

Adena M

Using your words, can you please describe your work? It is my responsibility as a First Nations woman and professional to ensure that my work is approached each day with respect, gratitude and integrity as each interaction affects not only one person, but their family, their community, and their Nations.

Can you tell me your best story of making a difference at work? I was able to reconnect a young girl with her biological parents, immediate family and her Nation back east whom she had not seen in quite some time. This young girl was so happy and excited to see her parents and she had so many questions about when she would meet them. I met with her Mother and we talked about the day the little girl was born and the excitement and joy it brought to her to finally meet her daughter at birth. I asked the Mother if I could share that with her daughter before their meeting and she was supportive of that. I put together her birth story along with pictures of her Mother and herself and on the opposite side I attached a copy of the girl's family genogram. When I presented this to the young girl she lit up and exclaimed I have family!? She had at least 10 aunts and Uncles and over 20 first cousins and some of them had children as well. The young girl was so exasperated she would not let go of her story and immediately asked when can I meet them. She met her parents, sees them regularly and will be moving back to her community with her Aunt and where all of her family still resides this summer. Her Aunt is making traditional regalia for her Niece and is eager to be a part of the rest of her life. The difference made was a connection where there was disconnect and a sense of belonging and a strong foundation laid for this young girl to journey in finding her true self in her identity, family and community.

How would you describe your biggest challenge at work? Honoring and fostering the diversity of which all of our families come from is a great challenge but very important responsibility bestowed upon us. BC has the most diverse range of First Nations cultures and languages that are inherently tied to their unique identities. It is imperative in our work to honor the individual and their space and place in their worldview as First Nations. When one has a strong foundation of knowledge in who they are and where they come from their personal journey will only build upon that knowledge and create connections internally and externally that will help develop a balanced and healthy individual.

In your words, what might a typical work day look like? Connecting with families, colleagues, respective Nations and communities to ensure families are supported in a meaningful and positive way that fosters and maintains healthy and stable reunification.

What's your vision for the future of your job and your sector? I hope to encourage and foster more work being done on a collaborative basis between all agencies and supports. My vision is for families to enter our doors knowing that they are important and that they have a voice and their stories matter. I had an instructor in school who taught me that we must honor the past within the present for the future, and that is how I want to approach each day and each interaction I have with all those I connect with. Huy'ch'qu Siem (Thank you respected ones)

What part of your work do people compliment you on? Respecting everyone I come into contact with and organization skills.

Area [Vancouver and Lower Mainland \(area 3\)](#) [1]

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