



THE 6TH CANADIAN ADVENTURE THERAPY SYMPOSIUM

EXPLORING THE NATURE AND WELLNESS CONNECTION

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

Montréal, Québec

November 12th, 2017

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Executive Summary

The 6th Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium (CATS6) was hosted in Montréal, Québec on November 12th, 2017 at Le Centre Sheraton Montréal following the 2017 International Association for Experiential Education (AEE) Conference. The theme of the symposium was: *Exploring the Nature and Wellness Connection*.

Approximately 47 delegates attended this one-day symposium, which aimed to explore the diversity of adventure therapy (AT) in Canada as it related to the broader themes of nature and wellness. The keynote addresses of the symposium were: *Northwest Territories On the Land Collaboration* (Kyla Kakfwi-Scott) and *Adventure Re-Considered* (Pat Maher). Workshops included: *T.O.N.E. Therapy Outside Normal Environments* (Nick Cardone), and *How to Connect with Nature While Connecting with Oneself* (Jean-Phillipe Leblanc, Nicholas Bergeron, and Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon). In addition, a roundtable session was facilitated by Stephen Ritchie and Tony Cox, which aimed to explore the broad array of professional practices and passions across delegate attendees.

Several key leanings from the symposium arose from the presentations, discussions, and analysis of delegate professional practices and passions:

1. Discovering the Extent of On-the-Land Programming in the Northwest Territories (NWT);
2. Re-thinking the Meanings and Implications of “Adventure”;
3. Looking at Canada’s first AT-Related Graduate Program;
4. Re-considering “Adventure Therapy” in Canada.

The symposium concluded with an announcement regarding The 7th Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium (CATS7); in spring 2019, the Boys and Girls Club and several collaborators will convene and host CATS7 in Whitehorse, Yukon!

Résumé

Le 6^{ème} Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium (CATS6) a eu lieu à Montréal, Québec, le 12 novembre 2017, au Centre Sheraton. L'évènement a suivi la conférence internationale de l'Association for Experiential Education (AEE). Le

thème principal du symposium fut : *Exploring the Nature and Wellness Connection*.

Un total de 47 participants ont pris part à ce symposium d'une journée, qui avait comme objectif d'explorer la diversité des programmes de thérapie par l'aventure au Canada, ainsi que les thèmes reliés à la nature. Les principales conférences ont été : *Northwest Territories On the Land Collaboration* (Kyla Kakfwi-Scott) et *Adventure Re-Considered* (Pat Maher). Quant aux ateliers offerts, les thèmes suivants ont été abordés : *T.O.N.E. Therapy Outside Normal Environments* (Nick Cardone) et *How to Connect with Nature While Connecting with Oneself* (Jean-Phillipe Leblanc, Nicholas Bergeron et Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon). En outre, une plénière a été animée par Stephen Ritchie et Tony Cox. Celle-ci avait pour but d'explorer l'éventail de pratiques professionnelles des participants, ainsi que leurs motivations à utiliser la nature et l'aventure à des fins thérapeutiques.

Différents apprentissages ont émergé des présentations et des ateliers :

1. La découverte d'un programme offert aux Territoires du Nord-Ouest ;
2. Des réflexions à propos du terme « aventure », notamment en ce qui concerne son sens et ses implications au sein de la pratique professionnelle ;
3. Un survol d'un programme de second cycle en intervention en contexte de nature et d'aventure (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) ;
4. Des réflexions en ce qui concerne le terme « thérapie par l'aventure », tel qu'il est utilisé au Canada.

Le symposium s'est conclu par la présentation du 7^{ème} *Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium* (CATS7) qui aura lieu au printemps 2019, au *Boys and Girls Club*, à Whitehorse (Yukon).

