

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

2021 | Volume 3 (Special Issue).

Editor's Note

Research and Evaluation in Child, Youth, and Family Services seeks to advance the principles of social justice and transformative child welfare through robust inquiry. It achieves this by fostering collaborative partnerships among researchers, agencies, and communities to highlight evidence-informed policies, programs, and services that aim to enhance the well-being of children, youth, and families within diverse social contexts. Volume 3 is comprised of five journal articles completed by a total of 15 MSW students supervised by Dr. Simon Davis, Adjunct Instructor.

The Use of Safety Assessments was conducted by Carina Chu and Rianna Warkentin. This research focuses on the use of the safety assessment tool by child protection social workers at the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The safety assessment is one of several tools used to evaluate the immediate safety of children and youth. The study aims to determine whether social workers are using the tool as intended and if they are asking all the necessary questions to inform safety factors. This study used a mixed- method approach: virtual interviews with social workers and team leaders within MCFD and a follow-up survey. Findings indicate that more than half of the participants were not asking all the required questions, with various reasons provided. Recommendations include smaller caseloads, ongoing training, clinical supervision, and guides for asking questions about safety factors not initially reported.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Research: Key Learnings Around Integrating Calls for Justice into Delegated Aboriginal Agency Programs and Service was conducted by Jennifer M. Ortman and Frances C. Wells. This report stems from a national inquiry into systemic violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA individuals in Canada, resulting in 231 calls for justice. The research focused on the responses of Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) in child welfare, with a focus on cultural safety, community connections, youth transitioning, and safety. It incorporated a Post-Colonial Theoretical Orientation, Trauma-Informed Practice, and an Indigenous framework. A focus group consisting of executive directors and program managers from six DAAs in BC. Findings revealed the need for increased funding, training, support for out-of-care options, cultural education, and staffing initiatives.

Combining Western Evidence-Based Psychological Counselling Practice and Theory with Indigenous Cultural Wellness Practices was conducted by Emily MacNeil, Daniel Marquardt, and Hali McLennan.



The study aims to integrate Indigenous wellness and Western counseling practices in Indigenous Children Youth Mental Health (ICYMH). The study included a jurisdictional scan involving nine interviews and community engagement involving two sharing circles. The findings uncovered five main themes: Indigenous leadership, culture, relationships, education, and organizational regulations. This study added to understandings of: epistemic racism as an individual and systemic barrier, the need to incorporate spiritual and cultural practices, practitioner responsiveness to the Canadian colonial context, Indigenous leadership, and Two Eyed Seeing as an approach to practice.

Understanding Child and Youth Mental Health New Hire and Retention in the South Fraser Service Delivery Area (SDA) was conducted by Victoria Ord and Jamin Short. This study aimed to understand the new hire experience and address organizational concerns around retention and training for CYMH staff in the South Fraser SDA. The study involved a survey and four follow-up interviews with CYMH staff. While the staff demonstrated passion for their work and the goals of CYMH, the study identified concerns related to the need for more clinical support, access to necessary training, and standardized practices for onboarding and training. Additionally, staff expressed tensions with administration over certain policies and expectations. The report concludes with recommendations to address these issues and improve the staff experience within CYMH.

2SLGBTQ+ Experiences with the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Children and Family Development was conducted by Alexis Baker and Justine Little. This study aimed to understand the unique needs of 2SLGBTQ+ youth involved with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) in British Columbia, given their overrepresentation and under-support in the system. The research conducted eight qualitative interviews and found that some youth had mixed experiences, while others had wholly negative and traumatizing interactions with the Ministry and related support systems. The participants emphasized the importance of respecting diverse gender identities, correct pronoun usage, and the need for better training, removal of inappropriate staff and foster families, and empowering youth in decision-making about their care.

The conclusions, interpretations, and views expressed in these articles belong to the author(s) as individuals and may not represent the ultimate position of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. We hope you enjoy this volume of research articles and that it can help inform research, policies, program development, and practices. If you have any questions about any of the research projects, please contact me at b.lee@ubc.ca.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee, MSW, PhD

Editor-In-Chief

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia

Director, Centre for the Study of Services to Children and Families

Knowledge Exchange and Mobilization (KxM) Scholar