Essay

Action Research: A Culturally Specific Case Study on Organizational Capacity-Building to Battle Addiction in the Oneida Native-American Community

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Abstract

The Healing Society (coded to mask) is a new and developing organization operated by a volunteer board created by Oneida Nation community members. Leaders were seeking strategic direction to build organizational capacity and sustainability for this new organization. They sought to make positive social change after a well-known community member died from an overdose. The purpose of this post-positivist, constructionist qualitative case study was to gather empirical data from the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders through a SWOT analysis. Their answers addressed: (a) the organizational strengths and weaknesses of The Healing Society to ensure short-term strength and long-term growth, and (b) the opportunities and threats impacting short-term strength and long-term growth of The Healing Society. We used a facilitated focus group exercise to gather an internal perspective from board members. A semi-structured interview process also gathered data from external stakeholders. Themes, categories, priorities, and action items were identified as critical success factors for small nonprofit social service organizations wishing to develop short- and long-term strategic plans. Many startup organizations shortchange culturally relevant planning activities that provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share perspectives, clarify expectations, set priorities, and define roles to help implement action for immediate or visible results ensuring public trust and enhancing the perception as a model service agency. Their experience may serve as a "fire" for other organizations led by and for minority populations to incorporate natural, meaningful, and relevant healing and wellness practices. First Nation communities are encouraged to identify healing practices of their ancestors to use in servicing their communities.

Keywords: *post positivist, constructionist, First Nations, Native-American, convenience sampling, empirical, SWOT analysis, indigenous, accommodation, disparities, suicide, historical trauma*

Recommended Citation

In acknowledgement of the ancient wisdom knowledge holders and healers who bring hope and joy to others.

Introduction

Organizational Capacity-Building to Battle Addiction in the Oneida Community

In 2017 First Nation communities began lighting fires as a symbol of a spiritual battle against fatal heroin and opioid overdoses in their communities. The fire itself represents life and has as many interpretations as there are people tending to it. This research focused on the effects systemic racism has on First Nation communities and how community members were able to voluntarily organize themselves to help improve health and wellness conditions stemming from inadequate governmental policies, funding, and culturally significant resources. The catalyst for this research stemmed from current realities of social injustices exhibited to people of color and the lack of focus on First Nation people as though they no longer exist or have been absorbed by other ethnicities.

On October 15, 2017, Oneida Nation members, not the Oneida Nation government or employees, lit the Oneida community fire when a well-known Oneida Nation member died of an overdose. There were 63 overdose deaths in Brown and Outagamie Counties in 2017, according to data reported by the Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2020). Sections of these counties are within the Oneida reservation boundary and make up the Oneida community for the purpose of this study. In December of 2017, a grassroots organization, The Healing Society (coded to mask), emerged as a formal group taking on the role of servicing people struggling with addiction by establishing a board of directors.

In 2018, The Healing Society Board of Directors identified their mission, vision, and primary goals. Their goals were to (a) bring awareness about the rampant use of dangerous drugs like fentanyl-laced heroin and opioids, (b) fill a gap not met by formal alcohol and other drug abuse service providers, (c) gain knowledge of and implement culturally based healing practices, and (d) engage community members as volunteers. The group provides a place for individuals, their family members, or community members concerned about or suffering from the effects of drug or alcohol addiction to go for moral support, guidance, and experiences in making positive lifestyle changes for a healthier community. The board was ready to take steps to improve the organizational infrastructure, build capacity, and enhance sustainability.

In preparation for this study, The Healing Society Board of Directors expressed the desire to expand services and incorporate cultural learning opportunities as an independent organization within the Oneida reservation boundaries servicing people from a variety of backgrounds, not just Oneida Nation members. In the fall of 2018, The Healing Society board obtained a building within the Oneida Nation boundaries after several months of using temporary tipi and yurt structures to keep the spiritual fire burning and visible in the Oneida community. Additional planning and outreach were needed to expand services and increase revenue.

Problem

The problem faced by The Healing Society board members was the lack of a culturally sensitive strategy to build ownership, capacity, and sustainability, a common problem for many small startup organizations. The Healing Society stakeholders possess a variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the needs of community members; nevertheless, they needed guidance as to where and how they could help. The Healing Society Board needed to start making data-driven decisions to develop strategies, priorities, and immediate action items to meet their goals and identify best uses of volunteers. Stages of organizational development were identified by B. Barry (1997), Bryson (2004), Bryson & Alston (2011), Institute of Cultural Affairs in the USA (ICA-USA, 2016), and Kelsey (2015). According to the lists of stages, the board was ready to begin taking the next steps in the strategic planning process and determine their timelines for short- and long-term development to meet their mission, vision, and goals.

