



Attitudes toward collaboration among agencies serving urban First Nations and Métis Children and Families

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Healthy Weights
CONNECTION™

Métis Nation
of Ontario



PROPEL
CENTRE FOR
POPULATION
HEALTH IMPACT

Organization



Background

Context

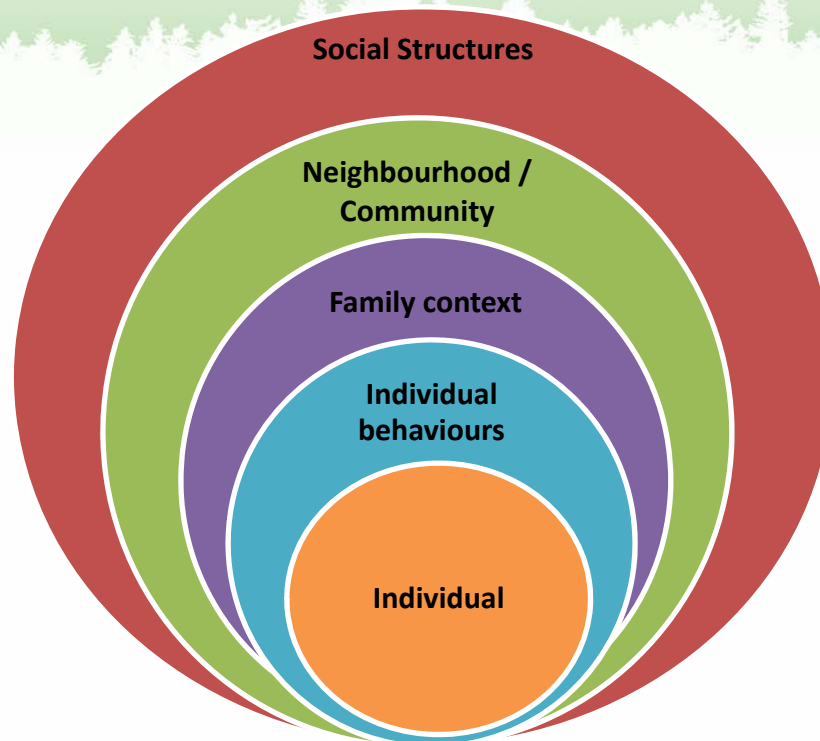
Research Questions

Methods

Results

Implications for policy and practice

Socio-ecological perspectives on childhood obesity



e.g. Willows, Hanley and Delormier, 2012. A socioecological framework to understand weight-related issues in Aboriginal children in Canada *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab.* Feb; 37 (1), 1–13.

Factors affecting childhood overweight/obesity



Maternal and infant health

Smoking
Maternal obesity
High (or low) birth weight
Breastfeeding

Family conditions

Lone parenthood
Low income
Low food literacy
Food insecurity

Community conditions

High food costs and low availability
Poor transportation to grocery stores
Lack of safe play spaces
Opportunities for active transportation

Behaviours

Diet
Physical activity
Screen time
Eating habits

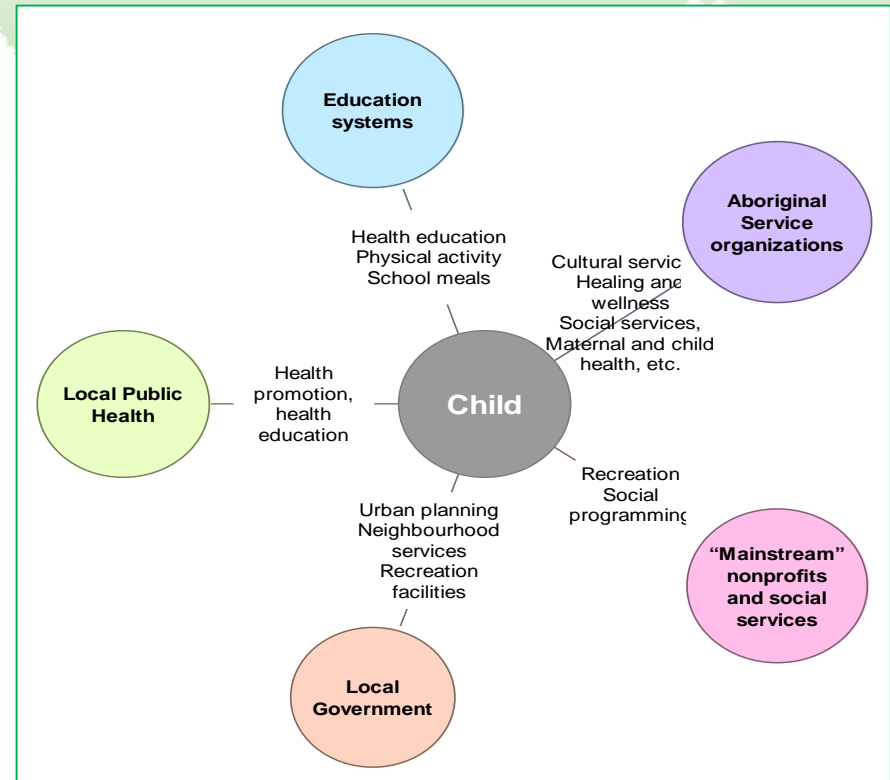
Culturally specific factors

Language/culture
Sense of belonging
Access to traditional knowledge

Local public health systems



- Indigenous children and youth are affected by a complex local public health system
- There is no evidence of a single, effective solution (Towns et al, 2014; Godin et al, 2015)
- Different organizations can have influence at different socio-ecological levels



The Healthy Weights Connection



Healthy Weights Connection strives to improve existing community resources and access to new resources to achieve and maintain healthy weights among Aboriginal children and youth.



