



2008 CYHRNet Student Interns in Child and Youth Health Research FINAL REPORT

Cynthia Lee – Child Welfare Strategies and Domestic Violence

Description

Cynthia studied child welfare strategies for reducing health risks and injuries related to domestic violence.

University/Institution

School of Child and Youth Care, University of Victoria

Supervisor

Dr. Doug Magnuson, Associate Professor, School of Child and Youth Care

Report

My experience as a CYHRNet student intern has been a great learning and networking experience and has helped me to define my thesis topic. The research question for my thesis came from the child protection team that I was working with. I was excited to work on a project that would help the team to evaluate their practices in domestic violence cases and contribute to the ongoing discussion related to evidence-based practice in child protection. The activities of the internship included reviewing the literature and designing an exploratory study looking at the health outcomes for victims of domestic violence under two different safety-planning strategies used by the child protection team.

A strong partnership has been developed between our research team and the child protection team on Vancouver Island. This partnership has been extremely valuable to my learning and for developing my research skills and knowledge in the area of child protection and domestic violence. It has also helped me to gain access to Ministry of Children and Family Development publications, assessment tools, training videos, practice guidelines and policy documents to enhance my knowledge of child protection and domestic violence research, policy and practice.

I had the opportunity to complete research ethics applications for two institutions which has helped me to reflect on ethical issues related to conducting research with human participants. The skills I have gained include: literature review skills, observation skills, interview skills, networking skills, research design skills and presentation skills.

My experience working with a team of researchers in child and youth health has directly impacted my career development. I am now more aware of how my research skills can be of use in community settings. For example, jobs at MCFD that I would not have applied for in the past are now of interest to me because I can see how my research experience and skills can be relevant and of use to the Ministry. Moreover, working with a team of researchers and practitioners has exposed me to a range of perspectives and has taught me different ways of translating knowledge.

The internship experience has shown me the importance of developing and sustaining partnerships with community sponsors and the value of developing research questions that come from the community itself. Furthermore, reflecting on ethical considerations when conducting community-based research has been valuable for my own ethical development as a researcher.

I am now more aware of the complexities of designing research in real-world settings that are not necessarily present in laboratory/controlled settings. Conducting research that can make a contribution to helping the child protection team to evaluate their own practices and interventions with clients showed me the value of integrating research with practice in community settings.

This internship has opened many doors for me, has made me think about research from multiple angles and has affected the way I will approach problems, questions and challenges in the future. I hope to continue to work in multi-disciplinary teams and to find work in which my social science research skills can be of use to policy makers and practitioners.

Finally, thank you to CYHRNet for awarding me this student internship. I have received excellent mentorship from my supervisor throughout the internship, have learned many new skills and am grateful to have had this experience.