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Community Comment

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COMMUNITY COMMENT

MINNIE GREY

The strength of this article is its attempt to show that the psychologist's code of ethics can link to traditional knowledge. It shows that there are aspects of traditional knowledge that could be useful in psychology. Direct contact with Elders regarding traditional methods used in dealing with troubled individuals would have been interesting.

The Nunavut territorial government may not be the first to be shaped by an Aboriginal world view. Kalaalit Nunaat (Greenland) has a long history of home rule based on culture and language of its people.

There may be some gap in use of terminology and language in relation to traditional knowledge and this gap may be due to regional differences. Some important values are not listed in the Inuttitut words; such as *Upigiutiniq/Upigusunniq* — which is appreciation and/or respect for one or each other. *Puqiasunnginiq* is a value very important amongst any peoples and that is trust and believing. These are not exhaustive and could be different in each Inuit group.

In reference to community as a whole vs. individuals, it is proper to question whether the view is appropriate today. As for conflict between CPA and IQ in that CPA gives priority to individuals over community, I say that is why now we have so many problems amongst individuals as the community concept is now very different from the past.

Wihak says that sustained deception is difficult to achieve in communities that are small because private lives are so exposed. The communities may be small but there are very serious community problems that are not being exposed. This can be broken down to families who are aware within themselves of serious problems which somehow are not any different to anyone else's, but it still does not become a community problem until it is of epidemic proportion. For example, sexual abuse (starting in families) leads to suicide which becomes a community tragedy.

For many Inuit, schizophrenia is the result of demon possession. This is not across the board; it is seen mostly as such by the religiously obsessed.

These are my remarks. I think this is a very good paper and is attempting very well to show that although there is really no scientific proof in the IQ, there are still values similar to those followed by scientists.

My comments are also based on my experience in a community, as an Inuk but also someone who has been involved in the health and social services sector for the last 12 years.

PAUL MCGAFFEY

Wihak's article brings some important realities to the attention of psychologists and therapists who work as healers or researchers with the people of Nunavut. Wihak's summary points us toward the very useful work of Jack Arnakak (2002), who is helping to develop a definition of a Nunavummiut circle. Arnakak has summarized the principles of *Inuit Qaujimanituqangit*, or IQ. In October 1999, these principles were declared part of the "Bathurst Mandate" of the Government of Nunavut Territory.

Using the traditional circle as a legislative foundation means, in my observation and reading, that the better good of the community has priority over that of any one person. Wihak argues that this issue is essential to the ethics of working in Nunavut. Nunavut may be the first state or territorial government that has enshrined the circle as a touchstone for developing legislation, including legislation to regulate psychologists working there.

But, according to Wihak's description, there is a dilemma. Both psychologists and legislators need to figure out how Nunavut will conform to the law-of-the-land of Canada and still use its own touchstone. The *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists*, 3rd ed, states:

Psychologists are expected to respect the requirements of their provincial/territorial regulatory bodies. Such requirements might define particular behaviours that constitute misconduct, are reportable to the regulatory body, and/or are subject to discipline.

There are several methods Wihak might develop in an article discussing this dilemma of conforming. For instance, there are alternatives available to non-Inuit psychologists that give proper priority to IQ. A discussion of such alternatives would be consistent with the case study method used all across Canada to assist psychologists to understand the code of ethics. Practical issues could include:

- o In a Territory with such small numbers, and small communities, how does IQ tradition handle the ethical issues of "dual relationships" and the "community" definition of confidentiality?
- o Do ethical practices that work in a small community have to change when a psychologist is required to report to a formal body (such as the justice system)?
- o Laws in Canada require a psychologist to report danger to persons, but sometimes the reports don't happen (as in Wihak's example of the rape of the teenage woman in the outpost camp). Can required reporting fit with IQ?

- o If there are traditions of secrecy in Nunavut, how does a psychologist deal with family distress issues in a timely manner? How can traditions of secrecy, or “not saying,” be untangled from the ethics of deception? What are the ethical principles that hold if secrecy were to limit access to health? For instance, is secrecy selectively enforced with sexual abuse of males compared to abuse of females?
- o What about conflicts with patri-centric attitudes and practices? What are the ethical principles that hold if women are given less access to good care? Are females less likely to be brought for early detection of easily mistaken disorders like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or treatment of diabetes that leads to kidney failure? Are women more likely to be neglected or battered?
- o How should areas of decision, such as medical options previously unknown to Innu or antagonistic to Innu traditional practice, be handled? What if there was neglect of old people in a culture that had little tradition of long-term care until after the Second World War?
- o How can clinical psychologists working in Nunavut be prepared for the increased likelihood of being challenged to make ethical judgments commonly outside a psychologist’s scope of practice?

There are many resources to guide psychologists interested in these questions.

- o National Aboriginal Health Organization’s First Annual Conference and Health Information Fair: January 21-23, 2003. Maria Braveheart from South Dakota displayed an overhead presentation titled, “Historical Trauma and Indigenous Knowledge and Healing – The Takini Network” (available from the Takini Network). She distributed a Union of Yagé Healers of the Columbia Amazon presentation titled, “The Beliefs of the Elders – Code of Ethics for Indigenous Medicine of the Columbian Amazon” (available from NAHO).
- o Ross Himona, “Maori Development: The Power of the Network.” Revised from *Te Putatara*, November 1988.

