



Step Forward

Building a Better Life: Mapping Methodology & Case Studies

M.A.P.S. Annual Collaboration Showcase
October 24, 2018, Chateau Louis Conference Centre
Edmonton, AB

Presenters: Marlene Mulder & Colette Cornejo



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Determinants of Social Capital & Differential Success: Building a Better Life

Connection:

To create research partnerships comprising service providers to Newcomers and Indigenous people, municipal government, and researchers, in order to build a cohesive team to effectively address policy and programming issues.

Insight:

To learn how loneliness and self-esteem affect belonging, and how some can successfully use their Social Capital to strengthen their Human Capital to build better futures, while others have difficulty.



Building Research in the Community

- Edmonton Public Library
- 80+ community visits and 40+ collaborating agencies
- Learning about Agency work
- Seeking advice
- Community developing rather than learning about the research plan
- Community presentations and discussions
- Indigenous Elder and Immigrant Wisdom Holder
- Working group for development – facilitated by Alberta Community Development



Structure of Research

- Three year SSHRC grant to June 30, 2018
- Focus on immigrants, Indigenous peoples and homeless or marginally homeless
- Mixed Methods: face-to-face interviews (450 planned) focus groups, case study life maps
- Data collection points: Spring 2016, Winter 2016-17, Fall 2017
- Report drafts to be shared with collaborators for review and interpretation after each data collection point
- Ongoing presentations to participants/service providers
- Final report and research shared with public
- Aggregate data reports available to collaborators
- Abide by Tri-council Ethics



Guiding Principles/Rules of Engagement

The seven sacred teachings: love, respect, wisdom, courage, honesty, humility, truth provide the cornerstones to the project

- Seek balance through respect for each other's differences.
- Willingness to learn from the new experience
- Use plain language
- Acknowledgement & accommodate different learning styles



Guiding Principles/Rules of Engagement

- Being intentional in the collaborative process
- Provide regular updates through e-mail/website
- Draw on research experience and existing reports
- Ongoing and open communication
- Process that is relevant and beneficial to community
- Engage diverse and equal participation from all



Partners and Collaborators

- Action for Healthy Communities
- Africa Centre
- Alberta Community & Social Services
- Alberta Culture & Tourism
- Alberta Health Services
- Ambrose Place – Niginan Housing
- Bent Arrow Healing Society
- Bissell Centre
- Boyle Street Services
- Bredin Centre for Learning
- Canadian Mental Health
- Candora Society of Edmonton
- Catholic Social Services
- City of Edmonton – Community Inclusion
- City of Edmonton – Family Supports
- Creating Hope Society
- Distinctive Employment Counselling
- E4C
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- Edmonton Food Bank
- Edmonton Immigrant Services Assoc.
- Edmonton Native Healing Centre
- Federation of Community Leagues
- George Spady Centre
- HIV Network of Edmonton
- Homeward Trust
- House Next Door Society
- M.A.P.S. Alberta Capital Region
- Marian Centre
- Metis Child & Family Services Society
- Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Mustard Seed
- Multicultural Health Brokers
- Native Counselling Services
- Native Healing Society
- Rupertsland Institute
- Wicitowin
- YMCA





The research team

Changes: Building The Plane As We Flew It

- Working Group
- Languages and translation
- Talking stick – second round
- Income and household number question
- Refocus on participants
- Expansion of numbers
- Life Maps instead of traditional case studies
- Life Map Celebration & Presentation
- Having community experts read and vet the chapters
- Adding three subgroups for specific analysis (homeless ever, substance use problems in past year, poor health)



Dissemination

- Community presentations
- Local, national and international conferences
- Local Media
- Journals and publications
- Life Maps in public places
- Graphic booklet
- Reports



Research Methodology



Community-Based Research Goals

1. To learn what is needed to support marginalized people in developing their Social Capital
2. To build strong community partnerships with service providers and local government



