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DAY 1 – JUNE 12 WORKSHOPS/SESSIONS

MORNING SESSIONS

A1. Exploring the Use of Simulation-Based Learning to Promote Trauma-Informed Care Approaches for Youth in Therapeutic Campus-Based Care

Presenters

Dr. Angelique Jenney, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Krista West, Therapeutic Campus Based Care Program at Wood's Homes Calgary

Therapeutic Campus-Based Care (TCBC) environments provide support and intervention for young people in care with complex needs and requires skilled providers. These skills are not taught in classroom settings, but often through on-the-job learning experiences. The onboarding time and resources for each staff is significant and the potential for distressing learning experiences occurring early in a new worker's trajectory can discourage them from remaining in the field to the point of developing competence and mastery for this difficult work. Simulation-based learning (SBL) opportunities offer a range of learning scenarios that can be experienced safely to build knowledge and insight. This project creating a number of virtual gaming simulations (VGS) as a mechanism to improve access to trauma-informed care skills training and provide opportunities for the development of practice competencies in both student and professional practitioners in TCBC settings. Multiple complex episodes, requiring different levels of competency and complexity (novice, advanced beginner, and competent) have been created and are in the early stages of piloting. These scenarios are designed to help staff recognize and respond to trauma in young clients while maintaining safety for themselves and the youth. Scenarios involve intersectionality where learners are presented with a range of diverse clients to address equity, diversity and inclusion as part of targeted learning. This 60-minute presentation will describe the potential for SBL within TCBC settings to support trauma-informed care approaches with new staff. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with the SBL scenario and discuss experiences and implications for future developments.

A2. "That Safe Place" Early Career Child Protection Social Workers and the Search for Safety

Presenters

Faye Hamilton, Social Work at MacEwan University

Early career child protection social workers are highly vulnerable to experiencing negative impacts as a result of their work due, in part, to the combination of the intensity of the work and being young and inexperienced (Jack & Donnellan, 2010, Jankowski, 2010, Wilke et al. 2020). This presentation will cover the learnings gleaned from a study of early career child protection social workers in relation to how the participants were affected by the challenging aspects of their work and how they were impacted by the context in which they were practicing. The application of trauma informed practice as a theoretical framework identified safety as the essential aspect of

their experiences that shaped the participant's responses to the work they were doing. Key aspects of creating and supporting safety for early career child protection social workers will be discussed.

A3. The Ethical and Legal Conundrum of Under-Resourcing Child Welfare Systems Leading to Systemic Failure

Presenters

Julie Mann-Johnson, University of Calgary

Chris Tortorelli, Mount Royal University

Peter Choate, Mount Royal University

Eileen Munro authored the Munro Review of Children Protection in the United Kingdom in 2011 where she recommended a shift from over bureaucratized systems of child protection towards one that valued professional expertise and the professional's focus on the safety and welfare of children and youth (Munro, 2011). Yet twelve years later, child welfare systems in much of the global north continue to be connected to neo-liberal contexts fraught with austerity measures, a devaluing of professional social work expertise, and the ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous and racialized populations. With a focus on the Alberta provincial context, this presentation will highlight the contemporary context where child welfare practice has been devalued with moves towards lowering professional qualifications, under-resourcing the sector, and increased bureaucratization. All while evidence in Alberta points towards systemic failures including an increase of the deaths of children and young people in care, an increase in the number of children and youth in provincial care, and an increase in the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth care. This presentation considers how legislators and policy makers are perpetuating systemic failures, while simultaneously devaluing and under-resourcing child welfare systems of care. The role academics can play to highlight these failures will also be discussed.

A4. A Transformative Change for Youth in Transition, the Alberta Children and Family Services Story

Presenters

Jerry Mortensen, Executive Director

Jackie Astle, Director, Youth in Transition Branch

Ministry of Alberta Children and Family Services (CFS)

Are you seeing it? It is happening all across Canada, Transformative change for post intervention supports. Alberta Children and Family Services wants to share our story with you. Over the past four years, Alberta has fundamentally transformed provincial post-intervention programming, supports and services by launching the new Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP). TAP is a provincial program designed to provide consistent holistic supports and services for young adults 18-24 years old in Alberta, who are transitioning out of the care system. TAP provides supports

and services that focus on; supported transitions, achieving interdependence, maintaining stable lifelong connections, developing autonomy, and pursuing education and employment. By electing to receive supports with TAP, young adults, along with their natural supports, and community members are supported in healthy relationships with family and community, opportunities to build life skills, strong identity and have identified hopes and dreams.

The proposed YIT presentation at the Prairie Child Welfare Consortium 2024, will provide an opportunity to highlight the story of how TAP reflects innovation in design, implementation, operations and evaluation of Alberta's transformative program model. The presentation will also highlight work with First Nations Communities and Delegated First Nations Agencies (DFNA), Inter-Provincial protocol, Inter-ministerial projects /processes and the development of young adult from care focused contracts and services.

The Youth in Transition Branch (YIT) leads the ministry of Alberta Children and Family Services (CFS) in the delivery of targeted approaches to support youth and young adults, in and from care as they transition to adulthood, through the Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP), Advancing Futures (AF) and Youth Strategies initiatives. YIT programming and supports empower young adults from care to meet their full potential through self-selection of specialized programming that supports their unique needs. The Branch is provincially structured, centrally managed and locally delivered across Alberta.

A5. [MOSAIC Newcomer Family Resource Network on Supporting Newcomer Parents in Winnipeg.](#)

Presenters

Maisa'a Haj- Ahmad, Director of Family Programs
Gabriela Galli, Parents Program Coordinator and Lead Mentor
Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network.

One concern that causes significant distress among immigrant parents in Canada is how to effectively discipline (teach) their children. Numerous parents who are newcomers experience a great deal of uncertainty regarding how they should handle conflicts with their children. Additionally, many of these parents hold concerns that their children will be taken into home care if they make a mistake that is potentially deemed inappropriate. The reality that a significant number of these parents originate from societies frequently employing corporal punishment intensifies their worry and anxiety. When they learn that Canada views such behaviours as improper, individuals may feel disempowered, bewildered, and anxious.

So, the "Parenting in a New Country" presentation explores the commonalities and distinctions in parenting practices and elucidates the function of Child and Family Services. This presentation helps parents gain a comprehensive understanding of Canada's parenting regulations and conventions to alleviate anxiety and facilitate a smoother and more prosperous adjustment for them and their families. This interactive presentation not only imparts critical knowledge, but it will also provide parents with information on where to find parenting resources upon their arrival in Canada.

