

# THE INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM JOURNAL

**Volume 3 | 2023**

*HONOURING RESEARCH,  
HONOURING COMMUNITY*



SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL  
GRADUATE ENHANCEMENT

**The Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium Journal** was founded in 2021 by Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) at The University of British Columbia (UBC) and Simon Fraser University (SFU) in British Columbia. This volume features the abstracts of twenty-nine student presenters during the 20th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS) hosted at UBC's Vancouver campus on March 17-18, 2023.

Students represented in this volume are affiliated with Indigenous nations and academic institutions largely in western Canada and spanning across Turtle Island (Indigenous North America) with representation also from Latin America. They include students pursuing masters and doctoral degrees in a diversity of disciplines and fields including Architecture, Biology, Counselling, Dental Hygiene, Educational Studies, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Geography, Health Sciences, Indigenous Museology, Interdisciplinary Studies, Kinesiology, Law, Library & Information Studies, Medicine, Nursing, Psychology, Public Health, and Rehabilitation Sciences. All with an interwoven commitment to employing research and Indigenous methodologies in ways that honour community.

Currently, this publication is entirely a student-led volunteer initiative supported by IGSS Abstract Journal Committee team members. Volume 3 IGSS Abstract Journal Committee members were Francine Emmonds, Jessica Koski, and Denali YoungWolfe with additional review support provided by Lori Huston and V. Pauahi Souza.

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The background of the page is a faded photograph of a person wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and a wide-brimmed hat, kneeling on a grassy field. The person is facing away from the camera, looking towards a dense forest of evergreen trees in the distance. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day or early morning/late afternoon.

**The 20th Annual IGSS theme was *Honouring Research, Honouring Community*.**

Student abstracts in this volume exemplify four interrelated sub-themes:

1. Centering Indigenous Paradigms, Knowledges & Research Practices
2. Renewing & Reimagining Knowledge Transmission: Past, Present, Future
3. Nurturing the Relationship between Community & Research
4. Embodying & Actioning Interventions through Indigenous Research

Student-led and co-sponsored by UBC and SFU, the annual IGSS seeks to provide Indigenous graduate students a supportive and empowering environment grounded in Indigenous cultural values in which to share multidisciplinary research. It fosters peer-to-peer mentoring and supportive connections with emerging and established Indigenous scholars in the SAGE network. Students are invited to present finished and in-progress work connecting to annual symposium themes and sub-themes.



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# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## From Clouds to Streams: A Process-Oriented Exploration of Indigenous Research

**Sarah Buffett, Métis Nation BC**

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan  
Master of Arts Student in Interdisciplinary Studies



Indigenous research seeks to bring worldview and relationality<sup>1</sup> to the forefront of our work. While metaphor and imagery are widely encouraged within Indigenous storytelling,<sup>2</sup> the concept is relatively novel within academic circles. This process-oriented presentation draws on a powerful metaphor describing the untold phases of Indigenous research: time spent looking to the clouds, dancing for rain, and wading into streams.

In this offering, we will explore the natural cycle of water and its kinship to an Indigenized research process. Symbolically, water is a central force in Indigenous worldviews and an essential element of life. This symbol translates seamlessly to describe aspects involved in our research processes, including the collective mind and sacred knowledge, the role of water in sharing, cleansing, healing, and sustaining, and its place in renewal, nourishment, growth, and integration.

This exploration provides a strong rationale for the inherent value of attending carefully to the research process as equal to its outcomes. This presentation will also re-assert the crucial inclusion of metaphor and storytelling in Indigenized academic research and their immense potential for knowledge transmission within the academy and the community.

“From Clouds to Streams: A Process-Oriented Exploration of Indigenous Research” lends itself fluidly to each of the proposed symposium themes of Centering Indigenous Paradigms, Knowledges, and Research Practices; Renewing & Reimagining Knowledge Transmission: Past, Present, Future; Nurturing the Relationship between Community and Research; and Embodying & Actioning Interventions through Indigenous Research.

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<sup>1</sup> Shawn Wilson. *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. (Blackpoint: Fernwood Publishing, 2008), 84-96.

<sup>2</sup> Jo-ann et Archibald et al., eds. *Decolonizing Research: Indigenous Storywork as Methodology*. (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2019), 1-13.





## Incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into Architecture and Engineering Design and Delivery

**Danilo Caron, Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

PhD Student in Civil Engineering

Infrastructure projects play a significant role in shaping our communities and the impacts go far beyond the infrastructure itself. Embedded within are values that represent the end users and the ambitions of the community. Infrastructure holds the potential to elevate and honour the values of the Indigenous peoples on whose traditional territories projects are built. Including Indigenous ways of knowing in infrastructure projects can strengthen relationships between Indigenous communities, project stakeholders and the broader society as well as provide much needed local project input. In the Canadian context, the rebuilding and strengthening of respectful relationships is called reconciliation, and while often casually claimed, true reconciliation can be advanced only through fundamental shifts that produce real-world outcomes.

The inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing is fraught with challenges and uncertainty for project owners and design teams. My Master of Applied Science thesis created a Framework to Incorporate Indigenous Ways of Knowing that can inform project owners on the preparation, optional methods, and continued responsibilities that they can implement in an effort to respectfully incorporate Indigenous knowledge in their projects. As a Ph.D. student, I am expanding my previous work to explore how an Indigenous-centered methodology could be utilized in this area.

# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Keeoukaywin: Métis Kinship Visiting in Distinction Based Oral Health Research

**Paulette Dahlseide, Métis Nation of Alberta Region 2**

University of Alberta

Master of Science Student in Dental Hygiene

Indigenous methodologies (IM) center Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being with an aim to generate culturally relevant and reciprocal knowledge translation. With the increase of Indigenous health researchers, Indigenous healthcare has begun to prioritize the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples as both primary knowledge makers and users who effect change. This interrupts current pan-Indigenous work that does not account for the diversity among sovereign nations and communities of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, thus perpetuating settler-colonial erasure. This also calls attention to the persistent gap in literature that fails to reflect the demography of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Métis people make up one third of the Indigenous population in Canada, yet their experiences go largely underrepresented. The paucity of Métis specific research spans across many health disciplines including oral health, hampering the health outcomes of Métis citizens.

As a Métis woman researcher guided by Métis values of relational and reciprocal learning, my research honors women as traditional caregivers and keepers of community wellbeing. I privilege the voices of 8 - 10 Métis women within my kinship network to co-create a deeper understanding of Métis oral health experiences in Alberta. A Métis-Cree research methodology, keeoukaywin, guides my relational approach to knowledge co-creation and translation.

This way of being in research contributes to a deepened understanding of Métis contexts impacting the oral health outcomes of Métis families. Highlighting such nuanced experiences and insights fosters the co-creation of Metis-specific kinship care and culturally safe strategies towards reducing oral health inequalities.





## Using *Mino Bimaadiziwin* as a Methodology for Indigenous Restorative Justice Practices

**Kelsey Darnay, Garden River First Nation**

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan  
PhD Student in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies:  
Community Engagement, Social Change & Equity

Indigenous peoples are over-represented in the Canadian justice system because of colonization. Colonization has replaced longstanding governance and legal practices that are fundamental to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and forced colonial legal systems upon them that punishes indigeneity, separates individuals from their communities, and reinforces historical traumas. While Canada's Criminal Code has been amended to include section 718.2(e)<sup>3</sup> in an attempt to alleviate over-representation, incarceration rates of Indigenous peoples continue to increase.

Using community-engaged, decolonial, Indigenous methodologies, specifically *Mino Bimaadiziwin*, this research explores the reconnection of individuals to nation-specific cultural traditions and practices through Indigenous restorative justice (RJ), and the role in promoting health and well-being and restoration of community balance through wholistic healing. *Mino Bimaadiziwin* encompasses Anishinaabe worldview and philosophy, relating to balance and well-being through healthy relationships, cultural identity, and connection to the land. *mno-bimaadiziwin* as a methodology provides researchers with a framework for conducting work with Indigenous peoples in a good way, that is rooted in a relational way of being. The loss of traditional ways of living and practices takes away fundamental determinants of Indigenous peoples' health that are essential to their well-being, and Indigenous RJ aims to reconnect individuals to traditional ways.

This research will be conducted in partnership with my urban-Indigenous community in the Niagara Region. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used to examine statistical data from the program and interviews with Elders, knowledge keepers, program coordinators and participants regarding their perspectives of the program.

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<sup>3</sup> 718.2 A court that imposes a sentence shall also take into consideration the following principles:  
(e) all available sanctions, other than imprisonment, that are reasonable in the circumstances and consistent with the harm done to victims or to the community should be considered for all offenders, with particular attention to the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders.”



# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Indigenous Storywork to Witness Indigenous Students' Experiences with Campus Recovery Support Services

**Jennifer Doyle, Cree Nation**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
Master of Arts Student in the Department of Educational and  
Counseling Psychology, and Special Education

Guided by a group-based Indigenous storywork methodology, this study will explore the narratives Indigenous students construct of their experiences accessing and participating in addiction recovery support services on post-secondary campuses. The main objective is to understand what they found helpful and unhelpful in these services and to explore their beliefs and experiences regarding culturally responsive programming. By giving voice to the stories of Indigenous students with lived experiences, this study hopes to develop a set of recommendations that will inform future university policies and practices that will best support Indigenous students in recovery which is imperative to their academic success.



