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First Nations Protocol: Ensuring Strong Counselling Relationships with First Nations Clients

by

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A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Psychological Foundations in Education

We accept this dissertation as conforming to the required standard

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the protocol that Non-First Nations counsellors need to follow or do when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. The purpose of this study is to provide some guidelines that Non-First Nations counsellors could utilize building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

The research method involved interviews with 14 adult First Nations clients and support people and 21 Non-First Nations counsellors and support people. The Critical Incident Technique was used to elicit incidents from the 36 participants.

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Thanks are also owing to the thirty-six participants who shared their knowledge and experiences that made this research possible.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

I worked with the Saanich First Nations people for eight and half years between 1990 and 1998. In 1990, a First Nations community member encouraged me to write a job proposal for a School Counselling position with the Saanich bands community school. After successful completion of this application, I began to work with the Elementary and Post Secondary education facilities with the Saanich people.

In order to support the people in a professional and ethical way, I did research on the Saanich people but I found the best way to gain experience was the actual observing and witnessing of the First Nations culture over time. I became close to a member from the community who taught me about the culture and the best way to support the people that was respectful.

Throughout my years with the Saanich people, many Non-First Nations counsellors and educators asked me how I was able to learn about the First Nations culture and how I developed strong relationships with the people. I began to notice that there was either misinformation or limited information about building strong relationships with First Nations communities. As a result, I felt that a study that outlined some of the First Nations protocol might help Non-First Nations counsellors be more respectful, professional and ethical in their work with a First Nations community.

## **FORWORD**

I came up with the idea for this research as a result of suggestions from my graduate committee and the many questions I received from Non-First Nations counsellors over the years as a counsellor with the First Nations people.

After completing my Ph.D. Candidacy examination, I began to think about what Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and know about the First Nations people before they could build strong, effective counselling relationships. Many Non-First Nations counsellors and educators often asked me how I became effective within the First Nations community. When I began talking about my job as a School Counsellor working with the Saanich First Nations people and what I learned, people seemed intrigued and amazed by what I was saying. After talking with my First Nation's colleagues and friends about doing such a study, they too felt it was needed.

I then began to research the material regarding Non-First Nations counsellors protocol with First Nations people in counselling situations. I was amazed by the lack of information that has been written about this very important subject matter. This study is designed to outline some guidelines that Non-First Nations counsellors can use when building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

Please note that I have chosen to use the contemporary term "First Nations" to represent people of Native, Metis or Aboriginal descent.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural counselling is a complex task regardless of which cultural group clients are from. Culture has played a significant role in human behaviour since the classical Greek era as well as near the beginning of psychology as a discipline (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993). The clients' culture provides him/her with a particular perspective relative to relationships with others, relationships with the environment and basic orientation (France, 1997; Amundson, Westwood & Prefontaine, 1995; Rungta, Margolis, & Westwood, 1993). Wade and Bernstein (1991) stressed the importance of the client's culture in providing relevant information about the client's cognitive and affective components that interact to form the client's inner experience. Culture also acts as a resource for positive mental health and fulfills the human's need for identity, security and continuity (France & Presaud, 1991). Counsellors need to know enough about the culture of the counsellee to understand how these factors affect the counsellee and then to utilize these variables with the client to ensure a positive counselling relationship with clients from a different culture (Amundson, et al., 1995; Coleman, 1995). Therefore, counsellors need to understand the culture and ethnicity factors of their clients in order to provide appropriate psychological services (France, 1997; American Psychological Association, 1991). The First Nations culture requires counsellors to have a certain amount of knowledge and skill in order to effectively build positive relationships with them.

Non-First Nations counsellors must be sensitive to, and aware of, how the culture of their clients affects their clients' perceptions, beliefs, values and norms (Amundson et al., 1995, Coleman, 1995; McCormick, 1994; Darou, 1987). These factors can affect the way the First Nations client presents his information and his attitude towards the Non-First Nations counsellor and towards counselling services in general. When the Non-First Nations counsellor acknowledges the First Nations cultural background or when interest is expressed, the client begins to experience a sense of validation from the counsellor.

Unfortunately, many of the training programs today do not adequately prepare counsellors to work with populations such as the First Nations community. As a result, professionals who do not have this required training often suffer culture shock and burnout (Devlin, 1988). First Nations people are diverse with many different levels of cultural commitment issues. This diversity requires counsellors who have a broad understanding of cultural and social phenomena not found in most textbooks and usually beyond the scope of many training programs. For example, gaining entry into a First Nations community in a culturally sensitive manner is important for those planning to study and work with First Nations people. The need for understanding and knowing what is the appropriate First Nations protocol has been well recognized but not well understood by many Non-First Nations counsellors. For the First Nations people, there is a clear and unmistakable request for the need for more and better understanding of the protocol needed to work effectively with the First Nations people. Because of this lack of understanding and awareness, many counsellors are unable to build

positive relationships with First Nations clients. Therefore, counsellors need to acquire or modify their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour in relation to becoming more aware of, understanding and relating to the First Nations people .

A thorough search of literature revealed that, while there have been more and more studies on the variables needed to make a counselling relationship strong with the First Nations client, there has been little empirical study of what the protocol is for Non-First Nations counsellors working with First Nations people. A review of the literature provided little information with respect to Non-First Nations counsellors building positive relationships with a First Nations community (MacNeill, 1997).

This study will help Non-First Nations counsellors, psychologists, educators and other people working with First Nations people to obtain a better and more elaborate understanding of establishing what steps or procedures are needed when building strong counselling relationships with First Nations clients.

#### Purpose of the study

This research will identify the First Nations protocol for establishing a strong relationship with First Nations people. The purpose of this study is to ascertain what things Non-First Nations counsellors need to do and know when building positive relationships with the First Nations clients. Specifically, this study has three objectives. First, this study was designed to give voices to the First Nations Elders, First Nations Counsellors, Non-First Nations Psychologists and Clinical

Counsellors and others who are directly involved in counselling First Nations people, so that they can speak about the appropriate steps and ways for people to become involved with a First Nations community to ensure a strong counselling relationship with the First Nations client. The second objective is to develop recommendations for individuals working with First Nations people -- recommendations based on the reports that will be collected in this research and based on an analysis of the literature. Finally, the third objective is to educate readers, Non-First Nations counsellors and educators to the procedures or steps that are needed to build relationships with a First Nations community.

#### Rationale of the study

There are several reasons why a study like this is important. To begin with, First Nations people have the same mental health issues as the general population (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996). However, they do have a higher incidence of mental health issues (McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c). Specifically, the First Nations population has a higher incidence of suicide, substance abuse, depression and domestic violence than the general population (Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Heinrich, Corbine & Thomas, 1990; Devlin, 1988). Therefore, First Nations people may seek out counsellors to help them resolve and cope with these issues.

Secondly, counsellors are likely to have First Nations clients among their clientele (Garrett & Myers, 1996). Many psychologists and highly trained

professionals working with this population have been Non-First Nations people with little or no knowledge of the First Nations culture with which they are working. For instance, many of these Non-First Nations people have no idea of how to get into a First Nations community in order to establish an effective counselling relationship. There has been little attention in the literature or training programs focused on what the procedures or steps are in building relationships with a First Nations community. It is not clear what factors, steps or procedures establish a strong counselling relationship with First Nations clients. Nor is it clear just when certain protocols are needed with whom and how. The limited information about protocol often impedes the counsellors' understanding of the behaviour of First Nations clients and the counsellors' therapeutic effectiveness with the First Nations clients. Non-First Nations counsellors must be prepared to support First Nations clients. Thus, these professionals need to first understand what the protocol is for building relationships with the First Nations communities before they can effectively establish counselling relationships with the First Nations people.

The information from this study will be used as a guideline for Non-First Nations counsellors to use when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. In addition, the identification of these guidelines can help educators develop appropriate training for counsellors who are building relationships with First Nations people.

### The Value of the study

The value of this study may be measured by its benefit to professionals interested in or already working with First Nations communities. Developing effective relationships with First Nations clients can be established more quickly and easily when the Non-First Nations professional knows and understands the guidelines for entering into a First Nations community. If Non-First Nations counsellors working with First Nations people were aware of some guidelines to use when working with First Nations clients, then harm may be avoided and more effective and appropriate counselling support may be provided to First Nations clients.

### Approach of the study

The methodological approach in this study is the Critical Incident Technique because this technique allows the participants to share their knowledge and experiences with regard to what things are needed to establish positive counselling relationships with First Nations clients. This technique also adequately answers the research question. I attempted to create an interviewing environment that was safe, warm, informal and respectful.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Literature relevant to the question of what is the First Nations protocol is, will be presented in this chapter. Non-First Nations counsellors need to know how to build stronger and more effective relationships with a First Nations community. The counselling variables necessary to work with First Nations clients will be presented by way of a background information. The remainder of the chapter will focus on the issues that contribute to a strong effective relationship with a First Nations community.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Researchers have begun to investigate the impact of counselling on First Nations culture (McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Dauphinais, et al., 1981). Most of this research has focused on the counsellors' ethnicity, the appropriateness of some theoretical approaches with First Nations clients, the identification of the variables for First Nations counselling or the effectiveness of school counselling with First Nations students.

An awareness of First Nations protocol is required when counselling First Nations clients. A review of the literature provided very little information with respect to procedures for entering First Nations communities and working with First Nations people (Kowalsky et al., 1996). Historically, most of the research and counselling within First Nations communities has been done by Non-First Nations people (Kowalsky et al., 1996). Further, many historical events have

happened in the First Nations communities that have devastated their cultural identity and practices. Therefore, First Nations people have been cautious about Non-First Nations people coming into their communities and working with their people. The following is a review of the literature pertaining to the protocol counsellors need when building positive relationships with First Nations clients. I have divided the literature into global issues, personal qualities, cultural, community and general issues.

### Global Issues

There are a number of global issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of before effective counselling relationships can occur (Amundson, Westwood & Prefontaine, 1995). These global issues will vary from one First Nations group to another. Counsellors need to find ways to elicit this information before strong counselling relationships can develop. The following are examples of global issues.

### The Counselling relationship.

Counsellors need to establish a positive relationship with a client for effective counselling to occur (Amundson, Westwood & Prefontaine, 1995; Janzen, Skakum & Lightning, 1994). Part of building a positive relationship with a First Nations community involves understanding what is needed to build these positive

relationships. Most of the First Nations literature has focused on the identification of the variables for First Nations counselling or the effectiveness of school counselling with First Nations students (McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Dauphinais, et al., 1981). Essential counselling variables that are needed for First Nations clients are the counsellor's ethnicity, the appropriateness of some theoretical applications over others, the diversity of the many different First Nations tribes, and the understanding of First Nations history and world view. This historical information of the First Nations people gives counsellors an awareness of events that shape the values and beliefs of their clients (Vickers, 1993). Non-First Nations counsellors must also know and use First Nations counselling values to ensure a sense of interconnectedness and spirituality in the counsellor's theoretical approach to healing, to have a nonverbal and direct form of communication, to use humor appropriately, to honor silence, and to understand the meaning and importance of family, choice, trust, acceptance and social support. These counselling variables are incorporated into certain protocols that First Nations communities have embedded within their culture.

#### The Importance of a worldview.

Everyone has a certain worldview of life. A worldview is defined "as consisting of presuppositions and assumptions an individual holds about the makeup of his or her world" (Ibrahim, 1985, p. 626). This worldview is a culturally based variable that influences the relationship between the counsellor and client. A client's worldview means that the client has a unique understanding

about how things and people relate to each other (France, 1997; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c). Counsellors need to understand the client's world view in order to be effective (France, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; Janzen, et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Sue, et al., 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988; Ibrahim, 1985). An understanding of the First Nations client's worldview can create a trusting relationship between the counsellor and client and is vital to what counselling style and approach the counsellor uses with the First Nations client (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; Janzen, et al., 1994; McCormick, 1994; Laffromboise, Trimble & Mohatt, 1990; Devlin, 1988; Ibrahim, 1980). Failure to have this knowledge of First Nations values, beliefs, and worldview can lead the counsellor to make faulty diagnosis about the problems, use incorrect healing strategies with the First Nations client, and jeopardize the counselling relationship between the counsellor and the First Nations client. One way of understanding the First Nations worldview can be understood by examining the values of the First Nations people (France, 1997; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995c). However, counsellors must first understand their own worldview, the philosophical assumptions in this worldview and the specific skills that can be adapted to the First Nations culture. Counsellors need to also have a clear understanding of their own values, beliefs, attitudes and biases before they start working with clients from other cultures (McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; France & Presaud, 1991; Pedersen et al., 1989).

### Personal Qualities

There are certain elements that need to be present when Non-First Nations counsellors are working with First Nations clients. Non-First Nations counsellors need to have certain personal qualities, skills and knowledge about the community, culture, the history and individual issues to ensure a positive counselling relationship with the First Nations client. The following is a summary of the literature on these counsellor qualities that are required for effective counselling to take place.

#### Trust and safety.

Some First Nations people have difficulty trusting Non-First Nations counsellors because of their history with many Non-First Nations people (Devlin, 1988; Lafromboise & Dixon, 1981). For example, there are numerous historical instances in which the First Nations people were treated unfairly by Non-First Nations people. Land issues, residential schools, and other economic decisions made by the Europeans impacted the First Nations people in a negative way. Because of these difficulties with some individuals in the white society, some First Nations people display a differential response according to the race of the individual with whom they are interacting. They may appear closed, withdrawn and rather hostile when Non-First Nations people first interact with them. With

other Non-First Nations people, they may appear open, relaxed and responsive. Although racism may have affected many First Nations people, it is important to remember that not all First Nations peoples within this group react in the same manner. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to treat each First Nations client as an individual and need to be trustworthy, empathetic, human and understanding (Amundson et al., 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Peavy, 1994; Janzen, Skakum, & Lightning, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991).

Trust is the essential ingredient to counselling First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Gora, Sawatzky, & Hague, 1992; LaFromboise, Trimble & Mohatt, 1990; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Dillard, 1983; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise, et al., 1980). Certain elements must be present for the client to develop a sense of trust and safety (Kleespies, 1998; Daniluk, 1989; Lafromboise & Dixon, 1981). Establishing trust with the First Nations client takes time (McIlwraith, De Wet & Wilson, 1997; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Trust is the foundation that counsellors need to build through demonstrating patience, being trustworthy, showing genuine interest and willingness to be involved and respecting protocol. Lafromboise, Dauphinais and Rowe (1980) studied the importance of trust for First Nations high school students. They found that trust was crucial to a positive counselling relationship. The study pointed out the importance of the counsellors' competence and willingness to meet outside the office. LaFromboise and Dixon (1981) also studied the effects of student ratings of perceived counsellor trustworthiness. The

study found that First Nations students rated simulated interviews more positively when the counsellor was acting in trustworthy roles. Results of this study also indicated that the ethnicity of the counsellor may not be important provided that the counsellor is culturally trained and acting in a trustworthy fashion.

Other studies found that establishing trust means the counsellor must be attentive and responsive to the client, giving structure and direction to the process and demonstrating respect for culturally relevant values and beliefs (Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Lafromboise et al., 1990). For example, Non-First Nations counsellors may want to include traditional healing ceremonies and healers in their counselling process with their First Nations clients. This connection with traditional methods and people would demonstrate to the client a respect for their traditional ways while supporting the client in the most effective way possible. Counsellors could also include the extended family in their counselling approaches with their First Nations clients. By having family members involved in the counselling process for some First Nations clients, this would again demonstrate respect for traditional healing methods (Garrett & Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990). In addition, Non-First Nations counsellors could convey trust by making themselves available outside their office or after their regular hours (McIlwraith, De Wet & Wilson, 1997; Lafromboise & Rowe, 1980). Finally, trust can also be established through the counsellors' involvement with the community during informal activities (Kowalsky et al., 1996).

### Empathy.

Counsellors must be able to convey empathy. Empathy needs to be expressed in the counsellors' verbal and nonverbal communication (Janzen, et al., 1994; McCormick, 1994). Counsellors that are culturally sensitive to clients tend to be seen as more competent, empathic, and supportive by their clients. These variables in turn contribute to a strong relationship between the counsellor and the clients and thus ensure the effectiveness of the counselling.

### Being human.

Counsellors need to develop personal relationships with First Nations clients (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). The rapport is further enhanced with the First Nations client and Non-First Nations counsellor when the client sees the counsellor as a human being first. The Non-First Nations counsellors must also allow himself or herself to be a person first to establish common ground with their First Nations clients.

### Be patient.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be patient and create opportunities where they can build strong counselling relationships with their First Nations

clients (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen, et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). Non-First Nations counsellors must be prepared to wait to build positive relationships at the pace of the First Nations community. Counsellors must respect the process and pace of the First Nations community in which they are involved.

Be honest about your motives.

Non-First Nations counsellors must clearly understand why they are wanting to support the people from a First Nations community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994). The counsellors' motives are communicated through their actions and these actions are observed and watched by the First Nations community.

Be genuine.

Authenticity is another important part of the counsellors capacity to be "real" or "genuine" in his or her reaction with the client (Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Kleespies, 1998). Non-First Nations counsellors must be themselves and show genuine interest in the First Nations people and demonstrate sincere interest and respect for the client and culture (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). As the First Nations client begins to see the Non-First Nations counsellors' genuine caring, clients' anxiety and reluctance diminish. One way for the client

to see counsellors' genuineness is for the counsellor to stay problem-focused with the client (Coleman, 1995).

### Enjoy and allow humor.

Humor has been seen as an important variable in First Nations counselling (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). First Nations people love to laugh (Herring, 1994; Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Humor is reaffirming and enhances the sense of connectedness experienced in being part of the group. Laughter creates an opportunity to relieve stress and creates an atmosphere for sharing and connectedness. In the First Nations culture, humor (especially the clown motif) plays an important role in both daily life and ceremonial activities (Herring, 1994). First Nations humor varies according to way of life, weather and geography, social and emotional climate, type of food, or the obtaining of food and particular tribal culture. The presence of humor is one sign that the counsellor has moved into the transitional stage of relationship building with the First Nations community (Kowalsky, et al, 1996). The First Nations person often shows humor in their communication (Kleespies, 1998; Herring, 1994). A Non-First Nations counsellor must appreciate and acknowledge this humor with their First Nations client. Counsellors need to allow for their clients to use humor as a form of communication where appropriate. For example, counsellors could use rhymes, limericks, jokes and tongue twisters with their clients (Herring, 1996).

### Respect confidence.

Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the importance of confidentiality (MacNeill, 1997; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). First Nations clients need to feel assured that what they say is respected and safe with the Non-First Nations counsellor.

### Acceptance.

Acceptance is an important variable for counselling First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Sue, 1981). Non-First Nations counsellors must accept their clients for who they are and where they come from (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Pedersen et al., 1989). The First Nations client in return must accept the counsellor and the counselling process in order for a strong counselling relationship to occur.

### Community variables

The following is a summary of the literature that outlines some information that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about First Nations communities when building positive relationships with their First Nations clients.

### The First Nations community.

Non-First Nations counsellors must have an understanding of the First Nations community they are working with and how it is organized and structured.

(Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Knowing someone or getting to know someone in the First Nations community provides the Non-First Nations counsellor with an opportunity for entry and an introduction to the First Nations community and its members (Kowalsky, Verhoef, Thurston & Rutherford, 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991).

First Nations groups are organized into different tribes or clans. These tribes are an inter-dependent group of people who perceive themselves as part of the greater community, tribes or band rather than as a whole consisting of individual parts (Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; McCormick, 1994). The First Nations people then judge themselves and their action based on what they do that contributes to the community, tribe or band. When a First Nations person describes a problem, it affects not only that individual but also the whole community (Lafromboise, Trimble & Mohatt, 1990). Counsellors should be aware of this factor. In addition, counsellors need to have a clear understanding of the meaning of “community” to the First Nations client (Herring, 1996; Lafromboise et al., 1990). This definition of community will help the counsellors structure their intervention and support with their First Nations client.

### First Nations history.

A First Nations person gets a strong sense of belonging from their cultural values, from social relationships and from a connection with their ancestry and tribal history (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Counsellors must be aware of the cultural history of the First Nations client they are working with (MacNeill, 1997; Vickers, 1993; Pedersen et al., 1989). Counsellors must consider these factors as they apply their techniques and counselling styles with their clients.

The counselling relationship also needs to take into account the First Nations history in order for the relationship to be strong (Herring, 1996; Herring, 1994; Sue, Zane & Young, 1994; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991). Traditionally, First Nations people were a gentle, community-driven and peaceful nation. The people actively lived off the land in a communal and collective fashion. Throughout their history, First Nations people have also been influenced by exposure to racism and prejudice in Canadian society and by their struggle for identity. The drastic effects of residential schools, being put on reserves and governmental and religious treatments have shaped these people's lives today (Devlin, 1988). For example, Herring (1994) talked about the disastrous effects these influences had on the First Nations people, including erosion of traditional parenting, negative educational experiences at residential schools, inappropriate standardized testing, incongruent career education, and high suicide rates. Thus, counsellors need to be aware of, but not necessarily experts in,

the nature and history of the community to identify the variables that make counselling relationships strong for First Nations clients (Amundson et al., 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Peavy, 1994; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Devlin, 1988). This knowledge of the particular community will eventually lead to mutual respect and a strong counsellor-client relationship with the First Nations group (Peavy, 1994; Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

#### Cultural approach with a First Nations community.

Non-First Nations counsellors must be culturally sensitive when entering and establishing counselling relationships within a First Nations community. If counsellors understand the stages for entry into a community and how best to facilitate this process, harm can be avoided and positive relationships can develop. The stages of entry have been identified by Johnson (1984) and Hutchinson (1985) as stopping, waiting, transition and entry (Kowalsky, et al., 1996). Each stage is described as relating to a researcher's entering a culturally different community but can be appropriately applied to a counsellor. The first stage is the stopping stage and occurs when the counsellor is prevented from entering into a community through formal or informal means. This stage is a critical stage that determines the counsellors' movement through the other consecutive stages and is contingent upon how the activities and intentions of the counsellor are perceived by the community. The second stage is the waiting stage. The waiting stage is somewhat similar to the stopping stage where the community perceives the counsellor as trustworthy and worth the investment of their time. The next stage,

the transition stage, occurs when the counsellor starts to become involved in the community. The community members start to open up and share more about themselves and their culture. The final stage is the entry stage and occurs when the counsellors are trusted and feelings and reflections are shared openly with the counsellor.

People can move through the different stages with different individuals and groups even within the same community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996). This process of movement in a community is not always unidirectional and may at different times move forwards or backwards through these different stages of entry. Thus, counsellors must not only gain entry into the community but also the community must develop a relationship with the counsellor. Counsellors need to know more than just the theoretical stages of entry into the community. They also need to know how these stages are put into practice. Therefore, it is important for researchers and people working in other capacities, such as counselling, to use specific and practical guidelines when entering a First Nations community. Johnson (1984) and Hutchinson (1985) outlined the eighteen guidelines for researchers to follow that can be applied to Non-First Nations counsellors. First, Non-First Nations researchers need to be prepared for the uncertainty of the process. People working with First Nations communities must be open-minded and not try to control the process (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Second, people working with First Nations communities must recognize that the First Nations people are in charge and to be patient. Researchers must

wait until the right time to approach the issue and to gain permission from those guiding the researcher's activities. Third, researchers will need to consider the implications of the number of researchers. There may be advantages for having two researchers to help with the frustration of the research but that may also be a disadvantage when seeking entry to the First Nations community. The benefits and risks of having one or more researchers in the community must be considered. Fourth, researchers must be honest about their motives for doing research within the First Nations community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). The community will be analyzing the researcher's motives often without them being aware that they are being scrutinized. An analysis of the researcher's motives will determine their procession through the entry stages. Fifth, the researcher will need to be themselves and participate in the community. Researchers must dress appropriately to that community's dress and be genuine in order to gain trust and to facilitate communication with the community. Sixth, the researcher must be aware of and work through their own feelings about their experience while completing this project and working with the First Nations community. Seventh, researchers must remember that research involves sharing information as well as listening to the community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Eighth, researchers must also be prepared for spontaneous conversations and informal information gathering times. Ninth, researchers must allow for time to listen to stories and events (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). The process of learning and understanding is more important than the time it takes to get the information. Ten, the researchers

must be sensitive and determine the appropriateness of their activities depending on the topic being addressed. Eleven, the Dene community has a deep belief in spirituality that is based on love, respect and kindness. Researchers need to be aware of the history of the different religions within the community and aware of the different religious practices to be perceived as trustworthy (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Twelve, researchers need to elicit information from the community that facilitates interaction with the community. Thirteen, if the researcher is encountering humor from the First Nations community in their collection of research, then the researcher has moved into the transitional stage. Fourteen, researchers need to contribute to the community in economic terms whether it be through car-pooling or buying crafts. These gestures allow the researcher to socialize and elicit information on an informal basis. Fifteen, researchers need to be objective and respectful in reporting their results.

Researchers need to make sure they are reporting objectively and talking about the issue instead of identifying the person who is giving the information. Sixteen, the researcher will need to follow the lines of authority and show respect for it (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Researchers will need to establish contact with a person within the community to help gain entry into the community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988).

This contact may be someone in the Chief and Council and sometimes it may not. However, this initial contact with the Chief and Council sets in motion a two-way communication, consultation and community ownership benefits that Non-First Nations counsellors (Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Seventeen,

researchers will need to be aware of general etiquette expectations. Researchers should be aware of the customary gestures and teachings of the community they are in. Finally, researchers are responsible for maintaining effective communication with all the parties involved throughout the research project.

Be prepared for the uncertainty of the protocol.

The protocol of the community also needs to be learned and followed in order to not be disrespectful to the traditions of the community (Peavy & McLeod-Shannon, 1995; Peavy, 1994). Counsellors can read about these traditions if they are recorded or counsellors can also visit the First Nations communities to get a clearer understanding of the First Nations people. Non-First Nations counsellors will not automatically understand or receive information from the First Nations people on their protocol. Non-First Nations counsellors must be open minded and genuinely interested in understanding the process for building positive relationships with a First Nations community (Pedersen, et al., 1989). Once the counsellors have established trust with their First Nations client and communities, the community will inform them on the appropriate protocol of that First Nations community.

### Participate in community events.

Non-First Nations counsellors must participate in the First Nations community to understand who they are working with and how to gain their (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980). There are many ways for Non-First Nations counsellors to participate in the community. However, counsellors must first be as informal as possible, be human, not play a role and dress appropriately for the community event (MacNeill, 1997). Counsellors could participate in community events such as funerals, sporting events or bingo.

### Who.

Once the Non-First Nations counsellor has learned about the culture, introduced themselves to the community and taken the time to be involved in the community in an informal way, they then enter the transition stage at which time they approach the Chief, Councillors or Elders in the community to talk about their roles (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991, Devlin, 1988). The interaction with the Chief and Council provides the opportunity to start the process of entry into the community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Devlin, 1988). The Chief and Council will then direct the counsellors to the appropriate person or agency for them to build relationships with.

### Cultural variables

Counsellors need to understand the cultural knowledge of their clients to help them access their strengths, skills, problems, and ways of viewing the world (Vickers, 1993). The following are examples from the literature regarding things that are typically part of First Nations culture.

### Diversity.

First Nations people are not all the same (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick & France, 1997; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Axelson, 1985). Each First Nations group has different social, economic, linguistic and political forces that guide and shape their culture. First Nations people differ greatly in their commitment to tribal custom, values and beliefs such as the differences in customs, languages and types of family structures (Maina, 1997; Restoule, 1997; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991). Thus, counsellors need to use holistic, informal and relevant methods with their clients (Peavy & McLeod-Shannon, 1995; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988). The challenge for counsellors then becomes adapting, using or developing techniques to incorporate practices that are sensitive to the ideology and philosophies of the First Nations client.

### Family.

First Nations people have a strong sense of family (Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1992). Non-First Nations counsellors must understand the definition and importance of family to their First Nations client. One of the most important sources of connection and intrinsic worth is the family (Restoule, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994). First Nations people place high value on relationships with family, friends, community, clan, and nature (Peavy, 1994). The First Nations family is a multigenerational support system of interdependence that provides cultural continuity for all. Family relationships are not only biological categories but also spiritual. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and community members are all responsible for raising a child. The concept of family also extends to second cousins, clan members, community members, all living creatures in this world, nature as a whole, and the universe.

### Recognize and respect the strong sense of spirituality.

Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of and understand the spiritual connection for the First Nations group with whom they are working. First Nations people look at all things in this universe as having a type of spiritual energy and importance (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; McCormick, 1994; Devlin, 1988). Specific spiritual practice is determined by the individual tribal values, beliefs and customs (Dufrene & Coleman, 1994). First Nations people believe that all things are

connected, have life and deserve respect. Many traditional First Nations healing practices emphasize the healing powers of spirituality. The different ceremonies and social activities stress the importance of connecting with one's spirituality. In the First Nations culture, the spirit plays a role in sickness and health. First Nations healing also requires that the person transcend the ego rather than strengthen it as Western counselling aims to do (France, 1997; McCormick, 1995a; Lafromboise, et al., 1990). Rituals and ceremonies allow First Nations clients to express themselves personally and connect with their communities (McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Vickers, 1993; Devlin, 1988). Spiritual activities could include the Sweat Lodge, Vision Quest, and utilization of a traditional healer. The type of ceremony chosen will depend on the particular First Nations client. Counsellors who reconnect First Nations clients with cultural beliefs, traditions and ceremony as a way of overcoming problems help the clients handle difficult situations in mainstream society (McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c). Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to include an understanding of spiritual practice in their methods when doing counselling with their First Nations clients (McCormick, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Peavy, 1994). For instance, counsellors would help their clients reconnect with their spiritual leaders to assist them to understand their issues and guide them towards their solutions. This support by the counsellor may include referring the client to the appropriate person or people that can guide the client in his/her spiritual journey.

