

**STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-DRIVEN
POSTSECONDARY WELLNESS EDUCATION AS A MEANS TOWARDS
INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE WELLNESS**

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Dedication

Dedicated to all Indigenous graduate students contemplating a thesis: Research can be Indigenous. Dedicated to faculty and staff: It is my hope that this thesis helps to bridge the gap between Indigenist research and academia. Dedicated to postsecondary institutions, with hopes that what is presented in this thesis is considered and action is taken to fill the gaps that exist for Indigenous students wishing to engage in Indigenist research and receive culturally appropriate training in the field of counselling psychology.

Lastly, dedicated to my mom, who was diagnosed with terminal and metastatic cancer in the beginning of this research journey. My mom is an example of why traditional Indigenous approaches to wellness are essential. They save lives. My mom is defying the diagnosis the doctors gave to her and I know she will continue to prove them wrong. Grateful for our traditional ways of healing. Love you mom- this is for you.

Ay Ay!

Abstract

This thesis used $\Delta^{\prime}\Gamma^{\prime}\Delta^{\prime}$ /Isihcikêwin, an Indigenist research paradigm, to explore students' experiences of participating in community-based graduate programs based on local Indigenous approaches to wellness. The intention of this research was to explore students' experiences of participating in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs, which took place in Niitsitapii (Blackfoot) territory in collaboration with Niitsitapii Elders and knowledge holders. Six conversations with Aawaystamattsa were used. The Aawaystamattsa (Blackfoot for "learner") came from various backgrounds: three were from Niitsitapii Nations, one was from the Bearspaw First Nation, and two were non-Indigenous allies. Meaning making was guided by $\Delta^{\prime}\Gamma^{\prime}\Delta^{\prime}$ /Isihcikêwin. All of the Aawaystamattsa were integral co-researchers throughout this process. Findings comprised eight teachings. The two foundational teachings that encompass all other teachings are (1) Indigenous Culture is Healing, and (2) Reconciling Relationships Through Education. The remaining teachings are Personal and Professional Benefits, Strengthening Allyship & Relationships, Intergenerational Wellness/Healing, Community/Collective Wellness, Nations Experiencing Wellness, and Cultural Identity. The Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs offered through the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education were found to have profound personal and professional benefits for Indigenous and non-Indigenous, individuals, families, and ancestors inside the Niitsitapii territory and also rippling out into other communities, nations, and cities within Canada and the United States. Included in this thesis is an $\text{LU}^{\wedge}\text{U}^{\wedge}\text{L}\text{Q}\text{Q}\Delta^{\prime}$ /Macastêhamānakêwin (Cree for "offering") to communities, institutions,

organizations, and agencies who wish to implement programs to support community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I need to say thank you to my family for their love, support and patience. My husband, Piitaspil for being so patient and understanding as I haven't been present throughout the last few months. My son, Naato'hkotok—not spending time with you, doing fun things this spring/summer was the hardest sacrifice of my life. Mommy is almost done her school! To my parents for all their love, support and taking good care of our boy. For giving their time, love and energy to our boy always and especially throughout this time. I know he is just as happy at his “other home” as he is with us. This would not have been possible without your support and encouragement.

This work is a reflection of many peoples knowledges, efforts and support. Thank you to the Aawaystamattsa who were involved in this research and transferred their knowledge to me through this thesis. For allowing me to join you on this journey both in class and during the conversations. Thank you for trusting me to share our collective voice. Thank you to Mahtsaottaa, my Aawahskataa Advisor for your unconditional support, guidance and for sharing your knowledge with me. For good visits and good laughs. Thank you for trusting me with sharing all that I learned in a good way, on a program that you were part of developing.

Thank you to my numerous Elders, knowledge holders and cultural mentors for sharing your knowledge with me. To my ceremony family for the prayers. Iistakaanaps, for reconnecting me with my original instructions almost 11 years ago. To my family and friends who supported me in following spirit and connecting with the ceremonies of my ancestors. Thank you to my ancestors, for the guidance and support. To all who helped with the language aspect— Katie Rabbit, Chester Day Chief, Bruce Day Chief, Delia Day Chief, Melodie Ayoungman, Perry Day Chief, Bernie Gladue and Margret Lamouche. To Good Hearted Woman for being my

spirit/ceremony sister and supporting me through all the ups, downs and transformations—Your wisdom and friendship was monumental in this process.

Thank you to my committee for sharing your knowledge and supporting me through this process. Each person brought something different to the process and I am grateful for the experience of learning from all of you. Dr. Toupey Luft, for agreeing to take on another graduate student with a relatively tight time crunch. For honoring my process of sharing my story. Dr. Janice Victor for introducing me to the option of doing Indigenist research and opening the door to a whole new world! Both, Dr. Toupey Luft and Dr. Janice Victor, for being allies in this process. Dr. Michelle Hogue for being the voice between the institution and Indigenist research, for fighting the good fight, and agreeing to take on a student in Counselling Psychology! To Dr. Karlee Fellner, for believing in me from the moment we met each other, for throwing me into the world of Indigenist research and providing instrumental hands on mentorship. For supporting me in finding my voice within academia and for fighting the good fight for our people. For believing that the impossible (deadlines) was possible. And hey—it was!

Thank you to our culture and traditional ways. If it weren't for these original instructions, I would not be where I am today. Thank you the Kainaiwa community for accepting me as part of the community and for allowing this project to take place.

Ay Ay!

Aawaystamattsa

In this thesis, the dominant Euro-settler term participant is replaced with the Niitsitapii word Aawaystamattsa, which means learner(s). Consistent with Indigenist research, the six Aawaystamattsa, introduced below, are vital members of the research team. They are co-researchers and have been involved throughout the entire process (Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019). These are their introductions, all of which are written in their own words.

Aahkaotasi (Many Horses) / Clarence Black Water. Oki! Niitaanikoo Aahkaotasi (My name is Many Horses). My government name is Clarence Black Water. I am a proud member of the Aapaitsitapiksi (White Weasel people) of the Maamiiksi (Fish Eater Clan) from the Blood Tribe. I am a two-time sacred society member of the Horn Society here on the Blood Tribe, which is considered one of the last sacred societies in the Plains Indian territory still in circulation. I've lived here on the reserve all my life and have witnessed all the social changes from a "baby boomer's" perspective and there are many not so good and some really good. For instance, I am a product of the traditional Blackfoot horse culture that stems from early participation in the rodeo world, which I am very proud to say was very good to me as I have accomplished many coup counts (championships) throughout this great nation in the Indian and mainstream rodeo circuits. So, with that part of my life completed, I have chosen to pursue and further educate myself in both our traditional knowledge teachings and the mainstream scholarly paradigm, which I believe, to make it in the world of today, one must be able to use both sides of the brain so a balance can be achieved in the spirit and body for the healing journey so many of us have experienced from the government policies we Indians had to endure from forced assimilation.

Annastisinski Akii (Pretty Badger Woman) / Tisha Bromley-Wadsworth. Oki. Niisto Niitaanikoo Annastisinski. (Hello. My name is Pretty Badger Woman.) My English name is Tisha Bromley-Wadsworth. My husband and life partner of 29 years is Iskotoohka Billy Wadsworth. We have one daughter, Apoyakii Keely Wadsworth, and one grandson, Ashkii Diyin. I received my Bachelor's degree from the University of Lethbridge in 2005. I have just completed my Master of Education (research stream) from the University of Calgary. I am a member of the Blood Tribe-Kainai which is part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. During the summer we participate in powwows all over Indian Country. My passion is the retention and participation of Blackfoot language, culture, and ceremony.

Otsiikin'aki (Buffalo Flower Woman) / Caithlyn Munar is of proud Filipino ancestry and is grateful to reside in Mohkinstis on Treaty 7 territory. She has worked as an urban acute care nurse for 11 years. Through personal and professional education of herself and colleagues, she seeks ways to promote and uphold the critical relevancy of local Indigenous ways of wellness within the health care institution.

Aahsitapiyaki (Kind-Hearted Woman) / Sherri Rinkel MacKay. I am a descendant of Euro-settlers who came to the traditional territory of Treaty 7 Nations and the home of Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III. My formal work has been as a kindergarten to grade 7 teacher and as a teacher mentor with Galileo Educational Network at the University of Calgary. It was with Galileo Educational Network that I first worked with the Kainai in 2005 and helped develop a web resource working with Elders, knowledge keepers, education staff, and grade 4 Blackfoot immersion students documenting the medicinal plants and their traditional uses on the Kainai Reservation. This also began my education towards being Niisitapii (a real person) as I participated in ceremony and cultural practices and I was given the name Aahsitapiyaki (Kind-

Hearted Woman). Miinii'pooka (Peter Weasel Moccasin), with his wise and patient counsel, and my dear friend the late Napiakki (Carolla Calf Robe) have been central in my learning.

Naahs'inaaniks (the ancestors), the generous landscape and her beings have also been key in my instruction. This education continued in a more formal way in the Poo'miikapii program. I am humbled to be included in this research.

Woman Who Carries the Bundle / Shelly Eli. I am a member of the Crazy Dog Society in Amskapii Piikani. My partner and I hold a Beaver Bundle, and I am a holder of a stand-up headdress. Currently, I am going into my second year of a PhD program in educational research – language and literacy at the University of Calgary. I have a Master's and a Bachelor's in English from the University of Lethbridge. I have a BSc in business administration / management from MSU Billings. I have an Associate of Arts in business administration from the Little Big Horn College.

Singing Across the Water Woman / Sheri Shotclose. Sheri's Nakoda and Blackfoot. Her Blackfoot name is "Singing Across the Water Woman." She is a Stoney Nakoda member of the Bearspaw First Nation of southern Alberta. In her career, Sheri has worked as social services manager, training to employment project manager, life skills coach, and is currently a teacher in her First Nation community. She actively strives to reconnect with her roots, reclaim her identity, and recover from the effects of intergenerational trauma. Her passion in life is to promote wellness and balance by being a role model and example to family, friends, and students.

Aawahskataa Advisor

The Aawahskataa (Elder) Advisor for this thesis is Mahtsaottaan (Pretty Shields) Calvin Williams. Mahtsaottaan was a vital part of the process and has provided me with numerous teachings, guidance and support throughout this process. These are his own words of introductory.

Mahtsaottaan (Pretty Shields) Calvin Williams. I started participating in our Kainai Way of Life Spirituality when I was 27 years old, joined our sacred Horn Society with three different society groups: Brave, Black Horse and Bullhorn Societies and also joined the Brave Dogs. I have danced in other Sun Lodges (piercing) throughout the Northwest America's and in Canada. I speak our Blackfoot Language fluently and have researched the Blackfoot History. I am now an Elder and Teacher of our sacred ways and conduct Sweat Lodge ceremonies. I am familiar with some Traditional Medicine plants and roots, and use them to help heal those that require healing. I am an Elder for Red Crow Community College and have assisted other non-native Universities and Colleges in Alberta to Indigenize their Institutions, Faculty and Curriculum.

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Blackfoot and Plains (y) Cree Terms Used

Aakahtapiiyiitsiniksiin	old stories	Blackfoot
Aako'ka'tssin	circle camp	Blackfoot
Aamatosimaan	Smudge	Blackfoot
Aawahskataa	Elder	Blackfoot
Aawaystamattsa	learner	Blackfoot
Aistohk	young pine	Blackfoot
Aistommatop	embody knowledge	Blackfoot
Aksistoypaitapiisni	being resourceful in the face of challenges	Blackfoot
Âniskô-Kiskinwahamâkêwin	passing on the teachings	Plains (y) Cree
◄◄◄ ρ^ρ ◄◄◄◄◄◄◄◄◄◄	passing on the teachings	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Ao'ta'sao'si Ponokaomita	the era of the horse	Blackfoot
Ao'maopao'si	from when we settled in one place	Blackfoot
Iihpkim Moottspi	passing on the teachings one has received	Blackfoot
Iistakaanaps	knowledge holder's name, which means dependable, among other things	Blackfoot
Iniskim	Sacred Buffalo Stone	Blackfoot
Isîhçikêwin	the way things are done in regard to culture and ceremony	Plains (y) Cree
Δ^j rQΔ^j		Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Iskaipima	guiding people on to a better path	Blackfoot
Isskanaitapstsi	relationship	Blackfoot
Isspi'po'totsp	responsibility	Blackfoot
Kanatsomitaiksi	Crazy Dog Society	Blackfoot
Kanotsisissin	All-Smoke Ceremony	Blackfoot
Kapuna	Elder	Hawaiian
Takehtaweyimowin	wisdom	Plains (y) Cree
ბყ C∇·პ·JΔ^j	wisdom	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Kiipatahpiisinoon	our ways of life	Blackfoot
Kimmapipitsin	kindness	Blackfoot
Kisteyitamowin	respect	Plains (y) Cree
ρ^U·C·JΔ^j	respect	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Kwayaskâtisiwin	honesty	Plains (y) Cree
ბ·ზ^b·b·rΔ^j	honesty	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic

Litotasimahpi Limitaiks	the dog days	Blackfoot
Mai'stóó	crow	Blackfoot
Makoyi	wolf	Blackfoot
Manitow	mystery or sacred power, i.e.,	Plains (y) Cree
ᑭᑭᑦ	spirits	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Miyo Wicehtowin	good relationships and	Plains (y) Cree
ᑭᑭ ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	harmony	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Mohkínstis	elbow for the Elbow River, referring to Calgary	Blackfoot
Nehiyaw	Cree (One person)	Plains (y) Cree
ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	Cree	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak	Cree-Métis (Nehiyaw -	Plains (y) Cree
ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	“person”; Otipemisiwak - “people who rule themselves”), also referred to as the Métis	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak	Cree-Métis woman	Plains (y) Cree
Iskwew		
ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ	Cree-Métis woman	Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Naaahsiks	grandparents (ceremonial or otherwise) or in-laws	Blackfoot
Naato'hkotok	Holy Rock (my son's name)	Blackfoot
Naato'hkotok Aakíí	Holy Rock Woman (my name)	Blackfoot
Naatoosi	the sun (this is Elder Chester Day Chief's traditional Blackfoot name)	Blackfoot
Naatoyapiits	spirits	Blackfoot
Nittapitapiisini	integrity	Blackfoot
Niitsitapii	person of truth, or the real people (Blackfoot word for themselves)	Blackfoot
Niitsitapiisinni	real people's way of life	Blackfoot
Niisto Anahyoak	I am	Blackfoot
Oki	hello	Blackfoot
Ohtsitappspii	the purpose of one's Niitsitapii existence	Blackfoot
Óóhktok	rock, also a character in the script	Blackfoot

Otipemisiwak ᑲᑎᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ	people who rule themselves”), also referred to as the Métis	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Ótsskaapin Aakiíí	Blue-Eyed Woman	Blackfoot
Piitaa	Golden Eagle	Blackfoot
Piitaspíí	Eagle Fancy Dancer	Blackfoot
Pimameyiimowin ᐱᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ	humility humility	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Poo'miikapíí	harmony, balance, unity	Blackfoot
Sákihitowin ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ	love love	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Siksikaitsitapi	all Blackfoot speaking tribes	Blackfoot
Sôhkeyitâmowin ᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦᑕᑦ	courage or bravery courage of bravery	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Tan'si ᑕᑦᑕᑦ	how are you? how are you?	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree Syllabic
Tsikinaakíí	a traditional word that cannot be fully translated	Blackfoot
Tâpwewin ᑕᑕᑦᑕᑦ	truth truth	Plains (y) Cree Plains (y) Cree

Glossary

All our relations / All my relations: A common phrase that signifies all the relationships one has, including family, clans, nations, communities, the natural world (earth, sky, water, plants, and animals), and the spirit world (Creator, ancestors, and spirits).

Decolonized/decolonizing/decolonization: Fellner (2018) asserts that decolonizing “may be conceptualized through the interconnected processes of deconstructing colonial ideologies and their manifestations, and reconstructing colonial discourse through Indigenous counter narratives” (p. 1).

Elder Advisory Committee: Also referred to as Council of Aawaahskataiksi. Bastien (2004) describes Aawaahskataiksi as the Elders from the Kainai Nation who have been transferred bundles and have now transferred them to others. These Elders are approached for ceremonies and advice by the rest of the community. The Elder Advisory Committee / Council of Aawaahskataiksi are knowledge holders and Elders deemed Eminent Scholars and employed by Red Crow Community College.

Eurocentric/Euro-settler/Euro-Western: These terms are used interchangeably to refer to dominant Western European worldviews that are colonial in nature. These terms refer to approaches of research, theory, practice, values, and ideologies that are grounded in these dominant colonial worldviews.

Kainai/Kainawa: The Blood Tribe, part of the Siksikaitstapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) and the largest reservation in Canada.

Indigenist paradigm / Indigenist research paradigm: Boyd (2014) defines Indigenist research as “a form of social enquiry based on the principles and philosophies of indigenous peoples, adopted by indigenous people and designed to be conducted by indigenous people within their

own communities” (p. 2). An Indigenist research paradigm is a culturally appropriate research paradigm that is considered to be wholly Indigenous throughout the whole process, and which encompasses an interrelated axiology, epistemology, ontology, and methodology. An Indigenist research paradigm yields findings consistent with this paradigm and is a pathway to Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous voices are present throughout each phase, and cultural traditions and protocols are followed.

Indigenous people(s) refers to Turtle Island’s First Peoples, which include First Nations, Métis, Inuit, non-status, Indian, Indigenous, First Peoples, and Aboriginal Peoples. This term further refers to all the Indigenous peoples excluded by the and/or division inherent in the definition of Aboriginal, a label that was imposed on Indigenous peoples by the colonial system. The term Indigenous peoples used in this thesis is intended to reflect, honour, and celebrate the diversity of Indigenous peoples. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (n.d.) defines Indigenous peoples as:

- Those who self-identify as Indigenous at the individual level and are accepted by the community as their member.
- Having historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies.
- Strongly linked to territories and surrounding natural resources.
- Possessing distinct social, economic. or political systems.
- Possessing distinct language, culture, and beliefs.
- Those who resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (p. 1)

Chapter 1: ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Mâcihtawin (The Starting Point)

Oki! Niisto Anahyoak Naato'hkotok Aakií. *Hello. I am Holy Rock Woman* (Blackfoot language). ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ / Tan'si! Kihcihtwaw Asinewiskwew Nitisiyihkason. Nevada Ouellette-Young Pine ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Môniyâw Wihowin. ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Niya Neyihaw Niya Otipemisiwiskwew. *How are you? My name is Holy Rock Woman. Nevada Ouellette-Young Pine is my white name. I am Cree, I am a Métis woman.* (Plains (y) Cree)

My Niitsitapii name was given to me by Elder Pa'ahtsi'kaiya'kiitao'ohkommi (Two Birds Facing and Chatting to Each Other) Bruce Day Chief, a grandfather in the Horns Society. The name came from a dream his wife, Mo'tano'akki (Can't See the Lady) Carla Wells had, about the Old Lady. As years went on, Bruce ended up finding the place that Carla's dream occurred with the Old Lady. When he went into the bush, he found a large rock that was shaped like mother Mary. The rock now sits in his altar in his home. Rocks are our oldest ancestors in the physical world. They are strong and they are an integral part of many of our ceremonies. When I was given this name, Pa'ahtsi'kaiya'kiitao'ohkommi did not know that my son also carries a variation of this name that was passed down from his grandfather. I am proud to carry the name I have been given and blessed to carry this name in connection to my son. I am ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Nehiyaw (Cree, also "person"), and ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak (Métis, also "the people who rule themselves"). I am daughter to Ótsskaapin Aakií (Blue-Eyed Woman in Niitsitapii) and Piitaa (Golden Eagle in Niitsitapii), who are also known as Donna and Gord Ouellette. I am the granddaughter of Rose and Bill Podmeroff and Helen and Leonard Ouellette. I am wife to my husband Piitaspîi (Eagle Fancy Dancer in Blackfoot), Kyle Young Pine, and

of my story are interwoven with the research story, providing you, the reader, with context that informs how I share relation to this project (Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008). By sharing my story, I increase my relational accountability by exploring how I am woven into this research and how my relationships with the people I worked with throughout this research are interconnected within the retelling of this story as a thesis (Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Furthermore, as I carried out Indigenist research with Indigenous people, I came to understand the importance of sharing my own personal story in this research and with the Aawaystamattsa. This is an act of reciprocity and one of the foundations of Indigenous research (Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Stories are created from our connection with the world and remind us who we are as Indigenous peoples, while weaving in knowledge that explains the importance of relationships (King, 2003; Kovach, 2009).

You will also notice that in various sections I specify the primary audience(s) to whom I am writing. This first chapter is written to you, the reader. The second chapter aligns with a typical Euro-Western thesis being written within a Euro-Western institution. Chapter 2 includes a thorough review of the literature that focuses on (1) the historical and ongoing harms experienced by Indigenous peoples, (2) the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), (3) community-based health education programs, (4) Indigenous approaches to wellness, (5) counselling with Indigenous clients, and (6) the history of research with Indigenous peoples. Chapter 3 is addressed to faculty and scholars who will be potentially supporting Indigenous students in conducting research. In this chapter I describe the Indigenist research paradigm of $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{h}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ /Isihcikêwin (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). Honouring the teachings I have received, I have chosen to limit my thesis to four chapters. Chapter 4, guided by the epistemology of $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{h}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ /Isihcikêwin, combines findings and discussions in the form of a

script. Chapter 4 is written to two audiences: (1) Indigenous scholars and (2) you, the reader. This chapter honours the significance the number four holds for Indigenous peoples. For us, everything comes in fours. There are four directions, four elements, and four seasons (Bernie Gladue, Big Stone Cree Nation & Fort Good Hope, lives in Tsuu' Tina Nation, personal communication, 2020). In Niitsitapii teachings, there are four cycles of life: birth, adolescence, adult, and Elder. Niitsitapii creation has four levels, all of which you would find painted on a Niitsitapii tipi: cosmos, air, four-legged, ground (Pretty Shields, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2020).

In most fields, including psychology, mentorship for students wishing to engage in Indigenist research is sparse. I hope in writing to these various audiences in this thesis to be able to bridge the worlds of academia and Indigenist ways of knowing in order to support the Indigenous students who will come after me.

Intention

The intention of this research is to explore students' experiences of participating in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni²: Real People's Way of Life programs, which take place in Niitsitapii territory in collaboration with Niitsitapii Elders and knowledge holders, using an Indigenous paradigm. The Aawaystamattsa who participated in this research are from various backgrounds, including Niitsitapii, Nakoda, Euro-settler, and Filipino. While most Eurocentric approaches to research see benefit in removing oneself from the research, in Indigenist research, the researcher is an essential part of the process. I am a part of the research journey (Wilson, 2008). I spent time attending the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs as an

² Blackfoot for real people's way of life

Aawaystamattsa and a helper, which fundamentally built relationship with the other Aawaystamattsa. This process will be discussed in greater detail as the thesis proceeds. This was a collaborative process that intended to honour all voices throughout the process. As an essential part, I have done my best to honour the teachings I have received from each Aawaystamattsa and to represent the teachings in a way that speaks for us (the Aawaystamattsa and me) as a collective. The Aawahskataa Advisor for this thesis is Mahtsaottaan (Pretty Shields) Calvin Williams.

I am using $\Delta\prime^{\prime\prime}\Gamma\Omega\Delta^{\prime}$ /Isihcikêwin (Fellner, 2016, 2018a), an Indigenist research paradigm developed by Fellner (2016, 2018a see Glossary). The work contained herein is informed by my own interpretation of how I understand $\Delta\prime^{\prime\prime}\Gamma\Omega\Delta^{\prime}$ /Isihcikêwin and informed by all the experiences and teachings I have received up to this point (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). Boyd (2014) describes Indigenist research in the following way:

Its primary purpose is to allow Indigenous people to represent their worlds in ways they can only do for themselves, using their own processes to express experiences, realities and understandings that are unique to Indigenous society, history and culture. It achieves this purpose by drawing on Indigenous philosophical understandings of the world and places itself against what is seen as an imposed (Western) view that does not acknowledge Indigenous ontology and epistemology. (p. 2)

It is important to note that despite the fact that Indigenous peoples have been conducting research in their own communities since the beginning of time, the definition of Indigenist research is a fairly recent concept within academia. This would be a topic worthy of research to further refine. Wilson et al. (2019) state:

Just because a researcher is Indigenous, doesn't mean their methodology is Indigenist; Indigenous researchers pursue research using all sorts of philosophical and methodological approaches. And, by extension non Indigenous researchers can also undertake Indigenist research, provided that they are working from a relational understanding of reality, engaging respectfully with Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Peoples, and learning how to behave themselves properly. (p.8)

In regards to settler research that is not Indigenist, in that it does not come from a relational understanding of reality, Kovach (2018) uses the term Indigenous research as an umbrella term that encompasses research with Indigenous peoples within Indigenous contexts that utilize various Eurocentric and/or Indigenous methodological approaches. Indigenous methodologies, which falls under her definition of Indigenous research, are based on Indigenous knowledge systems. The researcher using Indigenous methodologies would have a firm understanding of Indigenous knowledge.

A key teaching that has informed my intention of this research is a teaching from the late Andy Black Water who talked about knowledge as being both a living thing and a responsibility. When we receive knowledge, we then have the responsibility to do good with it (late Andy Black Water, Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2017). This teaching guided the writing of this thesis. The knowledge I received from the Aawaystamattsa in this research has been received with the understanding that it is my responsibility to create good with the conversations, to share the conversations in a good way; that is, in a way that will benefit the community and Indigenous people as a whole. It is my Isspi'po'totsp (responsibility) to Iihpkim Moottspi (pass on the teachings I have received; late Andy Black Water, Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2017; Werklund School of Education, 2020). From this thesis, recommendations in the forms of

ᑭᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ Macastēhamānakēwin (Cree word for offerings) are provided to Iihpkim Mootspi to other communities that wish to increase their community's capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways.

ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Isīhcikêwin (The Way Things Are Done)

The interrelated and fluid epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology of this research is a ceremony. It has been approached as a sacred task of coming to know. Like ceremony, it is a transformative journey. This research is a ceremonial quest that honours traditions and protocols. Karlee Fellner (2016, 2018a) articulated this wholly Indigenous research paradigm, which she adapted to contemporary times through using conventional tools, such as transcribing, to honour those voices involved in the research. This research has been influenced by many teachings of various Nations reflecting the multiple teachings I have received while living as a primarily urban ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak Iskwew (Cree/Métis woman) on Siksikaitsitapi territory (territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy). This research has been guided by relational accountability (see below), a fundamental concept in Indigenist research that encompasses our responsibilities to all of our relations (see Glossary for definition of all my relations). From this point forward, the term ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Isīhcikêwin will be referred to by the Cree Syllabic only, except for in section/chapter titles. All other Cree syllabics will provide translation.

Relational Accountability

Most Indigenous paradigms evolve from a specific territory and are infused with tribal knowledge specific to that territory (Kovach, 2009). Given that I have not been raised with Niitsitapii teachings and that I have my own ancestors teachings as an Indigenous individual, I have chosen to use a paradigm that reflects me and my ancestors' experiences and the various

teachings I have received. Given my connections to the community and ceremonial practices within this territory over the past 10 years, these teachings are fundamentally, nonverbally infused in this process. $\Delta r^{j} \Gamma \Omega \Delta^{j}$ is a relatively small snapshot into a very complex inquiry, one that is evolving and fluid. An example of how Niitsitapii teachings may be infused, is through the understanding that the written aspects of $\Delta r^{j} \Gamma \Omega \Delta^{j}$ (paradigms in the methodology section) do not encompass all teachings I have received in my life or all teachings that guide my way of being in the world, which includes the ceremonies I am part of. It is important to acknowledge my gratitude toward the Elders, knowledge holders, and cultural mentors I have that come from Kainawa, Siksika and Amskapi Piikani³ who practice various ceremonies within Siksikaitsitapi territory. The intention of this research, and consistent with Indigenist research, is not to make generalized claims for the community but rather to honour the relationships with and voices of the Aawaystamattsa involved in this research (Boyd, 2014; Fellner, 2016; Martin, 2003; Wilson, 2008).

My Niitsitapii family and the Aawahskataa Advisor for this thesis is Mahtsaottaan encouraged me to locate myself as part of the community. I am an adopted member of the community. Mahtsaottaan reminded me, during our final review that in Niitsitapii ways, when one is adopted or married into the community, one is considered to be part of the community. Mahtsaottaan also shared that despite not using a Niitsitapii paradigm to conduct this research that as Indigenous peoples we can all relate (Pretty Shields, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2020).

As an Indigenous person with an embodied understanding of the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism within education, I am cautious about the task of transferring this

³ Blackfoot people, or Southern Piegan, located on the American side of the Canada-USA border.

knowledge into academia. As an Indigenous therapist, educator, and individual, I am aware of the need for Eurocentric institutions to acknowledge our ways of knowing and healing as valid. I believe that when this occurs it will have beneficial impacts for the future generations, our present-day Indigenous peoples, and our ancestors. With that being said, I am inspired by the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs as these programs' content and pedagogy has demonstrated how to share knowledge in a good way. Another teaching I received from one of the Aawaystamattsa in this research is that there is a way to share enough information so that Eurocentric institutions can understand, while also respecting the sacredness of our processes, our teachings, and the knowledge (Tisha Bromley-Wadsworth, Kainai Nation, lives in Coalhurst, Alberta, personal communication, 2020). This particular teaching has been infused within my intention, and that is to write this thesis in a good way, honouring the sacredness of our ways and meeting the requirements of the institution.

The Aawaystamattsa who were part of this research were included every step of the way. All cultural knowledge infused throughout this thesis has been cited to acknowledge where it came from, in addition to receiving approval from the individual to include it in my thesis. Everyone has been more than happy to be acknowledged in this way, and was happy to contribute. This process has involved numerous informal conversations and texts with my friends and family, cultural mentors, knowledge holders, and Elders who are from the Siksikaitsitapi territories. These acts of relational accountability have been infused along the way.

To honour the diversity of teachings and as a form of relational accountability, I do my best to cite where all the teachings I am drawing on have come from throughout my research. While I am a monolingual English speaker, I draw on the Niitsitapii language and my

(Absolon & Willett, 2005; Fellner, 2016; Kovach, 2012; Steinhauer, 2001). The stories I include in this thesis reflect my current truth and what I know at this current time (Wilson, 2008).

I am ᑕᑦᑲᑦᑭᑦ/Nehiyawak, ᑮᑎᑎᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak, Russian, and Polish with Anishinaabe, Nakoda/Dakota ancestry. I acknowledge and honour all my relations. All of my grandparents on both sides of my family come from Saskatchewan. My immediate family has been in the Mohkínstis⁴ region since the late 1950s. I come from a strong line of ᑕᑦᑲᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak lineage. My ᑕᑦᑲᑦᑭᑦ/Nehiyawak, ᑮᑎᑎᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak, Anishinaabe, Nakoda and Dakota ancestors had kin throughout many communities, spanning the Treaty 4, Treaty 6, and Treaty 7 territories, Montana, Minnesota, and North Dakota, maintaining connections in many communities but with no specific affiliations given the context of colonization. When one of my ᑮᑎᑎᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak ancestors married a First Nations, they would have to give up their Indian identity/Status and became known ᑮᑎᑎᑦᑭᑦ/Otipemisiwak. The church and other impacts of colonization have tried to erase our Indian identity. My ancestors comes from Saddle Lake Cree Nation in Alberta, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa First Nations in North Dakota and Little Shell Reservation in North Dakota—Throughout the duration of the research I have been guided, unknowingly to all of these places for ceremony and powwows. I now understand that it was my ancestors that lead me to connect with the land in the places from which they were from. Given that I have spent my entire life in the territories where Treaty 7 was signed, my cultural teachings and experiences of my Indigeneity are formed in relation to this place.

⁴ Mohkínstis: Blackfoot for elbow for the Elbow River, referring to Calgary

While I grew up aware that I was Indigenous, we did not regularly practice Indigenous culture or language in our home. Our family is visibly a blend of Indigenous and European ancestry. When my uncle, my grandpa's brother, passed away, I attended our first family ceremony on the Tsuu' Tina Nation. Growing up, I didn't get to meet my dad's father, Leonard, who was born in Bear Lake, Saskatchewan. I saw pictures of him and all I knew was that he was First Nations. He passed away one year before I was born. I was always told by my parents that I would have been my grandpa's favourite. I always felt connected to him and somehow longed for him without knowing him. I have connected with him spiritually in recent years, and he is a great support and helps me a lot.

My father comes from a big family of eight children: six brothers and two sisters. My dad was raised mostly by his siblings. His mom, Helen, had to work long hours to make ends meet and feed all the children. My dad's father, Leonard, wasn't around all the time. He would leave for long periods of time, coming back to his family every now and then. My dad just says grandpa was a happy guy. He loved to laugh and dance and sing. He was a funny man. On the other hand, his kids also knew that when my grandpa told them to do something, they listened. And my dad, much like his dad, doesn't talk about much of his childhood and harbours no negative feelings towards his dad for not being around.

