

CREATING A MÉTIS-SPECIFIC MODEL OF CULTURALLY- RELEVANT SHARED CARE FOR MÉTIS INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH OR AFFECTED BY HIV AND STBBI

**Danielle Atkinson¹, Raye St. Denys², Kandace Ogilvie²,
Carrielynn Lund³, Renée Masching³, Rachel Landy¹, and
Catherine Worthington¹, for the DRUM & SASH team**

1. University of Victoria 2. Shining Mountains Living Community Services 3. Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network



Conflict of Interest Disclosure: The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Background: Shared models of care are used to improve access to, and quality of, HIV and sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI) care, in a culturally relevant and safer way for Indigenous peoples (Maar et al., 2009). The Métis community in Red Deer has served as a pilot community for the development and implementation of a Métis-specific model of culturally-relevant shared care as part of the DRUM & SASH implementation science team grant (www.drumandsash.ca). Shining Mountains Living Community Services (Shining Mountains), an Indigenous services agency for individuals living with or at risk of HIV and/or STBBI, was delegated by the Métis Nation of Alberta to lead the Métis-specific shared care model development in partnership with the DRUM & SASH team.

Research Objective: The objective of this research was to develop a grassroots-led, community-grounded Métis-specific model of health and wellness for Métis people in Alberta living with or affected by HIV, HCV and/or other STBBI. This model will be used as an intake assessment tool for Métis clients at Shining Mountains, and will be used to guide future community interventions addressing HIV and STBBI.

Methods: To develop this Métis-specific model of health and wellness for individuals living with/impacted by HIV and STBBI, three gathering circles (similar to focus groups but incorporated Métis culture and practices) took place in Edmonton. Eight diverse Métis participants were involved, who had either: cultural knowledge, lived experience, or were HIV service providers. Gathering circles were audio recorded, transcribed, and thematically analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the components of the model.

Results: A unique Métis-specific model of health and wellness was developed for use with Métis individuals living with or affected by HIV and/or STBBI, titled the **Red River Cart Model** (Slide 3). The figure on Slide 3 represents the Red River Cart Model in its current state; it may be changed in the future to reflect feedback from model users.

What is DRUM & SASH?

DRUM & SASH is a five-year CIHR-funded implementation science team grant to support First Nation and Métis communities in Alberta to Develop Shared Care Models for HIV and other STBBIs. The goals of DRUM & SASH are:

1. Shared care model scale-up and adaptation;
2. Capacity strengthening using community-to-community mentorship;
3. Implementation assessment and co-learning;
4. Knowledge sharing by creating accessible online resources.

DRUM & SASH is grounded in a community-readiness approach which focuses on meeting communities where they are at.

Ethics: This research was approved by the University of Victoria's Research Ethics Board, on September 18, 2019 as an amendment to the DRUM & SASH ethics application (certificate # 18-1179).

Shining Mountains Métis Care Assessment

Red River Cart Model

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Date: _____

Métis flag
(leadership)



Ukotāson

Métis cart tarp
(spirituality and Culture)



Pahkwanehikan

Métis Capote coat
(family)



Li capote

Métis sash
(community)



Le ceinture
fléchée

Métis York boat
(goals)



Misti awota osi

Métis medicine bag
(clinicians & treatment)



Maskihkī maskimut



Métis moccasins
(connection to land)



Pahpekin muskisinah

Métis fiddle
(social)



Li vialon

Métis weapons
(harm reduction)



Nimaskwana

Métis stove
(housing)



Kotawanapisk

Métis tools
(education & training)



Apuchichikuna

Métis grub box
(resources)