### The Importance of elders.

Elders play a vital and integral part of a First Nations community (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1992). Elders have always had an integral role in the continuance of tribal community, history, traditions, values and spiritual practices for the First Nations people. They do this by functioning as teachers, parents, spiritual advisors and community leaders (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

### Communication style.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and be aware of the communication styles of their First Nations clients (Maina, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Lafromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). The communication styles among First Nations people are diverse and unique to the particular First Nations group (Maina, 1997, Devlin, 1988). First Nations people use a nonverbal communication style (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Herring, 1992). If Non-First Nations counsellors do not understand this difference in communication style, then often First Nations clients drop out of counselling or are misdiagnosed.

Counsellors must also be able to use timely words and phrases that capture the emotional meaning of the client's communication. This type of communication requires the counsellor to have patience, concentration, and good listening skills.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to initially do more listening than talking (Janzen et al., 1994). Non-First Nations counsellors must wait and listen to the stories of the First Nations client. In addition, counsellors need to know that the communication system of the First Nations people often has more complex meanings for their words than the Non-First Nations culture (Amundson et al., 1995; Ibrahim, 1985). The meanings of some of the First Nations words and phrases are often different from the Non-First Nations meanings. Non-First Nations counsellors need to ask their First Nations clients about their lives. Taking the time to ask these questions helps convey respect, and builds rapport.

Understanding the First Nations clients way of communicating will help the Non-First Nations counsellors understand appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication. These counsellors could also use various nonverbal counselling techniques with their clients (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996). For example, counsellors could use art and play therapy approaches when working with First Nations clients. Non-First Nations counsellors also need to know that many First Nations people learn through observation and patience (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). Counsellors need to be comfortable and allow this reflection time for their clients

(Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). Counsellors should also be patient and work with their clients in providing counselling support.

Non-First Nations counsellors should match their First Nations clients' intonation, pace of speech and degree of eye contact (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). For example, avoiding direct eye contact and demonstrating concern and interest with facial and body gestures and movements are helpful ways to engage the First Nations client. Counsellors need to modify their amount of talking and avoid direct eye contact to demonstrate their respect to the Elder and leaders of the communities. These counsellors could research and ask people they know in the First Nations communities about the level of cultural commitment and tribal structure, customs and beliefs with regards to dealing with their First Nations clients.

Non-First Nations counsellors also need to allow for silence and restatement of what the client says with their clients because this allows the client to clarify what the counsellor says (Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988; Darou, 1987). Counsellors need to continue at the client's pace, accept silence, understand the client's connection to family and express flexibility in meeting the client's expectations. These counsellors could also use role-plays and model appropriate behaviour as First Nations people are taught at an early age to learn through observation.

Silence and not asking questions are important qualities to incorporate when counsellors work with First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Darou, 1987). In the First Nations culture, each person learns by watching, thinking and then doing something (Devlin, 1988). Thus, silence and restatement will be effective strategies to use with the First Nations clients because they are the least intrusive and allow time for clarification (Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

The type of communication style is important for First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; Lafromboise, et al., 1990; Sue, 1981). First Nations people emphasize and value nonverbal forms of communication (Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Dillard, 1983). They usually speak softly and take ample time to reflect on what is being said before responding. Often, First Nations people use facial expressions, personal distance, body movements, clothing, feathers and jewelry to communicate without verbalizations. Dauphinais, Dauphinais, & Rowe (1981) explored the effects of race and communication style on First Nations perceptions of counsellor effectiveness. Results of their study indicated that a directive style of communication is more important to the First Nations person than the nondirective approach (Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Dauphinais, et al., 1981). This directive style seems to be more effective with First Nations clients since many of these clients are often reserved

during the early stages of counselling if not throughout the whole counselling (Trimble & Fleming, 1989). Counsellors may want to use storytelling as a way of doing counselling with their clients since storytelling is the primary method of teaching values and attitudes for the First Nations people (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996). Counsellors may also need to rely on more nonverbal forms of communication such as art therapy, dance therapy, singing, music therapy and drama therapy rather than verbal communication in their sessions with First Nations clients. Asking the right questions and being open to learning are other useful strategies for counsellors to use with clients. Counsellors then become facilitators in helping First Nations clients discover their purpose, examine their assumptions, seek awareness of universal and personal truths and make choices that allow them to exist in a state of harmony and balance within the Circle of Life.

#### Interconnectedness.

Connecting with nature and all things is important for First Nations clients (France, 1997; McCormick & France, 1997; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Axelson, 1985). Interconnectedness is described as a series of relationships, beginning with the family and reaching to the extended family, community and encompassing the universe (McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c). First Nations people believe that all life exists by virtue of the many circles or cycles

(Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990). All life is in constant motion and all life is interrelated and interdependent. Humans are part of nature and thus humans move in cycles. These circles of life surround humans, exist within humans, and comprise the many relationships of human's existence. First Nations people believe that we each have a circle of self, composed of many facets (e.g., mind, body, spirit), a circle of immediate family, extended family, community, nation, natural environment, and universal surroundings. Within this Circle of Life, everything is alive and all things have spiritual energy. The components of the Circle of Life include mind, body, spirit and natural environment. Connecting with nature allows the First Nations client to feel relaxed, cleansed, calmed, stronger and balanced. This Circle is referred to by some First Nations groups as the Medicine Wheel. In First Nations culture, Medicine means "the way of life" or "way of things" (Garrett & Myers, 1996). The medicine wheel involves four interconnected entities: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. This wheel reinforces the concept of interconnectedness and the belief of cooperation and harmony with all of the parts. This medicine wheel also signifies the balance that exists between all things. The First Nations person seeks balance to remain in harmony with the universe and to be in good health (Garrett & Myers, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c). Being in harmony means that the First Nations person is in step with the universe while being in disharmony means the First Nations person is out of step with the universe.

This concept of interconnectedness is often in contrast to the Western belief of individuality. For instance, some First Nations people believe that being unhealthy is the result of excessive individualistic behaviour that is best balanced by involving family, friends, and the community. Therefore, the healing process in the First Nations community may involve treating that person within the context of the community (France, 1997).

### Issues

There are many issues Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand when working with First Nations clients. The issues differ depending upon the First Nations individual and the First Nations group with which counsellors are working. Counsellors will need to find some way of becoming aware of these issues and their effects on their clients. The following are examples of the issues.

#### Counselling issues.

Counsellors need to balance themselves between the issues and the histories, cultures, values, beliefs, experiences and feelings of their clients. Clients come to counselling with various issues such as family problems, alcoholism, violence, and depression and they have their own interpretation and reasons why these are issues for them. Counselling is not designed to judge or tell individuals what they should be doing but to help the client to understand and come to their own resolution

about their problems. The dilemma for counsellors is that they must decide how to best support their clients. Counsellors need to be prepared to adapt their skills and methods to relevant techniques that are applicable to their First Nations clients (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990).

#### Knowledge about the culture.

Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the culture with whom they will be working with (Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta, et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987). As Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble (1989) reports, if the role of culture for the client is overlooked, then the counselling relationship becomes obstructed, and the relationship is negatively affected. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the values, beliefs, customs, and traditions of their First Nations clients. This information may help Non-First Nations counsellors overcome some of the barriers that can exist between a Non-First Nations counsellor and a First Nations client. By looking at the client's culture, the counsellor gains a further understanding of the client's issues and can determine with the client, what support is needed. In addition, counsellors need to look at the client's history, socialization, expectations, theories on human nature and philosophies on life to effectively help and support their client to come up with solutions to their problems. It is only through personal contact and time that

the counsellor will learn about the culture and community and thus become accepted by the First Nations people (Janzen et al., 1994). An effective Non-First Nations counsellor will integrate aspects of the First Nations cultural heritage with their own theoretical style.

These counsellors could gain this knowledge through reading books but exposure to the culture first hand would be ideal in order to be realistic and trust their understanding about the First Nations culture they will be working with (Coleman, 1995; Janzen et al., 1994; Vickers, 1993; Mahan & Rains, 1990; Devlin, 1988; Lafromboise & Rowe, 1980). Unfortunately, there are few First Nations materials in print, but there are other ways for a counsellor to obtain relevant information about his/her client. The counsellor can become familiar with the clientele by talking with people from the client's nation for suggestions and methods the counsellor could use with the client (Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Educators should consider including courses in their curricula to include some First Nations content (Dufrene & Coleman, 1994). An internship program would also give counsellors the time to understand and experience the First Nations community better (Lafromboise et al, 1990).

### Acculturation.

First Nations people also exhibit various forms of acculturation and come from different tribal groups with different customs and beliefs (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Dillard, 1983). Acculturation has been frequently found to be a significant within-group difference for determining ways in which clients from different cultures perceive counselling. Further, First Nations clients also come from different settings including rural, urban and reservational.

### Empowerment.

Empowerment is “the development of skills enabling the person of color to implement interpersonal influence, improve role performance, and develop an effective support system” (Lafromboise et al., 1990, p. 637). The idea of empowerment is for the counsellor to encourage clients to be in charge of their own lives. Non-First Nations counsellors need to empower their First Nations clients (Lafromboise et al, 1990; Devlin, 1988).

### Values.

Understanding the values of the First Nations client is crucial to a strong counselling relationship (Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Sue, et al., 1994; Dufrene & Coleman,

1992; Darou, 1984; Dillard, 1983; Sue, 1981). The First Nations values provide the counsellor with a context for the counsellor to understand the behaviours and beliefs of the First Nations clients. First Nations values consist of sharing, cooperation, being, the group and extended family, noninterference, harmony with nature, a time orientation toward living in the present, preference for explanation of natural phenomena according to the supernatural, and a deep respect for elders (Restoule, 1997; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Sue, 1981). In contrast, the mainstream values of the Non-First Nations community include competition and aggression, domination, saving, mastery over nature, individualism and the nuclear family, doing, a future time orientation, a preference for scientific explanation and reverence of youth (Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Sue, 1981). Many of the problems experienced by First Nations people emerge from the values of the dominant culture being incongruent with the First Nations values. For example, First Nations people judge their actions according to whether or not they are benefiting the tribe and its harmonious functioning.

First Nations culture encourages “being” over “doing” (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Devlin, 1988). A First Nations person’s inner worth is more important than what he/she does. First Nations people watch and note how a person behaves and treats others, and the world around him or her rather than what he/she does for a living. This concept of being is also part of the First Nations time orientation (Garrett & Garrett, 1994). It is more important to be and experience things than to

work by a strict time line. For instance, some First Nations clients may have difficulty thinking in long-term goals and planning for the future instead of thinking about the present.

In mainstream society, worth and status are based on what one does or achieves while in First Nations culture they are based on cultural values, social relationships, sacred connection with one's ancestry and tribal history.

#### Cultural commitment.

First Nations people differ in their commitment and practice of traditional values and customs (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Lafromboise et al., 1990). This great diversity exists not only between bands or tribes but also within each band or tribe. As a result, Non-First Nations counsellors must determine the degree of cultural commitment; whether the person comes from a reservation, rural or urban context; and the tribal structure, customs and beliefs that apply to their clients (Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994).

#### Summary.

Most of the research up to now has described the counselling variables necessary for counsellors when counselling First Nations clients. Other research

has focused on evaluating theoretical counselling techniques deemed to be most effective with First Nations clients. Before Non-First Nations counsellors can start to work with First Nations clients, the counsellors have to develop a positive counselling relationship.

The challenges of today and tomorrow require a more comprehensive and balanced view of counselling for First Nations clients. The theory, beliefs and values of the counsellor will ultimately affect the type of service the client receives. The task of the counsellor is to effectively adapt the skills of traditional counselling to the perspectives of the First Nations client. The choice in the way a counsellor helps the client must fit the needs of the client base with which they are working (Coleman, 1995; McCormick, 1995). Counsellors must also be adaptive and flexible with their personal orientation and counselling techniques. Counsellors must also have a sense of commitment to understanding the cultural context and unique characteristics of their First Nations clients (Coleman, 1995; McCormick, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Peavy, 1994). It is essential that Non-First Nations counsellors prepare themselves for counselling different First Nations clients in which all significant and relevant variables are considered and practiced. It is then possible for an informed counsellor to do counselling with First Nations clients.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The Critical Incident Technique was chosen for this study for two reasons. First, this technique gives a comprehensive idea of what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. Second, this technique gives the participants a voice. In this chapter, I will define the definitions used throughout this study, describe the Critical Incident Technique, give a description of the sample, and illustrate interview procedures and methods for making use of the information that this study gathers.

#### Terms Used in the Research

*Names used to refer to cultural members.* In this study, the term First Nations will be used to refer to a Native, Indigenous or Aboriginal person.

*Participants.* In this study, a participant is a person who is knowledgeable about this topic under study.

*Protocol.* The term “protocol” in this study means the ways of doing things that Non-First Nations counsellors need to follow when building strong counselling relationships with the First Nations person.

*Community.* A community for this study is a social system, with interrelationships and interdependence which have a sense of common identification through their development and physical environment. The social system give its members a sense of belonging, commitment, emotional investment, loyalty and is further defined by the ability of its members to act on common problems (Devlin, 1988).

*Phenomenology.* The term “phenomenology” refers to the study of experience and personal meaning. It also refers to a method of study that involves the direct observation of experience as expressed in speech and other communicative acts.

Phenomenological researchers rely on accurate, unbiased listening and observation. The researchers consciously attempts to put aside prejudices, assumptions, biases and stereotypes in reference to the topic being studied. They use research activities such as unbiased listening and recording personal stories, conversations and personal accounts, and make use of autobiographies and other texts.

The phenomenological researcher learns about another’s culture by asking the members of that culture to relay their cultural experiences. The phenomenological researcher’s role is that of an open, unbiased, concentrated and respectful listener who invites the participants to teach about the topic under examination.

*Culture*. Culture is defined as a set of shared meanings that a community uses in their daily lives to give meaning to events.

### Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) is a form of interview research where participants provide descriptive accounts of events that facilitated or hindered a particular objective. This study used The Critical Incident Technique because this technique answered the research questions and the technique allowed the participants to tell their stories (narratives) thus ensuring the First Nations variables of storytelling and oral history. Participants were selected because they have experienced or observed relevant examples of what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know and do when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. They are also capable of communicating those experiences. After the interviews are completed, critical incidents are pulled out from the interviews and then grouped by similarity to form a set of categories that comprise the events. These categories provide an outline of what facilitates or hinders a given objective. These categories can then be used to develop a theory, educational programs, define further research, and extend or revise the categories.

## Participants

The participants for this study were obtained through my network of colleagues, word of mouth and identified people within and outside the Saanich community that fit the criteria in this research. These participants were chosen for their length of service with the community, exposure to the First Nations culture and their type of role within the community. The participants were given an information sheet that outlined the purpose and format of the research (Appendix A) and a consent letter showing they understand and agree to participate in this study (Appendix B). Participation in this study depended upon two possible situations. Either the participant had to be a Non-First Nations counsellor, psychologist or support person, or the participant had to be a First Nations counsellor, support person, Elder or client.

Geographically, the thirty-six participants came from different areas in British Columbia. The location of these areas ranged from the interior of the province to the west coast of Vancouver Island. The participants ranged in First Nations experience from 4 – 34 years. The mean was 13 years of experience. Four of these participants were First Nations clients. The participants worked with many different bands throughout Canada, with a majority having worked with the four Saanich bands (Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tsyecum and Pauquachin) (see Table 3).

Thirteen of the participants were male and twenty-three were female (see Table 1). The participants had various roles when working with the different First Nations people (see Table 2). Thirty of the participants were counsellors. Fifteen of the participants had been educators or teachers with First Nations peoples. Six of the participants had been Youth Workers. The participants also functioned in other roles with the First Nations people such as consultants (4), clients (4), testers (3), Social Workers (3), Volunteers (3), Administrative Support people (3), Teacher Assistants (3), Friends (2), Community Health representatives (2), Councillors (2), a Nurse (1), a Homemaker (1), a Librarian (1), an Acupuncturist (1), a Family Support Worker (1), an Administrator (1), a Diplomat (1), and a Mediator (1).

#### Critical Incident Interview

The Critical Incident interview involved an informal meeting to establish a rapport with each of the participants and a formal time to elicit incidents from each of the participants. The first part of the interview was developed to inform the participants of the purpose of the interview. Each participant was then encouraged to describe each incident clearly and completely. As the interviewer, my job was to listen and provide the space to ensure that the incidents were complete and accurate.

### Orientation

Each of the participants was acquainted to the study by the researcher explaining the purpose and the process of the interview. As the researcher, I also explained that their comments and ideas would be confidential and that each participant had the option to withdraw any time during the interview.

### Elicitation of events

The interviews ranged from a half an hour to an hour and a half in duration. These interviews were tape recorded with an audio recorder. These interviews took place at the convenience of the participants but all attempts were made to ensure confidentiality and privacy for each of the participants. The interview commenced by the interviewer saying to each participant:

In what capacity have you worked with First Nations people?

The interviewer allowed each participant time to answer each question completely. Questions were repeated when necessary to ensure a full descriptive response for each question. The interviewer was careful not to lead the participant during the interview. Some clarification statements included, “tell me more about that?”

## Procedure

A pilot study of these questions was done in the winter of 1997-98. The results were used to define and refine the interview questions used in this study. Participants were recruited through their association with the community, outside the community, and through their cultural identification. Participants were also recruited by using a “snowball” technique in which certain participants identified other potential participants as “good” (knowledgeable) persons to talk with. An information letter was provided to each of the participants that were interested in this study (see Appendix A). The time and location of the interviews depended upon the participants’ time and comfort level. Before each interview, the information was read over and a consent letter was signed (see Appendix B). The interviews were conducted over a four-month period during the spring and fall of 1998. Each interview lasted approximately one half hour, to an hour and a half. Once the interviews were completed, themes were constructed according to the criteria listed below. These categories were then validated in a number of different ways.

## **ANALYSIS OF THE INCIDENTS**

Analysis of the incidents was done in three different ways. First, different themes were established and recorded on paper that were based on the audio tape from each participant. Second, these themes were then grouped according to

similarity to form categories. Third, these categories were then subjected to several tests to examine reliability and validity.

#### Extraction of incidents

The thirty-six interviews were tape-recorded and each was assigned a number. The transcripts were then typed. Each transcript was rechecked by each of the participants for reliability and completeness. The researcher then studied each interview and pulled out themes. The researcher and the research supervisor then examined themes. In this examination, the following criteria were applied: (1) was there a theme for the event?; (2) can this event be stated with reasonable completeness? and (3) does this event coincide with the objective of the study? Having these stringent criteria made it possible to delete vague statements and further refine the themes to meet the objective of the study. After this process of constructing themes, five themes were identified.

#### Process of forming categories

After the incidents were written on paper, the researcher and the research supervisor divided them into common themes. This facilitated sorting the incidents into categories. These categories were listed as; personal qualities of the counsellor, cultural themes, community themes, historical events and general issues.

## VALIDATION PROCEDURES

The categories were assessed in different ways to answer questions regarding the soundness and trustworthiness of the category system. First, the supervisor was provided with a brief description of the categories and then asked to review the incidents under the appropriate categories. The researcher then compared the placement of incidents by the supervisor with the original placement of incidents while forming categories, the number of hits and misses was then summarized. Flanagan (1954) recommends a 75% level of agreement or more to consider a category system to be sufficiently reliable for use. A high level of agreement would show that different people could use the categories to categorize these incidents in a consistent, reliable way.

Second, the researcher needed to decide if the category system was reasonably complete or comprehensive. The researcher needed to find out if these incidents could be easily and reasonably placed within the existing category system. If not, new categories would have to be formed. If the incidents could be placed reasonably in the existing categories, then the category system would be comprehensive. If each incident was easily placed within the five categories, then each category would be deemed comprehensive and valid.

Third, the researcher needs to determine whether the categories are sound or well rounded. A category is formed when the researcher can identify a significant similarity among a group of incidents reported by different people. Participants would independently report the same kind of event. However, if only one person or few participants reported a category of event, it might be dismissed. If the incidents were repeatedly reported under each of the categories, then the soundness of these categories would be strengthened.

Fourth, the soundness of the categories could also be assessed by individuals who are highly qualified to judge the relevance and usefulness of a category of event for facilitating or hindering a particular objective. In this study, two Non-First Nations counsellors and two First Nations clients were asked to determine whether or not these categories were useful to them. The two Non-First Nations counsellors held masters degrees in counselling and had approximately 55 years of combined experience in supporting First Nations people throughout Canada. The two First Nations clients were active members of their culture and had experience with counselling from Non-First Nations counsellors. If the experts report that these categories were understandable and useful to their needs and practice the soundness of these categories would be strengthened.

Finally, the soundness of the category can be assessed by previous research. If a category or event disagreed with previous research, then there would be a

good reason to question its validity. It could not automatically be dismissed, but it could be questioned because it would contradict previous evidence from other studies. If a category of event agreed with prior research, then there would be a good reason to be more confident that it is sound. If a category of event was not documented in the previous research, then it would stand alone as a possibility to be confirmed or discounted by future research. If the categories were found to agree with the research literature, then these results would indicate the soundness of these categories.

### Summary

This study was designed to outline some guidelines that Non-First Nations counsellors require in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. Two hundred and forty-one incidents were organized into five categories that are described in the next chapter. Tests were conducted in this study to determine the soundness and validity of these categories. It was found that this category system could be used with confidence.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The following results are the professionals' perceptions of what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know when building strong, effective relationships with First Nations clients. From interviews with 21 Non-First Nations counsellors and support people and 15 First Nations counsellors, clients and support people (13 men, 23 women), 241 critical incidents were elicited outlining what Non-First Nations counsellors needed to know when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. These critical incidents were organized into five categories. In this chapter, these categories are first described than methods used to establish the reliability and validity of the categories are explained. Finally, guidelines for Non-First Nations counsellors are provided based on the findings from this study.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE CATEGORIES

This section will present a description of the categories that are used to summarize the data. The data was separated into Personal Qualities, Community Themes, Cultural Themes, Historical Themes and General Issues. I will first describe the results from all the participants and then I will comment on what First Nations counsellors, support people and First Nations clients thought were the most important in each category.

### Personal Qualities

There were 52 Personal Qualities identified. A Personal Quality is defined as a personal characteristic or skill that the Non-First Nations counsellor possesses or has learned to use with their First Nations clients. A majority of the participants (23/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be patient and that a positive relationship takes time. Non-First Nations counsellors must also genuinely be interested in the First Nations client (22/36). Twenty-two out of the thirty-six participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to build relationships of trust and respect with their First Nations client. Non-First Nations counsellors need to really listen to their First Nations client (18/36). Twenty-one of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to use culturally appropriate methods. Forty-four percent of the participants said that counsellors need to be non-judgmental and be supportive and open with their First Nations clients. Fifteen of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be trustworthy, ask questions, have no assumptions about what they know about the First Nations culture and relate to the First Nations people as people.

Counsellors need to empower their clients, go at the pace of their clients, have a willingness to learn about the First Nations culture and use understandable language with their clients (13/36). Thirty-one percent of the participants think counsellors need to act in an informal way with their clients. Ten of the

participants said that counsellors need to be flexible, set clear boundaries, know their limits when working with the clients, ensure confidentiality and privacy with their clients and be healthy as individuals before they start working with the First Nations client. Non-First Nations counsellors also need to show that they care and not act as if they are an expert in the First Nations culture (8/36). Seven of the participants said that the First Nations clients need to find a way to get to know who the Non-First Nations counsellor is, and that these counsellors need to ensure safety and establish a good rapport with their clients. Sixteen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to go beyond their role as counsellors, create a comfort with their clients, self-disclose personal information about themselves and be able to read the client's body language. Five of the participants said that humor was an important attribute in the counsellor and that counsellors needed to be personable. Four participants said that counsellors had to be honest, have no agendas, be visible within the First Nations community, walk the talk, be comfortable with their own culture and be present with their clients. Eight percent of the participants said that these counsellors need to be reliable, friendly, work closely with the community support system and be able to acknowledge the strengths of their clients. These counsellors need to dress to match the community, be direct in their communication, be qualified and understand their role as a counsellor, think before they act and learn from their mistakes (2/36). Finally, one participant (1/36) felt that counsellors needed to pay attention to their self-talk, use the client's words as feedback, be consistent in their support and services, have no expectations, have respect for the client, use

culturally appropriate knowledge, give the client a choice of whom they wish to see for counselling services, be aware of the feminist theory, start working with the children and use the family counselling technique.

First Nations participants comments on personal qualities.

First Nations counsellors and support people felt that the personal qualities that were important for the Non-First Nations counsellor to have included trust (8/15), listening (8/15), entering informally into a community until acceptance, trust and respect are recognized (7/15), showing respect (6/15), going slow (6/15), genuinely caring about their First Nations clients (6/15), and having some knowledge about the traditional values of the First Nations community they are working with (6/15). Letting the First Nations people know who they are and what they want and wait (5/15), ensuring comfort (4/15), offering support services and waiting for an invitation from the First Nations community (4/15), knowing about the importance of family (4/15), ensuring safety (3/15), having healthy boundaries (3/15), being patient (3/15), going beyond their role (3/15), and avoiding assumptions about the First Nations people (3/15).

### First Nations clients comments on personal qualities.

First Nations clients felt that the personal qualities that were important for Non-First Nations counsellors to have included patience (4/4), genuineness (2/4), trust and respect (2/4) and good listening skills (2/4). These clients also felt counsellors need to go at the client's pace (2/4), work with existing services in the community (2/4), ensure confidentiality (1/4), show they care (1/4) and be able to read body language (1/4).

### Community themes

There were 82 Community Themes identified. A Community Theme is defined as a way in which the community operates or what occurs in the community based on the particular First Nations culture. A majority of the participants (20/36) felt that having a community liaison person in the First Nations community helps the Non-First Nations counsellors develop a positive relationship within that community. Fifty-three percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors needed to meet with the Chief and Councillors in order to build strong counselling relationships with the First Nations community. These counsellors needed to be invited to work with the people within the First Nations community (8/36). Forty-two percent of the participants agreed that it is very important for Non-First Nations counsellors to become part

of the community. Fourteen of the participants felt that the counsellors needed to be visible in the First Nations community and attend cultural events while thirteen of these participants said that being part of the community gives a chance for the First Nations community to see who they were and what they were all about. Thirty-one percent of the participants said that it might be important for counsellors to become part of the community. Ten of the participants agreed that Non-First Nations counsellors needed to explain their role to the First Nations community and that this could be done by meeting face-to-face with the community members (9/36). Counsellors should attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representative or interact in an informal way with the First Nations community members (8/36). Nineteen percent of the participants said that the Non-First Nations counsellors could attend sporting events, meet with educational personnel or teachers or sit with the Chief and Councillors or Elders to get to know and become part of the First Nations community. Counsellors could also meet with a Drug and Alcohol Worker (6/36). Fourteen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors have to have some type of relationship with a professional in the First Nations community such as the School Counsellor, to volunteer in different programs within the community, to attend Pow wows or to go to the Band office. Counsellors should not send a letter or fax; instead they should go meet with the community in person. Four of the participants felt that it was not critical to be part of the First Nations community to build positive community relationships. They felt that counsellors could meet with someone from Health Services or Teacher Assistant to get to know the

community. Counsellors should avoid becoming part of the community because they might have trouble separating their private from their public lives. They should meet with the Family Support Worker and Social Worker within the community, attend the bighouse when invited, and understand the sense of First Nations community (3/36). A couple of participants (2/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors should be involved in the community by doing such activities as attending craft fairs, community lunches, participating in the indigenous games, attending healing circles, attending Elders meetings or attending the community feasts. Counsellors also need to attend and participate in these events slowly, nonintrusively, informally, and respectfully. In addition, counsellors need to get to know the communities personally before they do any counselling support with them. Depending upon their role, counsellors can also get to know the community by meeting with the nurse, Home School Coordinator, or Frontline Workers. Although counsellors may never get to know the community, they need to understand what it means to live on the reserve. Finally, one (1/36) of the participants thought that there was an advantage to living within the community or being close to it. For example, counsellors could attend weddings, bingos, potlatches, educational places within the community, casino nights, or Sla-hal Games (Bone Games). Non-First Nations counsellors could also be open to learning about the community, get involved in local fund raising events, meet with Educational Advisors, Police, Capital Health Board staff, a Band Worker in order to understand and get to know the community and for the community to get to know them. Furthermore, counsellors need to be aware of the rules and

regulations between the different jurisdictions that affect the First Nations people, know the different power systems, and be aware of the rumours and gossip issues in the community. Counsellors also need to know that everybody knows everybody. Counsellors need to be aware of the differences between working with urban First Nations clients and rural First Nations clients. In addition, counsellors need to work with clients by asking permission to be on their territory. This can occur through private referrals from principals, referrals from doctors, court orders, or directly contacting the clients. Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors could get to know the community by talking with the Shaker Church group, sending a letter, or using the telephone.

First Nations participants comments on community.