Leonard's father, my great-grandfather, was born in Lewiston, Montana. My ancestors were part of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa First Nations and the ᑭᐁᐃᐅᑦ ᑭᐁᐃᐅᑦ/Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak, who had children and moved to Montana to form a distinct ᑭᐁᐃᐅᑦ/Otipemisiwak community in Spring Creek, which today is known as Lewiston. This group of ᑭᐁᐃᐅᑦ/Otipemisiwak are still located in this area; however, my ancestors went back to Turtle Mountain reservation, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta, creating new

alliances through marriages between other ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak and First Nations. My great-great-great-grandfather Antione Ouellette, who was ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak, is well known as a great activist and independent trader who fought the government for the ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak to not have to give up their Indian identity and rights. He was part of the survey of the international boundary along the 49th parallel, Treaty 7 negotiations between the Crown and the Niitsitapii, negotiations between the Lakota and the US government in Wood Mountain, the campaign against the Buffalo Ordinance, and the North-West Rebellion and he was an escort and friend of Chief Sitting Bull. Our ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak history is rich and very well documented (Hogue, 2015).

My grandfather's mom left when her children were very young, and they were raised by their dad, who married a French-speaking lady—she was ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak. My aunt told me that this lady was very strict and forbade them to speak ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak. They were told, “You're not ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak, you are French.” While I mourn that our ᐃᑎᖃᓯᐱᖅ/Otipemisiwak language was taken from us, I have come to understand that hiding their Indigeneity was imposed on them by the hand of the government.

I struggled with addiction from about age 12 or 13 and spent many years in and out of treatment, counselling, and hospitals that used Eurocentric approaches to mental health. None of these approaches were helpful. At the age of 21, my grandmother—who was like another mother to me, died in my arms. It was quite traumatic and gory how it happened, but I understand now that she chose me to be with her when she passed as this set the path for me to change the way I was living my life and truly heal. Early in sobriety when I was in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), one of my cultural mentors, Iistakaanaps, introduced me to my first sweat

lodge. These were Morris Crow's ceremonies, from Kainai. It felt familiar. I felt like me. I felt whole. I felt like everything was going to be okay. I felt like I wanted to live. I started to attend more ceremonies. This became a way of life for me for about 3 years.

Something happened in my life, and I abandoned these teachings for a few months. I started to drink again. I was determined I could be a social drinker and was fed up with the "brainwashing" I experienced in AA. This time my rock bottom came fairly quickly, and it was low. It was during my undergraduate degree. I started to drink on the weekends, which then turned into I don't know how many days. Thankfully, my friend checked up on me when I didn't show up for our first week of class. She showed up and took me to her house. The next morning my friend dropped me off at the Fort Macleod detox.

I don't remember a lot of my stay. It was familiar; it seemed like the story of my life. Going to detox. And I remember those deep, dark feelings—I don't know if you have ever experienced them, but the ones that are the lowest of low. I remember the flies landing on my face as I tried to sleep. I laugh about it now, because anyone who has been to Fort Macleod detox in summer will know what I mean. I was lying there in my emotional pain unable to sleep, and this man opened the door and came in with a frying pan and smudge. I remember the smell; I remember how I felt. I felt like everything was going to be okay. That I could get through this setback. That I could pick myself up. I remember thinking "Oh yes, I forgot about you!"—meaning the smudge. The man continued to smudge our rooms each and every night, letting me know that I was going to be okay.

When I got out of detox I knew where to go and what I had to do. To the sweat I went! It was from this moment on that my life truly began to change. Something I always struggled with—my own Indigeneity—since I had white skin privilege, was now something that was

integral in saving my life. I began praying, smudging every day and helping at many ceremonies. Ceremony and prayer again became a way of life for me and helped me work through my addiction and trauma. Embracing my own Indigenous identity and engaging in my culture saved my life. This was only the beginning of how my life would become culturally and spiritually full.

Today, my husband, son, and I live a good life full of culture. Through my husband's side, we have many blood relatives on the Kainai Nation. We also have a lot of friends and adopted families that take us as their own. We usually don't use the word adopted; we just say family. Our Ninna (father) Chester Day Chief, whose Niitsitapii name, Naatoosi, means the sun, is the leader of the Sundance where I dance. Over the years, my husband, my son, and I have spent most of our free time on the Blood Reserve at various ceremonies helping, praying and singing, picking and learning about plant medicine, making drums and drumming, singing, powwow dancing, beading, making moccasins, and just visiting. It's been a beautiful experience watching my parents engage in this way of life as well. Both of my parents participate in various ceremonies and cultural activities. My husband and I have been living the good life, free of alcohol and drugs for 7 years!

Relationship with the Research

Relationships are fundamental. They are a vital life force for us Indigenous peoples, and this way of being is transferred to the way we conduct research (Wilson, 2008). This section describes how my relationship with my research topic was formed and further maintains my relational accountability.

In spring of 2016, I met a lady at a powwow who I had no clue would become one of my academic and cultural mentors. My husband, who is a fancy dancer, had been telling me for a long time to start powwow dancing. I struggled with my Indigeneity and felt I was "too white" to

embarrassed. I questioned myself. I still felt split between my Indigenous identity and my white skin privilege. Did I have any idea what I was talking about? Is it my place to talk about these things?

All of the theories and interventions we were learning lacked Indigenous perspectives that would help Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. I remember asking a lot of questions regarding the relevance for Indigenous communities. Something was missing—the entire content of this thesis both directly and indirectly speak to what was missing. I continued to be “the Indigenous voice” in our cohort. My cohort and professor were very supportive. I even took it upon myself to invite Indigenous presenters to come to our classes. One of the presenters was Dr. Karlee Fellner, the jingle dress dancer from the powwow.

After connecting with Karlee again, I found out she was working on an experiential program with the Kainai Nation focused on land-based approaches to wellness. This kind of education is essentially what I had been asking for throughout my master’s program. Before I knew it, I was in Kainai, sitting in on the class (the Poo’miikapii Class) and helping with the Elders. It was amazing to be in a classroom where Elders were the instructors. This was the answer! This is what will help our Indigenous peoples who are struggling with addiction and other symptoms of colonialism. As I continued to spend time with the Poo’miikapii class, I realized I was essentially engaging in community-based research. I was attending classes, ceremonies, land-based activities, being an Aawaystamattsa, helping with art workshops, planning powwows, and speaking with the students, Elders, and instructors. It wasn’t long before I was offered an official research assistant position on Karlee’s team with the University of Calgary, researching the program. For the first time, I was engaging in an academic process that was in line with who I was. It didn’t feel like work.

My first experience of a wholly Indigenous approach to research excited me. It was the first time I actually enjoyed research. I started speaking with Karlee about my master's research, and she brought up the idea of evaluating the program for my thesis. A few conversations and several forms and signatures later, my master's topic was set. The jingle dress dancer I met in 2016 was now one of my thesis co-supervisors. I was embarking on a research journey that would be deeply transformative—and so much more meaningful than I ever could have imagined.

Indigenous Research

Research has been, and in many instances remains, harmful and exploitative of Indigenous peoples. Research with Indigenous peoples is largely conducted non Indigenous researchers; who live and understand life through a Eurocentric view of the world (Bastien, 2004; Holmes, 2000; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). However, more culturally relevant research is being carried out and published by Indigenous scholars and researchers (Archibald, 2008; Deloria, 1991; Fellner, 2016; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et.al, 2019). Indigenous scholars are redefining the way Indigenous research needs to be conducted within Indigenous communities. There is a call for research to be done in a more culturally appropriate way that honours Indigenous protocols and culture. There is also a call for research to be carried out using Indigenist paradigms (Wilson, 2008; Wilson et.al, 2019). When research is done using an Indigenist paradigm, it is likely that the findings reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing and are relevant to community.

Although there have been considerable shifts to decolonize research and include Indigenous perspectives within research, this is not enough. When research is conducted though a mixture of Indigenous and Eurocentric paradigms, Indigenous elements are at risk of being

subsumed within the dominant approach given the colonial power differential between the two approaches (Gone, 2013). Thus, using an Indigenist research paradigm prioritizes Indigenous voices and ways of knowing, being, and doing, which are privileged throughout each phase of research (Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et.al, 2019). Importantly, an Indigenist paradigm is congruent with who I am as an Indigenous woman and reflects my worldview and ways of being. Therefore, I chose to carry out this research using an Indigenist paradigm.

The Programs

Students taking the programs have the option of obtain a master's-level certificate for Poo'miikapii, a master's-level diploma for subsequently completing Niitsitapiisinni, with the option to continue to complete the final step of the interdisciplinary MEd online and obtain a master's degree. The first two years, Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni are taught on the land and in community. The third component in which would grant them a master's-level degree has the option to be taught online or on campus at the University of Calgary. (For a description of the courses offered in the Niitsitapiisinni program, see Appendix B.)

In the fall of 2016, Karlee approached Roy Weasel Fat, president of Red Crow Community College in Kainai, and initiated a conversation about setting up a land-based program in Niitsitapii approaches to wellness. Roy invited Karlee to meet with the some of the Elders who were part of the Elders' Advisory Council (see Glossary), which at the time consisted of Bruce Wolf Child, Sophie Tail Feathers, Evelyn Striped Wolf, Calvin Williams, Georgette Fox, Andy Black Water (now deceased), and Pete Standing Alone (now deceased). Community member and Indigenous scholar Dr. Betty Bastien was also part of these meetings, in addition to Kainai Board of Education Wellness coordinator and future student of the program Tisha Wadsworth. The Elders were excited about the idea, and immediately the team began working

with Karlee to design the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness program. This community-driven program consists of four courses that involve learning on the land with Elders through direct experience of traditional Niitsitapii approaches to wellness. Karlee then obtained funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to develop, implement, and evaluate the program.

The first cohort began in July 2017. The program was aptly timed, as the Blood Tribe declared a state of emergency in 2015 due to fentanyl overdoses and declared a second state of emergency in 2018 (Blood Tribe Police, 2015; Southwick, 2018). Courses in the Poo'miikapii program draw on Niitsitapii pedagogical practices surrounding Niitsitapii approaches to wellness. The pedagogy emphasizes decolonized, culturally relevant, and historically sensitive community work, service provision, and education while honouring trauma wisdom. The community-directed program is taught by Elders, knowledge holders, and instructors and delivered on the land through experiential learning, oral knowledge sharing, and cultural mentorship. The Poo'miikapii program is geared towards service providers, educators, and other community workers who are working with Indigenous populations or who plan to in the future. (For a description of the courses offered in the Poo'miikapii program, see Appendix A.) Through this process students come to embody Niitsitapii ways of knowing, being, and doing (Werklund School of Education, 2020). Successful program completion of the Poo'miikapii program provides learners with the option of obtaining a master's-level certificate.

Initiated by a community request, a second program was developed titled Niitsitapiisinni: Real Peoples' Way of Life. Courses in the Niitsitapiisinni program focus on cultural revitalization through Niitsitapii language, history, politics, art, and storytelling. This second program was delivered in a similar manner as Poo'miikapii—collaborative instruction between a

primary instructor and knowledge holders. Niitsitapiisinni further collaborated with Amskapi Piikani⁵, featuring courses in Kainai at RCC and at Blackfeet Community College (BCC) in Browning, Montana. The collaborations transcended the imposed colonial border and offered unique learning opportunities for students on both sides of the Canada-USA border. The Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni programs engage in reciprocity by providing community members in Kainai and the surrounding communities with the opportunity to access and integrate these approaches to address health disparities into their work and daily lives to address health disparities. Learners who subsequently completed the Niitsitapiisinni program, had the option to obtain a master's level diploma or continue to the third component, in which they would be able to receive a master's level degree upon successful completion. From 2017 to 2020, over 50 Siksikaitstapi students graduated from at least one of these programs. Members of the first cohort just completed the third component, with 11 Siksikaitstapi students and one non-Indigenous ally receiving a Master of Education degree in Fall 2020.

Strides Towards Reconciliation

While the development and implementation of these programs were community driven and focused first and foremost on direct and immediate benefits in relation to community wellness, a secondary benefit is that these programs also address a number of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015b) in the area of health and education. Areas of education that are addressed include development of culturally relevant curricula that encompass Indigenous language courses (#10) which aid in language preservation/revitalization (#14), and creating postsecondary education programs in Indigenous languages (#16). The programs also address areas of health that include recognizing

⁵ Blackfeet people, or Southern Piegan, located on the American side of the Canada-USA border.

the value of Indigenous healing practices and implementing them in collaboration with Elders and healers (#22), increasing the numbers of Indigenous health professionals and providing cultural competency training for professionals working with Indigenous peoples (#23), and providing an Indigenous health course in a postsecondary health program (#24). The courses also aim to respond to the call for Indigenous healing centres that address the spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical harms related to colonization (#21) through engaging students in a service-learning project involving community-based program development and design that addresses the holistic wellness needs of local Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015b).

Summary

The intent of this study is to explore, using an Indigenist research paradigm, students' experiences of participating in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs. This research will inform Indigenous health education as part of a larger project of community-based health service development and implementation. It is my hope that teachings and recommendations in form of $\text{LL}^{\wedge}\text{U}^{\#}\triangleleft\text{L}\underline{\text{Q}}\text{q}\Delta^{\cdot}$ /Macastēhamānakēwin may be helpful for Indigenous communities and academic institutions in supporting community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways.

Next, in Chapter 2, I review the literature on (1) the historical and ongoing harms experienced by Indigenous peoples, (2) the TRC, (3) community-based health education programs, (4) Indigenous approaches to wellness, (5) counselling with Indigenous clients, and (6) the history of research with Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 2: ᐅᐊᐱᓐᓂᐊᐅᓐ ᐅᓐᐅᓐᓂᐊᐅᓐ/Masinahikan Kiskihtamôna (Knowledge That Comes From Books)

This chapter begins with a thorough review of Canada's role in colonization and treatment of Indigenous peoples. This includes an Indigenous perspective on forced assimilation, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the ongoing impacts of the child welfare system. I then discuss the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and how the field of education is responding to the TRC's findings. In particular, I review land-based postsecondary programs as a means to address the TRC findings. The current body of literature on community-driven programs in postsecondary education remains small, which speaks to the gap in the literature surrounding this topic. I then provide a section on traditional Indigenous approaches to wellness. Also included is a review of how the field of psychology is responding to the TRC and the need for culturally relevant counselling and approaches to wellness with Indigenous peoples. I end this review with a brief summary on the history of research with Indigenous peoples and the growing presence of Indigenist research in academia. Given the history and continuation of culturally inappropriate research with Indigenous peoples, this literature review intentionally draws on the work of Indigenous and allied scholars whose work is acknowledged as culturally relevant and credible among the wider community of Indigenous scholars and stakeholders.

Historical Treatment of Indigenous Peoples

Processes of colonization have imposed centuries of oppression, forced assimilation, marginalization, and absorption into a global economy on Indigenous peoples in Canada (Loppie, Reading & Wien, 2009; TRC, 2015a). Colonization has also involved indirect and direct acts of genocide (TRC, 2015a), including exploitation of lands and resources, biochemical warfare through smallpox-infested blanket distribution, and head-hunting bounties (Wilson,

2008). To further the aim of colonization, the Government of Canada (GoC) through its formally instituted policies lawfully intended to eliminate Indigenous peoples' rights, treaties, and governments through the legal processes of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Indian Act, and the British North American Act (Gray, 2011; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada [INAC], 1996; Martin, 2003; TRC, 2015a). The goal of these legal processes, which provided a foundation for Indian Residential Schools (IRS) and the Sixties Scoop (Gray, 2011; Sinclair, 2007), focused on absorbing Indigenous peoples into mainstream society (McDougall, 2008). In regard to the Indian Act (1920), former deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott expressed: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department, that is the whole object of this Bill" (McDougall, 2008, para. 25).

Treaties that were signed between Indigenous Nations and Europeans did not recognize Indigenous sovereignty or cultural laws (Baskin, 2016; Henderson, 2000; TRC, 2015b; Wilson, 2003). They reductively viewed Indigenous people as primitive and believed they had no ability to negotiate their lands (Martin, 2003; Smith, 2012). As such, when treaties were signed, they used European language, mainly English (Wilson, 2003, 2008). Many have criticized the authenticity of these treaties given the language barriers and vast differences between Indigenous and European worldviews, further questioning whether Indigenous leaders were even present during these signings (Henderson, 2000). Nonetheless, the signing of treaties set the stage for the colonial government to rule over and control Indigenous peoples.

Sanctioned by law, Indigenous peoples were removed from their lands and forced onto small reserves on land that was often undesirable by the Euro-settlers (Martin, 2003; TRC,

2015a). Language, spiritual, and cultural expressions were banned, and anyone who continued to practice them was prosecuted. In an attempt to dismantle the nations and assimilate Indigenous peoples into dominant Eurocentric society, the government categorized Indigenous people into an either/or identity, which led to the creation of Indian status. Historically, Indian status, which permitted certain rights to status holders, could be voluntarily surrendered through enfranchisement or revoked for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, attending university, marrying a non-Indigenous person, marrying a Métis person, voting, or joining the military (Baskin, 2016; Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015a). Indian status recognition by the government perpetuates colonialism and further divides Indigenous peoples. The category of status Indian excludes the First Peoples from the North (the Inuit), the distinct group who are a mixture of Indigenous and European descent (the Métis), and those who lost their status by one of the means identified above. The exclusion of these groups from the definition of status Indian resulted in some Indigenous people having fewer rights than others, based on arbitrary government categories.

The Constitution Act 1982 uses the term Aboriginal, which refers to Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada (GoC, 2020a). The Indian Act 1985 currently defines an Indian as “a person who pursuant to this Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian” (GoC, 2020b, Section 2). Inuit is defined as “the place where Inuit live” (GoC, 2019, Section 2). The Inuit, formerly referred to as Eskimos, are Indigenous peoples of the North and are spanned across northern communities in Canada which include Inuvialuit (NWT and Yukon), Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Labrador) and Nunavut (GoC, 2019, Section 2). The definition of Métis, formerly referred to as half-breed, is controversial due to the Métis’ own self-governance and historical lack of governmental recognition. The Métis are a culturally

distinct group which emerged as a result of kinship relations and marriages between (mainly) Indigenous women and European men in the 18th and 19th centuries (Hogue, 2015). Each of these three groups that fit under the term Aboriginal have their own problematic histories within the Canadian context of colonization. As a result of colonial objectives, these imposed categories have divided and continue to divide Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Although the term Aboriginal (GoC, 2020a) may be convenient, it is an oversimplification and does not acknowledge the diversity of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Furthermore, the government's division fails to acknowledge those who lost their status at the government's hands. First Nations, which includes both status and non-status "Indians," is a term used by the Assembly of First Nations to refer to the original inhabitants of North America (Alberta Teachers Association, 2016). Recently, many organizations and institutions have shifted their language to use the term Indigenous instead of Aboriginal or First Nations. One notable shift took place in 2015 when the former Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) became Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). More recently, INAC was divided into two departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (GoC, 2020c). The Canadian government has a tremendous amount of work to do before it can reconcile the inequalities faced by Indigenous peoples as a result of imposed classification of identity.

Beginning in the 1800s, Canada's first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, approved the formation of the IRS. The main goal of this movement was to eradicate Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing through the imposition of Euro-settler language and culture. IRS were a foundational mechanism to perpetuate cultural and physical genocide (Canadian Psychological Association & Psychology Foundation of Canada, 2018; TRC, 2015a). Indigenous children were forcibly taken away from their parents and placed in IRS that were run by Roman Catholic,

Anglican, and other church systems. Children were forbidden to speak their languages, prohibited from practicing their cultures, forced to have their hair cut and wear institutional uniforms, and separated from siblings. Sir John A. Macdonald referred to Indigenous peoples as savages and believed the residential schools were needed to convert Indigenous children into a “civilized” state. He stated to the House of Commons in 1883: “The [Indian] child lives with his parents, who are savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write” (Parliament of Canada, 1883, pp. 1107–1108). Therefore, the objective of the IRS was to eliminate cultural connections within families and prevent culture and language from being passed through the generations (TRC, 2015a).

IRS were poorly built, heated, and ventilated. Mortality rates were high as disease spread rapidly through the schools, and the children were poorly dressed and nourished. Many children who attended IRS experienced physical, sexual, mental, emotional, and spiritual abuse (Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015a). Many children never returned home. The last residential school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996. Following the IRS, the child welfare system began to replicate the same abuses and act as a mechanism to continue the process of assimilation (Baskin, 2006; Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015a).

The Sixties Scoop in the 1960s marks the era when the child welfare system removed Indigenous children from their homes, families, and communities, and placed them with non-Indigenous families. This era began as the IRS were still ongoing. Many of the non-Indigenous homes were located outside of Canada, mainly in the United States of America and sometimes overseas (Gray, 2011; Sinclair, 2007; TRC, 2015a). The horrific impacts of the IRS were not considered and again children were placed within a system that applied Eurocentric notions of normality to households (Gray, 2011). This era continued to support the loss of cultural

transmission that would typically be found within family and community settings. As with IRS, many children who were part of the Sixties Scoop also endured physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual abuse (Gray, 2011; Sinclair, 2007), creating further generations of trauma and deep spiritual wounds (Duran, 2006).

Presently, overrepresentation of Indigenous children continues in the foster care system (Schofield, 2011; Sinclair, 2007). According to Statistics Canada (2016), Indigenous children make up 48% of all children in care, yet represent only 7% of all children in Canada. In Alberta, only 29% of Indigenous children in care live with at least one Indigenous foster parent (Statistics Canada, 2016). The TRC (2015a) refers to the child welfare system as the modern-day IRS. John Beaucage coined the term Millennium Scoop to describe today's extreme rates of overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the foster care system. He points out that this number exceeds that of the IRS legacy (Schofield, 2011).

Formation of the TRC

Based on the continued injustice and intentional acts of erasure from history, land, and culture, Indigenous nations came together to demand recognition and reparation. In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a public apology for the IRS (INAC, 2010). The TRC was formed that same year to address the impacts of IRS on survivors and communities. The TRC further aimed to educate all Canadians regarding the effects of IRS and actions needed on the part of the country and its citizens to address these effects (TRC, 2015a).

Public historic records on IRS and their continued impacts on Indigenous peoples, families, and communities were created as part of the truth and reconciliation process (TRC, 2015a). The inquiry continued for seven years and spanned across Canada. In 2015, the TRC released its final report, as well as 94 Calls to Action (CTA) which provide a framework for how

to move forward (TRC, 2014a, 2015b). The CTA are divided into several areas, such as child welfare, education, language and culture, health, and justice. The CTA highlight the actions required on the part of multiple stakeholders and systems in Canada to move towards reconciliation with survivors and their relatives. The TRC (2015a) defines reconciliation as:

an ongoing individual and collective process [that] will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada. Reconciliation may occur between any of the above groups. (p. 16)

It is estimated that more than 150,000 Indigenous children, spanning over 139 residential schools throughout Canada were directly impacted by IRS, and thousands more were apprehended during the Sixties Scoop (TRC, 2015a). Ongoing and historical impacts of the IRS and the Sixties and Millennial Scoops have resulted in an overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care, as well as broader health and social disparities among Indigenous people, including mental health issues (Corntassel, 2009, Duran & Duran, 1995; Gone, 2008; Gray, 2011; Fellner, 2016, 2018).

Education and the TRC

Education will require significant effort to reconcile the way it failed Indigenous peoples in the past. Eleven of the 94 CTA address education (TRC, 2015b). Since the CTAs were released, universities across Canada have been confronted with the challenge to Indigenize as an effort of reconciliation (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). While the term reconciliation has become popular due to the TRC, Alfred (2014) suggests shifting focus from reconciliation to

decolonization, explaining that decolonizing (see Glossary) fundamentally encompasses reconciliation. These issues have been an important area of focus given that many institutions have been making efforts to address the CTA.

As a means to understand how successful the process of Indigenizing the academy has been, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) conducted a qualitative study that included anonymous online surveys of 25 Indigenous and allied academics from a number of different institutions. Based on their findings, these authors assert that Indigenization is a three-part spectrum ranging from least to most radical. They identify the first phase as Indigenous inclusion, the middle phase as reconciliation Indigenization, and the third and most radical phase as decolonial Indigenization. The data from the online survey suggests that most institutions are caught between the first and second phases (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Within the first phase, Indigenous inclusion, some institutions are hiring more Indigenous faculty (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). The visibility of Indigenous faculty is seen to be part of the decolonization process; however, most faculty members lack the administrative and collegial support to carry out the changes that need to occur at the systemic level within the institution. As a result, Indigenous academics report feeling pressure to conform to the Eurocentric worldview. Furthermore, Indigenous academics tend to be isolated within a faculty, leading them to bear the burden of change alone. Therefore, although research has shown that the inclusion of Indigenous academics does have a positive impact, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) contend that visible inclusion is not enough, and institutions must move forward with structural change in order to advance decolonization within the institution.

Reconciliation Indigenization, the second phase identified by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), includes the attempt to alter university structures that privilege Eurocentric knowledge (Fellner,

2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). This process involves addressing the power imbalance between Indigenous and Eurocentric approaches by involving all parties in decision making (e.g. creating an Indigenous Advisory Committee). In addition, the second phase includes educating students and faculty to improve relationships with Indigenous people. Indigenous scholars suggest that, at a minimum, it is necessary to incorporate courses that include the treatment of Indigenous people in North America, residential schools, and intergenerational trauma (Ansloos et al., 2019; Canadian Psychological Association & Psychology Foundation of Canada [CPA & PFC], 2018; Fellner et al., in press). Furthermore, Fellner (2016) suggests that training within institutions should support students to understand Canada's relational accountability to the treaties and to recognize that all people who are not indigenous to the land they are living on are guests on Indigenous territories and ought to respect local Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing (CPA & PFC, 2018). Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018) findings suggest that while visible gestures such as land acknowledgements are made by many institutions, such gestures are not genuine reconciliation, as they continue to dismiss structural barriers that perpetuate colonialism. Therefore, if postsecondary institutions are authentic in their commitment to reconciliation through Indigenization strategies, they must revisit the needed structural and rhetorical changes and advance to the third phase.

The third phase suggested by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) is decolonial Indigenization. This phase is a process of collaboration and a global exchange of knowledge that honours Indigenous knowledge as equal and includes ceremony, prayer, language, and reconnection to land (Corntassel, 2012; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Most institutions are nowhere near this phase, as this phase calls for deep shifts in longstanding embedded colonial structures. However, the authors contend this shift is necessary. For this change to occur, institutions must implement a

treaty framework and support Indigenous knowledges, cultures, and political resurgence (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Land-based programming. A starting point for Indigenous resurgence is on-the-land or community-based learning and research (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Community-based learning acknowledges the complexities of Indigenous knowledges and how Indigenous epistemology is best taught in community by community. Further, community-based learning honours the various ways Indigenous people come to know their own paradigm, thus land and community-based programs may include, but are not limited to, learning with Elders, ceremonies, oral knowledge sharing, and self-reflection of learning (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Wildcat et al. (2014) explain that “if colonization is fundamentally about dispossessing Indigenous people from land, decolonization must involve forms of education that reconnect Indigenous people with land and social relations, knowledges and languages that arise from the land” (p.1).

Simpson and Coulthard (2014) argue that if institutions are serious about decolonization, they must support reintegrating relationships with land in education. This calls for moving out of the classroom and onto the land to learn in physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual ways (Simpson & Coulthard, 2014). In this same article, Coulthard shared his experience of learning on the land and how it enabled him to understand the failings of capitalism (Simpson & Coulthard, 2014). Wildcat et al. (2014) suggest that land-based approaches with non-Indigenous people will activate their personal decolonizing processes, leading them to address historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism (Wildcat et al., 2014). Therefore, land-based learning facilitates decolonial processes among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Various institutions are gradually starting to address the need for land-based programs (Alfred, 2014; Bang et al., 2014; Wildcat et al., 2014). Currently, there is a very limited amount

of culturally relevant literature on postsecondary land-based programs. Some existing Indigenous land-based postsecondary programs include the University of Saskatchewan's Educational Foundations land-based program with an Indigenous focus (<https://education.usask.ca/departments/efdt.php#Overview>). This program is part of a Master of Education program. Each semester involves two weeks of on-the-land learning with Indigenous communities on a local to global level. Another program is offered by the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories (<https://www.dechinta.ca/>). This institution has partnered with accredited institutions such as the University of Alberta and University of British Columbia to deliver various land-based programs. Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, offers an Indigenous Studies PhD program that includes one year of on-the-land learning (<https://www.trentu.ca/indigenoustudiesphd/>).

There is a demand for land-based programs to focus on Indigenous approaches to wellness (Fellner, 2016; John, 2004; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1996; Waldram, 2008; Wildcat et al., 2014). However, a thorough search of the literature did not reveal any land-based graduate-level programs that highlight local Indigenous approaches to wellness. Thus, based on existing literature, Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni are the first of their kind. These programs were created through a mutual collaboration between the University of Calgary and Red Crow Community College. Keast (2020), an ally, conducted culturally relevant research on the development and implementation of the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni programs. She met with instructors, administrators, Elders, and community members who were involved with the development and implementation of both programs. Keast identified four primary themes for program implementation and development: relationship building and maintenance, Elder engagement, community-based Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum, and decolonizing and

Indigenizing academia. Using a story work methodology (Archibald, 2008), her findings were represented in a circle, supporting the importance of each theme and illustrating their interconnectedness.

Common among all storytellers in Keast's (2020) work was the importance of relationships. Her findings clarify that relationships between the institution and the community must be informed by an understanding of the impacts of colonization and be reciprocal and trusting. These types of relationship take time to build and require more than a 9–5 commitment, as many ceremonies and celebrations that are involved in the relationship-building process take place in evenings and on weekends (Keast, 2020). Keast's (2020) findings are supported by Simpson and Coulthard (2014), who worked with a Dene land-based program. They discussed the importance of working with the community and having the community lead the direction of the program. Work within Indigenous communities should start by considering how to create reciprocal and genuine relationships with communities (Wildcat et al., 2014). O'Connor (2009) worked with two land-based programs, one in the Yukon, the other in northern Alberta. Congruent with Keast's (2020) findings, O'Connor (2009) also found that strong relationships between institutions and community are vital.

The next theme Keast (2020) shared was the importance of Elder engagement. Elders provided the teachings in each of the courses in a collaborative and communal process. There was no expectation that one Elder should have knowledge in all areas. Rather, cumulative knowledge requires various Elders with different expertise. Knowledge attainment takes a great deal of time. Elders go through many years of training in order to pass on teachings. From Indigenous perspectives, the knowledge Elders possess surpasses that of a person with a PhD (Keast, 2020). Elders and knowledge holders must be recognized for the role they play in

healing. Institutions and agencies need to financially compensate Elders for their teachings equivalent to the compensation given non-Indigenous scholars (CPA & PFC, 2018).

The third theme Keast (2020) identified was community-based Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum, which included experiential and land-based learning, and centring of Indigenous language and ceremony. This theme coincides with Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018) third phase of Indigenization which is decolonial Indigenization. Keast's findings support that the students were able to embody wellness through experiential and land-based learning, which is congruent with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Classes on the land allowed for smudging and many land-based activities and ceremonies. For example many institutions have policies that interfere with smudging in the classroom, therefore having the classes on the land alleviates any breaches of policies that may be found within the Euro Western institution. Students' capstone projects involved community service work, creating programs congruent with Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Through these projects, learning rippled out into the community as students interacted and engaged with the community, transmitting learning wellness and language revitalization into the community.

The final theme Keast (2020) described is decolonizing and Indigenizing academia, which included decolonizing policies and practices, transparent funding and finances, introducing team or collectivist approaches, and Indigenizing assessment and grading processes. Within this area, Keast (2020) discussed numerous barriers that exist on a structural level between Indigenous communities and Eurocentric institutions. For example, she suggested that institutions need to allow more flexibility within their policies to better serve the needs of the community (e.g., the University of Calgary requires instructors to hold a master's degree, which posed challenges for Elders in holding official instructor positions in the Poo'miikapii and

Niitsitapii programs). In regards to funding issues, programs like the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapii programs cost more to deliver than conventional Euro-Western classroom-based courses, which can be problematic for institutions, and institutional financial procedures can delay or hinder cultural protocols such as gifting, as was the case for the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapii programs. Last, Keast discussed that typical Eurocentric approaches to assessment and grading are incongruent with these programs. Some of the grades assigned to learners were based on self-reflective work that demonstrated their ability to integrate aspects of what they had learned into their own cognitive processes. Given the oral culture of Indigenous peoples, oral presentations were more successful (Keast, 2020). Keast's findings regarding the need for alternative assessment and grading mirrored those of O'Connor (2009).

Indigenous Approaches to Wellness

While institutions begin to Indigenize institutions, scholars in various fields are continuing to voice the need for more programs based on traditional approaches to wellness. Indigenous nations' cosmologies differ from nation to nation; however, some common understandings of wellness are that it is interrelated, holistic, and relational and it encompasses spirit, mind, body, and heart (Fellner, 2016; Hart, 2002; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1996; Ross, 2014; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Communal living and traditional healing are embedded aspects of Indigenous people's ways of being in the world (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). While this section articulates some of the commonalities that exist among communities, it is important to acknowledge the great diversity that exists around traditional healing concepts. This section gives a general idea of Indigenous approaches to wellness.

