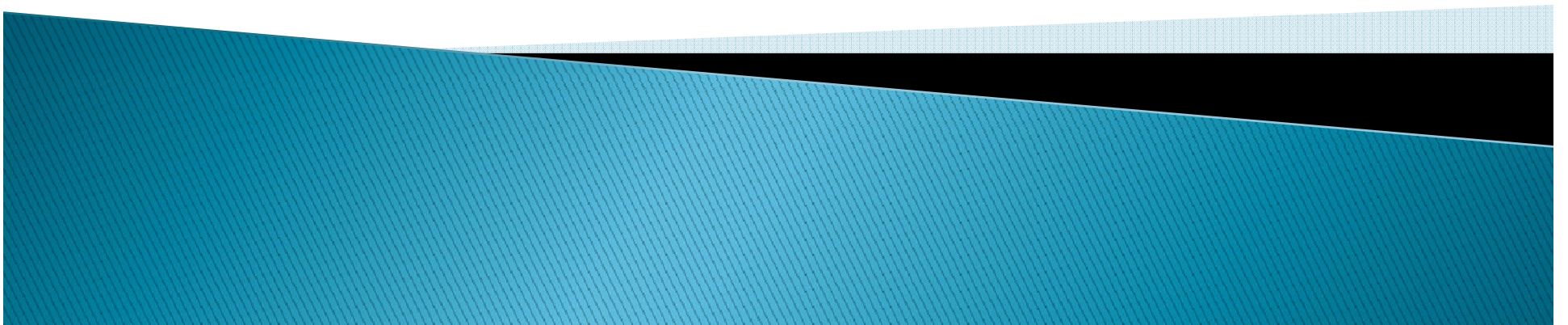


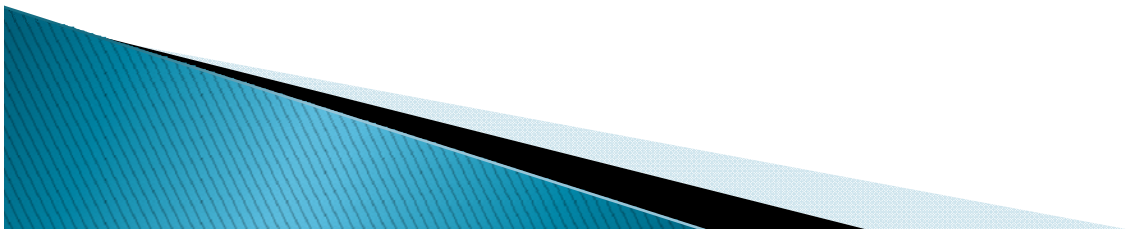
Remembering our Sacred Talk in Research

Gwen Gosek



Overview of Presentation

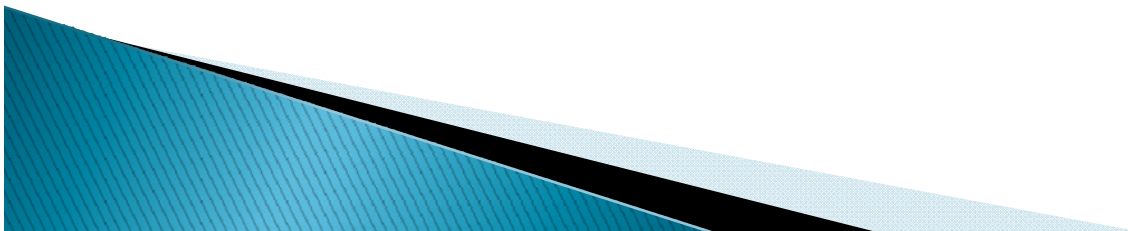
- ▶ Introductions
- ▶ Research approaches: Colonial, Indigenous & Multicultural
- ▶ Questions to guide the research process
- ▶ Overview of research project
- ▶ Challenges to meeting goals
- ▶ How have you been impacted by research in your communities?



Partnerships in Researching

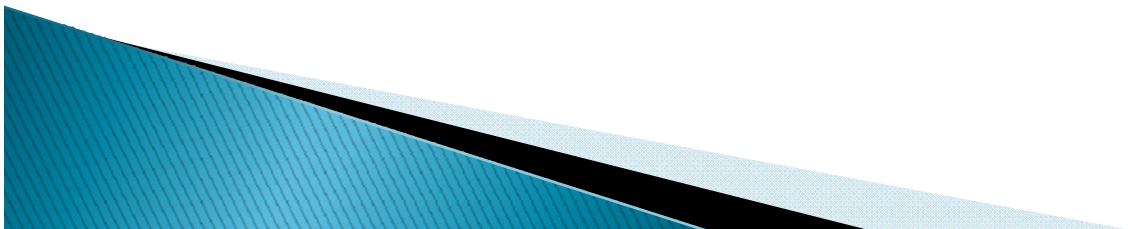
Three approaches to research in Indigenous communities:

