

"Building the smallest democracies at the heart of society."
The United Nations: The International Year of the Family, 1994

Agreement# 40063171

University of Calgary Teams with University of Pittsburgh: Working For Kids



by Bikram Sekhon, Master of Nursing Student, University of Calgary

In their landmark study, *Felitti et al. (1998) demonstrated a graded relationship between the number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; abuse, neglect and household dysfunction before the age of eighteen) an individual experienced, and the presence of health risk factors in adulthood. Health risk factors included physical and mental illnesses, with an associated increase in the development of chronic illness. Having studied the importance of early intervention on the brain development of rodents and primates, **Dr. Judy Cameron** (a renowned neuroscientist) became interested in the key periods for human brain development. Assessment of internalizing disorders and brain imaging in children suggests that early-life stress can interfere with white matter development, possibly increasing emotional difficulties in the longterm. Much of the research on early-life stress and developmental outcomes uses animal models, though complementary research using humans suggests early intervention can mitigate risk in later life. Translating findings into clinical practice and social policy has been underway, but it has been difficult to discern a sensitive period



in which intervention would produce benefits for child development. This helped inform Dr. Cameron's desire to identify the sensitive periods of child brain development, and create interventions promoting the best outcomes for children experiencing chronic and toxic early life stress.

The *Working For Kids: Building Skills* program (workingforkids.com) developed from this desire. **Dr. Nicole Letourneau**, with the CHILD Studies program at the University of Calgary and an expert in healthy child development, joined forces with Dr. Cameron and the Palix Foundation to implement the Calgary arm of this multi-national study. The study investigates if educational interventions for parents about

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Ending Violence Across Manitoba Inc.



by Mary Lobson, Executive Director, EVA Manitoba

Ending Violence Across (EVA) Manitoba Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that works to end gender-based violence and advance gender equality in Manitoba. In 2017, EVA was one of five Manitoba projects awarded a grant by Status of Women Canada to create systemic change and advance gender equality in Manitoba. EVA Manitoba joined the RESOLVE Manitoba Steering Committee at the end of 2018.



Currently, EVA Manitoba is coordinating a pilot project to reduce violence against women and girls in Manitoba through improvement of service response for high risk domestic violence cases. The project is based on the Interagency Cases Assessment Team (ICAT) model developed by the Ending Violence Association of British Columbia.

An ICAT is a partnership of local organizations and the group responds to referrals of suspected highest risk cases of domestic violence with a goal of increasing safety. This goal is achieved by:

- Identifying risk using the Manitoba Summary of Domestic Violence Risk Factors (assessment tool currently in development) and, if necessary, an evidence based risk assessment tool;
- Legally and ethically sharing risk-related information; and
- Reaching agreement regarding risk level.

While ICAT reviews cases, they are not investigative bodies. A domestic violence case may be referred to the ICAT even if a police report has not been made. Based on contributing risk factors and vulnerabilities, ICAT creates a risk management plan that outlines a team commitment to enhanced interventions for victims and monitoring, management and support for perpetrators. Cases are regularly reviewed to monitor factors and critical events.

The model is currently being adapted and the

Manitoba ICAT manual will be complete by Summer 2019. Portage La Prairie, Brandon, Thompson and Winnipeg have been identified as pilot sites for the first ICAT locations. The ICAT is a partnership of community members led by two co-chairs—

one from local law enforcement and the other from a community agency. Community partners will vary between pilot sites, dependent on available community resources. Partners may include Victim Services, Manitoba Probation offices, RCMP, Winnipeg Police Service, Brandon Police Service, Child and Family Services, and such agencies as the Family Abuse Prevention Centre (Portage), Women's Resource Centre (Brandon), and Willow Place (Winnipeg).

In addition to coordination of development of the ICAT model, EVA Manitoba maintains a comprehensive list of resources that includes programs, services and supports available across Manitoba and information on gender-based violence for survivors, friends, family members and employers.

EVA Manitoba is also developing *Safety Net Manitoba*, in partnership with the Safety Net Project at the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) in Washington, DC. Through Safety Net Manitoba, training and related resources will be available to address the intersection between technology and gender-based violence. Training has also been developed for lawyers to assist in working with clients who experience intimate-partner violence. This training has been available as part of the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) program of The Law Society of Manitoba and for students in the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba.