The Healthy Weights Connection



Our goals:

REDUCE

the risk of obesity among
Aboriginal children and
youth by improving how
local health and wellness
organizations serve
families

INCREASE

culturally-appropriate
programming available
for children and their
families

IMPROVE

relationships and
collaboration among
components of the
health and social
services systems

The Healthy Weights Connection



- Actively **engage and connect** Aboriginal and mainstream organizations that serve First Nations and Métis children and families
- Promote **collaboration and resource-sharing** to support culturally-appropriate and evidence-based programming
- **Assist** organizations with program development



Backbone organization



- Website and database
- Factsheets
- Newsletters
- Social media
- Support for proposals
- Support for events
- Knowledge translation

The collage displays the following components:

- Website:** The top right shows the Healthy Weights Connection website with the tagline "together we can grow, share and learn". It features a navigation menu with "ABOUT", "RESOURCES", "PARTNERS", "LONDON", and "MIDLAND-PENETANGUISHENE".
- Facebook Page:** The middle left shows the Facebook profile for Healthy Weights Connection, including a cover photo, profile picture, and a post for a "YEAR END GATHERING" on Thursday, March 20, 2014.
- Twitter Profile:** The middle right shows the Twitter profile for HealthyWeightConnect (@HealthyWeightCon), with a bio that reads "Strives to improve and coordinate community resources, and access new resources, to achieve and maintain healthy weights among Aboriginal children and youth." It also shows a tweet about a "YEAR END GATHERING".
- Newsletter:** The bottom right shows a newsletter titled "Community Links" with a "WELCOME TO THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE HEALTHY WEIGHTS CONNECTION TEAM" section and a "SPOCKING EVENT" announcement.

Research questions



- **What are service providers' attitudes toward collaborations?**
- **What are the barriers and facilitators to collaboration** among local organizations serving Indigenous families and children

Methods



Organization survey

- Web-based survey, e-mail invitation to Executive Directors, senior managers
- N=120 organizations in London and collaborating FNs, Midland
- 41% response rate

Focus groups with service providers

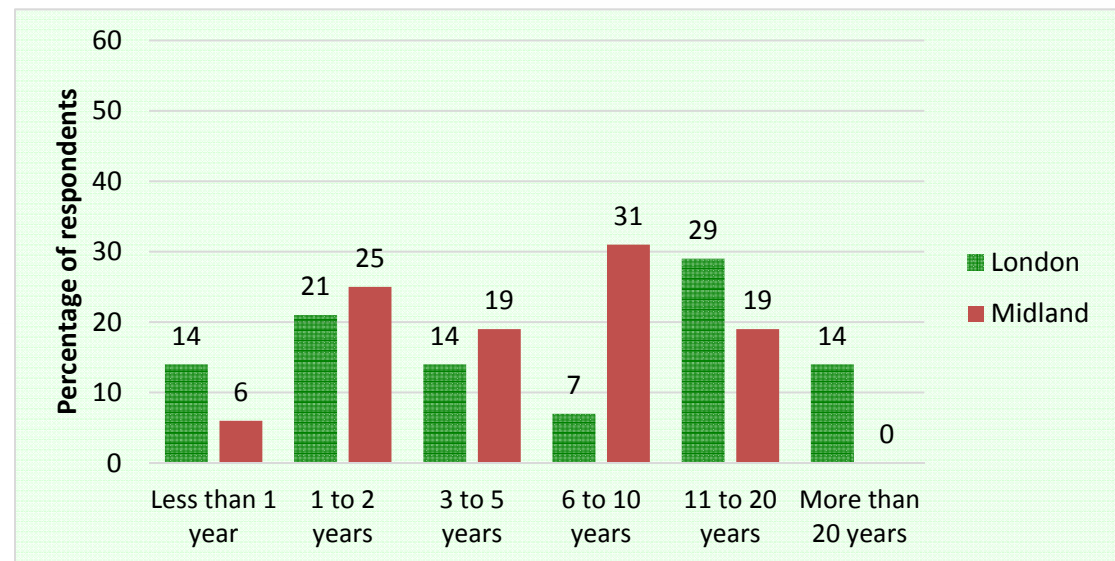
- In-person focus groups with selected organizations (5 “mainstream”, 4 Indigenous)
- 9 focus groups, 72 participants, London and Midland

Organization survey respondents



Respondent Position	Percent
London	
Executive Director / Assistant Executive Director / CEO	31%
Program Director / Manager / Supervisor	23%
Program staff	15%
Coordinator	12%
Health Administrator	4%
Health Promotion Specialist	4%
Chief	4%
Graphic Artist	4%
Research Assistant	4%
Midland	
Program Coordinator	29%
Executive Director	24%
Manager	18%
FNMI Liaison	6%
Registered Dietitian	6%
Community Career Developer	6%
Community Action Plan for Children (CAP-C)	6%
Treasurer	6%

“How long have you been with your current organization/agency?”