Holistic wellness encompasses a striving for balance (Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1996). Fairly consistent among nations are relationality and interconnectedness with all aspects

of reality at all times, which includes all things animate and inanimate (Fellner, 2016; Hart, 2002; McCormick, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Eurocentric approaches to health tend to be individualistic in nature, whereas an Indigenous perspective to wellness is considered to encompass one's relationships in an all-my-relations perspective. Thus, wellness is holistic and encompasses all one's relationships (Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; McCormick, 1997).

A circle is a useful metaphor to illustrate Indigenous wellness. When concepts or ideas are placed within a circle, they typically signify a holistic interconnectedness and balance between the ideas (Wilson, 2008). If one were to place mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of the self, respectively, in a circle, this illustrates the relationships they share with each other. The components are interrelated and fluid (Wilson, 2008). One aspect cannot be located in the centre, as this would throw the others out of balance. Rather, each aspect works equally to maintain harmony (McCormick, 1996). If one aspect is impacted, each other aspect will be impacted (Wilson, 2008). Wellness is experienced when all aspects are in balance (Simard & Blight, 2011). When things are out of balance, illness can occur, as illustrated in the work by Sager (2018) in *Culture and Healing: Indigenous People's Experiences with Wellness and Healing Through Cultural Engagement* who describes how one of the storyteller participants shared their experience of becoming physically ill upon denying a part of their spirituality. The teachings of the circle can also be used to understand Indigenous people's holistic interconnectedness on a communal level. For example, the individual, the family, the community, and the nation, respectively, may be represented by the four quadrants of the circle (Clarke & Holtlander, 2010). The circle illustrates the way in which impacts in one aspect of health may impact another aspect (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014; Wilson, 2008). Thus, just as trauma can be experienced vicariously, so can wellness (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). That is,

wellness experienced on an individual level can ripple out into the family, community, and nation.

McCormick (1997) conducted a study to explore the important factors that were part of First Nations healing within a community in British Columbia. His findings convey that a balance of each quadrant of the circle is essential for healing to occur. Further supporting holistic interconnectedness and balance is a vital path towards wellness for Indigenous people (McCormick, 1997). While this is true on an individual level, the same is also true on the social or communal level.

Wellness for Indigenous people is strongly connected to the community. Community offers a sense of belonging for individuals (McCormick, 1997; Sager, 2018). Dominant Eurocentric approaches to mental health tend to be very individualistic in nature as they focus on the individual without consideration of the family, community, and nation. This poses great challenges for Indigenous people whose well-being is an embedded aspect of communal living and being (Duran & Duran, 1995; McCormick, 1997). Healing requires viewing the individual in the context of community (Lafromboise et al., 1990). Numerous traditional ceremonies aimed at healing occur within community contexts (Ross, 1992). Given that Indigenous people are empathic, they can vicariously feel the impacts of colonization from others within their community (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014).

From an Indigenous perspective, time is not linear but rather cyclical (Duran & Duran, 1995). Consistent with an Indigenous, relational cosmology, Indigenous people are intergenerational and ancestral beings and as such they experience multiple relations with all of their reality including the metaphysical and spirit worlds (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Given these multiple realities, it can be understood that this includes ancestors who have passed on

(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Indigenous people may be impacted by their ancestors from generations back, or into the future (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). For example, the difficulty a person is experiencing could connect to past trauma of an ancestor or community (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Therefore, when wellness is experienced by an individual, family, community, or nation, this can benefit the generations of the past and the generations to come (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). All one's relationships also encompasses land and all of creation (Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; McCormick, 1997; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014).

The holistic interconnectedness and relationality also include land and all things in nature (Fellner, 2016; Hart, 2002; McCormick, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Kelm (1998) discusses the historical trauma that occurred for Indigenous peoples as a result of dislocation from the land. The late Niitsitapii scholar Narcisse Blood talked about place encompassing the spirits and our teachers (Kovach, 2009). Land is much more than just a resource to be exploited, as it is seen by the dominant culture; it is a life source, and when land is harmed, Indigenous people feel it (Parkes, 2011). McCormick (1997) found the relationship with land was very important for healing to occur. Participants in his research experienced healing through just being on the land, in the forest, and in the water. Land can also strengthen one's spirituality (McCormick, 1997).

Spirituality is also critical in Indigenous people's wellness and healing processes (Sager, 2018). Many Indigenous clinicians believe the spiritual component should be a first priority in the healing process with Indigenous people (Duran, 2006; Linklater, 2014; Ross, 2014; Sager, 2018). Despite traditional ceremonies being banned until the amendment of the Indian Act in 1951 in Canada as a strategy of colonialism (GoC, 2020b) many ceremonies took place in secret, and ceremony continues to be practiced today. Each community has unique teachings that are typically interconnected with place and language (Kovach, 2009). Indigenous peoples have been

practicing spirituality and healing holistically since the beginning of time (Baskin, 2016). Rituals and ceremonies are gateways into spirituality further strengthening one's cultural identity and giving purpose to one's life. Identity and purpose are vital to Indigenous wellness (Sager, 2018).

Because cultural transmission was undesirable for such a long time, (TRC, 2015a; Gray, 2011) Indigenous scholars are continually justifying the integral role culture and identity play in Indigenous peoples' wellness (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013; Sager, 2018). McCormick (1997) found that participating and learning about culture and traditions is an important part of Indigenous peoples healing process. Engaging in cultural practices supports a sense of purpose and identity (Ross, 2014). One storyteller in Sager's (2018) research discussed how embracing his Indigenous identity and learning about his culture brought healing throughout his life. Thus, having a firm sense of cultural identity can bring empowerment, purpose and overall wellbeing (Gone, 2013; Sager, 2018). Cultural activities vary from nation to nation and may include but are not limited to, ceremonies, rituals, celebrations such as powwows, arts and crafts, oral, medicine picking, storytelling (Chandler, 2013). Chandler and Lalonde (1998; Lalonde & Chandler, 2008) found that communities that actively engage in cultural rehabilitation strategies had significantly lower rates of suicide. Healing centres that are based on traditional approaches to wellness are more effective for Indigenous clients than ones that work from Eurocentric approaches (McCormick, 2009; Wendt & Gone, 2012). Unfortunately, these centres are also underfunded (CPA & PFC, 2018).

Colonization has threatened the relationship Indigenous people have with their culture and traditions, but despite the efforts to cut cultural connections, Indigenous peoples have managed to keep their traditional knowledge alive (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). It is clear that Indigenous people have numerous approaches to wellness ingrained within their cultural and

ceremonial ways of living that have been used for thousands of years (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). While this section is devoted to traditional approaches to wellness, this does not assume that all Indigenous people will hold this desire (Trimble & Thurman, 2002). It is vital to acknowledge that Indigenous people know best what they need to heal (Fellner, 2016). Acknowledgement of the effectiveness of traditional Indigenous approaches to wellness offers a foundation for clinicians to better work with Indigenous clients.

Psychology's Response to the TRC Report

Five years have passed since the TRC released its final report including the 94 CTAs (TRC, 2014a, 2015b). Within this time, various organizations and professions gradually started to respond to the calls to action. For instance, CPA and PFC created an Indigenous Task Force to better serve and work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. The task force is comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous psychological service providers, CPA and PFC leadership, and community leaders. It was intended to be a starting point to provide psychologists with action-oriented approaches to address reconciliation in their work with Indigenous people (CPA & PFC, 2018).

The task force report intended “accountability and responsibility to Indigenous Peoples on behalf of the profession of psychology in Canada” (CPA & PFC, 2018, p. 6) for the historical and ongoing marginalization of Indigenous people. Further outlined in the report was how the field of psychology needs to shift to support Indigenous peoples moving forward (CPA & PFC, 2018). The report acknowledged the acts of cultural and physical genocide committed by the Canadian government, while also acknowledging the field's own colonial practices. It further acknowledged the field's breaches of its own ethics as outlined in the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (CPA, 2017).

As with the TRC's final report (TRC, 2015b), the task force report included a number of actionable recommendations for researchers, educators, and clinicians in the field of psychology (CPA & PFC, 2018). These recommendations offer concrete guidelines that promote reconciliation with Indigenous people and communities, as well as culturally relevant and appropriate assessment, treatment, research, education, social justice, and program development and evaluation. While the psychology field has issued similar apologies and acknowledgements in other areas of the world (e.g., Australian Psychological Society, 2016; Members of Division 39, Section 9, Psychoanalysis for Social Responsibility, American Psychological Association, 2016), the CPA and PFC report is the most comprehensive in addressing the field's violence toward Indigenous people to date. Two common themes among these apologies, statements, and reports are the importance of critical self-reflection on behalf of clinicians and the field, and integrating Indigenous approaches to wellness in applied psychology.

Counselling with Indigenous Peoples

Unfortunately, despite the apologies and acknowledgements from the psychological associations, the psychology field continues to unconsciously support ongoing colonization of Indigenous people (CPA & PFC, 2018). Psychology as a field is grounded in colonial epistemologies (Ansloos et al., 2019; Carolissen & Duckett, 2018; Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2018). This is particularly concerning in applied fields that directly serve Indigenous people, such as counselling psychology. Even if practitioners are not consciously acting in a colonizing way, they have collective and historical biases that are only reinforced in conventional counselling education (Fellner, 2016, 2018). The task force report and Indigenous scholars in counselling psychology call on clinicians to gain deep understanding of the colonial history of Canada and to incorporate increased cultural literacy and safety by learning Indigenous ways of

knowing and traditional approaches to wellness and healing (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2018; Fellner, John & Cottell, 2016; Fellner et al., in press).

Key Competencies for Working With Indigenous People

2018 marked the year that the field of psychology responded to the recommendations of the TRC. The suggestions provided to psychologists validate what Indigenous people have been saying for decades (e.g., Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Since the release of the response paper, Indigenous scholars (e.g., Ansloos et al., 2019; Fellner et al., in press) are responding to the progress of the recommendations of the CPA (CPA & PFC, 2018), providing further directions for service providers and educational institutions. Every practicing and in-training psychologist has a responsibility to embody the recommendations within their work with Indigenous peoples. The key competencies for working with Indigenous people, which I discuss below include: understanding the impacts of colonization in counselling, understanding the concept of soul wound, understanding clinicians' responsibilities, providing culturally relevant counselling, and attending to ethical considerations.

Understanding the impacts of colonization in counselling. The colonial ideologies and approaches embedded in applied psychology have resulted in higher rates of misdiagnosis and over-pathologizing of Indigenous people (CPA & PFC, 2018). Counselling psychology fails to understand “diagnosable” behaviours such as substance abuse, anxiety, and depression as consequences of colonial trauma. It is fundamental that clinicians are able to understand Indigenous worldviews, histories, and the embedded colonial forces that disproportionately affect Indigenous people. For when this is not present, Indigenous peoples are reported as having more mental health issues, higher incarceration rates, and more child apprehensions (Duran & Duran, 1995; Gone, 2008; Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016). Indigenous scholars (e.g., Ansloos et

al. 2019; Duran 1995; Gone 2008; Fellner, 2016, 2018) suggest that without considering the vast differences in worldview between Euro-centrism and Indigenous peoples; as well as colonial histories, assessments can be viewed as another method to further the colonial agenda. Duran (2006) infers that “after the church began to fail to control people . . . the medical professional, including the original doctors of the mind, took up the power to control” (p. 9). Diagnostic labels have become a tool to oppress Indigeneity. When an Indigenous person receives and internalizes a diagnosis, this pathology becomes a lived reality that is reinforced and maintained by the colonial deficit narrative in the media, statistics, and society. Duran (2006) thus compares diagnosis to a traditional Indigenous naming ceremony, wherein the person diagnosed takes on the spirit of that diagnosis in much the same way one would embody the spirit of a traditional name.

When meeting with an Indigenous individual with a diagnosis of mental illness or disorder, psychologists who do not challenge the diagnostic narrative actively participate in the continued colonization of Indigenous people; diagnostic labels should be used only when required to support the client in the current system and/or when the client finds them helpful (Duran, 2019; Fellner, 2016). In these cases, the psychologist can then support clients in deconstructing these labels in order to mitigate potentially harmful consequences of the diagnosis (Duran, 2019; Fellner, 2016). Fellner, John, and Cottell (2016) discuss Eurocentric perceptions of pathology and cultural constructions of health and wellness and emphasize the importance of exploring the historical, spiritual, intergenerational, and collective impacts when working with Indigenous peoples.

The challenge of incorporating culturally appropriate clinical practice with Indigenous people, therefore, lies primarily in psychologists’ conceptualization of Indigenous clients. Given

the colonial epistemologies which most modalities of psychological treatment and measures of progress have evolved from, these modalities and measures tend to be less than helpful for Indigenous people, and in many instances are harmful. The standards of normalcy are based on Eurocentric ideologies and do not acknowledge Indigenous approaches to wellness, colonial histories/trauma, or internalized oppression, which further reinforces the idea that Indigenous people need yet again to adapt to colonial narratives of normalcy (CPA & PFC, 2018).

Psychologists would be prudent to deconstruct colonial notions within the field and move towards Indigenous understandings of pain, ill health, and trauma, as well as Indigenous concepts of self, family, and cultural values.

Soul wound. Duran and Duran (1995) used the term “soul wound” to describe what others have termed collective trauma, colonial trauma (John, 2004), and ancestral and historical trauma (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Brave Heart and DeBruyn (1998) used literature on the Holocaust to explore how trauma is transferred through generations. The inability of communities to grieve layers of loss both historically and at a family level creates generations of unresolved grief. The disenfranchised grief then presents as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is demonstrated in coping behaviours such as substance abuse, anxiety, and suicidal tendencies (Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998). Fellner (2019) strongly suggests a shift in paradigm to deconstruct the colonial pathologizing process on Indigenous clients. While she agrees that terms such as collective or colonial trauma are valid, she encourages a reframing of pathologizing terms that evoke a deficit narrative and instead using language that highlights narratives of survivance, resilience, and resurgence. The paradigm shift that will occur through Indigenous approaches to mental health is consistent with the language of holistic wellness, balance, and harmony. From an Indigenous perspective, it is understood that trauma that is

vicarious, intergenerational, and collective often comes with great medicine, referred to as trauma wisdom; all of these terms encompass an Indigenous perspective of working with trauma (Fellner, 2019). Fellner, John, and Cottell (2016) explain that when impacts of colonization are considered, it helps to address the needs of Indigenous peoples who are suffering from ancestral trauma due to the forced removal from homelands, forced attendance in residential schools, genocide, and continued deaths (Duran & Duran, 1996; Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016).

Clinicians' responsibilities. Considering the colonial issues embedded within counselling practice, it is no surprise that Indigenous people continue to mistrust mental health services (McCormick, 2009). To combat the mistrust, psychologists are called on to become allies (CPA & PFC, 2018), to confront clinical racism (Duran, 2006; Fellner et al., in press), and to disrupt the profound impacts of colonization (Ansloos et al., 2019; Fellner, 2018; Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016). Heather Schmidt (2019) talks about her experience of being a non-Indigenous psychologist who worked with Indigenous people. She explains the importance of building genuine relationships with the community. Fellner (2018) suggests viewing each counselling session as a ceremony, while avoiding appropriation possibilities. Viewing each session as a ceremony honours the sacred space and exchange that will occur (Fellner, 2018). In order for relationships to be genuine, the therapist may be required to engage in deep self-reflection and acknowledge historical and ongoing implications in the settler-Indigenous relationship (Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016; Fellner, 2018). It is common for a psychologist to feel guilt, shame, and horror when understanding the ongoing and historical impacts of colonization and the settler-Indigenous relationship. This encourages the need to engage in their own healing work and critical analysis of modes of power (Duran, 2006; Regan, 2010). One must acknowledge positions of power, privilege, and oppression (Fellner, 2018; France et al.,

2013). In addition, critical and authentic reflexivity can support the clinician to better understand how to alleviate the power imbalance that lies between the client and the therapist (Baskin, 2016, Fellner, 2018; Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

Once the psychologist recognizes the colonial nature of the field, they can begin to incorporate more culturally and historically informed perspectives into conceptualizing Indigenous clients and engage in authentic relationship building. Fellner (2016) describes this as a responsibility on the part of the clinician to engage in ceremony or cultural activities that will provide them with a deeper understanding when approaching case conceptualization in a culturally relevant way. This needs to be authentic participation that will lead to building relationships that will support the clinician in providing clients referrals to knowledge holders or Elders. Although it is not appropriate to duplicate ceremonies or rituals by those who have not been transferred the rights, the clinician will learn to understand proper protocols with basic cultural approaches to wellness and may then be able to offer them to a client. For example, understanding basic cultural approaches such as smudging will support the clinician in being able to offer this to clients (Fellner, 2016). They may have medicine or smudge bowls available in the office to offer to the client to use.

Culturally relevant counselling. Fellner (2016) also supports the importance of attending to a client's gifts using a strengths-based approach. Good relationships with Indigenous clients can be facilitated in various ways, such as therapist self-disclosure as a means to build trust (Fellner, 2016), accommodating or adjusting the length of sessions (Trimble & Thurman, 2002), and inviting the client to position their chair as they wish (Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016). In addition, Fellner (2016) suggests there is a necessity to create respectful spaces for clients and support them in feeling validated as an Indigenous person. Some examples include accessing

appropriate Elders and knowledge holders to facilitate cultural programming and ceremonies, supporting or initiating initiatives within agencies to create community-based spaces, and practicing place-based protocols. Clinicians are encouraged to honour Indigenous people's connection to land and traditional approaches to wellness as effective healing approaches. In addition to advocacy for development of more cultural programming facilitated by appropriate knowledge holders, clinicians may draw upon the land when possible. This may include moving sessions outside, having land such as rocks or cedar available in the office, or connecting clients with opportunities to attend ceremonies on the land. Fellner et al. (in press) revealed that non-Indigenous psychologists feel they need more culturally applicable training and support to better work with Indigenous clients.

While adapting therapeutic practice in ways that make it beneficial and culturally safe is necessary, it would be ideal if clinicians could use therapies that are wholly Indigenous (CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2016). Only one such Indigenous psychotherapeutic modality has been fully articulated to date—Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy (CPA & PFC, 2018; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Indigenous focusing-oriented therapy (IFOT) is rooted in Indigenous worldviews, and incorporates client strengths, the importance of land, and the impacts of genocide (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). IFOT works from an “all my relations” framework that acknowledges how Indigenous peoples are in constant flux and in relation with all of creation, which includes humans, all beings of the natural world, and all beings of the metaphysical and spiritual realms, including past and future generations. Turcotte and Schiffer (2014) describe trauma as bodily sensations that hold interconnected energy and knowledge that spans through these relationships and generations. Thus, IFOT is centred around the understanding that trauma can be ancestral, vicarious, intergenerational, collective, and communal. Within this modality the

client, through their own experiences, experiences healing shifts through the spiritual wisdom that comes from the trauma.

Unfortunately, IFOT is in such high demand in communities across North America that it can be very difficult for clinicians to access training. Thus, clinicians often need to pursue further learning on their own (Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018). One might speculate on the benefits and drawbacks of clinicians doing so, but to date no studies have looked at this issue.

The wise practices lens is a model Wesley-Esquimaux and Snowball (2010) created to support various practitioners in developing culturally relevant services for Indigenous clients. It draws on Edward Benton-Banai's (2010) seven sacred values, or seven teachings. Benton-Banai is Ojibway-Anishinaabe of the Fish Clan from the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin. While these teachings are not necessarily consistent within each Indigenous nation, they are general enough that they resonate with many nations' teachings (Baskin, 2007). The values include courage, honesty, humility, respect, truth, love, and wisdom. These values guide the way many Indigenous peoples live a balanced and good life, and may be applied as an ethical framework in counselling (Wesley-Esquimaux & Snowball, 2010).

Ethical considerations. Ethical tensions in practice with Indigenous people require consideration from Indigenous perspectives and the relationality involved. For instance, within a small community dual relationships may occur whereby a therapist may have to offer counselling to a family member if no other options are available (Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016). Also, given that the field of psychology is inherently individualistic and bound from a colonial narrative, it may be up for ethical debate whether or not to involve the community in treatment (CPA & PFC, 2018). For example, common amongst Indigenous peoples way of life community is vital, however ethics within the field of psychology may see this as a breach of confidentiality.

Psychologists must develop an understanding of when a spiritual advisor or Elder and/or ceremony may be better suited to help an individual. Further, psychologists need to recognize that lived and cultural experience is just as valuable as educational experience (CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, 2016). With just a couple of examples listed above, it is understood that psychologists will face ethical tensions as they engage with Indigenous clients from Indigenous perspective (CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner, John, & Cottell, 2016).

History of Research with Indigenous Peoples

Canada's colonial and genocidal history led to research that was an active contributor to colonization. Martin (2003) an Aboriginal researcher, describes six phases of colonial history with respect to research as the *terra nullius phase*, *traditionalizing phase*, *assimilation phase*, *early Aboriginal research phase*, *recent Aboriginal phase*, and *Indigenist research phase*. These phases were developed in the Australian context and are discussed in relation to Canada's history given the similarities in colonial and scientific histories between the Indigenous peoples of Canada and Australia. These were developed during the time that Europeans intentionally distributed smallpox-infested blankets, placed head bounties on Indigenous peoples (Thornton, 1987; Wilson, 2008), and signed treaties with Queen Victoria (Henderson, 2000), and can be understood as the informal research processes that played a vital role in the demise of Indigenous peoples of Canada (Martin, 2003). The *terra nullius phase*, took place between 1770 and 1900 and involved Europeans' racist observations of Indigenous people that justified acts of colonialism. These informal research processes reinforced the dominant Eurocentric view of Indigenous people as inhuman, supporting forced removal from their territories and various acts of physical and cultural genocide (Martin, 2003). By the end of this phase, Indigenous peoples

had been forcibly relocated to reservation land and were considered wards of the government (Wilson, 2003, 2008).

The *traditionalizing phase* of research took place from the 1900s through the 1940s and involved the use of research to support the continued dispossession of Indigenous people and lands and the intentional infliction of disease and death. All research done was further intended to conflate the diversity of Indigenous people into pan-Indian stereotypes. This phase also included measuring physical traits and other means of scientific inquiry in which the dominant Eurocentric conceptualization of normality was used to support the notion of Indigenous people as inhuman. For example, Garth (1921) conducted a study that compared performance of “Mixed and Full Blood Indians” (Garth, 1921, p. 360) on a psychological test. He concluded in his findings that mixed bloods tend to score higher than their full blood counterparts (Garth, 1921).

The mixed Bloods tend to excel the Full Bloods on a score average.... Furthermore the scores of the Mixed Bloods is favoured by their superior status and educational opportunity. However, the writer doubts if an equality of school attainment would remove the indicated differences. (p. 363)

Another example aimed at conflating the diversity of Indigenous peoples relates to the remains and belongings of Indigenous people, including ceremonial items, that were forcibly taken and displayed in museums and universities. By putting these items on display, it exaggerates the diversity between the dominant Eurocentric culture and Indigenous peoples (Martin, 2003; Smith, 2012). The items that were forcibly taken from Indigenous people have yet to be returned to the communities and families from which they have been taken. Towards the end of this phase, Indigenous peoples were a prime topic for academic research. Shawn Wilson (2003) suggests that, in some ways, this is still present in some of the research being done today.

The *assimilation phase*, 1940–1970, was marked by an increase of force that was used to dispossess Indigenous peoples, particularly removing Indigenous children from their homes and placing them in IRS and then in the child welfare system during the Sixties Scoop (Gray, 2011; Martin, 2003). It was during this time period that harmful experiments were done on children while in care of the IRS. For example, between 1942 and 1952 harmful experiments involving dietary manipulation and malnourishment were conducted on children in IRS (Mosby, 2013). Research moved from measuring physical traits (Martin, 2003) to studying social aspects of Indigenous peoples (Coomer, 1984). This was followed by research inquiring about mythologies and kinship relationships (Beckett, 1994). Further included in this phase was research conducted by Eurocentric researchers describing the “Aboriginal problem” which informed assimilationist government policies and legislation (Martin, 2003). During this time, there was an influx of non-Indigenous researchers who became “Indian experts” within institutions, including universities (Wilson, 2008). Shawn Wilson (2003, 2008) describes how Indigenous professors are underrepresented in academia, suggesting that this pattern continues to the present day. This phase transitioned into the *early Aboriginal research phase*, from 1970 to 1990, where Indigenous people continued to be the most researched people on earth (Smith, 2012). During this time, Human Right movements spread and in response, many disciplines conducted research with the intent of “rescuing” Indigenous peoples. Given that research was still being conducted on Indigenous peoples and thus interpreted through a dominant Eurocentric worldview, the findings were not representative of Indigenous peoples but rather only understood through the dominant Eurocentric worldview. This further pathologized Indigenous people (Wilson, 2008).

The *recent Aboriginal research phase*, from 1990 to 2000, coincided with the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996). As a result of research continuing to be

conducted *on* Indigenous peoples as opposed to *by* or *with*, Indigenous scholars and communities began to assert the need for collaborative and community-based research. Soon after, Indigenous people demanded to speak for themselves and conduct their own research (Martin, 2003; Wilson, 2003, 2008).

Martin (2003) refers to the current phase as *the Indigenist research phase*. She suggests that Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012, originally published in 1999) seminal work, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, marked the beginning of this phase. Smith argues that in order for research to be genuinely beneficial for Indigenous peoples, it must be decolonized. Scholars such as Shawn Wilson (2008) contend that an Indigenous perspective is not enough. Research with Indigenous peoples should be conducted through an Indigenist research paradigm. Indigenous scholars are now creating their own Indigenist research paradigms that are consistent with their cosmologies (Martin, 2003; Wilson, 2008). Indigenist paradigms consist of an Indigenous epistemology ontology, methodology, and axiology (Wilson, 2008). Epistemology refers to how we come to know; ontology refers to the nature of reality; methodology refers to the theory that guides us in our search for knowledge; and axiology refers to the ethics and morals about how we gain knowledge (Wilson, 2008). Numerous Indigenous scholars have published books on various Indigenist paradigms, including Jo-ann Archibald (2008), Peter Cole (2006), Margaret Kovach (2009), and Shawn Wilson (2008). Scholars such as Kovach (2009) posit that epistemologies stem from tribal affiliations and place. These published books support the Indigenist research phase as it provides guidance to Indigenous researchers who are conducting Indigenist research. Indigenist researchers are now able to support their own paradigm and approach to research with published literature.

It is necessary for every researcher working with Indigenous people to have a firm grasp on the historical impacts of research mentioned above. There are also a growing number of Indigenous scholars utilizing Indigenist research paradigms in their work and increasing the number of Indigenous doctoral students who are also doing this work (Wilson, 2003). Until recently, most research being conducted with, on, and even by Indigenous people has been through a Eurocentric paradigm, thus yielding Eurocentric results. Although it is not necessary for every Indigenous researcher to use an Indigenist research paradigm, it is an option for those who want findings that emerge through wholly Indigenous cosmologies. Indigenist research paradigms are one way researchers are reconciling the harm perpetuated by the research of the past.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature, which included the historical and ongoing harms Indigenous people experience in the colonial context of Canada which includes attempted assimilation through IRS, the Sixties Scoop and the present-day Millennium Scoop. Also included was a review of the formation of the TRC, education's responses to the TRC's findings, and community land-based programs. The literature proposes that authentic acts of reconciliation, such as structural and rhetorical changes within education, are falling short. For example, very few land-based graduate postsecondary programs or programs based on local approaches to wellness are being offered. This speaks to the significant social gap which is driving this research. I provided a section on traditional Indigenous approaches to wellness, the psychology field's response to the TRC, and counselling with Indigenous peoples. I ended the literature review with a section on the historical and ongoing harm that research has caused with Indigenous peoples. Recently, Indigenous scholars are redefining the way research needs to be

conducted and are calling for Indigenous researchers to conduct research from an Indigenist research paradigm.

Next, in Chapter 3, I describe the meaning-making process I used in this research. Specifically, I describe the $\Delta^j \cap \Delta^2$ research paradigm and how it was applied to all aspects of this research journey. I also provide a rationale for the study and use story to bridge the gap between Indigenist research and academia.

Chapter 3: $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{m}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ /Isihcikêwin (The Way Things Are Done)

As I demonstrated in the literature review, there is a need for culturally relevant research that supports community-driven wellness initiative and can inform future counselling practices with Indigenous people. Therefore, I conducted my research through an Indigenist research paradigm that is based on an interconnected Indigenous epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology. I chose to use an Indigenist paradigm that is congruent with who I am as a $\text{ᑕ}^{\text{m}}\Delta\text{ᓃ}^{\text{o}}$ $\text{ᐃ}\text{ᑎ}\text{ᖃ}\text{ᑦ}/\text{ᑎ}\text{e}\text{h}\text{i}\text{y}\text{a}\text{w}\text{-O}\text{t}\text{i}\text{p}\text{e}\text{m}\text{i}\text{s}\text{i}\text{w}\text{a}\text{k}$ researcher, because it both serves my own cultural reclamation and honours the voices of those who have shared their knowledge with me (Boyd, 2014; Wilson, 2008). Specifically, I chose to use $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{m}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ (Fellner, 2016, 2018a) as the paradigm that guides this thesis. This chapter presents how $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{m}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ was used in the research design, procedure, and knowledge-gathering process of this thesis. Within Fellner's (2016) conception of $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{m}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$, the conventional term participants is replaced with knowledge holders; however, after consultation with the Elder advisor for this thesis, Calvin Williams, it was decided that Aawaystamattsa is a more culturally appropriate term given the context of this research and relation to Niitsitapii language. In this research, the student participants are Aawaystamattsa, and I am Aawaystamattsa as well. I discuss $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{m}}\text{r}^{\text{q}}\Delta^{\text{p}}$ in greater detail as the chapter continues.

The conversations in this thesis were originally part of a larger project funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). The University of Lethbridge Ethics Department approved the repurposing of these conversations for this thesis. The original ethics application was revised to reflect the repurposing. This process is discussed in more detail as the chapter continues.

My storyteller voice in this chapter is addressed to faculty and scholars who may be supporting Indigenous graduate students in engaging in Indigenist research. My story illustrates how Indigenous research methods are not commonly taught in graduate programs and it is my hope that this thesis acts as bridge so that faculty and staff can support Indigenous graduate students in doing Indigenist research.

To You, the Faculty and Scholars

Oki/ Cʔʔ/Tan 'si,

I struggled with how to write this section of my thesis and to articulate the complex meanings behind the terms axiology, ontology, and epistemology because they are interrelated. Tafoya (1995, as cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 8) explains that “the closer you get to defining something, the more it loses its context. Controversially, the more something is put into context, the more it loses a specific definition.”

I started my writing session off with a smudge and offered tobacco to the Naatoyapiits (spirits)⁶—This was how everything that has written in this thesis has been done. Every aspect of this writing process started with a smudge and tobacco offering. The way forward came to me: I had to write this section in a way that would reflect my journey in coming to understand what Indigenist research is. Initially I thought by sharing my story and experiences I had found a way to honour what I needed to share with the Indigenous students who come after me: individuals who see life through an Indigenous experience. I thought of Elders who might be pursuing graduate-level education. I wanted to let them know that traditional ways of knowing are valuable in academia and that research can be Indigenous, regardless of the researcher’s level

⁶ Translated by Chester Day Chief, Kainai Nation, lives on the Kainai Nation Blood Reserve, personal communication, 2016.

of formal education (Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). As the process of writing this thesis progressed, it became clear to me that the audience to whom I needed to write had changed through a natural unfolding of this process.

I have chosen to address this section to faculty and scholars who may be supporting Indigenous students in engaging in Indigenist research. Although Indigenist research has been well established within numerous institutions, there are still not enough Indigenous scholars carrying this work out in faculty positions to mentor Indigenous students. The relationship between storyteller and audience is key to sustaining both context and definition (Wilson, 2008). I have experienced a deep level of learning and growth, along with some bumps in the road, throughout this process, and I want to share my experience through story in a way that will add to the conversation around truly decolonizing the academy and supporting Indigenous students' success in academia.

These experiences have led me to embody a teaching from Kapuna (Elder) Aunty Fran. Francine Dudoit-Tagupa, a Native Hawaiian who lives in Oahu, taught me not to sink, not to puff out, and to stand my sacred ground (personal communication, February 2020). My interpretation of this teaching is as follows: Sinking would be to lose my voice and become silent, to be intimidated or feel defeated; puffing out would be getting angry and lashing out; and standing my sacred ground is giving voice to what needs to be voiced, in a good way. Writing this to its intended audience is a way I have come to give voice to what needs to be voiced, with hope that it can help to bridge the gap between Indigenist research and academia.

As I continue on this journey, I become more aware of how Euro-settler Western education aided in the colonization of our people (Black, 2010; Karlee Fellner, personal communication, 2020). This truth has become evident throughout the process of writing this

thesis. I have experienced a battle within myself, fighting between what I was taught from a Eurocentric perspective of what research is, while attempting to honour my own Indigeneity. I have had an incredibly challenging time trying to articulate what I know on the inside while simultaneously questioning whether it belonged in academia. What I have learned in this process is that honouring myself and the ways I come to know—and the ways my ancestors came to know—does belong in academia; it is a valid method of inquiry (Fellner, 2016). Chapter 2 presented a clear and concrete literature review that supports Indigenist research recognition within academia. I also made an effort not to include anything I felt was too personal to share with the public. In order to meet the requirements of this degree, I had to include certain sections in the thesis, following the dominant Eurocentric Western paradigm. In my struggle, the solution grew from weaving the more personal style of an Indigenous paradigm with scholarship from within the academy that is Indigenous research focused.