- ▶ Colonial Approach
- ▶ Indigenous Approach
- ▶ Multicultural Research Partnerships



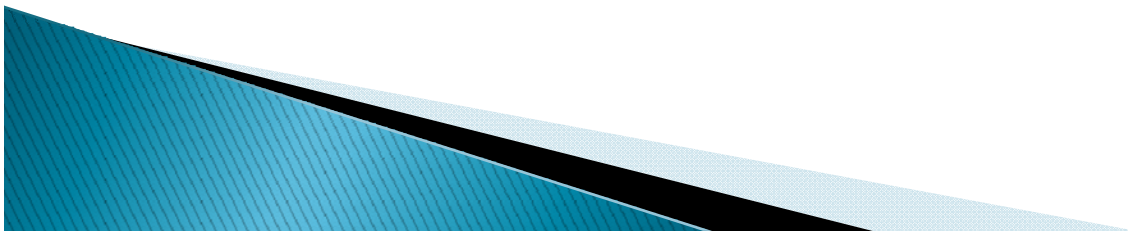
Colonial Approach

- ▶ Researchers included explorers, priests, intellectuals, travelers, anthropologists, medical practitioners, and voyeurs
- ▶ Careers have been built on knowledge extraction, ownership, storage and control over Indigenous knowledge



Colonial Approach

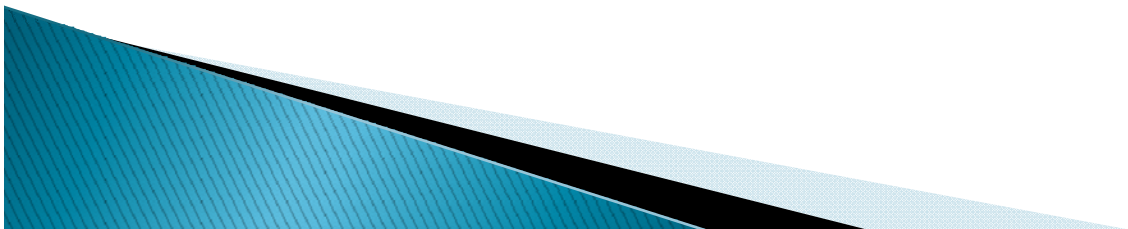
- ▶ The 'objects' of research were observed, written about and assessed through European lens
- ▶ Indigenous peoples were viewed as inferior, savages or exotic specimens



Colonial Approach

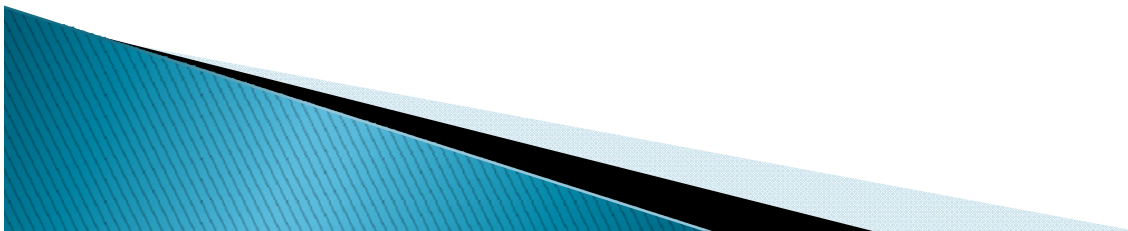
Their approach was often problematic:

- ▶ Disrespected community cultural protocols
- ▶ Ignored Indigenous worldviews & values
- ▶ Focused on the individual versus from a community perspective



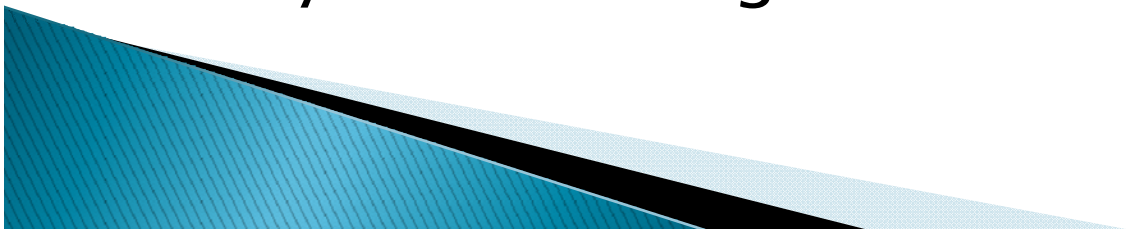
Colonial Approach

- ▶ Incorporated poorly informed research which resulted in poorly informed policies, which in turn produced punitive practical applications
- ▶ Produced findings which often reinforced stereotypes and rendered peoples' realities invisible.



