



Everyday is different at work and that is what I really like about my job. I care about the youth that I work with and try my best to support them and their families.

As a Guardianship Social Worker with the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society we deliver services to Aboriginal Children and Youth who are in continuing care as a result of a Child Custody Order granted under the CF&CS Act, or an order under the Family Relations Act when a child has no parent or guardian. Guardianship of our children and youth involves their physical care and decision-making responsibility concerning such areas as residential placement, education, health, emotional and behavioural development.

I bring years of experience working in child welfare with aboriginal families in rural and urban communities throughout the province of BC to my job. I also bring my cultural experiences as a Métis woman to share with my colleagues and families. In our traditional Aboriginal culture it is understood that the honour of raising a child is to be shared by many members of the community. Most of the day entails meeting with youth, foster families, birth families and other professionals to address the needs of the youth. Keeping everyone involved is important so the child's needs and best interests are kept at the centre of planning and decision making to ensure their safety and well-being.

It is always special when you get to be involved in the extraordinary moments in their life such as taking the youth to their aboriginal communities for the first time to meet their extended family. Or being a part of the celebration for one of my Cree youth who has been accepted to attend university to pursue a social work degree.

*Sonya Sheppard has been a Guardianship Social Worker with the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society for 6 years.*

*CommunitySocialServicesMatter.ca*