Expected Outcomes

- Recognition of the importance of agency work
- Increased knowledge about community-based research
- Agencies have a resource of data to support their community service initiatives
- Participants feel validated and included in the project
- Participants can relate to the experiences of others
- Recognition and validation of the importance of Social Capital
- Agencies work together and share information



Guiding Principles

- Nurture working relationships
- Honour and respect
- Include community
- Build Social Capital
- Be sensitive to needs
- Build research team
- Seven Sacred Teachings (love, respect, wisdom, courage, honesty, humility, truth)

This [research project] I felt made our organization a partner from the beginning. We were able to contribute to the design and implementation of the project. Also, the data collection itself was an empowering and humanizing experience. The researchers were part of the community literally, and made the experience very comfortable ... -Community Collaborator

Challenges

- △ Creating and maintaining trusting relationships
- ◻ Changing faces of research team and community collaborators
- ◻ Managing expectations
- ◻ Honouring culture
- ◻ Balancing administrative and community needs

Designing the Path

Planning research with the community

12 created; 40+ service providers



Analysis and review

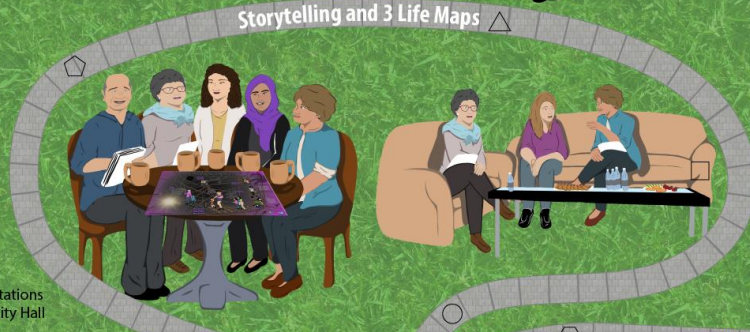
- Present, Review, Interpret**
- Focus on those with experience transcending marginalization
 - Case studies to Life Maps
 - Media, articles, community presentations
 - Data showcase at EPL
 - Working group meeting



Analysis and review

- Present, Review, Interpret**
- Thank you cards with findings to participants
 - Added analysis subgroups: ever homeless, problematic substance use, poor health
 - Media, articles, community, and conference presentations
 - Data showcase at NorQuest College
 - Working group meeting

Storytelling and 3 Life Maps



Analysis and review



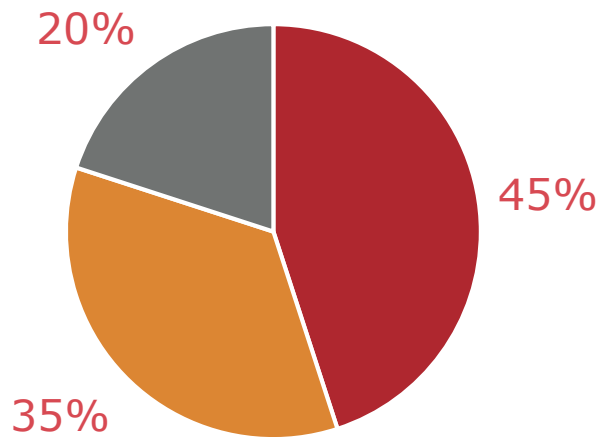
- Present, Review, Interpret**
- Community presentations
 - Media, articles, publications
 - Community and conference presentations
 - Data showcase and celebration at City Hall