## Unravelling Métis Theory and Methodology: Embodying Wahkootowin in Indigenous Play

**Shannon Field (she/her), Métis (Red River)**  
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
Master of Science Student in Kinesiology

Kovach<sup>4</sup> states “Articulating theory can feel like unravelling a tightly tangled knot” (p. 181). As a beader, I know all too well the experience of untangling knots.

Nevertheless, determining Métis theory in the context of my research was one of the toughest knots I have ever tried to unravel. In this presentation, I shared my journey of unravelling, going from a mishmash of Indigenous models and approaches, to sifting through countless readings, to finally recognizing wahkootowin in my urban community and understanding it within the context of play. Wahkootowin is a Cree-based word, long used by Métis people, that can be translated to relationships/relations or kinship, extending to the whole of creation, past, present, and future. Within this concept lie the virtues, values, principles, and laws that guide, strengthen, and foster our relationships. Wahkootowin guides the way we conduct ourselves and treat one another, and therefore can be equated to the laws of relational accountability. Wahkootowin, then, became the methodology and axiology of my thesis work. The theories within guide my research choices, while my research question aims to decolonize spaces in academia and recreation. I believe that decolonizing spaces is one way in which we contribute to the wellbeing of our relations, therefore upholding wahkootowin. In my research I also seek to better understand how colonization has impacted Indigenous peoples’ experiences of play across generations, the play experiences available to us, and how we seek to play today. My research seeks to honor Indigenous ways of knowing and being, and strives to amplify self-determining conceptualizations of “play” in an effort to encourage those that work with Indigenous peoples to make space for Indigenous play.

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<sup>4</sup> Kovach, M. (2021). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Second ed.). University of Toronto Press.



# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Witnessing the Journey through Indigenous Youth Storywork: A Spiritual Awakening

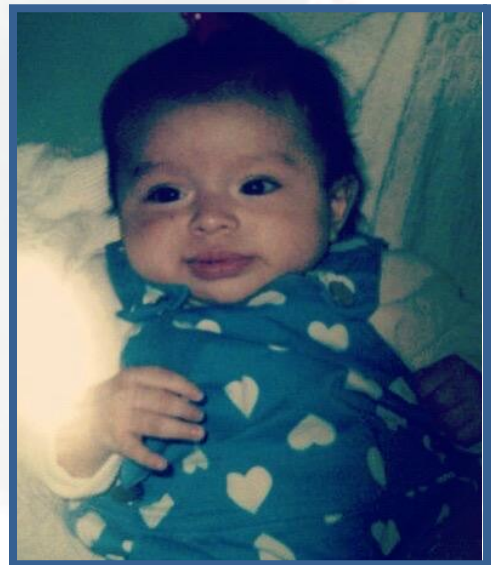
**Ana MacLeod (she/her), Maya**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, PhD Student in Educational Studies  
University of Victoria, Master of Arts Degree in Child & Youth Care

Indigenous adoptee scholars across Turtle Island and beyond have done good work in coming to understand their identity through community connection, culture, education and practice. A plethora of research has guided young Indigenous interracial adoptees on their journey, yet there are few stories focused on the experiences of interracial Maya adoptees reconnecting to their culture in KKKanada.

Currently there is limited research documenting Maya adoptees' experiences of displacement and cultural reclamation in KKKanadian adoption studies. Research must make more space for these stories and the stories of local Indigenous communities supporting them. In this story (thesis), through engagement with current literature and ten research questions, I explored what it meant to live as an interracial adoptee in West Coast Indigenous communities. An Indigenous Youth Storywork methodology was applied to bring meaning to relationships I have with diverse Indigenous Old Ones, mentors and Knowledge Keepers, and their influence on my journey as a Maya adoptee returning to my culture.

My personal story was developed and analyzed using an Indigenous decolonial framework and Indigenous Arts-based methods. This storying journey sheds light on the intricate intersections of interracial adoption, specifically for Maya Indigenous Youth who currently live in KKKanada. The intention of this Youth Storywork research work is to create space for Indigenous, Interracial, Transracial and Maya adoptees in Child and Youth Care, Social Work and Counseling Psychology education, policy and practice.