A6. Seeing Action as Intentional, Contextual, and Relational: Using the Action-Project Method in Child Welfare Research.

Presenters

Daniel Ji, UBC School of Nursing

The Action-Project Method (A-PM) is a qualitative research approach used to describe and understand goal-directed actions. Initially developed in counselling and vocational psychology, the A-PM is rooted in Contextual Action Theory which assumes that the meaning of human actions can be constructed across time in the short term as joint projects, and over the longer term as careers. A-PM uses three distinct perspectives to understand goal-directed joint actions: observable behaviour, internal processes (i.e., reported feelings and thoughts), and social meaning reflected in goals. These perspectives are suitable for addressing child welfare research questions pertaining to significant family transitions or life events (e.g., how foster coparents integrate children into their care). Advantages of this unique method include its close conceptualization of human experiences, systematic data gathering and analysis procedures, and usefulness in describing processes of interest over time. In this workshop, researchers experienced with using A-PM will describe how to conduct research using A-PM including how to frame questions, gather and analyse data, providing instructive examples in child welfare research to illuminate the process. As a methodology that gives equal weight to participant voices, captures context, and recognizes the importance of joint actions and goals, our workshop concludes by discussing the promise of A-PM in conducting child welfare research in a discipline like social work that is rooted in social justice.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

A7. Childhood Adversity and Resilience Research Training Platform (CARE RTP): Bringing Together Community Partners, Trainees, and Academics to Increase Research Capacity in Child Welfare.

Presenters

Stewart-Tufescu Ashley, University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work

Tracie O. Afifi, Department of Community Health Sciences and Psychiatry

Overview of the Childhood Adversity and Resilience (CARE) Research Training Platform pilot project: Generating impactful research by developing knowledge, skills, and connections between students/trainees, community partners, and academics with the aim of preventing child maltreatment and improving child welfare practices. This is a Public Health Agency of Canada funded project at the University of Manitoba aimed at increasing research capacity in child maltreatment, child welfare and family violence. The project trains and supports researchers partnering with community organizations to answer research questions regarding child maltreatment and child welfare. This project is cross-disciplinary and is student focused.

A8. Building Stronger Futures: A Two-Generation Approach to Enhance Child Wellbeing in Northern Manitoba.

Presenters

Michelle Johnathan, University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work Northern Program.

Children and youth have the right to health, high-quality care, and protection from violence and neglect, as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Canada, child welfare legislation is primarily governed by provincial and territorial authorities, with Indigenous bodies taking more control over child welfare through culturally specific approaches.

This presentation highlights the critical need for a two-generation approach to child wellbeing in Northern Manitoba, addressing the interconnected needs of both parents and children. This holistic strategy integrates parental skill development, and community resources to break the cycle of poverty and intergenerational trauma, and to foster stronger, healthier communities and better future outcomes for children and families.

A9. Supporting Family and Creating Safety Through Networks

Presenter:

Joshua Van Mulligan, Supervisor, Western CFS
Marnie Wallis, Network Facilitator, Western CFS

Networks are at the core of our work with families. In 2022, the General Child and Family Services Authority (GA) along with our agencies embarked on a journey to co-create a network facilitation training. The goal of the training is to help workers gain skills and increase confidence in assisting families to build upon natural safety networks. Networks help to keep children safe while remaining in their family or supported while they transition back home. When we work collaboratively with networks, we facilitate a process in which the network itself can grow from their own strengths, be innovative and create safety and support for children and families.

With the support of the GA, agencies initiated the development of a community of practice in relation to network facilitation. The COP comprised mainly of front-line workers, supervisors, and reps from GA. Come learn about the 2-day training curriculum and how the COP continues to come together to ensure that the ongoing implementation of the important initiative continues to be informed by front line experience.

A10. Indigenous Fathers & the Child Welfare System in Manitoba.

Presenters

Leona Huntinghawk, University of Manitoba

As part of the colonial agenda, the child welfare system in Manitoba has a long history of violence in the Indigenous community. What we know about fathers involved in the child welfare system

is that they are excluded to the point of ‘invisibility’. The focus remains strongly on the mother and child(ren). The situation seems to be more dire when examining the fatherhood experiences of Indigenous males, as Indigenous fathers are the “most socially excluded population group in Canada”. Statistically speaking, fathers whose children are involved with the child welfare system fit into a certain demographic: “young, poor, Indigenous or otherwise racialized, unemployed, lack education and skills, and face much more disadvantage” than the average Canadian male.

There is a reduction of risk to children when fathers are actively engaged in parenting. On a systemic level, child welfare agencies need to ‘see’ fathers. This research study will use qualitative inquiry and storytelling to explore the experiences of Indigenous fathers who (or their children) have encountered the child and family services (“CFS”) system in Manitoba.

A11. Supporting Fathers Healing Journey: Caring Dads Program

Presenters

Gerry Brown and Gillian Rutley
General CFS Authority Domestic Violence Response.

Abstract

As part of the General CFS Authority’s (GA) innovative domestic violence response strategy, the GA has shifted its practice to be more inclusive of all family members. Our work with fathers needed to change and the need for expanding programs into community was imperative in efforts to keep families together. Family preservation is an important component of the strategy. To assist fathers in their parenting and to reunify children sooner, the GA in partnership with Childrens Aid Foundation of Canada, to expand the availability of the Caring Dads program across the province. Caring Dads is a group for dads which combines elements of parenting, fathering and the impact of coercive control while providing a safe space for men to reflect and learn how to enhance the safety and well-being of their children.

Community is key to making this part of the strategy successful. We have partnered with a number of community programs to assist them in creating or expanding their ability to facilitate Caring Dads in community. The goal is to help fathers to be safe and healthy parents so that services such as Child and Family Services are not required. Come join us to learn more about our strategy and how programs such as Caring Dads are helping fathers in their healing journey.

A12. The General CFS Authority (GA) Three Year Province Wide Domestic Violence Response Strategy

Presenter:

Jay Rodgers, General CFS Authority

The presence of domestic violence in a family is harmful to children. It doesn’t matter if the child is “witness” to the abuse or just knows it’s happening that child is the victim of domestic violence. The Manitoba Advocate of Children and Youth recently reported that every 2 hours in

MB a child is exposed to police reported domestic violence incident. GA agencies have reported a high prevalence of domestic violence in families who we serve. The presence of domestic violence is often a factor that contributes to the decision to bring a child into care and when coercive control is not addressed, it becomes very challenging for that family to be reunified. In early 2023, the GA established a five-person expert team to develop a comprehensive province wide strategy for supporting families who experience this domestic violence. Overall, our strategy is inclusive: training to shift practice to work with all members of the family (with a focus on holding the perpetrator accountable), programs for dads, programs for moms, new resources for children and youth and dedicated staff for implementation and coordination. In this session, you will learn about this exciting new initiative and the impact it will have for children, youth, and families.