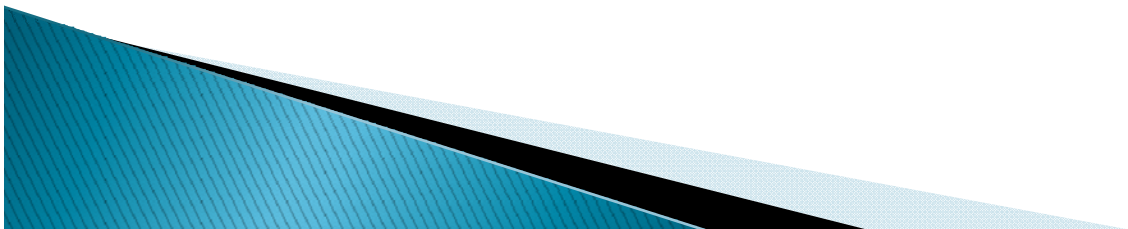
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ Researchers are Indigenous people doing research for Indigenous peoples using Indigenous knowledge and methods
- ▶ Understand the impacts of colonization (How it feels)
- ▶ Understand oppressive methods which have undermined the authenticity of Indigenous ways of knowing



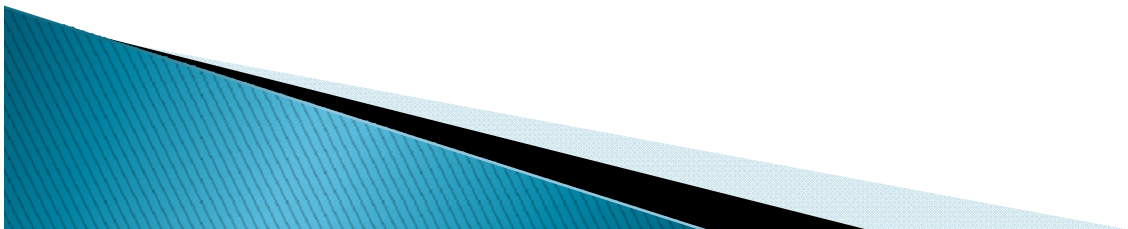
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ Benefits of Indigenous approach
 - Bring different lens and perspective to understanding the issues
 - Understand that communities must own the research
 - Recognize that communities must benefit from the research



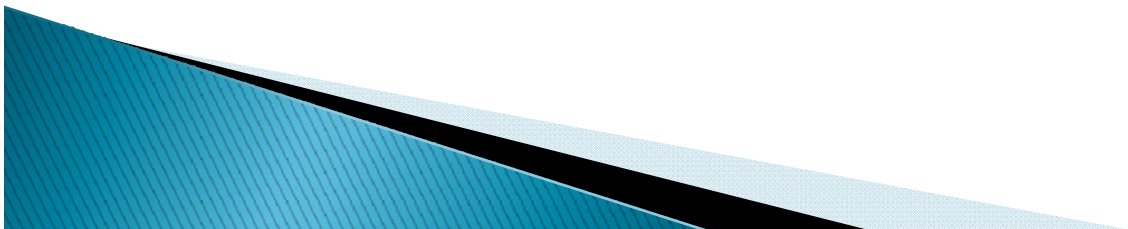
An Indigenous Approach

- Understand research process and sharing of results must be respectful of cultural values and teachings
- Recognize that methods must fit with cultural ways ie story telling and narrative fit with oral traditions
- Focus on maintaining political integrity with the goal of political emancipation, and
- Have the foresight to build on individual, family and community strengths rather than deficits



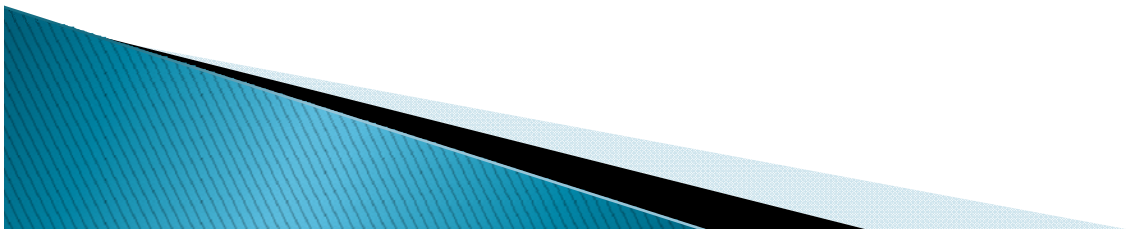
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ Understand that our role is to uncover oppression and support the healing efforts of the individuals, families and communities with whom we work
- ▶ Remember our sacred responsibilities and the power of our sacred voice



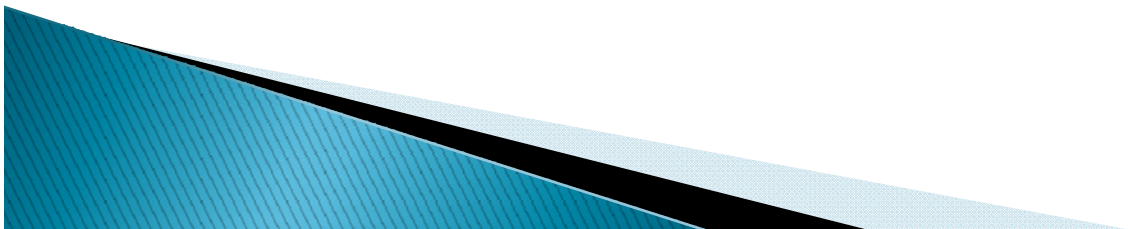
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ Elders admonish us to ‘Speak from the heart’
- ▶ Teaching: to carefully consider your words before speaking; take your time because once the words are spoken, you can’t take them back
- ▶ Our languages are sacred and reflect our relationships to all of creation
- ▶ In research, our ‘sacred talk’ includes both oral and written forms