Acknowledgements

- **Association for Experiential Education (AEE):** for supporting and promoting CATS
- **Keynotes and Workshop Presenters:** for facilitating the educational and thought-provoking sessions during the symposium
 - Kyla Kakfwi-Scott
 - Nick Cardone
 - Jean-Philippe LeBlanc
 - Nicholas Bergeron
 - Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon
 - Pat Maher
- **Volunteers:** for working behind-the-scenes to ensure a successful CATS6
 - Celiane Trudel
 - Alexandra Desilets
- **CATS Advisory Committee:** for organizing, planning, and hosting the symposium
 - Tony Cox (Chair)
 - Mario Bilodeau
 - Stephen D. Ritchie
 - Virginie Gargano
 - Stephen Glass
 - Nevin Harper
 - Bob Henderson
 - Heather Kelday
 - Adam Ross
- **Tony Cox-Leaders of the Day:** Convenor of CATS6 in Montréal

History of CATS

The initial aim of the Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium (CATS) was to provide an opportunity for Canadians who practice or are interested in AT to collaborate and share ideas with other professionals.

After the first two symposiums (Victoria, BC in March 2009 and Chicoutimi, QC in 2010), CATS was re-designed to seek interested hosts and convenors in the other major regions of Canada. It has since been held in Sundridge, ON (2011), Kananaskis, AB (2013), and Brigadoon Village, NS (2014).

Today, the 6th CATS continued to bring together a diverse range of professionals (educators, researchers, therapists, social workers, and students) that share a passion for nature-based interventions, in order to educate and connect those engaging in AT, with a vision to further the development of AT practices in Canada. Final reports from all six CATS are available at: <http://adventuretherapy.squarespace.com/finalreport/>

The current website for CATS is: <http://canadianadventuretherapysymposium.ca/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CanadianAdventureTherapySymposium/>

Overview of CATS6

Background

- Prior to CATS6, the last CATS was held in 2014; thus, there was a longer timeframe between symposiums compared to previous gatherings.
- The CATS Advisory Committee recognized the need to meet and realized that many interested delegates may be attending or interested in attending the AEE Conference.
- Thus, it was decided to host CATS6 in Montréal, QC following the AEE Conference at Le Centre Sheraton.

Audience Diversity and Demographics

- Approximately 47 delegates attended CATS6; please see Appendix A for the list of attendees with email contact information. All delegates listed in Appendix A consented to have their name and email included in this report.

Symposium Length

- Previous CATS were hosted by regional organizations over two or three days, however CATS6 was planned and hosted by the CATS Advisory Committee as a one-day symposium that started at 9:00am and concluded at 3:30pm.
- The symposium consisted of two presentations, two workshops, one facilitated roundtable session, and several announcements.
- Please see Appendix B for the complete symposium schedule.

Keynote and Workshop Descriptions

Keynote Address: The Northwest Territories On the Land Collaboration

Presenter: Kyla Kakfwi-Scott

The Northwest Territories (NWT) On the Land Collaborative was developed to better serve the communities and Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Territories in their efforts to deliver land-based programming in the territory. Recognizing that outcomes across the economic, social, cultural, and environmental spectrum are intertwined and interdependent, partners from multiple levels of government, corporations, philanthropic organizations, and community representatives have collectively developed a funding and support model that streamlines access, builds capacity, reduces administration, and supports shared learning and evaluation.

First established in 2015, the Collaborative has grown considerably and has leveraged shared learning to inform related events such as the Pan-Territorial On the Land Summit, held in Yellowknife March 2017. Kyla Kakfwi-Scott reflected on lessons learned and best practices gained through these processes, as well as her personal experiences as a participant, organizer, and funder of land-based programming in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Workshop: T.O.N.E. Therapy Outside Normal Environments

Presenter: Nick Cardone

Many men and boys have unique needs when it comes to therapy. With poor help seeking behaviours and high dropout rates, mental health statistics are at CRISIS levels. While therapy as we know it (office/chair/talk) works for some, research tells us that other ways of 'doing' therapy have greater resonance for

men/boys living with mental illness. The T.O.N.E. Project is an innovative group therapy for men, looking at how and where therapy happens, and aligns it with ways that men tend to explore their inner and outer worlds.