The First Nations counsellors and support people felt that in order to build positive relationships with First Nations people, Non-First Nations counsellors needed to be part of the First Nations community in which they are working (12/15). They could contact the Chief and Council (12/15), be part of the community events (8/15), attend sporting events (5/15), do some research on the First Nations community they will be working with (4/15), connect with Health services (4/15), know about the lifestyle of the First Nations clients (4/15), connect with the Community Health representative (4/15), connect with the Band office (3/15), attend the canoe races (3/15) or connect with the Band Manager (3/15).

First Nations clients comments on community variables.

First Nations clients felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to let the community know who they are (4/4), meet with the Chief and Councillors (2/4), perhaps become part of the community (2/4), sit with the Elders (2/4), attend sporting events (2/4), be visible within the community (2/4) and work effectively with existing programs within the community. Clients also felt that counsellors needed to have a liaison with a community member (1/4), attend funerals (1/4), meet with the Community Health Representative, meet with educational personnel (1/4), meet with the Drug & Alcohol workers (1/4), attend Pow wows (1/4), meet with someone from Health Services (1/4), meet with a Teacher Assistant (1/4), meet with a Family Support Worker (1/4), understand the important sense of community (1/4), meet with Frontline workers (1/4) and meet with the police (1/4).

Cultural themes

There were 53 Cultural Themes identified. A Cultural Theme is defined as a way of behaving and thinking that guides the people in a First Nations community. A majority of the participants (34/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the First Nations culture they are working with. Twenty-eight of the participants felt that counsellors need to be aware of the diversity in the First Nations cultures. Sixty-one percent of the participants said that the Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the cultural practices that occur within the

different First Nations communities. Counsellors need to know about the importance of the extended family to the First Nations people and that they will be working with the whole community when they are working with a First Nations client (15/36). Thirty-nine percent of the participants said that counsellors need to be aware of the beliefs and traditions of the First Nations people. Thirteen of the participants stressed the importance of waiting for an invitation before entering a relationship. Thirty-three percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have knowledge of the customs of the First Nations people and be aware of their communication styles. Counsellors need to read up on the First Nations culture they are working with, know about their spiritual practices, understand that eye contact varies with the First Nations people and counsellors need to sit with the First Nations people when providing counselling services (11/36). Twenty-two percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have some personal experiences with the First Nations people. Counsellors need to know that the First Nations culture is oral and to offer their support and wait until the client is ready (8/36). Sixteen percent of the participants felt that counsellors need to know the protocol of the First Nations community and understand that the First Nations culture is alive. Non-First Nations counsellors need to accept that silence is important, that there are some secrets that counsellors will never know, that the healing techniques of the First Nations community are important and need to be used and that humor is imperative. Eight percent of the participants said that counsellors need to consult with a First Nations Liaison person, know the definition of health, educational success, understand that the

First Nations boundaries are different and build informal relationships within the First Nations community. In addition, counsellors need to know that the First Nations people have a quieter nature. Counsellors need to invite the First Nations people to bring their concerns forward, know about the importance of Elders, understand that the cultural affairs take priority over educational pursuits, be aware of body language and be visible within the First Nations community (2/36).

Three percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the ways of dealing with conflict, know about the gender differences, policies and the First Nations teachings. Furthermore, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the definition of a strong relationship, the power of stories, the political structures, the power structures, the reserve boundaries and the power of mythology in the First Nations community (1/36). Finally, counsellors should recognize the importance of Elders, appreciate that First Nations people think before they speak, realize that First Nations people live with basic things, talk more slowly, use visual aids, and understand the lifestyle of the First Nations client (1/36).

First Nations participants comments on understanding the First Nations culture.

First Nations counsellors and support people said that there are some things that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the cultural individuality of each First Nations community (12/15). They must also have some awareness of

the First Nations history (11/15), awareness of the diversity of the First Nations people (9/15), and be willing be with a First Nations community (9/15). Non-First Nations counsellors must realize that a positive relationship takes a long time (8/15). Counsellors need to be visible in the First Nations community (4/15), realize that there are some things that Non-First Nations counsellors will never know (4/15), appreciate the close knit ties and relationships within the community (4/15), recognize the importance of the culture to the First Nations people (4/15), go into the First Nations community with a First Nations person (4/15), get to know the Elders (3/15), understand and know the protocol (3/15), understand the spiritual connections (3/15), and attend cultural events when invited (3/15).

First Nations clients comments on cultural variables.

First Nations clients said that there are some things that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the culture in order to ensure strong counselling relationships with First Nations clients. Counsellors need to know the culture that they are working with (4/4), understand the cultural practices of the community (1/4), be aware of the traditions and beliefs of that culture (1/4), read up on the culture (1/4), have some personal experiences with the culture (1/4), know the protocol (1/4), recognize that there are some secrets they will never know (1/4) and invite the First Nations clients to bring forward their concerns (1/4).

### Historical themes

There were 10 Historical Themes identified. A Historical Theme is defined as past events that currently affect the people in a First Nations community. Forty-seven percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the history of the First Nations group that they are working with.

Counsellors need to be aware of the First Nations community's history (9/36).

Seventeen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to read up on the First Nations culture that they are working with. Counsellors

also need to know about the amount of loss that a First Nations community experiences (3/36). Five percent of the participants said that counsellors need to

know the First Nations peoples' experience with the Ministry of Social Services.

Finally, three percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors

need to realize where the First Nations person comes from, understand the acculturation process, recognize the broader historical perspectives and the

specific issues of the First Nations people, comprehend the history that the First

Nations people have experienced with the educational system and be aware of the history of diseases experienced.

### First Nations participants comments on historical themes.

First Nations counsellors and support people believe that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand certain historical events in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. These historical events are an

understanding of the impact of residential schools (9/15) and an awareness that some people have their guard up with Non-First Nations people because of various historical events involving Non-native citizens.

#### First Nations clients comments on historical variables.

First Nations clients believe that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the community they are working with (3/4), read up on the culture they are working with (1/4) and know about the history of the relationship with social services (1/4).

#### General issues

There were 44 General Issues identified. A General Issue is defined as events that have happened that have affected the people in a First Nations community in some way. Fifty-three percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the effects of the residential schools. They also need to know that there were drug and alcohol issues within the communities (11/36). Twenty-two percent of the participants said that counsellors need to understand the importance of time for the First Nations people. In addition, Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the effect of sexual abuse issues for the First Nations people (7/36). Seventeen percent of the participants felt that there needs to be a consistent approach of professional counsellors working with

the community. Five of the participants said that counsellors need to know the impact of acculturation, the high suicide rates, the issues of racism, the amount of emotional abuse endured by the First Nations people, the level of poverty, the lack of parenting skills and that each First Nations person is different and has his/her own issues. Eleven percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the violence in the First Nations communities, the physical abuse and that there are differences in values between the two cultures. Furthermore, counsellors need to know about the generational abuses that the First Nations people endured, the effects of religion on the First Nations people and the different identity issues that some First Nations people may have (3/36). Five percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the high unemployment issues and the impact of being in the minority. Three percent of the participants said that counsellors need to focus on prevention, know about the effects of moving to urban centers, understand how the counselling funding works for the First Nations person, and be aware of the environmental issues in a First Nations community. Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors need to realize the amount of loss in First Nations communities, be aware of the number of First Nations people on social assistance, recognize the different communication patterns, know about bingo addictions, be aware of the media portrayal of the First Nations people, recognize the internalized oppression and the problem with confidentiality (1/36).

First Nations participants comments on general issues.

First Nations people outlined some issues for Non-First Nations counsellors needing to develop positive relationships with a First Nations community. These issues include an understanding that there are no set issues for all First Nations clients (4/15), an awareness of the effects of colonialism on the First Nations people (4/15), and an awareness of alcoholism in a First Nations community.

First Nations clients comments on issues.

First Nations clients outlined some issues they felt Non-First Nations counsellors need to know when they are working with First Nations clients. Counsellors need to understand the impact of residential schools (2/4), know about the drug and alcohol issues (1/4), recognize the need for consistency of professionals (1/4), be aware of the history with emotional abuse (1/4), know about the environmental issues (1/4), focus on prevention (1/4) and be aware of the lack of confidentiality (1/4).

## **VALIDATION OF CATEGORIES**

The scheme of categories in research needs to be used confidently. These categories need to be found sound and trustworthy. The question of validity of the categories involves assessing whether the categories are sound or well-founded. It

is understood that it is impossible to attain absolute certainty as to the soundness and trustworthiness of any category scheme. However, it is necessary to ensure that the category scheme is reasonably certain if it is to be used in practice.

Counsellors need to be assured that the incidents gathered and the categories formed are complete, accurate and practical. I have taken several measures to assure counsellors of an acceptable level of soundness and trustworthiness.

### Reliability of Categorizing Incidents

Evidence of trustworthiness can be established by a study being reliable. One way to determine reliability is by the degree between agreement of independent judges using the same category scheme. This test measures whether different people can use the categories in a consistent way. Flanagan (1954) recommended that a category scheme should attain a score exceeding 75% agreement. In this study, the research supervisor, a Non-First Nations counsellor and a First Nations client were provided with a brief description of the categories by the researcher and asked to place the incidents in the categories. The incidents provided to the judges were on five different pages. The judges were asked to place incidents in the categories that they felt were most appropriate. The judges took about an hour to place the incidents into categories. The judges agreed 95% of the time with the placement of these incidents into the categories. This high percentage of agreement amongst these judges means that counsellors can use the categories to place this incidents in a consistent or reliable way.

### Comprehensiveness of Categories

Another way to determine the soundness of a category scheme is to decide whether or not the category is reasonably complete or comprehensive. In this study, the comprehensiveness or completeness of these categories was tested by withholding 10% of the incidents until the categories were formed. Once the categories were formed, the withheld incidents were then classified into the categories. These incidents were easily placed into the categories. If these categories were not easily placed within the developed categories, then it would have been necessary to form new categories until these withheld categories could have been placed. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that the categories are comprehensive. However, it is recognized that new categories could be discovered at a later date.

### Participation Rate of Categories

The soundness or well roundedness of a category can also be determined by the level of agreement amongst the participants in the study reporting the same thing. A category was formed by the researcher when she found significant similarity amongst a group of incidents reported by different people. The participants independently reported the same kind of event. This agreement amongst independent observers is an important test of soundness. The agreement

is measured by the participation rate for each category (see Tables 4, 6, 8, 10, 12).. The categories with the highest participation rate are those with the highest level of agreement. The participation rates ranged from a low of 3 % (see Tables 4,6,8,10,12) to a high of 94% (Know the culture you are working with). Each of incidents were considered to be relevant and necessary to explain the answer to the research question. The incidents and the categories were sufficiently clear and found to be sound.

#### Expert Commentary

Expert validation is another way to test for soundness in a study. This analysis involves asking people who are experts in the field to determine whether or not these categories are valid and useful to them. Experts are asked to reflect on their experience and explain whether or not the findings of a particular study are consistent with what they have found from their own experiences. This testimony from experts is important because these people see things that the average person may not. These experts provide collaborative evidence and content validity to the results being investigated. In this study, the researcher asked two Non-First Nations counsellors and two First Nations clients to determine whether or not these categories are useful to them. The two First Nations counsellors held master degrees in counselling and had approximately 55 years of combined experience in supporting First Nations people in Canada. The two First Nations clients were active members of their culture and had experience with counselling from Non-

First Nations counsellors. The researcher conducted an informal interview with each of the experts, described the categories with the experts and then asked each expert to go through each category to assess their usefulness. The results of these interviews with these experts confirmed that each of these five categories in the category scheme were useful and valid for their counselling with First Nations clients. The experts felt these categories and incidents gave them specific and concrete example and ideas of how to better establish strong counselling relationships with a First Nations community. This analysis give this study further credibility to the soundness or validity of the categories and the category scheme.

#### Support of Related Research

The soundness of the categories can also be checked through agreement with previous research. If a category or event disagreed with previous research, then there would be a good reason to question its validity. It could not automatically be dismissed, but it could be questioned because it would contradict previous evidence from other studies. If a category of event agreed with prior research, then there would be a good reason to be more confident that it is sound. If a category of event was not documented in the previous research, then it would stand alone as a possibility to be confirmed or discounted by future research. In this study, the categories were found to agree with the research literature. Therefore, these results indicate the soundness of these categories. Reference to relevant research for the five supported categories are as follows:

### Personal qualities

Many studies have outlined personal qualities that counsellors must possess in order to effectively establish strong and effective counselling relationships with First Nations clients (Kleespies, 1998; McIlwraith et al., 1997; Herring, 1996; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Amundson, et al., 1995; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; McCormick, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Gora et al., 1992; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Heinrich, et al., 1990; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Daniluk, 1989; Pedersen et al., 1989; Trimble & Fleming 1989; Devlin, 1988; Dillard, 1983; LaFromboise & Rowe, 1981; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise et al. 1980).

First, First Nations counsellors need to ensure safety and trust in the counselling environment. This trust is established over time (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise et al., 1980). Once the trust and safety is established, then professional services may occur with a First Nations community. Second, counsellors need to convey empathy. Empathy needs to be conveyed in the counsellors' nonverbal communication with the client (Janzen et al., 1994; McCormick, 1994). Third, counsellors need to be human and personable with their clients (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). Counsellors need to become known and accepted as a person, then they will be requested to provide services as a professional. Fourth, counsellors need

to be patient and take their time when building strong and effective relationships with a First Nations community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al, 1990). The community needs to have a chance to get to know the counsellors and the counsellors need a chance to understand the protocol of the community they are working with. Fifth, counsellors need to be honest about their motives (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994). The counsellors' motives will be observed by the people in the First Nations community. Sixth, counsellors must be themselves and have a genuine interest and respect for the First Nations client and their culture (Kleespies, 1998; Coleman, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Heinrich et al., 1990). Seventh, counsellors must be aware of the significance of humor in the life of a First Nations community (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Eighth, counsellors must ensure that confidentiality is a part of the counselling sessions with First Nations clients (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Finally, counsellors must accept their client for who they are and where they come from (Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990; Pedersen et al., 1989; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Sue, 1981).

### Community variables

Many studies have outlined the community variables that counsellors must be aware of in order to effectively establish strong and effective counselling

relationships with First Nations clients (MacNeill, 1997; Herring, 1996; Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Amundson et al., 1995; Garrett, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Peavy & McLeod-Shannon, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; McCormick, 1994; Sue et al., 1994; Vickers, 1993; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Pedersen et al., 1989; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Devlin, 1988; Hutchinson, 1985; Johnson, 1984).

First, Non-First Nations counsellors must have some knowledge of the First Nations community which they are working (McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Each First Nations community has its own values, traditions and beliefs. Counsellors need to be aware of these differences both within and between the different First Nations groups with which they are working. Second, counsellors need to know about the history of the First Nations group which with they are working (MacNeill, 1997; Herring, 1996; Amundson et al., 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Sue et al., 1994; Vickers, 1993; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991; Pedersen et al. 1989; Trimble & Fleming 1989; Devlin, 1988). Counsellors need to have this awareness of the history in order to understand who the First Nations client is and the best way to support them. Third, counsellors need to understand what is the most culturally appropriate way for them to entry into a First Nations community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1998). There are certain

unspoken stages that Non-First Nations people must go through in order to establish a strong relationship with a First Nations community. Fourth, counsellors must participate in community events to gain the trust and understanding of a First Nations community (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980). Participation in the community facilitates mutual trust and communication. Finally, counsellors need to know who to approach when building strong community relationships with a First Nations community (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Politically, a Non-First Nations person needs to approach the Chief and Council.

#### Cultural variables

Other studies have outlined the cultural variables that counsellors must be aware of in order to effectively establish strong and effective counselling relationships with First Nations clients (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett, 1995; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Vickers, 1993; Herring, 1992).

First, Non-First Nations counsellors need to comprehend that First Nations people are very diverse (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick & France 1997; Garrett &

Myers 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Axelson, 1985). The First Nations people are very diverse and have different social, economic, linguistic and political forces that guide and shape their culture. Second, counsellors need to know about the importance of family in the lives of the First Nations people (Restoule, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Herring, 1992; Heinrich, et al., 1990). The family gives the First Nations person a sense of belonging and is of great importance to the lives of the people. Third, counsellors need to recognize and respect the strong sense of spirituality for the First Nations people (McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; McCormick, 1994; Devlin, 1988). Spirituality is an important part of healing for the First Nations person. Fourth, counsellors must understand the importance of Elders in the lives of their First Nations clients (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1992). In the First Nations community, Elders play an integral role in the continuance of tribal community, history, traditions, values and spiritual practices. Fifth, counsellors need to understand and be aware of the communication styles of their First Nations clients (Maina, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). The communication styles among First Nations people are diverse and unique to the particular First Nations group. First Nations people also place a lot of value on nonverbal communication (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Herring, 1992). Counsellors will need to be able to understand way verbal and nonverbal communication is used. In addition, counsellors need to accept silence, the

various forms of eye contact, listen more and go at the pace of the client when communicating with their First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990). Finally, counsellors need to recognize the sense of interconnectedness that First Nations people have in their relationships with people, nature and the universe (France, 1997; McCormick & France, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Axelson, 1985). First Nations people believe that all life is in constant motion and all life is interrelated and interdependent. As a result, healing not only affects the individual but also the community in which the individual lives.

### Issues

Studies have outlined issues that counsellors must recognize in order to effectively establish strong and effective counselling relationships with First Nations clients (McIlwraith, et al., 1997; Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick, & France, 1995; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Sue, et al., 1994; Rungta, et al., 1993; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; LaFromboise, et al., 1990; Darou, 1987; Darou, 1984; Dillard, 1983; Sue, 1981).

First, Non-First Nations counsellors need to decide what are appropriate healing methods to address the various problems that clients bring to their sessions (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990). These healing methods may include traditional, cultural or western methods. Counsellors must be willing to use whatever method works for their clients. Second, counsellors must have some knowledge of the culture of the First Nations group with which they are working (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987). Counsellors need to be aware of the values, beliefs, customs and traditions of the First Nations clients. Third, counsellors need to recognize that First Nations people have different levels of acculturation which affects the what they believe, the way they live and the type of healing method that works best for them (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Garrett, 1996; Heinrich, et al., 1990; Dillard, 1983). Fourth, counsellors need to empower their clients to solve their own problems (Lafromboise, et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). Fifth, counsellors need to understand the First Nations values of the particular First Nations group with which they are working (Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Sue, et al., 1994; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Darou, 1984; Dillard, 1983; Sue, 1981). These values give the counsellors a context for the counsellors to understand the behaviours and beliefs of the First Nations clients. Finally, counsellors need to understand that First Nations people differ in

their commitment and practice of traditional values and customs (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; LaFromboise, et al., 1990). Counsellors need to assess the degree of cultural commitment, whether the person comes from a reservation, rural or urban context before they can appropriately determine a healing method for that client.

Based on the results of this analysis, it is safe to say that there are many personal, community, cultural, global, and issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be knowledgeable of when establishing strong relationships with a First Nations community.

## SUMMARY

This study answered the research question: What is the First Nations protocol for developing strong relationships with First Nations clients. Two hundred and forty-one incidents were organized into five categories which were described in this chapter. Tests were done in the study to ensure the soundness and trustworthiness of the category system. These tests showed that the category systems can be used confidently. Finally, a set of guidelines were listed to help Non-First Nations counsellors to use when starting to develop strong and effective counselling relationships with First Nations clients.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The previous chapter introduced five categories of incidents that could help Non-First Nations counsellors develop strong and effective counselling relationships with First Nations clients. This chapter examines the narratives that the participants shared when outlining these guidelines. These incidents are organized in the five categories. In each category there are narrative quotes from the participants as well as a summary of these narratives (see Tables 4-13).

#### Personal Qualities

##### Patience.

A majority of the participants (23/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be patient because a positive relationship takes time. First Nations people need to get to know who counsellors are as people and figure out what the counsellors' intentions before they will trust them and build strong relationships with them.

“Non-First Nations Counsellors need to have patience when they go into a First Nations community. They need to know that it takes time to build relationships with the community and the client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to come into a community slowly and non-intrusively. They need to spend time getting to know the people before they try to get referrals in order to understand the community and to gain their trust. Non-First Nations counsellors have to be willing to be tested to see if they can be trusted because the First Nations community has been exploited so much historically that they are very wary. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to wait to be invited into the communities.”

As found in previous research, Non-First Nations counsellors need to establish relationships with a First Nations community before they can do any work with them (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Janzen, et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Lafromboise & Dixon, 1981; Lafromboise, et al., 1980). As Janzen et al., (1994) stated, this relationship takes time (e.g., months or years). Counsellors need to participate in the community to show the community who they are and what their intentions are. After awhile, the First Nations people will trust the counsellors and then these counsellors can start their work as professionals.

### Genuineness.

Non-First Nations counsellors must also be genuinely interested in the First Nations client (22/36). First Nations people are very perceptive and open up more if counsellors are genuinely interested in them.

“It is going to take time to establish trust and it will only come from the counsellors that genuinely care and love the First Nations community. The First Nations community needs to feel that Non-First Nations counsellors are working from their hearts.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellor also needs to show a genuine interest in the First Nations client as a person. For example, say hi to them in the hallways or somehow acknowledge their accomplishments in a private way.”

As found in previous research, counsellors will need to genuinely care about the First Nations people in order for clients to share their pain (Kleespies, 1998; Coleman, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Heinrich et al., 1990). The First Nations people will not let them into their communities and hearts without the counsellors’ genuineness. If the First Nations community trusts and believes that the counsellor is genuine, they will share their culture and seek the counsellors’ services.

#### Trust and respect.

Twenty-two out of the thirty-six participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to build relationships of trust and respect with their First Nations client. Because of the history with Non-First Nations people and because trust is a

crucial ingredient of any good counselling relationship, First Nations clients need to trust the counsellor and feel respected by them before they can develop a strong positive counselling relationship with them.

“One of the most crucial things Non-First Nations counsellors need to do in order to establish strong counselling relationships with the First Nations client is to build a relationship that includes trust and respect.”

“Respect is the foundation that Non-First Nations counsellors must have when working with First Nations clients. Respect means letting each person have their own space. It also means asking first and never assuming because if you ask, they can say yes or no. A Non-First Nations counsellor needs to be prepared for no answer.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be respectful with their First Nations clients. Counsellors will be considered ineffective if they come across as having a higher form of truth than the First Nations culture does.”

“There must be mutual respect between the First Nations client and the Non-First Nations counsellor in the sense that they can learn from each other and are both willing to listen to each other.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be trustworthy and respectful in their work with First Nations communities. This trust and respect needs to be earned but only through time will the community see and believe in the counsellors' intentions. Counsellors can earn this trust by being visible in the community and supporting the community in an informal and social way (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Janzen, et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise, et al., 1980).

### Listening.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to really listen to their First Nations client (18/36). Part of this listening involves really hearing what the First Nations person has to say verbally and non-verbally without any judgments from the Non-First Nations counsellor.

“When the First Nations people do speak, Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen. By listening to the First Nations person, this shows the person that they respect them by listening to every word that they say.”

“Most importantly, listen to the First Nations client. Many First Nations clients may not be forceful in their speaking and may have different needs than what these counsellors may have in mind. Work with the client based on what they need.”

“Counsellors and support people need listen to what the First Nations client is saying about what they need from the counsellors and support people.”

“Clients also need to feel that they are really listened to first before any solution work. This feeling of being listened to may take two or three visits and trust will then be established with the Non-First Nations counsellor.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen to the First Nations clients without interpretation or interrupting.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen and wait. Counsellors could show the First Nations clients they are listening by asking their clients questions. They could illustrate their listening ability by restating what they have heard. ”

“These counsellors will also need to really listen and check out their understandings with the First Nations clients.”

“First Nations students need to talk about the problem before counsellors can talk about solutions. For example, counsellors should not counsel in the hall. It is more productive for counsellors to sit down with First Nations clients with no time constraints. There should not be any pressure but only opportunities to listen, allow silence and provide the space and time for the First Nations clients to tell their stories.”

Counsellors need to listen to the needs of their First Nations clients (Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen, et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). As Janzen et al (1994) found, it is important for the counsellor to do more listening than talking at the development stage of a relationship. Furthermore, counsellors need to provide an environment where clients can speak freely about what is happening for them and what they need.

#### Culturally appropriate methods.

Twenty-one of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to use culturally appropriate methods. Non-First Nations counsellors need to use methods and interventions that are relevant and have meaning for their First Nations clients. For example, counsellors may need to use some local and traditional healing techniques and methods that may support their clients best.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to use relevant counselling methods with the First Nations client. They need to know that the theoretical processes that counsellors see as the goals for individuals and families may be quite different from what First Nations people see as goals for themselves. The whole issue of goals is very different between these groups. Western culture is very goal oriented. It puts a lot of energy into goal directed behavior. In the First Nations

community there is a difference in thought around the value of goal directed behavior. Non-First Nations counsellors must be careful not to misunderstand this difference in meaning when working with First Nations individuals and families.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be open and aware and not always use the traditional therapeutic methods with the First Nations clients. ”

“Counsellors need to use holistic methods with their First Nations clients. ”

Previous research has also found that counsellors need to use counselling approaches that fit the First Nations client’s needs (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990). For example, counsellors may need to provide services in the client’s home, include family members or use traditional healing methods. Counsellors who are not aware of these traditional services need to refer the client to an appropriate traditional service provider.

The need to be non-judgmental and supportive.

Forty-four percent of the participants said that counsellors need to be non-judgmental, supportive and open with their First Nations clients. Counsellors need to be aware that there may be different meanings and ways of being that are unknown to some Non-First Nations counsellors. These counsellors need to be open, curious and allow for these differences or ways of being. Thus, counsellors need to be supportive to their First Nations clients needs and ways of dealing with and healing themselves.

“Non-First Nations counsellors should not make judgments about the First Nations culture based on their own culture. Counsellors need to be comfortable with their own value systems but not impose them on others. Counsellors should not challenge culture wide values because they will become unproductive in their counselling with the First Nations people. They then come across as judgmental.”

“Most importantly, Non- First Nations counsellors need to be good communicators, warm, caring, understanding and non-judgmental. Once these characteristics are in place, counsellors will connect well with the First Nations clients. ”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must also be non-judgmental and genuine. These counsellors should not want to try to be a First Nations person but instead, respect them for who they are.”

“Counsellors need to be seen as supportive and understanding of the First Nations community.”

“Counsellors then create a safe, trustful and supportive place for the First Nations student to be.”

“Counsellors need to be open and not assume that every First Nations client is the same. Do not assume that counsellors know everything about the First Nations culture. Ask questions.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to display a sense of openness and respect to their First Nations clients. The Non-First Nations counsellor is not an expert in the First Nations client although they may have expertise in certain areas.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellors must be open to the specific parts of the culture that they are unfamiliar with. This openness and respect for the culture will help increase and further strengthen a trusting relationship with the student.

These counsellors do not necessarily need to adopt First Nations beliefs but be open to them.”

Non-First Nations counsellors should not judge ways of dealing with problems that they are unfamiliar with or are different from their view of healing. Instead, counsellors need to allow, encourage and support First Nations clients to do what they need to do on their healing journey. Other studies have documented the importance of using traditional and culturally appropriate healing methods with First Nations clients (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990).

Be trustworthy, ask questions, make no assumptions and be respectful.

Fifteen of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be trustworthy, ask questions, make no assumptions about the First Nations culture and relate to the First Nations people as people. Counsellors must be respectful of First Nations clients and where they are in their lives. They need to be reliable, consistent, open and skilled in their counselling support of the First Nations people.

“Trust is another crucial issue that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have with First Nations clients. However, counsellors must earn the trust of First Nations people. First Nations people do not care about the technical diplomas or degrees of Non-First Nations counsellors. First Nations people are more interested in who you are and the way you conduct yourself with them. Another way to earn trust is to say what you mean, mean what you say, do exactly what you say you are going to do, and only do what you are willing to do.”

“Counsellors must remember that all their clients are human beings with cultural differences. All clients should be treated as human beings and asked questions when necessary about their culture if it will help in supporting the counselling process. For example, some of the First Nations students will be going in and out of the bighouse at different times and then returning to school. Counsellors may not know about what the bighouse is, how it works and things these students can and cannot do when out of the bighouse. Counsellors should ask questions about what would be appropriate to say and do with these students.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that the culture is different for different First Nations groups from different areas. Counsellors can find out what they need to know through asking questions.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to ask questions about their client’s culture when they have a good rapport with them. Ask the clients to teach or tell you about their culture , so you do not invade their privacy in asking them to share with you. The First Nations traditions are very important and a precious part of their culture.”

“It is sensitive to go slow and ask questions about what would be the best way to establish strong relationships with the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to find out what the needs of the First Nations community are in terms of contact and ask questions about what they need to know to do their work. Counsellors should never assume they know what the First Nations community needs or the best way to support them.”

“Counsellors need to withhold assumptions around cultural stereotyping. Instead, counsellors need to probe what the client’s sense of their own culture is and their level of commitment. For example, find out if the student is involved in tribal dance or other cultural practices, their relationships with the Elders, and their connection with other First Nations students on campus.”

“These counsellors should avoid any assumptions that all First Nations people are the same as this is really insulting to the First Nations people. Each First

Nations community is unique. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the diversity amongst each community.”

“These counsellors need to come out of their roles and be genuine and show their face and show that they care for the First Nations people as people. Thus, these counsellors need to make some type of human contribution to the community.”

“Be open to everyone around you and relate to people as people.”

