

Promoting Self-Esteem, Defining Culture

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Solvent abuse in the form of youths sniffing gasoline is a problem in many Native communities. This article analyzes two proposals for a solvent abusers' healing program designed for a northern Native community, suggesting that successful programs for Native people will not only have to be designed by Native people themselves, but also must be based on the culture of the people.

Introduction

Solvent abuse in the form of sniffing gasoline has become a problem among youths. Popularly defined as the "addiction of the poor," the problem has also found its way into Native communities, and it seems to be more widespread there, particularly in isolated areas.

This article refers to my doctoral research (Witt, 1998) done between 1995 and 1996 in a northern Native community where a healing center was to be opened the following year. As the success rates of the treatment that some of the youths had received in healing centers outside the community was reported as being nil (ASAPC, 1994), a new approach was to be found for the program of the local healing center. The two proposals for the healing center (Kells & Associates, 1995; Hannah, 1996), therefore, emphasized that the program must have local Native cultural content, particularly considering Faries' (1995) analysis that the failure of treatment programs offered to the youth of the community was due to the youths' inability to adapt to the alien culture on which the treatment center programs were based.

The key for the focus of the program to be developed as it was presented in the two proposals was the reference to local cultural content. However, although the target of the healing program—to promote self-esteem among the affected youths—was agreed on by the people involved in the planning of the healing center of that community, a major disagreement arose about how this should be accomplished.

I concluded from analysis of earlier research done in the community (Faries, 1995; ASAPC, 1994)—both emphasizing that local youths did not come to terms with the alien cultural environment outside their community—that the whole program was to be based on local culture, whereas the proposals for the healing program to be established emphasized that local cultural content should merely be included because, as Kells et al. (1995) found, "Native culture alone is not enough" (p. 23). The proposals were presented accordingly, including some content defined as Native culture, but the bulk of the content, including the assessment of the solvent abuse problem, was based on western structures. The conflict in the proposals arose over the cultural approach that should be chosen for program and delivery modes and over confusion about how culture would be defined. Although the importance of cultural content in the program was emphasized, the

proposed cultural content to be included in the program did not go beyond physical activities like hunting and gathering.

Having in mind the failure of previous programs offered to local youth, and the analysis by Faries (1995) that the failure was due to the inability of the clients to come to terms with the "other" cultural environment, I saw the need to look into the concept of culture and how it was used in the proposals. When the youths' inability to come to terms with the other cultural environment caused the failure of other healing programs, one would have to define the cultural basis in order to find out what the clients were missing and what they were unable to adapt to, before some content thought to derive from Native culture is merely added in the hope that the whole program thereby would satisfy the needs of the Native clients and be accepted by them. One also would have to be clear about which concepts to base an analysis of a program.

I discuss below the necessity of a cultural basis of the program in order to reach the goal of enhancing self-esteem in the clients. The inclusion of some cultural content is not enough, particularly when the concept of culture is often limited to physical activities like hunting and gathering.

What is Meant by Native Culture?

The undertone in the proposal suggested that the authors defined the basis of Native culture as physical activity, hunting and gathering, which led them to the conclusion that going back to a hunting and gathering society was not desirable because this would cast the people back into the Stone Age.

Bhabha's (1995) discussion of cultural difference that can be read and interpreted in the "meanings and values" (p. 206) shifts the understanding of culture beyond mere physical activities. Hawthorn's (1966) definition of culture as the "totality of behavior, values, attitudes of a given group" (p. 102) also shows that culture goes far beyond activities like hunting and gathering and cannot be confined to these activities.

Yet hunting is still part of life in the community researched. Much of the diet of the people is country food. The two goose hunts in spring and fall are still the major events of the year with almost all people involved. Even people with employment take time off, and the local school closes for a week in fall and spring for the goose hunt (Hookimaw, 1991).

