



THE INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM JOURNAL

Vol. 1 (2021)

Collective Response-Abilities:
Intervention for Indigenous Wellbeing

INTRODUCING

THE INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM JOURNAL

SAGE at [SFU](#) and [UBC](#) is pleased to introduce the [Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium journal](#). This inaugural issue presents students' presentation abstracts from the [2021 virtual symposium](#), themed Collective Response-Abilities: Intervention for Indigenous Wellbeing. Presentations explored our individual and collective responsibilities for the restoration & maintenance of our communal and personal wellbeing.

The abstracts reflect the following themes:

- Our Responsibility to the wellbeing of ourselves, our community, and our people. This stream asks, "What should we be doing?"
- Our Ability to support the wellbeing of ourselves, our community, and our people. This stream asks, "What are we able to offer?"
- Our Response for the wellbeing of ourselves, our community, and our people. This stream asks, "What are/will we be doing?"

We'd love to see your abstract in the 19th annual IGSS (Spring 2022). Watch for more information in the coming months



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Our *Responsibility* to the wellbeing of ourselves, our community, and our people.

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INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Madeline McCracken (She/Her), Red River Métis, 2021

ABSTRACT: Weaving our Work Together – Supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children and Youth and the Responsibility of Educators

Within the past year, I have been humbled to learn from Dr. Nicholas Ng-A-Fook and Ph.D. Candidate Lisa Howell within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa in our collaborative partnership with the Indigenous-led non-profit organization, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society). We are developing Spirit Bear's Virtual School as a communicational support network to engage with educators across Turtle Island. In our shared work, we address youth rights and respond to the inequities in Canada's welfare and education systems that continue to harm First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth. From the research, we have newly developed The Spirit Bear Beary Caring Curriculum for Reconciliation which is embedded in the Touchstones of Hope Principles, Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Sovereignty, Rights, and Responsible Citizenship. Further, we are guiding teachers (inside and outside contexts of public schooling) to educate their classes about the truth of Canada, discrimination, racism, justice, and reconciliation-based practices through the Caring Society's resources and campaigns.

My response, through story, uncovers the work we are collaboratively doing with the Caring Society to support educators. Additionally, I will unpack our virtual school and curriculum, and how it addresses the holistic health, healing, and advocacy to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth and communities. I will also highlight the importance of collaborating with Indigenous-led non-profit organizations, like the Caring Society, to address this work. Further, I plan to unpack why non-Indigenous educators carry a responsibility to teach truth to their classes and ways they can reconcile through their actions. Lastly, I will discuss how I have been able to care for my spirit throughout this process. The story will weave, much like the Métis Sash, understandings together in aims to address the impacts of our work and how we continue to advocate for change.

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INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Kate Dunn, 2021

ABSTRACT: Wisdom Seeking and Perspectives on Liver Wellness

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus infecting the liver and causing damaged tissue, cirrhosis, or liver cancer, resulting in greater life years lost than any other infectious disease in Canada. Indigenous communities face higher incidence as well as lower treatment uptake, although a medication treatment is available which offers high rates of cure. But this Western Science cure approach is not achieving exceptional results. In response, and with the intent of supporting wellbeing, wellness and wholistic approaches as well as potential for improved access to Hepatitis C cure, formative research has been initiated asking for guidance from Indigenous healthcare colleagues in directing a respectful approach. This Wisdom Seeking work hopes to incorporate Indigenous perspectives on liver wellness into the pathway for Hepatitis C care. Proposed Wisdom Seeking work among 6-10 community Knowledge Holders across Treaty areas in Alberta working within Indigenous Wholistic Methodologies through qualitative methods while respecting protocol will spend time fostering relationship facilitating listening to perspectives, story, and open-ended interview conversations regarding traditional health and wellness approaches. Resulting knowledge will be respectfully and reflectively co-analyzed with participant partners for themes and consistent message. These will be shared back to community reflecting culturally relevant messaging and language translations through visual medias while honoring participant's perspectives. This work has potential to influence creation of culturally relevant resources and treatment pathways impacting provincial policy while incorporating wholistic and traditional wellness approaches to Hepatitis C and liver health.

