CEDAR CENTER · NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CLINIC

Building the Ground Beneath the Work

Internal Staff Culture as Research Infrastructure

"What grows above depends on what lives below."

Presented to the Clinical Trials Network

Native American Community Clinic · 1213 Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404

AGENDA

Today's Path

01

Who We Are

CEDAR's mission, our team, and the Six R's that govern the work

02

The Premise

Why internal staff culture is research infrastructure, not a side project

03

What We Built

The systems, policies, and team rhythms now holding the work

04

Where It Shows Up

Portfolio at a glance, and how we assess readiness relationally

05

What Travels

What this offers other sites in the Network

WHO WE ARE

The Place Where Wisdom is Gathered & Shared

OUR MISSION

CEDAR serves as a communal space where wisdom is gathered and shared, centering the leadership and knowledge of Indigenous communities in all research practices.

Our community-driven, relationship-based approach seeks to develop and share insights into the drivers of Indigenous wellness.

Community Engagement for Decolonizing & Advancing Research

Housed within the Native American Community Clinic, Minneapolis

THE SIX R'S OF INDIGENOUS RESEARCH

- **Respect**
- **Relationship**
- **Representation**
- **Relevance**
- **Responsibility**
- **Reciprocity**

Centering Indigenous voices, knowledge, and self-determination.

OUR TEAM

Six People Holding the Portfolio

Dr. Antony Stately

Executive Officer & President, NACC

Ojibwe / Oneida

Cancer & pain research, land-based healing, behavioral health, health equity

Dr. Meghan Farley Webb

Research Director, CEDAR

Sovereignty & global equitable health systems

Kayla Richards, MSW, PhD Candidate

Research Manager, CEDAR

Oglala Tituwan Oceti Sakowin

Criminal legal system transformation & youth mental health

Ailee Krautkremer

Research Coordinator, CEDAR

Child & maternal health, narrative health

Mardryka Adzick

Youth Programs Coordinator, CEDAR

Seminole descendant

Trauma, resilience & systems transformation

Jaidyn Probst, MPH

Sustainability Coordinator, CEDAR

Bdewakantunwan Dakota

Indigenous reproductive justice & land-based care

Currently hiring: Research Assistant — recruited through a structured, two-round relational interview protocol

Attending to *Internal Staff Culture* to Build Research Capacity

WHAT GROWS ABOVE DEPENDS ON WHAT LIVES BELOW

RESEARCH CAPACITY

Community-Centered Methods
Research designed with, not on

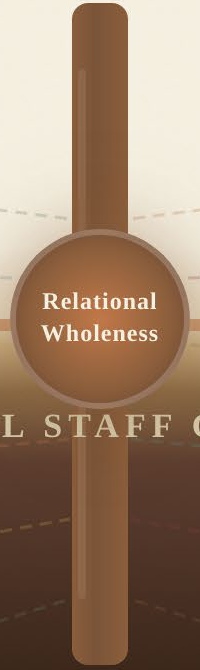
Data Sovereignty
Governance rooted in community

Sustainable Partnerships
Reciprocal, long-term relations

Knowledge Production
Stories as data, narrative as evidence

Decolonized Frameworks
Counter-narratives centered

Mentorship & Growth
Building the next generation



INTERNAL STAFF CULTURE

Relational Trust
Safety to be whole at work

Reflective Practice
Pausing to learn, not just produce

Shared Vision
Aligned values across the team

Staff Wellness
Care for the ones doing the caring

Cultural Grounding
Indigenous ways of being honored

Honest Dialogue
Brave conversations, not polite silence

WHAT GROWS ABOVE DEPENDS ON WHAT LIVES BELOW

THE PREMISE

Below the Surface: Internal Staff Culture

Six conditions we now name, resource, and review — because research capacity fails here first.

Relational Trust

Safety to be whole at work

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Care for the ones doing the caring

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Honest Dialogue

Brave conversations, not polite silence

These are not the soft conditions. They are the load-bearing ones.

WHAT WE BUILT · 01

Research Infrastructure

Policy & Procedure Library

30+ policies spanning research administration, data governance, HR, and community engagement.

Team Weekly Sessions

Week 1- Internal Culture & Identity
Week 2- Research Skill Capacity Development
Week 3- Medicine Sharing
Week 4- Policy & Procedure Building

Research Operations Calendar

One annual rhythm for reporting, renewals, IRB cycles, and community review.