Analysis, reporting, animation, and dissemination

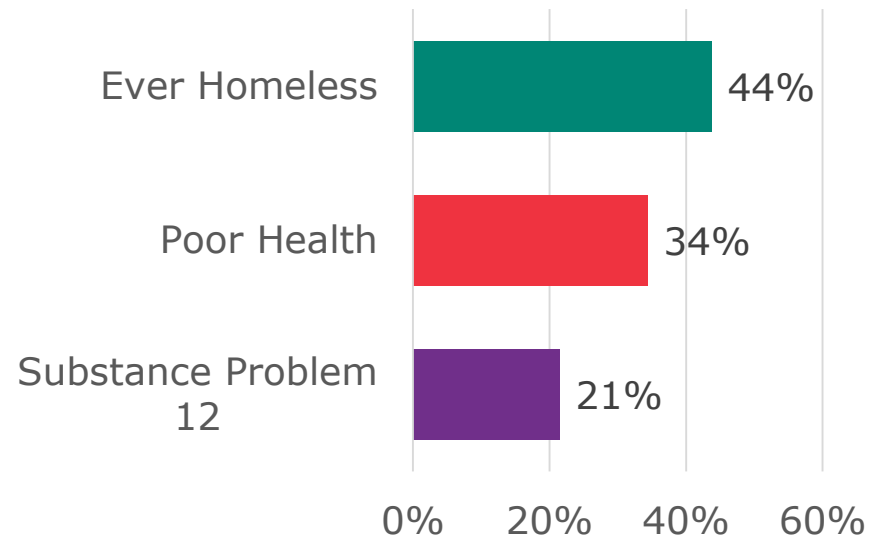
Further Research
Community Booklets
Further Community Work
Conference & Publications

Participants: Who They Are

**606 face-to-face interviews; 50 focus groups;
3 life map case studies**



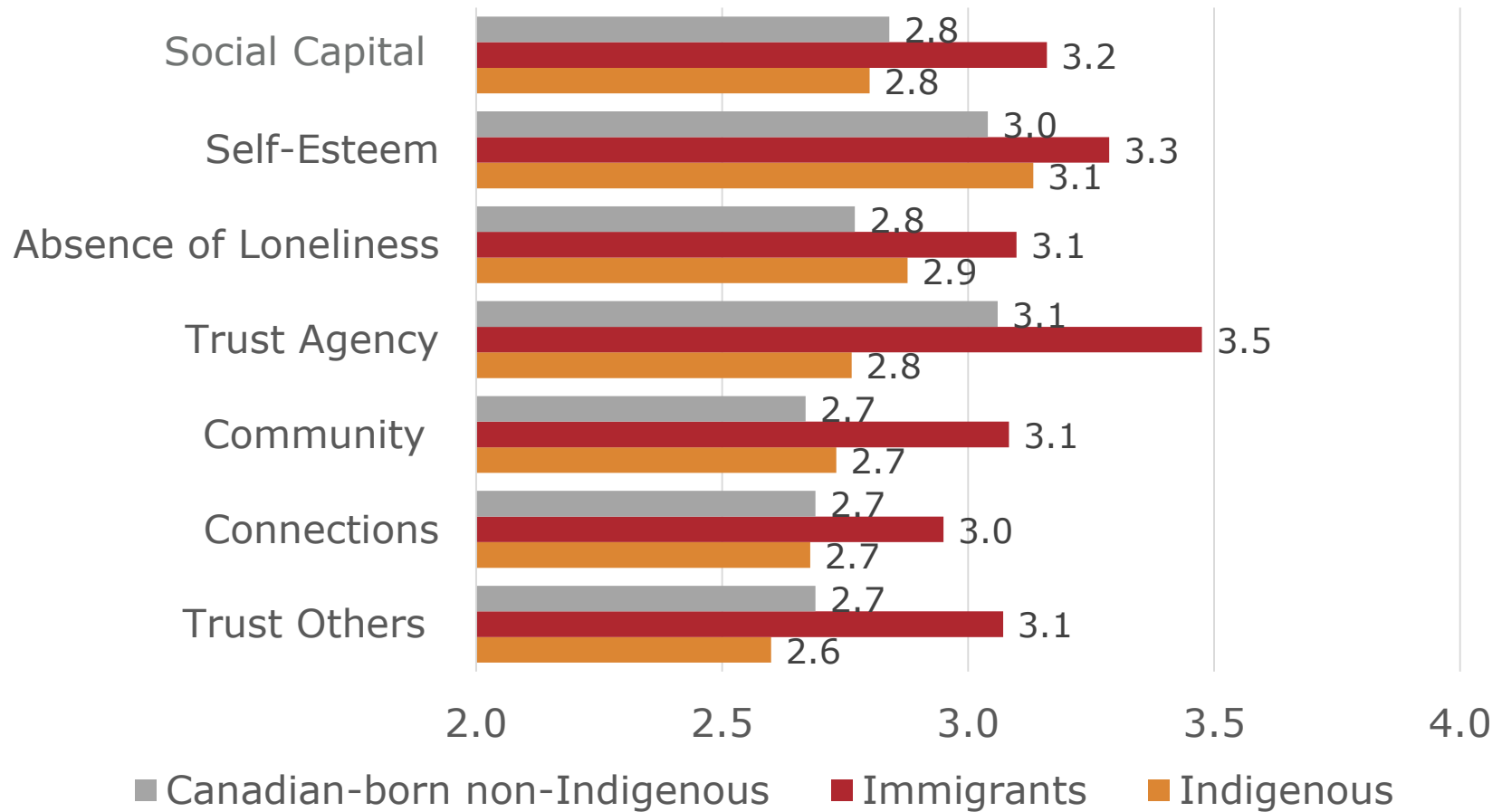
- Immigrant
- Indigenous
- Canadian-born non-Indigenous