The meanings and values, behavior, and attitudes mentioned in the above definition were certainly influenced by, and are connected to, the activities of hunting and gathering. One often mentioned value in Native culture how goods circulate in the community based on "reciprocity and mutual sharing" (Ash, 1988, p. 16). The value of sharing, here referred to Dene culture, also appears in descriptions of other Native groups like the Micmac, whose society is described as one of mutual charity (Gonzalez, 1981). Gonzalez refers to reports of French explorers who were impressed by the Micmacs' concern and generosity to each other. Ash (1988) also says about the Mistassini Cree that:

Production and sharing of food, and economic interdependence among Cree themselves, remain central to Cree economic and social life. Although hunting and wage employment provide roughly equal contributions in dollar value to the total economic outputs at community level, hunting is the more valued activity, it is the more stable activity and it

remains more closely and reticulately linked to the local social and cultural structures that are central to Cree life and that the communities clearly desire to maintain. (p. 20)

The value of sharing among people of Native groups is usually referred to in the past tense, but the above quote indicates that these traits are still present.

Dene elders of today also refer to the present when they say that the value of sharing derives from the concern of Dene society for the welfare of the whole group (NWT Education 1993).

This example shows that culture has to do with the organizing of society. The Dene elders expand on this by also pointing out how decisions are made and conflicts solved, which is by consensus in the group. Decisions are also not seen as final because they may have to be changed if they turn out to be not workable. The way Dene society is organized aims at survival, not only of the individual, but also of the group and the whole world (NWT Education, 1993). The concern about the survival of the world, the ecological system, is an indication of Indigenous people's relationship to the environment and to spirituality.

In Native culture spirituality is a part of life. It is not separate from everyday life and is not confined to daily or weekly church visits. The elders in the community researched are respected as sources of wisdom. Grandparents play a major part in the education of their grandchildren (Witt, 1994).

Spirituality is connected to the responsibility of the people to the land and life in general, which is summarized in the four relations around which the Dene Kede curriculum centers: "the land, the spiritual world, other people and oneself" (NWT Education, 1993, p. xxv). Spirituality as concern for survival and the welfare of the whole group, which is manifest in the value of sharing, would leave little room for economic differences among the people, because each individual is needed for the survival of the whole. No hierarchical structure is based on the economical well-being of the individual. The absence of hierarchy is also true for gender relations in that society. Stasilius and Jhappan (1995) see Native societies as "egalitarian societies where women exercised considerable autonomy and power in sexual, political and economic matters" (p. 102).

This would indicate an absence of gender discrimination in traditional Native societies. As Turpel (1991) points out, the dominant society "introduced the norm of discrimination on the basis of sex" (p. 181) as a means to assimilate Native people. Although the concept of the egalitarian society is again presented in the past tense, Voyageur (1996) points out that the traditional role women play in Native communities has not entirely disappeared:

Despite all changes endured by indigenous peoples, many aspects of the traditional woman's role have remained constant. Indian women are still responsible for maintaining culture, stabilizing the community, and caring for future generations. They still play an influential ... role. (p. 94).

All the above concepts might have originated in what is called a hunter and gatherer culture, but they cannot be confined to only that activity. Ash (1988) states that hunting is not the only activity culture with which Native people can be identified, and that when people stop hunting they do not necessarily lose their culture:

Clearly, hunting itself is essential mainly in that it provides the best opportunity for traditional value to be practiced within contemporary settings. However, other settings can be used and I am certain that production of any sort can be used in the same way. The difficulty is that often they are not. Yet this is not to say that when hunting is lost, so are traditional institutions and values. (Ash, 1988, p. 21)

This means that cultural behavior can be transmitted to any activity or technology no matter what age we live in, and that the definition of *culture* has to go beyond production modes such as hunting and gathering. In the two proposals for the healing program of that community, however, *Native culture* is still entirely defined by the concepts of hunting and gathering.

However, as can be concluded from the above discussion, culture goes far beyond those production modes. It is how people organize their lives. And the creation of a culture-based treatment program, therefore, must consider how the people relate to each other and their environment, how children are educated and how they learn, what place punishment has in educating children, how discipline is implemented in relations between young and old, how men and women relate to each other and their roles, and how people see the world secularly and spiritually. It should become clear in this definition that culture is not a question of the age we live in or if we are hunters and gatherers, but of how our lives are organized. The token inclusion of some physical activities non-Native people perceive as Native culture does not qualify as a healing component for a Native program that should enhance self-esteem in Native youths. The healing youths need to develop pride in who they are, not in who they should become; and they can find that pride only in their own people and culture.