A 3-month group, T.O.N.E. (Therapy Outside Normal Environments) exposes men to adventure experiences, creative expression and reflective tools, volunteer service, and healthy nutrition.

This interactive workshop explored the mental health needs of men and boys, including the underlying theory. Woven throughout 2 years of T.O.N.E. stories, participants also:

- Experienced some of the specific tools, strategies and imagery, intended for immediate use in their work environments;
- Explored more deeply their own work, but through a gendered lens; and hopefully
- Were inspired to find their own unique path using adventure and experiential techniques.

Workshop: How to Connect with Nature While Connecting with Oneself

Presenters: Jean-Phillipe Leblanc, Nicholas Bergeron and Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon

Early intervention services for psychosis offers a range of interventions. However, many people present difficulty in achieving remission and recovery with usual care. Adventure therapy provides a normalizing experience to help people in their recovery process.

After a brief literature review on adventure therapy and psychosis, we presented the specifics of building a program for participants with psychosis. First, we reviewed what psychosis is and then helped participants experience the complexity of psychotic symptoms to better understand how they can impact usual adventure therapy interventions.

We then shared examples from 5 years of expeditions with youth with early psychosis done by *Face aux vents*, a non-profit organization specializing in adventure therapy for people with mental illness. We discussed the challenges of working with this population. Clinician, facilitator and guide point of views were presented.

Closing Keynote Address: Adventure Re-considered

Presenter: Pat Maher

In 2017 we live in an ever-changing world: globalization, truth and reconciliation, climate uncertainty, technological advancement. However, we still tend to exist in a relatively static world of adventure, circa 1980.

Across the many realms of adventure, such as therapy, education, recreation, and tourism, there are many new meanings for the phenomenon and new identities derived from it. We need to examine these changes, and better understand adventure's dynamic nature in theory, but also in practice.

Roundtable: Professional Practices and Passions

Facilitated by Stephen Ritchie and Tony Cox:

In this facilitated roundtable session, participants were asked to consider the nature of their practices and passions as students and professionals. Following this reflection, participants wrote down 1-3 ideas on cue cards that captured their motivation for attending CATS6, and then engaged in small-group discussions to determine collective commonalities.

During the plenary discussion, several broad themes emerged from commonalities across the small-groups: “connecting to self, others and nature”; “helping, healing, and wellness in nature”; “acting as advocates for our professions”; and “finding inspiration, ideas, and validation or ‘the spark’ to continue making a difference in the lives of others and within our respective fields of practice”.

After the symposium, participants' cue cards were collected, transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed. The data was then imported into Tableau Software to create a word-based visualization of participants' motivations for attending CATS6. (See Figure 1)