Conceptional Framework–Historical Background

Many scholars address traumatic historical events and the importance of incorporating ancestral knowledge in the healing process associated with systemic racism. First Nations, for the purpose of this article, refers to the original inhabitants of what is now known as North America. Treuer (2019) describes events from 1492 until 1890 as apocalyptic for First Nations. Throughout history, First Nations have experienced several adverse policies administered by the U.S. government and the actions of different religious factions that created polarization and paralysis of individuals, families, communities, and nations (R. Antone, 2013; B. Antone, 2015; Churchill, 2004; Holthaus & Lee, 2008; McLester & Hauptman, 2010; Paterson, 2017; Pevar, 2002; Porter, 2008; Prucha, 2000; Treuer, 2019). Governmental policies, spiritual obstructions, colonization, accommodation, and assimilation are a few of the major concerns contributing to unhealthy behavior among people from First Nations (R. Antone, 2013; Holthaus & Lee, 2008; Rogers, 2017; and Treuer, 2019). Brave Heart (1998) uses the term "historical trauma" to identify self-destructive behavior. Brave Heart & DeBruyn (1998) liken the experience of First Nations to a holocaust. In-depth information and examples of the actions taken against First Nations to destroy their cultural identity, vernacular language, and livelihood are provided by Holthaus & Lee (2008), Prucha (2000), and Treuer (2019). In addition to these barriers for possible unification of mind, body, spirit, family, community, and nation, the establishment of two cities, two counties, six school districts, three townships, and one village within the borders of the Oneida land base created multiple jurisdictional issues that impede a sense of security and wellness.

Governmental qualitative studies were conducted on First Nation communities based on external observations and concerns about the quality of life and living conditions. The Meriam Report identified eight initiatives to improve the disparaging conditions in First Nation communities (Meriam, 1928). The Kennedy Report (Kennedy et al., 1969), conducted 41 years later, focused on education but found the same conditions listed in the Meriam report. Holthaus & Lee (2008), Leary (2018), and Rogers (2017) asserted that the educational system promotes disparaging conditions through the methods of teaching and the inaccurate or missing information about significant contributions made by First Nation governments, athletes, medicinal practitioners, agriculturists, environmental specialists, and more. Rogers (2017) asserted there are damaging societal reconciliation issues that require changes in the educational and justice system.

Accounts of systemic racism can be found in documents dating back to 1492, and many social ills in First Nation communities, including Oneida, are based in systemic racism. Prucha (2000) provided chronological and in-depth explanations of the history of treaties and governmental policies regarding First Nations. Treuer (2019) provided further explanation of the sanctioned policies and provided examples of how they were carried out, resulting in positive and negative outcomes for First Nation communities. Leary (2018) and Treuer (2019) provided vivid examples of violence and social injustice acts against First Nation members who asserted treaty rights. Leary (2018) addressed the reactions and assertion of hunting and fishing rights during the 1970s. Treuer reflected on treaty violations associated with the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota. According to Treuer, protestors experienced severe physical harm at the hands of the National Guard and police officers from several states, not just North Dakota. Physical harm included eye, facial, and organ damage from being shot with rubber bullets. In addition to being shot, protestors were sprayed with water in freezing temperatures (Treuer, 2019). Some protesters were arrested and incarcerated for months without being charged. Leary (2018) and Treuer (2019) asserted that the violence was fueled by a lack of knowledge about treaties and how they were established. Protestors in both cases were arrested, but they appealed and won their cases in the Supreme Court. Wisconsin Act 31 (O'Connor, 2020) was established to ensure citizens were knowledgeable about treaty rights; however, due to decreased funding and lack of teacher training, implementation is not enforced. In the spring of 2020 verbal chronicles indicated First Nation members asserting hunting and fishing rights were being shot at with real bullets, and their boats were being damaged.