Why a Cultural Basis is Necessary

One of the Elders of the community summarizes the problems of basing so-called Native programs on non-Native concepts:

We were always adopting whiteman's ways, but this doesn't work. You cannot be half white and half Indian. There is no faith in ourselves anymore, no self-esteem. People are always doing as the white man does, but we cannot do that. (Witt 1998, p. 249)

The Elder shares his awareness that programs for Native people designed on the cultural basis of non-Native people cannot work. In order to promote self-esteem for the clients in a healing center, the program must be based on the culture of the clients.

The Elder emphasizes that a basis is needed. The conclusion that "you cannot be half white and half Indian" also excludes a so-called parallel teaching as suggested in the proposal by Kells et al. (1995), as this would suggest that the clients have no culture and must learn the whole process that human beings normally grow into. I discuss this in more detail below. First, I wish to point out one oversight of planners of Native programs. Native people do have their own cultures, and any development in Native communities must attest to that fact. Gardner (1991) defines

humans as creatures of the brain, but not solely so. Unlike all other organisms, we participate in a rich culture, one that has had its own evolution over many thousands ... of

years. Indeed, we have no choice; we are as much creatures of our culture as we are creatures of our brains. (p. 38)

He therefore thinks that culture is central to any consideration of human development, which would, of course, also include the design of a treatment program geared to healing and human development of the clients. If we also acknowledge that "each [culture] is a workable means of adaption to a given environment" (Arensberg & Niehoff, 1971, p. 16), we realize that Native peoples themselves have developed their own cultural systems in adaptation to their environment. This, of course, also includes changes in the wider environment since contact with the Europeans who came to this country. Any development of programs in Native communities, therefore, to be successful must be a continuation of the cultural development of the community. The people in the communities know their own lives and needs better than any outsider. Any research of program developments in the communities would, therefore, have to consider the people's own definitions and concepts, which would mean that the program must be based on the local culture.

This conclusion would be supported by the realization that culture is central to human development, as pointed out by Geertz (1973), who states that "rather than culture acting only to supplement, develop, and extend organically based capacities logically and genetically prior to it, it would seem to be ingredient to those capacities themselves" (p. 76).

This not only suggests that education without cultural context is impossible and that, therefore, a cultural basis is needed, but also points out that the continuation or "correction" of human development in the clients of a treatment program must take into consideration that the youths to be treated were born into and grew up in a certain cultural environment. Their culture is internalized, and their abilities and development as human beings are based on that culture. In other words, their culture is expressed not only in activities like hunting and gathering, but in their *being* as a whole, in how they would define themselves as human beings. When their own definition of themselves needs to be upgraded in a healing program because of their low self-esteem, then the youths' understanding of their own culture and ultimately of their own being must be promoted because that is where they draw their identity from.

The Elders interviewed in the community are aware of this fact, and they make the education the children receive in the community partly responsible for the problems the youths have today, which is expressed in the following statement: "It is only 'white' ways taught in the community. The school does not teach our ways. If children are our future, the future is taken away from us because our children do not learn our ways any more" (Witt, 1998, p. 273).

The loss of their future might not be considered too bad a loss by some program planners who might not have a high opinion of the Native way of life, maybe even thinking that it is obsolete. However, the Elders do think about the children, and the suggestion to base a healing program on local culture not only has the effect of saving their culture, but also of saving the youth. This becomes clear in statements that refer to the loss of identity:

I once heard from a person who did not learn anything about himself at residential school. He lost himself. My father told me that I had to live in harmony with the whitemen I would meet, but I had to keep my identity. (Witt, 1998, p. 273)

and: "They [the youths] are lost because they do not know who they are" (p. 273).

The Elders are talking about why the youths have problems, attesting their low self-esteem and the resulting problems of solvent abuse to the fact that the youths have lost their identity. The way to help the youths is for the community to "reclaim the lost youth to aid in healing" (Witt, 1998, p. 272), which, as stated in the quote above, must be done by teaching the youths their own Native ways.