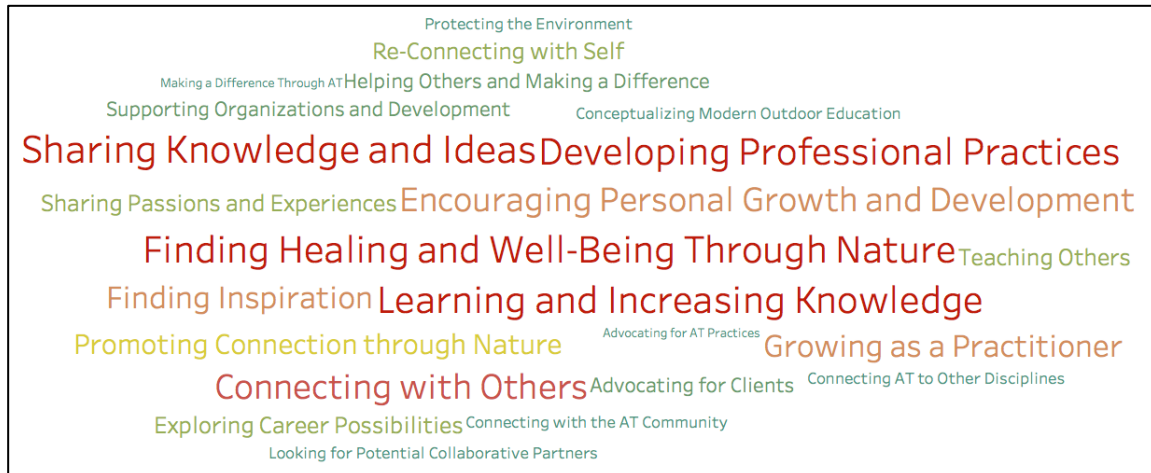


Figure 1. What Motivated You to Attend CATS6? This figure shows the most commonly used descriptors by participants when asked to describe their reasons for attending the symposium. The colour and size of the word shows the frequency of its occurrence in the data. Thus, warm-coloured and large-sized words represent the most prevalent themes; cool-coloured and small-sized words show the less common themes.

The most frequently-stated reasons for attending the conference based on the participants' cue cards included: "Sharing Knowledge and Ideas", "Developing Professional Practices", "Finding Healing and Well-Being Through Nature", "Learning and Increasing Knowledge", and "Connecting with Others". This information may be useful to inform the aims, topics, workshops, and presentations of future CATS.

Presenter Bios

Kyla Kakfwi-Scott

Kyla Kakfwi-Scott is a member of the K'asho Got'ine First Nation, originally from Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories. She lives in Yellowknife with her husband and two daughters. Kyla is currently senior advisor to the deputy minister of health and social services, Government of the Northwest Territories.

She previously worked as team leader of community development for the Ekati Diamond Mine, and was the founding program manager for Dechinta Bush University. Kyla is a member of the Selection Committee for the Arctic Inspiration Prize, an advisor to the Small Change Fund, and a member of Dene Nahjo. She was a fellow in the first cohort of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship.

Nick Cardone

Nick Cardone is a Registered Counseling Therapist specializing in working with men and adolescent boys. With 20 years experience in school, institutional and community-based mental health settings, his private practice clients are invited to explore new ways of 'doing' therapy. Utilizing evidence-based modalities incorporating physical movement, creative expression, the power of metaphor and exposure to nature and adventure, clients engage while out on a hike, journaling, rock climbing, sitting by a lake or by using a mousetrap!

Jean-Philippe LeBlanc

Jean-Philippe LeBlanc, founder of Face aux vents, has designed and run 25 adventure therapy programs dedicated to people living with mental health difficulties in different contexts: outpatient and inpatient clinics and community organizations with youth and adults. Jean-Philippe has delivered many lectures and offers training for a number of universities.

He is directly involved in the development of adventure therapy in Québec. He is currently completing a mental health certificate at the Université de Montréal.

Nicholas Bergeron

Nicholas Bergeron has completed a DESS intervention par la nature et l'aventure at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. He has been facilitating expeditions with Face aux vents for 2 years and has been working in the field of adventure therapy for many more.

Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon

Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon, MD, MSc, FRCPC is a clinical assistant professor at the Université de Montréal and a psychiatrist working at the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal. Her expertise is in first episode psychosis and concurrents disorders (mental disorder and addiction). As a researcher, she has been leading an adventure therapy research project for young adults with first episode psychosis since 2013.

Pat Maher

Dr. Pat Maher is an Associate Professor of Community Studies and Outdoor Leadership at Cape Breton University. He is the past editor of the Journal of

Experiential Education, and current editor of the Canadian Journal of Environmental Education.

As an educator, Pat is the recipient of a 3M National Teaching Fellowship and the Willi Unsoeld Award for Transformative Education. As an adventurer and researcher, Pat has been on expeditions from the Arctic to the Antarctic and many places in between. He is a Fellow of both the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and the Explorer's Club.

