

# RESEARCH SNAPSHOT

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION



University  
of Victoria

uvic.ca/rpkm

## Strengths-based supervision models

### What you need to know:

In Indigenous child welfare, there has been a shift to strengths-based, culturally-grounded child welfare practice. The application of these approaches into the supervision of child welfare workers has been inconsistent. A proposed strategy to this is implementing a strengths-based supervision model which mirrors practice expectations to support supervisees in implementing the practice model.

### What is this research about?

Strengths-based Indigenous culture-grounded supervision models embrace the values of humility, integrity, respect and belonging, rather than the traditional problem or deficit-centered supervision practice.

Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society (VACFSS) is one of the largest Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAA) in British Columbia (BC). Over the past 25 years, VACFSS has worked towards utilizing restorative child welfare practices that are not only strengths-based but also grounded in Indigenous knowledge, practices and community. Now, VACFSS is committed to applying this restorative approach to the supervision of their child welfare workers through their *Restorative Supervision Model* pilot project.

VACFSS is interested in learning about other strengths-based and culturally-grounded

supervision models. This literature review aims to answer the question: What can be learned from the peer-reviewed research about developing and implementing strengths-based, culturally-grounded approaches to staff supervision in child welfare agencies and beyond?

### What did the researcher do?

The researcher conducted a literature review focused on strengths-based, culturally-grounded approaches to staff supervision in child welfare. The researcher used the Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier and Web of Science databases to search for peer-reviewed academic literature. The researcher then reviewed the titles and abstracts of the articles to assess relevance to the research question. Then they analyzed the articles for key themes and recommendations for practice and research.



*UVic researchers reviewed literature on strengths-based Indigenous culture-grounded supervision models for a child welfare MCFD Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) (Photo credit: UVic staff).*



HUMAN & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RESEARCH  
**IMPACT**  
CANADA | Turning  
research  
into action

researchimpact.ca

## What did the researcher find?

This review included 37 sources published mostly in English as some of the articles also included terms and/or sentences from Indigenous languages.

In the final report, the researcher summarized several culturally-grounded and strengths-based supervision models and provided general considerations for the development and implementation of supervision models.

### Key findings:

- Culturally-grounded supervision:
  - Aotearoa New Zealand appears at the forefront of utilizing culturally-grounded supervision approaches
- Strengths based supervision include:
  - Strengths-Based Model by Lietz (2013; 2018)
  - Rounds Casey Family Services Supervision Model by Frey et al. (2012)

### Recommendations/conclusions:

- Outcome-based research on specific supervision models is needed beyond theoretical descriptions of supervision
- Evaluate the impact of supervision models on client outcomes
- Acknowledge context when developing, implementing and evaluating supervision models:
  - Tailor supervision models to individual agencies
  - Conduct supervision research in a culturally-attuned way

## How can you use this research?

This research is relevant to anyone in a supervisory role in child welfare and social work. This research will help organizations develop policies and resources for strengths-based culturally-grounded supervision models.

## About the researchers

Anika Brown is a University of Victoria (UVic) graduate student. This project was completed as part of the [Graduate Studies \(GS\) 505](#) course and supervised by instructors Dr. Sibylle Artz and Ms. Thais Amorim. Facilitated by UVic [Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization](#), GS 505 is a partnership between MCFD and UVic. This project was prepared on behalf of MCFD. The researcher also gratefully acknowledges the partnership of VACFSS, under the guidance of VACFSS's Research Committee.

## Keywords

Supervision; culturally-grounded; culturally-safe; culturally-relevant; social work; child welfare; strengths-based; training

## Citation

Brown, A. (2019). *A Literature Review on the Development, Implementation and Evaluation of Strengths-Based and Culturally-Grounded Supervision Models in Social Work*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.

---

Content for this Research Snapshot was co-created by [UVic's Research Partnerships and Knowledge Mobilization unit](#), Anika Brown, Dr. Sibylle Artz and Thais Amorim.

## Territory acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the lək'wəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

*We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Children and Family Development.*