

PROJECT STATUS

- Currently developing a prototype of the application tool, in preparation for user-testing with clients
- Ongoing consultation with MACSI & Elders

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) and Gabriela Novotna (gabriela.novotna@uregina.ca)

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Research assistants/ application developers: Rathin Kothiya (rathinkothiyaedu@gmail.com); Ritu Patel (ritup789@gmail.com); Soumya Shukla (soumya.vshukla@gmail.com)

ACCESS TO RECOVERY WITH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

APRIL 2020

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 of all learning abilities and preferences.

Background photo by Katya MacDonald

APPLICATION PROTOTYPE

Computer Science students Rathinkumar Kothiya and Ritu Patel are continuing to build the application and make changes based on feedback from project team members, MACSI, and Elders. If you are a member of the MACSI community and are interested in seeing the prototype and offering feedback, please use the contact links at left to request access.

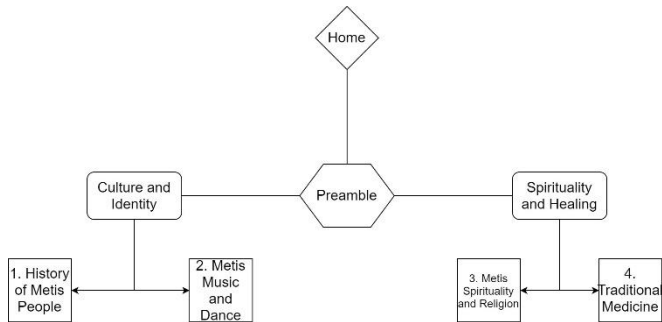
The application contains modules for each of the four weeks of MACSI's inpatient treatment program. These modules are housed in two main sections, developed through discussion with MACSI and project Elders:

- Culture & Identity
- Spirituality & Healing

Each section is designed to give users tools to integrate knowledge about themselves and Métis culture into their own healing processes. Clients are encouraged to reflect and record their own stories and responses in written or audio format (visible only to the individual user and their counsellor). Visual and audio resources are important parts of the application's design, as are interactive features such as the ability for users to enter their own reflections. Questions and feedback are always welcome.

APPLICATION PROTOTYPE

Here is an overview of the application's layout and content:



In each of the four modules, there are content themes to explore each day. They are currently:

1. History of Métis People
 - a. What does it mean to be Métis?
 - b. Stories
 - c. Michif language & nationality
2. Métis Music & Dance
 - a. Introduction to Métis music and dance forms
 - b. Videos & audio recordings of music and dance
3. Métis Spirituality & Religion
 - a. Introduction & overview
 - b. Sources of strength
 - c. A relational worldview
 - d. Prayers
4. Traditional Medicine
 - a. Overview
 - b. Teachings from Elders
 - c. Images and descriptions of medicines

The content continues to be revised based on feedback, so if you have suggestions or questions, please feel free to get in touch!

WELCOMING SOUMYA SHUKLA

As of May 1st, Soumya Shukla has joined the project team as a research assistant. She will be providing technical evaluations of the application tool. Here's Soumya to introduce herself:



With a good background in Computer Science and 3 years of work experience at Visa Inc in various technologies, I am presently pursuing master's in interactive information retrieval and

information visualization.

I am keen on exploring methods that blend cognitive psychology and Human-computer interactions with visualization on search interfaces to help the users in a variety of ways. I am also teaching a lab in web development and database systems (CS215) to undergraduate CS students to cater to my passion for knowledge sharing. My mantra being, "The best way to master a skill is by teaching it." My hobbies include biking, singing and capturing life experiences in my writings and photography.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ELDER NORMA JEAN BYRD



Many of you may know that a prominent Métis Elder in Saskatchewan Norma-Jean Byrd passed

away on April 23, 2020. We send our prayers and thoughts to her family during this difficult time. There will always be a special place in our hearts for Elder Norma-Jean, as she was our project Elder during its first year of operation. Her dedication to guiding others was shaped by the Medicine Wheel teachings, which she referred to often. After the passing of her husband several years ago, she moved from White City to live with family, and was no longer able to continue her work with us. Although we deeply missed her nurturing presence and wise teachings, she left us with the memories of her stories and warm words of encouragement. Thank you, Elder Norma-Jean Byrd.

NEXT STEPS

- Meeting with MACSI managers May 2020
- Project full team meeting June 2020
- Completed draft of application prototype May 2020
- Feedback on application prior to user testing
- User testing of the application, adapted for MACSI's realities and COVID-19 guidelines