

Symposium | Community care : [Symposium 47] Engaging Culture in the Community

📅 2025年9月26日(金) 14:50 ~ 16:20 🏢 Session Room 6 (Conference Room B)

[Symposium 47] Engaging Culture in the Community

Moderator: George Eric Jarvis (McGill University)

[SY-47-04] Integrating cultural objects in mental health to navigate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemic worlds and the colonial imprint.

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Background: Providing child mental health care request an understanding of the politico-socio-cultural worlds in which children/youth and their families navigate. Transcultural encounters, where clinicians and families come from different cultural backgrounds, influence the care. In encounters between a clinician from a settler origin and an Indigenous family, the colonial history is yet a superimposed structure inhabiting the clinical space. Cultural objects, may they be physical ones and imagined/abstract ones (e.g. words, stories), are strong tools to navigate between Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemic worlds and the colonial imprint. **Objective:** The presentation will first define cultural objects and review the literature on their use in mental health care, and then explore different cultural objects which may be introduced in clinical encounters with Indigenous families, and discuss their role and therapeutic signification, and potential challenges and pitfalls of their use. **Methods:** Insights gained through different working settings in Indigenous communities in Quebec, Canada, will serve as material to reflect on the role of cultural objects. The presentation will rely on clinical experience in Inuit communities of Nunavik, and on research projects in Atikamekw and Inuit communities where traditional story telling, images or words served as mediums of culture. **Findings:** The uses of objects evoking culture act as witnesses of the importance of cultural perspectives, as points of entry to promote therapeutic relationships, as transitional tools to engage in emotional work. They also allow conversations to emerge in clinical and interprofessional settings in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples meet. Yet, a reflection on their use is necessary, interrogating how, when and by whom they should be used, taking into account notions of cultural appropriation and transmission, and the colonial imprint in which encounters happen. **Conclusion:** Cultural objects may be powerful tools in child mental health care, and need to be wisely used.