The wrong conclusion drawn from statements like this is usually that the Elders are hostile toward western education and believe that Native children should not learn the ways of the white man. The statement above that a Native person should "live in harmony with the white men" (Witt, 1998, p. 273) indicates that there is no hostility toward the ways of the other people per se. However, as the Elder continues, the Native person must also keep his own identity. This identity, of course, is drawn from one's culture, and the Elder's statement means that this culture must be the basis for the education of the youths. The same is said by another Elder, who directly refers to the wrong assumption that Native Elders are hostile toward western education of their children: "I do not have anything against school, but our ways should not be forgotten in the process" (p. 253).

The problem many program planners for Native communities seem to have is the definition of education, or that it is a question of either/or about the content taught in schools or in the content of a healing program. The other content, that emphasized by western education, can still be taught. However, the basis of the system, be it school education or the program of a healing center, still has to be the local culture. Afterward, anything can be added. The conclusion in the research of Faries (1995) that treatment programs offered to the local youths have failed so far because the youths experienced "culture shock and inability to function in a white society" (p. 31) indicates failure of such programs because they were based in a different culture. Particularly the reference to culture shock suggests that the local youths do not respond positively to programs based outside their culture.

An explanation for this failure of programs from outside the clients' culture can be found in Ogbu's (1989) analysis of why remedial programs in schools designed for minorities are not successful:

At the moment, the definition and explanation of the school adjustment and academic performance problems of the minorities are based on a white middle-class cultural model, not the cultural model of the minorities which influence the latter's school orientations and behaviors. However, such definitions and explanations are incomplete until they incorporate the minorities' own notion of schooling, which influences their school behavior. And until such an incorporation is made, social policies or remedial problems based on the definitions such as those embedded in the drop-out literature are not likely to be particularly effective. (p. 201)

The attitude that Native children have to be educated the same way as non-Native children has certainly contributed to problems in Native communities today, as expressed in the statements of the Elders above. A similar conclusion is that an

assimilative approach to Native people can lead to loss of personal integrity (Hendrey, 1969).

This would suggest that many problems in Native communities derive from the confusion between the western way of life and Native values and forced assimilation into western way of life. This would attest to the importance of grounding a healing program in local cultural values in order to establish self-esteem. I conclude with regard to education that "we have to try to understand the difference in the personality structure and form the education system around it" (Witt, 1994, p. 65) should also show the direction of a healing program for people in Native communities. As identified by the community's Solvent Abuse Committee (July 21, 1994), the success rate of treatment programs to which youths had been sent so far was nil. Aside from understanding the problems in the community that led to increasing solvent abuse by the local youths, we need to understand why the programs offered so far failed in order to create a treatment program that works for local youth and their relatives in the wider region. The failure of existing treatment programs to address this context may account for their negative success rate. This interpretation is consistent with Faries' (1995) findings that the high dropout rate from treatment programs can be attributed to "culture shock and the inability to function in a white society" (p. 31).

Skills Needed for Both Realities:

How Can This Be Consistent With the Cultural Basis?

Perhaps one solution to this question could be found in the above-mentioned suggestion by Kells et al. (1995) of a bicultural process. They proposed a process of bicultural education that would involve giving the clients the skills that enable them to survive in both worlds. This notion is consistent with the goals of the Assembly of First Nations to reinforce Indian identity and to provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972).

Hanson (1985) comes to the same conclusion when he writes, "Ideally, the educational process must provide the student to remain a functional member of his/her own group, yet satisfactorily fit into the dominant society if he/she so wishes" (p. 74). However, this suggestion requires further thought regarding how to teach and heal biculturally and to understand the implications of this education-healing model with respect to delivery modes. As a multicultural nation, Canada needs solutions for an education that caters to the needs of students from different cultures. Understandably, "the majority of the work in the field is most extensively focussed on educational assessment, curriculum content, and teaching strategies that are related to cultural values, language and cognition" (Darder, 1991, p. 71).

The recommendations made in one of the proposals for the Healing Lodge (Kells et al., 1995) was, in the matter of curriculum content, to include some Native content and teaching strategies (like a wilderness camp) into the curriculum in order to reflect the cultural values discussed above. However, how the services offered are delivered, and the structure of the institution where the services are offered, would still reflect the cultural context of a non-Native society and as such may not be accepted by the clients. Reintegration of the healed client into family and community will be difficult because the structure of the community is based in

a different cultural context, and the goal of developing a sense of community and ownership of treatment center and program could only be achieved if the community as a whole would transform its social and cultural structures to western ways. This was, however, not the intention of the planners, when their goal of enhancing self-esteem in the Native client is to be taken seriously; rather, it was to reestablish a connection to the community's local culture.