Organization experiences with “working together”



To what extent has working together with other organizations...

	Not at all or small extent	Moderate extent	Great or very great extent
Enhanced your organization's ability to fulfill its goals and objectives	5%	14%	82%
Helped your organization acquire knowledge about services and programs in the community	4%	11%	85%
Increased the overall use of your organization's programs and services	14%	27%	59%
Increased professional skills of your organization's staff	19%	35%	44%
Increased your organization's access to resources	5%	29%	67%
Led to frustration or aggravation for your organization's staff	82%	14%	0%
Taken time and resources away from other priorities	89%	11%	0%
Led to insufficient credit given for contributing to the accomplishments resulting from collaboration	75%	9%	2%

Individual beliefs regarding “working together”



I believe that...

	Strongly disagree or Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree or Strongly agree
Projects are more sustainable when organizations work together	0%	2%	98%
Working together can help organizations leverage more resources (for example, space, expertise, volunteers, or funding)	0%	2%	98%
The last thing my organization needs is effort being spent on working together with other organizations	95%	2%	2%
Spending lots of time trying to promote organizations working together is seldom worth the effort	86%	7%	7%

Organizational experiences with networking and collaboration



Some mainstream organizations pointed out the general importance of collaboration for their service delivery:

“A lot of our work is really built on partnership and building collaboration. That’s really a foundational piece of our work.”

“I can’t think of anything that I do that isn’t done in partnership.”

Organizational experiences with networking and collaboration



One organization reported being “fairly self-contained”, and “networking internally” to address needs.

Another organization indicated that an “internal policy limited time spent networking/ being involved in external committee work.”

What makes collaborations effective?



- **Organizational support and resources**
- **Networking opportunities**
- **Common interests**
- **Commitment**
- **Clear and ongoing communication**



Main barriers to collaboration

Some were seen as “structural” or organizational in nature. Several pointed to a lack of organizational support or resources that support collaboration.

“Sometimes there is definitely a lack of networking between organizations that would benefit from a partnership. Time and ability to know and understand what other organizations do (and how it would work well with your organization) are definitely barriers”



Main barriers to collaboration

Other “structural” issues:

- **Client confidentiality** was seen as a barrier to sharing information and clients between organizations.

Organizational cultures could be a barrier to working together:

- Organizational structures and a tendency to “work in silos”
- Differing ideas, priorities, goals and mandates
- Organizational leadership unwilling to collaborate externally
- A lack of cultural awareness among “mainstream” organizations



Main barriers to collaboration

- Personal conflicts and relationships were also seen as barriers to effective collaboration in some cases.
- Individual managers or leaders were seen as not supporting collaborations, for personal reasons.


“Communication has been the biggest challenge that our organization has faced when dealing with other organizations. Somewhere down the line there has been miscommunication, which has led to huge problems. It is a work in progress for us as we see it as a potential huge advantage to partner with other organizations.”

Case examples of collaboration in our communities



- Development of an Indigenous Culture Card for service providers in London-Middlesex




Culture Card

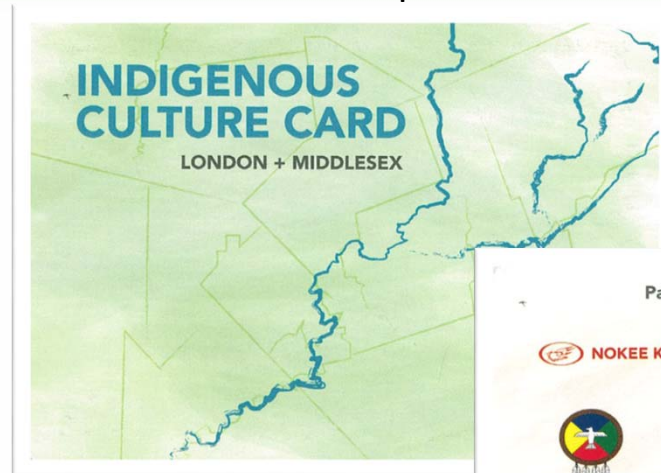


A Guide to Build Cultural Awareness

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Partners who contributed to this card:

















Thank you to the community members who contributed to the development of this card

Case examples of collaboration in our communities



- Establishment of a snowshoe lending program and skate exchange program in Midland





Implications for policy and practice

1. Most of the responding organizations valued “working together”
2. However, both structural (system-level) and organizational factors affected collaboration

Thank you!



Questions?



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Follow us on twitter
@HealthWeightCon

Together we can grow, share and learn

Read more about Healthy Weights Connection online at
www.healthyweightsconnection.ca