktitut, with English being the primary language. They were recorded and transcribed.

Videos about youths' experience in placement were produced with seven girls and six boys. A single youth declined to participate. Youths made the videos in groups of two, except for one girl who was new to the residence and did the video alone with the research assistant. Facilitators asked youth volunteers to film each other talking about the residential centre and showing their experience on campus. The goal of this activity was to better understand youths' feelings about the placement, what they enjoy, and what they would like to see changed. Facilitators were present during the filming and would ask questions to help guide the activity.

Ethnography

We used an ethnographic approach for this study that involved many hours of participation in regular activities on residence floors with youths and staff. The main researcher and two research assistants took part in routine activities with the youths (e.g., sewing, girls' talk group, activity centre, smoking breaks) as well as team meetings. The research team kept detailed records of observations, decisions, and reflections about youths' experience of placement, clinical practices, and organization of care throughout the evaluation process. The main researcher also took part in various administrative activities, including weekly program development meetings and clinical discussions.

Data analysis

All data was transcribed and read by research assistants and the lead researchers. A research assistant and the primary author (S.F.) performed thematic inductive analyses (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006, Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In thematic analysis, one looks for emerging patterns of themes within the gathered data. Inductive approaches are driven by the data rather than by theory, with the main focus on the perceptions or experiences of the participants.

All data was read an initial time during which all thoughts and observed patterns were highlighted, allowing for an emergence of insights and interpretations. We then used the observed patterns to generate initial codes by organizing the material according to the groups of actors (educators, therapists, cultural broker, youths, external observers). At this step, also known as open coding, multiple in-depth discussions took place to define an extensive set of codes that emerged from the data. The third phase, axial coding, involved grouping specific codes under more general themes to document youths' needs. Transcripts were reread to establish whether these broader concepts encompassed the more exhaustive codes developed in early phases. We then defined all categories and linked emerging themes with significant extracts. The sixth step consisted of relating emerging themes with the literature on the subject, which was done by making sense of the emerging data in relation to the contexts and experiences of Inuit youth and the professionals working with them. The final four codes that emerged in this final step are developed in the discussion of this paper.

Because the residence was undergoing important structural changes, it was only possible to return to the cultural broker and one therapist to validate findings. Not being able to validate the findings from other participants is a limitation to be considered.

RESULTS

Educators

During interviews, educators consistently reported that these youths required attention, respect, and being responsible or being held accountable for their decisions and actions:

> They need to be self-accountable, for their day-to-day way of life and not to expect things to be given to them. Like I can work and buy my own things. I mean there is nothing like knowing that one can work, because it's . . . self-worth, because it's self-esteem. (Educator, 2011)

> Educator: Attention, respect. They command a lot of respect. One of their main needs is to be held accountable. Accountability.

> Interviewer: In what sense?

> Educator: They have this need to . . . I mean, it's not just a need for them. But, if they do something, and they're not held accountable, then they'll keep on doing it. . . . So there's a need for them to be held accountable, in order for them to progress. Otherwise, it's never a lesson learned. (2011)

Structure and consistency are seen as basic needs for these youths. Educators and their managers explained that ensuring structure and consistency of program and scheduling was one of the most important tasks for educators. Educators generally felt that another of their fundamental tasks was creating a rapport with the youths, i.e., making them feel comfortable in order to provide a safe space for communication.

I think they're definitely in need to have a place to communicate what's going on, to communicate their frustrations; a safe place for them to explore ways, to recognize conflict, to know what conflict is. (Educator, 2011)

These "safe spaces" allow youth to work on certain interpersonal and psychological difficulties they may have. In these cases, safe spaces are areas of non-judgement and acceptance despite one's personal difficulties.

Educators explain that youth should have fun and positive experiences to develop self-esteem. This is done through activities that youth feel capable of finishing. Activities that are too challenging and make them question their abilities become obstacles to well-being, creating frustration, disappointment, and anger:

They like to be rewarded and they like to be told they're doing well. I think that the girls gravitate towards things that they feel safe doing and things that they know they're strong at, because they want to be able to succeed. (Educator, 2011)

Ideally, these activities should incorporate skills that are usable and valued in the environment to which they will return, to help foster a sense of independence and build self-esteem:

To me, it's more long term, something that can be useful for them in the future. Basic life skills. It meets the specific needs; it gives them a skill that they can use when they leave here. It's more like a skill development training. (Educator, 2011)

Many educators commented on the adaptation of activities to meet the specific needs of these youths, citing cultural differences. A major theme was the need for hands-on activities such as stone carving and practical outdoors activities:

These kids love hands-on activities, sports, and outdoor activities. They like the things they know. Games work exceptionally. Anything that gets them moving; anything that gets them using their hands. (Educator, 2011)

I've noticed—I've noticed in conflict resolution in particular there are a lot of role plays. I've noticed and I think it might be a cultural thing, that they're very uncomfortable doing role play. (Educator, 2011)

Reports by staff from group homes or residential programs youth have attended in the past highlight the importance of structure and discipline in intervention strategies and recommendations. Intervention plans often propose setting clear expectations, consistency, and routines. Individual or group counselling, as well as anger management and/or addiction rehabilitation programs, are recommendations that social workers and educators often formulate for these youths.

Therapists

Therapists primarily focused on the need to communicate. They discussed the importance of having a safe space for expression where youth can feel accepted and heard. Therapists noted that the youths needed to understand what is happening in their life and the reasons why:

They need to understand why. Why do they need structure? Explain it to them before you say structure, and bedtime. Why? You know, I thought it was a great question when this client, one of my girls, [chuckles] one of the girls I worked with said, "But why?" (Therapist, 2011)

The therapists described the importance of accompanying the youths in finding answers to their questions by talking to social workers, educators, or managers. Therapists noted that when youths understood how they were living and what would be taking place in the near future, there would be a reduction in anxiety and fewer associated difficult behaviours.

Having an adapted and individual plan was also discussed as being important for well-being. Therapists felt that there should be a certain consistency within a program with various options for the youths to choose from:

[H]aving options. . . . Something that is clear, so it does not create confusion. They know where they are going. You have some kind of structure, guidelines, but then there is something individual. (Therapist, 2011)

One therapist also discussed the importance of youths taking part in activities they are familiar with and will be able to continue doing within their communities, especially activities that make sense to their worldview and experiences.

A program that takes into consideration some of the stuff that they do up north. I was going to say swimming [chuckles] but fishing, hunting. I think that it is great that they go camping. (Therapist, 2011)

Clinical reports from therapists who had met the youths before or during placement often gave very complete pictures of their lives and personal and family dynamics. They tended to explain individual difficulties as responses to complex realities including family life and past histories. Recommendations offered by therapists for these youths often included living in structured environments, having clear limits and consistency, taking part in therapy, working on past traumas, reducing alcohol use, and increasing school attendance. They also recommended drug education, support, positive reward systems, a secure environment, and help in developing trusting relationships.

Inuit educator/cultural broker

Like the therapists, the cultural broker felt that the youths had to grasp their current reality in order to plan for the future. Within this process of understanding, the cultural broker emphasized the importance of personal time and space:

> More room, more privacy, alone time, relaxing time to think about what happened yesterday or what I am going to do today. When they know what they are going to do they are pretty smooth. (Cultural broker, 2011)

> So they need their alone space but they need someone they can talk to all the time. A safe place for them to be like every person in the world. (Cultural broker, 2011)

The cultural broker explains that in contexts of personal, family, and even community upheaval, youth can feel unsafe. They have often experienced physical and/or sexual abuse as well as neglect and bullying. In such situations, the residential facility can be seen and felt as a safe space far from threats to one's well-being. However, beyond the geographical space, the youths found "safety" in culturally relevant activities and contexts, which foster feelings of security and openness. Such activities included traditional sewing, traditional meals, talks about the northern reality, and any space where there was an opportunity to speak and be understood in their language. The cultural broker explains that the key is opening doors for sharing without obligating youth to talk about their feelings and experiences. The cultural broker explains that in small northern communities, talking about one's feelings takes place spontaneously during shared moments. People are never directly asked or told to open up. Sharing may be done in unstructured group activities; however, some youths may feel uncomfortable discussing certain issues in front of their peers and directly ask resource people for one-on-one time, an individual space that the cultural broker felt was very important:

> [A need] is for them to talk about the problems, to share the problems, not necessarily to fix it—if they can fix, that's great—but to at least make them open up, and talk about it. (Cultural broker, 2011)

> I think what is important for them is to have a comfort level; to know that someone can talk to them and answer them. Because these kids, when they ask questions, they expect a concrete answer. (Cultural broker, 2011)

The cultural broker also discussed the importance of structure, with a caution that the type of structure and discipline offered in residential care is not what Inuit youth and staff would be used to in their communities:

> It is good for them to have a tight schedule with lots of activities, but at the same time when they leave here they are going to have culture shock. Because it's so different from what they live up there, so it's as if it helps them to feel better but it doesn't prepare them for reality. (Cultural broker, 2011)

The cultural broker discussed needs of youth as going far beyond the individual. Youth need to have good parents with appropriate parenting skills and they need to know about their culture and have the ability to pass it on. Youth require culture to be well and culture requires youth in order to survive:

> [T]o carry on their culture, to not lose it. . . . That's how we survive. . . . So they can be independent, so they can belong, and they can master something; and also develop generosity. (Cultural Broker, 2011)

> I think to be connected to home, to be surrounded by Inuit staff, to talk their language, to know what it means to be Inuit, to talk about being Inuit today. Taking part in traditional activities, as if they can forget everything else for a moment. (Cultural broker, 2011)

> [Youth need] for their parents to stop putting stuff like alcohol and drugs [in their bodies]. It's one of the biggest things. (Cultural Broker, 2011)

Youth

The most important theme in youths' discourse was family: family history, family relationships, and spending time with family. By far, the most difficult part of being at the residence was being away from family. Many youths felt guilt, sadness, or desperation at being far from family members. Family members were mentioned as important resources in difficult times. Many youths mentioned that thinking about family members at times when they felt suicidal helped them cope and deterred them from harmful actions. Specific family members were also identified as role models, people to look up to when trying to take a positive path. Some of the most important family members included aunts, uncles, and especially grandparents. Although youths rarely used the word "Elders" to describe influential people in their lives, they often talked of their grandparents.

Youths also verbalized the importance of cultural activities and traditional food in their daily routine. These activities connected them to home, their past, previous generations, and good memories. Taking part in activities like sewing was mentioned as a way to calm down. When these activities were not available or not allowed at a specific time because of scheduling, the youths could become very angry and aggressive.

For many youths, the natural environment was of great importance as well. This included enjoying outdoor activities like

taking a walk by the river, camping, and playing in the snow. The youths often mentioned taking a walk outside as being the best place to relax and think when angry or upset.

Having alone time, or personal space for reflection, was seen as necessary during difficult times. Youths also acknowledged the importance of having people around when feeling upset, especially people they can talk to and trust. However, they expressed a preference for approaching these people when needed rather than being requested to talk.

The youths also expressed the need to have outings, to be off campus, to have something "different" in their week, and to feel "normal." Being identified as a client of the residence was felt as being stigmatizing and embarrassing.

The youths also spoke about the desire to be surrounded by more Inuit staff—individuals who speak Inuktitut and can share traditional activities and the Inuit way. Not being understood by non-Inuktitut speaking staff created mounting frustration among the youths.

Many youths talked of the importance of spirituality in their lives. Some have requested the possibility to practice their religion by going to church; however, when this was offered by the residential staff, they did not necessarily feel it met their needs. Many felt that church or reading the Bible had to be done in Inuktitut with family and friends, rather than being a solitary experience.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to explore the needs of Inuit youths in the care of child welfare services from the perspective of four groups of actors: educators, therapists, a cultural broker, and the youths themselves. In this study, individuals were not requested to discuss particular types of needs, or needs as related to something specific; rather, we extrapolated the perceived needs from discussions to determine what they felt mattered most when working with youth. We also used ethnographic observations and daily logs as a source of information. A secondary objective was to explore how culture is embedded within the identification and perception of these needs.

Needs

Each group of actors discussed a variety of subthemes that seemed to be guided by their own experiences and cultures (see Table 1). Educators discussed the importance of developing skills, learning responsibilities, being accountable for one's actions, having structured environments, and living positive experiences. Interestingly, and most likely not coincidently, these perceived needs are also the crux of psychoeducational theories (Gendreau, 2001; Renou, 2005). Although educators also used words like mastery, independence, and belonging, these words were rarely— if ever—contextualized or explained in any meaningful way, suggesting difficulty using this philosophy. As described elsewhere, educators also found it hard to explain how these values were

implemented within daily activities (Fraser et al., 2012). In our own observations and during program development meetings, we did not notice any greater reinforcement of psychoeducational values as compared to the Circle of Courage model. It is possible that the educators' previous personal and professional experiences influenced their perceptions of youth above and beyond any imposed residential philosophy. It may also be that the Circle of Courage model was not adequately implemented within the program at that time.

Recommendations offered by educators and mental health workers in clinical reports included living in a stable and structured environment, anger management therapy, and individual or group therapy. Although family situations were explained as reasons for the youths' difficulties, needs and recommendations focused on individual behaviours.