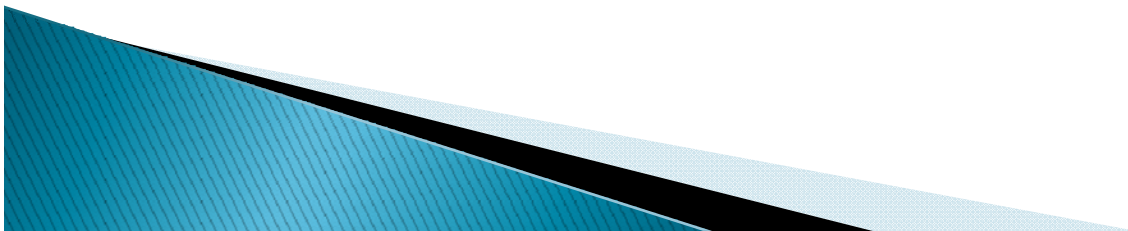
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ It's important to maintain our values & integrity to the relationships we have formed through our research in both our oral & written 'talk'
 - Reflected in the reasons for doing the research,
 - How we treat the people we do research with
 - What we do with the results



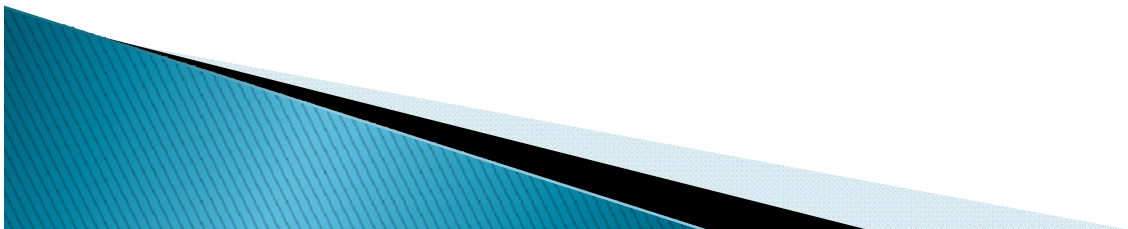
An Indigenous Approach

- ▶ We make a conscious decision to engage in research to explore certain topics or issues with the goal of improving the lives of people
- ▶ Often the process itself benefits the people through the research process



Multicultural Research Partnerships

- ▶ “Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge” (Smith, 2002, p. 39).
- ▶ Rather bicultural partnership and multicultural research means rethinking research strategies in Aboriginal communities (Smith, 2002, p. 17).



Multicultural Research Partnerships

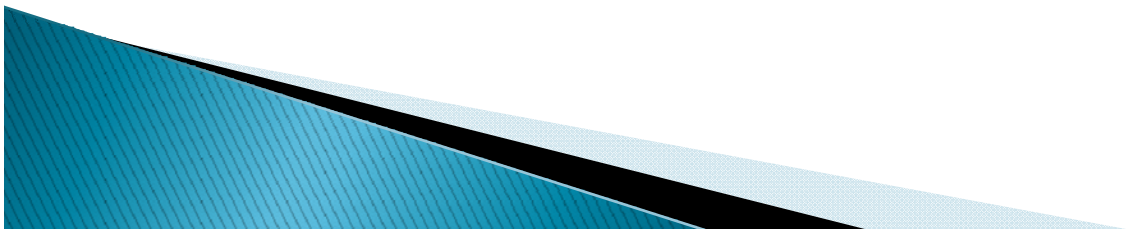
- ▶ Research teams include Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners
- ▶ Maintaining cultural and political integrity, means partners incorporate a bi-directional sharing of information and expertise (with each other and community)
- ▶ True partnerships incorporate joint planning and implementation of all research activity with the Indigenous communities



Multicultural Research Partnerships

Partnerships need to incorporate:

- An understanding of the impact of colonization,
- A knowledge base related to traditional cultures (local cultures),
- An awareness of Indigenous worldviews & values,
- Insight into the history, norms & customs of the communities involved in the research