A13. In Search of Promising Approaches: Canadian Child Protection Service Responses to cases of Intimate Partner Violence

Presenters

Dr. Kendra Nixon (Principal Investigator), Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

Dr. Lise Milne (Co-Investigator), Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina

Dr. Angelique Jenney (Co-Investigator), Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Jamie Pfau, Research Assistant, University of Manitoba

Erin Gobert, Research Assistant, University of Manitoba

Adrienne Ratushniak, Research Assistant, University of Manitoba

Background: Children's exposure to IPV represents one of the most common forms of CPS-investigated maltreatment. Significant changes in policy and practice have occurred across CPS jurisdictions, yet little is known about the impact of these changes. This exploratory project (2018-2023) was designed to understand how CPS systems respond to IPV.

Methods: This mixed methods project included six phases of data collection conducted in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba: a literature review and national scan of CPS policies/practices; interviews with CPS managers/supervisors; online survey with CPS workers and follow-up focus groups; interviews with collateral agencies and IPV survivors.

Panel Focus:

The panel begins with an overview of the project and will involve a discussion of the study's components in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta:

1. National scan of each province/territory's policy response, revealing gaps and emerging trends.
2. Interviews with CPS managers/supervisors
3. Interviews with collateral (community) agencies
4. Interviews with IPV survivors involved with the CPS system.
5. Online survey of frontline CPS staff readiness to manage IPV cases.
6. Follow-up focus groups for CPS survey.

We conclude with recommendations including the need for meaningful engagement with survivors and community organizations, cross-sectoral collaboration, policy reform, intersectoral training, ongoing support, quality supervision, survivor empowerment, and perpetrator accountability.

A14. Advancing the Rights of Children and Youth in Manitoba: Navigating System Change Through Collaborative Advocacy in Youth Addiction Services.

Presenters

Alexandra Guemili, Systemic Advocacy Specialist
Margherita Gagliardi, Advocacy Officer
Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY)

In response to the alarming increase in child deaths linked to substance use disorders (SUDs) in Manitoba, a MACY project team set out to do extensive consultations with diverse stakeholders who work both directly and indirectly with youth addiction issues. This included interviewing youth with lived experience across various regions, who provided invaluable insights into the challenges faced in accessing addiction services in Manitoba. Informed by survey data, internal program analysis, and a comprehensive system map, MACY hosted a Youth Addiction Services Roundtable as a systemic advocacy intervention this April 2024. This initiative aligns with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), emphasizing the highest standards for health services.

This presentation promotes collaborative advocacy methodologies as an effective tool for advancing children's rights, particularly in addressing complex issues compounded by systemic factors. Rather than adopting traditional siloed and hierarchical approaches, this intervention sought to identify issues from the ground up, fostering a holistic understanding of the challenges at hand. The intention behind the roundtable was to lay the groundwork for an intersystem youth addiction strategy, slated for publication later this year as a MACY Special Report. This presentation will delve into lessons learned thus far and assess both the strengths and limitations of this approach.

A15. The Equitable Standards for Transitions to Adulthood for Youth in Care: A First Voice Advocate Led Initiative.

Presenters

Marie Christian, Manitoba's Youth in Care Network
Dr. Melanie Doucet, Project Lead, Child Welfare League of Canada
Susan Russell-Csanyi, National Council of Youth in Care Advocates Manitoba representative

Many youths in the child protection system abruptly lose government support at age of majority due to mandated cut-offs, regardless of readiness to be on their own. This leads to negative outcomes for youth exiting care, including homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Drawing upon research and the expertise of youth with lived experience from across the country, Dr.

Doucet and the National Council of Youth in Care Advocates released the Equitable Standards for Transitions to Adulthood for Youth in Care in 2021. The standards are outlined across 8 transition to adulthood pillars and encourage systems to become youth-centered by meeting young people where they are at and being adaptable to their ongoing needs and life circumstances. The goal is to ensure that youth in care are provided the same standard of support and opportunities for success as they transition to adulthood as their peers not in the system, while also recognizing the traumatic impact of removals from families of origin. The Equitable Standards Evaluation Model, released in fall 2022, provides evaluation criteria by which stakeholders can assess their fidelity to the standards, and determine a concrete action plan for filling in gaps in supports and services to youth in care as they transition to adulthood. Thirteen key stakeholders from across the country, including three child protection Ministries, are piloting the Evaluation Model in 2023-2024. This pilot phase will help us refine the Evaluation Model and make it accessible for all stakeholders across the country to meet the Equitable Standards over time.

DAY 2 – JUNE 13 SESSIONS

MORNING SESSIONS

A16. The Parents Project: Using Linked Population Data to Understand Trajectories and Health Outcomes of First Nations and Non-First Nations Parents Involved in Child Protective Services.

Presenters

Lindey Courchene, First Nations Family Advocate Office
Kathleen Kenny, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy.

Child Protective Services (CPS) interventions has been shown to significantly affect the health of parents, yet there has been sparse research on its distinct role in health inequities experienced by First Nations parents who are disproportionately over-represented in the system in Manitoba. Incorporating perspectives and research priorities from representatives from First Nations government, community organizations, and CPS authorities and leveraging novel linked data from the Manitoba Population Research Repository, the Parents Project research study is aiming to 1) identify how many First Nations and non-First Nations parents are involved with CPS, and how they move through the system; and 2) identify mental and physical health outcomes for First Nations and non-First Nations parents that occur during and following CPS interventions. Our presentation will describe the Parents Project rationale, advisory structure, aims, and results from two analyses, including the population-level prevalence of CPS interventions among parents and their impact on premature mortality. Our results show that 50% of First Nations parents in Manitoba had CPS involvement with their children (compared to 13% among non-First Nations parents), and that First Nations parents experienced the highest rate of premature mortality following intervention by this system. Mitigating harms to parents involved with this system, as well as addressing the vast over-exposure of First Nations families to it, should constitute crucial focus points for health and social policy interventions directed by First Nations.