Intention

This study set out to explore students' experiences of two programs delivered through the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education—Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs. It is my hope that this study's findings will be used to create a model and framework that Indigenous communities and academic institutions may use to support community-based capacity building to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways. The research question that guided this journey of coming to know was: How do students in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs experience community-based postsecondary wellness programs?

Rationale for the Study

Colonization has imposed centuries of oppression on Indigenous peoples and forced them to assimilate into a Western Eurocentric ideology; marginalization of Indigenous people continues to impact their health, which perpetuates health disparities between Indigenous peoples and the general population in Canada (Loppie Reading & Wien, 2009; TRC, 2015a). As communities work to address determinants of health, numerous community-based studies and reports are drawing attention to community wellness initiatives that have been developed in culturally relevant ways (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Fellner, 2016; Marsden, 2005; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; TRC, 2015a; Waldram, 2008). Despite ongoing calls for community-driven approaches to wellness, many communities do not have the financial, structural, or human resources to support such approaches (TRC, 2015b). As a result, there is a significant need for stronger Indigenous and culturally competent health professionals who have the skills to apply community-based approaches to wellness (TRC, 2015b). In response to the disparities in health outcomes and the need for more Indigenous and culturally competent health professionals, this study highlights students' evaluation of two master's-level Indigenous wellness programs as a foundation for ongoing development and implementation of community-driven wellness initiatives.

Relationship with Indigenist Research

An intuitive force guided me to apply for the Master of Education in Counselling Psychology Program. An embodied wisdom, it was one of those life-force, ancestral, universal energies. This is the same knowing that also led me to apply for the Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy for Complex Trauma Program and my PhD. I am grateful for the support of my ancestors who are guiding me on this journey; however, I was quite unprepared for master's-

level education when I applied. What I mean by this is that I actually had no clue that graduate studies involved a high level of research. I laugh as I reflect on this now, because when I first started, I loved all the courses except the research methods course. I had no research experience in my undergraduate degree; it was a whole new world! A scary one. An intimidating one.

When I started my research methods course, I didn't know how I was going to get through it. Imagine a new sponge, just soaking up all the new information. I questioned what I had got myself into and if I was even capable of doing it. As part of the research methods course work, we had the semester to pick our research topic and come up with our first three chapters, which would then act as our proposal. The first three chapters were worth the majority of the marks for this class. We then had the option to use this material as a proposal for our thesis, if we decided to do one. I paid close attention and learned about each methodology presented in the class. I knew early on that I didn't like quantitative research. For me, quantitative research lacks the relational pieces that are needed when conducting research with people. Thus, when given only the choice of a Euro-Western approach to research, I resonated most with qualitative research, finding an approximate fit with phenomenology and hermeneutics. A qualitative approach allowed me to see more of what I believed research should include. It seemed like an impossible task to separate myself from my work. At the very least, phenomenology allowed me to have a relationship with my research. Thankfully, it was not too long before I was introduced to Indigenist research and methodologies.

My original proposed study was aimed at understanding the lived experience of individuals who used the support of AA and then transitioned out of AA while maintaining a sober lifestyle. Learning how to write a research proposal on that topic through a Eurocentric framework was rigid and exhausting. I had picked a topic that had interest to me given my

experience in recovery. Yet despite my passion for the topic, I hated the course, and I sure the heck hated research. I can't even begin to count how many times I have said "I am not a researcher!" I felt trapped, rigid, and inauthentic. I felt so colonized. This same colonized feeling is what led me to leave AA. I now understand that this colonized feeling I have felt many times in my life is intergenerational, ancestral, and collective—interconnected with many Indigenous people, including students and scholars (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014).

Not only was I struggling with my research course work and potential thesis, but my personal life was challenging. I was living in Lethbridge with my one-year old son, while my family was back in Calgary. This created difficulties when trying to manage my schedule to meet the needs of being a good mom and completing my course work. Later that year, my mom was diagnosed with aggressive breast cancer. She endured massive surgery and chemotherapy. To say the least, this was an incredibly hard time. Yet, somehow, I found the strength to continue forward in my studies.

As the semester continued, I was faced with the option of doing a capstone project that did not require research, rather than doing a thesis. Despite all the challenges I was facing alongside my disdain for the research I was learning about, I was nudged toward completing a thesis (the internal, embodied wisdom I spoke about before, that life-force, ancestral, universal energy; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Despite my fears and hesitancy, I decided I was going to do what, to me, felt unfathomable: I decided to complete a thesis. When I opened up the proposal again, an intense bodily sensation that felt like my insides were being ripped out and I was left hollow appeared. Even though I had chosen a methodology that included qualitative and some relational pieces, I still felt like I had to deny myself in order to complete the project. Pushing past the intense bodily sensations, I started to put together a committee. I knew I needed to do

this despite how sick it made me feel. I understand now that these intense bodily sensations held great ancestral wisdom (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014).

As I paid closer attention to the embodied wisdom of my ancestors, I was able to use my voice to be honest about what I was interested in researching. Instead of the original thesis topic, I wanted to talk with other Indigenous peoples who had a story like mine—brothers and sisters who struggled with addiction, had accessed the support of AA and left, but still lived a sober life by engaging with their own Indigenous identity and culture. My experience in AA caused a split within me. I see now how this experience was reflected in my circumstances and resistance to my research and Western methodologies. For instance, through the narrative of lifelong disease and AA being the only answer, it had become ingrained within me to think that AA was essential to living a sober life, that it was the only way. The assumption in the community was that when someone left the program they were doomed to relapse. It was yet again another form of colonization. After leaving AA, it took me about four years to let go of these fears and trust that following Spirit was an okay thing to do. Four years to decolonize. As I voiced my passion to my professors, I was discouraged by several faculty members who steered me away from doing research with Indigenous peoples. As an Indigenous person myself, I didn't get that.

Trusting in Spirit, I met with one of my first committee members, Dr. Janice Victor, and I told her my reflections. She asked me, why aren't you using Indigenous methodologies? Curious, I wondered, what is that? I had never heard that term before, and I had just completed a graduate-level research course that never mentioned Indigenous research. Janice's inquiry proved life changing. My journey into Indigenous methodologies began in that moment. Janice stepped into a mentorship role as an ally and informed me about the possibility of conducting culturally relevant research. I am forever grateful to her for opening the door to Indigenous

Indigenous knowledges, without the need to compare it to or validate it by Eurocentric Western knowledges (Kovach, 2009). In academia, Indigenist research faces a constant battle on two fronts: one, as a methodology, by having to prove our ways of knowing; and second, for the researcher, by having to prove oneself. Margaret Kovach (2009) sums it up perfectly: “To embrace Indigenous methodologies is to accept subjective knowledge” (p. 111).

I must say a huge thank-you to the scholars who came before and transferred their knowledge into the literature, including Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Shawn Wilson, Jo-Ann Archibald, and Margaret Kovach. Their writings are critical for Indigenous graduate students and faculty. Due to the lack of support for Indigenous students doing Indigenist research, I had to reach outside of my home institution to find support. I found a peer support group facilitated by Dr. Fellner which is comprised of Indigenous students and allies who are engaging in Indigenist research. We met monthly to support each other on this journey. This peer support helped me to become aksistoypaitapiisni (resourceful in the face of challenges).

Learning about Indigenist research has activated a profound social justice energy within me, as this process has deepened my understanding of the historical and ongoing harms that Indigenous peoples continue to face to this day (Fellner, 2016; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). I have come to understand that this awakening is a normal aspect of Indigenist research because it was our ancestors who experienced the atrocities of the past and it’s our generations and other generations who are still experiencing the negative impacts. In order to persevere through the intergenerational, ancestral, and collective emotions this process evoked, smudging, praying, debriefing with Indigenous scholars, and ceremonies have been foundational to the research process (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). It’s important to know that this process is heavy and support from other Indigenous researchers and faculty is needed, ones who

understand it. Indigenist research is a holistic process that involves learning mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically (Fellner, 2016).

It's also important to know that it is incredibly challenging and unnatural to articulate in written words aspects of a cosmology. For me, this was a vulnerable experience. There are things within paradigms that you may understand, but there are also things you may not. This is because these paradigms have been articulated through an Indigenous experience in life. It is okay for you not to understand.

My journey of struggling with my own internalized colonialism has been lifelong (Duran & Duran, 1995; Karlee Fellner, personal communication, 2020), and this research journey provided me with healing that has led to integrating both my Indigenous self and my settler self. It has been painful and beautiful. Although I feel more integrated, I am mindful that healing is a lifelong journey (Calvin Williams, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2020; Tammy Crowchild, Tsuu T'ina Nation, lives in Tsuu T'ina Nation, personal communication, 2016). The healing I am experiencing is not only for myself; it's for my ancestors who were not able to openly embrace who they were, and for my son (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). This research journey has helped me connect even more deeply to my cultural teachings and original instructions as an Indigenous person. So, while other students are going about their typical thesis writing, please keep in mind that we Indigenous students are going through a very different experience that impacts us in a mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical way. Its intergenerational, its ancestral and its collective. It is a process that involves heavy emotions and a process that involves healing. The paradigms included within ΔΓΠΓΔΔ are a way for me to articulate what I know on the inside in a form that is intended to support someone who does not live life through this paradigm to make sense of.

Theoretical Framework

$\Delta^{\mu} \cap \rho \Delta^{\nu}$ encompasses an interconnected ontology, methodology, epistemology, and axiology (Fellner, 2016, 2018a; see Figure 1, from Wilson, 2008). For a review of Indigenist research / Indigenist research paradigm, see the Glossary, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2.



Figure 1. Interconnectedness: Theoretical framework (Wilson, 2008, p. 70).

The circle in Figure 1 represents the collaboration needed to maintain its wholeness and the inter-relational aspect of how we come to know what we know (epistemology). All parts are found inside the circle as opposed to outside it, which speaks to the possibility of many realities (ontology). Each part is equal, and if one part is impacted, it impacts the other parts in an equal way (axiology). This exemplifies each component being grounded in relational accountability (see Glossary) and belonging to the universe (Wilson, 2008). The way we come to gain more knowledge (methodology) is purely dependent on all other parts of this circle (Wilson, 2008). All of these components are grounded in relationality, are interrelated, and are fluid (Wilson, 2008).

The circle also represents the continuity and never-endingness of all things rather than the linear start-to-stop of the Western paradigm (Lester-Smith, 2013)

Ceremonial journey. ᐃᓯᐢᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ is an Indigenist research paradigm that was conceptualized by Indigenous scholar Dr. Karlee Fellner (2016, 2018a). Fellner describes herself as an urban, mobile Indigenous woman with many cultural mentors and teachers; therefore, unlike other Indigenist research paradigms, this one is not linked to a specific community. This paradigm reflects the mobility within the historic ᐅᐢᐃᓂᐅᓂᐃᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ/Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak lifestyle, thus it includes various teachings. As such, this paradigm is a good fit for me, as it enables me to draw upon the teachings from my ancestors as well as teachings I have received from different teachers and many nations, including ᐅᐢᐃᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ/Nehiyawak, Anishinaabe, ᐅᐢᐃᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ/Otipemisiwak, Dene, Lakota/Dakota, Native Hawaiian, Sts'ailes, and Niitsitapii.

When translated, ᐃᓯᐢᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ means the way things are done in regard to culture and ceremony. This paradigm is based on the premise that coming to know is a sacred task. Because the gathering of knowledge is a sacred task, this methodology is a ceremonial quest (Fellner, 2016). As Shawn Wilson (2008) states, “the purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between our cosmos and us” (p. 137). Moreover, given the transformational experience of ceremony, research is also transformative (Wilson, 2008). Naturally, as we are transformed through ceremony, we build a stronger relationship with ᐃᓂᓴᐃᓂᐃ/Manitow (Mystery, or sacred power).

The reciprocal experiences of ceremony between us and the cosmos are congruent with how I live my life, how I began to approach my research, and how I will continue to conduct my research. The methodology is a ceremony, but so are the epistemology, axiology, and ontology

(Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008). $\Delta r^{\prime} \Gamma \Omega \Delta^{\prime}$ involves formal ceremonies within this ceremony (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). The ceremonies I include in my daily life are how I come to know. I have given offerings at countless ceremonies asking for guidance in this ceremonial quest of coming to know. I have started each writing session of with prayer, smudge and a tobacco offering.

Infused in this interrelated and holistic paradigm are particular protocols and culturally based processes that guide this quest (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). $\Delta r^{\prime} \Gamma \Omega \Delta^{\prime}$ adapts and applies conventional research tools, such as transcribing, that are useful in best serving the communities involved in the research (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). Transcribing the words of the Aawaystamattsa was helpful in that it allowed their voices to be shared using their own words. Dr. Fellner describes the use of these tools as a reflection of the adaptability and survivance of Indigenous peoples throughout history and contemporary times, as our people have always been resourceful and have adapted new tools into our ways of doing when they help our communities (personal communication, January 2018).

Now in all honesty, when I first read the title of Shawn Wilson's book Research is Ceremony I was offended. After all, to me, ceremony was and still is something very sacred. I was offended that someone would group something so beautiful as ceremony with a word like "research" that has done so much harm to our people. I happened to attend the Indigenous Knowledge Public Lecture Series at the University of Calgary that Wilson was presenting at. When we had an opportunity to go up and introduce ourselves and get our books signed, I asked him about the title. Wilson, who is Opaskwaya Cree and now lives in Bundjalung land, Australia, explained that it might be easier to think about it from the perspective of dinner as being a ceremony. When you sit down to have dinner with your family, there is a series of actions/events that take place (cooking the food, setting the table, etc.) prior to sitting down and eating with

your family. The same is true with ceremony. There is a series of actions that contribute to the overall ceremony. For example, “specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to get the participants into a state of mind that will allow for the extraordinary to take place” (Wilson, 2008, p. 69). The same is true with research. This was the beginning stage of coming to understand that research is a ceremony (Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008). Of course, as I delved into this research journey (I am about three years into it now) I have come to understand on a much deeper level that my research is, indeed, a ceremonial quest (Fellner, 2016).

I have found this process to be a way to honour my ancestors’ ways of knowing. I never believed I could bring this into the academy. But we can, and we should. Of course, we must keep in mind that the paradigm we choose needs to be consistent with how we experience the world (Wilson, 2008). Δῖῖῖῖῖ allows me to draw upon the teachings within in the paradigm while at the same time including all of the other teachings I have received throughout my life, as these teachings have developed who I am. The connection of research to ceremony allowed me to enter into relationships with the Aawaystamattsā in that way—a respectful relationship that honoured both the exchange that occurred and my responsibility to do good with what they shared with me.

When I first considered using this research for my thesis, I tried to pray about it in my daily life, during fasts, and when I Sundanced. I couldn’t. It was like a block. What I understand now is that I needed all the experiences in between then and now to be able to start the process. All of my experiences in between deciding to do a thesis and now needed to happen for me to be ready to start. This included supporting my mom in ceremony during her experience with terminal cancer. My mom and I journeyed together in our traditional healing ceremonies and I learned from different Elders and knowledge holders. I learned on a new level during my mom’s

struggle with cancer the vital power of prayer and the importance of culture. Learning with various Elders enabled me to embody more of my original instructions as an Indigenous person, which allowed me to support myself and people I would meet along my journey, including my community. Elder Art Leon (Sts'ailes unceded Coast Salish, lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, personal communication, 2020) told me, "You are widening your Red Road and this will help you as you go back to help your community." Indigenist research is fluid and doesn't follow a linear pattern.

Throughout this research journey, I have attended numerous ceremonies asking for guidance for this research. At this time I won't get into too many details of what that ceremonial process is like, but I will share that when one asks for help, the help always comes. It may come, for example, through dreams, intuitive knowings, bodily knowings, physical guidance and direction, or interaction with animals. I received an incredible amount of guidance for this research from ceremony. Some of these ceremonies within the time period of this thesis include sweats, fasts (spring and fall), night lodges, kanotsiissin (all night smoke), Sundance sings, Sundances, yuipis, pipe ceremonies, full moon ceremonies, and numerous other informal ceremonies. Being involved in ceremony is a way of life, and a way that saved my life. Although most of my ceremonial commitments are in the Siksikaitstapi territories, I have also been connecting with my ancestors' ceremonies, including ᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋᠋/Nehiyawak, Anishinaabe, and Dakota ceremonies that have spanned Treaty 7, Treaty 6, and where the Syilx people live in the Okanagan Nation. And thus I have received a significant amount of help from various grandmothers, grandfathers, and Naatoyapiits.

I have started all of my writing sessions off with a smudge and offered tobacco to ask to be guided in a good way, to go about things in a good way, and to allow myself to be opened and

trust that everything I write is what is supposed to be written. Most of the conversations I have had with the Aawaystamattsa have begun with a smudge. Any time I have been struggling with this thesis I have turned to my smudge or a song to get me through it, trusting I will be guided in a good way (Karlee Fellner, personal communication, March 2020).

ᐃᓱᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ / Isihcikêwin

This next section discusses the frameworks used to guide the ᐃᓱᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ (Fellner, 2016, 2018a).

Seven Directions paradigm. ᐃᓱᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ is a seven directions paradigm that can be represented by the medicine wheel (Figure 2; Fellner, 2016, 2018a). ᐃᓱᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ allows for fluidity between each of the seven directions (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). The fluidity between these directions represents the interconnectedness and holism consistent with an Indigenous paradigm.



Figure 2. Seven directions medicine wheel paradigm (Fellner, 2016, p. 71).

Fellner (2016, 2018a) describes the seven directions as follows: The East represents the spirit, South represents the body, the West represents the heart, and the North represents the

mind. We are opening our awareness to our senses, to both physical and metaphysical knowings. We are learning through our being in relation with aspects such the earth, sky, and $\text{L}\sigma\text{D}\circ$ /Manitow. Earth encompasses land and all other land beings, animals, plants, and rocks. The sky includes all winged ones and sky beings, including the Naatoosi (sun), moon, stars and $\text{L}\sigma\text{D}\circ$ /Manitow (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). A crucial aspect of $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{H}}\text{r}\text{q}\Delta^{\text{D}}$ is honouring your relation to all parts equally (Fellner, 2016, 2018a). Deepening the understanding, Fellner explains the generational aspects of time within the seven directions that allow fluidity between the past and the present. These seven directions, through the generations, inform all phases of the research, from how knowledge holders are recruited, to conversations, to meaning making and writing. These seven directions, through the generations, informed all phases of this research, from how knowledge holders were recruited, to conversations, meaning making, and writing.

Seven Grandfathers teachings. $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{H}}\text{r}\text{q}\Delta^{\text{D}}$ (Fellner, 2016, 2018a) also draws upon the seven sacred grandfather teachings of the Anishinaabe (Benton-Banai, 2010; Hart, 2014) to inform how the research was approached throughout all phases. These teachings are consistent with $\text{O}^{\text{H}}\Delta\text{b}\text{A}^{\text{V}}/\text{Nehiyawak}$ and many other nations' teachings (Fellner, 2016). These teachings originate from my ancestors' communities in Turtle Mountain. The teachings that guide this framework are $\text{CV}\cdot\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Tâpwewin}$ (truth), $\text{r}^{\text{H}}\text{q}\text{C}\text{J}\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Sôhkeyitâmwîn}$ (courage or bravery), $\text{^{\wedge}}\text{L}\text{r}\text{D}\Delta\text{J}\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Pimameyiimowin}$ (humility), $\text{b}\cdot\text{b}^{\text{H}}\text{b}\text{r}\text{D}^{\text{D}}/\text{Kwayaskâtisiwin}$ (honesty), $\text{P}^{\text{H}}\text{U}\text{C}\text{J}\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Kisteyitamowin}$ (respect), $\text{b}\text{q}^{\text{H}}\text{CV}\cdot\text{r}\text{J}\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Kakehtaweyimowin}$ (wisdom), and $\text{y}\text{P}^{\text{H}}\Delta\text{D}\Delta^{\text{D}}/\text{Sâkihitowin}$ (love) (Blue Quills College, 2009). I honour the Seven Grandfather teachings, my ancestors' teachings, both within the $\Delta\text{r}^{\text{H}}\text{r}\text{q}\Delta^{\text{D}}$ methodology and within my traditions, as a demonstration of relational accountability. Thus, I am accountable to myself, the

community I am working with, the physical world, and the spirit world all at the same time, while maintaining ᑦᑭᑦ ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ/Miyo Wicehtowin (good relationships and harmony) throughout all phases of this research ceremony (Fellner, 2016, 2018a).

These teachings can be thought of as collective agreements between myself and all that I am in relation to (Clarence Black Water, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2018). Many nations have their own collective agreements that slightly vary. Thus, it is appropriate for me to use the teachings of my ancestors. Given the fluidity, and honouring of various teachings within ᑕᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ, other teachings and values have fundamentally guided this journey, guiding how I am in relation to the universe. This is an example of how relational accountability has been infused throughout my research process.

Knowledge Gathering for Original Project

The conversations being used for this research were conducted by me as part of a larger research project funded by CIHR. This section includes the knowledge-gathering process that occurred. I clearly outline the steps taken that led to me receiving approval from the University of Lethbridge Office of Research Ethics to repurpose the conversations as part of this research.

During my time attending the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs, I had the opportunity to sit with the Aawaystamattsa as an Aawaystamattsa. My experience attending the classes is infused throughout Chapter 4. Some of my involvement included learning from the Elders and knowledge holders, attending land-based activities such as feeding the members of Kanatsomitaiksi (Crazy Dog Society) during the Aako'ka'tssin (circle camp) and searching for Iniskim (sacred buffalo stones) in sacred sites in Amskapi Piikani. I helped prepare food, organize and serve at the Kanotsisissin (All-Smoke ceremony), attended and helped prepare, set up, and arrange food for

capstone and community presentations, took care of the Elders, ensuring they had food and water, and sat and participated in the class as an Aawaystamattsa when there were classroom activities. I planned a powwow for the first cohort that included a feast and giveaway for the community informed by Niitsitapii powwow protocols and also supported the second cohort with this in the second year. This involved numerous hours of informal consultations with the awaystamattsa, community, Elders, and powwow community, along with full days of working and of course dancing during the powwows. Involvement in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs required being open and flexible, and some days were up to 20 hours long! These are just some examples of my involvement in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs. I approached these classes as I would approach any community or ceremonial event—being an Aawaystamattsa, helping in any way that is needed, building genuine relationships, and ensuring that reciprocal friendships are guided by and informed through teachings and cultural protocols, which include the Seven Grandfather teachings.

Everyone is welcome (recruitment). While I was attending the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs, the students, Elders, and community members were invited to participate in a face-to-face conversation about their experiences in the program, with the understanding that these conversations would then be used for a research project. Everyone was informed that these conversations would inform future offerings of the programs and/or offer Indigenous communities recommendations that support community capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways. At this time, everyone in attendance was presented with an official letter of invitation, inviting them to participate in the research. The letter included details describing the research

project, objectives of the research, the specific research questions, expectations during the conversation, and clarification of the approach to meaning making. After the invitation was dispersed, six Aawaystamattsa self-selected to be a part of the study.

Knowledge gathering (data collection). I am cognizant of the historical and ongoing harm that continues to be done to Indigenous peoples. In order to mitigate any further harm, I read through the CIHR policy *Guidelines for Health Research Involving Aboriginal People* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, 2010) and Chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2, *Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2018) that were discussed earlier on and in greater detail in Chapter 2. I also referenced the First Nations principles of OCAP (ownership, control, access, and possession; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014), the final report of the TRC and the Commission's calls to action (TRC, 2015a, 2015b), and Brant Castellano's (2004) five major themes regarding ethics in Indigenous research. In addition, I thoroughly read work by Indigenous scholars that guided me on this journey. As an inherently relational Indigenist paradigm, $\Delta r'' \Gamma \Theta \Delta \text{ }^{\text{D}}$ also ensures that Indigenous ethics and cultural protocols are adhered to throughout and that the research is supported by the Seven Directions paradigm and the Seven Grandfathers teachings. Thus, I am ethically and culturally accountable to all my relations. This gives way to a paradigm that is mobilizing, transformative, decolonizing, and healing (Smith, 2012; Fellner, 2016, 2018a).

After the Aawaystamattsa had responded to the invitation to participate, a conversation was scheduled with each of them. The Aawaystamattsa and I reviewed the informed consent forms together, which offered them an opportunity to gain more clarification about the process

and ask any questions they might have. The informed consent addressed data collection, transcription of the conversation, analysis of the data, and the collaborative role of the knowledge holders (Wilson, 2008). Last, the consent addressed issues of confidentiality and anonymity. The Aawaystamattsa were informed that they could revoke their participation at any time up until the data analysis phase. They were informed that I and members of the research team would be the only individuals with access to the audio-recorded and transcribed interviews. Any Aawaystamattsa who wished to use a pseudonym would be referred to by their pseudonym.

Finally, Aawaystamattsa were informed that they would be offered co-authorship on any publications that result from this study and will be given a written copy of any publications resulting from this study regardless of their participation as an author. Indigenist research values the contributions of all individuals as they are considered co-researchers in the process (Wilson, 2008). I retained the signed consent forms and each Aawaystamattsa received a copy.

Conversational process (interview process). The conversations with the Aawaystamattsa were conducted using the conversational method (Kovach, 2009) in Kainai Nation, Amskapi Piikani, and Mohkíntis (Calgary). The conversational model allows for deep and meaningful conversations that come out in story, which honours our traditional oral histories (Kovach, 2009). The conversations were conducted one on one. The conversations continued for as long as the Aawaystamattsa wanted to speak. The shortest conversation was approximately 40 minutes and the longest lasted about three hours. On average, most conversations were around an hour. The conversation began with an introduction, with the Aawaystamattsa invited to introduce themselves as they wished. They all chose to introduce themselves in the Niitsitapii and English languages, using their legal names. This is consistent with Indigenist research, as identifying research participants by name highlights their contributions to the project (Wilson, 2008). The

Aawaystamattsa were asked to share their experiences of taking the program. This unstructured and open interview format allowed for free-flowing and reciprocal conversation (Sager, 2018). (See Appendix C for additional prompt questions.)

Often I would run into the Aawaystamattsa at community gatherings or gas stations and we would talk about having a conversation about the programs. These conversations took place on the go at times, given the fast-paced nature of being in community. By the time conversations occurred with the Aawaystamattsa, there was a great level of authentic relationship built, which speaks to relational accountability. Conversations were casual and comfortable (Kovach, 2009; Sager, 2018; Wilson, 2008). They all started with “Tell me about your experience taking the programs” and whatever came up for the Aawaystamattsa is where the conversation went. It was reciprocal, just as a conversation would be with someone you know. The Aawaystamattsa directed the conversations, but if there was something I was curious about or wanted to know more about, I would ask. Some conversations took place in a classroom during lunchtime; some took place during community gatherings away from the programs. Some were in my truck, on the land, or over a meal.

During the conversations, I was informed by the Seven Directions paradigm of $\Delta^{\text{H}}\text{C}\Delta^{\text{S}}$. I honoured spirit by noticing the occasional word that stood out to me during the conversation. I made note of these words in a notebook as parts of the conversation I knew through a metaphysical knowing were important. I honoured my body by recognizing and feeling certain and obvious sensations that occurred within me during the conversations. When the conversations ended, I wrote about my experiences and what came to me on mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical levels in as much detail as possible. These reflections were incorporated into the meaning-making process.

All the conversations were recorded. The digital files were encrypted and password protected on my private, password-protected computer and assigned a pseudonym. I personally transcribed the conversations verbatim, which provided an opportunity to listen to the Aawaystamattsa stories numerous times. The process of recording the interviews, transcribing them, and storing the transcripts according to the university's ethics guidelines is a Euro-Western way of doing research. However, personally transcribing these conversations was an act of relational accountability that honoured the space we shared, our conversations and the voices of the Aawaystamattsa (Wilson, 2008).

To ensure anonymity, the transcribed conversations and recordings were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Transcripts were sent to the Aawaystamattsa to review in order to ensure authenticity. At this time, they were invited to add to, revise, or edit the transcriptions as they wished. The Aawaystamattsa are co-researchers in the process, and this ensured their stories were being portrayed in an accurate way (Wilson, 2008). Two out of the six Aawaystamattsa revised their transcripts. These revisions consisted of minor edits of grammar, and one rewrote a paragraph that was confusing. When transcribing oral conversation into written text, often the natural language of the tongue interferes with the intention of the words. Once the Aawaystamattsa agreed on the final transcript, these were used for the meaning-making process. Five years following completion of the research, recordings and hard copies of the transcripts will be destroyed. At this time, Aawaystamattsa will be given the option of having their individual recordings and transcripts returned to them or discarded. Digital copies of all transcripts will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive for an additional five years, at which time they will be permanently deleted.

Repurposing the Conversations

I received approval from the University of Lethbridge Office of Research Services to repurpose, for this research project, conversations that were part of a larger, community-based research project funded by CIHR. In repurposing the conversations, revisions were made to the original University of Calgary ethics proposal to meet the regulations of the University of Lethbridge Ethics Department. The revised informed consent form can be found in Appendix D. In addition, an addendum was created and approved by the University of Lethbridge Ethics Department which reflected the repurposing of these conversations (see Appendix E). Before I used these conversations as part of this thesis, the Aawaystamattsa agreed to have their conversations repurposed and signed the revised informed consent and the addendum.

This thesis focuses on conversations with the students. Therefore, the inclusion criterion for participating in this thesis is that Aawaystamattsa be students involved in the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni Approaches to Wellness or Niitsitapiisinni: Real Peoples' Way of Life programs. Following the recommendations of Kovach (2010), who suggests in *Conversational Method in Indigenous Research* a sample size of six as a guideline, I used six conversations for this research.

Meaning Making (Data Analysis)

Preparation. *Three weeks prior to the meaning-making process, I headed out to fast on the land near Saddle Lake, Alberta—where my ancestors are from. During these days on the land by myself, without food, water, or technology and in ceremony, I prayed and gave offerings for the meaning-making process. I prayed to be guided by the teachings within $\Delta r^{11} r^9 \Delta^2$. I prayed that I would be guided to understand the important aspects of each conversation with the Aawaystamattsa, to be able to present the conversations in a good way. All social media were*

deactivated prior to this fast and has not been reactivated since. This is a way to focus on my prayers, to be able to more clearly hear the knowings that come through in mental emotional, spiritual, and physical ways, the ones that come from the earth, sky, and ᐅᓄᓂᓄ/Manitow. This ceremony was a preparation for the next ceremony I would be participating in.

Informed by the seven directions and seven teachings of ᐃᓯᓂᓄᓂᓄ, using Indigenous holistic meaning making (Fellner, 2016; Marsden, 2005), I made meaning of the conversations. During the meaning-making process it became clear to me that I was receiving teachings from the Aawaystamattsa, and therefore there are teachings that are presented in this thesis. Marsden (2005) defines holistic meaning making as “a subjective and interconnected process whereby knowledge from all aspects of being—mental, physical, spiritual and emotional—and knowledge from other beings, influences understandings about what’s important, common or thematic” (p. 50). This process encompasses and honours knowing on mental, emotional spiritual, and physical levels (Fellner, 2016; Marsden, 2005). Each individual using this framework will have different interpretations because these are informed by one’s own cultural and traditional teachings (Marsden, 2005). My process of meaning making included praying, smudging, offering tobacco, paying attention to my dreams, intuitive knowings, visions, singing, and being on the land.

The Seven Directions paradigm includes spirit, body, heart, and mind in relation to the earth, the sky, and ᐅᓄᓂᓄ/Manitow. The seven teachings include ᐅᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄ/Tâpwewin (truth), ᓯᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄ/Sôhkeyitâmwîn (courage or bravery), ᐅᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄ/Kwayaskâtisiwin (honesty), ᐅᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄ/Pimameyîimowin (humility), ᐅᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄ/Kisteyitamowin (respect),

voices, paying close attention to all aspects of my being, mind, body, heart, spirit, earth, sky, and $\text{L}\sigma\text{D}\circ$ /Manitow. I was quite surprised to notice that each time I listened to the Aawaystamattsa's voices, it was as if we were right there in person. And it was during these initial conversations that we were connected in such a way that I was able to vicariously experience and envision their experiences.

I made notes as anything came up. These reactions came in various forms: mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual. Sometimes I experienced a felt sense. A felt sense could be perceived as a physical knowing, but my interpretation is also connected to a spiritual and an emotional knowing (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). A felt sense is defined as "a bodily experience of interconnected emotion, energy and sensations that are an expression of knowledge of collective experiences through time" (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014, p. 51). On the mental level, it was a clear knowing that when things were repeated in several conversations, they were important. On the emotional level, I paid attention to my feelings and their intensity. Feelings with high intensity were noted. For example, numerous times I felt incredible joy. On the physical level, I paid attention to bodily sensations such as tingling, shivers, and watery eyes. Sometimes I experienced watery eyes, and although this is a physical sensation, it also has a spiritual meaning for me. On the spiritual level, I intuitively knew when things were important.