Multicultural Research Partnerships

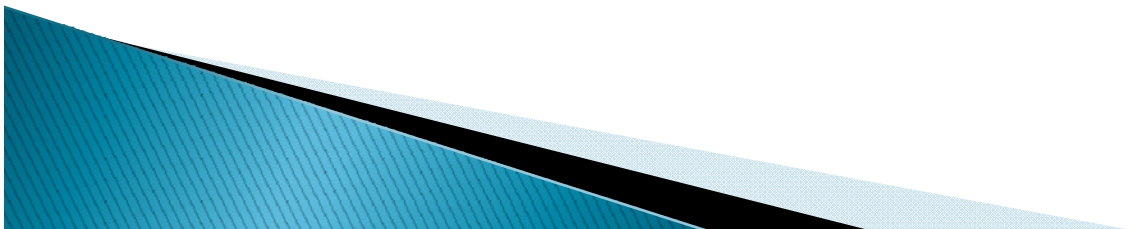
Research Principles:

- ▶ Indigenous research protocols must be followed
- ▶ Research priorities need to be identified by the communities
- ▶ Research must benefit the communities
- ▶ The communities must be acknowledged as the owners of their knowledge and experience
- ▶ Relevance or fit of chosen methodologies must fit with community objectives.



Research Approaches

- ▶ Absolon and Willett (2005) identify three questions posed by communities regarding research proposals:
 1. Who is doing the research?
 2. How is the research being done?
 3. What purpose does the research serve to the community (p. 107)?

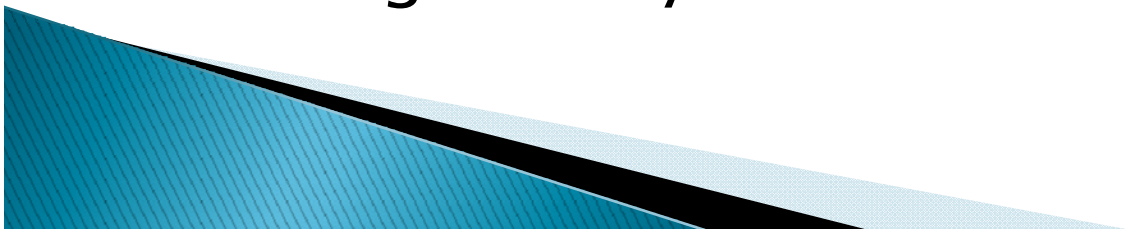


The Research Project

Supporting Aboriginal Children and Youth with Learning and Behavioural Disabilities in the Care of Aboriginal Child Welfare Agencies

Diane Hiebert–Murphy, Alexandra Wright,
Gwen Gosek

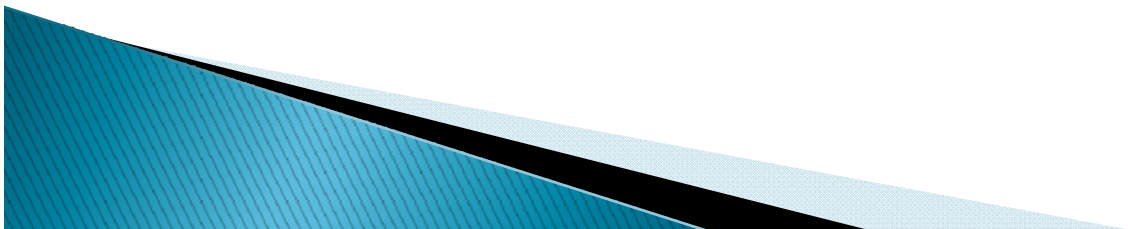
Funding provided by a grant from Health Canada to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.



The Research Project

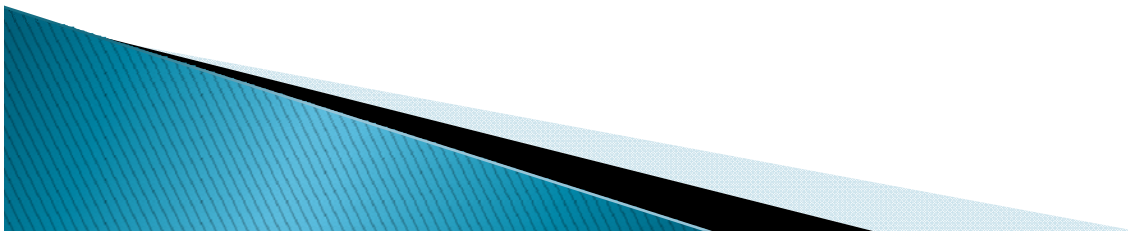
Research Objectives

- ▶ To consult with First Nations child welfare agencies and communities in relation to children and youth with disabilities
 - Strengths & needs
 - Current practices
 - Best practices
 - Challenges
 - Resource issues



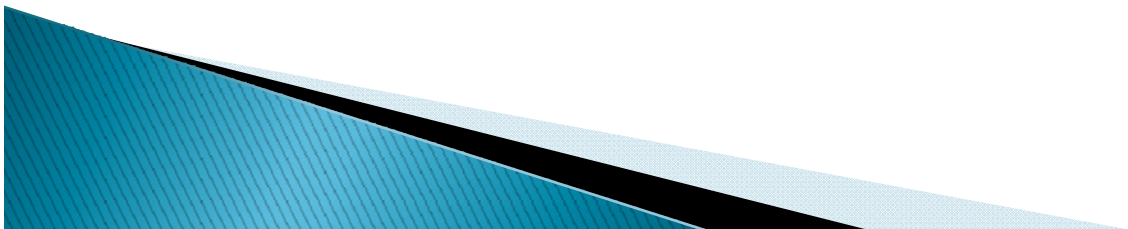
The Research Project

- ▶ Phase I involved developing and implementing a culturally relevant survey in consultation with a national advisory group
- ▶ Phase II involved six site visits to First Nations communities in five regions of Canada; west coast, east coast, prairies, northern, central