A17. Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adolescents' Subjective Well-being: Lessons learned from the Youth Voices of the Well-being and Experiences Study

Presenters

Ana Osorio, Ashley Stewart-Tufescu, Julie-Anne McCarthy, Tamara Taillieu, and Tracie O. Afifi.
University of Manitoba

The literature on childhood adversity is dominated by adults' perspectives, and children's voices are largely absent in research. There is a dearth of information about the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and adolescents' subjective well-being (SWB). This study examined adolescents' self-reported ACEs history and the likelihood of self-reporting optimal SWB. Data were from the Wave 1 (2017-18) of the longitudinal and intergenerational Well-being and Experiences Study conducted in Manitoba, Canada (n=1,002 adolescents, 14-17 years). An expanded list of 13 ACEs, including child maltreatment, child protective involvement, household challenges and peer victimization, was assessed. SWB was measured using the Mental Health

Continuum-Short Form. Descriptive statistics and bivariate associations were calculated. Logistic regression models for individual and cluster ACEs and SWB, adjusting for physical and mental health conditions and sociodemographic characteristics, were computed. Results showed that half of the adolescents (50.4%) reported flourishing well-being. The prevalence of experiencing at least one ACE was 86.1%. Among all adolescents, the most prevalent ACEs were parental mental illnesses (37.8%), spanking (30.7%) and parental separation or divorce (27.8%). The absence of a history of ACEs, except for parental gambling issues, significantly increased the odds of reporting flourishing SWB (Adjusted Odds Ratios-AORs ranged from 1.35 for no exposure to parental divorce to 6.51 for living in a safe community). Results highlight the importance of growing up in healthy and protective environments and may inform prevention and intervention efforts to reduce ACEs and to promote well-being during childhood and across life course in Manitoba.

A18. Making Sense of Complicated Love: Partners of child sexual abuse perpetrators speak.

Presenters

Lorna Hanson, Child Protection Branch
Eveline Milliken, University of Manitoba

This chapter shares the outcomes of a qualitative study that explored the experiences and impact on people whose intimate partners were found to have sexually abused children. Child sexual abuse is complicated because of secrecy, the repugnancy of the acts, the devastation it has on individuals and families, and the tendency of society to criticize and judge all involved. A feminist theory framework created an invitation for participants to share their experiences, and to place their responses within society's social constructs, in order to remove stigma and blame (Dominelli & McLeod, 1989; Dominelli, 2002; D'Arcy et al, 2012; Kinser, 2010; Milliken, 2017). The research study discovered the effects this experience had on the individuals. Participants described profound and the long-lasting impacts the experience had on them. As non-offending parents, participants described the overarching sense of confusion and responsibility that they felt. They noted that this sense of failure was reinforced by family, community, and the very systems designed to intervene and support families. Recommendations are made for child welfare practice.

A19. Examining the experiences of youth in the child and youth care system and their service providers: Impacts and emerging lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Presenters

David B. Nicholas, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
Kimberly Spicer, Government of Alberta, in Edmonton.
Roslynn T. Zulla, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
Arlene Eaton-Erickson, Social Work program and the Child and Youth Care Program at Norquest College.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread impacts on the well-being of youth receiving child intervention supports and services within the child and youth care system. An exploratory qualitative study examined COVID-19 pandemic impacts on these youth and their service providers based across Alberta. Seventeen youth and 38 service providers participated in interviews or focus groups via telephone or online technology. Content analysis of transcribed interviews and focus groups revealed the following impacts of the pandemic: (i) disruption in daily life, (ii) decreased mental health, (iii) individual resiliency and growth, and (iv) emergent means of moving forward amidst adversity. Findings highlight the need for continuity of care for youth with vulnerabilities especially in adverse circumstances such as a pandemic. These findings amplify the importance of maintaining 'essential services' including youth advocates, even in constrained pandemic or other emergency circumstances. For service providers, a supportive work environment was described to assist in nurturing adaptation as service providers sought to support youth during the pandemic despite access and communication challenges. Considerations and implications for pandemic-based support to youth in the child and youth care system will be presented, as will guidance on strategies to support post-pandemic recovery.

A20. [Settler Colonialism and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Indigenous Children & Youth.](#)

Presenter: Jolene Heida, York University School of Social Work

Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) of Indigenous youth is a direct consequence of settler colonialism, and the state continues to benefit from the productions of exploitative labour. The extensive nature of exploitation of Indigenous youth, and the multiplicity of intersectionality of their experiences in Canada is considerable and diverse, and this study provided a critical review of the literature which connected experiences of CSE with experiences of settler colonialism, state sanctioned interventions (i.e. child welfare, policing) and land extraction and exploitation. Theoretically this study utilized Anti-Colonial Theory and Indigenous Feminist Theory to situate Indigenous youth's experiences of CSE within the context of racism, misogyny, and settler colonialism, and offer a framework to critique the centrality of the colonial agenda in the literature. As Metis researcher it was vital that this project was grounded in Indigenous worldviews, and prioritized knowledge from Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous women who have lived experience in this field. Findings of the study are especially relevant to social workers in the child welfare sector given the intersections of child welfare and commercial sexual exploitation.

A21. [FearlessR2W - Parent Advocacy Group.](#)

Presenters

Burton Mary, FearlessR2W, Service User Advocacy Group

Fearless R2W is a non-profit that serves parents working to reunify with their children and youth aging out of care. We provide opportunities for learning about child welfare in Manitoba, build community and provide advocacy when possible. This is a community advocacy group that was

founded by Mary Burton, a grandmother who was navigating the child welfare system in Manitoba. Programs value service user knowledge and provide unique grassroots models. There are no other programs like this in Canada.

A22. Miyo ohpikihawasowin and Joining the Circle project.

Presenters

Sharon Steinhauer, Caleb Anacker and Shirley Hunter, University Blue Quills, Social Work

This presentation will share the innovative work the Department of Social Work at Blue Quills has been doing to prepare social work students for working in child welfare and related fields. Blue Quills has a long relationship with Children's Services and offers a two-day experiential learning event for frontline and management workers. Participants learn about oppressive practices and policies and participate in Ceremony. Participants are encouraged to do their own self-reflections and examine their work. They also provide a two-month follow-up.

A23. Child Welfare and Field Education.

Presenters

Julie Mann-Johnson, University of Calgary
Bernadette lahtail, CEO, Creating Hope Society

Join experienced field instructor and executive director of Creating Hope Society, Bernadette lahtail and Julie Mann-Johnson, Associate Director of Field Education at the University of Calgary for a round table discussion on experiences of students and field instructors in field education placements. Discussion will focus on identifying successful recruitment approaches, exciting learning activities, current realities, and supervisory approaches. Collectively, this conversation will identify opportunities to articulate the realities and benefits of these field education placements.