Nemawiwut

- Strong 
- Medium 
- Weak 
- Broken 

Results from Thematic Analysis for Each Component of the Model

Component of Model	Meaning	Quotes or Examples from Gathering Circle Participants
Red River Cart	The Cart holds important items for the client's journey to achieving and maintaining health and wellness.	"Whatever was in the cart was whatever we needed to survive"; "Only the most important things were put in there..."
Spokes (not pictured)	Our roles as Métis individuals (e.g., Elder, child, father, sister, auntie).	"Like our roles and responsibilities ... the spokes would be like that? Because without the spokes the cart can't go anywhere."
Rawhide (not pictured)	Wooden parts of the cart were lashed together with rawhide. Rawhide is the resilience of Métis peoples.	"...[resilience] threads into everything". "the resilience... kept the Métis strong regardless of what was done to them".
Métis Sash	Community. Community is important in Métis culture.	"Community is what makes you strong outside of your family"
Grub Box	Resources. The grub box traditionally contained foodstuffs on journeys. These are the resources needed to support health and wellness .	Contains social supports an individual can access, like food banks, or transportation subsidies.
Toolbox	Education, skills and training. Traditionally, our education, skills and training helped us to be self-sufficient as Métis people.	Supports that enable clients to access education and training opportunities (e.g., funding for school, community-led training opportunities like first aid)
Métis Stove	Housing. The Métis stove provided warmth and was used for cooking.	Housing supports such as affordable housing or supportive housing for people living with HIV.
Weapons	Harm reduction resources. Traditionally, weapons were primarily used for protection. These can include supplies such as condoms, needle exchanges, supervised consumption sites.	"So, it's... protecting yourself, your mind, and your body ". "As well as like, reaching out... like protecting yourself, and avoiding things like used needles, right".
Fiddle	Social. Closely related to community. Also represents Métis spirit and a tool for healing.	" Music is our spirit "; "Music is good for the soul"; "Music can be healing " The social aspect of health is closely linked to Métis social activities such as jigging and singing.
Medicine Bag	Clinicians and Treatment.	Can include access to primary care, HIV/STBBI specialists, and traditional healers.
Métis Flag	Leadership. Respect for leaders has always been an important Métis value.	"We need our [Métis] political leaders in the wagon with us to support the work we are doing, to help in that. And to honour them"
Capote Coat	Family. Contains values of warmth, compassion and kinship .	"It represents a kinship , the non judgemental, the warm, and compassionate services , the care of each other, taking care of each other"
Cart Tarp	Protection of the self through spirituality and culture. Elders play an important role in spirituality and culture.	"Spirituality and culture and so intertwined"; "Culture is spirituality, and spirituality is culture"
Métis York Boat	Represents goals. Used to portage and travel great distances.	"People need to have a vision of being somewhere other than whatever they're in. It's important to have hope , and be able to set goals and have dreams that lead to pathways to achieve them, even if it looks impossible at the time"
Moccasins	Connection to land. We feel the land through our moccasins; they help us walk softly on the Earth.	"Moccasins ... they're what connects you to land , it's in between your feet and the land". Participants indicated they connected to the land when they felt stressed or needed grounding.

IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Red River Cart model provides a model of health and wellbeing for Métis people that is reflective of a holistic understanding of health, and incorporates a social determinants of health approach with a life course perspective. There are a limited number of Métis-specific models of health in the literature (LaVallee, 2014); this model fills a significant gap in both literature and practice. Unique to this model is the important role that politics, as well as leadership, play in health, wellness, and prevention in an HIV and STBBI context. Its strengths are the focus on Métis culture and worldview as an integral aspect of health and wellbeing. Métis culture and worldview are important aspects of the Métis determinants of health (Dyck, 2009).

This model can be applied to multiple levels beyond that of the individual/client (i.e., program level, policy makers, Métis governments) to identify policy and program gaps that exist and contribute to the existing gap in health and wellness services for Métis peoples (Evans et al., 2012).

This model can be adapted to differing community and health contexts, and be used to address gaps in programming and outcomes for Métis peoples. Participants expressed the importance of fully engaging community when adapting this model to new communities or contexts. Participants also strongly emphasized taking an individualized approach to using the model, by allowing clients to define components of the model for themselves.

This research has created opportunities for future research and work, which can include: evaluation of the Red River Cart Model, and its scale up and adaptation to new Métis communities utilizing community-to-community mentorship through the DRUM & SASH project.

FUNDING AND OTHER SUPPORT PROVIDED BY:



CIHR IRSC

Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Institut de recherche en santé du Canada



University
of Victoria



Universities
Without Walls

The next generation of
HIV researchers in Canada



References:

- Dyck, M. (2009). *Social Determinants of Metis Health*. Ottawa, Ontario: National Aboriginal Health Organization.
- LaVallee, A. (2014). *Converging Methods and Tools: A Métis Group Model Building Project on Tuberculosis*. University of Saskatchewan,
- Evans, M., Anderson, C., Dietrich, D., Bourassa, C., Logan, T., Berg, L., & Devolder, E. (2012). Funding and Ethics in Métis Community Based Research. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 5, 54-66. doi:10.5204/ijcis.v5i1.94
- Maar, M. A., Erskine, B., McGregor, L., Larose, T. L., Sutherland, M. E., Graham, D., . . . Gordon, T. (2009). Innovations on a shoestring: a study of a collaborative community-based Aboriginal mental health service model in rural Canada. *International Journal Of Mental Health Systems*, 3, 27-27. doi:10.1186/1752-4458-3-27



the CTN
CIHR Canadian
HIV Trials Network

le Réseau
Réseau canadien
pour les essais VIH des IRSC



BC SUPPORT Unit
Advancing Patient-Oriented Research