The approach of adding Native content to an altogether non-Native curriculum would fail because it "does not necessarily guarantee that students (or clients) will participate in a process of social empowerment, nor that they develop their bicultural voice or become critically discursive with respect to their economic and sociopolitical reality" (Darder, 1991, p. 73). Although, as Darder (1991) continues her analysis of this western-centered approach of bicultural education, the student or client "may develop a stronger sense of cultural identity" (p. 74), the development of critical skills and questions of human agency, voice, and empowerment are ignored and this might work against the goal of giving the clients the life skills (empowerment) that enable them to survive in both worlds.

Hanson (1985) differentiates between assimilated Native people who live in the modern, industrial-oriented reality and Native people who live in subsistence-oriented reality. The isolation of the community researched (a fly-in community), and the importance of hunting there would be consistent with the latter group. The curriculum for a group oriented to subsistence must be based on this reality for it to be successful. As Hanson points out, "for many Indian/Native people within this reality, the current educational process is a continuation of the earlier indoctrination process of civilization, Christianization and colonization" (p. 74). Commenting on the results of an approach where western culture is made the basis of the curriculum, Hanson (1985) states: "As their 'way of life' has been considered irrelevant within modern industrial times, a sense of detachment serves as a defense from all outsiders" (p. 74). This would mean that education in this form was not accepted by the people to whom it is directed. Hanson (1985), therefore, points out in regard to the basis of the curriculum:

For the more traditional, the method, process and curriculum must reflect the historical process of development undertaken by their hunting-gathering ancestors.... The educational process must provide an opportunity for the student from this subsistence oriented reality to make comparisons between the two legitimate but contrasting life-styles, and choose those elements within each that he/she believes is essential for success. If this cannot be accomplished, the Indian/Native people within this reality will continue to reject the dominant society, its values, its methods and its goals. (p. 74).

Beside the realization that the basis for education and human development has to be local culture, Hanson also points toward a solution of how to include content from the other culture by leaving the choice of what content should be included to the Native person and by tying the new content to the cultural learning process by saying that the Native learner will compare the new content to that he or she has already learned in his or her own cultural environment.

This concept of bicultural learning based on the learners' culture was discussed in the 1960s and can be seen in Hendrey's (1969) conclusion that survival in both worlds may depend on the revival and revitalization of traditional Native values

and their application to the contemporary context. This conclusion is based on the idea that cultural values can be applied to contemporary context, that Native culture is not outdated, and that any Native program must be based on local culture if it is to be successful.

This is also stated by Emerson (1987), who concludes that those Native groups who maintain a connection to cultural values and heritage stand a better chance of developing a strong and positive self-concept and increasing their degree of self-determination, control, and potential development. Emerson also offers a solution to the problem of how to learn the skills to survive in both worlds when he suggests that if Native children are educated in their own culture and language, they learn the white culture from a Native point of view and thus are enabled to understand it better.

In a similar view High Pine (1973) emphasizes that culture and the old ways (life ways) are for Native people the means for their survival, their resistance to assimilation, and their way to understanding the white world. By understanding it, they can participate in this world. Native people can only understand the alien, non-Native culture when they can look at it from their own. Native culture is the reference point for understanding the other world around them.

Twenty years later, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples follows the same argument of Native culture being the reference point for Native youths. The commissioners conclude that an education of Native children must "develop children and youth as Aboriginal citizens, linguistically and culturally competent to assume the responsibilities of their nations ... Youth that emerge from school must be grounded in a strong, positive Aboriginal identity" (Government of Canada, 1996, p. 5, Education), and the recommendation to establish "a curriculum that instills a proud Aboriginal identity and competence as an Aboriginal person" (Government of Canada, 1996, Education, 3.5) points out how important culture and identity are for human development. Both conclusions of the commissioners support the necessity to base the curriculum for a healing center on local culture and to learn any additional content from that basis.