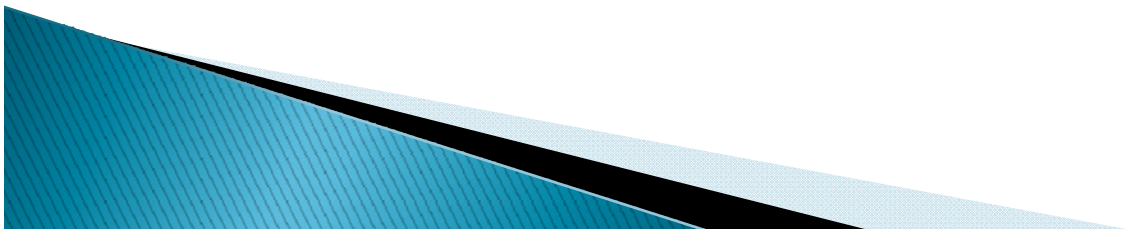
Who Is Doing the Research?

- ▶ Invited to collaborate on a research proposal by Diane and Alex
- ▶ Mutual benefits:
 - Experienced vs Inexperienced researcher
 - First hand knowledge of Indigenous issues vs limited knowledge
 - Respectful relationships



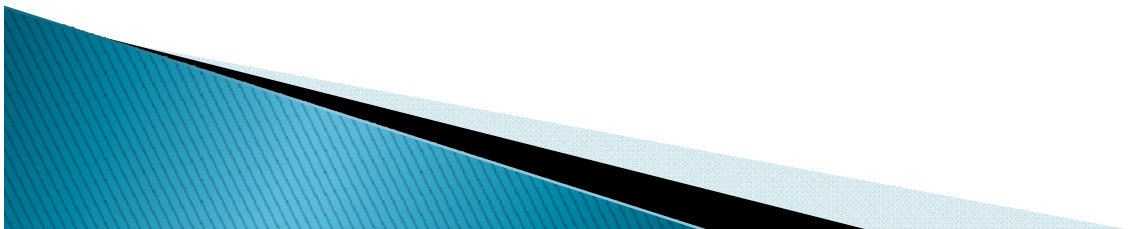
Who is Doing the Research?

- ▶ Our partnership expanded to include:
 - An national advisory committee of Indigenous & non-Indigenous experts in child welfare and disability from various regions across Canada
 - Indigenous faculty based research coordinator
 - Community based Indigenous research liaisons from each research site in second phase
 - Indigenous research assistants to assist in second phase



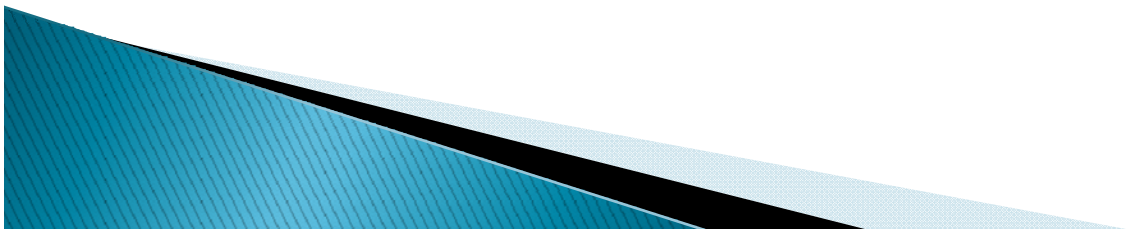
How Is the Research Being Done?

- ▶ Advisory Committee roles/involvement
 - Provided feedback on the research survey to ensure culturally relevant survey items
 - Met with our team and funders for research update
 - Acted as a resource for contacts
 - Were available for ongoing feedback through email and phone



How Is the Research Being Done?

- ▶ Research Coordinator's roles
- ▶ First Phase
 - Contacted all child welfare agencies across Canada
 - Administered the survey by phone
 - Day to day administration of the research office



How is the Research Being Done?

➤ Research Coordinator's roles

- Second Phase
- Invited child welfare agencies to participate in site visits
- Contacted First Nations for research protocols and permission to do research in their communities
- Arranged for a community liaison for each community
- Assisted community liaisons with planning site visits ie advertising, feasts, giveaways, elder involvement



How is the Research Being Done?