After I listened to the Aawaystamattsa's voices the first time, I noticed that most of what came up this time was consistent with what I had noticed during the original conversations and the notes I had made—Again, these were phrases or aspects of the conversations that stood out, bodily knowings, and knowings that came in a mental, spiritual and emotional way. I had already had notes on the original conversations and so I was able to look at the notes from the conversation and intuitively compare them to what I had experienced this time in re-listening. I

repeated this process, listening to their voices and following along in the transcripts. I would highlight the aspects on the printed-out transcript that spoke to me. Going over the voices one last time with another copy of the transcripts, I listened and highlighted the parts that stood out as important. This time I added words besides the highlighted parts—By this time I had a living room full of printed out transcripts from each Aawaystamattsa, in piles for every time I went through them, indicating what I noticed each time. The words described topics the Aawaystamattsa were speaking about. By this time I had good indicators for the parts of the conversations that were particularly important, and I was aware I was seeing many of the same topics within multiple conversations.

The fourth time I went through just the transcripts. I added any other words that came to me beside the highlighted sections. At this time I took the words that were written on the transcripts and wrote them onto a separate piece of paper. These were my preliminary teachings I was taking away. I put the list aside, but stayed mindful of the preliminary teachings I was receiving. This process repeated several times. I noticed that some things I had labelled with a different teaching were actually part of another teaching. This awareness further refined my preliminary teachings— This process was not something that I followed instructions on how to do, it was a process that evolved out of $\Delta r^{\prime} \cap \Delta^2$. Out of prayer and following my cultural teachings, I had developed a process infused with intuitive knowings which was guided by my ancestors that while at the same time opened my awareness to the seven directions. My body, my hands, my mind just knew what to do and how to go about it. It was a process of opening up each pile of transcripts and intuitively knowing what to look for.

In the past I have listened to Indigenous community members speak on their experience with research and explain that what they shared was taken out of context or not represented

accurately. This also occurs within journalism. I have also listened to Indigenous community members speak about participating in research and then never knowing what happened with the research findings. Both of these experiences have further informed me as to why it was very important to represent the conversations in a good way and to try and keep the themes as holistic as possible. My intention was to ensure I was able to honour the voices of all the Aawaystamattsa and what they shared with me the whole way through. This is distinctly different from most Euro-Western analysis, in which you would be expected to break everything down (to analyze for themes), which would risk losing parts of the Aawaystamattsa's stories. When we break down a conversation, we are breaking down the relationships around it (Wilson, 2008). Also, if one teaching was only shared by one Aawaystamattsa but held significance in my experiences in listening to it and in theirs, it was included. By the end of the two days, I had my preliminary teachings I was receiving from these conversations. Over the week I was guided in dreams and knowings to further articulate the teachings.

I have seen other Indigenous scholars present their findings in forms of both plays and stories, but I never considered that would be something I would be capable of. In my mind—mentally—I didn't feel drawn to story or play; it felt out of my comfort zone. I expected I would write typical findings and discussion chapters. However, Δ^{ju}Γ⁹Δ³ led me another way. Honouring the epistemology of this paradigm, which is inevitably also the interconnected ontology, axiology, and methodology, I prayed about it. I put out tobacco offerings. As I started to compile the excerpts from the conversations with the Aawaystamattsa, it became very clear to me that by separating pieces of the conversations, I would be at risk of losing important aspects of the conversations. Each conversation with the Aawaystamattsa was filled with numerous teachings, which could sit on their own as a thesis. Again, I realized what an important and big

job it was to ensure I was honouring everyone's voices. The process of coming to know which aspects of the conversations to use was of course driven by and infused with the ceremonial process. It came to me—spiritually—it was an intuitive knowing, that the only way I could honour all voices and not risk leaving out important elements was to present the conversations as a script. When I realized this was what I had to do, it made me nervous. This was definitely not what I had in mind—mentally. However, to honour $\Delta r^{j} \Gamma \Delta \Delta^{j}$, this was what I had to do. Given that $\Delta r^{j} \Gamma \Delta \Delta^{j}$ is infused with ethics, this script is another form of encircling. Encircling can be compared to member checking, which is a strategy often used in Eurocentric research to improve a study's trustworthiness. In this research, I tried to use the Aawaystamattsa's true voices as much as possible. To convert the conversations into a script, I had to make slight revisions, trying my best (being accountable by relational accountability) to keep their voices as they were.

Encircling (authentic, credible, and relational). Kovach (2009) writes that “to embrace Indigenous methodologies is to accept subjective knowledge” (p. 111). The intent with this research is not to make generalizable claims for the community but to honour the voices and the set of relationships (Wilson, 2008). While typical Eurocentric research is concerned with rigour and validity, Indigenist research is concerned with being authentic, credible, and relational. Within Indigenist research, accountability to knowledge holders and to other relationships is highly relevant (Wilson, 2008). The process of encircling is intended to ensure that the voices are being honoured and represented in an accurate way. This process ultimately increases the authenticity and credibility of the research.

Following the practice of relational accountability through encircling, once preliminary teachings were found, Aawaystamattsa were then asked to review the teachings. This process

students, the Elders, and the community. When interacting with any of the individuals or on the land in the Kainai Nation, Amskappi Piikani, I was respectful. I followed cultural protocols to the best of my knowing. I involved the Aawaystamattsa in the process of meaning making to ensure I was reflecting what they had shared in a good way. I contacted the Aawaystamattsa several times throughout to ensure I was representing their voices in a good way.

The teaching of ᑲᑭᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ/ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ (wisdom) was also lived throughout this process. My experiences of participating in the programs as an Aawaystamattsa, my interactions with the students, and especially the conversations I had with the Aawaystamattsa have taught me an incredible amount. Each Aawaystamattsa gifted me with many teachings that I will carry with me, but also continue to share with others in the form of this thesis, with hopes that it gives back to the community in a good way.

Tâpwewin is a teaching about truth. I lived this teaching by sharing the teachings as I understood them, and I honoured the Tâpwewin of the Aawaystamattsa by having their voices present to speak for themselves through condensed excerpts (Wilson, 2008). This demonstrates our collective voice, as we are speaking together (Kovach, 2009). The list of Aawaystamattsa (see Aawaystamattsa) contains personal profiles that were constructed by each Aawaystamattsa, which allowed them to introduce themselves in their own words in a way they saw fit.

Two teachings that I lived and that can be shared together are ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ/ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ (honesty) and ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ/ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ (humility). There were numerous times throughout this process that I didn't know what to do. I asked for help from my co-supervisor Karlee, Elders, other Indigenous researchers, and through prayer and ceremony. I tried to do my best throughout this process, but I made mistakes as well. One mistake I made was that I did not gift the Aawaystamattsa with tobacco in addition to the

culturally appropriate gift. This oversight was not intentional. This mistake required me to be honest and to practice humility, with myself, the Aawaystamattsa, and all that I am accountable to in all my relations. One of our sacred ways to give thanks and show appreciation is to offer tobacco. Tobacco is a way to show reciprocity and validity (Fellner, 2016).

To maintain relational accountability to the people, to the physical and metaphysical world, and to the ceremony of this research, I will therefore go back and give tobacco to each Aawaystamattsa and express myself (Bernie Gladue, Big Stone Cree Nation & Fort Good Hope, lives in Tsuu T'ina Nation, personal communication, 2018). From the teachings I have received, when I offer them the tobacco, if they accept it, they will be able to feel what I am feeling (Calvert Wolf Child, Kainai Nation, lives on the Kainai Nation Blood Reserve, personal communication, 2019; Chester Day Chief, Kainai Nation, lives on the Kainai Nation Blood Reserve, personal communication, 2019). I am assured that if they accept the tobacco, they will feel my sincerity. I also have been taught that our intention is what counts (Iistakaanaps, lives in Calgary, personal communication, 2010). I did have good intentions and I went in with a good mind and a good heart. Given that time is not linear, but spatial, I feel that everything will be made right in a good way (Duran & Duran, 1995; Wilson, 2008).

The last teaching is ᖃᐱᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃᐃ/Sâkihitowin (love). I initially met the Aawaystamattsa while I attended the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni Approaches to Wellness or Niitsitapiisinni: Real Peoples' Way of Life programs. Although we didn't directly know each other, we were mostly connected by mutual relations, which in our ways, forms an instant connection: a relationship. Throughout my attendance in the program, we continued to get to know each other, and the relationships deepened. Most of our relationships deepened after sharing such a beautiful

space where they shared their experience. I have love for all the Aawaystamattsa and consider all of them to be my friends. I have love for this program and love for the community.

Summary

This chapter described $\Delta\prime^{\prime\prime}\Gamma\text{q}\Delta^{\prime}$, a $\tau^{\prime\prime}\Delta\text{b}^{\circ}$ $\triangleright\cap\vee\Gamma\prime\text{q}\text{q}^{\prime}$ /Nehiyaw-Otipemisiwak research paradigm that was used to explore students' experiences of the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs. This chapter provided a rationale for this study as well as my relationship with this research paradigm. It shared story with the hopes to further bridge the gap between academia and Indigenist research. This chapter discussed the knowledge-gathering process that was part of a larger research project, as well as ethical considerations and how the conversations from the larger project were repurposed for this research project. Lastly and infused all throughout, this chapter described my ceremonial journey, how ethics were infused in the research, and how meaning was made. The next and final chapter reveals the teachings and discussion that came from the conversations with the Aawaystamattsa which evolved from the epistemological framework of $\Delta\prime^{\prime\prime}\Gamma\text{q}\Delta^{\prime}$.

true words and teachings into this research as I could. I reflected on one of the teachings from the late Andy Black Water that guided my intention for this research, and that is that when we receive knowledge, we then have the responsibility to do good with it (late Andy Black Water, Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2017). Following ᐃᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ, I prayed about how I could do this. I gave many tobacco offerings, and one morning it came to me through an intuitive knowing. I understood that I had to use the true words of the Aawaystamattsas and write in the form of a dialogue that would sit as a combined findings and discussion chapter. This script, just as each part of this research writing, started with prayer, smudging, and tobacco offerings. I know that the tobacco offering is a spiritual exchange that acted as a form of relational accountability, in that I was guided to write in the way it came out. And so, this script was written through spirit, with the guidance of my ancestors—just as every other aspect of this thesis has been done. As I allowed spirit to write through me, it became clear and very fitting that this was another method of relational accountability in the form of encircling.

In the script the characters (the Aawaystamattsas—for introductions, see the Aawaystamattsas section in the prefatory pages of the thesis) are invited to share their perspectives, signalled by being passed Óóhkotok, who ends up becoming an active character in the script. During this script Óóhkotok, other animals end up joining the circle and become active characters in the script which is a discussion. They know all the Aawaystamattsas as they have been around for aspects of the Poo'miikapii program. They speak whenever they feel the need to and do not follow the format of needing to hold the Óóhkotok.

Given that all the animals are written by me and within an Indigenist research paradigm we cannot separate ourselves from the process, the voices of all the animals are infused with my voice and my experiences in the program and in community. With the

understanding that we are constantly evolving and in constant motion the animals have more than one voice. This is also supported by the transformative abilities of Indigenous peoples throughout time (Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014). Therefore the animals are helpers to demonstrate knowledge, perspectives, experiences and various voices-including my own. In some instances the references on the side columns are intended to acknowledge that what is being said in the script is also supported with other culturally relevant work by other scholars. In some cases, the references are an act of relational accountability, which is a form of ethics that is infused throughout ΔᵣʷᵢᵣᵠΔᵣ, to honor where the knowledge comes from, despite being my voice. I have followed the epistemology of ΔᵣʷᵢᵣᵠΔᵣ, this is the way the script has come out. The voices of the animals and myself (Holy Rock Woman) are interrelated and fluid. It may be helpful to view the script as a story, and if doing so the invitation is to keep the following in mind:

“Stories go in circles. They don’t go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and hard as finding your way home. Part of the finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen” (Tafoya, 1995, p. 12).

The following nonhuman characters join the conversation at various moments:

Óóhkotok: *Óóhkotok is our oldest ancestor and has seen it all. He has witnessed a lot in the community and very wise. He is familiar with the healing abilities of land.*

Makoyi (Wolf): *Makoyi is very knowledgeable in traditional ways, but more recently was inspired by the Aawaystamattsa to go back to school. In his preparation he has been doing a lot of reading. He was down in the buttes prior to joining the group.*

Kiaayo & Baby Kiaayo (Bear and Baby Bear): *Kiaayo is the mother to Baby Kiaayo.*

Mother-like, she sees the impacts of colonization on the people. She remembers the good days and really cares about the younger generations, the children. She sees and hears a lot of what is going on in the community. Baby Kiaayo is five years old.

Mai'stóó (Crow): *Mai'stóó was flying around Old Agency before finding the group. He is a dramatic, witty trickster. He is unfiltered and gets to the point! Mai'stóó sees a lot of things going on in the community as he flies all around.*

Inni (Buffalo): *Inni is an ancestral Grandmother Spirit. She is old and tired but very wise. It is her spirit that is present since there have not been any Inni in the area for over 100 years.*

Piitaa (Eagle): *Piitaa is flying around all over Kainaiwa. He knows the right time to come into the script.*

Given that the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs took place on Siksikaitstapi territory, the dialogue in this chapter takes place on the land in Siksikaitstapi territory. The conversation takes place in one of my favourite places on the Kainai Nation—Belly Buttes in Old Agency—on the mid-morning of Friday July 17th, 2020, the official start of Kainai Indian Days Powwow & Rodeo—with no pandemic in sight. Congruent with $\Delta^{\rho}\Gamma^{\rho}\Delta^{\rho}$, the dialogue is informed by my own teachings in relation to being on the land in Siksikaitstapi territory.

To You, the Indigenous Scholars

I load up my wagon with all the items I need for the final conversation with the Aawaystamattsa. My trailer is parked at the powwow, but I make a run into Fort Macleod to pick up some Tim Hortons and snacks. When I arrive at Belly Buttes, I pick a spot and get out my

tobacco, hold it in my hands, and pray. I ask permission from the land to let us use this place to have a conversation about the teachings I received from all the Aawaystamattsa. Setting the intention, I ask for our conversations to be guided in a in a good way. Then, I set the tobacco down and lay out my star quilt on the piece of land on which I offered the tobacco. I pull out the smudge box, coffee, snacks, and culturally appropriate gifts for the Aawaystamattsa and place them on the blanket.

Like me, most of the Aawaystamattsa are camping with their families at the powwow or rodeo. When they show up, I greet each of them with a hug and give them a gift: tobacco, a braid of sweetgrass, a scarf, and a charcoal. We are excited to see each other! Even though this is our final meeting, we know we will be visiting all weekend at the powwow. Each of us grabs a coffee and a snack and we sit down on the blanket, naturally forming a circle.

When all of the Aawaystamattsa are settled, I reach into my bag and offer Many Horses, who happens to be sitting next to me, a small pouch of tobacco. I ask him if he would pray for us. He accepts my tobacco offering. I light the charcoal for him, and soon the smell of sweetgrass floats through the air. He starts to pray. His prayer officially and spiritually sets the intention for our conversations to be guided in a good way. At the end of his prayers we all place our right hand on our heart, signalling that we accept those prayers. I look down into the smudge box and grab a Óóhkotok (rock he is a grandfather rock) and start to speak.

All of us Aawaystamattsa are sitting down on the star quilt. The group includes, in clockwise order, Many Horses, Pretty Badger Woman, Buffalo Flower Woman, Kind-Hearted Woman, Woman Who Carries the Bundle, Singing Across the Water Woman, and me, Holy Rock Woman. The voices of the Aawaystamattsa are taken from the transcribed conversations. The only revisions that have been made to their voices are grammatical revisions and in some cases

additions to the beginning of their sentences, both of which were done to improve the flow of the dialogue into a script.

Going to the Powwow: A Script

Holy Rock Woman: *(holding Óóhkotok)* Thank you all for coming today and for being part of this whole project. Grand Entry is at 7 p.m. so we will aim to have this wrapped up in time to make it down to the powwow and have time to get ready.

It's been three years since this journey started. I know some of you (Pretty Badger Woman, Buffalo Flower Woman, and Many Horses) just completed your third year and now have a master's degree! Some of you (Woman Who Carries the Bundle) have started your PhD, and others (Kind-Hearted Woman and Singing Across the Water Woman) have been applying all that you learned within your personal lives and your work with community. I just wanted to say thank-you for the relationships that came out of this process and for the conversations we had as part of this research and for letting me be part of the process.

Over the time since our initial research conversations, I have had an opportunity to listen to all of your voices many times. I feel incredibly blessed to have been part of those conversations, and for you to have trusted me to represent your voices in a good way. So, thank you for the many teachings and for sharing the stories. I learned an incredible amount from each and every one of you. I have done my best to ensure I

(Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)

(Fellner, 2016)

didn't miss anything! I also learned a lot of cultural teachings and protocols that I am so grateful for. I won't include all those teachings in here, but I'll hold them within me, and they will be applied and shared in my personal life, outside of research. As I have learned through the conversations, when discussing traditional knowledge within Eurocentric institutions, it's about finding a balance: sharing enough of the traditional knowledge so it's understood, but not sharing too much. We need to keep some a mystery. These teachings feel very personal to me. Rather than having goals of rigour, validity, and reliability, as dominant Euro Western approaches to research do, research conducted through an Indigenist paradigm is concerned with authenticity, credibility, and relationality. As a demonstration of the authenticity and credibility of these teachings and out of respect for the relationships with all of you, the Aawaystamattsa, today is a process to encircle. I am ensuring that the teachings and offerings accurately reflect our voices. I am going to go through the teachings I received, one by one. Feel free to share whatever comes up for you. If you don't want to share, just keep passing Óóhkotok along.

I know each teaching is super interrelated and fluid and lots of the experiences can go with more than one teaching. This just speaks to the fluidity and relationality of Indigenist research! The intent of this research was to explore students' experiences of the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's

(Tisha Bromley-Wadsworth, Kainai Nation, lives in Coalhurst, Alberta, personal communication, 2020).

(Pretty Shields, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, Personal Communications, 2020)

(Wilson, 2008)

(Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)

Way of Life programs. The key teachings I received from our conversations in relation to your experiences fall under these eight themes: (1) Indigenous Culture is Healing, (2) Personal and Professional Benefits, (3) Strengthening Allyship & Relationships, (4) Intergenerational Wellness/Healing, (5) Community/Collective Wellness, (6) Nations Experiencing Wellness, (7) Cultural Identity, and (8) Reconciling Relationships Through Education. In addition to these eight themes and their teachings, there are $\text{LU}^{\wedge}\text{U}^{\parallel}\text{<L}\Omega\text{q}\Delta\text{'}\text{/Macastēhamānakēwin}$ in the form of recommendations for other institutions, agencies, organizations, or communities who are wishing to implement similar programs. These offerings also came from our conversations.

Maybe let's start with the first teaching, Indigenous Culture is Healing. Obviously this is a given (*giggle*). All the conversations we had were filled with numerous teachings that support the teaching that culture is healing. It was almost as though this was the foundation for all the other teachings to evolve from! Many Horses, would you like to start? (*Holy Rock Woman passes Óóhkotok in a clockwise direction to Many Horses.*)

Indigenous Culture is Healing

Many Horses: I feel like this is a given! (*laughs*) The community is always on a healing journey. Right now, we have this epidemic with the opioid

crisis. We have to find ways as a community, through our education and through our ceremonial life, to work together and find ways to heal the people. Anything we are going through in life, if it's tough or something we cannot handle, we turn to the smudge, Aamatosimaan (*he points at the smudge box*). So you give it back to Mother Earth. We know how the energy forces affect us. We know how it treats us. We see when the animals are acting different something is coming. We've got to be prepared for that. We know when there is an abundance of berries we're going to have a hard, hard winter. We know when we see the mountains, if they start glowing blue before winter comes, that is another indicator that we are going to have a hard winter. We are taught when you approach animals, don't approach them straight up. What we do is approach them to the side. For instance, a horse, we approach them to the side and when you do that it's the same thing as a child. That is how you approach a child, so they don't feel threatened, which is not supposed to happen in our culture. I'll give you another example. (*Many Horses proceeds to tell the story of when and how his name was given to him during a Horns Society sweat, at a time in his life when he wasn't overly involved in ceremony yet.*) . . .

And what the name did was set a path for me, not knowing that path was geared toward that ceremonial life. So, as it went on, I ended up joining the Horns Society. I am very humbled and honoured to be part of it. This program opened up a whole new concept in my way of living and it's based on wellness and positive thinking.

<p><i>(Many Horses passes Óóhkotok to Pretty Badger Woman. Right before Pretty Badger Woman speaks, Óóhkotok starts rocking in Pretty Badger Woman's hand. All of a sudden Óóhkotok starts to speak.)</i></p>	
<p>Óóhkotok: You're right. <i>(All the Aawaystamattsa say Oki to Óóhkotok).</i> You can give all that you're struggling with to the smudge, to Mother Earth, and that includes us grandfathers. Us grandfathers are the oldest ancestors, and we have the ability to take on all your pain, whether it's emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual. We were created in such a way that we can absorb anything. The land has the ability to calm, restore balance, and inspire creativity. It's an important aspect of culture, identity, and health, and it's necessary for revival of Indigenous knowledge. Land is another point of connection that holds ancient wisdom, and that is one reason why these programs need to be held out here on the land.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Kyun! (Done in Blackfoot) <i>(All the Aawaystamattsa laugh. All of a sudden there is a howl, AW AW AWOOOO! The Aawaystamattsa look around, and up from the buttes crawls up Makoyi.)</i></p>	<p>(Alanna Young Leon, Anishinaabe and Nehiy/naw Cree, from Treaty 1 & 5, lives in unceded Salish territories, personal communication, 2019)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(A. Wilson, 2004)</p> <p>(Rorick, 2019)</p> <p>(Berkes, 2012; Tobias & Richmond, 2014)</p>
<p>Makoyi: Oki, family! I heard some talking and was hoping it was you guys again. <i>(Makoyi walks towards Holy Rock Woman and Many Horses. The Aawaystamattsa and Óóhkotok say Oki to Makoyi.)</i></p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: It's so good to see you again!</p>	
<p>Makoyi: You too! Seeing you guys do your school out here on the land inspired me. I've been considering applying to the program too. In</p>	

<p>preparation, I've been doing some reading lately. Did you know that culture can be its own intervention in counselling when working with Indigenous people? It's actually vital to incorporate culture and traditional approaches to wellness when working with addiction. You know, sweats, smudging, cultural activities. Incorporating cultural and traditional approaches to wellness works far better to decrease substance use than Western interventions. There are some excellent culturally based treatment centres around. It's too bad they tend to receive far less funding than those based on Western interventions. <i>(Makoyi sits down between Holy Rock Woman and Many Horses.)</i></p>	<p>(Lowe et al., 2012)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016; Rowan et al., 2014; Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Lowe et al., 2012) (CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>
<p>Pretty Badger Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> I don't get it! Why would they receive less funding? Especially if it's proven to be more effective? Of course culture is healing! It seems redundant, like I am preaching to the choir when I say that! And the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs are just infused with culture and wellness. By the way, it's good to see you, Makoyi and Óóhkotok. <i>(With a big smile on her face, she passes Óóhkotok to Buffalo Flower Woman.)</i></p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: In the programs we have been learning about the horrible injustices that have been done to your people. I have asked myself many times, How are you all so resilient? And in talking with a lot of people from the community, they have said, "We are resilient because Creator gave us tools that we are so lucky to have." I'm like, what are the</p>	

<p>tools? (<i>laughs</i>) Ceremony, prayer, the land. That is what is missing in the Western world. We need to keep learning from each other, not in a capitalizing way. Even this weekend I had a conversation with a friend who said, “We know about meditation, how to restore ourselves and do self-care. We know about that. But in contemporary society it’s being sold to us, in books and yoga classes. It’s being sold to us. But these ways we always have known. And how to detoxify and cleanse, we have always known this too, but now in society, it’s just being sold. But for us, there is no cost, it’s all for free.” The language is teaching me. It’s not all lost, and the ancestors are here (<i>holds up Óóhkotok</i>). The prayer piece has been really big for me. I grew up Catholic, so I am grateful for that, because I learnt about praying but we weren’t really practicing. It just taught me to be spiritual. So, prayer I really resonated with. I’ll say my personal prayer but then I’ll say my Blackfoot prayer in the language, but also to honour the ancestors of this place, so they understand what I am I’m saying. We should all learn to pray and ask for help and guidance. (<i>Buffalo Flower Woman passes Óóhkotok to Kind-Hearted Woman.</i>)</p>	
<p>Óóhkotok: You would think that with all this talk of reconciliation and the calls to action that you would have learned about the truth of Canada’s colonial past while in university. Your friends were right about the tools, but there are even more: community, celebrations, art, history, and the list goes on. Indigenous peoples have been engaging in these holistic approaches to healing and wellness since the beginning of time—trust me,</p>	<p>(TRC, 2015a; TRC 2015,b)</p> <p>(Chandler and Lalonde, 1998; Gone, 2013; McCormick, 1997; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)</p>

<p>us grandfathers have seen it all! Ceremonies are on the land and with the community. The sacred objects that are used in ceremony all come from the land. So yes, all of these ceremonies and traditional healing practices don't have a price attached to them. You raised a good point about learning from Indigenous peoples but in a non-capitalizing way. This is super important. Just remember everything is about relationships. Authentic and genuine relationships that require decolonizing efforts. Kyun.</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)</p> <p>(CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>
<p>Kind-Hearted Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> Our first class at the Aako'ka'tssin (circle camp) when we were watching the Horns dance was the first experience I had of an animal blessing me. I felt an inexplicable joy. The horse's gaze just penetrated my being, and it was a huge healing experience. At that moment, I understood again the Blackfoot worldview (and the worldview of many Indigenous people, of course) that everything has a spirit and is animate, and they are brothers and sisters, so that horse was my kin. And same with you, Grandfather. <i>(holds up Óóhkotok and smiles)</i> When things get tricky for me, I have that horse's gaze to help me along. I think back and I realize, okay I am not alone. I can make the next step. I'm getting weepy talking about it, but it's very profound. <i>(pauses and wipes her eyes with her scarf)</i></p> <p>There were numerous other experiences when I understood on a deeper level the deeper connection we have with other beings. I think of the bison harvest. The bison was really agitated and jumping and scared. When one of our classmates who delivered the shot stopped and made an offering</p>	<p>(Fellner, 2016; Sager, 2018)</p>

<p>and said a prayer, the bison became calm, and she turned sideways and stood there. <i>(pause)</i> It’s always important to ask myself, “Am I turning sideways?”</p>	
<p>Makoyi: Hey, that sounds like one of the central learnings of being Niitsitapii—you claim your gift for the benefit or health of the collective.</p>	<p>(Kind-Hearted Woman, lives in Calgary, Alberta, personal communication, 2020)</p>
<p>Kind-Hearted Woman: Right! And when we had a day with the horses with Shane Little Bear and Pete Standing Alone. I have grown up with horses my whole life, and that was the first time I saw someone connect on a spiritual level and was able to direct the horse with energy. Another example of interspecies communication, on a way different level than a bridle or halters or spurs, right? I came away with understanding on a deeper level again that I am not alone, that we’re all in this together. And me going through my life isn’t necessarily about my will and energy, but all of creation wants to support me to do the work that I can do. <i>(passes Óóhkotok down to Woman Who Carries the Bundle)</i></p>	
<p>Óóhkotok: You got it! You are never alone. We are always in relation to all of creation. Cultural stuff is not only healing for Indigenous people but for all people. After all, we are all Indigenous to somewhere, right? Learning about Indigenous worldviews is a much different type of learning experience when it’s lived as opposed to read about in a book. Kyun.</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016; Fellner, 2016, 2018b; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)</p> <p>Karlee Fellner, personal communication, 2019, referenced a phrase from Dr. Betty Bastien (CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>

<p>Makoyi: Kind-Hearted Woman, when I heard you share, the word empowerment came up for me. I also read about that being another crucial aspect of working with Indigenous people. From your experience with the horse’s gaze, you now have a cultural tool that you can access any time you need to! Your experience at the Aako’ka’tssin reminds me of what Dr. Betty Bastien says about the first time she attended Aako’ka’tssin. She says the first time she was able to experience the cosmic alliances was when she started to engage in ceremony. She began to understand the Siksikaitisitapi paradigm, which then enabled her to make sense of the past but also provided her with strength for the future.</p>	<p>(Fellner, 2016; Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Bastien, 2004)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: <i>(Puts her hand to her heart)</i> I agree, it’s a given that Indigenous culture is healing. So many different aspects of culture are forms of wellness—ceremony, traditions, history, language, art, land, crafts . . . There are a lot of aspects, and they’re all very important and bring wellness to our people. <i>(passes Óóhkotok to Singing Across the Water Woman)</i></p>	<p>(Chandler and Lalonde, 1998; Gone, 2013; McCormick, 1997; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Óóhkotok: That reminds me of that art workshop that took place out here in Kainai two years in a row. Niitsitapii artists came into the schools and taught the youth various forms of art. Beyond being an amazing experience for the youth, artists, and community, art promoted wellness as a healthy coping strategy to the youth in a decolonized way. Many students come to school with distractions having to do with their home life, and this art workshop decreased students’ anxiety. It was empowering. Their art was an</p>	<p>(St. Pierre, 2018; Van Bavel, 2018))</p> <p>(St. Pierre, 2018)</p> <p>(Van Bavel, 2018)</p>

<p>expression of culture, of identity. It was empowering and acknowledged the soul in the process. Most Eurocentric approaches to wellness tend not to acknowledge the soul, but for Indigenous peoples, the soul is vital to wellness. Given that it was mainly Niitsitapii artists working with Niitsitapii youth, there was a sense of role modelling going on, and mentorship! It's really neat to think about how it all comes together bringing wellness into many different areas.</p>	<p>(St. Pierre, 2018; Van Bavel, 2018)</p> <p>(Duran, 2006)</p> <p>(St. Pierre, 2018; Van Bavel, 2018)</p>
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> I haven't always been connected with my culture, but I have been making an effort to learn, and in the program I learnt about protocol, prayer, and smudging. I've always been a person of faith and I always prayed, but learning about smudging and the way they go about it and the protocol and how it's so good for us spiritually and even doing the actions—it helps us in our physical. It really helps us to round out, I guess, to find that balance. It's really been helping me in that manner. And along with the community aspects. A lot of friendships came as a result. We developed close relationships with each other. <i>(passes Óóhkotok to Holy Rock Woman)</i></p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018, Fellner, 2016; Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p>
<p>Óóhkotok: So many people have lost their way because of colonization. After the worst period of physical violence ended, colonization became more of a slow process with serious long-term impacts. The implicit objective was to destroy identity, which we know is inherently linked with culture. Not every Indigenous person was able to retain a connection with the traditional and cultural ways. In fact, a lot weren't able to. Singing</p>	<p>(Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015 a)</p> <p>(Bastien, 2004)</p> <p>(Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015 a)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2018a)</p>

<p>Across the Water Woman, I am so happy to hear you're on your journey to honouring your original instructions of your people. Thankfully the Siksikaitsitapi were able to preserve enough connection to culture, language, and ceremony that they're able to be passed down through these programs.</p>	<p>(Bastien, 2004)</p>
<p>Holy Rock Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> I remember those art workshops! They were amazing. I witnessed the good medicine they brought to the community. Being a helper with whatever needed to be done afforded me the experience of working with everyone at some point, from staff to artists, students, community—you name it! Everyone was so happy. One of the workshops happened just shortly after a suicide in the community that really impacted the community and the students. <i>(pause)</i> It really inspired me to see how the students used art to express the grief they felt. <i>(thinking about a particular student)</i> It was truly beautiful. And the student was proud of the work they did. And then on the last day when they had a community showcase, all the students got to show their art to their families! Wow, the excitement and pride these students felt. It was just a beautiful experience. That was empowerment! I remember later that evening I ran into one of the youth who had created art on a skateboard at the sports plex. She was so proud of her skateboard and was showing all her friends. Culture is without a doubt healing—in mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical ways. And then there was that one class when we went to a sacred site to find Iniskim (sacred buffalo stones) in Amskappi Piikani, and</p>	<p>(St. Pierre, 2018; Van Bavel, 2018)</p> <p>(Sager, 2018)</p>

I had just recently found out my mom’s cancer had spread, so life was really tough. It was so comforting to be out on the land. I remember just being off on my own, being in prayer and looking for the Iniskim. We were all spread out and in our own processes, but I remember how calm I felt. I sat on the land and just reflected on how healing it was to be with everyone, be in prayer, be on the land. That day really helped me. Our experiences with culture being healing are consistent with what other Indigenous scholars have been writing about.