For more information about EVA Manitoba, or to access the provincial resource listing, please visit www.endingviolencemanitoba.org. If you are interested in learning more about the ICAT model for your community, please email programs@endingviolencemanitoba.org or call 204-475-3826. ❄

Manitoba Update



by Cheryl Fraehlich and Kendra Nixon

Fall was a busy time in Manitoba. In addition to working on several research projects, grant proposals, and participating in Research Day, we hosted a series of community events.

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, on November 6 RESOLVE Manitoba hosted the *Mothering Through Violence: Supporting Mothers who Have Experienced Violence and Their Children* workshop. This workshop highlighted the impact of exposure to violence on children, the importance of the mother-child relationship in healing from violence, and practice approaches that support women who have experienced violence and their children—including those provided through an Indigenous lens.

Angelique Jenny, Wood's Homes Research Chair in Children's Mental Health (University of Calgary), presented her research with children exposed to domestic violence and **Kendra Nixon**, Director of RESOLVE, presented her work on mothers who have experienced violence and the importance of mothering on their healing. **Tina Robinson** and **Kelsey Gregoire** also presented information on Wabung Abinoonjiiag programs for Indigenous mothers and their children. Wabung is an agency in Winnipeg that empowers children and their families to break the cycle of violence by providing opportunities for holistic healing through culturally-appropriate teachings and activities.

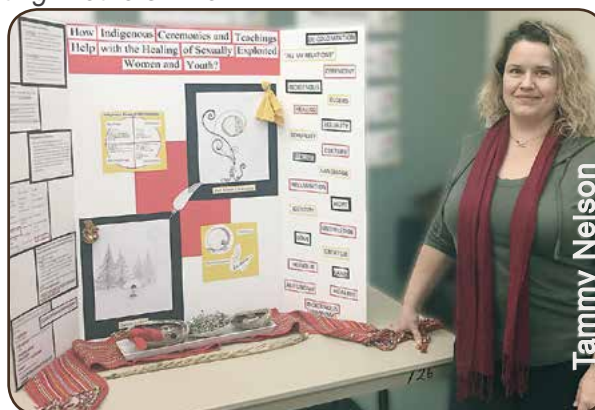
On November 26, RESOLVE launched its latest book, *Not a New Problem: Violence in the Lives of Disabled Women*. Edited by **Michelle Owen**, **Diane Hiebert-Murphy**, and **Janice Ristock**, this book reports on the experiences of Canadian women with disabilities; the need for improved services and access for women with disabilities; and the ways violence against women with disabilities intersects with class, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, gender, and sexuality. Thanks goes to the presenters and all contributors for addressing a topic that is important and under-investigated. More information about our new book can be found on our website at www.umanitoba.ca/resolve.

From November 25 to December 10, 2018, the *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* campaign took place around the world, raising awareness about

gender inequity and gender-based violence. As part of this campaign, RESOLVE Manitoba partnered with the UM's Faculty of Social Work and the Winnipeg Police Service to host a student research poster presentation session on December 5. This event highlighted important student research that addresses gender-based violence. Seven students presented on a variety of topics,

including increasing women's perception of their safety, using Indigenous ceremonies and teachings to help heal sexually exploited women and youth, and preventing domestic violence through focused deterrence. Special thanks to all of the students for sharing their valuable research. Special thanks also goes to **Detective Sergeant**

Susan Desjardine, Domestic Violence Intervention Coordinator, and **Constable Maria Buduhan**, Crime Prevention and Diversity Unit of the Winnipeg Police Service, for partnering and for reminding us how this important research impacts their work. ❀



NEW RESEARCH ALERT

RESOLVE Manitoba is partnering on three new projects. Building Relationships is a six-year project on the development of a community driven and culturally adapted dating violence prevention program for Indigenous teens. This project is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and partners include Ndinawe, MaMawi Chi Itata Centre, Community Education Development Association, Boys and Girls Club Winnipeg, and Resources and Assistance for Youth (RAY). **Dr. Kerstin Stieber Roger**, Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba and longtime RESOLVE Manitoba Steering Committee member, is leading a tri-prairie study on elder abuse and underreporting. RESOLVE Manitoba is also partnering with the Winnipeg Children's Access Agency and **Dr. Lorna Turnbull**, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba, to examine the intersection between criminal and family courts in Manitoba and the impact on children exposed to violence in the home. These last two projects are funded through Prairieaction Foundation's Special Research Call-Out. See our website for more information. ❀

Saskatchewan Update



RESOLVE Saskatchewan Guiding Elder Makes a Difference in the Community

by Elder Betty McKenna

I am RESOLVE Saskatchewan's Guiding Elder. I have many tasks, but once a week I meet with and teach a group of young First Nations boys between the ages of 11 and 13 from various schools in Regina. We talk about First Nations cultural values and teachings. We call the group NISKA.