Therapists and the cultural broker discussed the importance for youth to have a sense of control over their current situation by understanding the context and the functioning of the residence.

The cultural broker and youths shared similar thoughts on the needs of youth and included a systemic perception. They described the importance of spirituality and connectedness, which took place in three spaces: personal space, relational spaces, and spaces of action through concrete and mostly traditional activities. They underlined connections with family and culture as elementary for well-being, as well as speaking one's language and having Inuit staff who could understand their reality.

The needs to communicate and have trusting relationships were discussed by all four groups of actors. The therapist, cultural broker, and youths also talked about the importance of having a safe place to open up. Their notions of "safe place" and "communicating," however, were conceptually different. The therapist focused on confidential spaces of non-judgement where youth could talk about their experiences. Educators and mental health workers felt that youth needed closure (e.g., processing after moments of conflict, finding solutions to problems) and communication was an avenue for this. The cultural broker viewed safe spaces as areas of sharing and potential discussions without any expectations of meeting objectives or discussing particular events. The cultural broker and youths highlighted the importance of unstructured time and space that allowed for spontaneity in sharing and developing relationships. The youths also implicitly discussed safe spaces. Those who had experienced abuse in their homes viewed the residence as a safe space, but they also found spaces of comfort with family and friends, or alone and outside. Similar differences have been noted in qualitative work done in other Aboriginal communities and in intercultural interventions with Aboriginal people. Although similar words may be used by therapists/professionals and Aboriginal people, the meanings behind "therapeutic landscapes" and "spaces of healing" may be quite different. Gone (2008) describes how therapeutic clinics will encourage verbal communication, rumination on past trauma, and self-discovery. Having to do so in a space and with people who symbolically represent the oppressor may be anti-therapeutic and perhaps even a perpetuation of colonial practices (Gone, 2008; Berger & Epp, 2006).

Although a variety of needs were discussed by more than one group of actors, there was variation in the way they understood and conceptualized these needs. Two main themes emerged when attempting to understand the similarities and differences observed among groups of actors: culture and structure.

Culture

All groups of actors brought up the topic of culture; however, the space given to culture and the discourse surrounding culture differed among non-Inuit (educators and therapists) and Inuit (cultural broker and youths).

The educators and therapists were aware of the importance of family and culture in the youths' lives, but gave very little space to these themes when discussing the youths' needs. They talked about the importance of adapting activities and programs to the culture and context of youths. Such adaptations included skill-enhancing activities that are usable in the youths' home communities, as well as hands-on activities. Culture seemed to be viewed as an important characteristic or factor to be taken into consideration during program development and in activities. This view is not uncommon, and has been criticized for its stigmatizing potential and its tendency to view culture as a characteristic of "the other" (Bibeau & Corin, 1996).

On the other hand, culture is central in the discourses of the cultural broker and youths. Culture is described as a safe space that allows for exploration of feelings and sharing experiences. Culture provides possibility for connection and a sense of belonging. Speaking one's language and taking part in cultural activities allow for a certain healing process to take place. Adopting this view, culture becomes a lens through which we experience, perceive, and understand life. Culture is not foreign; it is embedded within our daily actions, thoughts, and perceptions (Bibeau & Corin, 1996). The cultural broker suggested that being connected to culture is not only necessary for the youths' healing process but is also necessary for culture itself. This concept parallels the fundamental principles of interactionism and social psychology (Giddens, 1984). It is believed that culture can be re-enacted and transmitted through daily interactions between individuals. As discussed by the cultural broker, without these daily interactions between Inuit—and in Inuktitut—a group risks losing culture and culture risks being lost. Many have argued that is it through this precise process that the removal of Inuit, and more generally of Aboriginal children, from communities to residential schools has had such a long-lasting and devastating impact. Youth were placed in settings where they were isolated from families and from their own cultures. This led to ruptures in intergenerational teachings of culture and parenting skills. It also created intergenerational trauma, which in turn has led to generations of families being unable to offer their children the care they require. More contemporary residences for Inuit youth, or for youth from other Aboriginal communities, are attempting to incorporate cultural elements in their programs to try to reduce the impact of removal on youth well-being. However, many have argued that cultural competence goes beyond the inclusion of cultural activities within programs and extends to political and economic considerations (Gone, 2008; King, 2011; Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003; Kirmayer, 2012). Do communities have the health, economic resources, and political power to maintain and transmit their cultures? Do the structures and systems in place facilitate empowerment? The cultural broker and the youths suggested that culture is about sharing with family, being in community, and transmitting cultural knowledge, all of which require one's presence within his/her community and family. Considering that the current system of care has been unable to address the structural causes of overrepresentation of Inuit people in care, some may argue that no matter what is put into place, out-of-community placements cannot be culturally appropriate because they imply that youth were taken away in the first place.