(Chandler and Lalonde, 1998; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013; McCormick, 1997; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)

Next we can talk about Personal and Professional Benefits. Many Horses, would you like to start? (*Holy Rock Woman passes Óóhkotok to Many Horses.*)

Personal and Professional Benefits

Many Horses: (*holds Óóhkotok in his hand and speaks directly to him*) That disruption of forced assimilation and residential schools you talked about that interfered in transmitting our culture—it left some gaps in certain generations—the one I am in and the one next after myself. (*Many Horses puts his hand, with Óóhkotok in it, on his lap and talks to the Aawaystamatts.*) A lot of our religious concepts have been disrupted. The disruption created a generation with a lack of spirituality. Where I am currently working it’s prominent there, in the students, especially at home. A lot of their parents do not have proper parenting skills, which leaves it open for them to be exposed to a lot of negative

<p>stuff that is pretty well normalized. So, taking this program, it guided me and instructed me on certain processes, programs, and approaches. Poo'miikapii program helped to see and operate with the families and make better relations, better communication, and implement more cultural processes in the school curriculum. For example, we all know well that the smudge is vital to our way of life, and there is a whole other story with that. In the morning is when you celebrate your life to begin the day, you say thank-you, to protect you, to move you through the day, and then at night before the sun goes down, you do the same thing, but you say thank-you for the day. It's a renewal process, and it has to be repetitive. So these students that I work with will be able to understand that it's not only a way of life, but it's a process of wellness. So they know they've got someone there, not only their parents but a community, that there is protection. Creator is always around to help.</p>	
<p>Baby Kiaayo: Don't forget about us. We are always around to help too! <i>(The Aawaystamattsa turn their heads toward a small voice coming from the distance. Just behind Singing Across the Water Woman is Kiaayo (Bear) and her cub walking over. The Aawaystamattsa wave.)</i></p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Oki, Kiaayo and Baby Kiaayo! Of course it would only make sense for you guys to be part of this, too! Will you come join us? <i>(She gestures with her hand for them to come over. Kiaayo and her cub come closer and plunk down right beside Singing Across the Water</i></p>	

<p><i>Woman and Holy Rock Woman. Baby Kiaayo has a big grin and sits on Kiaayo’s lap.)</i></p>	
<p>Kiaayo: Sorry for my boy. I hope he didn’t scare you. He just got a little excited to see all of you again. I heard you talking and thought we ought to come on over. We heard you talking about the gap in spirituality that was a result of those government people who came in and took all the kids. We miss the old days before that happened. Before the church came in and started telling all the people your ways were evil. We mourned with your people. Before those guys came in there were more ceremonies. There was the right relations and you had all the tools to live in a good way. And we had fun! Oh boy, did we all ever have fun. Colonization really tried to wipe out your culture and traditions, but you guys managed to keep them alive! We are really happy to see you getting even stronger and stronger. There are those generations who lost their core values and their ways of knowing. It’s so good you can teach it to them in school. <i>(Kiaayo gives a head nod toward Many Horses.)</i> Will you tell those kids you work with to make sure they know we are always here for them, too? The work you are doing with the kids—it’s really important. I know you know this, but the traditional ways are healing, and that includes spirituality. Especially with suicide. <i>(Kiaayo puts his head down.)</i> Our cousins from into the mountains, they were telling us how the community started to implement more cultural practices and strategies into the community and the results are</p>	<p>(TRC, 2015a)</p> <p>(Pretty Shields, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, personal communication, 2020)</p> <p>(Ross, 2014)</p> <p>(Poonwassie & Charter, 2001)</p> <p>(Battiste, 2013)</p> <p>(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014)</p> <p>(Chandler and Lalonde, 1998; Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1997; Ross, 2014; Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Chandler and Lalonde, 1998)</p>

<p>wonderful. It significantly reduced the number of suicides within the community.</p> <p><i>(Many Horses gives Kiaayo a nod and puts his hand to his heart. He passes down Óóhkotok, who comes to rest in Buffalo Flower Woman's hands.)</i></p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: So good to see you again, Kiaayo and Baby Kiaayo! Wow, I have so much to share! What I learned in Western nursing school was that if you are unwell it means physically unwell. What about emotionally unwell? Or spiritually unwell? Or mentally unwell? We don't look at that because we are so overwhelmed by the physically unwell people. Physical health of the individual is the focus! But through this class I've come to understand interrelatedness between those aspects and also between the individual, the family, and the community. I'm realizing that the community is not the focus for funding, it's the hospital, because people keep coming to the hospital. We should have more focus on education and living well programs in the community. <i>(Buffalo Flower Woman looks a little frazzled and shakes her head. All of a sudden there is a CAW CAW CAW! Just then, Mai'stóó swoops in and lands on the side of the smudge box in front of Many Horses. Mai'stóó hops off the smudge box and walks over to Buffalo Flower Woman. All the Aawaystamattsa, Óóhkotok, Makoyi, Kiaayo, and Baby Kiaayo say Oki to Mai'stóó.)</i></p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016)</p>

<p>Mai'stóó: You know you are touching on some really important things here. I have flown all around—sometimes I'll fly on into the city, but not too often, I like to spend my time out here. It's quiet and it's calm. It's a different life out here, and it's a different life with most Indigenous peoples. I am not the first one to notice. My ancestors have been talking about this for a long time. Those city folk, or you know, those ones in the Western world. Well, they live life very differently. You talk about the importance of acknowledging the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of us in addition to the physical. I am so happy to hear you get it! Especially being a nurse! What you're talking about is holistic wellness! That's the way we do it, and we need more health care professionals to understand this. It's about tending to each aspect and striving for balance. When one area is out of whack—oh boy, you'll know! I've got stories! But in my travels the need for mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual balance seems to be commonly recognized by many nations. You also talked about the interrelated aspects of family, individual, and community. Oh boy, I wish you could tell those funders. Wait! Maybe you can? Oh, don't worry about that now. Mind if I join you guys?</p>	<p>(McCormick, 1996; Linklater, 2014)</p> <p>(McCormick, 1997)</p> <p>(Sager, 2018) (Fellner, 2016)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016; Hart, 2002; McCormick, 2009; Wilson, 2008)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: Not at all, Mai'stóó! <i>(Kind-Hearted Woman and Buffalo Flower Woman scooch over. Mai'stóó walks and sits down between them.</i></p>	

<p>Mai'stóó: I'm surprised you didn't learn much about Indigenous wellness in nursing school. Many of the TRC Calls to Action in the areas of health and education speak to this. Unfortunately, the Eurocentric bias that exists in education and health care reinforce those colonial power dynamics by implying that Indigenous people need to conform to, or assimilate into, the dominant society. AGAIN OR STILL! (<i>Mai'stóó holds up both his wings.</i>) It's also really interesting that you notice how dominant society's notion of health continues to be a priority as opposed to living well programs that may be more desired by communities. Why are the dominant society's notions of health taking precedence in Indigenous communities? I can't even begin to tell you how many times I've seen outsiders come in and bring wellness initiatives into the community from other cultures. One time I even saw someone bring in a different cultures approaches to wellness into Kainaiwa. Like, hello people! It's clear the community already has their own cultural practices to keep them well. "Communities know what [they] need to heal." How about more funding of that type of stuff? To revitalize the culture—how about funding programs in that area? Maybe help support cultural events or a Sundance? If you have these traditional ways that are inherently healing Collective and community wellness is a priority, and it takes precedence over individual wellness. Of course, it's an interrelated and interdependent relationship. Say! This program you were all part of is a living well program! Being in relation</p>	<p>(Gray, 2011; Wilson, 2008; TRC, 2015a, 2015b)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016 p. 320)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016; Fellner, 2016; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Wilson, 2004, 2008; Baskin, 2016)</p>
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<p>to land is one of the main aspects of Indigeneity and a huge aspect of health and wellness for Indigenous peoples. You know, if the government is serious about closing the gap in health outcomes, they really ought to listen to Indigenous communities and the way they define wellness! Buffalo Flower Woman, maybe as an ally they will listen to you! <i>Buffalo Flower Woman, who has been holding Óóhkotok through all of this, puts her hand to her heart and passes Óóhkotok to Kind-Hearted Woman.</i>)</p>	<p>(Mashford-Pringle & Stewart, 2019)</p> <p>(TRC, 2015b)</p> <p>(Schmidt, 2018)</p>
<p>Makoyi: (<i>can't contain himself</i>) Education was a tool of assimilation. And it sounds like despite the reconciliation efforts, including the TRC, acknowledging Indigenous ways of knowing is still lacking within education. It is necessary to include Indigenous knowledge—it has implications in most professions to provide culturally relevant care. Within education and counselling psychology, various scholars have recommended incorporating Indigenous knowledge and support for clinicians, hiring Elders/knowledge holders in institutions, increasing support for Indigenous scholars to develop coursework and training, and investing in Indigenous-led research that looks at traditional healing and mental health. I can't imagine a better place for that than right here on the land. What I have been reading is that learning about Indigenous knowledge is best done out on the land, because it supports the complexities of Indigenous knowledge. There hasn't been very much research done yet on postsecondary land-based programs, but in one</p>	<p>(RCAP, 1996)</p> <p>(TRC, 2015a; TRC, 2015b) (Fellner et al., in press)</p> <p>(Ansloos et al., 2019; CPA & PFC, 2018)</p> <p>(Fellner et al., in press)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2018; Fellner, 2018b; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Twance, 2019) (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018)</p> <p>(Keast, 2020)</p>

<p>study I found, Elder Calvin Williams talked about how the land-based component helped to re-establish the independence that was taken through all the processes of colonization.</p>	
<p>Kind-Hearted Woman: Oh, are you ever right, Makoyi. I always knew why it was important for Indigenous students to have these kinds of experiences in school, but now I have the lived experience myself to speak strongly about why that is important. I am receiving in a different way. I have been able to deepen my understanding of why this is important and why that is good pedagogy. Through ceremony, through learning the songs, through learning the stories, through learning the language, through healing on the land I have a deeper, stronger connection to the spirit of this place. <i>(Kind-Hearted Woman passes Óóhkotok to Woman Who Carries the Bundle.)</i></p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: <i>(jumps up and hops in front of Kind-Hearted Woman, facing her)</i> Wow! I am so glad you were able to have these experiences, especially as a teacher—another professional who will be helping the urban Indigenous children. These are the kinds of experiences that the non-Indigenous people need to have to better work with our people. Experiential learning is what you just described! It's a way to learn by doing things, and it involves a deep level of reflection. So instead of learning about traditional approaches to wellness, you were living them. That's in line with Niitsitapii ways of teaching, too! In order for us all to work better together, we need to understand each other's worldviews,</p>	<p>(O'Connor, 2009) (Bastien, 2004) (Torrey, 1986)</p>

<p>and experiential learning deepens that understanding. In the field of counselling psychology, they have been asking for clinicians to get out into community and make authentic relationships. It's clear that you both have (<i>nods towards Kind-Hearted Woman and Buffalo Flower Woman</i>). Within these authentic relationships you are opened to the possibility of experiencing life through the Indigenous folks' worldview, which you ultimately will transfer back to the people in your work.</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: (<i>nods and puts her hand to her heart as she holds Óóhkotok</i>) Poo'miikapii program really helped me structure my classroom in different ways to bring about the cultural component for the course. I utilized some of the information and activities. I got a better grasp on sacred sites that I could bring my students to. I adopted the Poo'miikapii learning outcomes as part of my syllabus. When my students wrote their final papers, they had to apply those terms to what we were learning. I had students questioning what has been written about us, so starting to develop critical thinking. Because it's coming from the outside perspective looking in. So I had them question articles—ones that we are reading about our history. Because—for example, from the 1700s on, it is not set timelines, you know, it's in this 10-year span, say, when the horses were introduced. I've been supporting my students to think in a more decolonized approach of how to understand Piikani history. (<i>Woman Who Carries the Bundle passes Óóhkotok down.</i>)</p>	

<p>Kiaayo: (<i>raises her paw</i>) If I may, those are part of those cultural pieces we were talking about that are healing. It helps build cultural identity, and we all know how important that is. It gives people a sense of belonging.</p> <p>(<i>Óóhkotok starts rocking in Singing Across the Water's hands.</i>)</p>	<p>(Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013b; McCormick; 1997; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Óóhkotok: Critical thinking is a very important skill to have, especially with research. I'm pretty sure we are the most researched people on earth! Research is not a nice word to use in any community, and for good reason—it has been harmful and exploitive. Unfortunately, in some cases, research still causes harm. But I am happy Indigenous scholars are starting to do your own Indigenist research now and moving beyond simply providing an Indigenous perspective! We know that when Indigenous ways of knowing and being are treated as just a perspective included in the research, they are at risk of being subdued by the dominant approach, given the vast colonial power differential that exists. Okay, Kyun. (<i>The Aawaystamattsa laugh.</i>)</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(Smith, 2012) (Martin, 2003; Wilson, 2008)</p> <p>(Kovach, 2009) (Wilson, 2008)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)</p>
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: (<i>puts her hand to her heart</i>) This program has really inspired me to keep going. It motivates me to continue the work I am doing. Everything I learnt in the program transfers over to any First Nation, and even though the protocols may be different, it's still something. For example, we have a Stoney language teacher in our school and he is carrying a big load on his shoulders. He is not getting enough time with the students to actually transfer that</p>	

<p>language. It's almost like every teacher needs to have this kind of knowledge.</p> <p><i>(Singing Across the Water Woman passes Óóhkotok to Holy Rock Woman.)</i></p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: <i>(hops around again)</i> Wow, Singing Across the Water Woman! So, even though the program you took focused on Niisitapíi approaches to wellness, it still is helpful for your work with another nation? <i>(Scratches his head with his wing as he thinks about it)</i> Wait a second, that makes sense! The connection to land, general concepts of wellness, spirituality, you name it—it may not be the same protocols, teaching, and ceremonies <i>(pauses as he comes to an understanding)</i> but it motivates you to look into your own community's cultural teachings. So, what I am hearing you say is there is no one pan-Indigenous approach or way of life, but there are some similarities with some fundamentals, and now you can learn about your own community's teachings and apply this approach. Is that what you mean?</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2007, Battiste, 2013; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001)</p>
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: <i>(laughs)</i> Yes, Mai'stóó, you got it. It's given me inspiration to learn about my community. I only hope a program like this comes there one day.</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: <i>(holding Óóhkotok)</i> It's definitely clear how all these teachings are super interrelated and woven together. Many Horses, when you were talking about how important it is to incorporate culture</p>	<p>(Fellner, 2016; Wilson, 2008)</p>

<p>into the schools, to let the students know they are not alone, again I just thought of empowerment and resilience. I too have had experiences like that in my work as a therapist. Sometimes when a client is struggling, we have gone outside to make a tobacco offering together. We pray together. Some clients know how to do this, but others don't. Doing this supports them in knowing they are not alone, and that our prayers are powerful. It lets them know they have help with whatever it is they are struggling with and they are not alone. This is something they can do on their own at any time. It's empowering. Of course, that is a super important aspect of working with our people in any capacity.</p> <p>The next teaching we can talk about is Strengthening Allyship and Relationships. Who would like to speak to that? <i>(Holy Rock Woman passes Óóhkotok down. He keeps being passed until Buffalo Flower Woman is holding him.)</i></p>	<p>(Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016; Fellner et.al, 2019; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Strengthening Allyship & Relationships</p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: For me, being in this program was initially for both personal and professional reasons. I wanted to know—how do I acknowledge the territory I am very grateful to be on? Acknowledging place and language is so important. In nursing school, like I mentioned earlier, education on the Indigenous population wasn't a focus, it was like, "P.S.: This is some of the population of Canada and it's not doing well. Okay. Move on." But also, on the news, and what is being fed to</p>	

us on social media wise? It reinforced those unhealthy stereotypes. We can't look at these stereotypes and keep denying they don't exist. It needs to change. How terrible when Indigenous patients and families come into the hospital and we feel awkward instead of comfortable and able to deliver good care. I think the awkwardness stems from the longstanding history of poor relationships. We need to focus on a healthy narrative. There are so many beautiful, thriving communities. It's that resilience that we need to focus on as health care people. So, after taking Poo'miikapii it just broadened my view. I got introduced to the community. I got to meet beautiful people, who adopted me. So what it's done is, it's taken me on this beautiful learning journey, and I feel much more connected, much better as a practitioner. I feel like I am actually better and I can do good. I feel this different level of connecting to a human being and respect on a different level. As an ally, you have a full responsibility, the numbers [of allies] are already low. Allies have to do their own work. Allies have to decolonize themselves and decolonize each other, work on themselves. It can't just be the Indigenous people to be relied on who are doing their own work in their own communities. When we hear racist remarks, it's like the bullying thing—we can't be silent anymore! You can't know the culture unless you know the community. And I tell people, for example, if you moved to Italy would you not speak Italian and eat Italian food? We are on Blackfoot territory, how come we don't have the language present, the people and the art?

(CPA & PFC, 2018)

(CPA & PFC, 2018;
Schmidt, 2019)

<p>We need to know the community, but we don't. That's the problem, we don't. That is what this program has really given me—that opportunity. If I wasn't in this program, I wouldn't drive out to the Kainai and say hello. This program gave me the opportunity to be part of the class and to be like—this is who I am, this is what I am doing. And now I can come out because I have real friends here. (<i>Buffalo Flower Woman passes Óóhkotok to her left. It keeps being passed all the way to Holy Rock Woman.</i>)</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>
<p>Mai'stóó: (<i>jumps up and down in excitement</i>) YOU NAILED IT HERE! Relationships, allyship, self-work, decolonizing, confronting racism, losing that deficit narrative, systemic racism within education! You NAILED it! Yes, being an ally does come with a high level of responsibility. There is action and self-work involved. Allies need to see their own place of power and privilege and locate themselves within the systems of oppression. There needs to be more education on Canada's role in colonization, and not a watered-down lesson, either! There is a need for allies to critically think, because often, systems of oppression are subtle. They are interwoven within your field (<i>uses his wing to point to Buffalo Flower Woman</i>), within education, within the field of counselling psychology, pretty much everywhere. Allies ought to speak out when they see these things. Wouldn't really do any good to see them and not do anything. People need to know the truths and what that means in terms of oppression. Well again, it's supposed to be already</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018; Baskin, 2016; Schmidt, 2019)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(CPA & PFC, 2018; Baskin, 2016; Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018)</p> <p>(TRC,2015a; TRC; 2015b)</p>

<p>implemented since the TRC, but I'm beginning to see a theme here. . . .</p> <p><i>(Mai'stóó walks around the circle with his wing up toward his head as he thinks.)</i> Oh man. . . . <i>(He continues to walk around the circle in front of the Aawaystamattsa, in a clockwise direction as he talks.)</i> But yes, allies need to work on themselves and undergo a decolonization process. Some scholars are even suggesting a whole university course just on decolonization. I think that is a great idea! And I am sure when you do confront the colonial ideologies and racism that exists within your personal life, professional life, and even institutions—it's all over—this process may feel uncomfortable, but that means you're doing good work. You've got to keep educating the people! <i>(slows down his pace and comes to a standstill)</i> I think I ought to take a little breather. <i>(sits back down by Buffalo Flower Woman)</i></p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018; Baskin, 2017; Fellner, 2016, 2018b; Schmidt, 2019)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2018b)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p>
<p>Makoyi: The need for culturally relevant training for Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners—this has been vocalized within the field of counselling psychology, and it sounds like it needs to be vocalized within your field as well. I have been reading about decolonization lately, too, and there are various understandings. I like this one scholar who talked about it being an “active, intentional, moment-to-moment process that involves critically undoing colonial ways of knowing, being, and doing, while privileging and embodying Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing.” It's an individual, professional, and collective ethical obligation. It's a necessary process for everyone, but</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner et al., in press)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2018b, p. 284)</p> <p>(Duran & Duran, 1995; Fellner, 2016)</p>

<p>particularly within the fields of psychology, education, and research. These areas are all bound up in colonial narratives and entangled in systems that devalue Indigenous knowledge. Buffalo Flower Woman, it sounds like it's necessary in your field [Health Care], too! Land-based education programs run by community, support a decolonizing process for non-Indigenous learners. In one article I read about how land-based programs lead non-Indigenous learners to understand the total failings of capitalism as they were able to understand the truth and decolonize !</p>	<p>(Wildcat et al., 2014)</p> <p>(Simpson & Coulthard, 2014)</p>
<p>Holy Rock Woman: I have had similar experiences with Canada's history not being included within education. I have done some work in the city, with mostly non-Indigenous service providers, to bridge the understanding between both worlds, to ultimately support service providers in doing better work with our people. It's still necessary to go back to the history of Canada and the treatment of Indigenous people. Despite all that has happened in terms of "reconciliation" there are so many people, including those who are working with Indigenous people, who don't comprehend the full extent of colonization and the ongoing implications for their work with our people. There are even ones who have never heard of residential school.</p> <p>I will also share my experience in being a teacher's aide for a First Nations counselling class at my institution. This was a second-year class. Out of maybe 60 students, only about eight understood colonization, including residential school and its impacts. Out of those</p>	

approximately eight students who understood, they were a mixture of being Indigenous themselves or very young, perhaps just right out of high school. The rest, they either had zero clue or only knew a super watered-down version of the truth. University students can get through their education without knowing the history of colonization.

(Baskin, 2016)

Understanding the impacts of colonization and Canada's role is essential for authentic and genuine relationships that enable active allyship. The continuing lack of understanding is very worrisome, especially for those in the field of counselling psychology. It's funny, because I have been voicing the need for experiential learning like this program within the addictions counselling program and the master's program for a long time now. And it's clear that these types of experiences have positive impacts for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. My institution is located on Niisitapii territory and has an amazing addictions program, but the reality is that most of the counsellors that will be working with Indigenous clients are not Indigenous. So these types of experiences--engaging in programs like these, would positively impact the way the non-Indigenous counsellors support Indigenous people by becoming an ally and providing culturally relevant care.

(CPA & PFC, 2018)

The next teaching we can discuss is Intergenerational Healing/Wellness. (*Kind-Hearted Woman has a huge smile on her face. Óóhkotok is passed around the circle until he gets to Kind-Hearted Woman.*)

Intergenerational Wellness

Kind-Hearted Woman: (*Holds Óóhkotok for a moment in silence and looks off into the distance. The story she will tell was part of her capstone project around raising awareness and giving voice to missing and murdered Indigenous women.*) The idea that the teacher and I came up with was to do some work around photography and negative image. We used a special paper that is activated by the sun, called cyanotype paper, and the students made something called sun prints. We took the 11 children outside and we all stood together against the school wall and the children put their hands on their individual papers and we waited for the sun to activate the paper. The teacher and I walked around outside and wrote the children's names on the photo paper as they held it. We all went out together, we stood together, and we all came in together. No other person joined us outside. Then we developed the sun prints in water. The next part of the activity was that the children were paired and were to take digital photos of one another's hands. The teacher then said to me that one child would have to go twice because there was an uneven number of children. I looked at her and said, "But 12 papers were used because there were 12 in one package of the paper. So, we turned over the sun prints and sure enough there were 12, and only 11 had names on the papers. The teacher went completely white. (*All the Aawaystamattsa are smiling.*) Because one manifested and it looked

completely different from the other children’s pieces. So, she actually called in an Elder and smudged and prayed with these children, because it was apparent that an ancestor came and made a print. So, we had a physical print of a child’s hand. It was pretty incredible. So, in consultation with Elders who heard this story and saw the work, they wanted the spirit hand, the ancestor hand, to be in the east gate of the medicine wheel, and then that became the essential piece of the art walk. I was directed to have that piece as the centre of the art walk because Spirit had created it. I use the image a lot of building a bridge between the past and present and the future, and so clearly this program, this work, has allowed Spirit to manifest from the past in a physical, tangible way. In Euro-settler thinking, it’s like a “Whaa?!” It’s some spooky problem, right? But it of course is not a problem in Blackfoot ways of knowing. Of course the ancestors would participate, especially if you were on the right track. And especially if they needed to have a voice, where their voice was taken away. So Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, our art walk, gave voice to the people who created the artwork, but also to the ancestors, to those women who can no longer speak in this realm. *(silent pause)*

(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014)

Baby Kiaayo: Hey guys, do you see that? *(He points up towards Naatoosi.)* It’s Piitaa! *(All the Aawaystamattsa look up with smiles, knowing in their own way that it’s always a good sign when you see Piitaa. All the Aawaystamattsa put their right hands to their hearts.)*

<p><i>Then Inni (Buffalo) walks over. She sits down by Woman Who Carries the Bundle. The Aawaystamattsa, Makoyi, Kiaayo, Baby Kiaayo, Mai'stóó, and Óóhkotok say Oki.</i></p>	
<p>Many Horses: Good to see you, but really, we haven't seen you here in a really long time.</p>	
<p>Inni: Well, here I am. I am a grandmother (<i>spirit/ancestor</i>). I used to roam around here a long, long time ago. See, only the ones that can see me are the ones that have a relationship with that reality. That's a relational ontology. We are in relationship with all things at all times, including our ancestors. It's all about relationships. And well, time—time is not linear but rather cyclical. I heard that beautiful story and I had to come say Oki. Thank you for giving the ancestors a voice. We ancestors are always around. You just need to call on us and pray to us and we are here. When we are well, it not only affects individuals in a good way, it can impact the family and the community too, given the interconnected and interdependent relationships. Even nations. (<i>Inni sits there looking very tired. She lets out a big yawn.</i>) Would you mind if I just laid my head down here for a moment? (<i>Inni rolls on to her back and then onto her side. She lies his head down.</i>)</p>	<p>(Duran; 1995; Hart, 2002; Fellner, 2016; McCormick, 1997; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019)</p> <p>(Tammy Crowchild, Tsuu T'ina Nation, lives in Tsuu T'ina Nation, personal communication, 2017)</p> <p>(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014; Wilson, 2008)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: (<i>She moves over to make room.</i>) Of course not.</p>	

Holy Rock Woman: *(puts her hand to her heart)* I agree, Inni. Yes, that is consistent with other Indigenous scholars’ work as well! I can relate to that in my personal life and work as a therapist as well. My profession has been calling for psychologists to practice culturally safe approaches of therapy that acknowledge these vast differences in worldviews.

(CPA & PFC, 2018)

Actually, there is one wholly Indigenous psychotherapeutic modality that has been articulated: Indigenous Focusing-Oriented Therapy. As a client and a therapist, I have witnessed and experienced ancestral messages, gifts, and expressions of wellness in these sessions. These have been powerful sessions that have made permanent shifts for people.

(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014)

When Kind-Hearted Woman initially told me this story, we ran out of time, and so we finished a conversation over the phone. The theme of our conversation was “when you’re on the right path, sometimes spirits will manifest in a physical way.” She sent me a picture of the kin (deer) in her backyard. I felt incredible joy—there was a man and what I perceive to be the Old Lady in the picture. The spirits came through in the picture, letting us know we were on the right path with this research.

(pause, with a smile) In that moment it was confirmation we were on the right path. But then an even neater thing happened. Over the time I was making meaning of the conversations, that same man came to me in my dreams. I saw that man! I don’t know who he is or where he is from, but I remember the face paint and I remember what he had on his head! So,

<p>I will take it as another sign we are on the right path with this research! To me it shows that we are on track in terms of relational accountability.</p>	<p>(Wilson, 2008; Wilson et. al, 2019)</p>
<p>Kind-Hearted Woman: No way! Oh, do tell us more.</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: I will, I promise, but we need to get through this if we want to make Grand Entry! Let’s talk about Communal/Collective Wellness & Nations Experiencing Wellness. They are really tricky to separate. Many Horses? <i>(Holy Rock Woman passes Óóhkotok to Many Horses.)</i></p>	
<p>Communal/ Collective Wellness & Nations Experiencing Wellness</p>	
<p>Many Horses: Poo'miikapii programs really opened up my mind about how to look at the wellness part of the community based on the healing and the collective mindset. There were so many things, but one thing that comes to mind is the all-night smoke, it was another highlight. It was for the community and was open for anyone to attend, but it was really good to see so many of my classmates experience this lifestyle. They got to see it firsthand how societies work and pray for our communities. Also the past Sundance, I saw so many young people there. A lot of the students we had are joining our youth societies. It’s going to be some rising up and that’s really good. <i>(Many Horses has a big smile and passes Óóhkotok to Pretty Badger Woman.)</i></p>	
<p>Kiaayo: So, having these programs taught in and by community brought an opportunity not only for the students to experience wellness through</p>	

<p>traditional ceremonies, but for the community as well. Given the interconnectedness that exists among the individual, family, and community, this wellness undoubtedly impacted the community as a whole. This wouldn't have had the same impact in the city or an institution. Plus, how would everyone get to the city? Having the program in community made it more accessible.</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016; Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014; Wilson, 2008)</p>
<p>Pretty Badger Woman: <i>(Puts her hand to her heart.)</i> When I think about community, I just naturally think of the capstones. There were some really great capstone projects that came out of that class. One of them was the smudge box project. And I can't say enough about that. One of our fellow students is actually writing her final paper on the project. And it all just came from an idea in class where we were talking about the opioid crisis, and you know, some students were like, why are we just talking about it? What can we do about it? And that's where it came out. If we are going back to our ways and if we know [through] living-proof lived experience that smudging and prayer helps and cleanses a person, then why are we not doing that? Smudging cleanses our home and it protects us. I think at the end of the day we made like, I don't know, maybe like 700-900 smudge boxes. And people loved that! We distributed them throughout the community. So, very amazing stuff came out of the program! I mean, there were so many other projects, like girls' support groups and language bingos and stuff to promote the</p>	<p>(Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)</p>

language. (<i>Pretty Badger Woman passes Óóhkotok to Buffalo Flower Woman.</i>)	
Mai'stóó: Caw caw, may I, may I? (<i>puts one wing up in the air</i>)	
Holy Rock Woman: Oh Mai'stóó, you don't have to do that here. (<i>giggles</i>)	
Mai'stóó: Thank you! I knew it, I knew it, I knew it! I saw all those boxes being delivered throughout the townsite and well, all over. You guys really got around! And the people, I saw them too. They were happy. Remember what I said earlier “Our communities know what we need to heal.”	(Fellner, 2016b, p. 320)
Kiaayo: So, these capstone projects you talk about were graded assignments? They were community projects that were based on traditional wellness approaches, that in turn, benefited the community? I can imagine how the example of the smudge box project made smudging more accessible for those who didn't have a smudge box before, and it's something they can do in their own home—no going out, no needing to go to ceremonies. It's just wellness at their fingertips. Empowering them to engage in this process on their own. (<i>Óóhkotok starts to rock in Buffalo Flower's hand.</i>)	(Sager, 2018)
Óóhkotok: And you remember what Many Horses said about that smudge—when you're struggling, you give it to the smudge, to Mother Earth.	

