

## PROJECT TIMELINE

1. August/Sept 2018: Talking circles (Regina, Saskatoon, PA)
2. Data analysis and rough outline of the application
3. One-on-one follow-up interviews
4. User-testing of the application

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- A collaborative decision-making process with MACSI to decide what aspects of Métis culture, nationhood, & spirituality should be included in the application tool
- How to represent/acknowledge these aspects of Métis identity in technology?
- How to know and decide what's important to include in the tool?
- Ensuring MACSI community control over decision-making and content

## Project contact information

**Principal investigators:** Randy Johner ([randy.johner@uregina.ca](mailto:randy.johner@uregina.ca)) and Gabriela Novotna ([gabriela.novotna@uregina.ca](mailto:gabriela.novotna@uregina.ca))

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# ACCESS TO RECOVERY WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

MAY 2019

This newsletter provides updates about the Access to Recovery project, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. It is based at the University of Regina and is partnered with the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (MACSI). The goal of the project is to create a mobile application tool to assist people dealing with addictions in their recovery. A focus of the tool will be to ensure that it is accessible to people with learning challenges or disabilities.

*Background photo by Katya MacDonald*

## MACSI BOARD MEETING

In February, Randy, Gabriela, and Katya met with the MACSI Board of Directors to discuss the project. Board members emphasized the importance of ongoing consultation with MACSI and clients, attention to respectful and ethical research protocols, and the connection between MACSI and Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. We agreed that these discussions will be ongoing, and that we will keep in touch with MN—S, as they are developing research and data protocols that will shape how research takes place with Métis communities.

## WORKING WITH ELDERS

Métis Elders Isabelle Impey and Richard Laurin, both from Prince Albert, have joined the project. They agreed to provide guidance on ways of incorporating Métis cultural and spiritual understandings into the application tool. They also offer their input during meetings on the project's direction in general.

## UPDATES FROM MEETING WITH MACSI

On May 13, project Elders Isabelle Impey and Richard Laurin, MACSI representatives Raymond Laliberte and Emily Bear, project Co-Principal investigator Gabriela Novotna (Randy Johner could not attend due to a family matter), and project staff Katya MacDonald and Kristen Pawliw met to discuss MACSI's needs and priorities for the project. The discussion between MACSI and the two Elders highlighted identity as a tool for recovery. As Raymond Laliberte explained, fostering a feeling of pride, self-respect, and belonging can help individuals with addictions to become spiritually healthy. The application tool that this project will develop will be pilot tested within MACSI centres during treatment programs, will focus on Métis cultural understandings, nationhood, and spirituality. The Elders and MACSI representatives advised on the directions of the project (described in next steps below).

## DATA MANAGEMENT

This project involves many people with expertise in many different areas, meaning that the project generates diverse types of information that can be valuable beyond the project itself. To ensure that the research and data are still useful and accessible for MACSI after the project has been completed, we are currently developing a data management plan. This process involves MACSI's needs, university ethics agreements, and plans to ensure that the data will be securely stored and accessible to our community partner.

## LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

**Kristen Pawliw, project research assistant**

Currently, there is no culturally informed mobile application literature published that has studied an application as a tool for recovery and spiritual development.

## Themes in the research literature:

Métis addictions support through assistive technology is complex, but colonialism functioning as a catalyst for addiction has emerged as a distinguishable theme.

Other prominent themes:

- importance of forging strong partnerships
- community partners
- training and education
- authentic content
- equitable access
- importance of translation and inclusion of minority languages

Barriers:

- funding
- accessibility
- language barriers
- lack of existing Canadian content
- lack of Métis specific content
- necessary existence of a regulatory process

## NEXT STEPS

- Over the summer 2019, the team will focus on consulting with Métis knowledge keepers, Métis community members, as well as accessing archival resources on Métis cultural teachings to inform the development of the content of the application tool.
- The core team will continue consultations with MACSI representatives and staff members to ensure that the application tool respects clients' needs and the agency's logistical and programmatic realities
- The core team will reach out to individual large team members over the summer to seek their input and expertise
- Large team meeting will be scheduled at the beginning of the Fall 2019