Key Learnings

1. Discovering the Extent of On-the-Land Programming in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Ms. Kyla Kakfwi-Scott introduced the NWT On-the-Land Collaborative to the CATS community: this is a burgeoning, innovative, and cross-sectoral initiative that extends well beyond therapy to include wellness, nature-connection, and community healing through diverse on-the-land programs in dozens of Indigenous communities across the territory;

This initiative is an innovative example of some new models for funding healing experiences in partnership with the natural world. It is an exciting potential precedent for government to financially support programming grounded in a nature and wellness connection. More information is available at <http://www.nwtontheland.ca>.

2. Re-thinking the Meanings and Implications of "Adventure". Dr. Pat Maher challenged us to reconsider adventure in its many evolving contexts and to consider its implications with different populations and demographics. His message explored the connotations of language and the many meanings associated with the term adventure both historically and in more contemporary times. As CATS looks to widen the lens of practice to include expertise from other "peripheral disciplines", the linguistics of association with the term *adventure* becomes instrumental to our discussions.

3. Looking at Canada's first AT-Related Graduate Program. UQAC recently launched, what is likely the first graduate program related to AT in Canada entitled: "Nature and Adventure-Based Intervention". The goal of the presentation was to expose the vision behind the development and the curriculum.

4. Re-considering “Adventure Therapy” in Canada. The terms “adventure” and “therapy” may not fully represent the vast diversity of nature, wellness, and healing that delegates shared with each other in terms of their professional passions and practices. There seems to be a distinct energy and intention for expanding the CATS focus to have a more inclusive association with practitioners and organizations involved with intentional outdoor and nature-related programming expressly designed for health promotion, personal growth, and well-being.

Looking Forward

8IATC

The 8th International Adventure Therapy Conference (8IATC) will be held in Sydney, Australia from Wednesday August 29th to Sunday September 2nd, 2018. The second call for abstracts is now open until February 1st, 2018. Information on the conference, submission guidelines, and registration is found through the following link: <https://internationaladventuretherapy.org/8iatc/>

7th Canadian Adventure Therapy Symposium

We are excited to announce that in the spring of 2019, the Boys and Girls Club and several community collaborators will partner to convene and host CATS7 in Whitehorse, Yukon!

The plan is for CATS7 to return to a fuller 2-3 day structure with the potential for some pre- and post-conference training opportunities and potentially an expedition-based elective experience in the Yukon wilderness.

Appendix A: Delegate Contact Information

There were a total of 47 delegates who attended CATS6, and the following consented to be included in the report to facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaboration:

	Name (Last, First)	Email Address
1	Beaudoin-Côté, Pier-Olivier	leavefootprints@hotmail.com
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Appendix B: Symposium Schedule

CATS6 Schedule/Agenda

6th CANADIAN ADVENTURE THERAPY SYMPOSIUM (CATS6)		
Exploring the Nature and Wellness Connection		
09:15-09:25	Convener: Tony Cox	Welcome on Behalf of the CATS Advisory Committee
09:25-09:35	Nevin Harper	Overview of Adventure Therapy in both International and Canadian Contexts
09:35-09:45	Peter Rae	Introduction to the 8 th International Adventure Therapy Conference (8IATC)
09:45-10:00	Virginie Gargano and Christian Mercure	NABI Program: Nature and Adventure Based Intervention Program at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
10:00-11:15	Keynote Address: Kyla Kakfwi-Scott	NWT On the Land Collaborative Fund
11:15-12:05	Stephen Ritchie and Tony Cox	Roundtable: Professional Practices and Passions
12:05-13:05	Lunch	
13:05-14:15	Workshops	(1) T.O.N.E. Therapy Outside Normal Environments <i>Nick Cardone</i> (2) How to Connect with Nature While Connecting with Oneself <i>Jean-Philippe LeBlanc</i> <i>Nicholas Bergeron and</i> <i>Clairéline Ouellet-Plamondon</i>
14:15-15:15	Closing Address: Pat Maher	Re-Considering Adventure
15:15-15:30	CATS Committee	Gifts, Acknowledgements, and Announcements