A24. Social Work Child Welfare Curriculum Across Canada

Presenters

Jennifer Hedges, University of Manitoba
Shawn Webb, University of Manitoba

The PCWC has a research team, including student researchers gathering data from Schools of Social Work across Canada to examine what students are being taught about child welfare in their programs. This will help in understanding the social work curriculum for child welfare and how it can be improved.

A25. A Canadian Child and Youth Advocate Reports on Deaths of Children with FASD Engaged with Child Welfare Services.

Presenters:

Christina Tortorelli, Mount Royal University

Dorothy Badry, University of Calgary

Peter Choate, Mount Royal University

This presentation offers current research and evidence on the risks and vulnerabilities for children and youth with FASD involved in the child welfare system from a review of Canadian Child & Youth Advocate reports. It is important to note that the Office of the Child & Youth Advocate in Alberta provides regular ongoing reporting on child and youth deaths in care which contributes to our understanding of this phenomena. It is a fact that Indigenous children are disproportionately represented in the majority of reports released by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate in Alberta and this trend has been sustained over the last 20 years. An analysis of reports dating back to 2009 and up to 2024 will be presented. Reports were reviewed for evidence of FASD either diagnosed or possible and there is an increasing trend of children/youth who have actually received an FASD diagnosis. These reports offer critical insight into the circumstances of the child/youth, child welfare status and manner of death. Of deep concern is the overall reporting of high-risk drug use and risky behavior as contributing factors, with many reports confirming opioid overdose as cause of death. The child welfare system serves this most vulnerable population of children with a lifelong disability and the critical question of the provision of FASD informed care for this high needs population must be addressed. There is a disturbingly increasing trend of the number of deaths of children with FASD being reported in both child advocate and coroner reports. It is critical to identify and recognize the experiences of this population, recognizing that equitable disability tailored interventions need to be developed and child welfare staff need to be trained in order to impact the disproportionate number of deaths of children with FASD involved in child intervention processes as a matter of disability justice.

A26. [Bringing the Children Home: Conversations on Inuit Child Welfare in Manitoba.](#)

Presenters

Elder Maata Tagaaq

Patricia (Patti) Johnston, University of Calgary

Judy Clark is Inuk, Manitoba Inuit Association

Ariel Voisey, Manitoba Child, and Family Services

Dr. Marlyn Bennett, University of Calgary

Dr. Ariane Benoit, French National Research Centre in Quebec

Dr. Kathleen Kenney, University of Manitoba

The Bringing the Children Home project is an important first step towards long-overdue discussions concerning Inuit child welfare in Manitoba. Led by the Manitoba Inuit Association, this research project focuses on the impacts of child welfare on Inuit mothers and their families

who travel from Nunavut to seek medical care in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The project was launched in 2022 by a small but highly committed group of health and social service professionals, scholars, and community members who came together to discuss child welfare in Nunavut and the experience of Inuit families accessing health and social services in Winnipeg. The development of the project has been informed by the authors' personal and professional experiences within these systems. Insights from the early stages of the project have highlighted concerns for Nunavut children and families in their interactions with the child welfare system when in Winnipeg for medical care. Early discussions have also made it clear that it is critical for this work to be guided by continued conversations with Inuit families and to include the perspectives and experiences of health and social service workers. Our team makes the case for research that transcends disciplines and bridges systems to explore how Inuit children and families can be ensured safe, supportive experiences in Winnipeg hospitals and return home together following medical visits outside Nunavut. In addition to presenting the foundations and initial steps of this research project, insights into these topics from focus groups with young mothers in the Kivalliq will be shared.

A27. The Wellbeing of Children Living with Chronically Ill Parents in Canada: Economic, Emotional, and Social Dimensions

Presenter: Mackline Nuwasiima, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba

The wellbeing of children living with chronically ill parents in Canada encompasses economic, emotional, and social dimensions. Chronic illnesses, defined as health conditions lasting over 12 months and causing impairments or functional limitations, impose significant burdens on families. Despite Canada's universal healthcare system, indirect costs such as medication, specialized care, and loss of parental income due to reduced work hours or job loss create substantial economic challenges for these households. This study delves into the complex interplay between health, economics, and social dynamics, examining how these factors collectively impact the wellbeing of children. Beyond financial strains, children living with chronically ill parents face emotional stress, social isolation, and developmental challenges. These children often take on additional responsibilities within the household, affecting their academic performance, peer relationships, and overall emotional wellbeing. They may also experience intensified anxiety and a perceived increased risk of developing illnesses themselves.

The research aims to: Identify the economic challenges faced by children living with chronically ill parents., Examine the role of social support networks and government assistance programs in mitigating these challenges, Explore the emotional and social implications of children living with a chronically ill parent.

By investigating these dimensions, the study seeks to inform the development of comprehensive support mechanisms that can improve the economic, emotional, and social outcomes for children living with chronically ill parents. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges these children face and provides a foundation for policy and programmatic responses aimed at enhancing their overall wellbeing.

A28. Our Commitment to New Staff: Minimum Training Framework

Presenters

Jay Rodgers, Lisa Schmidt, General Authority

Abstract

As an organization, The General CFS Authority's (GA) primary purpose is to support our agencies and create an environment where staff feel valued, confident, competent and supported in doing what can be a very challenging job. So how do we accomplish this?

The GA has developed a training framework comprised of a series of training modules that span over two years to assist new staff in their learning and developmental journey. The framework sets out which modules are to be taken within certain time frames within the two years. The framework is designed to build confidence and skills over the two years. We start with foundational concepts and legislative frameworks in the virtual e-learning courses. Then we build towards advanced upskilling and professional development which is accomplished through a combination of in person training and interactive webinars. The comprehensive training series is built upon leading practices in the field. The GA provides multiple opportunities for staff to develop skills, enhance practice and build confidence. Our commitment to staff is to provide a learning experience with the opportunity to engage with other Agencies and community organizations. Our training goal is to equip staff with all the tools, skills and cultural humility they need to help them work effectively while also improving job satisfaction.

To fully support staff, we recognize that there has to be more than attending training. Through the support of the GA, there are agency based Leading Practice Specialists and Communities of Practice to deepen their knowledge and expertise. Come learn about the training framework and how the GA continues to support the integration of learning into practice.

A29. Staff Recruitment and Retention in Saskatchewan

Presenters

Salim Otiso, Director, Operational Support
Kari Paton, Executive Director, Service Delivery
Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services

Over the past several years, recruitment and retention have been a key challenge within Child and Family Programs (CFP), especially in our rural and northern communities. The government has employed multiple strategies to address the issue, however, it continues to impact service delivery to communities.

