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Title

Fostering Hope, Meaning, Purpose and Belonging by, and with youth through youth-driven activities: an Evaluation of the YPP

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Community based participatory research

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: The Youth Power Program was co-created in 2018 with and by youth at Sturgeon Lake First Nation (SLFN) to enhance wellness by, for, and with youth in the community. The program was grounded in the Plains Cree cultural teachings, ceremonies, and rites of passage. Objective: To evaluate the impact of the Youth Power Program (YPP) on young men and boys that had participated in this program. (Methods)Design: The study was informed by the integration of ethical space, community-based participatory research (CBPR), and transformative learning; built upon existing relationships with Elders, young men, boys, and community leaders at SLFN. Setting: Youth ACCESS Centre at SLFN. Participants: Young men and boys at SLFN and two youth facilitators. Intervention: Field notes, individual guided conversations with young men and boys that attended the Youth ACCESS Centre; member checking using a talking circle; and reflective practice. Results: A total of 14 young men and boys between the ages of 11 and 17 years participated individual guided conversations. The young men and boys reported: gaining confidence; acquiring new skills; and building positive connections with their peers in the youth-friendly activities carried out at/in the Youth Centre. The youth participants commented that the culture upheld within the Youth Center is safe, welcoming, fosters a sense of hope, is positive, purposeful, and a community for young men and boys of all ages. The young men and boys expressed a keen interest in continuing to engage in the fun and youth-driven activities facilitated by the youth facilitators and community leadership; however, they indicated a need for expanded space and focused programs for young men and boys in the higher age groups (i.e., 18-25 years). Conclusions: Engaging young men and boys in youth-led activities facilitated self-confidence, enhanced life skills, and encouraged peer support.