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INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Erica Hurley, 2021

ABSTRACT: At the Kamulamun (heart) of Wellbeing

BACKGROUND: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) has been declining in Canada but Indigenous women are significantly disproportionately impacted, experiencing a 76% higher mortality rate from heart disease than non-Indigenous women. Dominant western society situates the biomedical model of health at its core of interventions and there is no research focused on the experience of Mi'kmaq women and their understanding of heart health and wellbeing. Interventions often do not reflect the specific social, political, historical and cultural dimensions necessary to have an impact, therefore understanding the cultural and gendered experiences of Mi'kmaq women is crucial.

OBJECTIVES: To discuss my experience as a Mi'kmaq woman who is a student engaging in research with my community to 1) inquire into the experiences of Mi'kmaw women regarding the meaning of heart in relation to health and wellbeing 2) co-conceptualize meaningful and sustainable interventions focused on heart health and wellbeing that are grounded in the knowledge and experiences of women and their communities.

OVERVIEW: As a Mi'kmaq woman of Newfoundland my knowledge is grounded in Mi'kmaq knowledge systems guided by my relational understanding; valuing multiple worldviews and ways of knowing. This has shaped my methodological approach of using an Indigenous research methodology grounded in community with a community based participatory design, building on my relationships with communities, while using Storyworks. I will further strengthen the involvement of Elders, community leaders, families, and women who are affected by CVD. My methodological approach is grounded in ceremony and reflects the unique worldviews and knowledge held by Mi'kmaq communities.

RESULTS/CONCLUSIONS: Gathering information from Mi'kmaw women I hope to provide information to push for interventions grounded in Indigenous knowledge, which is critical to the relevance and meaningfulness of care and holds the possibilities to address current health inequities by designing new pathways to health and well-being for and with Indigenous peoples.

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INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Sam Tsuruda, 2021

ABSTRACT: (Un)learning colonialism one nervous system at a time: The need for education that overrides the rational mind

Due to the reign of white-body supremacy, every person living on Turtle Island has embodied colonialism and racialized trauma in some form, to some degree (Menakem, 2017). At the IGSS this year, I would love to share my learnings about neurodecolonial healing, as a 2S person with mixed-Indigenous-Japanese-European ancestry, in my doctoral studies to date – a journey I have been exploring to (un)learn harmful narratives, worldviews, and beliefs that have amounted to a range of mental/physical/emotional/spiritual health challenges.

After digging for the roots of culturally safe, decolonizing pedagogies for the past six years, I have come to understand that (un)learning efforts solely aimed at educating the mind are at greater odds of neurological defence: the reptilian brain, which serves as our mental bodyguard, blocks out any knowledge that is seemingly threatening from entering our higher cognitive mind, the part that can engage in [critical] thinking (Yellow Bird, 2013). In other words, it can inhibit us from metabolizing uncomfortable information. The reptilian brain may interpret stories as threats to our safety, when they are simply invitations to feel shared pain and raise heart-consciousness. My belief is that we are inheriting ignorance as survival. White-body supremacy capitalizes off our self-protection mechanisms, preventing us from developing deeper relations and evolving as humanity.

In this talk, I invite others to explore with me the concepts of reclaiming wholeness in the face of colonized identities; theories that support us to take power back, beginning with our own nervous systems.

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INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Denali YoungWolfe, 2021

ABSTRACT: Mapping Self-Determination through Survivance Narratives

What can stories, and the way they move across communities and the land tell us about nationhood?

Indigenous communities with control over land, education, health, policing, access to cultural facilities, and womxn in government consistently report few or no suicides. Enhancing positive self and cultural identity has similarly been shown to reduce child welfare apprehensions, drug addiction, and homelessness. We know that the ability to see oneself as an accepted and valued member of society is essential to developing a positive sense of self and cultural identity. As an Indigenous person on Turtle Island, living under the Canadian state, , this is no easy task as representations of Indigenous people in Canadian media overwhelmingly focus on and reinforce negative narratives of victimhood, deficit and disappearance. My research explores the relationship between narrative (re)presentation and cultural capacity by gathering, mapping, and analyzing narratives of agency, authority, and legitimacy as expressed through stories of survivance. I am looking for culturally relevant insights into how we, as Indigenous people, conceptualize and express agency, authority, and legitimacy, how those narratives can benefit our communities, and how they speak to and shape the sociopolitical and geospatial relationships that constitute Indigenous nationhood. The premise for this research is that mapping survivance narratives may illustrate Indigenous presence at a scale and scope that has not yet been fully comprehended. I believe that when survivance stories originate and spread from Indigenous people, they are more likely to demonstrate thriving cultural networks that can shift dominant discourses on Indigeneity from deficit to abundance.