NISKA comes from the Cree word "geese". Geese teach us leadership—they fly in a V formation with one goose in the lead. But that goose will drop to the back of a line and a new goose will take the lead, showing us that leadership is the responsibility of ALL members of the group. When that change comes in the line of geese they all honk, giving the new goose encouragement and signalling that they are still following. I apply this leadership value to what our ancestors viewed as leadership, and explain to the boys how to revive that understanding and apply it in our modern world.

Our connection to our ancestors will always resonant within us when we connect to the



natural world. I have boys who have been with me for three years and they help the NISKA newcomers with the way to roll the sweet grass to get a good plume of smoke, which direction to take the grass, how to smudge themselves, and the big drum. Then comes the day the older boys step back and hand over matches and sweet grass to the new boys and they say, "You now." As they respectfully bow their heads and begin to pray, the new boy's hand will shake, shoulders hunched. The older boys begin to sway and pray louder, the new boy

relaxes, stands straighter, lights the grass and goes around the circle smiling as he smudges his fellow NISKA. As he offers me the sweet grass, he whispers, "I thought I heard honking!"

Our talking circles are heartbreaking at times. At other times it is uplifting to the spirit to hear the boys speak so eloquently of the world they are inheriting with the social norms that their parents and grandparents lived, and how the NISKA boys crave change to find comfort and strength in kindness, in being themselves. ✿

Our RESOLVE Research Day 2018 was a big success by all accounts: We had 129 registrants, from as far away as the Northwest Territories, Northern Manitoba, and Northern Saskatchewan. Our participant from Northern Saskatchewan had a great experience and vowed to use what she'd learned in her community of Ile á la Crosse. Greetings came from Regina City Policy, the RCMP, the Ministry of Justice, the Attorney General, the Mayor of Regina and others, showing that many stakeholders have begun to understand how important their contribution is to ending violence in their communities. Many students attended, and our absolutely crucial volunteers for the day were mostly graduate students from the University of Regina. The Dessert Social honoured **Dr. Mary Hampton** who, until recently, was the Academic Research Coordinator for RESOLVE Saskatchewan. She has now retired from RESOLVE and the University of Regina. A RESOLVE award was presented to a person from each province who has distinguished themselves for their contribution to creating homes and communities safe from interpersonal violence and abuse. In Saskatchewan, that person was **Dr. Darlene Juschka**, University of Regina. Our keynote speakers were **Mr. Corey O'Soup**, Children's Advocate for the Province, and **Dr. Kim Zorn**, Psychologist, who is an expert on stalking. Everyone enjoyed the breakout sessions—16 in total—and went away knowing more about intimate partner violence and the work that RESOLVE does to help individuals and communities break the cycle of violence. ✿

Alberta Update



by Jennifer Bon Bernard & Dr. Nicole Letourneau

The Action Team on Triadic Attachment and Child Health (ATTACH) is excited to have finished Phase 1, begun Phase 2, and continues with new funding from the Harvard Center on the Developing Child, The Calgary Foundation, and an anonymous donor. We are also very excited to have been selected by the Harvard Center to be one of their Frontiers of Innovation Projects developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/current-frontiers-innovation-portfolio-projects. As part of Phase 2 we have completed a second round of intervention and data collection at the Calgary Urban Project Society, having recruited 14 families for this intervention program for mothers affected by toxic stress, including domestic violence. This program is designed to help reduce the impacts of the toxic stress of family violence on children's health and development. While ATTACH is tested in a randomized controlled trial, we provide the program to the control group in a quasi-experimental design. We are now recruiting 20 more families from Discovery House. Completed Phase 1 study findings show that intervention significantly improves a mother's ability to have insight into their children's thoughts and feelings, and trends were observed toward improvement in children's attachment security. Other results from these pilots, prepared by doctoral student **Dr. Lubna Anis**, show that intervention also improves children's social and emotional adjustment and parent-child relationship quality. We are keen about the potential for ATTACH to buffer the impacts of family violence on children and their parents and their mothers.

We are also enthusiastic about *Working For KIDS* progress. With approximately 70 families, completion is anticipated at the end of 2019. Many of these families have faced challenges with family violence and other stressors. The program was created by neuroscientist **Dr. Judy Cameron** from the University of Pittsburgh and is designed

to help parents understand and promote brain development in children affected by stress.

