



Connecting
the
Dots



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Cariboo Chilcotin
Mental health for all



Looking back at Connecting the Dots: Quesnel

A four-year innovative urban Aboriginal youth mental health project

2014

Objectives of Connecting the Dots

Connecting the Dots was an innovative project which sought to promote the mental health of urban Aboriginal youth and families by mobilizing the community to address risk and protective factors influencing mental health.

The project had three overall goals:



To improve urban
Aboriginal mental health



To adapt the Communities
That Care model to the
urban Aboriginal context



To initiate and sustain a long term
partnership between the Canadian
Mental Health Association and
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

The numbers

629
target
population

300
service
providers

426
general
public

Key Quesnel risk and protective factors

Key risk factors

- Loss of effective parenting skills
- Loss of identity
- Loss of trust between service providers and the Aboriginal community
- Loss of connections with Elders and youth
- Transition between grades 7–8 and 9–10

Key protective factors

- Create strong healthy connections
- Reclaim culture
- Build trust with service providers
- Healthy traditional parenting/secure attachment

Quesnel partners

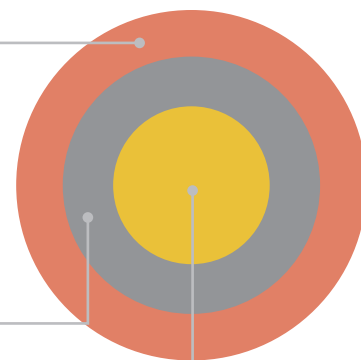
Partners

North Cariboo Aboriginal Family Program Society; School District 28; College of New Caledonia; Ministry of Children and Family Development; Axis Family resources; local Band Councils

Key Leader board, Elders Guiding Circle

Connecting the Dots core team

Lanny Kipling, Connecting the Dots Coordinator;
Sandy Brunton, Executive Director, Quesnel Tillicum Society;
Trevor Barnes, Canadian Mental Health Association, Cariboo Chilcotin Branch (Williams Lake)



Key Quesnel interventions

- Culture camps
- Parenting and traditional teaching workshops
- Trust building circles
- Family gatherings

Key Quesnel findings

Family dances

“Fantastic time. Great to see families having fun together. Elders and children dancing together. Tons of laughter and smiles.”

Parenting traditional teaching modules

“I’ve learned so much from this training—the things that I’ve learned that was about my family helped explain a lot.”

Trust building circles

“Yes. It is trust that is a building block for a healthy individual and community.”

Culture camps

“Makes me good and I feel better about myself.”

“What I like most was the teaching that was brought to my family and the games.”



Lessons learned

- Activities should include the whole family
- Building trust and relationships is essential and takes time
- Community engagement and key leader champions are very important for success
- Cultural competency of all stakeholders is vital

Cultural adaptations

- Followed cultural protocol, respected wisdom and followed teachings of Elders
- Included whole community, including Elders, families, adults, youth and children
- Adapted youth survey to be culturally relevant
- Use of meaningful language
- Followed Tribal Best Practices



Art by Aboriginal artist Jamin Zuroski, representing culturally relevant adaptations for Communities That Care

Cost of project in Quesnel
over \$400,000

www.cmha.bc.ca/connectingthedots