Recent studies included an agenda for improvement. Leary (2016), Rogers (2017), and Treuer (2019) suggested improvements in education and judicial systems. R. Antone (2013) and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) developed strategies to strengthen identity and increase self-esteem using ancient knowledge and practices. Enomoto & Smith (2016) conducted a study that encouraged using First Nation perspectives to make positive changes. Their study identified several success factors using cultural knowledge as a catalyst for healing, yet, found most diagnoses and treatment centers follow a predominantly Western lens. An Oneida Nation Action Plan developed in 2018 (Belisle, 2018) lists success factors for the Oneida community. According to Belisle, The Healing Society was written into the plan, not as an Oneida program but as an independent community service available to assist the Oneida Nation in meeting the Title II–Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (2010) and the Oneida Business Committee resolution #05-10-17C (Summers, 2017).

Community Resiliency Factors

First Nation communities are researching the significance of their cultural identity in building strong, functioning communities and are seeking opportunities to learn (R. Antone, 2013; Cajete, 2015; Kimmerer, 2013; LaDuke, 2016; Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh, 2017; Sasakamoose et al., 2016). Along with providing the background on governmental policies that created challenges for cultural identity and stability for First Nations, B. Antone (2015), Holthaus & Lee (2008), Kimmerer (2013), Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017), and Treuer (2019) offered information on the resilience of First Nations to survive using ancestral knowledge and practices. Cajete (2015), Holthaus & Lee (2008), and Kimmerer (2013) assert that learning needs to be conducted in a natural setting, using nature as a tool to build strong relationships through interdependence. Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) explained crossover ceremonies helped individuals find their place, build self-confidence, and strengthen spiritual ties. The use of fire in healing ceremonies is an example of ancestral healing practices. Smudging is also a practice used for healing. White (2020) describes the ancient practice of smudging and the benefits of burning sage. In addition, concentrating on the flames of a fire while meditating or contributing to talking circles helps people to focus and relax.

Just as fire has significant meaning to individuals and groups, cultural healing practices have significant meaning for different First Nations based on their environment and verbal chronicles (Ackley, 2013; Ackley-Christensen, 2015; Administration for Children & Families, 2017; B. Antone, 2015; Kimmerer, 2013; LaDuke, 2016; Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh, 2017; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017, p. 33). First Nation practices take into consideration spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical development (Cajete, 2015; Holthaus & Lee, 2008; House, 2008; Kimmerer, 2013; LaDuke, 2016, Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh, 2017; and Treuer, 2019). Verbal chronicles, along with research by R. Antone (2013) and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017), indicated the Haudenosaunee developed ancient healing practices during times of upheaval, crisis, and grief that are still significant today. Some common practices, such as building a physical fire or smudging, are incorporated into what The Healing Society board members and volunteers do when working with an individual or their families. The use of fire, smudging, and/or herbal tea helps to ground people who are seeking assistance. Further identification of other healing practices will enhance the ability of the board members and volunteers in helping people.

Developing Strategies With Verbal Chronicles

Individuals and groups are retrieving and piecing together ancestral teachings to help make positive social change in their communities. According to B. Antone (2015) and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017), key concepts of Haudenosaunee knowledge are necessary to establish a strong foundation of identity when developing initiatives in Haudenosaunee communities. Porter (2008) lists six specific concepts beginning with creation to thinking about the future. Holthaus & Lee (2008) provided examples of how using ancestral knowledge can have a positive global impact for developing positive social change. Models developed by R. Antone (2013) and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) incorporated building knowledge about a Haudenosaunee identity utilizing verbal chronicles for development and the seven-generation philosophy in

decision making. Historical decision making for the Oneida included a clan system, an ancient practice that provides an opportunity for consensus.