We are happy to report that we have received data on the 376 children who received the *Hand in Hand* program, created by partners at the Infant Mental Health Promotion Program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. RESOLVE Alberta has attained funding to evaluate the real-world delivery of the program, which we call the Helping Early Adjustment and Relationships to Thrive (HEART) Project. The HEART Project assesses children's development through the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* and *Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Socio-Emotional* agesandstages.com. This data was used to develop individualized support plans for each child. Foster caregivers are trained to follow the *Hand in Hand* plan to promote these children's development. Preliminary findings suggest that children's social-emotional adjustment is of greatest concern as children approach school age and communication difficulties are noted at 20 months of age. We look forward to receiving more data as more children receive the program to evaluate the effectiveness of the Hand in Hand Program for Calgary children for Child and Family Services.

Finally, we would like to welcome our new practicum student, **Madeleine McDougall**, who is in her final year of her Bachelor of Criminal Justice. She is helping with setting up the RESOLVE conference on October 21-22, 2019, co-hosted with Awo Taan Healing Lodge. The Conference focus will be on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. Madeleine will also help with the ongoing project on the effectiveness of peer support for women affected by domestic violence at Sagesse, led by **Carrie McManus**. ❀



Working for Kids... continued from Page 1

their children's' brain development will improve developmental outcomes in their children. This is a multi-agency study, with many Calgary agencies offering support to recruit study participants and provide the educational programming to families.

Some preliminary findings that compare data from Pittsburgh and Calgary highlighted differences in sleep quality, possibly related to the demographics of the two samples. Sleep fragmentation has long been shown as associated with reduced alertness or increased sleepiness in children, behavioural problems, as well as difficulty with sustained attention and behaviour inhibition—both of which have shown strong associations with developmental psychopathology. It was demonstrated that lower sleep quality in infancy significantly predicted compromised attention regulation and behaviour problems at 3–4 years of age.

An initial exploratory analysis used participants from Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) and Discovery House. Individuals accessing these agencies tend to be from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, often in transient circumstances, experiencing chronic stress. Many of these children have witnessed or experienced abuse. Children (and parents) from these families were likely exposed to more ACEs than the Pittsburgh cohort, which had a broader variance in socioeconomic and demographic background. **Figure 1** shows how the Calgary cohort scored higher in all categories of the *Child Sleep Health Questionnaire*, which is indicative of difficulties with sleep. This would suggest the Calgary children from these agencies may be at increased developmental risk, something the Working For Kids team hopes will be mitigated by their educational programming.

High risk family studies with a focus on individual factors of the child, including emotional regulation, cognitive style, stress reactivity and coping style in the family environment can help identify specific factors that are amenable to change through prevention programming. Working For Kids aims to do just this with their study, engaging in extensive

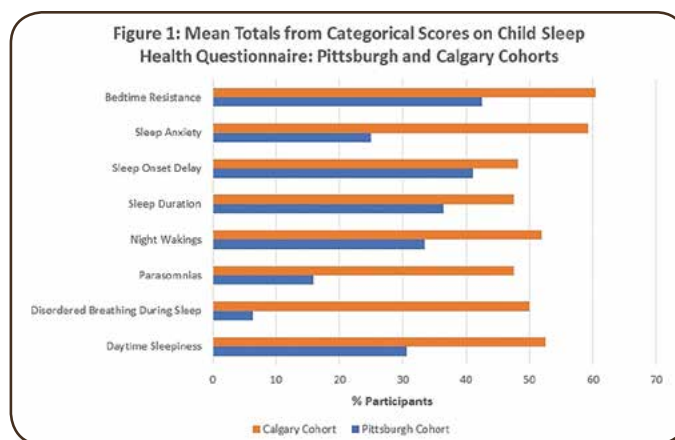
data collection including demographics, scores from *Ages and Stages* questionnaires and *ACEs* questionnaires, *Child Sleep Habits* questionnaires, NIH Cognitive Tests, videotaped play sessions, and urine samples from the children. One significant difficulty research assistants (RAs) have encountered is maintaining contact with participants. **Jelena Komanchuk**, a lead RA with the Calgary study, explains, *“It is not uncommon for participants to change their contact information. The agencies have been a*

pleasure to work with and their dedication to the program has been vital to our success in reaching these families.”