Moreover, our analysis suggests that personal perceptions of youths' needs are guided by professional and personal culture and competencies. Interviews with educators, however, suggest limited awareness of this phenomenon. Educators would float between discussing "youths' needs" and the needs they felt the youths had without differentiating between the two. Culture, being a lens through which we perceive and experience the world, will naturally guide our understanding of youths' needs, an understanding that is co-constructed in our interactions with youth (Aggarwal, 2012).

Structure

In this study, educators and therapists highlighted the importance of structured programs and consistency in schedules and rules. Nearly all educators and therapists recommended structure in clinical reports. Our ethnographic observations and analyses of individual logs highlighted a relationship between personal well-being and this type of structured and predictable environment. The cultural broker also mentioned structure as beneficial, but cautioned that most Inuit youth and staff would not be used to this way of life.

Structure, as understood in psychoeducational and residential programs, generally takes the form of schedules with the time, space, and content of activities being clearly stated and rigorously maintained; rules and consequences are known and consistently reinforced (Gendreau, 2001; Renou, 2005). It is believed that psychological and emotional disorganization can be "worked" through structure of ones' time and space complemented by a rehabilitative or therapeutic process. It is not uncommon to view rehabilitative practices this way. The structure-oriented approach may be congruent with occidental, neoliberal cultures that value efficacy and productivity (Otero, 2005). However, a reliance on external control may lead to a shrivelled internal control and eventually to ruptures with one's own cultures. In a context where the client "belongs" to a similar culture to that of the institutions that offer structure, the rules and regulations may be compatible with the clients' worldviews. In this way, by their rules and regulations, institutions ensure cultural reproduction by transmitting and reinforcing certain behaviours. However, in a context where the client and the institution do not share

Table 1. Youths' needs as perceived by various actors.

Needs	Educators	Therapists	Cultural brokers	Youths
Trusting relationships	√	√	√	√
Space for communication/expression	√	√	√	√
Structure	√	√	√	
Skills	√	√	√	
Personal space	√	√	√	√
Attention	√			
Respect	√			
Responsibility/accountability	√			
Having positive experiences	√			
Sense of control over own life		√	√	√
Speaking one's language				√
Cultural activities	√	√	√	√
Connection with family/positive relationships			√	√
Ability to transmit culture			√	
Outdoor activities and space	√			√
Feeling normal				√
Spirituality				√

fundamental values, the imposed structure may create further rifts with one's own history.

There is another fundamental issue in the use of time, space, and place in intercultural encounters: that of epistemological discrepancies in the conceptualization of these elements. Various authors have discussed this eloquently, observing important differences in how "western" and Aboriginal cultures conceptualize time, space, and place (Gone, 2008; Wilson, 2003). These differences often go unnoticed but are not without repercussions. Gombay (2009) suggests that occidental cultures tend to view time as absolute, linear, and quantitative, while Inuit tend to view time as contingent and cyclical. For Inuit, time and space are intertwined and highly dependent on ecological context. Having lived for centuries on the land, Inuit may be particularly aware of the unpredictability of life, having to develop a heightened ability to be flexible and adaptable (Gombay, 2009). These aspects of traditional Inuit culture do not seem congruent with the mandatory adherence to rigid organization of time and space through structured schedules and routines. All informants acknowledged the difficulty the youths had adopting a rigid structure. Whether this difficulty was mostly due to their personal life experiences, "behavioural profiles," or cultural differences is difficult to determine; however, educators, mental health workers, and the cultural broker all perceived it as being related

to cultural differences. The cultural broker did not see structure as necessarily being negative. She discussed how Inuit have experienced tremendous social changes that have led to what she calls "corruption of family practices"—practices that may need to be revisited. As an example, the current parenting programs being developed in Nunavik focus on parents' ability to offer nurtured guidance through a certain structure.

Structure, as discussed by the cultural broker and youths, may be more congruent with the way it is conceptualized in certain forms of ethnopsychiatry. In the field of ethnopsychiatry, rather than structuring time and space, therapists work with the client's traditional culture as an internal guide to organize or reorganize emotional and psychological space (Moro, 1997; Moro, 2004). Culture is used and viewed as a structuring agent and an internalized guide. Ethnopsychiatrists may attempt to reignite cultural values deeply entrenched within people's being, in order to support their client's internal path—one that is congruent with the client's worldview. They may revisit traditional myths or encourage the use of traditional practices to reinforce the internal structures already present within their client.