Verbal Chronicles and Current Organizational Development Strategies

Culturally specific authors provided a perspective of planning and development from a First Nation worldview using ancient knowledge for organization, relationships, team development, and community commitment. R. Antone (2013), Guyette (1983), Porter (2008), and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) used their knowledge of ancestral practices to develop treatment centers or other growth and development services to help overcome adversities and develop methods to address social ills. A common thread between ancient cultural practices and 20th- or 21st-century scholarly work identified in this study is the ability to incorporate perspectives from all stakeholders. As mentioned earlier, ancient cultural practices provided a method to give all stakeholders a way to contribute their perspectives addressing seven generations. Twentieth- and Twenty-first-century researchers shared the same concept of planning for the future using years instead of generations. According to F. Barry (2007), Bryson (2004), Langer and LeRoux (2017), and Moreno et al. (2017), strategic planning is necessary to improve organizational behavior, withstand constant changes in society, and meet regulations established by local, state, and federal government or granting agencies. Identifying perspectives and ideas for building organizational capacity and sustainability can provide The Healing Society board with the ability to further increase wellness opportunities for the Oneida community and establish an identity strong enough to combat any negative influence that may affect their community members.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather empirical data from internal and external stakeholders for The Healing Society Board of Directors to use when making culturally sensitive organizational development decisions. According to B. Barry (1997), Bryson (2004), Bryson & Alston (2011), and ICA-USA (2016), a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is listed as a best practice for gathering data for an overview of an operation. There was no documentation of a comprehensive overview defining the current situation of The Healing Society or strategies identified to be included in the development of long-term plans. The board was ready to assess their environment for a comprehensive overview of the organization to review as they move toward establishing strategies for success.

According to Phadermrod et al. (2019), the SWOT analysis could cause bias if only one segment of the population is involved in a study. Therefore, data gathered through a focus group with internal stakeholders and semi-structured interviews with external stakeholders provided insight and guidance in making positive lifestyle changes for a healthier community using a variety of perspectives. Data gathered from the SWOT analysis identified (a) internal organizational strengths to celebrate or expand, (b) internal weaknesses to address that can hinder progress, (c) external opportunities to tap into, and (d) external threats to prepare for as the board begins the strategic planning process. This study helped identify strategies The Healing Society board members can consider as they develop policies, procedures, and other strategies to strengthen their organizational capacity, complete their short-term goals, and prepare for a long-term strategic planning process.

Research Design

We used action research with a SWOT analysis to gather data identifying key concepts for this study. A post-positivist, constructionist qualitative case study gathered empirical data from the perspectives of internal stakeholders through a focus group and of external stakeholders through semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2013), B. Barry (1997), Bryson (2004), Bryson & Alston (2011), ICA-USA (2016), and Kelsey (2015) provided

guidance to conduct a comprehensive assessment identifying immediate action items, strategies to develop public trust, and components for future development. The collective knowledge gained from this study has the potential to help close the gap in wellness services not met by professional agencies for addicts and their families. The suggestions and action items identified from the focus group and semi-structured interviews will help organizers build public interest and create mutual trust between the organization and the wider community. Results of this study were designed to assist The Healing Society board, volunteer nonprofit organizations, treatment facilities, or educational institutions plan for capacity and sustainability. Their experience may serve as a "fire" for other organizations led by and for minority populations to incorporate natural, meaningful, and relevant healing and wellness practices.

Researcher Description

One of the authors and principal researcher is an Oneida-enrolled member living within the reservation boundaries working as a professional and serving as a volunteer in various organizations or groups. Alcohol and drug abuse personally impacted this researcher; as a result, involvement with The Healing Society prior to this study was on a volunteer basis offering general office duties and guiding others to more positive lifestyle choices by hosting a sewing circle or craft night and conducting personal goal development sessions. The researched used previous facilitation experience in a management position.

Research Participants

The Healing Society's internal and external stakeholders from diverse background provided different perspectives in this study. All participants had a vested interest in The Healing Society, and their identities were masked.

Focus group participants
Healing Society board members were selected as the internal stakeholders. Internal stakeholders have access to and experience with the budget, volunteers, technology, communication, mandates, organizational structure, and other internal operations of the organization. Titles for the board members are president; vice-president; secretary; treasurer; sargent at arms, and three general members, for a total of eight board members.

Semi-structured interview participants
Volunteers, community elders, and parent organization administration were targeted as external stakeholders because of their ability to look at the organization as outside participants looking in and making observations that the internal participants may not identify. External participants came from diverse backgrounds and provide administrative support, peer meeting facilitation, general maintenance, and testimonies on their experience with alcohol and drug abuse. Volunteers use their expertise in developing organizational materials, building ceremonial space, and guiding the board on issues as they surface. Community elders have various backgrounds in age, careers, and experience with The Healing Society.

Invitations, marketing strategies, and a presentation were created to explain the study to the Board of Directors and recruit participants. A consent form was created to explain the process, roles, responsibilities, and confidentiality requirements of the study. Signatures on the consent forms were required prior to any activity taking place. Interview questions were vetted in advance and administered by the primary researcher, an Oneida community member. A convenience sampling protocol was used to ensure important perspectives were included. Data was recorded via photographs, notes, and audio recording to be entered into NVivo for sorting, organizing, and analysis.

