RESILIENCY AND INHALANT ABUSE TREATMENT

D. Dell
YSAC

In Canada, a major and innovative national response to inhalant abuse among First Nations youth has been the establishment of residential treatment centres through the federally funded National Native Youth Solvent Addiction program (NNYSA). This paper focuses on the role of a holistic conception of resiliency in inhalant abuse treatment in the NNYSA program. A blending of policy and practice issues and their contribution to the health status of First Nations youth inhalant abusers guide the paper’s discussion of resiliency and its fundamental role in NNYSA’s traditional Native teachings program. A holistic conception of resiliency is viewed as a key contributor to the program’s achievements to date. The focus on resiliency has been identified in assisting youth in uncovering their inner spirit and strengthening their spirit by drawing on available community resources. Data and case illustrations from two NNYSA treatment centres—White Buffalo Youth Inhalant Treatment Centre (Prince Albert, Sask.) and Nimkee NupiGawagan Healing Centre (Muncey, Ont.)—are presented. The paper also offers NNYSA policy solutions that have been guided by a holistic concept of resiliency and account for the intersecting roles of culture, spirituality, and community in creating and maintaining the health of First Nations youth solvent abusers. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research.

Contact: Debra Dell (ysac@shaw.ca)