NEGOTIATING CHANGE

Community-Based Perspectives on Mental Health and Addictions Practice in the Northwest Territories

Alana Kronstal, MA Candidate
Studies in Policy and Practice
University of Victoria
Summary of Presentation

- Background Context
- Research Focus & Questions
- Why This Is Important
- Boom/Bust and Practice: Reflections From The Field
- Next Steps
To explore the current practices of community mental health and addictions workers in the Northwest Territories and better understand how practitioners are experiencing and responding to changes in their organization and community.
The Research Focus

What do practitioners experience?

Health Implications

Multiple Impacts on Communities

Rapid Change in the North
Emerging Issues in the NWT

- Resource Development
- Changing Substance Use Patterns
- Growing Senior Population
- Prevalence of depression, suicide, FASD
- Problem Gambling
- Rise in Prescription Medication
- Common Experience Payments
- Changes to Service Delivery
What the Literature Doesn’t Tell Us...

• What's going right?

• How can we build on these strengths?

  • What are the rewards of practice?

• How can we best prepare for the future?
Field Research Overview

- Preliminary fieldwork took place in 2007 in Yellowknife and Inuvik.
- In April 2008, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 community-based mental health and addiction workers in the Beaufort Delta.
- Focus population included Counsellors and Community Wellness Workers (GNWT positions).
- 6-10 additional interviews are scheduled for practitioners in other NWT communities in July and August 2008.
Community Change and Practice:
Initial Reflections
Next Steps

- Currently completing data collection and analysis.
- Full community report will be prepared by January 2009.
In Conclusion…

Mahsi Cho, Quyanainni, Thank you to the Community Mental Health and Addictions Professionals who shared their knowledge and experiences with me, the Department of Health and Social Services as well as the Beaufort-Delta Health and Social Services Authority for your support.

Funding for this initiative was generously provided by International Polar Year Canada and the Northern Scientific Training Program.