Data Collection and Analysis

Focus group
The focus group was conducted in a straightforward process allowing participants to list their perspectives for each of the SWOT topics. Instructions for the process of an 18-step infinity or snow card activity were provided by the USA-ICA (2016) combined with B. Barry (1997) and Bryson & Alston (2011) to facilitate the meeting.

Semi-structured interviews
Semi-structured interviews were developed using the same questions and similar processes, but using 10 steps instead of 18.

We used NVivo 12 software to code the data entered from the focus group and semi-structured interviews. The focus group identified their own categories; however, when all of the data was collected and organized four themes emerged with two to seven components and up to 54 specific steps or tasks. Community is the first theme with six components: communication regarding services and communication regarding operations, connection or building collaborative partners, events, remaining a safe place, and outreach. Organization is the second theme with three components, organizational infrastructure, formalize to facilitate, and sustainability. Funding emerged as the third theme with two components identified, fund development and philanthropists. Resources is the last theme with seven components: veterans groups, interns, high school students, corporations, different types of governments, other organizations, and planning workbooks.

Findings

Collectively participants identified plan elements, categories, priorities, immediate and long-term action steps to include in the organization's long-term strategic plan. Focus group findings and semi-structured interviews were reported separately and then synchronized using NVivo.

Focus group
It was difficult to create and sustain an ongoing conversation during the focus group exercise. However, clarification of answers provided a better understanding of different perspectives. The report for the focus group is by SWOT topic and categories. Categories are listed in prioritized order.

> **Strengths.** Communication, commitment to community, respectable qualities, and organizational growth.

> **Weaknesses.** Code of conduct, staff expectations, marketing, and services.

> **Opportunities.** Community, funding sources, sharing information and beliefs.

> **Threats.** Internal, external, and political.

Semi-structured interviews
Participants were asked to create lists for each topic, prioritize items on the list, and identify immediate actions the board can incorporate.

Strengths
All five participants rated what participant James calls "servant leadership" as a priority and something they want to see continued. High-scoring actions corresponding to servant leadership include making heart-led decisions, acceptance, a welcoming atmosphere, and the use of personal experience when reaching out to help others. All five participants recognized that there is a safe place for people to go when seeking help. In addition, all five participants indicated they appreciate the availability, passion, empathy, use of cultural

practices, and genuine encouragement of the board and volunteers as they warmly welcome the community to their activities. Mildred specifically stated, "they put their heart and soul in trying to help people. They include everybody in activities they have, and they don't turn anybody away." In addition, Mildred acknowledged that "they helped watch over people there, like suicidal or even just thinking about it." Mildred, Delia, and Jane asserted providing 24-hour assistance for individuals needing a safe place to go, referrals for intense therapy, someone to talk to, or a place of encouragement are crucial in the recovery process.

Answers from the semi-structured interview participants embrace the capability of the board and volunteers to use personal experiences in recovering from addiction or exposure to addiction as ways to connect with people. Cynthia declared, "everybody there has personal experience … that's what helps them … connect." James acknowledged they "have experience, which is a strong benefit in their own recovery, which is incredibly important when you're … trying to help others in their recovery." Cultural involvement was also high on the priority list. Mildred stated, "they have traditional beliefs." Delia believes "the fire calls people, draws people." Jane asserted, "most importantly for my number one is the culture involvement."

The most outstanding actions noticed by the participants include the board's willingness to provide contact information and transportation so community members can attend events, participate in a meeting, talk to someone, or just hang out. A list of other action items deemed important was identified: being outspoken; determined; child friendly; having a place or space to conduct business; offering food, showcasing success stories; and continuing genuine appreciation. An item to continue, improve, and make available is the list of other resources in the community.

Weaknesses

According to the data, the lack of a long-term strategic plan is impeding the success of The Healing Society. James stated if the organization wants "to create long-term systemic change in the community, they have to have a long-term strategic plan with clearly defined goals, objectives, and strategies of how to achieve them." Collectively participants asserted that marketing, membership, financial, and operational plans are critical to ensure that community members have access to information on all aspects of the organization. Interested individuals will then have an opportunity to commit their knowledge, skills, or abilities to specific activities relating to community involvement.