<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> My capstone [a workshop addressing how to work with Indigenous patients in a good way] was geared towards healthcare professionals, mainly nurses, at the hospital in Calgary. The intent was to educate and show that we are not actually professionals of health—the patients are. And to improve our relationship with Indigenous patients. Like what I talked about before—there is scary stuff on the news and it’s time to stop pretending like it doesn’t exist and acknowledge it at least. My baseline was to acknowledge our own personal biases as Western-trained healthcare people, sharing basic details, like the fact that we live and work on Blackfoot territory. They were like, oh really? I was like, yes! That level of understanding. We are all humans, we have stories, we all have children, we all have grandparents. And that is how I was kind of able to bring about that empathy, that real empathy to make them understand. In the end everyone was bawling their eyes out, [saying] this is good and this is what we have to do. And since then, because it was received so well and there has been so much curiosity, I have been providing mini education sessions to other groups of nurses in hospitals—Lunch and Learns. <i>(Buffalo Flower Woman passes Óóhkotok to Kind-Hearted Woman.)</i></p>	
<p>Kiaayo: Indigenous people have been left out of their own definition of health. Do you think you guys could come on out to the Lethbridge hospital? It’s common knowledge that most Indigenous people in</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>

<p>Lethbridge have poor experiences when accessing health care because of the racism. Well, let's be honest, it's not just at the hospitals. It's in the malls, grocery stores. It's everywhere. It's amazing how you were able to take your project and use your power as an ally to start important conversations. To support your fellow nurses in becoming aware of their biases. This is something that would be beneficial in many places. The wellness from your project left the Kainai Nation and was able to touch another dreadful place for Indigenous peoples—Calgary hospitals.</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016; Schmidt, 2019)</p>
<p>Makoyi: It's important to know the history of colonization in Canada, but I have been reading and it's also important to know our own families' (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) history in order to understand ideologies and economics embedded in our own history. To understand how power and privilege are linked to inequities that are further sustained by government, policies, and society in general. They are all bound from colonial narratives. After all we are all treaty people. Meaning our ancestors, even if they were non Indigenous signed the treaties for us.</p>	<p>(Battiste, 2013)</p> <p>(Pretty Shields, Kainai Nation, lives in Kainai Nation, Personal Communications, 2020)</p>
<p>Kind-Hearted Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> So true, Makoyi. I'll discuss the capstone, which was actually not mine but many communities' project. I would like to explain how it came about first, because I think that is an important part of the story. I thought I had a great idea, but then it fell apart at the last minute. So, I panicked and I thought, okay, I remember Andy Blackwater saying "believe in your</p>	

prayers.” So I sat down and offered tobacco and I prayed for guidance, and then I went for a bike ride and it all just came—what I was meant to do. And I really felt that project was not my project, that I was a vehicle in service, because what I was able to accomplish was not humanly possible (*laughs*) in the amount of time I had. I was able to make connections with all the Blackfoot Confederacy, with the representatives from the Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaty 6, Métis Nation, and Tsuu T’ina and Stoney Nakoda here and Amskapi Piikani. So, I worked with various age groups and community members to create art pieces that spoke to their experience, understanding, or their wish to communicate the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women. I had some knowings about—well, it could impact the people creating the work, so maybe it would be a little bit of art therapy. Then I thought, well maybe it would help raise awareness for people viewing the artwork. (*deep sigh*) But what happened was a deeper healing than I ever could have anticipated. Not only did the community members who created the artwork speak to their own experiences, but they also created the artwork in memory of those missing and murdered, so that created a healing, a potential healing, for those women who are missing and murdered. The person who was hosting the fundraiser [where we showcased the art] started to see some of the artwork come in and they said, “Oh, oh, we want to have this artwork on display for longer. Please may we?” And so it stayed up for six weeks in Fort Calgary. And Fort

Calgary was not ever a kind place to Indigenous women, and so that act of having Indigenous women strongly represented at the Fort with the voices of Indigenous people speaking through the art was very important and powerful—not only for the ones who created the artwork and the people who viewed the artwork, but for the healing that was created on a bigger level, for the Fort and for the ancestors. So, the feedback from the community members creating the artwork was that it gave them voice in places they were not allowed to speak or couldn't speak, [when] they couldn't find the words or couldn't speak because they felt they weren't heard. The people that viewed the artwork were deeply impacted in ways that I can't ever know. I saw people weeping. I saw people asking the docents at Fort Calgary for more information—how can they be involved, how do they not know about this issue? But also, it gave an image to teachers who were there with their students. Sometimes teachers don't know how to bring up difficult topics with their students. So, it gave images to these teachers for possibilities with their own students, so that was huge. Then a class at UBC found out about the artwork. They saw the examples, and they too started their own. And the docents talked a lot about how that work gave voice to the issues of Treaty 7 in a way none of the displays at Fort Calgary ever could. Right? Because missing and murdered Indigenous women is a result of colonization. Right? (*Kind-Hearted Woman passes Óóhkotok to Woman Who Carries the Bundle.*)

<p>Kiaayo: Yes, definitely! Colonization. Indigenous nations have been voicing concerns for years about the gendered and racialized physical and sexual violence and homicide that occurs to Indigenous women and girls. While the RCMP note that there are 1200 missing Indigenous women, communities and other Indigenous organizations argue that it's closer to 4000. Of course, this inconsistency isn't surprising given the history of colonization and ongoing and embedded systemic racism that exists. Even though a national inquiry began in 2016, the number of Indigenous women and girls missing and suspected of being murdered continues to rise. As an ally, you worked to ensure Indigenous people had a voice. This is another important aspect of an ally—making space for the Indigenous voice. This capstone, which was literally created by many Indigenous peoples and communities, left the Kainai Nation and impacted numerous people in both Calgary and British Columbia. It brought voice and awareness to people who didn't know, and in a place that was part of a very colonial history with Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>(Baskin; Schmidt, 2019; Wilson et al., 2019)</p> <p>(Cote-Meek, 2014)</p> <p>(Tasker, 2016)</p> <p>(National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, 2019)</p> <p>(Tasker, 2016)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p>
<p>Makoyi: You're right, these are challenging topics to discuss. The idea of using art is great! It's great for the people viewing it and a great expression for those creating the art.</p>	<p>(Maria Livingston, Big Stone Cree Nation, lives in Lethbridge, personal communication, 2020-Maria's Kokum is a MMIW)</p> <p>St. Pierre, 2018; Van Bavel, 2018)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: <i>(puts her hand to her heart, holding Óóhkotok)</i> I can talk about my capstone as well. It was a three-part class</p>	

in Amskapi Piikani that focused on teaching ceremonial protocols and etiquette—how to dress, what’s expected, what’s going to happen—and creating that safe space so people could ask questions and hopefully feel more confident in attending ceremonies. We opened each class with a smudge. Rick and Elsie Ground and Helen Carlson came in to the first class and shared some of their knowledge as traditional knowledge holders. As Bundle Holders, they were able to share some of the information on how to approach ceremony, what to look for, why men wear blankets around their waist or over their shoulder, and more. Elsie Ground went over some of the etiquette behind wearing dresses, not ribbon skirts, etc. In one of the classes we ended up having 30 people show up! Some were even from Missoula State University (MSU) that somehow found out about it. We got a bunch of material supplied for us and two sewing machines and then people were able to bring their own. We invited a lady from Native Life to come in and teach us how to make ribbon dresses, shirts, and applique. Some of them finished their skirts really fast. They got to make little bags so they could put their dishes in for ceremony. We had really great feedback from the community, and now each department at BCC has to do their own. The Health Sciences [department] are having their own ribbon skirt making. MSU asked why they don’t have a program like this at our school. And so they were kind of hinting they would like me and Dustin to go down and do a presentation on it. *(Woman Who Carries the Bundle had a big smile on*

<p><i>her face.</i>) Oh yes, also, we helped and participated in the cultural activities at the treatment centre in Browning. We would go in and talk with the treatment clients and work with them. I taught them how to make ribbon dresses, skirts, helped with making moccasins. All these cultural crafts that would help them with their healing or recovery. We told them about some of the things we did while in the Poo'miikapii and Niitsitapiisinni programs and they adopted the winter counts to use in their recovery. (<i>Woman Who Carries the Bundle looks at Singing Across the Water Woman and passes her Óóhkotok.</i>)</p>	<p>(Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1997; Ross, 2014; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Kiaayo: Wow! So you were able to share all that cultural stuff with the community in Amskapi Piikani, at the college and treatment centre, and even MSU heard about it? I can just picture all this wellness being spread around. Imagine that, a program being delivered through the University of Calgary and Red Crow College out here, spreading wellness into the United States of America! Those are imposed colonial borders anyways. (<i>puts her head down for a moment, then lifts it</i>) I don't know about you guys, but we all probably have a story or two of being in ceremony and then getting in trouble for doing something wrong. (<i>All the Aawaystamattsa giggle.</i>) I can imagine that those experiences, or simply not knowing, keeps a lot of people away from ceremony. That is great to have a class on how to approach ceremony and etiquette.</p>	<p>(Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Duran, 2006; Fellner, 2016; Gone, 2013; Linklater, 2014; McCormick, 1997; Ross, 2014; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: (<i>puts her hands to her heart</i>) Well, since mostly everyone is talking about their capstones, I'll share on</p>	

<p>mine. Mine was an Elder in Morley, an artist, a fairly well-known artist in our community. We were going to do a mural, and the school was going to add it to the atrium. The Elder wanted to paint a vision he had from his childhood of a Sundance. I worked with him. We put the proposal together and presented it to Shell Canada, got some funding from the University of Calgary, and then he broke his hand. And so we hired another artist, Ryan Williard, and he was a Blackfoot artist who also does Sundance paintings. So between the two of them they worked on it and got it completed. So, it was really good just having the Elders and then having Ryan come in as role model / mentor. I used to love going up there and they would be painting and he would have Aboriginal drumming and singing playing and he would be singing along with them, and you know it was really great to see him bring that kind of joy to the students.</p>	
<p>Kiaayo: Wow, so your capstone brought wellness all the way out to the youth in Morley! See I bet the students enjoyed it. It's like a decolonized way of doing therapy.</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: This is beautiful! During my work at Tsuu T'ina Nation, I remember my supervisor saying during her group facilitation that when we heal, it ripples out into the community. Over the years I have come to understand on a deeper level the truth this holds, and again, these capstones support the notion that wellness can ripple out into the community, nations, cities—and in this case even countries!</p>	<p>(Tammy Crowchild, Tsuu T'ina Nation, lives in Tsuu T'ina Nation, personal communication, 2016)</p>

<p>Okay, the next teaching relates to cultural identity. Many Horses, would you start us off? (<i>Óóhkotok is passed to Many Horses.</i>)</p>	
<p>Cultural Identity</p>	
<p>Many Horses: We want the youth focused on who we are—give them an identity so they can run and respect our people the same way our ancestors did. I think it’s very important. We noticed a gap that spiritualism is not there for this generation, so instead of looking at it in a negative perspective, we are looking at it in a positive way. There is an opportunity for our culture to reignite and embed into our people. Because, reason said, these are our future leaders. This program really focuses on the language and the values—for instance, Ikimmapiiyipitsi, which is compassion and it’s one of the main values that are part of us, and Inna’kotsiiysin, respect, and Yisstsiiy means listening. Those are the three that come to my mind right now that are very important to be part of us. Not only is this program focused on cultural living, it’s for our own personal livelihood too, because it branches out into everything else we do in the world. (<i>passes Óóhkotok to Pretty Badger Woman</i>)</p>	
<p>Kiaayo: It makes sense that this program focuses on language because Siksikaitsitapi pedagogy is embodied through the language. Language has a spiritual component, too! Niisitapii language carries the sacred knowledge that evolves from a Siksikaitsitapi cosmology in a way that the English language cannot. English is a very colonial language that is</p>	<p>(Bastien, 2004)</p>

<p>contextualized through the eyes of the dominant worldview. I like what you said about cultural living. It's a process, a way of life. In the context of building a cultural identity, it has more to do with the process than the content. Although content is still important, the process is how it's maintained.</p>	<p>(Chandler, 2013)</p>
<p>Pretty Badger Woman: I can share on my capstone. I think it really touches on the importance of cultural identity. At the time, I was working with Kainai Board of Education. So, we teamed up with the high school counsellors and we gathered a group of girls at each school. For the elementary school the school counsellor would do a weekend power girl camp sleepover. So, myself and one of my colleagues went on the Friday and facilitated some girl stuff—everything to empower girls and just letting them know that as females we have to stick together—and it was so awesome. We did tons of activities and we played games and we read books and we talked about traditional roles. What does it mean to be a Blackfoot young lady? And what is smudging? You know, some of these kids are never exposed to that. So, giving them that confidence, [so that] now they can say, oh, I know what smudging is. And if anyone tries to test them they just say, “You know what? This Elder said. . . . Go talk to her if you have an issue with it.” <i>(All the Aawaystamattsa laugh.)</i> So, kind of giving them that backbone to say “This is my culture, this is my way, and I am smudging and I have the right to do it.” Over a six-week period at the high school we</p>	

<p>started off making smudge boxes. We made all of these different activities about self-worth and we brought them into the culture room in the high school. And the female Elder pretty much told them, you ask me anything you want. And so the girls asked, well, why do we smudge? How do we do it right? I want a Blackfoot name, how do I get a name? There really wasn't any limitations or restrictions and it was really comfortable for the girls. It was really important and really awesome. So after that, at the celebration at the end, the girls were taught to make berry soup, fry bread, and how to cook flank. They wore the skirt that they learned how to make. We invited their parents or their guardians, grandparents, and they sat around and served their parents. We gifted them a bag full of fun stuff, a scarf and a shawl. And they loved it! And they got a certificate at the end. One of the girls asked the principal, she said, "Ramona (that's the principal), can we have at least one day a month where girls get to wear their ribbon skirts to school?" So they loved, loved it. They were all so proud of what they made. They were proud to be Blackfoot. They were proud to be Indigenous and they wanted to show it off. (<i>Óóhkotok is passed around until it gets to Woman Who Carries the Bundle.</i>)</p>	
<p>Kiaayo: You look at all that harm that was caused when they swooped in and took the kids. They sent them to those schools ran by the church, all trying to sever those cultural ties. I know it's a tough topic to keep talking about, but all of our issues relate back to colonization. Wow. I</p>	<p>(TRC 2015a; Gray, 2011)</p> <p>(Duran, 1995)</p>

<p>am just picturing it now. It sounds so beautiful that the girls were proud to be Niisitapii, proud to be Indigenous! This is how it should be! This is what we need more of! I remember this one story of a girl who was struggling with her Indigenous identity. She was feeling like she couldn't openly embrace her Indigeneity. Her sister gave her some good advice by asking her a question. She said, "Are you proud to be Indigenous or ashamed to be Indigenous?" From that moment on, things shifted for that girl. She was able to openly embrace her Indigeneity. You know back in the day before they [church and government] came in, there used to be more rite of passage ceremonies that signified different phases of development. It is within these ceremonies that individuals deepened their connection with the cosmos and learnt the knowledge that was needed to proceed to the next phase. This included tribal knowledge and gender and ag- related roles and responsibilities that prepared people for the next phase of development. Again, colonization took that away too. When Indigenous people engage in their culture it's empowering. It leads to deeper levels of spirituality, strengthens their cultural identity, sense of community, and strengthens their ability to get through life's challenges.</p>	<p>(Bastien, 2004)</p> <p>(Fellner, 2016; Poonwassie & Charter, 2001; Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Woman Who Carries the Bundle: <i>(She holds Óóhkotok in her hand.)</i></p> <p>Identity is vital. A lot of my lectures and instruction relate back to identity. You ask a lot of these students down here in Amskapi Piikani what makes you an Indian? And a lot of them will say my blood</p>	

<p>quantum, or my membership card says I'm Piikani. They don't know anything else. That's really pitiful if you can't say, well, this is what makes me Piikani, or in the beginning when I introduce myself, Nisto Annakaok, it's like HERE I AM! Assuming a sense of pride, you know, be proud to be Piikani, to have knowledge of our ancestors and our people. And have this knowledge going forward, because nowadays our youth are exposed to so much information and it's really hard to keep up, but if we can instill that sense of knowing who you are so that they understand more of our culture. They need to have that sense of identity and that sense of place. For me, taking this course was great. I have been a practitioner of traditional ways for a long time and in more recent years started learning Niitsitapii ways. So this has been helpful, especially as I develop more of the language. <i>(She passes Óóhkotok to Singing Across the Water Woman.)</i></p>	
<p>Kiaayo: You're right! So much of cultural identity is connected to the ancestors, the story to the language. Again, colonization has caused us to be disconnected from the ancestors, the language, the land. Revitalizing language is necessary, and upholding the culture. The federal government has been called to support the initiative of language revitalization within the communities. Unfortunately, for some nations in Canada, this gesture was too late and the language is extinct. In most others, it's deteriorating.</p>	<p>(Kovach, 2009) (Bastien, 2004) (Julian, 2016) (TRC, 2015b) (Perley, 2011)</p>

Singing Across the Water Woman: *(puts her hand to her heart)* The first year [of the program] was great. It was amazing, making moccasins and drums and beading. That was the first time I ever beaded in my life. And I know what you mean about the language. *(nods to Kiaayo)* When I first started working back in my community the language was so strong, and then coming out to Morley I have seen that decline where the young people are not really talking their language. It seems like they don't want to connect with their identity as being Nakoda, and there even seems to be a resistance to learning about First Nations issues. I am in the school and I don't hear the language being spoken at all. *(Singing Across the Water Woman looks down.)* I know we all need that connection, because the rate of suicides is so high, not only out on the reserve but in Calgary as well. Growing up in Calgary myself you know as a First Nations person, I felt so disconnected. Doing my practicum in Calgary, I even seen that the Native children who are in the schools in Calgary are suffering, they are not finding that belonging. Our First Nations kids are suffering. So to get education such as this program in university is really great. We need more and more! It's great we are getting this education because we certainly bring it back to our places of work, but there is still so much work to be done in our communities. I am seeing it now. And even the language part, learning Blackfoot. I knew a little bit, but now I am being pushed and having a course in the Blackfoot language, I am learning that I can actually say those sounds, I

<p>can actually speak. I am getting it and I am really loving that part of it.</p> <p>Language really connects you and it carries the culture. It's really helped me connect with that Blackfoot side of me. I wish when I was growing up here in Calgary that there had been a lot more access to programs to help me. I was just lost here in Calgary as a young person in the city.</p> <p>And the history, going down to Browning and taking the history course and contemporary issues, I just learned so much about the history of the Blackfoot that I don't think I would have ever done on my own. <i>(Passes Óóhkotok to Holy Rock Woman)</i></p>	
<p>Kiaayo: Moccasins and beading are other examples of cultural activities that strengthen a sense of cultural identity too. You know, since we have established the importance of cultural identity, it's very sad to hear about the students in the city and even the ones in Morley not wanting to connect with their identity. But it's important you brought that up. If only more teachers from the city were able to take a program like this. Even teaching craft and art like beading and moccasin making may be a good start to help them connect!</p>	<p>(Fellner, 2016)</p>
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Wow, you guys, this is just incredible. Only one more teaching to go! Let's talk about Reconciling Relationships through Education. Looks like we are doing good for time. <i>(Passes Óóhkotok to Many Horses.)</i></p>	

Reconciling Relationships Through Education

Many Horses: Wow! Well, when we did the harvesting of the buffalo and it had been shot, and the time came to cut the buffalo, our Elder Blair First Rider—Calvin Williams was there too. He called myself and my sister Lydia Mistaken Chief, because we are both Horn Society members. We were transferred a process that hasn't been done for I'd say 100 years, since when the buffalo was here. That was a highlight of my life! It's going to be part of my ceremonies when we do Kanottsisissin (All-Night Smoke ceremony). It's where all the ceremonial societies meet and we pray for the community. I can use that in one of my stories and it's going to help me further my journey as an Elder. These types of transfers and the transfer of knowledge that occurs in this program is very vital to our culture, to our traditions, to keep going. *(Many Horses passes Óóhkotok to Pretty Badger Woman.)*

Mai'stóó: Okay. Wait a minute here. *(puts his wing up to his head as he thinks about things for a minute)* So, you're telling me that these educational institutions that caused an incredible amount of harm to ensure that culture wouldn't be passed down through the generations have now facilitated a process that returned a knowledge transfer that hasn't been in your community for over 100 years? And now that transfer will benefit the community since you can include it in your ceremonies?

(Gray, 2011, Martin, 2003; TRC, 2015a; Wilson, 2008)

<p>Many Horses: Well, when you put it like that, yes.</p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: I am impressed!</p>	
<p>Pretty Badger Woman: <i>(puts her hands to her heart and smiles)</i> Oh yes, the bison harvest was an amazing experience that I probably would have never been able to have if it weren't for this program. Yeah, amazing. I was introduced to Poo'miikapii through the coordinator of the program, Dr. Karlee Fellner. She brought it to Red Crow College and I sat in on the original meeting. And personally myself, I had been waiting for something, one of the institutions, to do something like this. That is the opposite of the Western deficit narrative and perception of health. I thought it was an amazing opportunity for Blackfoot people to take this, to further their education and take this class. <i>(Pretty Badger Woman passes Óóhkotok to Buffalo Flower Woman.)</i></p>	<p>(TRC, 2015b)</p>
<p>Mai'stóó: People! Did you hear that? Maybe they are starting to get this whole reconciliation thing they been going on about for the past six years. <i>(the Aawaystamattsa laugh)</i></p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: <i>(puts her hand to her heart)</i> Having the Elders guide the teaching is great. It's part of the revitalization—bringing the Elders together with the learners and having that generational union, because that is what's missing. The ways are being lost because the Elders don't know how to find the young ones and the young ones don't know how to find the Elders. I remember hearing</p>	

<p>them say, “We never had this opportunity to speak about ourselves from ourselves. It’s always been hearing about ourselves, but now it’s just like we can speak about ourselves like we are now. And to have teachers who are learning to listen and not scold—how lucky we are to have these images of teachers that are not scary residential teachers.”</p> <p>Thinking back on all the little bits of those stories they would share—that’s what we are trying to do, because they have those values incorporated to harness. Because of residential school there seems to be this big gap in generations, so the Elders are like, we don’t know how to talk to these youngsters, and the young people are like, where are the Elders? Where are they and who are they? Where do you find an Elder? There is a disconnect. (<i>Buffalo Flower Woman passes Óóhkotok to Kind-Hearted Woman.</i>)</p>	
<p>Mai’stóó: So, these Elders who went to residential schools were able to come in and have positive experiences in the school? In a place that caused so much harm, they were able to pass on their traditional knowledge to students? That knowledge that they [church and government] tried so hard to erase. Essentially the disconnect exists because of colonization, in which education played a big role, and now the educational institution was able to facilitate a process that bridged that disconnect. People! People! (<i>Waves wings in the air and paces back and forth.</i>)</p>	<p>(Gray, 2011; TRC, 2015b)</p>

Kind-Hearted Woman: (*puts her hand to her heart*) I have a sense of this program creating a bridge from the past to the future. So we were walking and one of the Elders said today that “you’re here for them you’re here for the children” but I also think we are here for the ancestors too. I am understanding from Blackfoot ways of knowing that time is not linear. By doing these things we are repairing ancestral webs and those into the future for seven generations or longer into the future. So, the work we do today, again, is maybe not so much about us, but preparing the way for those to come and healing what was done with the ancestors. In my previous work here, I worked with an Elder and asked her to come to the school and talk about some of the medicinal plants on the reservations with grade 4 children, and she came but she didn’t want to come into the school because the school represented her experience with residential school. She said to the children in her humble way, I’ll never forget this. She said, “When I went to school, I went to school to forget who I was and here, here you are, here I am, and you are asking me to help you remember who you are.” I think that perhaps this program is a bridge to help them remember who they already are. It’s really a huge shift if you think about it, a huge paradigm shift in Western education. Being a kindergarten teacher was the best because you had their real selves. By grade 12, if you’re successful in school, you’re successful because in Western education you have numbed out

<p>the authentic parts of yourself, right? (<i>Kind-Hearted Woman passes Óóhkotok to Singing Across the Water Woman.</i>)</p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: (<i>still pacing back and forth, stops for a second</i>) Oh, are you ever right! And you're right about the healing. So, this program was good for all of you Aawaystamattsa, and it's good for the Elders and (<i>puts his wing up to his head and pauses</i>) it's going to be good for the future generations, too? (<i>starts pacing back and forth and then stops</i>) Oh WAIT! THE ANCESTORS! IT'S GOOD FOR THEM, TOO! (<i>Just then, Mai'stóó flops to the ground. All the Aawaystamattsa look concerned.</i>)</p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: I'll check for a heartbeat. (<i>Buffalo Flower Woman gently picks Mai'stóó up in her hands. She holds Mai'stóó in her hands and puts his body up to her ear.</i>) There is a heartbeat, guys! (<i>Mai'stóó opens his eyes.</i>)</p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: Hey there, Buffalo Flower Woman! How long was I out?</p>	
<p>Buffalo Flower Woman: You're okay, Mai'stóó. You weren't out for too long. You better rest for a bit.</p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: Don't mind if I do. (<i>Mai'stóó closes his eyes and nestles in Buffalo Flower Woman's hands.</i>)</p>	
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: (<i>She puts her hand to her heart. Woman Who Sings Across the Water is Nakoda and Blackfoot. Her grandfather's side was originally from Amskappi Piikani and then</i></p>	

<p><i>Kainai.</i>) Poor Mai'stóó, I guess that must have been a lot to take in.</p> <p>Well, I guess I should go next. <i>(Looks at her watch.)</i> It's getting close to Grand Entry.</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: I'll braid you quick, just keep going. <i>(Holy Rock Woman moves towards Singing Across the Water Woman, pulls out comb, brush, elastic, and hairspray and starts to braid her hair.)</i></p>	
<p>Singing Across the Water Woman: Thank you! I never knew about my grandfather's side of things, his family or where he came from. And my mother didn't know a lot and she spoke Nakoda but she never learned the Blackfoot language. She probably wanted us to succeed. She wasn't connected to the culture. My grandfather went to residential school and from what my mother said, he really pushed my mother and believed education was really important. And so my brother has a degree, my cousin is a teacher, my other cousin is a nurse. So I think we are probably one of the only families in Eden Valley that have our degrees and unfortunately none of us speak our language. But I understand now that my grandfather just wanted us to succeed [in the dominant culture]. <i>(pause)</i> I guess, yeah, for me, this has been a beautiful experience, connecting to the land, that Blackfoot part of me. Learning about my Blackfoot ancestors.</p>	
<p>Makoyi: Dr. Betty Bastien also talks about that. How as she furthered her education within Eurocentric institutions she moved farther away</p>	<p>(Bastien, 2004)</p>

<p>from the tribal connections. It seems like for so long it had to be formal education at the cost of losing culture. But this program! It's both! It's crazy to think, since Canadian universities have been complicit with numerous colonial practices including land theft, forced sterilization, and assimilative education policies just to name a few.</p>	<p>(Fellner et al., in press)</p>
<p>Kiaayo: And this program helped you connect with your Blackfoot ancestors?</p>	
<p>Singing Across The Water Woman: Yes, my grandfather was from Amskapi Piikani and raised in Kainai. <i>(passes Óóhkotok to Holy Rock Woman, who is still braiding her hair)</i></p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Why don't I summarize the teachings we have been discussing? I'll start with #1 Indigenous Culture is Healing, #6 Reconciling Relationships Through Education, and #7 Cultural Identity, which are all related.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary of Teachings - #1 Indigenous Culture is Healing, #8 Reconciling Relationships Through Education, & # 7 Cultural Identity</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: I am just blown away at all that came up! And all that I learned from you all. I remember during a class, one of the Elders, Georgette Fox, said, "This program is the reverse of residential school." When she went to residential school she remembered learning about China and Italy. The Elder was just so impressed that in this program,</p>	

the students got to learn about themselves! It's true though, if you think about driving force behind residential school, it was to cut culture from being transmitted down the generations. The wanted to erase our identities. Everything that occurred in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs was the reverse of residential school. It's like, hello government, hello institutions, if we are serious about reconciliation, why not implement more "reverse of residential school programs"?! It's evident by hearing all your experiences, my own experiences and the literature, that what is being taught within these "reverse of residential schools" programs are what Indigenous peoples need more of. Culture encompasses many aspects including, but not limited to, ceremony, spirituality, language, the land, art, storytelling, history. Within our cultures there are diverse teachings and traditions that guide our lives. The teachings and traditions are used to help us in our struggles. Like Many Horses talked about the smudge. This is a practice that doesn't require a formal ceremony, or much or anything. Even if a person doesn't have smudge, they can head out to the land, give it to the land. Like Óóhkotok said, rocks are super helpful. They absorb everything, our physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental pain. Our ancestors have known these ways since the beginning of time. They have had the tools since the beginning of time. These experiences of engaging in culture support resiliency and empowerment within us as Indigenous peoples,

(TRC, 2015a)

(Baskin, 2016)

(Sager, 2018)

<p>but also are impactful for non-Indigenous peoples as well. A great example of empowerment from the teachings is the horse's gaze that Kind-Hearted Woman spoke about. This is not something that you went to therapy for, it's an experience you had by engaging in aspect of Indigenous culture and now it's a resource you have, to help you. You can draw upon that anytime you need to! And those students from the Art workshop, they too now have an outlet to express themselves in a culturally relevant and decolonized way. It's a tool! That is empowerment and Indigenous culture is full of opportunities to have many other experiences just like that! Also, the young girls that Pretty Badger Woman worked with. The ones that were proud to be Indigenous, proud to be Blackfoot! The foundational teachings that all the other teachings evolve from are: Indigenous Culture is Healing and Reconciling Relationships Through Education. Let's summarize the rest of what we learned.</p>	
<p>Kiaayo: Can we help you summarize?</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: I guess that would only make sense, wouldn't it? <i>(The Aawyastamattsa laugh. She finishes braiding Singing Across the Water's hair.)</i> Okay, Kiaayo, why don't you give it a go? Let's go over Personal and Professional Benefits.</p>	

Summary of Teaching - #2 Personal and Professional Benefits

<p>Kiaayo: Okay, it's clear that the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs had lots of positive impacts personally and professionally. All of the wellness was recirculated back into the community, addressing the community's desire to address wellness needs in a culturally relevant way. It's also clear that these programs addressed issues around Indigenous people in general, such as culturally relevant care and culturally relevant education. In Amskappi Piikani, knowledge was transmitted into the community at the Blackfoot Community College. Woman Who Carries the Bundle was able to apply aspects of the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness program into course curriculum, content, experiential learning, including sacred sites and supporting students in developing critical thinking skills. Then, Woman Who Carries the Bundle became a co-instructor for the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness program. The University of Calgary requires instructors to hold a master's degree so hiring a member of the Siksikaitisitapi territory as a co-instructor is one step closer to increasing the community's capacity to keep this program in the community and eventually be fully instructed and taught by community. Many Horses is a school counsellor and was able to create and include more cultural programming within the school, since colonization left the gap of</p>	<p>(Keast, 2020)</p> <p>(CPA & PFC, 2018; Fellner et al, in press)</p> <p>(Sager, 2018)</p> <p>(Keast, 2020),</p> <p>(TRC, 2015a)</p>
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<p>cultural transmission in some generations. This helped the students to know they are not alone and they have lots of support through the community and cultural tools to help them. Many Horses also started to focus more on the relationships with the families as well. Kind-Hearted Woman (an ally) is an educator and teacher mentor and had many transformational experiences through living Siksikaitstapi ways of knowing that left her with an embodied understanding of why it is important to incorporate Indigenous knowledge within education. Within nursing, Buffalo Flower Woman (an ally) learned the truthful version and the impacts of colonization in Canada. Through living Siksikaitstapi ways of knowing and traditional approaches to wellness, she developed critical thinking skills to address culturally relevant care in nursing with Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014) (Fellner, 2016)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016; CPA & PFC, 2018)</p>
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Wow! Okay who wants to summarize Teaching 3, Allyship and Relationships? (<i>Óóhkotok is still in Holy Rock Woman's lap and starts shaking.</i>)</p>	
<p>Summary of Teaching - #3 Allyship and Relationships</p>	
<p>Óóhkotok: Thanks for not passing me around this time. I was starting to get a little dizzy. But I can give it a go. Well, it's clear that all of you built strong relationships with your cohort and truly became friends. It strengthened the relationship with the Elders. Like Buffalo Flower Woman said, it brought the learners and the Elders together for the</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016)</p>

<p>transfer of knowledge. But both Buffalo Flower Woman and Kind-Hearted Woman, you both created authentic and genuine relationships with community. You lived Siksikaitapapi ways of knowing and that had profound positive impacts on your personal and professional lives. You both used your capstones to do meaningful and important ally work, to give voice to Indigenous peoples and start important conversations. Buffalo Flower Woman, your experience in not learning about an honest version of colonization, Indigenous worldviews, or culturally relevant care in nursing brought to light some important issues regarding education and institutional racism, emphasizing how real structural change is needed within institutions. You even talked about the role of the ally and the big responsibility allies have that involves understanding privilege and power and being able to locate yourself in this process; decolonizing oneself and the importance of not staying silent. Having more allies like both of you is something that benefits all Indigenous peoples and improves education and health care for Indigenous people. It's clear these programs not only benefit Indigenous students, they have incredible impacts for all people, of various professions! Kyun.</p>	<p>(CPA & PFC, 2018)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2018; Schmidt, 2019; Wilson et al., 2019)</p> <p>(Duran, 2006)</p> <p>(Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016)</p> <p>(Baskin, 2016; CPA & PFC, 2018; Schmidt, 2019)</p>
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Amazing. <i>(pause)</i> Teaching 4, Intergenerational Wellness.</p>	

Summary of Teaching - #4 Intergenerational Wellness

<p>Inni: <i>(lifts up his head and sits up)</i> I'll go, it only seems fitting. It's evident these programs positively impacted many people, many generations. The youth benefited, you were all involved, the Elders were involved. It touched many generations. Kind-Hearted Woman, your capstone that gave voice to the missing and murdered Indigenous women and showed evidence of the ancestors presence. The spirit hand that physically manifested during the art project with the youth demonstrates that, and was confirmed by the Elders. The ancestors were letting you know that you're were on the right track.</p>	<p>(Turcotte & Schiffer, 2014)</p>
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<p>Holy Rock Woman: Right. . . . Who wants to do the next teaching, Communal/Collective Wellness?</p>	
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Summary of Teaching - #5 Communal/Collective Wellness

<p>Makoyi: I will! It's evident that the wellness experienced in the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs positively impacted the community of Kainai. For example the program had some ceremonies and celebrations that were open to the entire community—an annual powwow with feast and giveaway and the all-night smoke. The buffalo harvest also involved a greater number of community members than the regular classes. Through the capstones, wellness trickled out into the</p>	<p>(Baskin, 2016; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Fellner, 2016; Sager, 2018)</p>
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<p>community. Some of the capstones that positively impacted Kainai Nation include a smudge box project that provided 700-900 smudge boxes to community members, language bingo, girls' support groups, and a six-week program aimed at increasing cultural identity which included numerous experiential cultural aspects, just to name a few. All of the programs were aimed at language and culture revitalization and Blackfoot approaches to wellness. Not to mention what the longer term impacts will be that there are 12 more graduate students from the Siksikaitsitapi territory who can use their master's degrees to continue to transfer all the knowledge and conduct their own research. There are also many more completing their master's degrees right now. Probably another 40 or so. The Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs created community capacity to conduct their own research.</p>	<p>(Chandler & Lalonde, 1998 & Sager, 2018)</p>
<p>Mai'stóó: (<i>puts his head up</i>) Were you talking about all those smudge boxes again?</p>	
<p>Holy Rock Woman: Yes Mai'stóó, glad to see you're feeling better. Would you like to help us out? We are just summarizing the teachings; the next teaching is Nations Experiencing Wellness.</p>	
<p>Summary of Teaching - #6 Nations Experiencing Wellness</p>	
<p>Mai'stóó: (<i>sits up</i>) Oh yes, I am feeling much, much better! (<i>Aawaystamattsa laugh</i>) Wow! Well, the neat thing is this program</p>	

didn't just keep the wellness in the Kainai Nation, it rippled out and over to other nations and cities! Singing Across The Water Woman talked about feeling more motivated and inspired in her work as a teacher in Morley. She said that even though this program taught Blackfoot approaches to wellness it still is transferrable to where she works. The framework and delivery of the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs is useful and could be applied in Morley based on their own teachings. And also, she talked about her capstone project, the art mural. The wellness the kids received in Morley as the art was being the created-- the laughs, the visits, and the music. Wow! And then Woman Who Carries The Bundle, in addition to the classes at the BCC, talked about her capstone projects that were aimed at teaching cultural protocol for ceremonies. And she taught how to make ribbon shirts and skirts and even food bags for ceremony. And somehow the MSU students from Montana found out and joined too! Since then, you have seen other departments at BCC begin their own cultural classes for the community and MSU hinting they want you to come up and talk about the program. Wait! You also went to the treatment centre to help with moccasin making. Oh, and you also shared about the winter counts that you shared with the treatment centre and they adopted them to use with clients struggling with addiction! Wow. That is neat!

(Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018)

(St. Pierre, 2018 & Van Bavel, 2018)

(Chandler & La londe, 1998; Mc Cormick, 1997; Sager, 2018)

alternative. This also requires flexibility of the course instructor. Further, even though there may be scheduled material, if a teaching is meant to go in another direction or take longer than expected, this needs to be respected. Many Horses shared, “We never look back two days, so we live for the moment because we know, because we follow the life cycle of the world, you know, the cosmos.” This is a fundamental contrast with dominant Eurocentric worldviews.

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Holy Rock Woman: In the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs, the capstone projects involved the Aawaystamattsa incorporating what they learned into projects that benefitted the community. In addition to the learning outcomes (see Appendices A & B) the capstones taught finance, budgeting, and presentation skills that increased the capacity of the Aawaystamattsa to initiate their own projects in their work. It would be beneficial to include funding for capstone projects in the budget for the course. Building relationships with other departments or organizations may help with funding projects. The capstone projects were presented during a community showcase that involved a community feast. It could be particularly helpful to invite institutions or funders to such an event to see the evidence of how the program supports wellness. Students suggested this as being helpful in their overall learning.

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Holy Rock Woman: Although the process of transforming traditional knowledge into curriculum may cause logical appropriate fears for many communities, it can be done in appropriate ways. It was suggested that there is a way to create curriculum by finding the balance of what and what not to share. Involving a variety of Elders in this process was suggested.

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Holy Rock Woman: The master's degree option of the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs consisted of two years of on-the-land learning while the third year, with a research focus, was taught online. It would be beneficial to have a transition course or teach the final year on the land as well. The online learning environment was a stark contrast to learning on the land; however, the relationships the students built within their first two years learning on the land helped them to support each other to succeed in the online environment in their final year. It is recommended that while the programs are taught out on the land, more relationship building is needed from the institution staff. For example, staff should be available to inform students of scholarships and bursaries that they are eligible to apply for, as well as to inform students of supports that are available to Indigenous learners that attend on campus. If the supports that are available for on-campus Indigenous learners are not a fit for on-the-land learners, additional supports may need to be developed.

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Holy Rock Woman: The programs involved a knowledge holder and/or Elder(s) and a course instructor. It is necessary to have other culturally informed staff who can support students with their assignments.

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Holy Rock Woman: It is clear that a gap remains in Euro-Western education regarding what is taught about Indigenous history and colonization. Another gap remains in that courses that address decolonization, Indigenous worldviews, Indigenous approaches to wellness, and culturally informed implications for work with Indigenous peoples are lacking. Learning with community and with Elders

on the land supported the Aawaystamattsa in their own decolonization process and in understanding the impacts of colonization.

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Holy Rock Woman: Mentorship opportunities for students wishing to engage in wholly Indigenous approaches to research remain scarce. The learning experiences in both the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs provided them with a solid foundation and embodied knowing as to why Indigenous knowledges are valid within research.

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Holy Rock Woman: Being the first cohort to complete the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs allowed the Aawaystamattsa to have a voice in the direction and activities the course would explore. This was seen as a benefit.

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Holy Rock Woman: Elders are essential! Increased Elder presence would be beneficial. Having more than one Elder involved in each class would ensure that if an Elder does get called out for a ceremonial commitment, learners would have other Elders there to learn from. This also supports a gender balance.

The Elders in the classes were amazing! It was suggested that having a large group of Elders would be beneficial. This would prevent exhausting a small group of Elders and involve more of the community. Elders can be approached in a culturally appropriate manner informed by protocol about the type of knowledge they would most like to share with the learners. It's unrealistic to expect that a small group of Elders will know everything, and it is unfair to expect Elders to share knowledge on ceremonies they do not practice. The Siksikaitsitapi territory has numerous Elders who are not being

asked to share their knowledge, and it was suggested that they would be more than willing to do so and would enjoy doing so. By engaging numerous diverse Elders, a holistic transfer of knowledge would occur that would support community knowledge transmission and reintegration. Also within this recommendation is to include Elders, knowledge holders, and medicine people with various knowledges and ceremonial backgrounds, thus not limiting to society knowledge. This would give a broader understanding of the various ceremonies and knowledge that exist within the Siksikaitstapi territory. A suggestion from an Aawaystamattsas is to include various groups of Elders each semester.

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Holy Rock Woman: Not all Indigenous peoples who live on traditional territory are members of that territory. For example, not all Indigenous people who live in Niitsitapii territory are Niitsitapii. If institutions are looking to broaden a program's scope to reflect the diversity of nations and Indigenous peoples who reside in the territory here are some recommendations:

- Be mindful of the traditional territory
- When looking to various Indigenous approaches to wellness, it may be helpful to start with one, so that the students can get a better understanding of protocols.
- In regard to Siksikaitstapi territory, it was suggested to offer a semester of learning Niitsitapii approaches to wellness, then move into other ceremonies practiced within Blackfoot territory and then branch out to other nations to reflect the diversity of Indigenous people who live in this territory and ultimately reflect the diverse Indigenous people the students will be working with.
- Including numerous communities within a territory would more accurately reflect the people. For example, for these programs, which are focused on Siksikaitstapi peoples,

the wagon into the back of Holy Rock Woman's truck. Kiaayo, Baby Kiaayo, Inni, Makoyi, and Mai'stóó hop into the back of Holy Rock Woman's truck. One by one, the vehicles pull out of Belly Buttes in a line, following Piitaa, who is leading the way. They make their way to the 2020 Kainai Indian Days and Rodeo! Going to the POWWOW!
Kyun.

Limitations

I have articulated the teachings I received from the Aawaystamattsa through my understanding of $\Delta^{\prime}\Pi\Gamma\Delta^{\prime}$. It is likely that these findings would be different if this research were conducted by another individual using the same paradigm, because $\Delta^{\prime}\Pi\Gamma\Delta^{\prime}$ is reflective of the self-in-relation and dependent on the context of time (Kovach, 2009). Thus, others would understand $\Delta^{\prime}\Pi\Gamma\Delta^{\prime}$ in relation to who they are and their own life experiences. The meaning-making process is a subjective, inward process, and it, too, is formed through self-in-relation and dependent on contexts of time and experience (Kovach, 2009; Marsden, 2005). Thus, it would make sense for the meaning to vary from person to person. These teachings would also vary if this research were conducted using another approach. However, within Indigenist research, it is a common understanding that knowledge is formed through self-in-relation (Kovach; 2009; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019).

It is noted that timing could be considered a limitation. Five out of the six Aawaystamattsa conversations took place in the beginning of their second year. One of the conversations took place near the end of the third year. This was due to me supporting my mom and family through a diagnosis of terminal cancer, while balancing the demands of graduate

school. The first five conversations occurred in 2018, which meant that the sixth Aawaystamattsa had more experiences to comment on. The reverse is also true: The Aawaystamattsa who had the more recent conversation may have had less to comment on given that they had not been involved with the on-land component for over a year and thus their experiences may have been less fresh in the mind. This project could have benefitted from additional time to have in-person encircling processes; however, this would not have been possible given the current pandemic. Encircling occurred over the phone, text, email, and through the Aawaystamattsa receiving copies of the play prior to the writing of the thesis. They were given the opportunity to add, change, or revise anything.

Another limitation could be seen as only interviewing students. It would be important to include voices from all of the community, particularly the Elders. Given the time crunch to wrap the thesis up in order to start my PhD, and having already had conversations with students, this felt like the best way to proceed. Another possible limitation is the internal resistance I felt about articulating the teaching “culture is healing”. Being Indigenous myself and having experienced on a very deep level that culture is healing, it was challenging to articulate this teaching, as my personal opinion is that this should be a given. It feels unnecessary to have to articulate the reasons why it is true. Also, within my conversations with many of the Aawaystamattsa, it was also suggested that this teaching is a given. Culture is healing was the foundation for everything to evolve from. It is noted that the paradigm that was used is an Indigenist research paradigm that was infused with relational accountability and honoured all voices throughout the whole process (Boyd, 2014; Fellner, 2016, 2018b; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al., 2019).

Lastly, in writing in a dialogue format and combining chapters 4 and 5, findings were contextualized in relation to literature that supports them. While this may give the impression

that references were chosen on the basis of confirming findings, this is not the case. However, a thorough review of the literature revealed that culturally relevant studies do support the findings of this study, and this was the basis of my decision to incorporate references in the way I did.

Indigenist Research is Therapy; Indigenist Research is Reconciliation

To You, the Reader,

Wow, I can't believe it's been three years since officially starting this research journey and four years since starting my master's degree and learning about research. I see this research journey starting long before, though. Of course, everything that my ancestors, my family, and ultimately myself have experienced has informed this research journey. It feels fitting to see this research journey as formally starting 11 years ago, when I was more fully able to embrace my Indigenous identity and began to reclaim our ways of life. I am passionate about the wellness these programs create because I have lived it myself as a learner in the program, as well as through numerous other experiences outside of this program. Engaging in traditional approaches to wellness saved my life. Returning to my original instructions gave me a life, a will to live.

Indigenist research is a large undertaking. It is an extensive process, a political process, one that involves mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual processes. Given the harmful and exploitive history of colonization and research with Indigenous peoples, it's my perspective that all research with Indigenous peoples honours their voices throughout the entire process, recognizes their contributions as co-researchers, and involves multiple Elder advisors. In discussion with the Elder Advisor for this thesis he shared that it would be better to have two Elders serve as Elder Advisors. If they disagree about something they can work it out.

Throughout the process of doing this research, it became clear how big a responsibility we have as Indigenist researchers to ensure that we are honouring the voices in a good way. Engaging in research in this capacity has altered the relationship I hold with research. Engaging in Indigenist research has built and strengthened relationships with myself and the Aawaystamattsa. As Shawn Wilson (2008) states, “They are obviously more than research participants; they are my friends and co-researchers” (p. 36). This is a very accurate statement Shawn! And I must say—I love Indigenist research! I am excited to continue to learn and engage in research in this capacity.

Shawn Wilson (2008) posits, “If research doesn’t change you as a person, then you haven’t done it right” (p. 135). And through living $\Delta^j\Gamma^9\Delta^j$ engaging in Indigenist research, this process has led to incredible transformations. With this, I also state that this research is therapy. The ceremonies, informal and formal, led to healing, wellness, and shifts within my core that, if they were even possible within Euro-Western therapy, which I highly doubt, would have taken many years to achieve.

I spoke about the challenges Indigenous students may face when carrying out Indigenist research. A personal example I remember is writing the literature review. The topics of the literature were heavy, and included IRS, historical/ongoing impacts of colonization, and harmful research. There were many days while writing the literature review that I felt like I couldn’t breathe—I felt like I had a large concrete flagstone sitting on my chest. It was a frozen feeling. A silenced feeling. From an Indigenous perspective of trauma, I know that when there is a reaction to something with that intensity it is usually, ancestral, intergenerational, and/or collective. In this case, it was all of the above. I saw my ancestors. They all stood around me. They were the ones who were able to lift the flagstone off my chest enough so I could breathe. Thank goodness

for an IFOT session with myself. There were many other similar instances like this throughout the writing of this thesis. Another example is a couple weeks ago, I went to see a healer, who does a lot of work around "Indian Country". He helps people in many ways. One of the ways in which he helps people is by unblocking energy within their body, and he can pull trauma out as well. He was amazed with all that he was pulling from me. When he was working on me he asked, "What have you been doing?" I explained to him what I had been up to and he let me know that what he was pulling out was very, very old. When I spoke with him again, he confirmed that what he had pulled from me were ancestral traumas. I felt a lot better to have it taken from me. I know the relief and healing I experienced that day was also felt by my ancestors.

I would like to share a story about a very profound experience within this research project. Kind-Hearted Woman and I were finishing a research conversation over the phone. We were talking about the spirit hand that manifested. The theme of our conversation was that when we are on the right path the ancestors, the Naatoyapiits, will sometimes manifest in a physical way to let you know you are on the right path. After our conversation she took a picture of her backyard and sent it to me. In the picture she sent me, you could see the Old Lady and a man. I sent her back a copy of the picture, pointing out the Old Lady and the man. We both loved this message that we got from the ancestors, from the Naatoyapiits, confirming that we were on the right path and confirming our conversation - that the spirits will manifest in physical ways to let you know. About nine months later when I was staying in the coulees for a few weeks to make meaning of the conversations, the man in the photo came to me in my dream. Again I shared this with Kind-Hearted Woman and we both loved it. This form of relational accountability let us know we were doing good and were on the right path.

If colonization was ultimately about cutting cultural ties, then this research, within this institution and the process itself, has supported an authentic “reconciliation” initiative, through rebuilding cultural ties. This research process has allowed me to strengthen relationships with my ancestors and give voice to them and our own history with colonization. I am incredibly grateful for the diverse teachings I have received throughout the years that have become an integral part of who I am. As a primarily urban-based, mixed blooded Indigenous women, my reconnection with my Indigenous identity almost 11 years ago began with Morris Crow’s ceremonies from Siksikaitstapi territories. Seven years ago, when I married into Kainaiwa, I was taken in as if I were their own. I, like my ancestors, adopted teachings that were those of my husband’s and my son’s ancestors. Over the duration of engaging in Indigenist research and guidance from my ancestors that came in many forms, I have been able to learn and connect with teachings and ceremonies that were those of my ancestors. Today, I honour all my relations, which includes teachings from my blood and non-blood kin that make up who I am and how I live my life.

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Appendix A: Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness Program Course Descriptions

The course descriptions have been taken directly from the University of Calgary Werklund School of Education's website (<https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/graduate-programs/>).

Niitsitapii: Foundations for Wellness Course. This course will introduce students to what it means to be Niitsitapii (a person of truth) as a foundation for personal and collective wellness. Elders and knowledge holders from the Kainai Nation will engage students in Niitsitapii practices that promote emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental wellness, with a focus on those practiced in the summer. Students will be introduced to cultural protocols for ceremonial and cultural engagement, and will explore the relevance of these protocols to their work with communities. The course will be delivered using traditional Niitsitapii pedagogical practices of experiential learning, oral knowledge sharing, and cultural mentorship. Students will also engage in scholarly learning that draws upon relevant academic sources. **Course delivery:** exact dates will be released by July 2020. This course takes place over one week during Aako'ka'tssin (Circle Camp)⁷ in Kainaiwa (the Blood Reserve)⁸, typically falling around the end of July or beginning of August. The course will involve 39 hours of face-to-face instruction. Specific days and times will be confirmed, as this will occur around ceremony. A full day orientation and blessing ceremony will also take place in mid-July. (Para 7)

Aksistoipaittapiisinni & Iskaipima Course. This course will focus on aksistoipaittapiisinni (being resourceful in the face of challenges) and iskaipima (guiding

⁷ Blackfoot for circle camp

⁸ See Glossary definition for Kainaiwa

people onto a better path) in service provision and education. Aksistoiypaittapiisiiii will be applied in deconstructing conventional Western Eurosettler conceptualizations of trauma-as-pathology, instead honouring people's experiences of challenges as intergenerational and collective conversations that guide Indigenous people, families, and communities toward poo'miikapii (harmony, balance, unity) and social and environmental justice. Such approaches honour Indigenous survivance, including the ancestral, collective, and personal knowledges and wisdom that emerge through difficult experiences. Students will learn how to draw upon their learnings in the Niitsitapii (person of truth) and poo'miikapii courses to bring an “all my relations,” land-based, strength-based, culturally relevant, and historical sensitive approach to their work. This course will further introduce students to iskaipima, and other Indigenous approaches to counselling that may be directly applied in service provision and education with communities. **Course delivery:** exact schedules will be released soon. In the past, this course ran on the first and third Saturdays (approximately) of each month during the fall for 6 hours (3 hours in the morning, 3 in the afternoon). (Para 8)

Poo'miikapii: Collective Unity, Harmony, and Balance Course. This course will expand upon what students have learned about being Niitsitapii through exploring how poo'miikapii (harmony, balance, unity) may be fostered in Indigenous communities. Elders and knowledge holders from the Kainai Nation will engage students in Niitsitapii practices that promote emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental wellness, with a focus on those practiced in the fall and winter. Students will continue learning cultural protocols for ceremonial and cultural engagement, and will explore the relevance of these protocols to their work with communities. The course will be delivered using traditional Niitsitapii

pedagogical practices of experiential learning, oral knowledge sharing, and cultural mentorship. Students will also engage in scholarly learning that draws upon relevant academic sources. Note: This course is a half-time course that runs over two semesters.

Course delivery: exact schedules will be released soon. In the past, this course ran on the third Friday (approximately) of each month during the fall and winter semesters for 6 hours (3 hours in the morning, 3 in the afternoon). (Para 9)

Iihpkim Mootspi: Capstone Course. This course will engage students in iihpkim mootspi (passing on the teachings one has received) through a service-learning project that involves working with a community group or organization to bring Niitsitapii approaches to wellness into their work. This project will be informed by students' learning throughout each of the courses, and through engagement with relevant academic sources. The course will introduce students to how to bring Niitsitapii ethics, standards, and practices into their programs, and will involve students in learning how to navigate colonial systems (e.g., funding, educational standards, health care systems) so as to prioritize community and ceremonial protocols and ways of knowing, being, and doing in their work. This course provides students with the opportunity to engage with a community group or organization in an applied project that has a direct and immediate benefit to the community. **Course delivery:** exact schedules will be released soon. In the past, this course ran on the first and third Saturdays (approximately) of each month during the winter for 6 hours (3 hours in the morning, 3 in the afternoon). (Para 10)

Appendix B: Niitsitapiisinni: Real Peoples' Way of Life Program Course Descriptions

The course descriptions have been taken directly from the University of Calgary Werklund school of Educations website (<https://werklund.ucalgary.ca/graduate-programs/>).

Course Delivery. The Summer course in this topic will take place face-to-face off-campus at Red Crow College, in Standoff, Alberta. Learning experiences will take place both outside on the land and in classroom space in Standoff, Alberta. (para. 4)

Fall and Winter courses will take place face-to-face off-campus at Red Crow College, in Standoff, Alberta. Learning experiences will take place on selected Fridays and Saturdays throughout the Fall and Winter terms both outside on the land and in classroom space. (para. 5)

Niitsi'tapiipohsinni: Blackfoot Language I. A general introduction to Niitsitapii grammar and vocabulary, with a focus on both oral and written language acquisition. Importantly, course assignments will focus on applied student projects that aim to contribute directly and immediately to language revitalization and preservation among the Siksikaitsitapi through creative and innovative methods, including new media. The course will be delivered using traditional Niitsitapii pedagogical practices of experiential learning, oral knowledge sharing, and cultural mentorship, in addition to conventional language instruction. (para. 6)

Kiipatahpiisinoon: Niitsitapii History and Politics. This course will focus on kiipatahpiisinoon (our ways of life) through understanding history, politics, and traditional governance systems among the Siksikaitsitapi. Students will learn through creation stories, Napi stories, how the Niitsitapii got their bundles and their helpers, Niitsitapii heroes and historical figures, and will span from the creation days to

litotasimahpi limitaiks⁹ (the dog days), to Ao'ta'sao'si Ponokaomita¹⁰ (the era of the horse), to Ao'maopao'si (from when we settled in one place) to today. (para. 7)

Aakahtapiiyiitsiniksiin: Niitsitapii Art and Storytelling. This course will focus on aakahtapiiyiitsiniksiin (old stories) through Niitistapii art and storytelling. Students will learn about traditional forms of art, including petroglyphs, painted lodges, winter counts, war counts, ceremonial clothing and regalia, and designs such as beadwork and quillwork through to contemporary art. Students will learn how art and stories convey and promote Niitsitapi value systems, ontological responsibilities, and understanding themselves in relation to ohtsitappspii (the purpose of their Niitsitapii existence) through the generations. (para. 8)

Niitsi'tapiipohsinni: Blackfoot Language II. Students will continue to advance their learning in Niitsitapi grammar and vocabulary. Niitsitapi language concepts will be connected with and reinforced by land-based and cultural activities. Importantly, course assignments will focus on applied student projects that aim to contribute directly and immediately to language revitalization and preservation among the Siksikaitsitapi through creative and innovative methods, including new media. (para. 9)

⁹ Blackfoot for the dog days

¹⁰ Blackfoot for the era of the horse

Appendix C: Additional Prompt Questions

- In your experience, how do you think the Poo'miikapii program has impacted the community of Kainai so far?
- In your experience, what do you feel has been most helpful or beneficial about the Poo'miikapii program?
- In your experience, what do you feel has been least helpful or beneficial about the Poo'miikapii program?
- What would you like to see incorporated or added to future offerings of the Poo'miikapii program in order to improve the program and/or its benefit to the community?
- How has the Poo'miikapii program affected wellness initiatives in the community of Kainai, if at all?
- Based on your experience, how do you think Indigenous community-based health education programs can most effectively be developed and implemented in ways that benefit the community?
- Based on your experience, what advice would you provide to communities or academic institutions wishing to implement community-based health education programs?
- How can the Poo'miikapii program best contribute to overall wellness initiatives in the community of Kainai moving forward?

Appendix D: Revised Ethics Application University of Calgary



Werklund School of Education 2500 University Drive NW Calgary, AB Canada T2N 1N4 Phone 403-220-6794

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Principal Investigator: Dr. Karlee Fellner (Cree/Métis), Associate Professor

Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary
(403) 818-6446; kfellner@ucalgary.ca

Co-Investigator: Nevada Ouellette, Master's of Education
Counselling Psychology Student

University of Lethbridge
(587)-228-0754; nevadaouellette@gmail.com

Title of Project:

Blackfoot Approaches to Wellness: Community Wellness through Health Education

Sponsor:

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included

here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study

This study will explore the implications of and evaluate the Poo'miikapii: Niitsitapii Approaches to Wellness and Niitsitapiisinni: Real People's Way of Life programs. This study is being completed as a thesis project for a Master of Education in Counselling Psychology degree, and will inform Indigenous health education as part of a larger project of community-based health service development and implementation. This project will also offer an opportunity for community members in Kainai and the surrounding communities to access and integrate these approaches into their work and daily lives in order to address identified health disparities. Ultimately, findings will be used to create a model and framework that Indigenous communities and academic institutions may use to support community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

1. You will meet with master's student Nevada Ouellette for an informal individual research conversation lasting approximately one hour. You will have the opportunity to share your impressions, experiences, and feedback in relation to the Poo'miikapii and/or Niitsitapiisinni programs, as well as their perceived impact in the community, and recommended implications of the program in relation to wellness initiatives moving forward.
2. Following transcription and synthesis of conversations, you will be sent both your transcript and a draft of the findings to review. You will be invited to participate in a second conversation wherein you will be asked to share your feedback and recommended revisions in response to the documents. Participation in this conversation is completely voluntary. You are also welcome to share your feedback with one of the research team members via email or phone.

During the individual conversations and the talking circle, you will be asked for permission to be both video and audio-recorded. You are welcome to decline either or both. Please note that video-recording is being used in this study so that non-verbal communication between the research team member and yourself may be considered for Indigenous holistic meaning making. All recordings will be kept strictly confidential.

You may modify or withdraw your consent as indicated at any time during the study without giving a reason and without any negative impact. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate altogether, may refuse to participate in parts of the study, may decline

to answer any and all questions, and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Please note that if you wish to fully withdraw your contributions from the study, you must do so any time up until the completion of the reviewing data phase. Data that is not withdrawn by this time will be transcribed and included in the synthesis of the findings.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide your name, email and/or phone number, age, and your ancestral background(s). Your age and ancestral background(s) will be collected in order to provide general information regarding the participant sample in the dissemination of results. This information will not be associated with your records unless you specifically request to have yourself identified this way in the research.

Your name and email/phone number will be used for contact with the research team throughout the study, but will never be disclosed outside of the study. Only the principal investigator and coinvestigator listed above, in addition to any research assistants involved with the project, will have access to the list of participants.

Below, please clearly indicate your consent to participate through checking the appropriate options. You may modify or withdraw your consent as indicated below at any time during the study without giving a reason and without any negative impact.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some, or none of them. Please review each of these options and choose Yes or No:

I grant permission to be audio-taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I grant permission to be video-taped: Yes: ___ No: ___

I wish to keep my name private, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ___ No: ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is:

You may quote me and use my name: Yes: ___ No: ___

Are There Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or put you at risk in any way. Given that you are a student, Elder, or community member speaking about your perspectives and

experiences in relation to the ongoing Poo'miikapii and/or Niitsitapiisinni programs, any potential harms are no greater than those you normally encounter in your everyday life related to the research.

Given that you will have an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Poo'miikapii and/or Niitsitapiisinni programs, you may find that participation benefits you through your feedback regarding implementation. Further, the findings of the current study will inform future offerings of these programs, which may have an impact on these programs in relation to your work and/or community.

Further, this project will offer Indigenous communities a framework that supports community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways, and you may find that participation benefits you through the application of results through publication and presentation of findings. Further, you may benefit from having a space in which to voice your perspectives on the research topic. Finally, you will also have the opportunity to discuss your perspectives with other community members and stakeholders, opening possibilities for networking and the exchange of ideas that may inform your work in the community. If you choose to have your name identified in this study, you will also have the option of being listed as co-author on any publications or presentations resulting from this thesis.

There will be no monetary compensation for your participation. However, you will be given a culturally appropriate gift to acknowledge your contributions.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

The principal investigator and co-investigator listed above will have access to the information collected, in addition to any research assistants involved with the project. You will be assured confidentiality by having a specific pseudonym of your choice. You will not be identified by the use of your actual name or initials, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential in any publication resulting from this research. All transcribed conversations and recordings will be assigned pseudonyms and stored in a locked filing cabinet. All digital files will be encrypted and password-protected on Dr. Fellner's private, password-protected computer. Five years following completion of the research, recordings and hard copies of transcripts will be destroyed. At this time, you will be given the option of having your individual recordings and transcripts returned to you or discarded. Digital copies of all transcripts will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive for an additional five years, at which time they will be permanently deleted. You will be offered co-authorship on any publications that result from this study, and will be given a written copy of any publications resulting from this study regardless of your participation as an author.

Please note that confidentiality may be limited in the talking circles given that other participants will be in attendance. Prior to opening the circle, all participants will be reminded that

information shared in the talking circle must be kept confidential as per cultural protocols and professional discretion. However, the research team cannot guarantee that participants will keep information confidential outside of the group.

Should you choose to withdraw from the study, all data that you have contributed to this research will be permanently deleted and destroyed.

Participation is completely voluntary. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the principal investigator and co-investigator, in addition to any research assistants involved with the project, will be allowed to see or hear any of the research conversations. There are no names on the videos or transcripts unless you have chosen to be identified by name in the options above. While every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality, please note that confidentiality may be limited in collective talking circles. Prior to opening the circles, the facilitator will remind all participants that information shared in the talking circles must be kept confidential as per cultural protocols and professional research ethics. However, the researchers cannot guarantee that participants will keep information confidential outside of the group.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that (1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and (2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Dr. Karlee Fellner, Associate Professor Nevada Ouellette, Master's Student
Werklund School of Education or University of Lethbridge
University of Calgary (587) 228-0754 (403) 818-6446; kfellner@ucalgary.ca
nevadaouellette@gmail.com

If you have any concerns about the way you have been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services, University of Calgary at 403.220.6289 or 403.220.8640; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix E: Addendum



University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
T1K 3M4

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Researcher: Nevada Ouellette, Master of Education Counselling
Psychology Student
University of Lethbridge
(587) 228-0754; nevadaouellette@gmail.com

Title of Thesis:

Students Experience of Indigenous Community-Driven Postsecondary Wellness Education as a Means to Towards Individual & Collective Wellness

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved the above listed research study of which you were a participant. This is an addendum through the University of Lethbridge Office of Research & Innovation Services (ORIS) to repurpose the interview data collected for Blackfoot Approaches to Wellness: Community Wellness through Health Education as part of Nevada Ouellette's thesis research for a Master of Education in Counselling Psychology degree.

Purpose of the Study

This study will explore how program participants and/ or community members experience community-based postsecondary wellness programs as a means to address community wellness needs?

This study is being completed as a thesis project for a Master of Education in Counselling Psychology degree and will inform Indigenous health education as part of a larger project of community-based health service development and implementation. It will also offer an opportunity for community members in Kainai and the surrounding communities to access and integrate these approaches into their work and daily lives in order to address identified health disparities. Ultimately, findings will be used to create a model and framework that Indigenous communities and academic institutions may use to support community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

Given you have already provided an interview for the above list research, no further interview will be needed. However, as per the original consent form for the original project, you will also be invited to review and revise your transcripts and provide feedback on the findings of the current study. I would like to further use your interview collected for the research with the Blackfoot Approaches to Wellness: Community Wellness through Health Education, for my Master's research to further explore: How program participants and/or community members experience community-based postsecondary wellness programs as a means to address community wellness needs?

You may modify or withdraw your consent as indicated at any time during the study without giving a reason and without any negative impact. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate altogether, may refuse to participate in parts of the study, and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Please note that if you wish to fully withdraw your contributions from the study, you may do so any time up until the completion of the reviewing data phase. Data that is not withdrawn by this time will be included in the synthesis of the findings.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

In addition to the previously collected audio and transcribed interviews, the only further required information will be your name, signature and the date, if you agree to have the interview used for this thesis project in the Master of Education in Counselling Psychology Program at the University of Lethbridge.

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

We do not think there is anything in this study that could harm you or put you at risk in any way. Given that you are a student speaking about your perspectives and experiences in relation to the ongoing community-based postsecondary wellness programs *Poo 'miikapii* and/or *Niitsitapiisinni*

programs, any potential harms are no greater than those you normally encounter in your everyday life related to the research.

Given that you will have an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the *Poo'miikapii* and/or *Niitsitapiisinni* programs, you may find that participation benefits you as your feedback may inform future programming. Further, the findings of the current study will inform future offerings of these programs, which may have an impact on these programs in relation to your work and/or community.

Additionally, this project will offer Indigenous communities a framework that supports community-based capacity to respond to community wellness needs in sustainable, culturally relevant ways. Further, you may benefit from having a space in which to voice your perspectives on the research topic. If you chose to use your name you may find that participation benefits you through the application of results through publication and presentation of findings.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

The transcribed interviews will be available to my thesis committee at the University of Lethbridge. All transcribed interviews will be coded with a pseudonym for storage purposes. You will not be identified by the use of your actual name or initials on the transcribed files, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential for storage purposes. All transcribed conversations and recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All digital files will be encrypted and password-protected on Nevada Ouellette's personal computer. If you chose to have your identity revealed, this will not be included into the thesis until the final version. Five years following completion of the research, recordings and hard copies of transcripts will be destroyed. At this time, you will be given the option of having your individual recordings and transcripts returned to you or discarded. Digital copies of all transcripts will be kept on a password-protected external hard drive for an additional five years, at which time they will be permanently deleted. You will be offered co-authorship on any publications that result from this study and will be given a written copy of any publications resulting from this study regardless of your participation as an author.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you consent to have data used, you are free to discontinue participation up until the completion of the reviewing data phase. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, all data that you have contributed to this research will be permanently deleted and destroyed.

Signatures

Your signature on this form indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to have your interviews from Blackfoot Approaches to Wellness: Community Wellness through Health Education, Poo'miikapii and/or Niitsitapiisinni programs used for the purpose of Nevada Ouellette's thesis project in the Masters of Education in Counselling Psychology Program at the University of Lethbridge.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Michelle Hogue (Co Supervisor)
Associate Professor & Coordinator
Indigenous Student Success Cohort
University of Lethbridge
(403) 329-2088; michelle.hogue@uleth.ca

or

Nevada Ouellette (Masters Student)
MEd Counselling Psychology
University of Lethbridge
(403) 587-2280754
nevadaouellette@gmail.com

If you have any concerns about the way you have been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Officer, Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge at 403.329.2747; email susan.entz@uleth.ca

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.