Evidence for the effectiveness of early preventative interventions exist, especially for high-risk populations; however, evidence for

the effectiveness of these interventions in real-world settings is needed. Working For Kids aims to provide some of this evidence, and collaboration with Calgary agencies makes it possible. Agencies include CUPS, Discovery House, Get Ready for Inclusion Today and University of Calgary Childcare Society, Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, and Aspen Family and Community Network Society. Staff who provided the educational intervention to parents speak enthusiastically about the program. *“One staff member communicated that she witnessed appreciable differences in how a parent interacted with their child, and how much more aware of their child's needs they seemed to be, after receiving the training,”* explains Komanchuk, *“The agencies have been incredibly supportive and welcoming to our team. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the study has been contagious and we have observed the same eagerness with some of their clients.”* The study will follow participants for a one-year period, with almost 60 families enrolled as of November, 2018. 🌸

*Contact Editor for References



Announcements, Conferences and Events



RESOLVE is Now Going Digital!

We are excited to announce that the RESOLVE Newsletter will move from print-based to digital, and will be sent to you via email. The May/June 2019 newsletter will be our last print issue. To sign up for our digital newsletter, please visit the RESOLVE Manitoba website at umanitoba.ca/resolve.

RESOLVE Manitoba is now on Twitter and Facebook. Please visit the RESOLVE Manitoba website for more information.



March 8, 2019 - International Women's Day: #InnovateForChange. This year's theme focuses on innovative ways in which gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure can be advanced. For events in your area refer to www.internationalwomensday.com/Events.

March 6 - 8, 2019 - Saskatchewan Association of Police Affiliated Victim Services (SAPAVS) Conference: Tell Us Your Story in Saskatoon, SK. Speakers include Timea Nagy, human trafficking survivor, author, speaker and social advocate; AJ Strand, who pursued a career as a police officer while ensnared in a violent marriage; Janice Linklater, who is AnishinaabeKwe from Couchiching First Nation in Treaty 3 territory near Fort Frances, Ontario; and many more. For more information refer to www.sapavconference.com.

April 17 - 18, 2019 - Coercive Control: Improving Responses to Domestic Violence at the University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON. Presented by the Feminist Anti-Violence Research Collective. This conference will bring together experts from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In addition to introducing the audience to the concept of coercive control, we will examine how coercive control can be used in different contexts, including the benefits of integrating this concept in our understanding of domestic violence and in our legislation. Coercive control is certainly a promising solution to some of the gaps our criminal justice system, family law and youth protection services face when trying to asset domestic violence. For more information refer to www.femanvi.org/en/2019-conferences/ccv2019en/.

April 22 - 25, 2019 - International Conference on Sexual Assault, Intimate Partner Violence, and Increasing Access in San Diego, CA, USA. Presented by End Violence Against Women International. Our annual conferences focus on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, human trafficking and elder abuse. We consistently bring together law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, parole and probation officers, rape crisis workers, health care professionals, faith community members, educators, researchers and others in this three-day conference highlighting promising practices and emerging issues to effectively respond to these crimes in all of our communities. For more information refer to www.cvent.com/events/international-conference-on-sexual-assault-intimate-partner-violence-and-increasing-access/event-summary-3014a410ca1c4646ab3f6ca0ac31a3bb.aspx.

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Congratulations to the 2018 Boivin Bursary Award Winners!

Three outstanding graduate students from the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba received the 2018 *Carolynne Boivin Bursary*. **Virginia Patemen** is studying the relationship between Indigenous youth, cultural connection, and youth suicide. She is interviewing Indigenous Knowledge Holders to document their cultural wisdom, teaching, and life experience around youth suicide. Virginia believes that the valuable information that is shared will reveal potential avenues for reconnecting Indigenous youth with cultural traditions which can reduce suicide, family violence and addiction. **Nellie Elizabeth Murdock** will use talking circles and individual interviews to examine whether participation in traditional Indigenous ceremonies promotes positive life style choices among individuals who have been impacted by violence. She will ask participants about their life experiences, the reasons they chose to become involved in traditional Indigenous ceremonies, and changes in their lives since participating in ceremonies. **Jeanette Brazaeu** continues her research on the impact of family violence among Indigenous adolescents. This qualitative study uses the personal narratives of Indigenous adolescents who have experienced complex trauma, and also includes an examination of the current trauma-informed practices of social workers.

Stay tuned for the 2019 Boivin Bursary Award competition! ✂

RESOLVE Manitoba

~ Dr. Kendra Nixon ~
Director (RESOLVE)

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