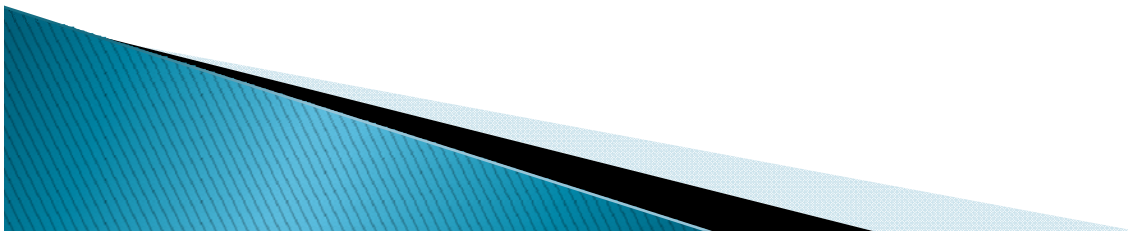
Community Liaison's Roles

- ▶ They were involved throughout the planning and implementation of the research for each site
- ▶ Organized all community, agency, and collateral agency focus groups, and individual interviews
- ▶ Collected data from agencies



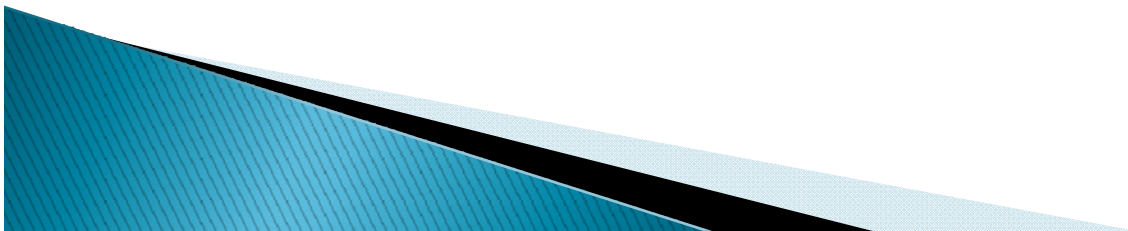
How is the Research Being Done?

- ▶ Advised and assisted with community feasts and giveaways
- ▶ Advised on community norms and cultural practices
- ▶ Invited Elders to participate & advised on honorariums and gifts
- ▶ Ensured translators were available
- ▶ Participated in groups



How is the Research Being Done?

- ▶ Tobacco was offered in the communities who held that teaching
- ▶ The talking circle was utilized in all group discussions
- ▶ Community circles were open to all interested community members



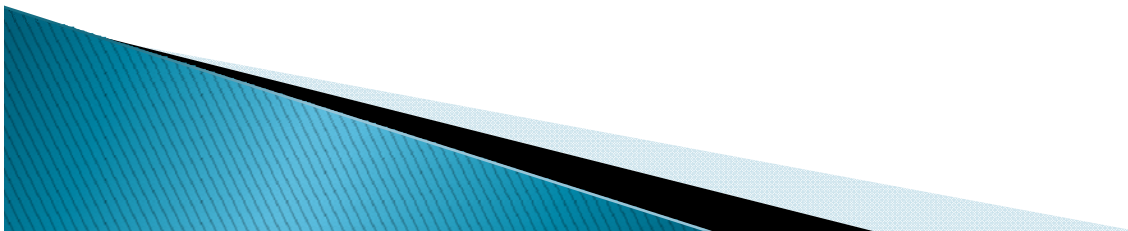
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ Raised awareness of the special needs for children & youth living with disabilities
- ▶ Community members were consulted as the experts throughout the research process
- ▶ The project was able to provide training and employment
- ▶ The research report was shared with all communities involved with the project



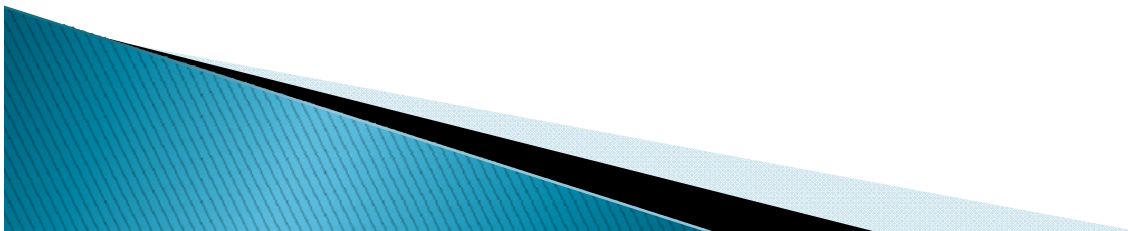
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ East Coast: Circles with child welfare agency personnel and individual interviews with community members stimulated an interest and heightened awareness of the needs of children with disabilities and their families