None of the above discussions mentions Native content to be merely added. It is obvious that to enhance self-esteem in the client or learner, education must be based on the culture of the learner. The ability to survive in both worlds is inseparably connected to understanding one's own world before new content can be added.

In considering the causes that led to the abusive behavior of the youth, it is also important to understand and acknowledge the role of cultural violence. Barnes' (1979) causal model for solvent abuse includes:

1. Low social assets;
2. Acculturative stress;
3. Parental drug use;
4. Peer and sibling influence. (p. 16)

Significant in articulating the cultural basis of the healing program is the second point of acculturative stress. Barnes (1979) defines this as transition pressure because of minority group or adolescent status. In dealing with Native youths we

must acknowledge that both factions, minority status *and* adolescent status, are in effect.

Another entirely Native problem is the contradiction inherent in being defined as a minority group in their own country. Native peoples did not immigrate to a different cultural context thinking that they might have to change their ways in order to fit into the society of a foreign country. They did not go to a foreign country; the country became foreign to them through the people who came into it; and they had to deal with forced assimilation into the new, alien society that was forming in their own country, a situation that made Native people an involuntary minority, initially "brought into the state through conquest and colonization" as defined by Ogbu (1989, p. 187).

However, whereas other minority groups are tolerated and defined as *modern* people despite their cultural differences, this is still widely denied to Native people. They are still told that their culture is something that belongs in the past and that the difference between them and mainstream culture is that Native people are hunters and gatherers living in the Stone age, and mainstream society is modern: the logical development of the ancient hunter-and-gatherer society. This kind of opinion could result in the low self-esteem of Native youths, which may be one of the major causes for solvent abuse. This will not change as long as outside values are the basis for Native programs, no matter if these programs are designed by non-Native people or Native people themselves. The results will always be the same. The tendency to devalue Native culture by grounding the education in a framework that gives preference to western values will weaken self-esteem instead of promoting it. Emphasis on western structures and values in the education system offered to Native people has now had the effect that the violence done to Native people is sometimes continued by Native people themselves raised to fit into western society.

The Ojibway artist Blake Debassige (Glaap, 1996) comments on this vicious circle, pointing out that the problems in Native communities are inherent in this kind of education of Native people by assimilated Natives:

What's happening, although they [Natives who had undergone "western" education] don't really realize it, is that they're applying what they learned from the priests to Native people, and sometimes that's a real serious problem. They are doing to Native people what was done to them without them really realizing, thinking that's how it's done.... You see a lot of social problems happening because of that. (p. 11)

Debassige clearly states that many social problems in the communities derive from choosing an alien basis and alien values for actions and decisions in Native communities. Native people, basing their actions on what they have learned from western educators, will prevent the building of self-esteem, even in themselves, because they focus on what they have to become rather than strengthening what they are.

One of the instruments for healing is, however, the building of self-esteem in the client, and self-esteem can only be built on the basis of what or who a person is. The decision of who or what a person wants to become, which is supported by education, must be left to the individual himself or herself, a concept that only works when the individual has a strong awareness of himself or herself. Develop-

ing self-esteem in the potential clients of a healing lodge will involve having the people develop pride in who they are. This means developing pride in their own culture, accepting it as a culture existing in the present. Basing a healing program on a different culture by saying that Native culture and spirituality is not enough (Kells et al., 1995), and merely adding some Native components to the content of an altogether non-Native curriculum will increase acculturative stress on the clients. Because acculturative stress is defined as one of the causes for solvent abuse, it would undermine the goal of the healing program.

Kells et al.'s (1995) response to the task of providing a curriculum that enables the learner to survive in both worlds must be seen in connection with his analysis that a bicultural education of Native youth is necessary because "Native culture and spirituality is not enough" (p. 25). The implication is that western education and culture are superior to Native culture because non-Natives in Canada are not taught about Native cultural content, and this education is deemed sufficient for survival—even for those who go to Native communities to design programs without bothering to learn about the culture of the people they work with. There seems to be a lack of trust in the ability of the other culture to solve its own societal problems.