Counsellors need to be trusted by their clients in order to be effective with them. This finding is continually documented in First Nations research (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise et al., 1980). This trust is developed over time, by being supportive and allowing the client to be and live the way they feel is right for the client. Counsellors can learn about the First Nations people by asking certain people questions in a very caring and genuine way. However, counsellors should never assume or appear superior to the First Nations people by seeming to know what is best for them. As Janzen et al (1994) found, counsellors need to be open and willing to learn about another lifestyle. Sometimes, the answers to their questions will come months or years down the road.

Empower clients, go at their pace and have a willingness to know about their culture and language.

Counsellors need to empower their clients, go at their pace, have a willingness to know about the First Nations culture and use understandable language (13/36). Counsellors need to believe that First Nations clients know what is best for them and when they are ready for counselling. These counsellors also need to be open to learning about the First Nations culture and ways of healing. They need to use language that is relevant and has meaning for their First Nations clients.

“Empowerment is an important process that Non-First Nations counsellors must use with First Nations clients. Empowerment involves allowing the First Nations clients to speak for and make decisions themselves. Non-First Nations counsellors should act as a support and confidence builder with First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must also be willing to pace themselves at the rate that feels comfortable for the communities. This means that the Non-First Nations counsellors will need to do some reading about the nonverbal behaviour of the First Nations clients and then check it out by asking questions.”

“Let the clients determine the pace and way of supporting them that works best for them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must always be respectful when dealing with their First Nations clients. For example, these counsellors need to allow for differences, go at the pace of the client, and be tolerant to different ways of supporting clients.”

“Counsellors need to show their own awkwardness around cultural beliefs, activities and language but still show a willingness to learn. Be inquisitive and welcoming at the same time with First Nations clients.”

“Counsellors need to be open to the First Nations culture. The Non-First Nations counsellors need to become a student of their clients. Counsellors need to ask the First Nations client to teach them to learn and understand the culture.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be careful of the language they use with their clients to ensure that they are working at the clients’ level of understanding.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to check clients’ understanding of what they have said so that clients are getting the same meaning that you are

intending. Check your client's understanding. Some of the First Nations clients may or may not be literate. Thus, counsellors need to use understandable language with their clients."

"Non-First Nations counsellors need to pay attention to language, and use non-jargon language. Do not label. Be open and explain yourself and what you are doing with your clients. Involve the client in the therapeutic process, for example, ask clients at the end of their sessions what was meaningful for them. Thus, keep it simple when working with clients and be upfront and honest with them throughout the healing process. Ask questions and look for strengths in clients."

As noted in previous research, Non-First Nations counsellors need to focus on how they can empower their clients (Lafromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). Counsellors need to work with the clients when they are ready and where they are in their healing process. Counsellors need to help their First Nations clients see their strengths and know their abilities to solve their own problems. Other studies also found that counsellors should help the First Nations client to heal at their pace (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; McCormick, 1995c; Peavy, 1994). Sometimes, this support may mean having a willingness to use cultural ways and language in supporting their clients.

Act in an informal way and be personable with First Nations clients.

Thirty-one percent of the participants thought counsellors need to act in an informal way with their clients. Counsellors need to be friendly first in order to create comfort and safety for their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors should initially have informal contacts with their First Nations clients. Then, as the relationships builds, the counselling support can be more formal.”

“It is important for these counsellors to establish personal and informal relationships with the First Nations community to have a more balanced look at the community life.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should informally share who they are and what they can offer people they know from that community. These counsellors should also sit and ask these contacts about the community before they formally enter it.”

“One benefit is that counsellors get an informal network opened up so they get to know community members personally. This works better in establishing relationships before being referred to the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should be part of the community informally until the acceptance, trust and respect is recognized. These counsellors should not jump in, fix things or think they know anything until they have been part of the community and they have that trust. Sometimes this process takes a long time depending upon what kind of situation a community is in. Thus, it is really important for Non-First Nations counsellors to wait for this trust to be established.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors who have not established relationships with a First Nations community or clients should be totally informal when approaching the First Nations community. For example, counsellors could volunteer at the school within the community, go for lunch with the First Nations counsellor within the community or go to visit with an Elder. Overall, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be friendly with the First Nations communities.”

“Counsellors could participate in local events in order to serve and get to know the First Nations community in some informal way. For example, counsellors could volunteer at dinners within the community to get to know people.”

“These counsellors will need to find individual contacts within the community to start building informal relationships before they go into a First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors needs to hang out with someone from the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors can spend time talking with a First Nations individual or informally visiting face-to-face with that First Nations individual. The most important thing for Non-First Nations counsellors is to establish a trusting relationship with the First Nations community.”

As noted in other research studies, Non-First Nations counsellors need to establish informal relationships with First Nations clients before any effective counselling can happen (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). For example, counsellors need to share a meal with the First Nations people, listen to their stories or participate in community events in order to build an understanding of who they are and to build trust with the people.

Be flexible, set clear boundaries, ensure confidentiality, be healthy and skilled.

Ten of the participants said that counsellors need to be flexible, set clear boundaries, know their limits when working with the clients, ensure confidentiality and privacy with their clients and be healthy as individuals first before they start working with the First Nations clients. Counsellors need to be healthy, strong, skilled and adaptable in meeting the needs of their First Nations clients. Counsellors must also ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

“First Nations counsellors need to be flexible in who they are and how they interact with the First Nations client. The Non-First Nations counsellor needs to watch the First Nations clients’ behaviour when interacting with them. Counsellors must try to be aware of the comfort level of the First Nations client. For example, as a Non-First Nations counsellor I may sit side-by-side with the First Nations client if I notice that the First Nations client is uncomfortable with our face-to-face interaction.”

“Non-First Nations Counsellors also need to be flexible. These counsellors need to work with the First Nations clients where they are. This will show the First Nations respect and trust. Trust will be established between the Non-First Nations counsellor and the First Nations client because the Non-First Nations counsellor then meets the client where he/she is. ”

“Counsellors need to be able to be creative and flexible in their work with their First Nations clients. Non-First Nations counsellors will also need to know that bureaucracy can sometimes get in the way of supporting clients. Counsellors need to be prepared that sometimes the systems they work in get in the way of supporting their clients. This bureaucracy will then become part of the problem that counsellors will need to support their clients with.”

“Counsellors need to have clear boundaries and know what they are willing and not willing to do.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be healthy first and able to set boundaries with the community and their clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that boundaries mean something different in the First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and experience the different type of boundaries within the First Nations community to learn how to navigate these boundaries. Understanding these boundary differences will help the Non-First Nations counsellors build trust and rapport with the First Nations client. For example, Non-First Nations counsellors need to go into the community to establish relationships with the people and in the family they are working with as a friend, participate in the community events and advocate for the clients and the people that they are working with. In the white culture, we say that counsellors need to wear many hats while First Nations people perceive this as being many things to many people. Non-First Nations counsellors must be genuinely comfortable with performing different roles in order to ensure strong relationships with the First Nations people.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know themselves and their limitations around providing counselling support to First Nations clients. For instance, counsellors must not promise to do more than they can deliver.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know their limitations in terms of skills and abilities. Counsellors need to be honest about what they are capable of doing and not doing with their First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know their limitations. The First Nations communities may give these counsellors information slowly as their relationship develops with them. Be patient and respectful of this process.”

“Counsellors need to be dependable, confidential and establish a safe and secure area to support their First Nations clients. For example, establish an office or place on the reserve.”

“These counsellors must be aware that there is no confidentiality up to the point when counselling is initiated. For example, problems are easily blown out of proportion and misunderstood and clients are pre-judged by members of their own community. ”

“This is where confidentiality is important for the Non-First Nations counsellor. These counsellors must walk with the First Nations clients to get their needs met.”

“First Nations clients need to feel that Non-First Nations counsellors have a sense of discreetness and privacy about what they hear. This may not be available from the other professionals within the community. For example, some First Nations clients believe it is crucial that the Non-First Nations counsellor does not communicate with others unless it is a statutory requirement. For other First Nations clients, they prefer no written records of the counsellors’ involvement be left anywhere that other community members can have access to. Thus, some First Nations clients will prefer a Non-First Nations counsellor because they want someone right outside their community system.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be healthy first and able to set boundaries with the community and their clients.”

Other studies have also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be willing to provide counselling support in a way that fits the clients needs (Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al, 1990; Pedersen et al., 1989; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Sue, 1981). For example, counselling may take place in a location other than the counsellors’ office and through a relevant

counselling approach for the client (e.g., traditional healing techniques, family counselling or individual counselling). Counsellors must also be able to set clear boundaries with their clients in terms of services and expertise. In addition, studies have found that counsellors must ensure confidentiality so that trust and safety is established with their clients (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise et al, 1980). Furthermore, counsellors must be healthy before they can support others. This finding needs further support by future research studies.

Be compassionate, humble and genuinely interested in the First Nations culture.

Non-First Nations counsellors also need to show that they care and not act as if they are an expert in the First Nations culture (8/36). Counsellors need to show some compassion and humility when they are supporting First Nations clients.

“These counsellors need to care about First Nations people and work with them in an open and honest way.”

“It is going to take time to establish trust and it will only come from the counsellors that genuinely care and love the First Nations community. The First

Nations community needs to feel that the Non-First Nations counsellors are working from the heart. Non-First Nations counsellors could go to meetings that are held in the community, attend birthday dinners or sit down with the Elders. The extent that the Non-First Nations counsellor is part of the community is their choice. However, the intentions of the Non-First Nations counsellors always need to be from the heart and not for profit.”

“These counsellors need to come out of their roles and be genuine, show their face and show that they care for the First Nations people as people. Thus, these counsellors need to make some type of human contribution to the community.”

“Being part of the community may mean just being part of meetings or events that go on in the community. The First Nations people need to see you there in the community. The trust is being built by the people when these counsellors participate in the community. This involvement by the Non-First Nations counsellors shows that they care about the First Nations community and its members.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that they are not First Nations therefore they are not an expert in terms of what is a crucial issue for them or their culture. Thus, counsellors need to approach clients with respect, openness, and validate what is important for them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to acknowledge with all their clients that they are not an expert on the First Nations people. These counsellors need to be aware of the potential or difficulties in cross cultural counselling relationships. Ask the client to teach the counsellor about what it is like to be in their position. Work from a strength model.”

“These counsellors do not need to be experts in the culture but be open and willing to hear and be part of the process to learn more about the First Nations culture. ”

As stated in other studies First Nations people need to see counsellors as being genuinely interested in the First Nations people and have a willingness to learn from the First Nations people (Kleespies, 1998; Coleman, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991, Heinrich et al, 1990). For instance, counsellors need to participate in community events, listen and take the time to be with the people outside typical office hours.

Get to know who the First Nations client is, ensure safety, and establish a good rapport.

Seven of the participants said that the First Nations clients need to find a way to get to know who the Non-First Nations counsellor is, and that these counsellors

need to ensure safety and establish a good rapport with their clients. Counsellors need to create opportunities to allow First Nations people to get to know and trust them as a person first before they support First Nations people. Counsellors then need to create an environment that is safe, comfortable for their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be part of the community in some way or another in order to get to know the people and for the people to get to know them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors who have never worked with First Nations communities before, can do various things. These counsellors can go to the reserves and start talking with different people at different public community events. This gives the chance for the community to get to know them and for them to begin to understand the community and who they need to talk to in order to start establishing counselling relationships. Non-First Nations counsellors should let the Chief and councils or band administrator know what the counsellors want to do in the First Nations community.”

“For instance, counsellors need to create opportunities where students and families from the First Nations communities can get to know the counsellors. Counsellors could make themselves available during parent teacher nights, know

through contact with the teacher assistant who the student will be assigned to, or through a First Nations liaison worker in the school.”

“Some other ways to support and to get to know the community include being involved in some of the local fund-raising events such as 50-50 draws, crafts events, attend sporting events within the community, meet with Chief and Council, and do other activities that connect people on an informal basis. Once people get to know the counsellors, the community will begin to invite them to their dinners, Pow wows, canoe pulling and other community events. It is considered very respectful if you attend these events when invited by the community members.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need the basics to ensure strong effective relationships. These include confidentiality, safety, clear boundaries, and skill.”

“These counsellors may want to have tea or coffee in attempts to create comfort and safety issues for the client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must create a strong relationship with their First Nations clients by establishing a good rapport with them and a mutual understanding. This type of relationship is possible and is necessary in order for the counsellor and the client to listen and understand each other.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must establish rapport (e.g., neurolinguistic programming) with their First Nations clients. Counsellors must use matching and pacing that joins with their client on several levels. The counsellor must connect with their clients on the physiological (e.g., breathing), auditory (e.g., voice, tone and pitch), and spiritual level (e.g., connectedness). This matching and pacing creates a good rapport between the counsellor and the client and is essential to relationship building. Counsellors must also use similar syntax (e.g., grammatical, structures and phrasings) as their clients. The counsellor must listen and match what the client.”

Previous studies have stressed the importance of counsellors using certain communication techniques to create an effective rapport with First Nations clients (Maina, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). For example, counsellors need to ensure they are listening and understanding what the First Nations client is saying. Counsellors also need to be visible in the community and interact in the social and cultural activities. This interaction gives the community a chance to see who the counsellors are and vice versa.

Go beyond your role, create comfort, disclose personal information and read the First Nations client's body language.

Sixteen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to go beyond their role as a counsellor, create a comfortable environment with their clients, disclose personal information about themselves and be able to read the client's body language. First Nations people need to see counsellors as people first before they become comfortable and trust them. Counsellors can create comfort with their clients by telling their clients personal information about themselves. Non-First Nations counsellors also need to be able to read and match the body language of their clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need also to be willing to let others know what they do not know. Counsellors need to be real and not caught up in their title or their role.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that comfort is very important in working with First Nations students.”

“Counsellors need to provide an opportunity for First Nations students to feel comfortable and strong in the school environment where they are a minority because of their self-segregation.”

“There also needs to be honesty and willingness to share personal history on the part of the Non-First Nations counsellors. These counsellors need to be selective, relevant and respectful when self-disclosing information to any client. It is quite important for the First Nations clients to know who the First Nations counsellors are personally.”

“These counsellors need to be personal and share things about themselves in order to build the First Nations client’s trust. First Nations clients will judge character on the counsellors’ history. For example, when First Nations clients are talking about their families and the counsellor shares something similar about their family, the First Nations client will open up more. When Non-First Nations counsellors share their history then First Nations clients have something they can relate to and build trusting relationships on with their counsellors. First Nations clients will never disclose anything unless they feel trusting of their counsellors.”

“In addition, counsellors should match the body language of their clients. For example, many First Nations people have to get to know a person before they will allow anyone to get close to them.”

Previous research has noted that Non-First Nations counsellors need to disclose personal information about themselves to allow themselves to appear human to the First Nations community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988). This disclosure creates comfort for the First Nations

community. Counsellors also need to go beyond their role to show the community that they care about them as people and do not just see them as a revenue source. In addition, counsellors need to have the ability to accurately read the First Nations clients' body language as a lot of information is observed through body responses. In addition, First Nations people use nonverbal communication as a supplement to enhance their verbal message (Herring, 1994; Herring, 1992).

Use humor, and be personable.

Five of the participants said that humor was an important characteristic in the counsellor and that counsellors need to be personable. Humor is an integral part of the First Nations culture. Counsellors need to allow for humor in their counselling environment and relate to their clients on a personal level as much as possible.

“Humor is also an important element for Non-First Nations counsellors when establishing strong counselling relationships with their First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a sense of humor. This sense of humor helps establish a sense of trust and safety with the Non-First Nations client.”

“Counsellors need to share personal things about themselves. For example, the counsellor should talk about who she/he is as a person, share knowledge of the client’s culture and activities of the First Nations student.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be seen to be more than just part of their history with the white system. They need to be seen as a honest, vulnerable, genuine, and open to the First Nations culture so that the clients can experience these counsellors as having feelings, hopes, interests and goals.”

Humor is part of the First Nations culture. In fact, humor plays an important role in both daily life and ceremonial activities of the community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Therefore, Non-First Nations counsellors need to allow for and encourage humor in their counselling sessions. Counsellors also need to be friendly with their First Nations clients in that they sit with and empower their clients in their healing journey (Janzen et al, 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). Finally, research also found that counsellors need to use certain communication techniques to create an effective rapport with their First Nations clients (Maina, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988).

Be honest, have no agendas, be visible in the community, walk the talk and be comfortable with your own culture and be present.

Four participants said that counsellors had to be honest, have no agendas, be visible within the First Nations community, walk the talk, be comfortable with their own culture and be present with their clients. The First Nations people need to see counsellors participating in their culture and being open and accepting of their culture and beliefs. Counsellors will also need to be secure in their own culture and have no pre-judgments or assumptions about who the First Nations person is and what they need. Instead, counsellors need to work with the client where they are.

“These counsellors must also be very genuine and honest about who they are and what their purpose is in the type of situation that they are involved in.”

“Thus, keep it simple when working with clients and be upfront and honest with them throughout the healing process.”

“Counsellors need to be honest about what they are capable of doing and what they are not capable of doing with their First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to come to a First Nations community with no expectations and no agendas in order to ensure strong counselling relationships with First Nations communities.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to develop a presence in the community and be visible and personal with the people of the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be visible in a First Nations community. Counsellors must be seen as being active so that people can see what they are doing. If people see that the counsellors are doing what they said they would do, then they start to trust them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could get involved by being visible to the First Nations community through attending cultural events or responding to crisis events where people get a chance to know the counsellors.”

“If the Non-First Nations are already involved in some way with the First Nations community then they need to walk their talk. These counsellors need to demonstrate in every way their respect for people with different value systems and different needs.”

“These counsellors must be comfortable with their own culture so that they come from a place of learning.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be present with their clients, sit with their clients, and listen to their stories.”

“Be really present. Hear the clients’ message in its entirety.”

Previous research states that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be honest and real with their clients in order to have their clients trust them (Kleespies 1998; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Coleman, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). Counsellors also need to ensure that they have no agendas other than supporting clients in their healing as they see it. In addition, previous research shows that counsellors need to establish trust and support from the community by being visible in the community, doing what they say and believe in and by being comfortable in their own culture (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al, 1991).

Be reliable, friendly, work closely with the existing support systems and acknowledge strengths of First Nations clients.

Eight percent of the participants said that counsellors need to be reliable, friendly, work closely with the community support system and be able to acknowledge the strengths of their clients. First Nations people respect and welcome counsellors who are dependable, friendly and work with the existing systems in their communities. Counsellors also need to work from the strengths of their clients as they support their needs.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be friendly and take the initiative to introduce themselves to their First Nations students on a regular basis. For example, invite the first Nations student into your office, say hello to them when you see them or eat with them.”

“They need to work with the community support services so that the community can support the clients as they tend to themselves.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be creative and acknowledge the strengths of the people they are working. They will become are very capable of finding their own solutions and asking for advocacy when working within a particular system that can offer them some benefit and support. For example, if it is the legal system that the First Nations client needs to enter into, then Non-First

Nations counsellors need to be aware that the First Nations client is going to go in and out of that system without engaging much in it.”

Many things have occurred in numerous First Nations communities that have caused them to become skeptical of Non-First Nations people and services. Therefore, as previous research also indicates it is imperative that counsellors be reliable, friendly and believe in their First Nations clients’ ability to have the strength and vision to heal themselves (Janzen et al. 1994; Peavy, 1994). Counsellors also need to be respectful of the existing services in the community and work with them in supporting their clients. This finding needs to be further explored in future research.

Dress appropriately, be qualified, understand your role, think before you speak and learn from mistakes.

Counsellors need to dress appropriately to match the community, be direct in their communication, be qualified and understand their role as a counsellor, think before they act and learn from their mistakes (2/36). First Nations people feel most relaxed when counsellors appear relaxed and competent. Counsellors also need to be direct in their communication and have a willingness to admit their own mistakes. This creates a sense of humanness in the counsellor for the First Nations client.

“Counsellors need to match the dress code and ways of communicating with their clients, that is, ask a question, wait and listen for the answer.”

“Counsellors should not over dress with their First Nations clients. Counsellors need to dress casually.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be direct in their communication with the First Nations client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be qualified counsellors.”

“The First Nations communities need to know who the counsellors are and what roles and responsibilities they carry. The First Nations communities are much more comfortable when they know who the counsellors are, the counsellors' name and what their position is. For instance, counsellors need to create opportunities where students and families from the First Nations communities can get to know the counsellors.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must think before they do anything. They need to be willing to learn from their mistakes. The knowledge that they need to work effectively within the community will take time and it will be a learning process.”

As found in previous research First Nations culture values and encourages thinking before speaking and learning from mistakes (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994). As a result, counsellors need to practice these teachings. Other studies have also found that counsellors also need to be aware of their clothing choices when working with a First Nations community (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). How counsellors dress and come across to the client can set the stage for an effective or ineffective relationship. Counsellors need to match the client's dress to ensure comfort for their client. In addition, counsellors need to be qualified to provide services to their clients. There have been many examples in First Nations history where unqualified people have provided unhealthy and often harmful services to the people. Thus, counsellors need to do whatever it takes to support their clients in their healing. Further research is needed in this area.

Pay attention to self-talk, use clients' words in your responses, be consistent, have no expectations and respect the First Nations client.

Finally, one participant (1/36) felt that counsellors need to pay attention to their self talk, use the client's words as feedback, be consistent in their support and services, have no expectations, have respect for the client, use culturally appropriate knowledge, give the client a choice who they see for counselling services, be aware of the feminist theory, start working with the children and use the family counselling technique. First Nations people need to see that

counsellors can hear what they have to say, support them with their needs, be respectful and open, and use relevant counselling techniques with them.

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to pay attention to self-talk.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to communicate understanding by reflecting the client's words as they define the problem. This matching in turn leads to good effective relationship building between the client and the counsellor.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that the communication patterns between the counsellor and the First Nations client is often different. First Nations people can often use the same words in different contexts that mean different things. For example, the First Nations person may talk about a “Hat ceremony”. Hat night means different things to a Non-First Nations person as it does to a First Nations person. Counsellors will need to understand a little about the community, its culture and beliefs before they start their work with the First Nations people. These counsellors will also need to really listen and check out their understandings with the First Nations clients.”

“Even if counsellors are coming for a one time visit, try to meet as many people as they can. The visits should be consistent, so those counsellors can become part of the community. It would be optimal for the Non-First Nations

counsellor to live in the community because they would get to know the community more easily.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to come to a First Nations community with no expectations and no agendas in order to ensure strong counselling relationships with First Nations communities.”

“First Nations clients can trust the Non-First Nations counsellors if they can feel that the Non-First Nations counsellor is respectful of them, their culture and their similarities and differences.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need be respectful in giving their clients a choice of where they want their support done and be open and genuine in their approaches with First Nation clients. For instance, ask the First Nations client where they would like to talk about what is going on their life. Give them a choice.”

“Counsellors should also look at the work done in the feminist theory. Counsellors need to have some knowledge of gender and power relationships. If counsellors have done the first steps of knowing themselves the above suggestions are all parts of knowing self.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to start working with the young children. There needs to be some family counselling. The whole community needs to work together with the counsellor to help in the healing of the community.”

Respect is a value in the First Nations culture. It means that counsellors need to be aware of the client’s beliefs and perceptions and reflect back to them in their own words (Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). In addition, counsellors need to have no expectations other than providing consistent and healthy environments where clients can heal.

#### First Nations Participant Themes.

First Nations participants identified essential themes in each of categories they thought Non-First Nations counsellors need in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. I will outline these incidents and give some quotes to further explain the meaning and the way in which each incident needs to be carried out.

### Trust and listen.

First Nations counsellors and support people felt that there were six main categories of personal qualities that were important for the Non-First Nations counsellor to have. First, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be trusted and good listeners (8/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to establish trust with their First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to get their First Nations clients to trust them. Trust is very important. For some First Nations clients, it will take them a long time to build that trust in anyone because some families stick to themselves. These counsellors really need to get to know the families and be able to gain their trust. These families in turn need to feel comfortable with the Non-First Nations counsellors. This trust and feeling of comfort takes time.”

“Clients need to feel that they are welcome to “vent” their concerns or abuse issues without feeling that they have to pursue matters further if they choose not to. Clients also need to feel that they are really listened to first before any solution work is done. This feeling of being really listened to may take two or three visits and trust will then be established with the Non-First Nations counsellor.”

“These counsellors will also need to really listen and check out their understandings with the First Nations clients.”

There have been many historical examples where First Nations clients have been hurt and betrayed by people and systems in their lives. As a result, many First Nations people have difficulties or are reluctant to trust people and services again. Research supports the fact that trust is a basic ingredient of any effective relationship (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; LaFromboise et al., 1980). Thus, counsellors need to create environments where trust can flourish. For example, if counsellors can show clients that they can listen to them, then clients will begin to trust them.

#### Enter informally.

Second, Non-First Nations counsellors need to enter informally into a community until acceptance, trust and respect are recognized (7/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to take it slow and let the First Nations people know who they are and what they have to offer. Be with the people in an informal way. The trust needs to be established with the people before any real work can be done with the First Nations person.”

As noted in previous research, the First Nations community needs to have a chance to observe and get to know counsellors as individuals and in a social context before they can feel comfortable entering into a counselling relationship with them (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al. 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1980).

### Show respect.

Third, Non-First Nations counsellors need to show respect to the First Nations client and their culture, go slowly with their First Nations clients, genuinely care about clients, and have some knowledge about the traditional values of the First Nations community they are working with (6/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to respect their First Nations clients. Respects means that counsellors need to be real, genuine and have all the basic counselling skills.”

“If the Non-First Nations counsellor follows the protocol and traditions of the First Nations community without judgment then the community can give the counsellor the respect that they need to interact and build positive relationships with the First Nations community. Counsellors can learn the protocol by the agency or person that hired or brought in the Non-First Nations counsellor. If it is

up to the counsellors to find out the protocol, they can do this through community interaction that is based on the sincere need for knowledge.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to find out as much as they can about the community before they step into it. Do some research. Go slow and realize that it takes time to develop strong relationships.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors above all need to be sincere and genuine. If these counsellors are sincere and genuine then they will build positive relationships with any First Nations institution, Chief, Councillors and School Administration personnel.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to first have a really clear idea of what culture means. Counsellors will also need to know that culture is a governing system that governs the lives of people. Counsellors need to examine the culture of the group that they are going to work with. For example, counsellors will need to know how family relationships are articulated, the priorities of what the culture values, and the ideas of how that particular culture views time, birth death, sex and power in relationships. There is no book that will explain these things to counsellors. Counsellors will know this if they are culturally self-aware. Instead, counsellors will need to find this out through their experiences with the particular First Nations group. This could take the counsellor a couple of years to find out this information.”

Previous research also indicates that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have some knowledge of who the First Nations people are in terms of culture, beliefs and values, before they can build effective relationships with them (Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Kowalsky et al., 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). If counsellors have this knowledge, they have a starting place to get to know a little about the community's beliefs, traditional practices and the most relevant therapeutic approach for that community.

Explain who you are, what you want and be patient.

Fourth, Non-First Nations counsellors need to let the First Nations people know who they are and what they want and be patient (5/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors should approach a First Nations community in person but they can have some accompanying documents about who they are and what they want. These counsellors need to present themselves in a sharing way. Non-First Nations counsellors need to avoid thinking or acting as if they are saving the First Nations people. Instead, these counsellors need to come in and offer their services and share who they are and what they have to offer the

community. If the community perceives you as genuine and they believe you are respectful, they will invite you to come in and support them.”

First Nations communities believe that they need to think before they act (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994). Counsellors can respect this belief by doing various things to introduce themselves to the community, telling them what their role is and waiting to be invited into the communities to provide support for them.

Ensure comfort, offer services, wait for invitation and know about the importance of family.

Fifth, Non-First Nations counsellors need to ensure comfort, offer support services, wait for an invitation from the First Nations community and know about the importance of family (4/15).

“The counselling environment needs to be a safe and comfortable place for clients to come and share their stories. The session may be more productive at the client's home or at the beach. Be flexible.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could introduce themselves and what role they play with the people of the community. These counsellors need to offer the community their services and wait for an invitation to do their work. Sometimes,

that will be as far as counsellors get with the community. Non-First Nations counsellors could get involved in at least some community events such as funerals or sporting events. These counsellors could also get to know and sit with the Elders of the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors who work best with the First Nations communities have had long-term contact with the First Nations people, have made an effort to get to know the community members, know about the family ties within these communities, know the historical aspects of the community, and appreciate how these communities work and support each other.”

As noted in the literature, Non-First Nations counsellors need to ensure that they provide comfortable environments for their First Nations clients by incorporating relevant healing techniques and matching the needs of their client (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). This comfort can be established by offering services in a very non-aggressive supportive manner and by understanding the importance and meaning of family in the lives of clients.

Ensure safety, have healthy boundaries and avoid assumptions about the First Nations people.

Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors need to ensure safety, have healthy boundaries, be patient, go beyond their role, and avoid assumptions about the First Nations people (3/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be prepared to spend longer sessions with their First Nations clients than their Non-First Nations clients. These counsellors may want to have tea or coffee in attempts to create comfort and safety issues for the client. Furthermore, counsellors may want to do a prayer or smudge before beginning a session depending on the beliefs and values of the First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to first know what their own boundaries are. Counsellors might choose events that take place outside working hours that they are genuinely interested in. For example, it is important to attend the funerals of those lives you have touched or whose lives you have come in contact with.”