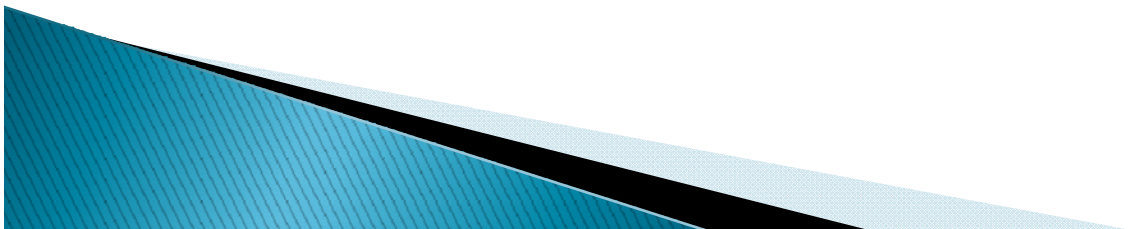
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ Prairie Region: Circle: Bringing families and community agency people together
- ▶ Parents spoke about the frustration & pain they experienced because there were so few resources available for their children
- ▶ One man repeatedly asked me to take pictures of his home to send to INAC
- ▶ The community members rallied around the families and started making plans for meeting regularly in order to bring about change



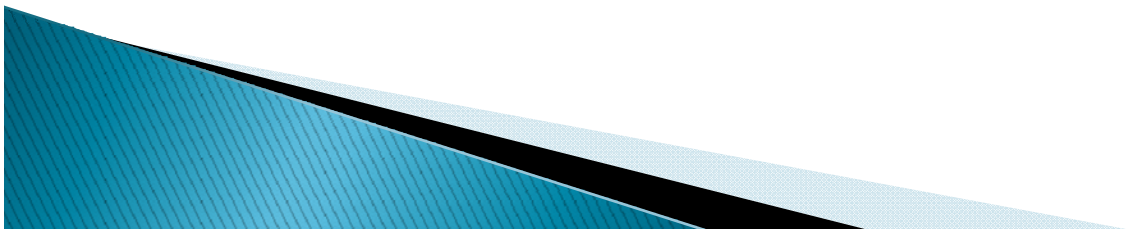
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ Northern Community: Focus group with collateral agencies
- ▶ Agency people expressed that getting representatives from different social service agencies together to talk about their roles in working with families with children with disabilities was very enlightening and decided to organize regular meetings.



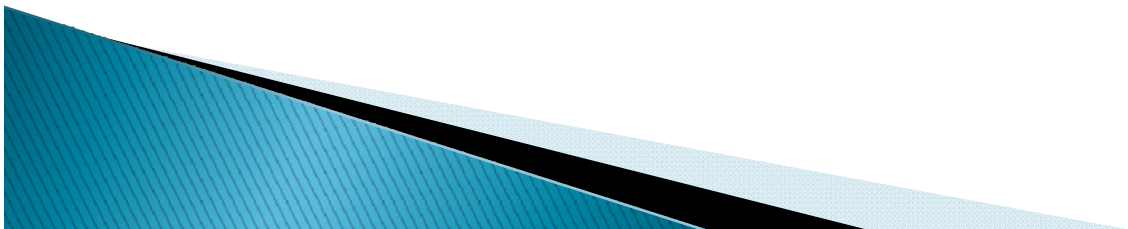
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ Central: Circle with CFS Agency supervisors
- ▶ Agency people appreciated the opportunity to discuss the services provided by different units, as it provided an opportunity to take an in-depth look at their services, including the strengths and challenges. They thought it was something they needed to start doing on a regular basis.



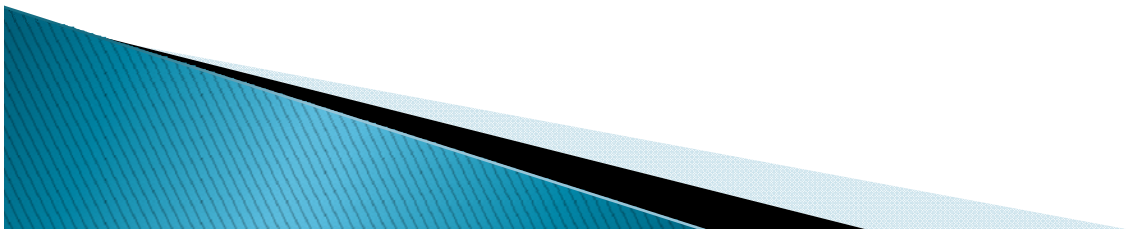
What purpose does the research serve to the community?

- ▶ West Coast: Circle with families and community agency people
- ▶ Parents spoke from the heart about the obstacles they faced in caring for their children
- ▶ Also about the strengths and the gifts their children brought
- ▶ Research project provided an opportunity to get together and share concerns that they had in common
- ▶ Result: Participants were determined to reinstate a support/advocacy group for families with children with disabilities



Challenges to Meeting Goals

- ▶ Initial deadline for proposal
 - No time to consult directly with communities involved at that stage
- ▶ Shortened time line due to institutional delays
- ▶ Funding timeline shortened
 - Impacted training of community liaisons
 - Interfered with dissemination



Research Report Available at:

<http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/fncfcsPubs.html>

Book Chapter

<http://www.cecw-cepbc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/prairiebook/Chapter7.pdf>