A network is an empowering organization. A network is many times greater than the sum of all its parts, and in a network, power is *shared equally* by its members. The network cannot be destroyed by destroying a single leader, for its heart is everywhere. A bureaucracy is only as strong as its weakest link. The Pakeha [western settlers] has different hierarchies for work, play, education, family life, and politics. The whanau, hapu, and iwi are networks that can provide all. That is another of the strengths of Maoridom. And the

Pakeha cannot see into the Maori networks, and cannot read the Maori mind. Yet the Maori sees into the hierarchies, and into the minds of the Pakeha. That is great strength. Our weakness is trying to emulate the Pakeha, his hierarchies, and his power games.

- o Help to resolve the dilemma described by Wihak exists outside the field of psychology. A practical methodology for improving assessment and prediction through “Culture Charting” is described in David C. McGaffey, *Reducing Uncertainty*. 1999, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

For any culture (a population which transmits consistent values to influence behavior, choices, priorities), an outside observer can comprehend the culture by (a) linking the values of interest to daily routine behaviors, (b) observing the population, and (c) comparing the choices of this population to a reference point (typically the observer’s home culture). This process results in a comparative scale that can be used to explain and predict future actions, while not pretending to fully explain the culture.

Wihak deals with the issue of the Inuit way of knowing and truth determination, suggesting that it is not consistent with science and empiricism. There are several arguments in the literature that Aboriginal/Inuit ways of knowing are indeed empirical, sometimes experimental, but just not accessible to “scientific” constructs that are too narrow for the moment. This is one essential rationale of IQ. For instance:

- o Jim Bowler, *Reading The Australian Landscape: European and Aboriginal Perspectives, Cappuccino papers Number One*, Imagine The Future Inc, Melbourne, 1995.

Sturt Creek runs south along the eastern margin of the Kimberley Block, terminating in a series of lakes in the Great Sandy Desert. Lying within the dune-fields of the now fossil desert, the area falls within the traditional lands of the Walmatjiri people. Today the Aboriginal owners hold title to the land surrounding the lakes, where they run a cattle property. The community takes its name from the major lake in the interconnected system, a basin known as Mulan.

When we first entered the area in 1978, the success of our enterprise depended on the goodwill of the traditional owners. In my very first discussions with them, I was treated to a striking example of cultural continuity between land and people.

Seated in the red dust in a concentric circle of elders, younger men and onlookers, we examined maps — some on cartographic paper, others drawn there in the red sand. When we examined a satellite

image, the Mulan people read it in a way that would put most geology students to shame. Their ability instantly to recognize and translate subtle features on the image to real places on the ground immediately portrayed a different sense of spatial perceptions to my own.

Do these different perceptions ever intersect, or are they destined to remain poles apart, one to be accepted by the scientific community, the other destined as a wall piece in some museum of the future? In the minefields that underlie the Aboriginal-European cultural interface, that question and its various manifestations remain of crucial importance.

- o Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran, *Native American Post-Colonial Psychology*. Ithaca, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995.

This book presents a theoretical discussion of problems and issues encountered in the Native American community from a perspective that accepts Native knowledge as legitimate. Native American cosmology and metaphor are used extensively in order to deal with specific problems such as alcoholism, suicide, family and community problems. The authors discuss what it means to present material from the perspective of a people who have legitimate ways of knowing and conceptualizing reality and show that it is imperative to understand intergenerational trauma and internalized oppression in order to understand the issues facing Native Americans today.

- o Maureen Flynn-Burhoe 2002. <http://www.carleton.ca/~mflynnbu/ocean>

Paradigm means a cognitive road map. . . . A paradigm encompasses ontology (the nature of reality); epistemology (how we know and the relationship between the knower and the known) and the methodology (how we gain knowledge about the world, of which Participatory Action Research is one approach). A paradigm is socially constructed and depends on a basic set of beliefs that guide action. It is a worldview, a basic set of beliefs that define the nature of the human subject, the relationships between human subject and the world. Paradigmatic beliefs depend as much on faith as any philosophical belief. Paradigms can be so inclusive that they encompass worlds within worlds or as narrow as orthodox positivism. . . .

- o Will Van den Hoonaard, 2002. Unpublished article presented May 2002, Toronto at the Canadian Historical Association Meeting:

The Bathurst Mandate is a syncretic document on governance of a modern, complex society incorporating Inuit values. What will be of interest to indigenous peoples globally is the dynamic between

Inuit Qaujimanituqangit and the pragmatics of policy-makers. In a very real sense this is a collision of knowledge systems.

Not all psychologists will agree with Wihak's definition of their mandate. As a psychotherapist working with people in healing, I am not, as Wihak suggests, "pledged to rely on scientifically verified demonstrations of causality." To illustrate what many experienced therapists and I are pledged to, I cite Seligman, M.E.P. (1995) "The Effectiveness of Psychotherapy: the CR Study," *American Psychologist* 50: 965-974. Or: <http://www.apa.org/journals/seligman.html>

The CR study, then, is to be taken seriously — not only for its results and its credible source, but for its method. It is large-scale; it samples treatment as it is actually delivered in the field; it samples without obvious bias those who seek out treatment; it measures multiple outcomes including specific improvement and more global gains such as growth, insight, productivity, mood, enjoyment of life, and interpersonal relations; it is statistically stringent and finds clinically meaningful results. Furthermore, it is highly cost-effective. Its major advantage over the efficacy method for studying the effectiveness of psychotherapy and medications is that it captures how and to whom treatment is actually delivered and toward what end. At the very least, the CR study and its underlying survey method provides a powerful addition to what we know about the effectiveness of psychotherapy and a pioneering way of finding out more.