Communication is an element of the marketing plan according to the NVivo 12 sort. Cynthia asserted there needs to "be better communication on the hours … counselors … are still handing out flyers from when they first opened and no one is connecting with mental health." Mildred suggested the board can "let people know what they're qualified for …. " Specific action items are to create flyers, social media pages, and advertisements that will let the public know who is providing services, when they are available, how they operate, what the organization needs, and where they can be found.

All five participants suggested The Healing Society Board expand outreach to the Oneida community to fill gaps in service through networking, recruiting volunteers, and obtaining transportation. Jane listed networking and reaching volunteers as a priority. The lack of a plan for sustainability is a topic Mildred, James, and Delia addressed. James explained that "a sustainability plan for the organization is key and would be a part of a strategic plan … how do they maintain and sustain membership, … their board, … their helpers, their work, in whatever capacity … 10, 20, 30 years … not only membership-wise and commitment but financially." All five participants noticed a decrease in services and the possibility of the board members overextending themselves. Jane suggested reaching out "to gain volunteers such as local technical colleges … students that are looking for internships." The board can also reach out to other schools and organizations offering interns or community service hours for people to help provide services such as running a meeting or hosting a class, answer phones, create plans, develop forms, or complete paperwork. A reminder from James, Mildred, and Delia indicated the board cannot do it all themselves; they need to allow others to help them

Four of the five participants mentioned the lack of a financial plan as being a significant weakness for long-term organizational health. The financial plans can increase approaches to secure funds for specific services or general needs. James posed the question: "How are they funding their organization?" Mildred suggested to "correspond to someone like Steve Harvey or … Ellen DeGeneres … Have them come visit or have them donate or see how they could … request … help. Willie Nelson … Kevin Costner." Delia, Jane, and Mildred asserted transportation is an issue and agreed a financial plan would include the cost of a vehicle and services, and donations from various sources to sustain the organization. Although The Healing Society Board wants to remain autonomous, a strategic plan can assist in applying for tribal, federal, state, or foundational assistance to meet their needs without compromising their values.

An operational plan will address daily needs for organizational development. All five participants recognized that organizational structure, hours of operation, resources, and availability are priorities to consider as the board moves forward designing strategies. Delia suggested, "Maybe to have paid staff or something like that might help." An operational plan will address Jane's suggestion for data collection on activities and attendance along with her concerns about low attendance, increasing community involvement, bringing back eliminated activities, and showcasing people in recovery. The operational plan can include Mildred's suggestions of "the organization owning the methods they use … activities or events to reach parents … provide entertainment and education … talent shows or … create a mini-stage show … have movies of what opiates, drugs, alcohol and … smoking can do … to your health and how it reaches out to the family members."

Opportunities

All five participants recognized that The Healing Society has several opportunities they can take advantage of to build capacity and sustainability. Important matters involve creative, culturally sensitive ways to raise funds, network, and share resources such as conducting workshops, culture camps, parenting groups, and movie nights. Jane suggested "increasing services … because the more that they're able to offer, the more of the need … there will be for the organization." The use of cultural knowledge is listed as an opportunity important to participants. Delia specifically stated, "I think there are opportunities to draw on our cultural … values for creating a sustainable organization, that we're not limited to … Robert's Rules of Order on how we conduct our business … it can still be heart led."

Jane suggested tapping into organizations that will provide a percentage of daily revenue to The Healing Society. Jane suggested Amazon and Cousins Subs, explaining that "Amazon offers a program … with non-profit organizations and they … donate a percentage of the proceeds to the organization …." James suggested the 501(c)3 status under the umbrella of their parent organization gives them "access to vast amounts of money" if they have a financial plan or targeted activities planned out. He goes on to state: "maybe they don't have the knowledge or expertise on how to access grants or other sources of funding, but they need to hire or partner with someone that does …." Jane suggested, "reaching and finding volunteers such as interns … there's tons of interns always looking …" for placement.

Immediate action items include becoming formalized as their own 501(c)3 and develop their own by-laws to make decisions without creating a lot of paperwork." Delia acknowledged The Healing Society Board of Directors' angst or the fear of becoming formalized or structured might change the nature of the organization … and equality of how people are. Delia and Mildred agreed. The Healing Society has no one controlling them and indicated the board can create their own by-laws and laws that are not as confining as governmental entities. Delia went on to say, "structure could … bring stability."