Project Close-Out Workflow

Data and findings return to community as a required phase, not a courtesy.

IRB & Consent Architecture

Protocol and consent templates that hold community review alongside institutional review.

Documented SOPs

Practice knowledge lives in the organization, not in one person's memory.

Built in-house by CEDAR staff, reviewed with community advisors, and revised on a set cycle.

Team Infrastructure

Culture is not a vibe.

It is a set of repeated practices with named owners and dates on the calendar.

When we treated staff culture as a scheduled, owned, reviewable practice, retention and research output moved together — not against each other.

Hiring & Onboarding

Role scoping, two-round relational interview protocols, and a structured first-90-days.

Quarterly Workplanning

Team-built quarterly plans with named owners, evaluated at the close of every cycle.

Facilitated Team Rhythms

ToP-facilitated meetings, analytic memo sessions, and shared synthesis convenings.

Mentorship & Growth Paths

Staff move into coding, analysis, authorship, and co-investigator roles by design. Staff development plans grounded in Indigenous values & individual gifts.

Plus: a documented culture reset after a difficult year — including relational accountability training for all staff.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Five Commitments, One of Them Structural

SD1

Model Bridging Research & Practice

Integrating community-based research with direct service to demonstrate the value of decolonized approaches.

SD2

Orienting & Privileging Indigenous Science

Centering OCAP® and CARE principles, Indigenous epistemologies, and relational accountability.

SD3

Research as Action

Ensuring research outputs translate directly to improved conditions for Indigenous communities.

SD4

Diversify Funding

Expanding the grant portfolio across federal, foundation, and community sources.

SD5

Infrastructure & SOPs

Building the organizational systems, policies, and team rhythms that let CEDAR operate with integrity at scale.

Infrastructure is a trust practice.

SD5 is the one that made the other four survivable.

PORTFOLIO AT A GLANCE

What the Infrastructure Now Holds

ACTIVE

N-CREW
NIH

Capacity building for OUD, SUD, pain, and mental health research in Indigenous communities.

OPTIC
NIH / UNM

Adapting opioid and chronic pain screening tools with cultural relevance; site with UNM.

Project BRAID
NIH / UMN

Community-driven physical activity and healthy eating study with urban AI youth.

Wisdom of the Elders
BCBS MN

Traditional Healing dialogues informing policy and practice.

IN DEVELOPMENT

N-CREW Pilot
NIH

Impact of pain treatment policy on relatives, using EMR data and interviews.

Lateral Violence Study
TBA

Structural conditions shaping lateral violence for Indigenous women in helping institutions.

Project BRAID 2.0
NIH / UMN

Next phase of after-school cultural programming and evaluation.

HCBS for Elders
MDH

Barriers and facilitators to home and community-based services for Medicaid-eligible Elders.

Eight projects, five staff. The difference between that being ambitious and being reckless is the infrastructure behind it.

RESEARCH READINESS

Assessing Capacity Relationally

Our interdepartmental advisory team assesses readiness through facilitated conversation before any instrument is written.

1. **Relationship & History**
   What has research already cost this community?

2. **Ownership & Control**
   Who holds the data, the questions, and the veto?

3. **Readiness & Capacity**
   What can we honestly carry right now?

4. **Values & Alignment**
   Does this work belong to who we say we are?

5. **Looking Forward**
   What must remain when the funding ends?

NEXT STEPS

Thematic Exploration

Coding the readiness conversations into shared themes across departments.

Key Personnel Survey

Translating those themes into a short instrument for the wider clinic.

Readiness is a relationship, not a score.

FOR THE NETWORK

What Travels to Other Sites

30+ policies and procedures in active use

8 projects active or in development

6 staff carrying the full portfolio

Begin with relationship, not readiness checklists.

Capacity assessment that opens with history and harm gets truer answers than one that opens with capability.

Infrastructure is retention & a practice in trust.

Documented practice means staff stop carrying the institution in their bodies — and stop leaving because of it.

Community return is a phase, not a courtesy.

Build it into close-out with a named owner and a date, or it will not happen.

Culture work is measurable.

Name the conditions, assign them, review them quarterly — the same way we treat enrollment and milestones.

Miigwech • Wopila • Pidamaya

Questions · Reflections · Next Steps

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