“These counsellors need to be patient and available when these clients are ready to deal with their issues.”

“These counsellors need to be personable with the people. Therefore, counsellors need to maintain their relationship with their clients outside their

working role. This shows the First Nations person respect whether these counsellors are personable or not.“

“Counsellors should display a sense of calmness, a willingness to listen, do not give advice, accept silence, and avoid assumptions.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to create safe supportive environments for their clients. Counsellors can establish a sense of safety for their clients in many ways. In fact, research supports the need for counsellors to ensure that the sessions are confidential (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Counsellors should provide services in areas they have expertise in, and never assume they know what their client needs without checking it out first with them.

#### First Nations Client Themes.

First Nations clients identified essential themes in each of categories they thought Non-First Nations counsellors need in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. I will outline these incidents and give some quotes to further explain the meaning and the way in which each incident needs to be carried out. These findings will need to be examined in future research studies focusing strictly on clients' beliefs around what Non-First Nations counsellors

need to know when building strong effective relationships with First Nations clients.

First Nation clients comments on personal qualities

The following are comments made by the First Nations clients in this study.

Patience

First Nations clients felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to display some patience with their First Nations clients (4/4).

“Counsellors need to be patient and available to clients when they are ready to deal with their issues.”

“Counsellors need to be patient when working with First Nations clients.”

Genuineness , trust, respect and good listening skills

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be genuine, establish trust and respect with clients and display good listening skills (2/4). These clients also

felt counsellors need to go at the client's pace, and work with existing services in the community (2/4).

“It is going to take time to establish trust and it will only come from the counsellors that genuinely care and love the First Nations community.”

“Counsellors need to respect the First Nations people for who they are.”

“Clients need to feel listened to first before any solution work is done.”

“Counsellors need to respect where each client is in their healing.”

Ensure confidentiality, show caring and be able to read body language

Non-First Nations counsellors need to ensure confidentiality, show they care and be able to read body language (1/4).

“Counsellors need to ensure that confidentiality is in place when they are working with First Nations clients.”

“Counsellors can establish trust with a First Nations community by genuinely caring for the people.”

“Counsellors need to be able to read body language in their work with First Nations clients.”

### Community Themes

There were 82 Community Themes identified. A Community Theme is defined as a way in which the community operates or what occurs in the community based on the particular First Nations culture. The following are community themes that were identified in this study.

#### Community liaison person from the First Nations community.

A majority of the participants (20/36) felt that having a community liaison person in the First Nations community helps the Non-First Nations counsellors develop a positive relationship with the First Nations community. First Nations people will tend to trust and listen more to their own people. This First Nations

liaison person can help the counsellor gain an understanding of the culture, the community structure and the issues that are occurring in the community that the counsellors may not be aware of or understand.

“It is also very important to have a First Nations liaison person from the community working with you.”

“Counsellors could also link up with someone from the community that can support them and have them do some introductions for the counsellor. This person will help counsellors understand the culture and the protocol that exists within that First Nations community.”

“If a Non-First Nations person has a friend or knows someone from that First Nations community it would be better to go with that person in the community.”

As noted in previous research, Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a link with a First Nations individual from the community they are working with. They would need someone to teach them about the culture, protocol and help them establish an effective relationship with that community (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994:). This liaison person can also advocate for them with its members.

Meet with the Chief and Councillors.

Fifty-three percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to meet with the Chief and Councillors in order to build strong counselling relationships with the First Nations community. First Nations communities are built upon the foundation of respect. The leaders are the ones that are appointed to make the major decisions that affect the community. Counsellors need to connect with these leaders to show their respect and follow the protocol of the community.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to realize that each band is different and that they may talk to different people in the community depending upon who is in that community. For example, in some communities, they could talk with the Band Manager but other communities just have a Chief and Council.”

“Politically, Non-First Nations counsellors should approach the Chief and Councillors. In reality, these counsellors should talk to the person in the community who is going to do something with the information you have to share. This may mean counsellors may have to talk to more than one person to establish strong counselling relationships with First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should talk with the Chief and Councillors because each have different roles within the community such as involvement in

health, employment and social development areas. They can direct these counsellors to the appropriate person or in the way to conduct oneself.”

“If a counsellor wants to formally enter a First Nations community then they need to go through executive channels such as the Chief and Councillor members. These counsellors need to let these individuals know who they are and in what way they can support the people.”

Kowalsky et al (1996) supports the need for Non-First Nations counsellors to respect the protocol of a First Nations community by first talking with the Chief and council. Politically, the Chief and council are the representatives of the community. The Chief and council can then direct counsellors to the appropriate people or services within the community. Counsellors can start laying the foundation for strong relationships before they actually begin their work. Future research would be needed to further strengthen this finding.

Wait to be invited to work with the First Nations people.

These counsellors need to be invited to work with the people within the First Nations community (8/36). The First Nations people have to want and be willing to work with people from outside their communities. First Nations people are more willing to be open and work towards their healing if they have asked for and

want the support from Non-First Nations counsellors. Counsellors will also get a better understanding of the First Nations culture and how they can best support the people when they have been asked into the First Nations community.

“The Non-First Nations counsellor should be invited to go in and know the protocol of that community before they enter.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors have to be invited to be in the community. If a Non-First Nations counsellor is invited into a community they have to go. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be able to make compromises in their own personal life when working cross-culturally.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be respectful of the First Nations community. Respect means counsellors need to introduce themselves and their services, then allow their clients to make a choice whether they choose to take advantage of those services (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Garrett & Garrett, 1994). By offering clients this choice, counsellors will begin to see more doors opening for them and more information becoming available to about the First Nations culture.

Become part of the First Nations community.

Forty-two percent of the participants agreed that it was very important for Non-First Nations counsellors to become part of the community. Counsellors will gain the best knowledge about the First Nations culture, beliefs and traditions by witnessing the culture. As the First Nations people trust these counsellors, they will disclose and create opportunities for the Non-First Nations counsellors to learn and understand their culture.

“It is very important for Non-First Nations counsellors to be part of the First Nations community. For example, when Non-First Nations counsellors are part of the community it gives the First Nations clients and community members a chance to learn about the counsellor and thus become more comfortable with approaching and trusting the counsellor. The First Nations community gets a chance to see who the counsellor is, how you show respect to them, how you conduct yourself, hear what your values are and see the counsellor in action.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to become part of the First Nations community. However, it may not be practically possible for all Non-First Nations counsellors to become part of the First Nations community when they are working in systems outside the community. Some systems that Non-First Nations counsellors work in may not lend themselves to become part of the First Nations community. For example, if a Non-First Nations counsellor works in a specialized

system such as a hospital, First Nations clients may have to come from other parts of the province in order receive specialized services. It also depends upon the client base of the Non-First Nations counsellor. For instance, if the Non-First Nations counsellor is working exclusively with First Nations clients, then it may be possible and very important to become part of the First Nations community.”

By becoming part of the community, counsellors get to know about the First Nations culture, protocol, traditions and beliefs. As previous literature stated the First Nations community also gets a chance to know who these counsellors are, understand their intentions and figure out what their beliefs are (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980).

#### Be visible and attend cultural events.

Fourteen of the participants felt that the counsellors need to be visible in the First Nations community and attend cultural events while thirteen of these participants said that being part of the community gave a chance for the First Nations community to see who they were and what these counsellors were all about. The most important thing for the Non-First Nations counsellor to do is to create opportunities for themselves to experience the First Nations culture, allow for the First Nations people to get to know them as people and gain the trust of the people they intend to support.

community by sitting down with the people and discussing what services they are qualified to provide.

Attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representative or interact in other informal ways.

Counsellors should attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representative or interact in an informal way with the First Nations community members (8/36). First Nations people respect counsellors who take time to show an interest in their way of being.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be invited into the community and they need contacts within the community. Sometimes, a First Nations client may invite them to participate in some of their ceremonial practices such as a sweat, healing ceremony or attending funerals.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could be part of the First Nations community by accepting invitations to community lunches, canoe pulls, Elders meetings, Casino nights or attend funerals. The type and length of involvement depends upon the counsellors or support person’s time and ability to get involved.”

It may or may not be important to be part of the community.

Thirty-one percent of the participants said that it may or may not be important for counsellors to become part of the community in order to develop a strong relationship with the First Nations people. Counsellors may not need to become part of the community in order to respect, understand and support the First Nations community.

“It will depend on the role that the Non-First Nations counsellor or support person is playing within the First Nations community as to whether it is essential for the Non-First Nations counsellor to become part of the First Nations community. Some roles require more contact with the community than others. Ask the community what they need.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors do not necessarily have to living as part of the community to establish strong relationships with the First Nations client. Instead, counsellors need to be open and personally involved with the community. There are some benefits in being part of the community. One benefit is that counsellors set up an informal network and people get to know each other personally. This works better in establishing relationships than just being referred to the community. There are also some drawbacks in becoming part of the community.

For example, there could be problems with confidentiality, anonymity, and safety for the First Nations clients. These clients often report how they are happy that there is somewhere to go off the reserve to get the support that they need.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors do not necessarily need to be part of the First Nations community in order to establish strong relationships with their First Nations clients. Instead, these counsellors must understand the community rather than being a part of it. The counselling relationship itself is more important than anything else. The interpersonal relationship between the client and counsellor is crucial in creating a strong effective relationship with the client.”

“Thus, it is not crucial for Non-First Nations counsellors to be part of the community but the counsellor must be respectful of the First Nations community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors may not necessarily have to become part of the community, but they need to be respectful of it and gain an understanding of the culture, beliefs and values. This finding has not been clearly outlined in the research to date. Future studies will need to be done to evaluate the need for a Non-First Nations counsellor to become part of the community before effective counselling work takes place. Research does support the need for counsellors to be aware of the First Nations culture, beliefs and values (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; McCormick & France, 1995;

Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

Explain your role to the First Nations community.

Nine of the participants agreed that Non-First Nations counsellors need to explain their role to the First Nations community and that this could be explained by meeting face-to-face with the community members (9/36). The First Nations people need to know what the Non-First Nations counsellors' role is and what they want from the First Nations people in order to feel safe and comfortable when trusting these counsellors. Counsellors can gain the trust of the First Nations people by following the tradition of sitting with the people and having a conversation with them about their intentions.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to make a proper presentation to any and all institutions they plan to work with. Explain to the people what your role would be.”

“Historically, Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that the First Nations community does not operate through letters. Letters will not necessarily be a reliable way to establish a strong counselling relationship with the First

Nations community. Instead, Non-First Nations counsellors need to telephone to arrange a face to face meeting.”

“Counsellors must take time to meet the First Nations people. This face to face interaction gives the chance for everybody to get to know each other and their intentions.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must meet face to face to introduce themselves to the clients because they need to know who each other is. This face to face interaction then establishes non-verbal, visual dimensions of the relationship (e.g., observe the eye contact, body posture, etc.). After some acquaintance it becomes easier to communicate by telephone, fax or letter.”

The First Nations community needs to understand the role of the counsellors (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994). Counsellors can explain their roles to the community by sitting down with the people and discussing what services they are qualified to provide.

Attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representative or interact in other informal ways.

Counsellors should attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representative or interact in an informal way with the First Nations community members (8/36). First Nations people respect counsellors who take time to show an interest in their way of being.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be invited into the community and they need contacts within the community. Sometimes, a First Nations client may invite them to participate in some of their ceremonial practices such as a sweat, healing ceremony or attending funerals.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could be part of the First Nations community by accepting invitations to community lunches, canoe pulls, Elders meetings, Casino nights or attend funerals. The type and length of involvement depends upon the counsellors or support person’s time and ability to get involved.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could approach the people already doing the work in the community to see what the community is like and the type of support that may be needed. For instance, counsellors could approach the Drug and

Alcohol counsellors, Community Health Representative (CHR), School Counsellor, or nurse within the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should initially have informal contacts with their First Nations clients then as the relationships builds, the counselling support can be more formal.”

As Kowalsky et al (1996) found Non-First Nations people need to attend funerals, meet with the Community Health Representatives and interact in the other social and cultural activities to experience the First Nations culture. More research needs to be done to further strengthen the need and importance for Non-First Nations counsellors attending specific events in a First Nations community.

Attend sporting events, meet with educational personnel and sit with Chief and Councillors and/or Elders

Nineteen percent of the participants said that the Non-First Nations counsellors could attend sporting events, meet with educational personnel or teachers or sit with the Chief and Councillors or Elders to get to know and become part of the First Nations community. Counsellors need to meet with the existing programs and workers in the First Nations communities to be respectful to the people and to gain the trust and understanding of the community.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to participate in whatever activities that are happening in the community. These counsellors need to show their face so that the First Nations people can put a name to their face. That will help build a relationship of trust with the First Nations people. For example, Non-First Nations counsellors could come out to sporting events, tournaments. Pow Wows and canoe races. Counsellors must be careful to come to activities that have open invitations. Some activities such as the longhouse, require an invitation to witness the events that go on inside.”

“Some other ways to support and to get to know the community include being involved in some of the local fund-raising events such as 50-50 draws, craft events, attend sporting events within the community, meet with Chief and Council, and do other activities with the First Nations community to start to get to know them on an informal basis. Once people get to know the counsellors, the community will begin to invite counsellors to their dinners, Pow wows, canoe pulling and other community events. It is considered very respectful if you attend these events when invited by the community members.”

Kowalsky et al (1996) also found that Non-First Nations people need to find different activities within the First Nations community to help them understand it and to create opportunities for themselves to be seen, trusted and understood. More research needs to confirm the importance of establishing a relationship with

someone from within the community to help ensure a strong counselling relationship with a First Nations community.

Meet with the Drug and Alcohol workers.

Counsellors could also meet with the Drug and Alcohol Workers to get to know the community (6/36). Counsellors need to choose those roles in the community that would be applicable to their intended role in the First Nations community.

“Non-First Nations counsellors could approach the people already doing the work in the community to see what the community is like and the type of support that may be needed. For instance, counsellors could approach the Drug and Alcohol counsellors, Community Health Representative (CHR), School Counsellor, or nurse within the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should go to the Band Offices and talk to whoever is available. It might be the Chief, council member, Drug and Alcohol worker, Community Health Representatives, or Elders.”

The Drug and Alcohol workers can give counsellors some ideas and suggestions on the protocol for that First Nations community. This finding needs to be further confirmed in future research.

Establish a relationship with a professional already in the First Nations community.

Fourteen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors have to have some type of relationship with a professional in the First Nations community such as the School Counsellor in order to volunteer in different programs within the community, to attend Pow wows or to go to the Band office. First Nations people have various roles in the community. It is important for Non-First Nations counsellors to develop an understanding of the culture and an awareness of these roles in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community.

“These counsellors could approach the Drug and Alcohol worker, Community Health Representative, Home School liaison person, Family Support Worker, School Counsellor or anyone who provides liaison with the school.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to create liaison relationships with other professionals that work in the community on a one-to one basis. For example, the Non-First Nations counsellor could get involved in weekly sweats with different groups of people within the community. This is a way for the Non-First Nations counsellors to meet, talk and experience the culture while leaving the role and responsibilities at the door.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be prepared to take time to get to know the community and for the community to get to know them as a person. For example, the Non-First Nations counsellors may want to volunteer on a project within the community so the people get to know them.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to participate in the different cultural events (e.g., funeral, Pow wows, bone games, etc.) if it is okay with the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could also go around to the Band office and other offices that are in the communities to find out what services are available . They can determine who is working that they can put faces to names.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should not use letters or faxes with the First Nations community. These counsellors need to come and have face to face contacts with the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people should avoid using letters and faxes with First Nations communities. Using letter and faxes with First Nations communities may be misinterpreted (e.g., due to low reading levels, no responses from the written communication) or they may not reach the appropriate person that counsellors and support people intended them to.”

Non-First Nations counsellors can find out about the First Nations community's culture, protocol, needs and services by meeting with professionals already working in that First Nations community. This method of finding out the protocol of a First Nations community needs to be confirmed by future research. The need for counsellors to be aware of the First Nations culture and protocol has been confirmed by previous research (Herring, 1996; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

It is not critical to become part of the First Nations community.

Four of the participants felt that it was not critical to be part of the First Nations community to build positive relationships with that community. Counsellors could meet with someone from Health Services or the Teacher Assistant to get to know the community. Counsellors need to meet with the programs and workers in the First Nations community that fit with their roles.

“These counsellors need to make different contacts with the people in the community who are offering Health and Human Services. These counsellors may offer to assist someone already working in the community. Thus, Non-First

Nations counsellors need to get themselves known first before they can start effectively supporting the First Nations people.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could connect with a First Nations Teacher Assistant in the school, the Drug and Alcohol Worker, the school nurse, the Band Office, the School Administrator or someone they know in the First Nations community.”

It is not critical for the Non-First Nations counsellor to be part of the First Nations community in order to effectively support the community. This finding needs to be further explored in future research. However, counsellors can meet with the workers in the community or participate in the community to get to know the protocol of that community (Herring, 1996; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

Avoid becoming part of the community but meet with the workers in the community, go to events when invited and understand the sense of community.

Counsellors should avoid becoming part of the community because they might have trouble separating their private lives from their public lives. They should meet with the Family Support Worker and Social Worker within the community, attend the bighouse when invited, and understand the sense of community in a First Nations community (3/36). First Nations counsellors need to remain objective when they are supporting their First Nations clients. They also need to attend different events within the First Nations community that give them an understanding of the community they are intending to work with.

“Non-First Nations counsellors should approach the First Nations communities through existing support programs in the communities such as the Family Support Worker program, Community Health Representatives, or Drug and Alcohol Workers.”

“Counsellors then need to meet with the different people from health services areas such as the Community Health Representative, Band Social Worker, and

others, so they know who the counsellors are and not just hear about them.”

“Counsellors could attend traditional cultural events such as the longhouse, Shaker Church, or Sweat Lodges when invited.”

“It is very important for Non-First Nations counsellors to understand the sense of community that First Nations people bring to them. Non-First Nations counsellors must recognize the collectiveness of the First Nations community that they are working with. Most European white counsellors live in a highly mobile society and even though First Nations people are mobile their rootedness and need for community belonging is extremely important.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be separate from the First Nations community to remain objective. This finding needs to be further explored in future research. Counsellors could meet with workers in different roles in the community and go to the community events to understand the community’s culture, values and beliefs (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1980). This involvement would also give counsellors an idea of the sense of community and connections that individuals feel with their community and their culture. This sense of connectedness will affect the course of the client’s healing and gives counsellors an idea of how the society functions (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994).

Be involved in community events.

A few participants (2/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors should be involved in the community by doing such activities as attending craft fairs, community lunches, participating in the indigenous games, attending healing circles, attending Elders meetings or attending the community feasts. First Nations people need to see Non-First Nations counsellors as people first, investing time and energy in who they are and how they live, before they develop strong positive counselling relationships with these counsellors.

“There are many ways to be part of the First Nations community. For example, the Non-First Nations counsellor could participate in craft days that often happen in the First Nations communities. Non-First Nations counsellors could buy some of these crafts or other homemade items from First Nations communities.

“Non-First Nations counsellors could be part of the First Nations community by accepting invitations to community lunches, canoe pulls, Elders meetings, casino nights or attend funerals. The type and length of involvement depends upon the counsellors or support person’s time and ability to get involved.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people may never ever become part of the community. However, they can participate in the First Nations community’s activities. For example, Non-First Nations counsellors could attend Pow wows, canoe pull events, indigenous games or volunteering in their programs.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could participate in the healing circles when invited and have direct involvement with the educational instructors or advisors to continue to maintain a presence and offer services.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to take part in events when invited to ceremonies, meetings, feasts, funerals or weddings because that is a symbol of trust.”

As found in previous research, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be involved in the different community events both cultural and social in order to show the First Nations community who they are and that they support and care about the First Nations people (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1996; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980).

Participate in events slowly, nonintrusively, informally and respectfully.

Counsellors also need to attend and participate in these events slowly, nonintrusively, informally, and respectfully. In addition, counsellors need to get to know the communities personally first before they do any counselling support with them (2/36). Counsellors must approach the communities slowly and on a personal level, to allow for the First Nations people to know who they are and what their intentions are. When the First Nations people have this information on these counsellors, they will begin to trust and build positive relationships with them.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to come into a community slowly and non-intrusively. They need to spend time in the community getting to know the people before they try to get referrals in order to understand the community and to gain their trust. Non-First Nations counsellors have to be willing to be tested to see how they can be trusted because the First Nations community has been exploited so much historically that they are very wary to trust Non-First Nations people.”

“Counsellors must start slowly when building effective relationships with First Nations clients and community. This relationship will take time so Non-First

Nations counsellors should not be discouraged if this relationship does not happen overnight.”

“These counsellors need to try to get to know the First Nations community members on a personal level first before they do any type of counselling work with them.”

“These counsellors need to let the First Nations communities know them as a person first before the First Nations community will open up and trust these counsellors. Non-First Nations counsellors need to develop a presence in the community and be visible and personal with the people of the First Nations community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that building strong relationships takes time and is a process (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1996; Janzen et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). By coming into a First Nations community slowly, informally, nonintrusively and respectfully, counsellors are fitting into the culture by allowing the community them and develop a trust with them.

Meet the Nurse, Home School Counsellor or Frontline Worker.

Depending upon their role, counsellors can also get to know the community by meeting with the nurse, Home School Coordinator, or Frontline Workers.

However, these counsellors need to know that although they may never get to know the community, they need to understand what it means to live on the reserve (2/36). Counsellors need to not only understand and develop relationships with the different people in the First Nations community but they must also understand their lifestyle in order to best support them.

“Non-First Nations counsellors could approach the people already doing the work in the community to see what the community is like and the type of support that may be needed. For instance, counsellors could approach the Drug and Alcohol counsellors, Community Health Representative (CHR), School Counsellor, or nurse within the community.”

“These counsellors could approach the Drug and Alcohol worker, Community Health Representative, Home School liaison person, Family Support Worker, School Counsellor or anyone who provides liaison with the school.”

“If a Non-First Nations counsellor has not been asked to come and work in the First Nations community, they need to introduce themselves to the Chief and

Councillors or one of the Frontline workers. These individuals could then introduce them to the people.”

“There are secrets in the First Nations culture that Non-First Nations counsellors will never know. Non-First Nations counsellors will need to accept that they sometimes will never know the secrets. If by chance Non-First Nations counsellors are let in on a few secrets, they can never admit what they are. Non-First Nations counsellors also need to be prepared for a high degree of uncertainty.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know what it is like to live on the reserve or residents day to day life. Counsellors need to know all the families, the grandparents and the community so they understand the history of the people they are working with.”

Non-First Nations counsellors could meet with the Nurse, Home School Counsellor or Frontline worker to learn about the First Nations culture, protocol and services needed in that community. These individuals could also advocate for the counsellors in that community. This finding needs to be further explored in future research.

Advantage to living in or being a peripheral part of the First Nations community.

One (1/36) of the participants thought there is an advantage to living within the community or at least being a peripheral part of the community. For example, counsellors could attend weddings, bingos, potlatches, educational places within the community, casino nights, or Sla-hal Games (Bone Games). There are many ways for the Non-First Nations counsellor to understand, become aware and gain the trust of a First Nations community.

“It is mostly an advantage to live within the community. The First Nations community needs to see the Non-First Nations counsellor or support person as wearing many hats. For example, counsellors and support people could be seen by the First Nations community as a parent, nurse and volunteer so people see you as a total person. Being part of the community also allows the First Nations community to see you and creates opportunities for the Non-First Nations counsellors and support people to build trusting relationships with the First Nations communities.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be recognized at least as a peripheral part of the community. Counsellors need to be seen as supportive and understanding of the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to take part in events when invited to ceremonies, meetings, feasts, funerals or weddings because that is a symbol of trust.”

“For example, counsellors could participate in the sports day, funerals or bingos. This participation will help counsellors gain visibility, and trust of the people. This also gives the chance for the people to see you as people that have likes and dislikes. The people will see you as a person outside the counsellors’ professional role.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be invited to ceremonial presentations. For example, counsellors could be invited to potlatches, ceremonies to welcome students to the college, and healing circles.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could approach the Bands and Chief and Councils, Elders, people working in the educational facility, community support worker, program director, First Nations Coordinator, Post Secondary Counsellors, and Advisors.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to participate in the different cultural events (e.g., funerals, Pow wows, bone games, etc.) if it is okay with the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could be part of the First Nations community by accepting invitations to community lunches, canoe pulls, Elders meetings, Casino night or attend funerals. The type and length of involvement depends upon the counsellors or support person’s time and ability to get involved.”

If Non-First Nations counsellors are living in or are a peripheral part of the First Nations community, it would give them a chance to observe and experience the First Nations culture. It also gives the First Nations community a chance to see counsellors as human beings and therefore trust can be established more quickly than if they were not part of the community. This finding needs to be examined more in future research.

Meet with the various programs and workers in the First Nations community.

Non-First Nations counsellors could also be students first to learn about the community, get involved in local fund raising events, meet with Educational Advisors, police, Capital Health Board staff, and a Band Worker in order to understand and get to know the community and for the community to get to know the counsellors (1/36). First Nations communities have many different

opportunities for Non-First Nations counsellors to get an understanding of the First Nations culture.

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to become students of their clients. Non-First Nations counsellors need to ask the First Nations client to teach them to learn and understand the culture. The Non-First Nations counsellors must have the ability to take a position of enlightened ignorance and not to presume to know a darn thing about the culture. The Non-First Nations counsellor must not presume to know anything because they will look foolish. We need to accept that the First Nations culture is not our culture and never will be. Non-First Nations counsellors cannot participate in it and trust it.”

“Some other ways to support and get to know the community include being involved in some of the local fund-raising events such as 50-50 draws, craft events, attend sporting events within the community, meet with Chief and Council, and do other activities in the First Nations community to start to get to know them on an informal basis.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could participate in the healing circles when invited and have direct involvement with the educational instructors or advisors to

continue to maintain a presence and offer the services of the Non-First Nations counsellor to the First Nations students.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to work with different agencies within the Community such as the police force, health community, or CRD. Once the First Nations people start to see the Non-First Nations counsellors face amongst the community, the counsellor becomes accepted in a small way.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could contact a community person, frontline worker, band worker, Councillor or Chief. Whomever the Non-First Nations counsellor contacts, it has to be someone who has a positive influence in the community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to meet with the different services in the First Nations community to learn about the First Nations culture, protocol and needs. These meetings give some of the community members a chance to know the counsellors’ personality and services. In addition, these services could act as a bridge for counsellors to start a positive relationship with that community. This specific method of establishing a relationship with a First Nations community and becoming aware of the protocol needs to be further examined in future research.

Know the boundaries of the different jurisdictions, the power systems and the role of gossip in the First Nations community.

Furthermore, counsellors need to be aware of the rules and regulations between the different jurisdictions that affect the First Nations people, know the different power systems, and be aware of rumor and gossip issues in the community (1/36). Counsellors need to understand the complexities of the First Nations communities in order to provide the best support to the First Nations people.

“Counsellors need to ensure that there are better connections between provinces and jurisdictions so as to ensure the best interest of the First Nations clients. In our training as counsellors, we need to be aware of the rules and regulations between and within provinces and different levels of jurisdictions that might affect the First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to be very aware of the five different systems of power that exists within a First Nations band on a reserve. These different systems affect the families and its members in intricate ways that can affect the work that Non-First Nations counsellors are trying to do help their clients. In any First Nations community, it takes time to understand how those

systems are played out and how the counsellors actions can respect or disrespect those systems.”

“Confidentiality is a crucial issue for any counselling relationship. Gossip and rumors are such powerful forces within the First Nations community. First Nations clients need to be aware of that Non-First Nations counsellors are exempt from this gossip process. First Nations clients need to feel that Non-First Nations counsellors have a sense of discreetness and privacy about what is heard. This may not be available from the other professionals within the community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the different jurisdiction issues and how these jurisdictions affect the types of services for their clients. For example, there are funding and services differences for First Nations people living on and off the reserve. Furthermore, counsellors must be aware of the different power systems and the amount of gossip in the community because it can have an affect on the type of services that counsellors provide. These findings need to be further investigated in future research.

Everybody knows everybody in a First Nations community and there are differences between rural and urban First Nations people.

Counsellors also need to know that everybody knows everybody and there are differences between working with urban First Nations clients and rural First Nations clients. In addition, counsellors need to work with clients by asking permission to be on their territory, through private referrals from principals, through referrals from doctors, through court orders, or through directly contacting the clients (1/36). Counsellors need to remind themselves that not all First Nations people are the same and that their environment affects their health and determines the way they need support from Non-First Nations counsellors. Counsellors also need to realize that there are different ways they could get their referrals.

“Non-First Nations counsellors must understand that in the First Nations community everyone knows everybody. When these counsellors address these issues, there are consequences in the whole community. Thus, there are pressures on individuals not to deal with issues that affect many people within the First Nations communities. For example, there are large proportions of First Nations people who are HIV positive and have hepatitis that the communities do not want to acknowledge or know about. Counsellors need to understand the dynamics that exist for many individuals in a First Nations community.”

“The way of working with the urban First Nations community would be different than working with rural First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to go to the Band office and meet with the Chief and councillors and introduce themselves and ask permission to do their work on their territory.”

“Non First Nations counsellors should get private referrals from the Chief and Councillors, School Principals, professional School Counsellors, court orders, Doctors or Public Health Nurses.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should directly contact the individual personally. These counsellors should not involve others from the community because it is no one else’s business but the clients. Non-First Nations counsellors should always remember the communities are small so it is important to keep things private and between themselves and their clients.”