Networking and sharing resources are opportunities the board can take advantage of immediately. Delia, James, Jane, and Mildred suggested visiting similar groups to get ideas on best practices, how they function, policies, procedures, and developing office manuals along with identifying pitfalls to be aware of as they plan. James asserted the board could "really partner up and share resources or share energy efforts, combine efforts …" with other groups like "Natives Against Heroin" and "Project Lights Out." Cynthia, James, and Mildred

suggested partnering with the Oneida Nation to an extent with tribal contributions, co-working with behavioral health, and using the fitness center and other programs offered by Oneida.

Threats

Data identified internal and external threats. Internal threats were identified as personal health and relationships. External threats like funding and societal changes are outside of The Healing Society Board of Directors' direct influence, but with strategy, negative outcomes can be avoided.

Health of the volunteers was identified as a priority and something that needed immediate attention. Burn-out was listed by Delia, James, and Mildred. Delia provided examples of burn-out as the board overextending themselves emotionally, mentally, physically, or financially. Participants alluded to burn-out creating a strain on performance, as well as on internal and external relationships. Public opinion can be a threat if quality services are not provided.

Negative marketing, jealousy, lack of knowledge, or laws can intervene in the success of building capacity and sustainability. Lack of support from the community or local governments can also cause changes in the acceptance of The Healing Society. Mildred, James, and Delia acknowledged changes in the laws, elected officials, and priorities of the nation could possibly have a negative impact on the organization. Delia stated, "the tribe could find another use for the land." Four of the five participants shared the ideas that: (a) the current trend can change to another drug or priority, (b) the organization might get formalized and the funds are no longer available, (c) opiates may become overwhelming or they may cease altogether and (d) the biggest threat to the organization is closure for various reasons. Cynthia declared, "maybe that nobody there is licensed as a professional per se counselor or clinician."

Discussion

Communication is a key element identified as a priority in the focus group and important to the semi-structured interview participants. According to the data, keeping up with current trends and developing a communication plan will ensure all stakeholders are aware of their duties, roles, responsibilities. In addition, the communication plan will inform interested parties of board member and volunteer qualifications along with hours of operation, services provided, and who can get help. Evaluation and updates will ensure all stakeholders are kept informed.

Each First Nation community retains knowledge holders and practices as resources to heal their community. R. Antone (2013) and Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) discussed initiatives that begin learning and internalizing the verbal chronicles of Haudenosaunee Creation. Rodriguez & Wakerahkats:teh (2017) discuss crossover experiences to instill lessons about the original instructions to living a good life. B. Antone (2015) explains how ancestral practices help men to overcome historical trauma and heal. In addition, R. Antone (2013) suggested that future projects addressing recovery from any kind of addiction and gathering data from First Nation knowledge holders on methods to increase wellness activities would be a benefit.

Strengths and Limitations of the Project

The Healing Society Board of Directors' willingness to take an overall view of the organization's status is their greatest strength as they internalize their purpose of wellness as a way of life. External stakeholders agreed the board and volunteers share their passion for clean living with others from first-hand knowledge and experiences. According to the data collected from the semi-structure interviews, personal experiences adds credibility to the services provided to the community. The board members and volunteers transfer what they know from experience to applicable practices for the struggling addict. A unique aspect of the organization is

the practice and knowledge of First Nation healing and wellness methods. Internal stakeholders expressed concern about the limited knowledge they personally have of First Nation healing practices but feel it is important to seek credible assistance from practitioners. This project was limited to identifying themes, categories, priority, and immediate action items for The Healing Society Board of Directors to incorporate. Additional focus groups, general conversations, and surveys can be used to gather more detailed data on the different types of or specific events, workshops, seminars, and camps to be offered. Focus groups can also identify specific plans addressing different age groups, including children, tweens, and teens.

This project identified actions specific to The Healing Society board members and volunteers to help others overcome the stresses caused by systemic racism. Data contained in this study will help others gain a better understanding of responsibility or duty versus entitlement of reaching a marginalized population. Members of communities who have experienced systemic racism may learn from this study and employ some of the strategies as they prepare to build a young organization for their specific community. Important aspects to remember when developing a volunteer organization are dependability from service providers along with consistent events, including group meetings, sharing the qualifications of who is providing services, and identifying how they can help strengthen the organization.

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