The Saskatchewan CFP leaders would like to present to PCWC on our Recruitment and

Retention strategies that focus on culture, diversity, and inclusion. Our presentation will focus on the development and support of our two employee teams.

The Saskatchewan government's commitment to promoting culture, diversity, and inclusion within the public service is one of the strategies that we have recently implemented. We think that placing these as our top priority is a large part of the solution to the current challenges regarding recruitment and retention. Currently, we have two groups providing ongoing peer support to our employees.

Team of Indigenous Employees of Saskatchewan (TIES): The purpose of this team is not only supporting Indigenous employees in recruitment and retention efforts, but also to make a positive impact on our Indigenous families and children. This Indigenous led group model's principles is around providing a sense of belonging, achieving competence, mastery in personal goals, finding independence, setting goals, and providing generosity to colleagues and community.

CFP Diversity Team: This team recognizes that a diverse workplace facilitates exposure to multiple world perspectives, which promotes creativity and innovation. It aims to provide a circle of peer support to employees who are immigrants/visible minorities. The objective is to ensure these staff are supported in their transition to a Canadian government workforce; to find success in their chosen CFP career, and to identify cultural learning and practice barriers. Additionally, our Diversity Team works with our families and children to help them navigate intricate and sometimes complex cultural differences such as child discipline, language, etc.

These groups share a projected outcome of the recruitment and retention of staff by supporting the transition into the workplace and also supporting the families and children that we serve. Improving cultural competence is an expectation within the workplace, which these two groups are working hard to ensure that we reach our goal.

A30. A Journey to Transform Partnerships in Support of Indigenous Child and Family Well-being

Presenters

Jeffrey Schiffer, Chief Impact Officer

Rebecca Green

Children's Aid Foundation of Canada

The overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care is one of the most visible and destructive legacies of colonialism in Canada. The first five calls to action of the TRC refer specifically to child welfare. Addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and building better systems of child welfare will require collaborative work led by Indigenous peoples, and supported by the Canadian government, organizations, and other partners. This collective work

must address the systemic causes of overrepresentation and prioritize Indigenous knowledge and values.

The Children's Aid Foundation of Canada has a responsibility to contribute to this collective endeavor of Truth and Reconciliation and has begun a journey to partner with and learn from Indigenous-led organizations in Manitoba. We come to this work with humility and a dedication to build new pathways in support of transformative change and targeted strategies that address the specific needs of Indigenous children and families. As a mainstream philanthropic body seeking to work in allyship, this means actively engaging in undoing colonial approaches to giving and meaningfully centering Indigenous wisdom within the context of Reconciliation through our work.

Using learning grounded in new approaches to relationship building, with tangible examples from program design to delivery, this presentation will share how the Foundation has begun to work together differently with Indigenous communities, community-based organizations, and families for change. It is our hope that sharing these examples will lead to conversations and collaborations to further transform thinking on partnership and engagement in support of Indigenous approaches to child and family well-being.

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

A31. Developing the Canadian Child Welfare Information System Intake and Assessment Module Protocol

Presenters

Isabel Garces-Davila, Kristen Letkeman, Richelle Ready, Tracie Afifi, Ashley Stewart-Tufescu.
University of Manitoba

The Canadian child welfare system contains a complex arrangement of 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions and Indigenous-led child welfare organizations with distinct data collection approaches. This variation makes quantifying and comparing child welfare practices across Canada challenging. To address this issue, the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing the Canadian Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS), a public health surveillance system aimed at examining child maltreatment and welfare services across the country.

Objective: This literature review synthesizes existing evidence on the use of administrative and other data sources related to child welfare services intake and assessment processes for public health surveillance, research, or performance measurement purposes in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, The USA, and New Zealand. The aim of this review was addressed by utilizing a scoping review methodology that includes grey literature searches and scientific literature from academic database searches and follows the World Health Organization (WHO) Review Guide and the Joanna Briggs Institute 2020 Guide for Scoping Reviews.

Results: The results from this review highlight that administrative databases are increasingly being used in child welfare practices to measure different types of child maltreatment, better understand marginalized populations' overrepresentation in child welfare services, and evaluate policy changes.

Conclusion: This literature review summarizes the use of administrative data in child welfare in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. This review aimed to understand the challenges and opportunities of using administrative child welfare databases that collect unit-level non-aggregated data.

A32. Reporting child abuse and neglect: Learning from the pathways of Canadian mandated reporters

Presenters

Heather Bergen, York University

The duty to report child abuse and neglect is a key piece of legislation impacting child protection practice. This paper will draw on preliminary findings from a pan-Canadian survey of mandated reporters about their duty to report. Legislation has shifted to include witnessing intimate partner violence and even risk of future harm. Research shows that most reports to child protection are not substantiated; rather increasing numbers of families experience stressful investigations. These experiences can inadvertently end up discouraging families from accessing services for fear of future investigations. Additionally, research shows that as thresholds for reporting are lowered, racism and bias play a role in the increased number of calls (Mohamud et al 2021).

This paper seeks to uncover how mandated reporters navigate this complicated responsibility by asking Canadian mandated reporters why they are reporting to child protection, what they hope will be the outcomes and what they see as needed to provide meaningful support for families. Using an anti-carceral feminist theoretical approach this paper will share some initial findings and themes from the survey. There will be a focus on how to transform practice so that mandated reporting practices can be more deeply rooted in child safety and family well-being.

A33. Preventing Placement Breakdowns in Child Welfare with a Foster Parent Pre-service Training Program.

Presenters

Jamie Pfau, Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba

Objectives: The number of placement breakdowns in Manitoba is a serious social issue. Current literature has found an increase in stable placements and fewer breakdowns when foster parents engage in a pre-service training program. Despite this, Manitoba is one of the only jurisdictions in the world that does not require such training. This has created inconsistent approaches and capacity of the caregivers.

Method: This qualitative study explored the need for a pre-service training program for Manitoba's foster parents to promote stable placements. The participants (n=13) were from three different groups: child welfare professionals (n=4); foster parents (n=6); and previous children in care (n=3). The participants engaged in a semi-structured interview. Both critical and standpoint theories were used as guiding theoretical frameworks. As both a foster parent and researcher, reflexivity was used extensively to guide this research.

Results: Significant findings included: every participant supported a pre-service training program in Manitoba. Furthermore, most foster parents in this study felt unsupported and unprepared for their roles as caregivers to children with complex needs. This finding was corroborated by child welfare professionals, and from previous children in care.