Confidentiality and safety are crucial elements that counsellors need to ensure they have when providing counselling services to First Nations clients (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Peavy, 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988). Specifically, confidentiality is important when working with First Nations clients on a reserve because everybody knows everybody. As Herring (1996) also

found, counsellors need to be aware that First Nations clients from urban settings may have different needs than clients from rural settings.

Get to know a community by talking with the Shaker Church, send a letter or use a fax.

Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors could get to know the community through talking with the Shaker Church people, sending a letter, or using the telephone. Counsellors need to use whatever method in a First Nations community that is most respectful.

“Non-First Nations counsellors can become part of the community by getting involved with activities and trying to learn about the culture (e.g., the Shaker Church or Pow wows). These counsellors could also learn about the different things that the First Nations people do.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could fax, send a letter or go in person to establish strong relationships with First Nations communities.”

“If a Non-First Nations counsellor has never had a relationship with a First Nations community they can send a letter to the Chief and Council with a copy to the Drug and Alcohol or Community Health Representative.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to use the least invading method of establishing contact with the First Nations community. Counsellors need to first find out who to contact. The counsellor could then telephone this person to set a time to meet face to face with them. Counsellors will need to go to the communities and have a look and want to learn about the community. This will help the counsellor to know what the needs are and what they can do to support the community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors could talk with the Shaker Church members to get to know the culture and protocol of a First Nations community. Counsellors could also introduce themselves and their services through a letter or fax to the First Nations community they want to work with. These two specific ways for counsellors to build strong relationships with a First Nations community need to be further supported by future studies.

#### First Nations participants and community.

The First Nations counsellors and support people felt in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community, Non-First Nations counsellors

needed to be part of the First Nations community they are working with and contact the Chief and Council when building positive relationships with the First Nations community (12/15).

“It is very important for Non-First Nations counsellors to be part of the First Nations community. For example, when Non-First Nations counsellors are part of the community it gives the First Nations clients and community members a chance to learn about the counsellor and thus become more comfortable approaching and trusting the counsellor. The First Nations community gets a chance to see who the counsellor is, how you show respect to them, how you conduct yourself, hear what your values are and see the counsellor in action.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors have to become part of the community in some way whether that is an understanding of the community with strong links within the community or actively participating in ceremonies and community events. It may not be necessary to be part of the community but more importantly Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the First Nations clients and how to work with them to establish strong relationships with them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be considered part of the community because otherwise they may not get information, respect, or any kind of support that they need to operate effectively in that First Nations community. This process of being part of the community may take a long time to happen. Non-First

Nations counsellors could also have a “buy in” into that community. A buy in occurs when the counsellor is accepted by a person who has a high recognizable position within that community that acts as the counsellor sponsor. This “sponsor” is giving their recommendation for that counsellor to be with and work with the First Nations people. This gives the community a way to know that the counsellor is accepted by that community.”

“Politically, Non-First Nations counsellors should approach the Chief and Councillors. In reality, these counsellors should talk to the person in the community who is going to do something with the information you have to share. This may mean counsellors may have to talk to more than one person to establish strong counselling relationships with First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should talk with the Chief and Councillors because each of these people have different roles within the community such as health, employment and social development areas. They can direct these counsellors to the appropriate person or way of behaving within the community.”

It is very important to be part of the community. This finding needs to be further examined in future research. Being part of the community would allow the people to get to know who you are, see your face and understand what your role is in the community. Trust is being built with the people when these counsellors participate in the community (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et

al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980). This involvement by the Non-First Nations counsellors shows that they care about the First Nations community and its members. In addition, counsellors need to meet with the Chief and Councillors in order to respect the political protocol of that community (Kowalsky et al., 1996).

Be part of the community events.

First Nations participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors needed to be part of the community events (8/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a presence in the community so people can see them and start to develop relationships with them. These counsellors could be part of the community by talking with the people, visiting with the people, being at the community gatherings, volunteering during community events and visiting the Elders. Non-First Nations counsellors need to show respect by helping the community members out of the goodness of their hearts or serving the Elders at the local events. These counsellors need to come out of their roles and be genuine and show their face and show that they care for the First Nations people as people. Thus, these counsellors need to make some type of human contribution to the community.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be involved in community events so the people can see them supporting their culture. This involvement gives the community an opportunity to see who these counsellors are as people and a chance for the community to start to trust these counsellors (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980).

Attend sporting events.

First Nations counsellors and support people feel that Non-First Nations counsellors need to attend sporting events to build positive relationships with a First Nations community (5/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors could get involved in at least some community events such as funerals or sporting events.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could come out to sporting events, tournaments. Pow wows, or canoe races. Counsellors should only come to activities that have open invitations.”

As Kowalsky et al (1996) also found, Non-First Nations people could attend any of the sporting events within the First Nations community in order to get to know and experience the community and how they live. Future research needs to further explore this specific method of understanding a First Nations community.

Do some research on the community, meet with Health Services, know the lifestyle and connect with the Community Health Representative.

First Nations counsellors feel that Non-First Nations counsellors need to do some research on the First Nations community they will be working with, connect with Health services, know about the lifestyle of the First Nations clients, and connect with the Community Health Representative (4/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to find out about the community before they step into it. Do some research.”

“If the First Nations community is living on their own territory then the Non-First Nations counsellors would go and do some research on where the First Nations community is geographically and information about them as a people.

Know their local history and the names of the local people whose territory you are on.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could approach someone in the Health field to find out what services exist and whether or not there is any need for the counsellors services.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the family ties, family history, where people lived and the type of lifestyle they have lived. This information is important for the counsellors to know because much of what the First Nations people do are tied to their history. Counsellors can find out this information by observing and participating in community activities such as the canoe races.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should approach the First Nations communities through existing support programs in the communities such as the Family Support Worker program, Community Health Representatives, or Drug and Alcohol Workers.”

Non-First Nations counsellors should do some research on the First Nations community before they start offering services to that community (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c; Janzen et al., 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991). Information about the type of services that are needed in the community

can be obtained from the Healthy Services or the Community Health Representative. Furthermore, counsellors need to have an understanding of the lifestyle of their clients in order to know the best way to support them.

Connect with the band office, attend canoe races or connect with the Band Manager.

First Nations counsellors and support people believe that Non-First Nations counsellors need to connect with the Band office, attend the canoe races or connect with the Band Manager (3/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors could also go around to the Band office and other offices that are in the communities to find out what services are available and who is working there . Then, Non-First Nations counsellors can put faces to names.”

“Counsellors can find out this information by observing and participating in community activities such as the canoe races. Canoe races were a chance for the different First Nations communities to see each other, socialize and feast together after the long winters.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to realize that each band is different and they may talk to different people in the community depending upon who is in that community. For example, in some communities, they could talk with the Band Manager or the some just have Chief and Councillors.”

Non-First Nations counsellors could go to the band office and meet with the Band Manager or attend canoe races to learn about the First Nations community and ways of building strong relationships. This finding needs to be further explored in future research.

First Nations clients comments on community variables.

The following are comments that were made by the First Nations clients in study.

Let the community know who you are.

First Nations clients felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to let the community know who they are (4/4).

“ The First Nations people need to see who the counsellors are. Counsellors can become known to the community by participating in the community.”

Meet with the Chief and Councillors, sit with the Elders, attend sporting events, be visible, work with existing programs within the community and perhaps be part of the community.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to meet with the Chief and Councillors, sit with the Elders, attend sporting events, be visible within the community, work effectively with existing programs within the community and perhaps become part of the community (2/4).

“Counsellors could go and meet with the Chief and Councillors or sit down with the Elders to get to know the community.”

“Counsellors could become part of the community and get to know the community by attending sporting events, becoming visible to the community and by working with existing programs within the community.”

“The First Nations people need to see you actively involved in the community.”

“Counsellors need to do what they can to understand the community. This may mean that counsellors need to become part or at least have experience with the community to fully understand the culture.”

Work with a liaison person from the community, attend funerals, Pow wows, meet with the community health representative, educational personnel, drug and alcohol worker, health services personnel, teacher assistant, family support worker, frontline worker or police and have an understanding of the sense of community.

Clients also felt that counsellors needed to have a liaison with a community member, attend funerals, Pow wows, meet with the Community Health Representative, educational personnel, drug and alcohol worker, health services personnel, teacher assistant, family support worker, frontline worker or police and have an understanding of the sense of community (1/4).

“Counsellors will need to establish relationships with a person already from the community to help them understand the culture of the community and help them establish relationships with the community.”

“Counsellors could meet with community health representatives, educational personnel, drug and alcohol workers, health services people, teacher assistants, family support workers, frontline workers or the police to help them understand what services are needed and about the culture of the community.”

“Counsellors will need to understand the strong sense of community of the First Nations culture when they doing their work with clients.”

### Cultural Themes

There were 53 Cultural Themes identified. A Cultural Theme is defined as ways of behaving and thinking that guide the people in a First Nations community.

#### Be aware of the First Nations culture you are working with.

A majority of the participants (34/36) said that Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the First Nations culture they are working with. Each First Nations community is different and there are differences amongst each First Nations community that counsellors need to be aware of.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be self-aware and aware of the culture that they are working with. Counsellors should be aware that not all First Nations clients are alike or from the same Nation and may have different values, beliefs, traditions and cultural identities. There are many different First Nations that make up the First Nations Bands in North America. They have very different activities, values and beliefs that they adhere to in one degree or another. Thus, it is important for Non-First Nations counsellors to get their First Nations clients to share with them their values, beliefs and cultural practices that they participate in. Many people have different levels of involvement in their culture depending upon how much of their identity they place on being First Nations.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be sensitive about the culture, history and the needs of who the First Nations people are. These counsellors cannot know and understand the First Nations people from reading books. Instead, these counsellors need to be amongst the people. This awareness for these counsellors will not take place in a one-hour session with them. It takes a long time to get to know who the people are, who the families are and who the individuals are.”

Each First Nations culture has its own values, beliefs and cultural practices. Counsellors need to know each community separately and respect and allow for these differences in their support of clients (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

Be aware of the diversity of the First Nations cultures.

Twenty-eight of the participants felt that counsellors need to be aware of the diversity in the First Nations cultures. Each First Nations community has different beliefs, traditions and ways of living that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of and understand in order to develop positive counselling relationships with a First Nations community.

“Each First Nations community is unique. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the diversity amongst each First Nations community.”

“Therefore, each First Nations Band is unique with their own set of opinions, values and beliefs based on their experience in the larger world.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the diversity of First Nations clients. Some clients will be okay with eye contact some will not. Some clients may be offended by eye contact while others will not trust you if you avoid eye contact. Counsellors need to find about the community that they are working with.”

It is important that Non-First Nations counsellors be cognizant of the fact that not only are First Nations people diverse amongst nations, but they are also diverse within each Nation (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick & France 1997; Garrett & Myers 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Axelson, 1985). Thus, counsellors will need to get to know each client individually and provide relevant and appropriate services accordingly.

Be aware of the cultural practices.

Sixty-one percent of the participants said that the Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the cultural practices that occur within the different First Nations communities. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the cultural practices and their meanings and purposes for the First Nations clients with whom they work with.

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to understand the different cultural practices that exist with a First Nations community. Counsellors need to understand what happens when someone dies. The First Nations communities pull together and support each other in this time no matter what things have happened between them in the past.”

“First Nations counsellors need to know that there is not just one First Nations culture. There are different cultural practices and beliefs in the different First Nations bands. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and learn about the culture of a particular client that they are working with.”

The cultural practices of a First Nations community affects its members directly and indirectly. Non-First Nations counsellors will need to know what these cultural practices are, what they mean to the culture and to their individual clients . This will affect the type of services that counsellors can provide for their clients (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

Know about extended family and that you are working with the whole community.

Counsellors need to know about the importance of the extended family to the First Nations people and that they will be working with the whole community when they are working with a First Nations client (15/36). Counsellors need to understand the connectedness of the First Nations communities with which they work. What the counsellors do affects not only the individuals with whom they work, but also their families and the community as a whole.

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to understand the strength and importance of the extended family to the First Nations person. In the white culture, the families are highly mobile. In the First Nations culture, families stay close together and support each other.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that the First Nations community is an extended family culture. The caregiver may or may not be the biological parent of the First Nations student. The First Nations student may live with relatives and these relatives are seen as family. These living situations are very dynamic and fluid so the home situation changes a lot.”

“Counsellors are relating and working with a whole community through one member. The interactions counsellors have with that student and the rapport that is established with that student vibrates through the community.”

“First Nations counsellors need to understand the relationship between the community and the First Nations student.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that the extended family can affect the healing of the First Nations client (Restoule, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Herring, 1992; Heinrich, et al., 1990). Counsellors will also need to understand how the community is connected and that a change in

one member will affect the whole community (France, 1997; McCormick & France, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Axelson, 1985). Counsellors will need to keep this in mind as they are supporting their clients.

Be aware of the beliefs and traditions.

Thirty-nine percent of the participants said that counsellors need to be aware of the beliefs and traditions of the First Nations people. Counsellors need to not only understand and be aware of the beliefs and traditions of the First Nations people but also be aware of the meanings of these beliefs and traditions with the First Nations client with whom they are working.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the beliefs and traditions of the First Nations people they are working with. These counsellors also need to know that each family is different and their may be different from one family to the next.”

“These counsellors must also be aware of the beliefs and traditions within that community being respectful, polite, and honoring the person, they are talking to, the political or social body they are talking to.”

As found in previous research, Non-First Nations counsellors will need to find out about the belief systems and traditions of their clients (Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Sue, et al., 1994; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Darou, 1984; Dillard, 1983; Sue, 1981). This process of finding out these beliefs and traditions will take time. As a trust and relationship develops with the First Nations client and community, so will the amount and depth of understanding about these beliefs and traditions.

Wait to be invited to build positive relationships.

Thirteen of the participants stressed the importance for counsellors to wait to be invited in to develop a relationship. Counsellors will develop positive relationships with a First Nations community when they are ready and wanting to do some healing with Non-First Nations counsellors.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be open to and wait for an invitation to go in the community. These counsellors will need to find individual contacts within the community to start building informal relationships before they go into a First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to hang out with someone from the community.”

“These Non-First Nations counsellors need to await for an invitation of acceptance that is based on a gradual exposure rather than the Non-First Nations counsellor insisting that they go to all the First Nations community events.”

“Instead, let the people know who you are and what you want to do and wait to be invited in.”

Other research has also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to give a First Nations community information about who they are and what services they can provide, then wait to be invited to provide those services (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al, 1990). This waiting fits in with one of the teachings of the First Nations culture.

#### Acknowledge the customs and communication style.

Thirty-three percent of the participants feel that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have knowledge of the customs of the First Nations people and be aware of their communication style. First Nations people have respect for and develop relationships that are more positive with Non-First Nations counsellors that understand their customs and use appropriate communication styles with them.

“These counsellors do not necessarily have to be immersed in the First Nations culture but at least be aware of the culture and the customs.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about First Nations spirituality, the customs, language and their culture.”

“These counsellors must also understand the types of rituals (e.g., bighouse) and customs of the First Nations client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware that there are differences in culture. This would include differences in values, and communication styles within the different First Nations bands.”

“Counsellors need to be aware of their history, traditional ceremonies and ways of communication before they start working effectively with the First Nations people.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that the style of communication is really different with the First Nations people compared to a Non-First Nations person. For instance, First Nations people do not make eye contact, are not abrupt, do not come across strong, wait for the other person to speak first, and wait for long periods to make sure the other person is finished. Non-First Nations counsellors need to allow for and understand the meaning behind long pauses in

the First Nations speech. These pauses allow the other person to finish their stories. If Non-First Nations counsellors do not allow for these pauses, the First Nations person will be put off and likely shut down.”

Previous research has also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to support and validate the customs and communication styles of the community with which they are working (Maina, 1997; Garrett, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; LaFromboise et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988). The First Nations community will in turn respect and build stronger relationships with the Non-First Nations counsellors.

Read up on the culture, know the spiritual practices, know that eye contact varies and sit with the First Nations people.

Counsellors need to read up on the First Nations culture they are working with, know about their spiritual practices, know that eye contact varies with the First Nations people and sit with the First Nations people when playing their role as a counsellor (11/36). Counsellors need to have an understanding and awareness of the spiritual rituals and practices, eye contact rules and ways of being respectful with the First Nations community which they are intending to work. This can be done by reading books or talking with others from the First Nations community. This awareness will help counsellors provide the best and most respectful support to the First Nations community.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to do a lot of reading about First Nations culture in order to be successful with First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be sensitive to the culture, history and the needs of the First Nations people. These counsellors cannot know and understand the First Nations people from reading books. Instead, these counsellors need to be amongst the people. This awareness for counsellors will not take place in a one-hour session with them. It takes a long time to get to know who the people are, who the families are and who the individuals are.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a better understanding of First Nations spirituality and the notion of oneness. Counsellors need to understand how important harmony and balance is in the First Nations community, so that it does not come as a surprise to counsellors when it is displayed to them in a feast or when Elders are talking.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about First Nations spirituality, the customs, language and their culture.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to be aware of the difference in the amount of eye contact and the meanings of family relationships.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people need to understand that sometimes some First Nations people have a hard time with eye contact. This lack of eye contact may be a result of the First Nations persons’ uncomfortableness or lack of trust with Non-First Nations counsellors or support people. Instead, counsellors and support people should listen to what the First Nations person is saying by looking at their nonverbal cues to get a clear picture of what the First Nations person is saying. For example, some First Nations people do not communicate a lot verbally.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must realize that some First Nations clients are comfortable with eye contact and some are not.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be present with their clients, sit with their clients, and listen to their stories.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to read up on the First Nations community with which they are working. As stated in other research, counsellors will also need to be aware of the different spiritual practices of their First Nations clients, understand that eye contact varies within and amongst Nations and follow the teaching of sitting with the people when inviting them to participate in a program (Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; McCormick, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990; Devlin, 1988).

Have some personal experiences with First Nations people.

Twenty-two percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have some personal experiences with the First Nations people. The best way for counsellors to learn about a First Nations community is through the actual observation and experience of being involved with them. This way of learning matches many of the traditional ways First Nations learn.

“These counsellors need to try to get to know the First Nations community members on a personal level first before they do any type of counselling work with them.”

“There is no book that will explain the protocol to counsellors. Counsellors will know this information if they are culturally self-aware. Instead, counsellors will need to find this out through their experiences with the particular First Nations group. This could take the counsellor a couple years to find out this information.”

As found in other research studies, the best way or most complete way for Non-First Nations counsellors to understand a First Nations community is to have personal experiences with them (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994;

LaFromboise et al., 1980). Much information about the First Nations community cannot be read in a book because it is an oral culture and because some of the teachings are considered too sacred to write down. Once counsellors gain the trust and respect of someone from the First Nations community, they will gain a great amount of knowledge about them.

Know that the First Nations culture is oral, offer support and wait.

Counsellors need to know that the First Nations culture is oral and that they need to offer their support and wait (8/36). Counsellors need to meet with the First Nations community to start building their positive relationships with them. They will also need to offer their support but wait until the people are ready for what the counsellors can offer them.

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to know that most First Nations communities are oral. This form of communication could be an obstacle or a challenge for the Non-First Nations counsellor. Thus, the Non-First Nations counsellor will need to be aware of this form of communication for the First Nations client. For example, non-First Nations counsellors will need to attend to this communication in a nondirect and nonverbal way in order to establish a good therapeutic relationship.”

“Most First Nations communities in Canada have oral traditions. However, this form of communication does not presuppose that the talk therapies are the only way to support the First Nations clients. The First Nations people often use a lot of symbols, so the Non-First Nations counsellors could use methodology or use the environment depending upon what the First Nations clients world view is.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that these people do not have to respond to them and they have to wait for permission to be on their land. These counsellors need to be low key and be informal without coming across as the saviour for the First Nations community. Instead, Non-First Nations counsellors need to offer themselves as a support for the First Nations communities.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to establish links with the First Nations communities off reserve first before going into the community. Counsellors need to wait to be gifted with an invitation to be involved with the First Nations community. Counsellors could offer to come to them or work with the First Nations community, but they need to wait for an invitation.”

Other research studies have also found that the First Nations culture is oral and thus counsellors will need to sit with and listen to the First Nations people in order to fully understand the culture, values, and beliefs (Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Herring, 1992). Counsellors will also need to introduce

themselves, explain their intentions and wait because the First Nations people believe in thinking before acting.

Know the protocol and that the culture is alive.

Sixteen percent of the participants thought that counsellors need to know the protocol of the First Nations community and know that the First Nations culture is alive. Counsellors will develop the strongest relationship with a First Nations community when they know and use the protocol of the First Nations community. Counsellors also need to be aware of and support the First Nations culture in whatever way is appropriate for that First Nations community.

“These counsellors need to go slowly and find out the protocol in each First Nations community.”

“Respect this protocol. For example, in some First Nations communities, counsellors may need to work directly with the Social Development workers.”

“For example, counsellors could talk with the First Nations Home School Coordinator in the schools to find out about the culture and about the protocol of the community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that the First Nations culture is alive, strong and very powerful in their First Nations clients’ lives.”

“The counsellor must also understand that the First Nations student is being encouraged to keep their cultural traditions and languages alive at the same time as being encouraged to integrate into the white society and be tolerant of and adaptive to what are fairly white-centered traditions and expectations.”

Other studies have also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the protocol of a First Nations community in order to enter and work effectively (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Devlin, 1988) . Counsellors will also need to understand that the First Nations culture is alive and that they must support and validate it with their clients.

Know that silence is important, some secrets you may never know, use humor and appropriate healing techniques.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that silence is important, that there are some secrets that Non-First Nations counsellors will never know, that the healing techniques of the First Nations community with which they are working

are important and need to be used, and that humor is important for the First Nations people. Counsellors need to accept and allow for the First Nations communities' ways of being and doing things. This means that counsellors will need to discover the meaning of and importance of things such as silence, sacred rituals, healing techniques and humor for that First Nations community.

“Silence is something that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand when it comes from First Nations clients. Silence with First Nations clients is a common and very important part of their culture.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that silence is an important tool and being a witness is an important tool.”

“Counsellors need to let their First Nations clients know that this silence is okay. The amount of silence that occurs depends upon the type of interaction First Nations clients have had with Non-First Nations people.”

“There are secrets in the First Nations culture that Non-First Nations counsellors will never know. Non-First Nations counsellors will need to accept that they sometimes will never know the secrets. If by chance Non-First Nations counsellors are let in on a few secrets, they can never admit what the secrets are.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that there are certain practices and rituals that need to be carried out in the First Nations community around such issues as death, birth of a child, naming of a person, marriage, or family breakup that can facilitate resolving problems and healing of the clients. Non-First Nations counsellors must work with these practices.”

“Humor is also an important element for Non-First Nations counsellors in establishing strong counselling relationships with their First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a sense of humor. This sense of humor helps establish a sense of trust and safety with the Non-First Nations counsellor.”

As stated in the literature, Non-First Nations counsellors need to allow for silence in the First Nations client’s healing and realize that this fits into the First Nations teaching of thinking before speaking (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990). Counsellors must also realize that because of history or other reasons, some teachings will never be exposed. Other research also found that counsellors need to use humor and appropriate healing techniques to meet the needs of their clients (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Erasmus & Ensign, 1991; Heinrich et al., 1990).

Consult with a First Nations liaison person, know the definition of health, boundaries and educational success.

Eight percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to connect with someone from the First Nations community to be aware of and understand the community and such things as their definition of health, educational success, definition of boundaries and ways for them to build informal relationships with that First Nations community. Counsellors can be more effective if they have this knowledge when supporting a First Nations community.

“It is also very important to have a First Nations liaison person from the community working with you.”

“Counsellors and support people need to understand the First Nations belief around health issues and what is important to them.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people need to know the ways the First Nations communities deal with their health issues. Counsellors and support people need to know the natural remedies that the First Nations communities use.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellor needs to understand what success in education means to the First Nations client. The First Nations client's sense of success, importance of collecting credit or accumulating a number of courses may

have a different meaning to them than to the educational community. The First Nations clients may be more interested in the process of education rather than its outcome.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that boundaries mean something different in the First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and experience the different types of boundaries within the First Nations community to learn how to navigate these boundaries. Understanding these boundary differences will help the Non-First Nations counsellors build trust and rapport with the First Nations client. For example, Non-First Nations counsellors need to go into a community to establish relationships with the people and the family they are working with as a friend, participate in the community events and advocate for the clients and the people that they are working with. In the white culture, we say that counsellors need to wear many hats while First Nations people perceive this as being many things to many people. Non-First Nations counsellors must be genuinely comfortable with performing different roles in order to ensure strong relationships with the First Nations people.”

“These counsellors will need to find individual contacts within the community to start building informal relationships before they go into a First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to hang out with someone from the community.”

Semantics are an important part of the counselling process with any client. Counsellors need to ensure that they understand their First Nations client's definition of health, boundaries and educational success. Counsellors could ask their First Nations liaison person the meaning of or cultural appropriateness of providing healing services in this community. These specific findings on communication with a First Nations client need to be explored in future research.

Know that First Nations people are quieter, invite First Nations people to bring in their concerns, know about the importance of Elders, understand the role of culture.

In addition, counsellors need to know that the First Nations people are quieter, that counsellors need to invite the First Nations people to bring their concerns forward, know about the importance of Elders, understand that cultural affairs take priority over educational pursuits, be aware of body language and be visible within the First Nations community (2/36). Counsellors need to know the people in the First Nations community, provide opportunities for them to take care of themselves, understand the role of the Elders, allow for cultural practices, have an awareness of body language and do activities where they can be seen by the people in the First Nations community.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that First Nations students are quieter and require the counsellors to do more listening. Counsellors must encourage and allow the parents and students to speak.”

“Counsellors must also invite families and students to bring their concerns forward. For example, the counsellors may ask the student during registration why they are making their choices in picking courses and encouraging them to tell their story.”

“Most First Nations students respect their Elders, have strong ties to their families, have important rituals around death and other types of ceremonies.”

“Non-First Nations Counsellors must be culturally sensitive to the appropriate and inappropriate ways of behaving. For example, Elders are used as the transmitters of cultural knowledge. Non-First Nations counsellors must go and talk with them and listen to their teachings.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to know that cultural affairs will take priority over the education system. For example, many First Nations students actively participate in the big house, weddings and funerals. These cultural activities will take students away from school and thus there can be an interruption to their attendance.”

“These counsellors need to be aware that their body language speaks for them.”

“Counsellors need to observe the people that they are working with. Observe what their body language is and their tone of voice and match it.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors could get involved personally by making themselves visible to the First Nations community through attending cultural events or through responding to crisis events where people get a chance to know the counsellors. It is as much who the counsellor is as who they are as professionals”

Other studies have also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that generally First Nations people are quieter, that they think before they speak and that Elders are important in the transmission of teachings (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Herring, 1992). Counsellors also need to be aware that the First Nations culture is an important part of who the client is and how he or she lives (Garrett & Myers, 1996; McCormick, 1995a; McCormick, 1995c;). In addition, counsellors need to create a place where the First Nations client feels comfortable and supported in bringing forth their concerns (Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994).

Know about the ways to deal with conflict, the gender roles, the different policies and the teachings.

Three percent of the participants thought that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand how conflict is resolved, gender differences, policies and traditional teachings in order to build positive relationships and provide the best support for the First Nations community they are working with.

“Non-First Nations counsellors should identify the community conflict patterns. Counsellors can identify the conflict patterns by overhearing people communicate and being a participant observer.”

“Counsellors need to have some knowledge of gender and power relationships.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellor needs to understand the protocol and policies in that First Nations community so they do not embarrass themselves or do something inappropriate.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must go and talk with the First Nations community and about their teachings.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that each First Nations community is unique and has its own way of dealing with conflict, gender, policies and teachings. Counsellors can find out about this information by asking their liaison person, observing community interactions or meeting with Elders or workers from community services. This finding needs to be explored further in future studies.

Know the definitions of strong relationships, the power of stories, the political structures, the power structures, and the reserve boundaries.

Furthermore, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the definitions of strong relationships to the First Nations people, know the power of stories for the First Nations people, know about the political structures in the First Nations community, know about the power structures in the First Nations community, know about the reserve boundaries and know about the power of mythology in the First Nations community (1/36). Counsellors need to learn about the First Nations community they are working with in order to be respectful to the First Nations way of being.

“These counsellors need to understand that establishing a strong relationships with the First Nations communities takes a long time and is best when it happens

by word of mouth. The community will want to know who these counsellors are, how they do their work and if they are willing to do something when asked.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that the stories of the First Nations clients are very powerful and may bring up strong emotions within the counsellors.”

“The different First Nations communities may also have different political rules within the same nation. It is, therefore, important not to lump bands together.”

“These counsellors must be respectful of the different social and political band structures within the First Nations community.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellor needs to know the reserve boundaries of that community. A Non-First Nations counsellor also needs to research the particular community that they will be working with. The counsellor needs to know how the community "operates" and who is the appropriate person to talk to.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must understand the power of mythology in the First Nations culture. These counsellors must also understand how these metaphors are played out in the First Nations culture.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the requirements of strong relationships, the power of stories, the different political structures, the power structures and the reserve boundaries when doing their work with the First Nations people. This information will help counsellors understand the needs of their clients and help them determine appropriate and relevant therapeutic interventions. These findings need to be examined in future research.