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Sarah Dickson-Hoyle & Char John, 2021

ABSTRACT: “Healing the land and bringing our people together”: joint leadership for wildfire recovery in Secwepemcúlecw

The record-breaking 2017 and 2018 wildfire seasons in British Columbia (BC) highlighted the risks posed to human and ecological communities and their wellbeing by large, intense wildfires. First Nations communities and their/our territories were disproportionately affected, and social, cultural, economic and ecological recovery processes are still ongoing. In the wake of these ‘megafires’, many First Nations were catalyzed to action - to advocate for Indigenous-led processes of wildfire recovery and restoration. Alongside these community-driven processes, Canada’s and BC’s adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and stated commitments to reconciliation have created further opportunities to advance Indigenous co-management and stewardship of Indigenous territories. This was seen with the 2017 ‘Elephant Hill’ fire, which burned approximately 192,000 hectares throughout the heartland of the Secwépemc Nation’s territory (Secwepemcúlecw).

Drawing on our ongoing collaborative research with the Secwepemcúlecw Restoration and Stewardship Society, including interviews with over fifty staff and leaders from Secwépemc communities and the Province of BC, we discuss how Elephant Hill created an opportunity to develop a new approach to government-to-government collaboration and land-based wildfire recovery. Our findings show the value of this process for building lasting relationships and trust between First Nations and the province, and highlight community priorities for wildfire recovery including protection of cultural heritage and archaeological values; managing impacts to wildlife and water; and upholding Secwépemc stewardship values, laws and roles as yecwminmen. However, diverse and at times conflicting perceptions of ‘success’, and of the meaning and scope of ‘wildfire recovery’, pose challenges to ongoing collaboration. Our research shows that true co-management and restoring both ecological and cultural wellbeing in Indigenous territories requires long-term commitments and resources to strengthen capacity; fostering shared decision making; supporting Indigenous peoples in exercising their/our rights; and rebuilding Indigenous lands and stewardship systems that have been passed down since time immemorial.

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Shelby Loft, 2021

ABSTRACT: A Roadmap for Indigenous Patient Reported Outcome and Experience Measures

This project seeks to address a lack of appropriate or adequate measurement tools for understanding Indigenous patient health outcome and experiences with health care services. Understanding patients' self-reported outcomes and experiences are vital for program development and improvement initiatives. In this research study, there are two pathways that are in place to address this gap. First, we will be conducting stakeholder interviews with Indigenous community health experts (leaders) and researchers in the areas of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs). Second, we will engage with Indigenous patients and families and other community members via in-depth interviews to gather feedback on their experiences with measurement tools and surveys. These two components will work together to inform the development of a pathway to guide survey developers in developing safe, appropriate, and culturally relevant survey tools. In turn, this would improve Indigenous peoples' experiences when completing surveys in future healthcare settings. In this presentation, the co-presenters will share preliminary data from various interviews with stakeholders. In addition, we will share some of the research processes of our study in order to demonstrate how to conduct research using Indigenous methodologies. In particular, we will discuss the development of how we have facilitated creation of Ethical Space in our work, which traces the ethical, accountable, and reciprocal nature of how the team project and the three circles of support have come together as a whole. These three circles, the project team, the advisory committee, and our funders have contributed and shaped the overall work of this research. This work will also feed into the current work at British Columbia's Women and Children's Hospitals.

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Celia Deschambeault, 2021

ABSTRACT: Mino-pimatisiwin-Living the Good Life to the Fullest: Education grounded by Indigenous Knowledge to be able to Walk in Two Worlds

The 2019-2020 (2020) Ministry of Education annual report gives us a strong indication that our Indigenous children are not doing well in education. This report substantiates that there is need for an alternative program to better meet the needs of Indigenous students. This data and reporting has been done through a westernized lens through the Ministry of Saskatchewan that do not take into account the cultural differences of Indigenous students. Currently, the Ministry of education provincial curriculum is written through western concepts where little bits of First Nations content is sprinkled into the curriculum. A whole new section on FMNI is available that currently segregates First Nations students into a box. This holistic model and conceptual framework allows for the natural process of highlighting Indigenous content that will be incorporated into current practices. It is currently being used at Meadow Lake Tribal Education and two of our nine schools are in the beginning stages of using the framework. It will allow us to look at education through a holistic lens that will meet the needs of the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing of our children. In turn, this model will support our Indigenous children to become more engaged in education and will allow for student growth by giving them the skills to be able to walk in two worlds.