Conclusions: Manitoba requires a pre-service training program to improve caregiver capacity and prevent placement breakdowns. The participants provided training recommendations, including communication and documentation, a more comprehensive orientation, a systems training, and child-focused training.

A34. Impact of out-of-home care on children's outcomes: A longitudinal cohort study using linked administrative data

Presenters

Marni Brownell, Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba

Kayla Frank, First Nations Family Advocate Office

Jamie Pfau, Community Health Sciences, University of Manitoba.

Objective: Despite high rates of children in care of Child & Family Services (CFS), there is little rigorous evidence isolating the impact of out-of-home care on children's outcomes. The objective of this study was to fill that knowledge gap.

Approach: Guided by an Advisory Circle of First Nations (FN) Elders and conducted in partnership with FN researchers, we used linked administrative data to identify all Manitoba children served by CFS at FN agencies (FNA) and other Manitoba agencies (OMA) (2007-2018). We compared health, education, and legal system outcomes of those in care (FNA n=10,856; OMA n=8,468) to those with protection concerns but not in care (FNA n=12,896; OMA n=14,394). Using instrumental variable analysis with agency rate of out-of-home care as the instrument, outcomes between groups were compared using 2-stage multivariate probit regressions adjusted for child and maternal/family factors.

Results: There was high variation of rates of taking children into care at the agency level. Odds of teen pregnancy, teen birth, and positive STI tests were higher and odds of vaccination at age 2 were lower for children in care than children not in care. Odds of being accused, victim, or charged with a crime, and odds of being incarcerated were higher for children in care.

Conclusions/Implications: Out-of-home care negatively affects children’s health, social and legal system outcomes. CFS agencies should work with FN leaders to develop and implement strategies to reduce the number of children taken into care. Decision-making and actions taken by CFS agencies should be monitored and evaluated.

A35. Safe and Together Model: Training to Shift Practice Working with Families Affected by Domestic Violence.

Presenters

Rhonda Dagg

General CFS Authority Domestic Violence Response

In early 2023, the General CFS Authority (GA) established a team to develop a comprehensive province wide strategy for supporting families who experience domestic violence. A foundational component of this overall strategy is to expand the availability of the Safe and Together Model training throughout the Child and Family Services system, into other sectors and in partnership with community.

The Safe and Together™ Model is an internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child- and family-serving systems become domestic violence-informed. This child-centered Model derives its name from the concept that children are best served when we can work toward keeping them safe and together with the non-offending parent (the adult domestic violence survivor). The Model provides a framework for partnering with domestic violence survivors and intervening with domestic violence perpetrators in order to enhance the safety and well-being of children.

In this 90-minute session, you will learn about some of the critical elements of our strategy, including how we plan to expand this training beyond Child and Family Services, targeting law enforcement, other government departments such as health, education, justice, and our community partners. We will discuss the different training options available. Our goal is supporting implementation in our agencies and in our community partners, to change the way we engage with families impacted by domestic violence.

A36. Lessons Learned through Child Welfare Advocacy in Manitoba.

Presenter: Sherry Gott, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth

This presentation with focus on lessons learned through the child welfare advocacy work of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) office. In doing so, it will emphasize decolonization, reconciliation, and collaboration. Participants will learn how programs at MACY are fostering pathways to parity in child welfare through their work to amplify the rights, interests, and viewpoints of children, youth, and young adults in Manitoba. This includes direct advocacy support for young people and their families, the review of child welfare service delivery

after the death or serious injury of a child, youth engagement, and child-centred research and evaluation. MACY is empowered through The Advocate for Children and Youth Act to do systemic advocacy, raise public awareness, and make recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of public services provided to children, youth, and young adults. It is guided by an Elders Council, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and acts according to the best interests of children and youth, including the need for culturally relevant services and supports.

A37. National Directors of Child Welfare Project on Recruitment and Retention

Presenter: Laura Anderson, Child Protection Branch Manitoba, Directors of Child Welfare.

Directors of Child Welfare (DCW) Committee contracted Dr. Linda Burnside to facilitate two think tank sessions in May 2023, and a subsequent report, focused on recruitment and retention of core child welfare staff. The Goal was to examine recruitment and retention challenges in child welfare through best practice research and knowledge exchange across Provinces/Territories and to identify potential solutions to consider. Strategies will be presented for discussion.

DAY 3 – JUNE 14 SESSIONS

MORNING SESSIONS

A38. Honouring Origins: Manitoba's Child and Family Services Journey 2018 – 2024

Presenters

Chris Nash

This presentation provides an overview of Manitoba's recent (2018-2024) child welfare policy drivers and the multi-phase legislative changes that have adapted the provincial legal landscape to reduce barriers as Indigenous Nations exercise their inherent right to deliver child and family services. It will summarize the key changes made through Bill 41 – The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2022) and Bill 32 – An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments) (2023).

A39. First Nation Bachelor of Relational Studies (post diploma) Degree

Yellowquill University is a First Nations Institute of Higher Learning and is the only First Nations Post-secondary Institute in Manitoba. YQUC began in 1984 and will be celebrating their 40th anniversary this year. **An announcement will be made by the Department of Advanced Education, Minister Cable regarding YQUC becoming a recognized post-secondary institute in Manitoba at that celebration.

YQUC offers a variety of programs; the program I want to focus on is the First Nation Bachelor of Relational Studies (post diploma) Degree Program (a First Nation version of a social work program). This program is meant to offer further education to the students who have taken one of the diploma programs: First Nation Child and Family Service Diploma, First Nation Addictions and Mental Health or the Jordan's Principle Community Support Worker or a similar program from another Institute. A student who has a Diploma will be required to do two more years of Relational Studies course to receive their Degree. YQUC is also considering the Prior Learning format for the student who may have certificates and years of work experience. First Nation students have always faced many barriers in achieving a post-secondary education and YQUC wants to be able to fill that gap.

The day program begins September 2024 and the Modular/Cohort versions will begin January 2025.

Yellowquill University College's aspiration is to become a viable option for a postsecondary education for First Nation students or any other student who has an interest and desire to work with First Nation people from a different perspective in Manitoba and other Provinces.

A40. Supporting Residential Care Workers to Provide Trauma-Informed Care to Children and Youth: Findings from a Manitoba Study

Presenters

Dr. Lise Milne, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina
Alexandra Paiva, CFSWM, Brandon Manitoba

Practice and research affirm the critical importance of supporting residential care workers (RCWs) to provide trauma-informed care (TIC) to children and youth, who often present with histories of serious adversity and trauma. This presentation shares findings of a trauma-informed training and support initiative developed for RCWs in Western Manitoba.