#### Understand the First Nations lifestyle.

Finally, counsellors should know about the importance of Elders, know that First Nations people think before they speak and know that First Nations people live with basic things in life. As well, counsellors should talk more slowly, use visual aids, and understand the lifestyle of the First Nations client (1/36). If counsellors can relate to the First Nations ways of being, learning and healing, then they will be effective in their support of the First Nations people.

“Most First Nations students respect their Elders, have strong ties to their families, have important rituals around death and other types of ceremonies.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must think before they do anything. They need to be willing to learn from their mistakes.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people need to understand that some First Nations people live with just the basic things and have a hard time managing money. Thus, some First Nations people have to spread their money around to take care of the basic needs.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of how the First Nations people talk (e.g., the language that is used, the speed that one talks). First Nations clients tend to be slower in responding to someone because they think more and reflect more on what was said and what they are going to say.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to use visual aids. For example, drawing the medicine wheel and other ways or skills of the First Nations clients. First Nations clients could then draw things with the counsellor. For example, the First Nations client could draw the medicine wheel for the counsellor. The client then teaches the counsellor about their drawings. This establishes a dialogue that is both nonverbal and verbal between the counsellor and the client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to spend more time talking with the client about the context in which they live, their lifestyle, etc. Counsellors may take a session or more on this with their clients.”

Previous research has also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that generally First Nations people think before they act and talk slowly (Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Herring 1992; Heinrich et al., 1990). First Nations people also live with only the basic things, are quite visual and are affected by their environment. This finding needs to be further investigated in future research. This information will help counsellors understand their First Nations clients and determine their therapeutic style and intervention strategies.

First Nations participants' comments about First Nations culture.

First Nations counsellors and support people outlined some things that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about a First Nations culture they are working with (12/15).

“Counsellors will need to know the First Nations communities that they are working with. Let the community know that they are aware of their history so they can see that they are concerned and interested in the First Nations community.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellor needs to investigate the cultural heritage and traditions of the First Nations group they are working with. If counsellors do not know the First Nations group they are working with, they will not build

positive relationships with their First Nations clients. There is no textbook that can give counsellors this information because the information they need is caught between the written Non-First Nations world and the written world of the First Nations people.”

“These counsellors can start examining the cultures of the First Nations clients that they will be working with. Counsellors will then be better able to understand the cultural norms of the group.”

As continually stated in the literature, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the culture of the First Nations community with which they are working (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987). This information also gives counsellors an idea of the appropriate protocol in establishing strong relationships with that community.

#### Be aware of First Nations history.

First Nations counsellors believed it was important for Non-First Nations counsellors to be aware of First Nations history (11/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors should be aware of the history, culture, and other issues that have affected their client. This understanding by the counsellor will build a strong relationship with the First Nations client.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must have an overall understanding of the history of the First Nations people as a group and as individuals. These counsellors should approach the First Nations people as they would approach any other culture but must have a good understanding of the culture and of the history of the First Nations people and the individuals that they are working with.”

“These Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the First Nations people they are working with. These counsellors need to understand where the First Nations people are coming from.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should also be aware of how the history of the First Nations peoples has evolved. For example, the four Saanich reserves are actually all part of the Saanich Nation which have the same cultural background and speak the same language. The people were put on these reserves by the government. Understanding this history will help the counsellor understand how things are today in many of these First Nations communities. Counsellors will need to be sensitive to how the culture evolved and how it is today which will help explain the lifestyle, employment situation and other issues that are occurring in

these First Nations communities. This understanding will help counsellors realize the strengths of these First Nations communities.”

As stated in the literature, Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the First Nations people in order to understand who they are and why they do the things they do (MacNeill, 1997; Herring, 1996; Amundson et al., 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Sue et al., 1994; Vickers, 1993; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991; Pedersen et al. 1989; Trimble & Fleming 1989; Devlin, 1988). This information will also guide the counsellor in determining the type and method of culturally relevant and effective services to that community.

Be aware of the diversity of First Nations people and be willing to work in a First Nations community.

First Nations counsellors and support people feel that these counsellors need to have an awareness of the diversity of the First Nations people and be willing to work in a First Nations community (9/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the diversity of First Nations clients. Some clients will be okay with eye contact, some will not. Some clients may be offended by eye contact while others will not trust you if you avoid

eye contact so counsellors need to find about the community that they are working with.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors should learn about the First Nations community that they will be working in. These counsellors should avoid any assumptions that all First Nations people are the same. This is insulting to the First Nations people. Each First Nations community is unique. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the diversity amongst each First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a presence in the community so people can see them and start to develop a relationship with them. These counsellors could be part of the community by talking with the people, visiting with them, being at community gatherings, volunteering during community events and visiting the Elders.”

Other research has also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that all First Nations people are not the same and that they will need to get to know each client and community individually (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick & France 1997; Garrett & Myers 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Axelson, 1985). One way of getting to know a First Nations community is by sitting with different people from the community.

Relationships take time.

First Nations counsellors and support people feel that Non-First Nations counsellors need to have an awareness that a positive relationship takes a long time (8/15).

“Go slow and realize that it takes time to develop strong relationships.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to look at their own survival skills in the community because they need to establish trust with the community, this takes time because the professional is regarded with some distance from the local community. The counsellors need to be themselves and establish trust with the people that they are working with. Counsellors can ask some questions in order to orient themselves with the community.”

“Trust may take time to build.”

As stated in other research studies, effective relationships take awhile to build (Kowalsky, et al., 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Janzen et al, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Heinrich et al, 1990). Trust, comfort and safety are established over time.

Counsellors need to be willing to wait and proceed slowly with a First Nations community to allow this process to occur.

Be visible, remember some things you will never know, be aware of close ties and relationships with the community, know about the importance of the culture and go into a First Nations community.

First Nations counsellors and support people believe that counsellors need to be visible in the First Nations community. They must be aware that there are some things about the culture that Non-First Nations counsellors will never know. Counsellors must also have an awareness of the close knit ties and relationships within the community, know about the importance of the culture to the First Nations people, and go into the First Nations community with a First Nations person from that community (4/15). First Nations people need to see Non-First Nations counsellors actively participating in their way of life. Counsellors also need to know that some things they may or may not understand but they still need to respect the culture and know about the rituals and customs of that culture with which they are working with.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to develop a presence in the community and be visible and personal with the people of the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be visible in a First Nations community. Counsellors must be seen as being active so that people can see what they are doing. If the people see that the counsellors are doing what they say they would do, then the people start to trust them.”

“These counsellors need to respect that not everything will be shared with a Non-First Nations person. There are some things that are not spoken and not shared with anyone but those directly involved in it. This information is their story and their history.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the close knit ties and relationships within the community. These counsellors must be aware that there is no confidentiality up to the point when counselling is initiated. For example, problems are easily blown out of proportion, misunderstood and clients are pre-judged by members of their own community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be sensitive to the culture, history and the needs of who the First Nations people are. These counsellors cannot know and understand the First Nations people from reading books. Instead, these counsellors need to be amongst the people. This awareness for these counsellors will not come in a one-hour session with them. It takes a long time to get to know who the people are, who the families are and who the individuals are.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that there are many parts of the culture. These counsellors will need to understand many different aspects of the culture such as the bighouse, basket dances, or Pow wows. Each family may belong to different parts of the First Nations culture. These cultural practices contribute to part of the First Nations peoples’ self-esteem, their outlook and their ethics.”

Other studies have also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to make themselves visible and available in a First Nations community (MacNeill, 1997; Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Devlin, 1988; LaFromboise et al., 1980). Counsellors need to realize and respect that there will be some teachings they will never know. They need to be aware of and support the close ties of the people, and support and validate the importance of the First Nations culture (Herring, 1996; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Heinrich et al., 1990; Pedersen et al., 1989; Trimble & Fleming, 1989; Sue, 1981) . In addition, counsellors need to provide services that are relevant and appropriate to that First Nations community (Appleton & Dykeman, 1996; Herring, 1996; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; Herring, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Heinrich, et al., 1990).

Get to know the Elders, know the protocol, understand the spiritual connection, and attend cultural events.

First Nations counsellors and support people believed that Non-First Nations counsellors need to get to know the Elders of that First Nations community, understand and know the protocol, understand the spiritual connections and attend cultural events when invited (3/15). Counsellors need to understand the role Elders play within the First Nations community, understand the way things work best within that community and understand and know the place spiritual practices and cultural events play in the life of their First Nations clients.

“These counsellors could also get to know the community by sitting down with the Elders.”

“Elders are used as the transmitters of cultural knowledge. Non-First Nations counsellors must go and talk with them about their teachings.”

“Counsellors could also link up with someone from the community that can support them and do some introductions for them. This person will help counsellors

understand the culture and the protocol that exists within that First Nations community.”

“Counsellors can learn the protocol by the agency or person that hired or brought in the Non-First Nations counsellor. If it is up to the counsellors to find out the protocol, counsellors can find the community’s protocol out through community interaction that is based on sincere need for the knowledge.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to have a better understanding of First Nations spirituality and the notion of oneness. Counsellors need to understand how important harmony and balance is in the First Nations community, so that it does not come as a surprise to counsellors when it is displayed to them in a feast or when Elders are talking.”

“The Non-First Nations counsellors need to participate in the different cultural events (e.g., funerals, Pow wows, bone games, etc.) if it is okay with the First Nations community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors can gain an understanding of the community by attending community events, recreational events, cultural events, or spiritual events when invited.”

As stated in the literature, Non-First Nations counsellors need to get to know the Elders which will help understand First Nations culture, protocol, spiritual connections and teachings (Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; McCormick, 1995b; McCormick, 1995c; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; McCormick, 1994; Dufrene & Coleman, 1992; Devlin, 1988). Counsellors could also attend different cultural events to learn about the culture and develop strong relationships with the First Nations culture (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987).

#### First Nations clients comments on cultural variables.

First Nations clients made some suggestions on what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the culture when working with First Nations clients.

#### Know the culture

First Nations clients said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the culture that they are working with (4/4).

“Counsellors need to know the culture, traditions and values of the culture they are working with”.

“Counsellors need to understand the way things work in the culture they are working with”.

Understand the cultural practices, traditions and beliefs of the culture, read up on the culture, some personal experience with the culture, know the protocol, recognize that some secrets they will never know and encourage clients to bring their concerns forward.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the cultural practices of the community and be aware of the traditions and beliefs of that culture. Counsellors can get this information by reading up on the culture, having some personal experiences with the culture and knowing the protocol of the culture. Counsellors will also need to recognize that there are some secrets they will never know and that the counsellors need to invite the First Nations clients to bring forward their concerns (1/4).

“Counsellor need to know and understand the First Nations traditions, protocol and history of the community they are working with”.

“Counsellors can get a clear understanding by witnessing and experiencing the culture they are going to work with.”

“Counsellors should have read up on the culture before they start working with a First Nations band.”

### Historical Themes

There were 10 Historical Themes identified. A Historical Theme is defined as things that happened in the past that affects the people in a First Nations community.

#### Know the history of the First Nations groups.

Forty-seven percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the history of the First Nations group that they are working with. Each First Nations person has had different events that have affected who they are, how they live and how they deal with their lives. Non-First Nations counsellors have to get to know the First Nations communities they are working with through research and experience.

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the history of the community that they are in. These counsellors must also be aware of the beliefs and traditions within that community: being respectful, polite, and honoring the person they are talking to or the political or social body they are talking to.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the First Nations clients. Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the history of the people in order to know where they came from and where they are going. Sometimes, this history is very painful but after First Nations counsellor know what happened they can understand why First Nations peoples behave a certain way.”

“Counsellors should be aware of the history of the different nations, their belief systems, what happens when someone dies, why and how they do things. If this type of information is not available for Non-First Nations counsellors, then they need to ask the people or particular communities for it.”

Other studies have also found that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the First Nations community they are working with to understand that community’s culture, how they live and the ways they deal with their lives (Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994;

Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987). Counsellors can gain this knowledge by sitting with the Elders, connecting with a First Nations Liaison person, and talking with workers from the services from within the community.

Be aware of First Nations history.

Counsellors need to be aware of the First Nations community's history (9/36). First Nations communities have had different life events affect their culture depending upon their culture and geographic location. Non-First Nations counsellors must get to know each Nation individually through research and experience.

“Non-First Nations counsellors also must realize that all First Nations people are different and that each person and Nation is affected by their history differently.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must understand the history of the First Nations client and how these historical events affected their lives. For example, the effects of residential schools on the parenting skills of the First Nations people.”

“These counsellors need to know the history of the people they are working with. Non-First Nations counsellors also need to acknowledge the history of the

people they are working with and take a step beyond. This awareness and acknowledgement by Non-First Nations counsellors will build trust with their First Nations clients.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to research books and interview community members to understand the First Nations culture, their values and beliefs. Previous studies outline the value of gaining knowledge about a First Nations community by becoming involved in the community in some way (Kowalsky et al., 1996; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994). This information will help counsellors understand what type of services may be needed in those communities.

Read up on the First Nations culture with which you are working.

Seventeen percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to read about the First Nations culture with which they are working. Non-First Nations counsellors need to have the knowledge about the culture before they start working with a First Nations community.

“The counsellor feels that the Non-First Nations counsellor needs to do a lot of reading about First Nations culture in order to be successful with First Nations clients.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to read up on the First Nations culture they are working with before they provide counselling services. Counsellors should know a little about the people they are intending to support. This finding needs to be further examined in future research studies.

Know about the amount of loss.

Counsellors also need to know about the amount of loss that a First Nations community experiences (3/36). Non-First Nations counsellors must understand the different types and amounts of loss for the First Nations community with which they are working.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the amount of loss that the First Nations community goes through. For example, there are multiple losses in the First Nations community some of which they have or may not have dealt with. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that some of the First Nations beliefs and traditions teach the First Nations client that it is not okay to talk about

their losses. This information will help the counsellor be a better support for the First Nations clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the high statistics of suicide in the First Nations communities. First Nations communities have multiple losses that contribute to these statistics and complicates the grief process.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that ceremonies and practices go along with tragedy and loss in their culture because these practices are centuries old and have been very powerful in organizing peoples feelings and behaviors. Non-First Nations need to work with these systems not against them.”

As Peavy (1994) found, First Nations communities have experienced different types and amounts of loss. Each First Nations community has its own way and belief around dealing with these losses. Counsellors need to be aware of these meanings and ways in order to appropriately support their clients. This finding needs further investigation.

Know the history of the relationship with the Ministry of Social Services.

Five percent of the participants said that counsellors need to know about the history that the First Nations people have experienced with the Ministry of Social Services. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the type of involvement and the effects of the Ministry of Social Services upon their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the historical effects of Social Services on the community where the system took First Nations children out of the First Nations community and put the children into Non-First Nations families.”

Counsellors use different agencies to support their clients. One of these services may be the Ministry of Child and Family Services (formerly called Ministry of Social Services). Each First Nations community has had a different experience with this Ministry. As Peavy (1994) states, counsellors will need to know about this history with the Ministry of Child and Family Services in order to provide the best support possible to their clients. This finding needs to be further supported by future studies.

Know where the First Nations client comes from, understand the acculturation process and history with education systems and diseases.

Finally, three percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand where the First Nations person comes from, understand the acculturation process, know about the broader historical perspectives and the specific issues of the First Nations people, be aware of the history that the First Nations people have experienced with the educational system and realize the history with diseases that the First Nations communities have experienced. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the issues that affect the First Nations community with which they are working. Counsellors can find out this information by spending some time informally with the people of the community and asking questions.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the First Nations people they are working with. These counsellors need to understand where the First Nations people are coming from.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the history of residentialism and acculturation and how that may colour somebody with white skin as they first come into a First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be seen to be more than just part of their history with the white

system but instead be seen as honest, vulnerable, genuine, and open to their culture so that they experience these counsellors as having feelings, hopes, interests and goals. Non-First Nations counsellors will then set the stage for a trusting relationship with the First Nations client and community.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the broader historical perspective and the specific individual issues of their immediate context. For example, there are certain ways of being and belonging in communities that is different for each Nation and band. Thus, it is important for people not to assume that all First Nations people are alike. What may work with one Band or one First Nations community may not work for another First Nations community. The non-First Nations counsellors cannot assume that they know what one band does and who they are. This does not automatically give them the knowledge about the cultural differences in all First Nations communities. First Nations communities are different in terms of tribal allegiance.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must also be aware of the lack of post secondary educational success and lack of positive role models.”

“There are also environmental issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of. For instance, there have been some deaths from diseases

contracted at home or in areas where hundreds to thousands of people can become afflicted.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand where a First Nations community has come from and what events have affected them. As stated in the literature, counsellors also need to understand the impact and effect of acculturation, education and diseases on the First Nations community’s beliefs, values and culture (Restoule, 1997; Garrett & Myers, 1996; Herring, 1996; Coleman, 1995; Garrett & Garrett, 1994; McCormick & France, 1995; McCormick, 1995c; Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Janzen et al., 1994; Peavy, 1994; Rungta et al., 1993; Wade & Bernstein, 1991; Darou, 1987; Dillard, 1983; Sue, 1981). This information will give counsellors a clearer understanding of their clients and how to best support them.

#### First Nations participants’ comments about historical themes.

First Nations counsellors and support people believe that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand certain historical events in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. These historical events include an understanding of the impact of residential schools on the First Nations communities and an awareness that some people have their guard up with Non-First Nations people because of these and other historical events (9/15).

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that the First Nations people are victims of residential schools even though some of the people did not attend. For instance, the older people may have gone to the residential schools and the families suffer as part of their parents’ experience at these schools.”

“Some people are still dealing with residential schools, alcoholism and grief. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that First Nations people are at different levels in their own self-awareness and their own self-healing. These counsellors must look at people as individuals and not group the First Nations people together.”

“As a result of these residential schools, the First Nations people have lost a lot of their parenting skills, pride, language and culture. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors need to go back to these roots and address these issues.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that they may get a fearful reaction from the community when they first approach. This reaction may be because of past history with the Non-First Nations people. Counsellors need to be real and genuine with their clients to alleviate some of this fear by some First Nations clients.”

As Peavy (1994) found, Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the reality of residential schools, and their impact on individuals and communities. Counsellors must also realize that some of their clients' history may be displaced on the counsellors which can cause some resistance in the counselling process.

First Nations clients comments on historical variables.

The following are the First Nations clients suggestions for counsellors to know about the First Nations history.

Know the history.

First Nations clients believe that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the history of the community they are working with (3/4).

“Counsellors need to understand that each First Nations culture is different and has its own history. Counsellors will need to know about this history when working with clients.”

Read up on the culture and the history with social services.

Counsellors need to read up on the culture they are working with and know about the history of the relationship with social services (1/4).

“Counsellors need to read about the First Nations culture they are intending on working with to understand the best way to support them.”

“Counsellors need to understand the historical relationship with the ministry of Social Services.”

General Issues

There were 44 General Issues identified. A General Issue is defined as anything that has happened which have affected the people in a First Nations community in some way.

### Residential schools.

Fifty-three percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the effects of the residential schools. The residential school system has affected the First Nations communities and the individuals in different ways. Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen to each First Nations story to get a clear idea of the effects of these schools.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the effects of residential schools on a lot of people in which some of them suffered, while others never had it as bad. Many negative effects have been passed on from one generation to another. Counsellors need to understand the link between these residential schools and things such as alcoholism, lost close family ties to their parents and siblings, broken homes, sexual abuse, physical abuse and suicide.”

“Each person may have a different experience from their involvement with residential schools. Some First Nations people did not go to these schools, some had some form of abuse at these schools, while others had relatively okay to good experiences. Non-First Nations need to understand the effect on each First Nations client. These different feelings account for some of the diversity amongst First Nations bands and clients.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand that there are different reactions to the residential school experience and how that has impacted and affected the type of upbringing, abuses, parenting skills and ways of life (e.g., strictness in parenting as a result of religious teaching which was often cruel and restrictive).”

“Non-First Nations counsellors also need to understand the affects of residential school on the First Nations client and community. No matter which generation Non-First Nations counsellors are dealing with, they are all affected by the residential schools. These schools often affected many of the First Nations clients’ development and healing journey. Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the residential history with their First Nations clients and what they are telling the Non-First Nations counsellors about what it meant to them and how it affects generations still today. This understanding of the effects of these schools may help the Non-First Nations counsellors understand how to better guide and support their First Nations clients.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the role residential schools played and their effects on individuals and community members (Peavy, 1994). Counsellors will need to read about and listen to their clients to understand the effect of these schools so they can provide the best support services. This finding

needs to be further explored as to its effect on developing a strong relationship with a First Nations client.

Know about the drug and alcohol issues.

Counsellors need to know that there are drug and alcohol issues within the First Nations communities (11/36). Drug and alcohol issues affect First Nations individuals and communities differently. Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen to their clients' story to understand the effects of drugs and alcohol on the individual, family and community lives of their clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware of the prevalent violence in the community, drug and alcohol issues, other lifestyle addictions that are prevalent in certain parts of the community, and the physical and emotional abuse issues that emanate from the residential school issues.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the verbal abuse, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and sexual abuse. Many of these issues are too shameful to address for the First Nations person because it is often right within the families. These families are often not willing to address it because it is too personal.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand and know the amount of drug and alcohol issues in a First Nations community (Peavy, 1994). Each community is affected differently by these drug and alcohol issues. This finding needs to be further explored as to its affect on developing a strong relationship with a First Nations client.

Know about the meaning of time.

Twenty-two percent of the participants said that counsellors need to understand the different meanings of time for First Nations people. First Nations people stress the importance of being and the process of their activities rather than a strict defined time schedule.

“Non-First Nations people have a different meaning attached to time than Non-First Nations people do. The time for being and building relationships are more important to the First Nations person.”

As Janzen et al (1994) found, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that time has a different level of importance for many First Nations people. For example, the event itself is more important than the time it starts or finishes. This definition of time will affect the type and duration of counselling services

counsellors provide. This finding needs to be further explored as to its affect on developing a strong relationship with a First Nations client.

Know about the impact of sexual abuse.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the sexual abuse issues for the First Nations people (7/36). Non-First Nations counsellors need to listen to their clients to see how sexual abuse has affected their lives.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that First Nations communities have experienced various issues such as death, car accidents, suicides, alcoholism, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors and support people need to understand that many First Nations people have lost their confidence, some of their pride, and ability to be good parents because of poverty, media, sexual abuse, physical abuse and drug and alcohol problems. However, many of these First Nations communities are in the process of becoming a strong nations again.”

Sexual abuse has affected each First Nations community in different ways (Peavy, 1994). Counsellors will need to assess its impact in a First Nations

community on a case-by-case basis. This finding needs to be further explored as to its affect on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

Consistency of services.

Seventeen percent of the participants feel that there needs to be a consistency of professionals within the First Nations communities. Many First Nations people have had Non-First Nations people come in and out of their lives. There needs to be a commitment and consistency of Non-First Nations professionals working with First Nations communities in order for these counsellors to become aware of and understand the culture and to give the First Nations people a chance to trust these counsellors.

“There needs to be some consistency of professionals working with the First Nations communities to ensure a trusting relationship.”

There have been too many people coming into the community to support the people and then leaving. Often, there is no opportunity for the First Nations people to build trust and respect for these individuals so that services are effective. Thus, Non-First Nations counsellors must be willing not only to spend the time to build these relationships with the community but also to provide consistent

services over time (Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988). More research on this finding needs to be done.

Know about the individual impact of acculturation, suicide, racism, emotional abuse, poverty and loss of parenting skills.

Five of the participants said that counsellors need to know the impact of acculturation, the high suicide rates, the issues of racism, the amount of emotional abuse endured by the First Nations people, the level of poverty, the lack of parenting skills and that each First Nations person is different and has his or her own issue. Non-First Nations counsellors will need time to figure out what issues are relevant to their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know the history and the acculturation of the community. There are secondary and tertiary issues from this acculturation that Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand. Each community is unique so Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the community history individually.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that First Nations communities have experienced various issues such as death, car accidents, suicides, alcoholism, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.”

“First Nations clients have a lot of historical and compound grief and loss issues. These are often complicated grief issues due to the high rate of suicides, accidental deaths and homicides.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors must also understand that there was a lot of racism and prejudice experienced by the First Nations people in the past and thus the First Nations person may have a hard time trusting Non-First Nations counsellors.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the type of poverty issues that First Nations people often face living on the reserves. For example, 85-90% of First Nations people living on reserves live on social assistance compared to 10% of Non-First Nations people. Thus, First Nations people are often disadvantaged in terms of what they can buy and how they feel about this.”

“Poverty is one issue that often occurs in a First Nations community. The majority of the people that live on the reserve live at or below the poverty line and barely get by on Social Assistance or seasonal jobs.”

“Many First Nations adults have no parenting skills because they were not taught them. The people in their lives who were supposed to teach were not there because they were taken to residential schools.”

“There are no set issues for all First Nations people. It is really individual for each First Nations person.”

“There are some general issues such as residential schools, poverty and other things but the experience of each First Nations band will be different. The issues for the First Nations person would depend upon that area. Non-First Nations counsellors would need to find out these issues for each specific area that they are working with.”

Many things have shaped the First Nations culture and its members. Counsellors will need to understand and assess individually each First Nations community and the impact of acculturation, suicide, racism, emotional abuse, poverty and loss of parenting skills. This knowledge will guide counsellors in determining the type and method of effective counselling services. These findings need to be further explored as to their effects on developing stronger relationship with First Nations clients.

Know about the level of violence, physical abuse and the difference between Non-First Nations values and First Nations values.

Eleven percent of the participants said that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the violence in the First Nations communities, physical abuse and the differences in values between First Nations people and Non-First Nations people. Non-First Nations counsellors will need to understand the family violence issues that may exist for their First Nations clients. These counsellors must also be aware of the value differences that may exist between themselves and their clients and then act appropriately.

“Non-First Nations counsellors must be aware that there are family violence issues, Drug and Alcohol issues, and various abuse issues with the First Nations people. These issues vary from band to band and individual to individual.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to realize that the First Nations values and beliefs are different from the Non-First Nations values and beliefs. For example, the First Nations people have a different definition of what a family is and the importance of community. The First Nations people also have different spiritual beliefs and practices.”

Non-First Nations counsellors will need to individually determine the impact of violence and physical abuse within a First Nations community. Each community and its members will be impacted differently. As stated in the literature, counsellors will also need to realize that there are value differences between First Nations and Non-First Nations people that will need to be respected and honored throughout the counselling process (MacNeill, 1997; McCormick & France 1997; Garrett & Myers 1996; Herring, 1996; Garrett, 1995; Herring, 1994; Peavy, 1994; Devlin, 1988; Axelson, 1985).

Know about the generational abuses, the effects of religion and the different identity issues.

Furthermore, counsellors need to know about the generational abuses that the First Nations people endured, the effects of religion on the First Nations people and the different identity issues that some First Nations people may have (3/36). Non-First Nations counsellors will also need to know about the impact that religion had on their First Nations clients. In addition, counsellors will need to understand the definition of identity for their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the legislative history, colonial history, reasons behind land claims and treaty negotiations, and be aware of generational effects of residential schools.”

“There are generational effects from some of the Western European systems and organizations (e.g., influx of settlers, new technology, religious organizations, etc.) that have affected the communities which counsellors need to understand. For example, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know how each family and person feel about being put on the reserve in the past compared to being free and able to live anywhere. Counsellors also need to be aware of the racism that different people have felt in the schools and between the larger community and the reserves. The effects of religion on the people and the sense of spirituality are different for each First Nations family depending upon their religious history and geographical location.”

“These counsellors need to be aware of the historical context of what their clients have faced in Canada and the United States such as racism, residential schools, historical abuse and identity issues.”

Non-First Nations counsellors will need to be aware of the impact and effect of generational abuses, religion and identity issues (Peavy, 1994). Counsellors can use this information to help them determine the needs of their First Nations clients. These findings need to be further explored as to their effects on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

Know about high unemployment rates, and the impact of being a minority.

Five percent of the participants felt that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the high unemployment issues in the First Nations community and the impact of being a minority for the First Nations person. Unemployment has affected the self-esteem and behavioural patterns of many of the First Nations communities. Non-First Nations counsellors will also need to understand the effect of being a minority in a majority culture.

“First Nations communities’ issues include high unemployment, high rates of drinking and poverty. These issues affects First Nations success in education.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors will need to know what it is like to be a minority in a community so they can relate to their clients.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the high unemployment rates and the impact of being a minority. This information can help counsellors build strong effective relationships with First Nations clients. These findings need to be further explored as to their affects on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

Focus on prevention, know about the effects of moving to urban centers, understand how the funding works and be familiar with environmental issues.

Three percent of the participants said that counsellors need to focus on prevention, know about the effects on the First Nations people when moving to urban centers, know about how the funding works for the First Nations person, and familiar with environmental issues in a First Nations community. Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of how the different issues within and outside the community affect the lifestyles of their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to focus on prevention issues. For example, suicide prevention needs to focus on addressing issues before tagging clients as “suicidal”. These counsellors should catch these clients before they fall into depression where suicide becomes an option.”

“Counsellors must be aware of the impact of colonization, residential schools, moving to urban centers, generational abuses and the difficulties of substance abuse.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand how the funding works for First Nations clients to receive counselling support. Funding for counselling support for First Nations clients is becoming more limited and harder to access for the First Nations clients. For instance, medical services pay for counselling for a

First Nations clients living off reserve for up to twenty sessions. These twenty sessions are not long enough to effectively deal with problems.”

