

Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation Members with Physical Disabilities: Access, availability, challenges

Jenny Gardipy, PhD Student
University of Saskatchewan, 2020



ABSTRACT

There is limited research that identifies the gaps in disability programs and services for Indigenous people. This research project takes an Indigenous nation-based CBR (community-based research) approach (Johnson & Sparrow 2015) to collaborate with Nêhiyawak (Cree people) who have physical disabilities in one Nêhiyaw (Cree) community, to explore their needs and gather their wisdom for improving services and programs. The findings have the potential to profile and inform disability policy, programs, and services at the community level; knowledge that will be transferable to other communities as well as upstream.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Indigenous people with physical disabilities often experience being doubly marginalized (Higgins et al. 2010, 14). They do not receive equal access to services and programs due to many factors including accessibility, cost and other issues, however the literature on these issues is scant. This study will utilize several methods to document the experiences of individuals with disabilities from the Beardy's & Okemasis First Nation and answer the question, "What are your experiences in terms of access to supports, availability of services, and other challenges in your daily life?"

OBJECTIVES

1. To craft a culturally driven, respectful, and inclusive research project space for the participants to confidently share their life and disability experiences.
2. To nurture and encourage participants to fully engage and guide the research in all respects, drawing upon and centering Nêhiyawak protocols; and to gather wisdom and insights about disability issues.
3. To synthesize the findings into recommendations and knowledge mobilization mediums such as a guidebook/toolkit that translates ideas into action and which will be beneficial to participants and communities;
4. To disseminate the findings as directed by community, in culturally appropriate ways that honours community ethics.

METHODS

This is a four-phase study:

1. Conducting a scoping literature review;
2. Engaging in a Indigenous community and nation-based participatory study with the support and guidance of a Nêhiyawak collaborative advisory team, at all levels;
3. Engaging the team in collaborative data collection and data analysis; and,
4. Engaging the community through a feast in order to present and disseminate the data.

PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS

A preliminary review of the literature reveals four prominent themes for Indigenous peoples with physical disabilities:

1. Lack of independence and access (Shackel 2008);
2. Racism and discrimination experiences (D'Cruz 2007);
3. One-sided narratives to describe Indigenous peoples with physical disabilities (Ferri 2008); and,
4. Lack of adequate community infrastructures (British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society 2017).



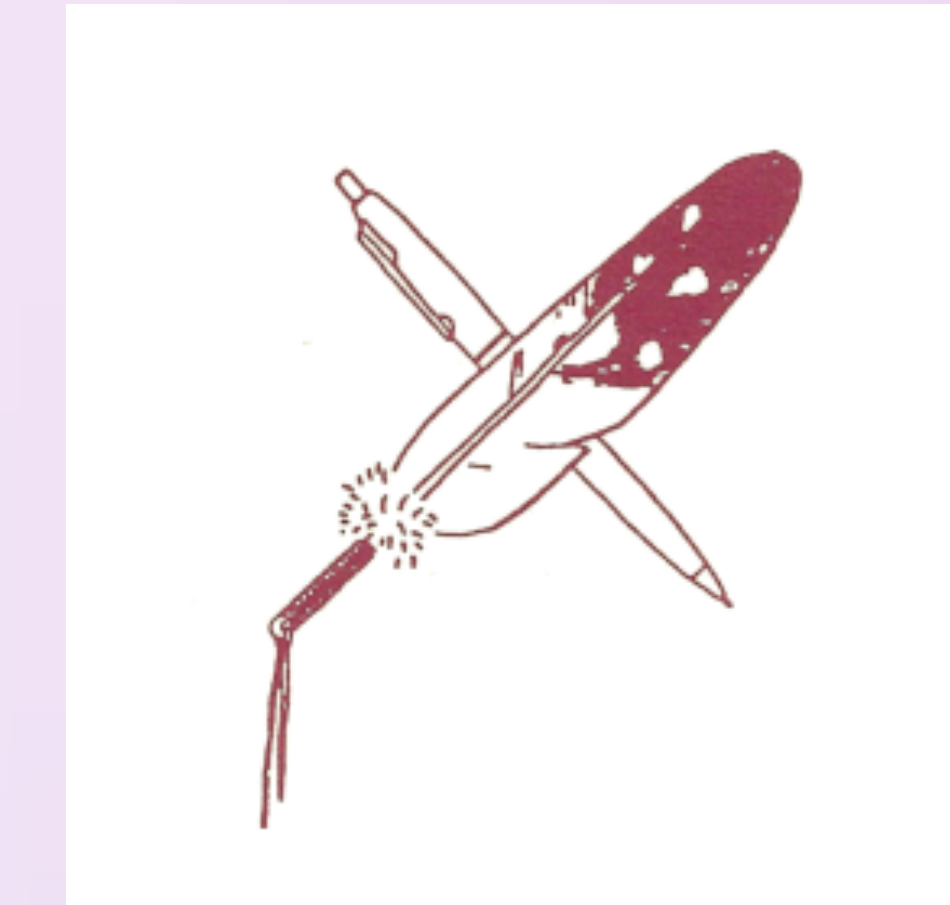
Nikawiy is snowshoeing.



Rose Gardipy, nikawiy (my mother in Cree) is blind; however, she is making crushed chokecherries with the help of my aunty Sylvia Oxebin.



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