This would lead to DeChiara's (1990) analysis of the negative effect of western "assistance" to Native peoples, which is based on the opinion that "westernization [is] desired to extend over the entire planet" (p. 231), which would make the Europeans or Euroamericans, who are in this case the consultants, the programmers and the researchers in the communities

the unquestioned source of power, the cosmopolitan, compared to the "savage," the "native" who neither travels nor explores but remains firmly in one place, almost as if wanting to be "discovered" and dissected according to the cultural standards of a Western elsewhere. (p. 231)

Although Kells et al. (1995), when suggesting a bicultural process in the healing program, seem to articulate a "dual strategy" approach in education, as suggested by Hanson (1985) and by the National Indian Brotherhood (1972), the way he interprets the necessity of this process—that Native culture alone is not enough—would have a negative effect on the program. The negative effect in this case would be that this approach works against the building of belonging and self-esteem in the clients who will be taught, albeit indirectly, that their own culture is obsolete and that, therefore, they must borrow from a different, superior culture in order to survive in this world, instead of learning the western content on the basis of their own culture, as suggested above.

The intention of the proposed healing program is to support self-esteem based on the people's identity. Native people have been victimized by assimilationist attempts that tried to deny them their own identity. The recommendation of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People that Native education has to take a course that ensures that "Aboriginal youth are solidly grounded in their Aboriginal identity" (Government of Canada, 1996, Education 4, Youth), points toward the "need in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts or images" (Durig, 1995, p. 125).

Indeed, the attempt to force assimilation on Native people created the problems present in Native communities today. The aggressive introduction of western culture into Native communities and the denial of the existence of a valid, modern Native culture has contributed to the causes of solvent abuse in the communities. This problem cannot be corrected by introducing yet another western solution. However, skills that enable a person to survive in two different cultural settings can be learned.

Not only is education to acquire the skills to survive in both worlds consistent with basing education on one local culture possible, it is also necessary. As the above discussion shows, the other culture and survival skills for it can only be learned and understood when it is compared with one's own.

How the Basis Can be Justified in Academic Theories

A cultural basis for the treatment program should acknowledge cultural difference rather than cultural diversity. As Bhabha (1995) states:

The revision of the history of critical theory rests on the notion of cultural difference, not cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is an epistemological object—culture as an object of empirical knowledge—whereas cultural difference is the process of the enunciation of culture as “knowledgeable,” authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification. (p. 206)

It is important to recognize the *ability* (in knowledgeable), authority, and adequacy of the other culture to construct systems of identification in regard to designing treatment programs for Native youths. There would be no need to refer to western culture to design such a program. The design must be in the hands of local people, the “Native intellectuals” as they are called to by Fanon (1967). The Elders in the community are in that group. Fanon's reference to “the zone of occult instability where the people dwell” (p. 168) and where the battle has to be fought is interpreted by Bhabha (1988) as “culture-as-political-struggle” (p. 207), a concept that helps explain the nature of colonial struggle. This struggle of Native people against the results of colonialism is important for the healing process because colonization, assimilation, and acculturative stress contribute to the social problems in many Native communities today. The search of the Native youths for identity should be supported by basing programs for Natives on local culture. As western researchers, consultants, and so forth, we will have “to be able to listen to that other constituency (people from the other culture) [and] ... learn to speak in such a way that one will be taken seriously by that other constituency” (Spivac, 1990, p. 42) when we want to be able to help design the desired healing program. In other words, those of us who help in the designs of the programs have to listen to the people first and then interpret any existing guidelines and requirements for programs into their cultural context. Only then will programs be community-based and successful.

Conclusions

For the healing context in the healing center the approach of basing the program on the culture of the clients will be particularly important, because for building of self-esteem as one of the bases for healing the clients have to be shown the way to themselves. In other words, they have to know who they are in order to make sense

of their place in the environment and reality around them. For the youths in the community, the path to their healing has to start with their identity. This identity cannot be given to them by persons from outside their cultural environment. Rather, the development of the person, which was started in a certain cultural context and was then disrupted when the person started with the abusive behavior, must continue from that point where it was disrupted, in the same cultural context the client was born into. Finding one's identity and by this strengthening one's self-esteem can only be achieved if one can look to one's own people, not to strangers who design programs based on their non-Native visions of a global village.

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