Ethnographic research suggests that when working with Inuit clients in particular, values such as connectedness with the land, traditional foods and activities, relationships, cultural belonging, and continuity may be core elements of successful

programs (Kirmayer, Fletcher, & Watt, 2008). Although the association between culture and structure was not explicitly discussed by the various interviewees, it was implicitly raised by the cultural broker and youths. They discussed the process by which culture aided well-being. Being together and sharing traditional activities brought calmness and a space where experiences could be explored and shared in tranquility. Moreover, when the youths discussed personal role models, they generally talked of individuals who did not engage in delinquent activities and who also took part in cultural activities such as sewing, berry picking, and hunting. The youths saw these individuals as models of "a good path." In this sense, structure can be understood as the use of culturally relevant spaces, places, relations, and actions to offer youth the possibility to find a certain tranquility and connection that allows for healing to take place.

Limitations

There are multiple limitations to this work. Data was collected for quality assurance purposes and not for research purposes, limiting the quantity and quality of data available for analysis. Sample sizes were small due to the fact that the residence receives only eight girls and eight boys at a time. The program was only in its first year of development and therefore was evolving to better suit youths' needs. Due to the fact that youths return to their communities after their stay in the residence, it was impossible to consult them after data analysis to validate the findings. Despite these important shortcomings, little research is available on this subject, a topic that warrants special attention due to the growing dissatisfaction with current child welfare services in Nunavik and in Aboriginal communities across Canada. Documenting and describing perceptions of various actors allows for an analysis of similarities and differences in views. This promotes a certain awareness of complementarity and differences in experiences and for a dialogue to take place among actors to improve the current system of care.

CONCLUSIONS

Program development and implementation should be viewed as a multicultural task, where multiple perspectives meet and interact. Individuals in charge of developing programs are guided by their own professional and personal cultures. The mere understanding of culture is culturally construed. Indeed, a major obstacle to this multicultural encounter is lack of awareness of the subjectivity of our experiences and the multiplicity of perceptions and voices. Difference in views is not necessarily problematic; on the contrary, it provides material for creativity and innovation. Koestler (1967) describes how the interaction of two conflicting phenomena or elements can lead to the development of new and more complex ideas. For this to take place, the two elements must merge or collide rather than add on to one another; a process of hybridization. Concretely, this means that developing

programs based on North American values but including aspects of Aboriginal traditional culture are not necessarily examples of creative and innovative practices. Indeed, adding sewing activities or traditional food to a curriculum does not mean that educators understand the importance of these activities for youth and maximize their benefits. In our study, we witnessed situations of crisis and power struggles between youths and educators because, for example, the youths wanted to sew at a particular time when other activities were scheduled. We also participated in a discussion about the relevance of traditional meals, where educators felt frustrated that the youths were still eating cafeteria fries after preparing a traditional meal. Educators were considering reducing the frequency of traditional meals for this reason. From exchanges with the youths it became clear that seeing the Inuit educator/cultural broker prepare and sharing the food was soothing, and eating fries did not take away from that experience of togetherness.

One must go beyond additive strategies and explore outside of the realms of the child welfare systems currently in place. Culture, as described by the Inuit youths and the Inuit cultural broker, is about being together, sharing, and transmitting knowledge. The same interviewees view culture as fundamental for well-being. History's difficult lesson has been that removal of children to out-of-community placements has led to ruptures in culture and intergenerational trauma. In order for innovative and culturally safe practices to emerge, the diverging parties must open dialogue and become aware that we are all bearers of culture, which highly influences our perceptions. Non-Inuit professionals would benefit from exploring the internal workings of such practices to better understand their own methods and teachings. One must equally acknowledge that the dialogue is circumscribed within a long history of often strenuous and unequal interactions. To develop practices that work in a context of social change and respect the culture of the client, professionals must reflect upon how their own practices can be not only "adapted" but can "evolve" in the face of diversity (Aggarwal, 2012). Rehabilitative strategies used by psychoeducational professionals may be explored and adapted by Inuit communities and workers in a context where youth remain within their own communities to share, transmit, and transform culture. Programs could look at developing spaces, techniques, and interactions that allow for the revitalization and reinforcement of internalized culture and values to offer guidance and structure, rather than give structure to youth by depending only on external mechanisms of controlling time and space.

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