“There are also environmental issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of. For instance, there have been some deaths from diseases contracted at home or in areas where hundreds to thousands of people can become afflicted.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know what has affected their clients. For example, counsellors need to be aware of the effects of moving to urban centers, to be familiar with the different environmental issues and to understand how the funding works for the First Nations people with which they are working. In addition, counsellors need to focus more of their activities on prevention rather than crisis interventions. These findings need to be further explored as to their affects on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

Know about the amount of loss, the number of people on social assistance, the different communication patterns, bingo addictions, the internalized oppression and the problem with confidentiality.

Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the amount of loss in First Nations communities, the amount of First Nations people on social assistance, the different communication patterns and the Bingo addictions. They

also need to know about the media portrayal of the First Nations people, the internalized oppression and the problem with confidentiality (1/36). Non-First Nations counsellors need to be open to understanding the many different issues that could affect the health and healing of their First Nations clients.

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of the amount of loss that the First Nations community experiences. For example, there are multiple losses in the First Nations community, some of which they have or may not have dealt with.”

“85-90% of First Nations people living on reserves live on social assistance compared to 10% of Non-First Nations people. Thus, First Nations people are often disadvantaged in terms of what they can buy.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware that the communication patterns between the counsellor and the First Nations client is often different. First Nations people can often use the same words in different contexts that mean different things.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the communities’ communication patterns. We need to be aware of the inter-cultural skills. For example, sometimes Non-First Nations counsellors may use professional jargon

and do not come across clearly to their clients. Non-First Nations counsellors could avoid theoretical talk when working with clients in the community.”

“There are certain things such as bingo, alcohol or drugs that may interfere with taking care of families and their own basic needs.”

“The media gives many perceptions about the First Nations people, about who they are and what they do. Non-First Nations counsellors need to clearly understand who the First Nations clients are, by finding out accurate information on the community.”

“One of the issues for the First Nations client is internalized oppression that plays itself not only in the therapeutic relationship but also in all relationships. Internalized oppression for the First Nations person is about never having enough power for the last 250 years to make your own decisions in ways that really count.”

“Confidentiality is very important with the First Nations client. Most First Nations communities on reserve are very small and interconnected. First Nations clients need to feel safe and confident that what they say with these counsellors stays with these counsellors.”

“The First Nations client living on reserve has no confidentiality or no privacy because the whole community is involved. If you were a counsellor in private

practice or part of an agency, you would go straight to the client or person who is helping you support the client.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the amount of loss each community has endured, the number of its members on social assistance and the different communication patterns. Counsellors also need to know about the level of bingo addictions, oppression and the problems with confidentiality in order to understand the needs of a First Nations community. These findings need to be further explored as to their effects on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

#### First Nations participants comments about issues.

First Nations people outlined some issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to know when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. These issues include an understanding that there are not set issues for all First Nations clients. There should be an awareness of the affect of colonialism on the First Nations people, and an awareness of alcoholism within a First Nations community (4/15).

“There are no set issues that are present for all First Nations people. It really differs for each First Nations person. There are some general issues such as

residential schools, poverty and other things but the experience of each First Nations band will be different. The issues for the First Nations person would depend upon that area. Non-First Nations counsellors would need to find out the difficulties for each specific area that they are working with.”

“Non-First Nations counsellors need to understand the legislative history, colonial history, reasons behind land claims and treaty negotiations, and be aware of generational effects of residential schools.”

“Counsellors need to understand the link between these residential schools and things such as alcoholism, lost family ties to parents and siblings, broken homes, sexual abuse, physical abuse and suicide.”

Non-First Nations counsellors need to know that each First Nations individual, as well as each community, is unique and has its own issues that counsellors need to assess individually with their clients. Counsellors also need to understand the impact and effects of colonialism and alcoholism on the First Nations community and provide services accordingly. These findings need to be further explored as to their effects on developing stronger relationships with First Nations clients.

First Nations clients comments on issues.

The following are the First Nations clients comments on what issues Non-First Nations counsellors need to know when working with First Nations clients.

Understand the impact of residential schools.

Counsellors need to understand the impact of residential schools (2/4).

“Counsellors will need to understand the impact of residential schools on the First Nations client.”

Know about drug and alcohol issues, be aware the need for consistency of professionals, the history of emotional abuse, environmental issues, focus on prevention and be aware of lack of confidentiality.

Counsellors need to know about the drug and alcohol issues, recognize the need for consistency of professionals, be aware of the history with emotional abuse, environmental issues, focus on prevention and be aware of the lack of confidentiality (1/4).

“Counsellors need to be aware of the impact of drug and alcohol issues, environmental issues and emotional abuse on the First Nations client.”

“Counsellors need to know about the importance of consistency of professionals and ensuring confidentiality.”

“Counsellors need to focus more on prevention activities.”

### Summary of discussion

Thirty-six interviews were conducted and 241 incidents were elicited from First Nations counsellors, support people, clients and Elders and from Non-First Nations counsellors and support people. These 241 incidents were placed into 5 categories that were found reasonably reliable. These categories are Personal Qualities, Cultural Issues, Community Issues, Historical Issues and General Issues. There are many things counsellors need to know and do in order to build effective counselling relationships with a First Nations community that have been outlined in this study.

### Constraints on the research

As with all survey research, the results are subject to certain limitations (e.g., socially acceptable responses, voluntary participation, differing interpretations of

the questions, etc.). A primary limitation of this study is that these results cannot be generalized beyond the sample used in this study. We know that First Nations culture is diverse and thus this study does not represent all First Nations people. At present, there are approximately 88,000 status First Nations people and 67,500 non-status First Nations people and Metis people living in British Columbia (Peavy, 1994). This study was restricted primarily to Vancouver Island (for reasons of feasibility considering the time available, the vast diversity of the people and funding). Most of the information was elicited from participants primarily from the Victoria area. Some information was taken from other First Nations people throughout the province. Thus, the steps or procedures for working with the First Nations people may be limited to the participants studied and should be used with caution when working with other First Nations people. Additional research is needed to determine if these results can be generalized to other First Nations bands throughout British Columbia as well as other parts of Canada.

These limitations notwithstanding, the data reported in this study does provide Non-First Nations counsellors and educators with some guidelines to use when building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

### Areas for future research

The results of this study confirm and extend the research involving what protocol Non-First Nations counsellors need to use when building positive relationships with First Nations people. Most importantly, this research provides Non-First Nations counsellors with information and a starting point upon which to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. Previous researchers have stressed the importance of Non-First Nations counsellors knowing and using the First Nations counselling values to ensure a sense of interconnectedness and spirituality in the counsellor's theoretical approach to healing. This includes having a nonverbal and direct form of communication with the First Nations client, using humor appropriately, honoring silence, and understanding the meaning and importance of family, choice, trust, acceptance and social support to the First Nations client. These counselling variables are incorporated into certain protocols that First Nations communities have embedded within their culture.

Researchers will also need to explore the experiences of First Nations people and the Non-First Nations counsellors in order to obtain information on the ways to best build positive relationships with a First Nations community. Further research also needs to be done if these categories differ with age, gender, urban versus rural First Nations groups, and education. Future research could also be done to replicate this study with more First Nations participants to determine if new information and categories can be identified. This replication of the study may help to further define, refine, extend or revise these categories and further the

understanding for Non-First Nations counsellors about ways to build positive relationships with a First Nations community. Finally, more research needs to be done on how Non-First Nations counsellors get into the intricacies and complexities of the counselling work with First Nations communities.

Research also needs to be done to determine the content of a culturally appropriate and effective First Nations program. In addition, research needs to determine the most relevant sites for training. It may be more applicable to utilize community based and distance education methods for training Non-First Nations counsellors.

#### Implications for Non-First Nations Counsellors

This study gives an overview of how Non-First Nations counsellors should approach a First Nations community. How each guideline is applied must be considered individually. The information from this study can be used as a set of guidelines to help Non-First Nations people respect the First Nations culture and will help enhance the communication and service delivery for First Nations members. These guidelines are neither comprehensive nor applicable to all First Nations communities. Non-First Nations counsellors must be cautious when generalizing these guidelines to other communities and other cultures. Each

guideline must be considered carefully with each First Nations community.

Non-First Nations counsellors need the basics such as confidentiality, safety, clear boundaries, and skill to ensure strong effective relationships. Counsellors need to use their basic counselling skills with any of their clients. For example, counsellors should display a sense of calmness, as well as a willingness to listen. They should avoid giving advice, and should recognize the benefits of silence. Furthermore, counsellors who assume that the client is focusing on self, may frequently find they have missed the importance of community living for the client.

Building strong relationships with First Nations clients may take years. It takes time and is a process of learning. Therefore, counsellors who push themselves onto the First Nations communities will likely discover that their approach does not work. Counsellors need to be available while waiting to be invited into First Nations communities.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to move more slowly in their therapeutic approaches and concentrate on establishing strong relationships with their First Nations clients. These counsellors need to take the time to nurture the relationship with their clients and be highly flexible in their counselling support.

It is unclear whether it is absolutely necessary for Non-First Nations counsellors to become part of the First Nations community in order to build strong relationships with them. Instead, counsellors need to be open and personally involved with the community. There are some benefits in being part of the community. One benefit is that an informal network that is opened up for counsellors giving an opportunity for people to get to know each other personally.

Non-First Nations counsellors need to respect their First Nations clients. Counsellors need to let their First Nations clients be who they are and believe that they have the answers and the courage to heal themselves.

There are no set issues that exist for all First Nations people. Non-First Nations counsellors need to explore with the First Nations clients their personal issues. There are some general issues that could affect many First Nations clients such as residential schools and poverty and other things, but the experience of each First Nations band will be different. The issues for the First Nations person would depend upon the area in which they reside. Non-First Nations counsellors would need to find out the specific issues for each specific area.

Most importantly, Non-First Nations counsellors need to go into the community and be with the First Nations community. Counsellors should not force anything on anybody but just be part of the community for awhile. The Non-First Nations counsellors should be part of the community informally until

the acceptance, trust and respect are recognized and start to work and then eventually things will happen for them. These counsellors should not jump in, fix things or think they know anything until they have been part of the community and they have that trust. Sometimes this process takes a long time, depending upon what kind of situation a community is in. Thus, it is really important for Non-First Nations counsellors to wait for this trust to be established.

Finally, Non-First Nations counsellors should go to the band offices and talk to whomever is available. It might be the Chief, councilor member, Drug and Alcohol worker, Community Health Representatives, or Elders. Counsellors should find out from these people what the potential is for a role in the community and how they can learn from them. Once they approach the community and if appropriate, they will often introduce the counsellors to the community. This may not be a quick process. Counsellors may want visit on an informal basis to show that they have some connections and commitments with the community. Counsellors should be genuine and be clear with regard to why they want to be involved in the community. The Chief and council can also advise Non-First Nations counsellors on the appropriateness of using letters, faxes or going in person to build positive relationships with their people.

### Implications for Training

This research suggests the need for changes to some of the present teaching programs for counselling in some of the college and university settings.

Counsellors who plan on working with First Nations clients need to be qualified counsellors. The content of the program these counsellors undertake needs to combine basic counselling skills and theoretical knowledge with First Nations cultural knowledge. This First Nations knowledge may take the form of research in books to experiential opportunities such as practicums in different First Nations communities.

Courses in psychology for graduate students will need to explore the definitions of community, how they are organized across diverse First Nations groups and how counselling interventions can facilitate community empowerment.

### Summary

This study examined issues that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of when building positive relationships with a First Nations community in the province of British Columbia. The purpose of this study was to provide some effective guidelines that Non-First Nations counsellors could use.

The research method involved interviews with First Nations counsellors, support people, clients, Elders and Non-First Nations counsellors and support

people who were in a position to know about the needs of the community. The Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954) was used to elicit 241 incidents from thirty-six participants. Five categories were developed from the analysis of the incidents reported. Several procedures were used to determine the soundness and trustworthiness of these categories.

The results indicated that building positive relationships with a First Nations community can be obtained in the following ways: Non-First Nations counsellors need to come into a First Nations community primarily as students rather than as professionals. First Nations people will respect those non-First Nations counsellors who respect them by acting in a way that is friendly, considerate and modest. Non-First Nations counsellors will also need a broader preparation than they are presently receiving in their current training programs when they are considering working with First Nations clients. This preparation needs to focus not only on theoretical knowledge and skills, but also on philosophical issues, awareness of one's own world view, awareness of one's capabilities, and an awareness of the different types of cultural communication styles. In addition, counsellors need to be able to be patient, flexible and adaptable to the particular First Nations groups with which they are intending to work.

Further research should explore and define culturally appropriate training methods which combine cultural knowledge and counselling skills with

appropriate training sites for counsellors working with First Nations clients. With the information from this study, educators should be better able to provide opportunities for upcoming counsellors in-training so they are aware of issues they will need to know about in order to build positive relationships with a First Nations community.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of Educational Psychology by providing guidelines for Non-First Nations counsellors to be aware of when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. This study has implications for research and outlines some methods that Non-First Nations counsellors can use to be more effective with First Nations clients.

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**APPENDIX A**

INFORMATION LETTER

March 11, 1998

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I would appreciate your participation in my doctoral study. I would like to identify some steps that Non-First Nations Counsellors need to follow or do when building relationships with a First Nations community. Developing effective relationships with First Nations clients can be established quicker and easier when the Non-First Nations counsellors know and understand the steps for building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

Your participation will involve a brief phone or in-person interview. In this interview, you will be asked to talk about what a Non-First Nations counsellor needs to do and know when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. The interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and erased to ensure anonymity. Confidentiality will be maintained by not identifying the participant's name on the raw data and by keeping the information in a locked cabinet. The tapes will be erased when the study is finished.

The purpose of these interviews is to develop guidelines of what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know and do when building relationships with First Nations clients. The development of these guidelines will be used as resource information and will benefit the counselling support for the First Nations client by Non-First Nations counsellors. People working with First Nations people need to be aware of some steps to use when building relationships with First Nations clients then harm may be avoided and more effective and appropriate counselling support could be provided for First Nations clients. In addition, the identification of these guidelines can help educators develop appropriate training for counsellors who are building relationships with First Nations people.

Your involvement is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. All the information that you provide to me will be kept confidential. I will use a different name and assign a number for your comments.

If you would like to participate in this gathering of information, please complete and return the attached consent form.

Thank you very much for your time and interest in this study.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Sherri Bruce

**APPENDIX B**  
**CONSENT LETTER**

**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY ENTITLED,  
“FIRST NATIONS PROTOCOL: ENSURING A STRONG COUNSELLING  
RELATIONSHIP WITH FIRST NATIONS CLIENTS”**

INVESTIGATOR: Sherri Bruce (Tel: 480-1363) SUPERVISOR: Dr. Honore France (Tel: 721-7858)

I would like to gather some information about building positive relationships with First Nations people as one of the requirements for my doctoral degree in Education from the University of Victoria. Specifically, I would like information on the steps that Non-First Nations counsellors need to follow or do when building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

This information will be used as a guideline that Non-First Nations counsellors could use and do when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. Participants are asked some questions in a 45-60 minute phone or in-person interview to give their ideas and suggestions for Non-First Nations counsellors to know and of when building positive relationships with a First Nations community and working with First Nations clients. Participants will then be asked what things or steps need to be done in order to ensure a strong counselling relationship with the First Nations clients. The interviews will be taped recorded, transcribed and erased at the end of this study. Lola James and myself will be conducting these interviews. At no time will the participant's name appear on any information that is gathered. Confidentiality will be maintained by not identifying the participant's name on the raw data and by keeping the information in a locked cabinet. I am the only person with access to this raw data.

I will be happy to answer any questions you might have about this process before or after the interview. It is important to note that your participation is voluntary and that you have the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice of any kind.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE AND CONSENT TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN THIS PROCESS.**

**I ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A COPY OF THE CONSENT FORM.**

Name of Participant:

Address:

Telephone Number

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Participant's Name)

Researcher: Sherri Bruce (250) 480-1363

**APPENDIX C**  
**BAND LETTER**

March 11, 1998

Dear Chief Mitchell:

I would like to gather some information about building positive relationships with First Nations people as one of the requirements for my doctoral degree in Education from the University of Victoria. Specifically, I would like information on the steps that Non-First Nations counsellors need to follow or do when building positive relationships with a First Nations community.

I will be asking First Nations Elders, First Nations Counsellors, Non-First Nations Counsellors and other First Nations and Non-First Nations people working with First Nations clients to be involved in a brief phone or in-person interview. In this interview, the participants will be asked to explain what a Non-First Nations counsellor needs to do and know when building positive relationships with a First Nations community. Lola James will be accompanying me during these interviews. Lola James is a member of the Saanich community and has volunteered her time with the collection of this valuable information. The participants' involvement in this search is voluntary and they may withdraw from this process at any time. The interviews will be tape recorded, transcribed and erased when the study is finished. At no time will the participant's name appear on any information that is gathered. Confidentiality will be maintained by keeping the information in a locked cabinet.

The purpose of these interviews is to develop guidelines of what Non-First Nations counsellors need to know and do when building relationships with First Nations clients. A copy of these guidelines will be sent to you upon completion. The development of these guidelines will be used as resource information and will be a benefit to the counselling support for the First Nations client by Non-First Nations counsellors. People working with First Nations people need to be aware of some steps to use when working with First Nations clients so that any harm may be avoided and more effective and appropriate counselling support could be provided for First Nations clients. In addition, the identification of these guidelines can help educators develop appropriate training for counsellors who work with First Nations people.

I would be honored if permission were given to me to gather this information from your community. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at 480-1363. If you prefer, we can meet in person.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Sherri Bruce

**APPENDIX D**  
**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### Research Questions

1. What special awareness must Non-First Nations counsellors have in order to be successful with First Nations clients?
2. What do Non-First Nations counsellors need to know about the First Nations culture?
3. How important is it to be part of the community? What could Non-First Nations counsellors do to become part of the community?
4. What are the crucial issues for the First Nations client that Non-First Nations counsellors need to be aware of?
5. What is the most crucial thing Non-First Nations counsellors need to do in order to establish a strong relationship with the First Nations client?
6. In what way should Non-First Nations counsellors approach a First Nations community?
7. Who should the counsellor first approach in a First Nations community?

**APPENDIX E**  
**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1. Sex of the Participants

Sex	Number
Male	13
Female	23

Table 2. Roles of the Participants

Role	Number
Counsellor	27
Teacher/Educator	15
Youth Worker	6
Consultant	4
Client	4
Tester	3
Social Worker	3
Volunteer	3
Nurse	3
Mental Health Therapist	3
Drug & Alcohol Counsellor	3
Administrative Support	3
Teacher Assistant	3
Community Health Representative	2
Post Secondary Counsellor	2
Friend	2
Employment Counsellor	2
Homemaker	1
Psychologist	1
Librarian	1
Acupuncturist	1
Councillor	1
Family Support Worker	1
Administrator	1
Diplomat	1
Mediator	1

Table 3. Bands that the Participants have worked with

Band/Nation	Number
Tsartlip	32
Tsawout	32
Pauquachin	31
Tsyecum	27
Esquimalt	15
Songhees	14
Peenacht	7
Cowichan	6
Saskatchewan and Alberta Bands	6
Beecher Bands	6
Various Bands from BC	6
First Nations from Prince George	5
Sooke	5
Various Bands from Canada	5
Mill Bay	3
Port Hardy Bands	3
Nuu-chah-nulth	3
Carrie Sekani Tribal Council	2
Gitksan Westwind	2
Northwest Territories	2
Gwa'sala 'Nak waz da'wx Quatsina	2
Northern BC Bands	2
Kwakiutl	2
Aghousat	2
Squamish Bands	2
Urban First Nations Bands throughout Canada	1
Nimpkisk Nagis Waleli	1
Queen Charlotte	1
Sawridge Nations	1
Yellowhead Tribal Council	1
White Bear People	1
Reserves in Saskatchewan	1
Kuwait Reserve	1
Sioux Band (Manitoba)	1
Cranbrook Bands	1
Yukon	1
Malahat Band	1
Morris Town Band	1
Blackfeet Band in the US	1
Micmac Band in Nova Scotia	1
6 Nations group in Quebec	1

Table 3. Bands that the Participants have worked with (continued)

Band/Nation	Number
Masset	1
Metis	1
Uculet	1
Port Renfrew Band	1
Skidigat	1
Merrit Bands	1
Alert Bay	1
Kuper Band	1
Nanoose Band	1
Tache Band	1
Inuit People	1
Haida	1
Cree	1
Queen Charlotte Islands	1
Prince Rupert Bands	1

Table 4. Personal Qualities

Quality	Number
Effective relationship takes time	23
Interested in the First Nations client: Genuineness	22
Trust and respect	22
Listen to the First Nation client	18
Be non-judgmental and open	16
Trust	15
Ask questions	15
Have no assumptions about the culture	15
Relate to the people as people	15
Empowerment important	13
Go at the client's pace	13
Have a willingness to know about the culture	13
Use understandable language	13
Be informal	13
Be flexible	10

Table 4. Personal Qualities (continued)

Quality	Number
Set boundaries and know limits	10
Ensure confidentiality and privacy	10
Be healthy	10
Show you care	8
Display that you are not an expert in the culture	8
Give opportunities for the people to know you	8
Ensure safety	8
Establish a good rapport	8
Go beyond your role	6
Create comfort	6
Self disclose personal information about self	6
Read body language	6
Humor is important	5
Be personable	5
Honesty	4
Have no agendas	4
Be visible	4
Walk the talk	4
Be comfortable with your culture	4
Be present with clients	4
Be reliable	3
Acknowledge strengths	3
Work with existing support services people	3
Be friendly	3
Dress appropriately	2
Use direct communication	2
Be qualified	2
Understand your role	2
Think before you act	2
Learn from your mistakes	2
Pay attention to self-talk	1
Use the clients words/feedback	1
Be consistent	1
Have no expectations	1
Have culturally appropriate knowledge	1
Be aware of the feminist theory	1
Start working with the children	1
Use some family counselling methods	1
Give your client choices in services	1
Respect the client	1

Table 5. First Nations participants comments on personal qualities

Personal Quality	Number
Trust	8
Listening	8
Entering informally	7
Respect	6
Go slow	6
Genuinely care	6
Have knowledge about traditional values	6
Explain who you are and what you want and wait	5
Ensure comfort	4
Offer support services and wait	4
Know about the importance of family	4
Ensure safety	3
Have healthy boundaries	3
Be patient	3
Go beyond your role	3
Avoid assumptions about the First Nations people	3

Table 6. Community Themes

Community Theme	Number
Have a community liaison person	20
Meet with the Chief and Councillors	19
Be invited into the community	18
It is very important to be part of the community	15
Be visible	14
Attend cultural events	14
Let the community to know who you are	13
Introduce self to the community	12
May or may not be important to be part of the community	11
Explain role	10
Meet the people face to face	9
Attend funerals	8

Table 6. Community Themes (continued)

Community Theme	Number
Meet with the Community Health Representative	8
Interact in an informal way	8
Attend sporting events	7
Meet with educational personnel/teachers	7
Sit with the Chief and Councillors	7
Sit with the Elders	7
Meet with the Drug and Alcohol worker	6
Have a relationship with a professional in the community	5
Volunteer in existing programs	5
Attend Pow wows	5
Do not send a letter or a fax	5
Go to the Band office	5
Meet with the School Counsellor	5
You could send a fax, letter or go in person	5
Not critical to become part of the community	4
Meet with someone from Health Services	4
Meet with a Teacher Assistant	4
Attend the bighouse when invited	3
May have trouble separating private from professional life	3
Meet with Family Support worker	3
Important to understand sense of community	3
Meet with the Band Social Workers	3
Be involved in the community	2
Participate in the craft days	2
Attend community lunches	2
Participate in the indigenous games	2
Come in slowly	2
Attend healing circles	2
Get to know the community first	2
Attend feasts	2
Attend Elders meetings	2
Know what it means to live on the reserve	2
Offer to support community events	2
Meet with the Nurse	2
Meet with the Home School Co-ordinator	2
Meet with the Frontline workers	2
Interact in a respectful way	2
Never really become part of the community	2
Who someone contacts depends upon role	2

Table 6. Community Themes (continued)

Community Theme	Number
Advantage to living in the community	1
At least be a peripheral part of the community	1
Attend funerals	1
Attend potlatches	1
Attend educational places in the community	1
Be a student	1
Participate in a casino night	1
Participate in Slahal (bone games)	1
Get involved in local fund raising events	1
Be aware of the rules and regulations between jurisdictions	1
Meet with the Educational Advisors	1
Meet with the police	1
Meet with the Capital Health Region workers	1
Meet with a Band worker	1
Know the different power systems	1
Know that there are many rumors in the community	1
Know everybody knows everybody	1
Referrals can come privately	1
Referrals can come from School Principals	1
Referrals can come from court orders	1
Referrals can come from doctors	1
Talk with the Shaker Church	1
Contact the client directly	1
Word of mouth	1
Attend bingos	1
Use the telephone	1
Know that there is a difference in working with urban FN	1
Ask their permission to be on their territory	1

Table 7. First Nations participants comments on community qualities.

<u>Community Theme</u>	<u>Number</u>
Be part of the community	12
Contact the Chief and Councilors	12
Be part of the community events	8
Attend sporting events	5
Do some research on the community	4
Connect with Health Services	4
Know about the First Nations lifestyle	4
Connect with the Community Health Representative	4
Connect with the Band office	3
Attend canoe races	3
Connect with Band Manager	3

Table 8. Cultural Themes

<u>Cultural Theme</u>	<u>Number</u>
Know the culture you are working with	34
Be aware of cultural practices	22
Know about the importance of extended family	15
Working with the whole community	15
Be aware of beliefs and traditions	14
Wait to be invited to develop relationship	13
Have knowledge of customs	12
Be aware of the communication style	12
Read up on the First Nations culture	11
Know about the spiritual practices	11
Sit with the people	11
Eye contact varies	11
Have some personal experiences with the community	11
Culture is oral	8
Know about the protocol	6
First Nations culture is alive	6
Silence is important	4

Table 8. Cultural Themes (continued)

Cultural Theme	Number
Some secrets you will never know	4
Know traditional healing techniques	4
Know ways of dealing with loss	4
Humor is important	4
Consult with a First Nations liaison person	3
Know definition of health	3
Know definition of educational success	3
First Nations culture is powerful	3
Know First Nations boundaries are different	3
Build informal relationships	3
First Nations people are quieter	2
Invite First Nations people to bring in their concerns	2
Know about the importance of Elders	2
Know that cultural affairs take priority over education	2
Be aware of body language	2
Be visible	2
Know the ways of dealing with conflict	1
Know about the gender differences	1
Know about the First Nations teachings	1
Know about the First Nations community policies	1
Know about the definition of strong relationships	1
Know about the power of stories	1
More slowly	1
Know that First Nations people think before they speak	1
Know that First Nations people do not talk loudly	1
Know about the political structures	1
First Nations people live with basic things	1
Know about the power structures	1
Use visual aids	1
Know about reserve boundaries	1
Know about the power of mythology	1
Know about the respect for Elders	1
Understand the lifestyle of the client	1

Table 9. First Nations participants comments about culture

Cultural Theme	Number
Know the First Nations group you are working with	12
Have some awareness of the First Nations culture	11
Awareness of the diversity of the First Nations people	9
Be willing to be with a First Nations community	9
Awareness that positive relationships take a long time	8
Be visible	4
Some things you will never know	4
Awareness of the close knit community ties	4
Importance of the First Nations culture	4
Go with a First Nations person from that community	4
Get to know the Elders	3
Understand and know the protocol	3
Understand the spiritual connections	3
Attend cultural events when invited	3

Table 10. Historical Themes

Historical Theme	Number
Know the history of the community	17
Be aware of the community's history	9
Read up on the culture you are working with	6
Know about the amount of loss	3
Know about the history with Social Services	2
Know where the First Nations person has come from	1
Understand the acculturation process	1
Know about the broader and specific historical issues	1
Know about the history with the educational system	1
Know about the history with diseases	1

Table 11. First Nations participants comments on historical themes

Historical Theme	Number
Impact of residential schools	9
Past events may create barriers for some clients	9

Table 12. Issues

Issues	Number
Know about the effects of residential schools	19
Know about the impact of residential schools	14
Drug and Alcohol	11
Time definitions	8
Sexual abuse	7
Need consistency of professionals	6
Impact of acculturation	5
High suicide rates	5
Racism	5
Emotional abuse	5
Different people have different issues	5
Poverty	5
Lack of parenting skills	5
Violence	4
Physical abuse	4
Different values between FN and the white culture	4
Generational abuses	3
Effects of religion	3
Identity issues	3
High unemployment	2
Being a minority	2
Moving to urban centers	1
How the funding works	1
Hard time with time management	1

Table 12. Issues (continued)

Issues	Number
Environmental issues	1
Loss	1
Social assistance	1
Communication patterns	1
Bingo addictions	1
Media portrayal	1
Focus on prevention	1
Internalized oppression	1
Lack of confidentiality	1
History with the educational system	1
Accidental deaths	1
Homicides	1
Teenage pregnancy	1
Disarray of services	1
Overrepresented in the justice system	1
TB	1
Treaty Negotiations	1
Land claims	1
Gender issues	1
Power issues	1

Table 13. First Nations participants comments on issues

Issues	Number
No set issues for all First Nations clients	4
Colonialism	4
Alcoholism	4