

CFS AND THE SHIFTING PRACTICE TOWARDS MORE RELATIONSHIP BASED SERVICE

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples have always known a deep relationship among all life. This interconnectedness governs customary law around traditional parenting and wellbeing. However, there is a legacy of European epistemology dominating Indigenous ways through assimilation and residential schools. The intergenerational trauma caused by this genocide continues to deprive Indigenous peoples of parental role models and cultural identity. Consequently, generations continue to experience abhorrent conditions of poverty, addiction, abuse and indescribable pain. Efforts to address these symptoms were imposed by the hegemony of western practices. This further ignored traditional childrearing knowledge and the right of self-determination and autonomy in the protection of children. The result has been cyclical over-representation of Indigenous children in government care.

The aim of this workshop is to discuss how relationship-based service delivery (RBSD) and signs of safety practice can align with Indigenous wisdom on protecting children through relationships. I will invite a family and their network to host a fishbowl discussion about their relationships with children's services and their perspectives on current practices that honor family and Indigenous ways of being. We want to highlight recommendations from the family on what is needed for our approaches in partnership with Indigenous families.



Biography

Caleb Anacker was born and raised in rural Alberta by his French-Canadian mother from Southern Ontario and his American father from New England. He and his wife now call Ashmont, Alberta home, where they have lived for six years. Caleb is a Masters of Social Work student at the University of Calgary in the clinical specialization. He is a Caseworker of six years in the Bonnyville office of Children's Services.

The Night family lives in rural Bonnyville and is from the Kehewin Cree Nation. Their land there is home to all the family, where they are practicing and reviving traditional laws, ceremony and life. The family has been growing a relationship with the Caseworker over the past nine months, focused on the wellbeing of their children and grandchildren.