- Substance Problem 12
- Poor Health
- Ever Homeless



Social Capital Component Means by Participant Group



What Increases Social Capital

- Attachment – relationship building
- Health – mental and physical
- Education Levels – likelihood of engaging and believing success is possible
- Employment – confidence and networks
- Spiritual participation – supports and belief system, community
- Volunteerism – connection and bonding



What Decreases Social Capital

- Problematic Substance Use - need
- Homelessness – connections
- Discrimination – perception & coping
- Discrimination frequency – perception & coping



Participant Voices

Transition points are difficult

I'm not going to lie, when I was in active use, it was so easy for me to live. It was like I was getting more help because I was in active use of drugs.



Participant Voices

Friendships in Programs

Since I've started at [this program], I've met some family and friends, when I'm here, it's like I'm in heaven.



Participant Voices

Best Friend is Service Provider

Most people think it's weird that I hate weekends. Most people love weekends, I hate them because all of the other places are closed and God forbid it it's a long weekend.



Case Studies – Life Maps

- No traditional case studies
- In-depth analysis, extensive time
- Needed expertise and original art work – M.A.P.S
- Confidentiality (people and space)
- Consistency of people
- Guided by participant
- No Interruptions
- Clarification only
- Vetting and verification then releasing project

It takes as long as it takes!



Building a Better Life - My Personal Journey - C



My mom and dad met in a bar. An Irish and Aboriginal connection.



The bar is a place we spent time daily during my childhood.



My mom and dad had a violent relationship. Lots of fighting. Once when I came home with my babysitter, I saw that my mom had stabbed my dad. He was bleeding badly.



Sometimes my mom hit me and yelled at me. I was scared.



My dad and I moved out into a small apartment.



Sometimes my mom stayed in hospital trying to get better.



My dad and I went to the bar. I felt safe there because everyone knew me and protected me.



When I visited my mom in her apartment, I felt scared of her weird friends.



My mom died when I was 12. My relatives came and I learned about her culture. I smudged. I was sad.



After my mom's death I had migraines and anxiety. I didn't want to talk. I skipped school and hung out with my friends. I ignored my curfew.



After my release I went back to partying with anyone who was interested. Drugs and alcohol was my life. I stole things, and robbed people to make money.



I ended up assaulting a police officer and had a gun pointed at me. I went to jail for three weeks. I decided it was best to stay in jail, rather than go back to the life I was living. I did not want to be released, but I was.



I got evicted and became homeless. Charges were adding up. Sometimes I rode the bus back and forth all day. No one wanted me around.



