



Research Brief: Project 6: Indigenous Perspectives and Experiences with Caring

Collaborative Partnership with Brock University and
The Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (FENFC)

Project Summary

The collaborative partnership between Brock University and the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (FENFC) is led by co-investigators Dr. Eva Jewell (Ryerson University) and Dr. Andrea Doucet (Brock University). Our team is focused on exploring the ways the Carer-Friendly Workplace Standard can be enhanced to ensure the needs of Indigenous carer-employees in the Niagara region are met. Our team provides an intersectional perspective on the way the CIAW Standard can be adapted to ensure a culturally appropriate and informed design. We are dedicated to enhancing the Standard to recognize the unique ways Indigenous peoples in Canada experience dual responsibilities of paid employment and unpaid caregiving responsibilities.

Our research explores the way an Indigenous approach to work and caregiving, along with a recognition of the unique circumstances of Indigenous peoples in Canada can enhance the Caregiver Standard.

Research Background

Our research is guided by a methodological process that combined the team's experience with Indigenous methodologies/epistemologies/ontologies, community-based research, and ecological approaches to knowledge making and narrative analysis (Doucet, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c; Jewell, 2018).

Research Questions

- (i) How can the Standard address and incorporate culturally diverse needs of Indigenous community members?
- (ii) What are the perspectives of a major Indigenous employer in the region (the FENFC) on the Standard?

Research Team

Eva Jewell, PhD., Ryerson University
Andrea Doucet, PhD., Brock University
Karent Hilston, Peer Researcher, Fort Erie
Native Friendship Centre
Jessica Falk, MA Student, Brock University

Project Objectives

Our project began in the fall of 2018 and built on the team's previous research with the FENFC. Through Indigenous, community-based research, we will provide recommendations:

1) for any revisions to the Standard;

2) to employers who would like to attract/retain Indigenous employees

Progress to date

- i)** Securing our research team: our peer researcher Karen Hilston from the FENFC, and Jessica Falk, an MA student researcher from Brock University
- ii)** Literature review conducted to guide research plans and objectives
- iii)** Two ethics applications successfully completed; (Brock University and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres)
- iv)** Two focus groups with carer-employees at the FENFC
- v)** Group data analysis (guided by narrative and Indigenous methodologies)
- vj)** Two articles in process (on substantive findings and methodological processes) to be submitted for publication by spring/summer 2021

Key emergent themes:

1. Care work is especially valued and held in high esteem in Indigenous organizations; moreover, the broad nature of women-led leadership at the FENFC impacts and deepens the value of care in the organization. Highlighting this Indigenous ethic of care will enhance the Caregiver Standard.
2. Indigenous peoples in Canada have unique social determinants of health as a result of systemic racism, the legacy of residential schools, and differing networks of care and household demographics in Indigenous communities. Our team is paying close attention to these unique social determinants of health, such as higher rates of diabetes than the mainstream Canadian population, and how this results in unique care demands and measures relevant to the Standard.

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