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Abstract Title

Adapting the App-Based BEAM Program for Indigenous Families in Manitoba

Authors

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Background

Indigenous families in Canada face persistent mental health inequities due to ongoing effects of colonialism and systematic racism. Although there are diverse Indigenous approaches to supporting wellness, most evidence-based interventions available through mainstream health systems do not adequately reflect Indigenous priorities, values, or ways of knowing and being. The current study will co-develop an adapted version of the app-based Building Emotional Awareness and Mental Health (BEAM) program to support family mental health and the specifics needs of Multi-Nation Indigenous parents of young children in Manitoba.

Objective

This study seeks to address the gap in accessible and culturally grounded mental health services by: (1) co-developing a multi-Nation adapted BEAM Indigenous program through a community-based participatory process with Indigenous mothers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community partners; (2) implementing the co-developed BEAM pilot program with a cohort of Indigenous mothers in Winnipeg; and (3) evaluating the program's feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effectiveness to inform future scale-up and broader implementation.

Methods

The project will take place across three phases: (1) co-development, (2) pilot implementation, and (3) evaluation. (1) The original BEAM program will be co-developed and adapted for Indigenous families through an iterative process led by Indigenous community and academic partners. (2) Approximately 50-60 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit mothers of children aged 2-6 years living in Winnipeg will participate in an open pilot implementation trial of the co-developed 12-week BEAM program for Indigenous families. (3) A sequential explanatory mixed methods approach will evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary

effectiveness of the adapted program. Quantitative data will be used to evaluate program effectiveness. Mental health and wellness questionnaires will be administered pre- and post-program, and implementation outcomes will be collected via back-end app engagement. Qualitative data will then be collected through post-program focus groups to understand participant perspectives on the program and provide additional insight into quantitative findings.

Results

Recruitment for cohort 1 is expected to begin in October 2026 and end in December 2026, with all cohort 1 participants anticipated to be enrolled by January 2027. Recruitment for cohort 2 is anticipated to begin in Summer 2027. Finalized evaluation results from both participant cohorts are expected by August 2028. Results from objective 1 found themes related to wellbeing entering relationaility, cultural connection, the inclusion of Elders' teachings in program content, and additional recommendations for planned adaptations to the program.

Conclusion

This work responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action by supporting the co-development of culturally relevant mental health programming with Indigenous leadership and community partners. It will establish the preliminary feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of a novel mental health intervention co-developed by and for Indigenous families with potential to inform future implementation of the program across Canada.