RESEARCH PROJECT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
An Exploratory Study of the Contribution of Equine-Assisted Learning in the Treatment and Wellbeing of First Nations Youth Who Abuse Solvents

Research Team Members
- Ernie Sauve, Executive Director, White Buffalo Youth Inhalant Treatment Centre
- Tamara Mackinnon, Program Director, Cartier Equine Learning Centre
- Colleen Anne Dell, Department of Sociology & School of Public Health, University of Saskatchewan
- Debra Dell, Coordinator, Youth Solvent Addiction Committee
- Darlene Chalmers, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina
- Cindy Adams, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Calgary

The researchers, as named above and identified as “the partners”, agree to conduct the above named research project with the following understanding:

1. The purpose of this research project, as discussed with and understood by the university and community partners, is to answer the question: Does EAL contribute to the residential treatment and the bio-psycho-social-spiritual healing of First Nations youth from solvent abuse, and if so, to what extent and how? In answering this question, the aim of this research is:
   - to examine the contribution of Cartier’s equine-assisted learning formula to the bio-psycho-social-spiritual wellbeing of First Nations youth from White Buffalo who participate in Cartier’s program, and
   - to develop and apply culturally competent EAL measures.

2. The approach and principles guiding the research project as discussed with and understood by “the partners” are that:
   - the study will be carried out in active partnership by a community-based research team.
   - the study will involve the development of an Advisory Group (National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, Siksika First Nation) and Research Assistants.
   - the approach to our study is rooted in Western and Indigenous knowledge systems (including YSAC’s culture-based model of resiliency)
   - we share the concepts of hope and inspiration, and understand the reciprocal intentions of our work together.
   - decision-making power will be shared by all partners in all stages of the study.
   - the study is relevant to everyone involved.
that the *CIHR Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples (2008)* and the OCAP principles (ownership, control, access, possession) will direct the study.

3. **The scope of this research project (e.g., issues, events, and/or activities that are to be involved), and the degree of participation by “the partners” as discussed with and understood by “the partners” are:**
   - outlined in the proposal submitted to the Alberta Centre for Child, Family & Community Research.
   - that White Buffalo will provide designated in-kind resources (e.g., staff time) to facilitate data collection at the treatment centre. This will include providing program and school time for the youth to journal, staff recording in client files the youths’ attitudes and behaviors, and participation of youth and staff in interviews post EAL program.
   - that Cartier will provide resources (e.g., staff time) to facilitate data collection at the EAL program site. This will include participating in interviews post EAL program.
   - that the university researchers and YSAC coordinator will contribute their time to carry out the research project with no remuneration apart from their current university/YSAC salary.
   - that at the design, conducting and analysis phase of the research project, all partners will provide input and feedback on the emerging themes from the data that the university researchers will take the lead on analyzing.

4. **Methods to be used, as agreed by the research partners, are:**
   - an exploratory study capturing the lived experiences of the participants. Of critical importance is capturing in their own words the youths’ experience of participating in the EAL program, White Buffalo staff, and Cartier EAL facilitators.
   - multiple, triangulated methods that will be used to collect the data and will include interviews with the youth, client written and video journaling, interviews with the Cartier EAL program facilitators, interviews with White Buffalo staff, and White Buffalo staff recordings in client files and video reflections.
   - psychological tools will include, for example, the Harter Self-Perception Scale and the Jewel Equestrian Scale.

5. **Community training and participation, as agreed, is to include:**
   - a capacity building and knowledge exchange workshop between the members of the research team and the staff of White Buffalo will be organized at the start of the project. This workshop which will initiate the project is for the purpose of information sharing related to research methods generally and this study more specifically.
- the staff and Elders of White Buffalo will serve in an advisory capacity on the cultural competency and youth solvent abuse population appropriateness of the Western-originated outcome measures. An Advisory Committee will be developed to provide expert guidance to the project and will be asked for input when required by the research team.

6. **Information collected is to be shared, distributed, and stored in these agreed ways:**
   - any information gathered cannot be made public without agreement and consent of all research team members.
   - any data recommending changes in the service delivery of the program(s) will: (1) be shared with the programs, and (2) will not be made public without the program(s) consent.
   - information will be stored according to University of Saskatchewan Ethics, University of Calgary Ethics, and University of Regina Ethics guidelines according to the respective Human Ethics Review Boards.
   - collection of information for purposes beyond the scope of this research project will not occur without discussion, approval, and consent of the research team.

7. **Informed consent of individual participants is be obtained in these agreed ways:**
   - that this study is required to receive university ethics board (University of Saskatchewan, University of Calgary, University of Regina) approval to ensure that no harm will be done to the participants (e.g. informed consent).
   - that this study will also ensure that no harm will come to the horses through the Cartier Equine Learning Centre’s adherence to industry standards
     i. that this study adhere to White Buffalo’s accreditation standards for research (which is typically fulfilled by acquiring University research ethics board approval for a study): there is an external review for all research projects conducted at the Centre
     ii. risks and benefits of the study are clearly outlined
     iii. the research process is clearly outlined
     iv. the research design is adequate
     v. the impact on organizational resources are identified upfront
     vi. there is a process for informed consent in the study.
8. The names of participants are to be protected in these agreed ways:
- as stated in (7) above, this study is required to receive university ethics board approval (University of Saskatchewan, University of Calgary, University of Regina) to ensure that anonymity and confidentiality are maintained related to the participants and staff.
- the data collected are confidential and no name is attached to a record outside of the programs.
- confidentiality is adhered to as per the policies and procedures of the White Buffalo and Cartier programs.

9. Project progress will be communicated amongst the partners in these agreed ways:
- face-to-face, conference calls, and electronic updates (i.e., email) will be scheduled at regular intervals as set out and agreed to by the team at the start of the project.

10. Communication with the media and other parties (including funding agencies) will be handled in these agreed ways:
- a team member, as agreed to by the partners, will be designated as the initial media contact person: Colleen Anne Dell for research specific questions; Ernie Sauve for White Buffalo specific questions; Tamara Mackinnon for Cartier specific questions.
- a team member, as agreed to by the partners, will be designated as the funding agency(s) contact person: Darlene Chalmers for the Alberta Centre for Child, Family & Community Research.
- requests by the public to any of the partners for information related to the project that is not yet in the public domain in terms of research findings will be forwarded to the team for discussion and approval.

Benefits
The study will be of notable significance in the two areas under investigation: First Nations youth solvent abuse residential treatment and EAL. The research partners wish to use this research project for benefit in these ways:
- a published final report* to the funding agency as per the funding requirements (*authorship order to be determined at start of any product)
- presentations at peer-reviewed conferences (*)
- peer-reviewed and grey literature publications (*)
- media awareness and other venues as agreed upon by the research team.
Commitments
The partners’ commitment to the research project is to:
- keep informed on the project progress, and help in leading the project toward meaningful results
- maintain communication that is timely and respectful
- consult with the team on any circumstances or conditions that may require discontinuation of the research project (i.e., if it is determined and agreed to by the team that the project will no longer be of benefit to either program)
- incorporate recommendations from the findings that will contribute to improving the efficacy of the respective programs.

This research partnership agreement is not legally binding and is agreed to in the spirit of conducting a mutually respectful, co-operative research project.

Partner Signature       Date

Ernie Sauve, Executive Director, White Buffalo Youth Inhalant Treatment Centre

Tamara Mackinnon, Program Director, Cartier Equine Learning Centre

Debra Dell, Coordinator, Youth Solvent Addiction Committee

Colleen Anne Dell, Department of Sociology & School of Public Health, University of Saskatchewan

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Partnership agreement signing ceremony June 30, 2010