Methods:

A 2-day interactive training and support program was co-developed and co-delivered to 20 RCWs by the researcher and the agency's children's therapist, based on the Attachment, Self-Regulation, Competency framework; child/brain development principles; and RCW resilience enhancement strategies. As a follow-up, eight monthly consultations were co-delivered to integrate training concepts, engage in activities, and support RCW resilience enhancement. Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) was completed at pre- and post-test. Focus groups were conducted with RCWs (N=5) and leadership staff (N=4).

Results:

Despite the onset of COVID-19 and myriad unanticipated organizational pressures during the study period, ARTIC findings showed increased favorability toward TIC on all seven subscales. RCW focus group themes included the training program as a safe place to be vulnerable; shift in workplace culture and mentality; acquisition of new language and foundational knowledge; and some disconnect between the training content and their work realities. Leadership focus group themes included appreciating the collaborative, adaptable approach to training development/implementation; adoption of a new training program as an on-going process, requiring sustainability; and workers becoming increasingly creative with, and receptive to TIC. The program demonstrates good fit within the organization's ongoing efforts to provide enhanced TIC services in multiple programming aspects.

A41. Wisdom from the Elders: Kinship care that honours traditional Indigenous ways

Presenters

Susan Burke, University of Northern British Columbia

Healthy Indigenous children and families are arguably at the heart of healthy Indigenous communities. However, in spite of significant changes that have been made to decrease the number of Indigenous children in foster care systems in Canada, they continue to be largely over-represented. The use of kinship care rather than stranger foster care has been viewed as a potential solution; however, as Western and Indigenous organizations move towards policies that

support kinship placements, the question remains as to how that can be done in ways that do not simply perpetuate Western child welfare systems.

This presentation shares research done with 8 First Nations and Métis Elders in British Columbia (BC) who shared their insights regarding kinship care practices that uphold traditional Indigenous values, beliefs, and practices. Suggestions are made regarding how policy makers and practitioners who work with Indigenous children, families, and communities can contribute to these positive changes and, ultimately, to a decrease in the number of Indigenous children in care.

A42. Our Practice: An Innovative Approach to Keeping Families Together

Presenters

Thomas Ens, Rhonda Dagg, Lisa Schmidt, Gerry Brown, Allison Dunfield, Tracy Oleschak, Jay Rodgers

The General Child and Family Services Authority (GA) introduced a new practice model over a decade ago. This practice model uses Structured Decision Making assessment tools, in conjunction with elements from solution-focussed approach. This model allowed for us to be able to accurately and consistently assess safety and risk. It also gave workers the tools and techniques they need to engage with families and co-create safety with families. The GA was among the first jurisdictions around the globe to begin using this Safety-Organized Practice (SOP), as it came to be known.

As our practice evolves, we will continue to explore and include leading best practices that will strengthen our GA service system. Our practice model has been expanded to include: a Reunification Assessment, Enhanced Network Facilitation, Family Finding/Family Seeing, and Safe and Together. We are also partnering with a national partner on a project called Safe at Home, which includes two additional programs: Caring Dads, and Mothers in Mind. All of these approaches create a system that is responsive to families' needs, includes community and networks in planning for families, and allows Child and Family Services to withdraw once the networks are functioning to keep children safe.

We will discuss how we believe that the inclusion of all these elements has contributed to positive trends we have seen in the GA service system.

A43. Services Delivery Models, Indigenous Capacity Building.

Presenters

Eldon Stick, Toni-Rose George, Wahkohtowin Society

The Reunification Family Homes Project is a dedicated professional, culturally orientated & families of Saddle Lake Cree Nation to instill integrity with an emphasis on traditional values that

morally motivate in a supportive & non-judgemental way to Facilitate & teach Families to thrive & live happier, healthy lifestyles. The Reunification is a Live-in transition home for Indigenous families involved with Child& Family Services (CFS) or that require a variety of supports to help create a path towards independent living and healthy choices for the family unit. The Reunification Family Homes are based on a treaty-based framework unique from the Mainstream Child Family Framework.

A44. Reimagining support for families impacted by child welfare legislation, policies, and professional practice

Presenters

Rebecca Foshole-Luke and Erin Ramsperger, Family Advocacy Support Centre (FASC)

This presentation will focus on the community-based systems change work that Family Advocacy Support Centre (FASC) is doing in Alberta to disrupt the intergenerational cycle of child welfare involvement for families. FASC was founded in May 2022, with the vision of a future where every family can ask for help and receive support without fear of discrimination, intrusive intervention, or family separation. Adopting the language used by Dorothy Roberts, we use the term family policing system to describe the child welfare system as it “more accurately captures the role the system plays which includes surveillance, regulation, and punishment, all roles associated with policing rather than children’s welfare.” Rebecca Foshole-Luke founder and executive director of FASC, will speak about FASC’s community justice initiatives related to child welfare legal education for parents, transformative capacity building for mandated reporters, peer empowerment and healing groups, and community-driven research. Our work highlights the need for anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and anti-carceral approaches to addressing child maltreatment and parental challenges. By engaging in this work, we aim to empower parents, and strengthen the ecosystem of support for families experiencing vulnerabilities. At FASC we believe that every child has a right to a healthy family, and every parent has a right to support in raising their children to thrive. By effectively addressing the needs of the parent, we are supporting the intergenerational well-being and safety of children, while also contributing to healthy familial relationships and thriving communities.

A45. Beyond Borders and Biases: Understanding Immigrant Experiences with Child Welfare in Manitoba

Presenters

Dr. Bolaji Akinyele-Akanbi, Faculty of Social work, University of Manitoba

The child welfare system in Canada is a complex network that serves a diverse population, including migrant families who often face unique challenges. Research highlights the stressors and barriers these families encounter, such as language difficulties, cultural misunderstandings, and the struggle to navigate unfamiliar legal and social landscapes. Research has documented the disproportionate involvement of African American families in the child welfare system, with

emerging studies in Canada highlighting similar trends among African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) families (Clarke 2011; Igbu et al 2023). As a distinguished community leader and a former child welfare system in Manitoba, Dr. Akinyele-Akanbi will offer a unique perspective that bridges professional practice and lived experiences. The session will critically evaluate the current methodologies employed by child welfare services when working with migrant families, scrutinize the inclusivity of the system, and propose a trajectory for future advancement