I started to fight more often to defend my turf and my friends. I used cocaine, percocets, whatever it took to deal with the pain of broken bones. I found myself drinking alone often. Severe depression and alcoholism set in.



As a drug dealer I had to protect my turf. When called out, I fought with a rival gang and got charged for the first time. When I went to jail I learned I could survive it.



I became more aggressive and used alcohol regularly. It gave me confidence. My dad got fed up with having so many people around and my behavior.



At 18 years, I attended a program at the Native Friendship Centre. I learned I had rights as an Aboriginal person. I learned about ceremony and spiritual practices. I became a leader. I was so disappointed when I did not receive status, it set me back.



I took care of my friends. Gave them a place to stay, food, and lots of booze and drugs.



At 16 I got my life back on track. I was a good student and a good leader. I created a crew and started earning money selling drugs.



My godparents were so great. They liked me to spend time with them.



I got an opportunity to go to a treatment program on a Reserve. It was good to connect with indigenous culture.



When I got back to the city I went on a bender again. I hooked up with old friends and members of my crew. I had to stay drunk to stay safe, to survive. I found myself alone and homeless again.



One night while partying I got into a fight with my best friend. I didn't realize until hours later that I had taken his life. I had blacked out and I had crossed the boundaries of community expectations. No one supported me after this incident. I was truly alone!



As a convicted murderer I had to face myself and what I had done. I had to come down off of drugs and alcohol. I tried to stay emotionally strong to protect myself. I realized I was "that person."



I felt very deep emotions. I grieved for my friend and his family. I found out my dad had cancer. I wanted to make amends with my dad. I had to stay strong to survive in prison. I received a medicine bag and had a spiritual Epiphany.



In prison I transformed myself and took responsibility for my actions. I joined the native brotherhood and became a leader. I met with an elder regularly, smudged, and attended the sweat lodge. I was committed to reducing violence among inmates.



Throughout my time in prison I tutored other inmates, and became a peer educator. I took cultural courses and developed my emotional awareness and expression. I stayed clean and remained committed to nonviolence.



I was able to attend a healing lodge near the end of my sentence. I participated in many cultural activities and ceremonies. I found myself and I found my path.



Today I use my experience to work with youth who are at risk of going down the wrong path. I step into leadership roles in my community when requested to do so. I remain committed to the teachings of the elders.

Life map developed by M.A.P.S. Alberta Capital Region



**I got evicted and became homeless.
Charges were adding up. Sometimes I
rode the bus back and forth all day.
No one wanted me around.**



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Skills & Characteristics I Use to Build a Better Life

- Caring nature
- Communication skills
- Confidence
- Courage
- Honesty
- Humility
- Integrity
- Leadership
- Networking
- Non-judgmental
- Perspective
- Positive attitude
- Resiliency
- Respect
- Self-awareness
- Self-care
- Stress management



External Supports I Use to Build a Better Life

- Community
- Counselling/Therapy
- Cultural connections
- Education
- Elders/Ceremony/Traditional Practice
- Employment
- Faith communities
- Family
- Friends
- Health care
- Justice system
- Mentors/Teachers
- Programs & services
- Shelter/Food
- Skill building opportunities
- Staff at agency(ies)
- Transportation



What I Give Back To The Community

- Acceptance
- Advocacy
- Calmness
- Caring
- Communication
- Connecting people
- Consistency
- Courage
- Honesty
- Hopefulness
- Leadership
- Patience
- Positive role model
- Understanding
- Volunteering



Thank you

- **Participants:** The participants in this study were gracious and willing to share their space and place with us. They saw this study as a time to have community with others they may not otherwise connect with.
- **Community:** Without the community working together this research would not be possible. We look forward to continuing this relationship to further understand, support, and give voice to people.
- **CCSIF - SSHRC**
- **NorQuest College**



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You are invited to the
**Building a Better Life
Research Presentation**

December 12, 2018
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm | Edmonton City Hall