(Ana at 6 months old, 1996)



Renewing &  
Reimagining Knowledge  
Transmission: Past,  
Present, Future



# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Researching Self-Determined Space Connected to Land in the Arctic: Indigenous-led Architecture in Sámi Territory

**Robyn Adams, Red River Métis**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Dual Masters Degree Student in Architecture and Landscape Architecture

During the summer of 2022, I participated in a research trip with the Canadian Centre of Architecture (CCA) to Kautokeino in Northern Norway, with a focus on Indigenous-led architecture in the Arctic. The CCA hosted a workshop called Futurecasting: Towards Indigenous-Led Architecture and Design in the Arctic, which hosted a gathering of Inuit, First Nations, Métis and Sámi designers and graduate students. Collectively we received lectures from Indigenous architects, created artworks displayed at the CCA, and went on two research trips to Kautokeino, Norway and Montreal, Quebec. We learned from Elders, Knowledge Holders, Scholars, Sámi Duojár, Kahnawake Artists, and Community Members. Lectures, storytelling, conversations and the trip included snowmobiling in the arctic with reindeer herders and a hands-on design build project creating a Luovvi, which is the form of a Sámi storage room.

Through this research experience, I found that Sámi architecture, and Indigenous architecture globally, designs and exercises self-determined spaces by connecting land-based activities into built structures. From snowmobile sheds to meat drying structures, Indigenous Sámi homes and landscapes are designed in the Arctic context, rooted in Indigenous culture and place.





## Protecting our Knowledge: Protocols and Indigenous Knowledge Transmission in Online Environments

**Lindsay DuPré, Red River Métis,  
Citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario**  
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan  
PhD Student in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is place-based knowledge that emerges in relationship and requires relational accountability. With climate change rapidly eroding the land base of IK, and digital technologies becoming increasingly relied upon in contemporary life and learning, new ways of engaging with IK are necessary. However, protocols for engaging with IK in person and on the land have developed over millennia whereas transmitting this knowledge online has only occurred over decades. Threats of epistemicide must be taken seriously in this digital shift as the educational, institutional and computer-based digital protocols that govern online environments are not epistemically neutral. Through visiting with Métis and Cree Elders and Knowledge Keepers this research sets out to 1) understand how the use of digital technologies changes the IK transmission process, 2) to examine how online environments make IK vulnerable to misuse and exploitation, and 3) to identify methods for protecting and encouraging IK to emerge safely online. This presentation will provide an overview of my proposed PhD project on this topic with a focus on the hermeneutical factors and conceptual framework driving my research.



# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Reconciling Libraries (& Librarians) For Truth and Reconciliation: Reviewing the Stacks, Revisiting the Past, To Benefit Our Future

**Xaanja Free, Northwest Territory Métis Nation**  
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
Master Student of Library and Information Studies



My research addresses the importance of recognizing Indigenous Identity, specifically as it applies to reconciliation in libraries. Stereotypes learned about Indigenous peoples since colonization are what has been written about us from ‘others’ who are not Indigenous. I believe that if literature and knowledge sharing can form identities for ‘others’, then literature can be a tool for reconciliation within libraries. Indigenous identity can be reformed through literature by hearing what Indigenous voices say. I discuss how libraries can support reconciliation through research and building up Indigenous collections, what reconciliation means and how actions toward supporting Indigenous relationships can be done through library services.



## Strengthening our Resilience through Land Based Teaching and Learning Knowledge Transmission

**Laura Grizzlypaws, St'át'imc (Xwísten)  
Bridge River**

Simon Fraser University  
Doctor of Education Student

Indigenous Land Based Teaching and Learning is grounded in Indigenous Knowledge, pedagogy, and epistemology. Grizzlypaws's research and experiential knowledge of oral traditions passed on to her from St'át'imc Elders the *tmicw* (land), *úcwalmicw* (people of the land), and *ucwalmícwts* (language spoken by the people of the land) are all interconnected; one cannot sustain itself with another. The land shapes the culture, language, and customs of Indigenous peoples; where one discovers the knowledge and survival are rooted through the knowledge of the land, water, animals, and plants. The phrase *Tákem nsnekw'nukw'a7* – which translates to “All of my Relations is a significant value within Indigenous worldviews; this term honours the relationship of all things being related to one another. Land-based learning puts Indigenous teaching and learning into practice and allows for observational and personal reflection. Land Based teaching and learning strengthens:

- Community connectedness;
- Resilience - improving mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness;
- Support for the advancement of reconciliation by decolonizing educational institutions;
- Improved understanding of land, territory, and language of Indigenous peoples;
- Increased awareness and understanding for protecting and caring for the land - addressing kinship, land protection and responsibility;
- Focused on intergenerational teaching and learning from Elders and mentors who pass their knowledge and skills onto students;
- Re-engagement for Indigenous learners to learn through their own knowledge systems; &
- Revitalization of Indigenous languages & practices which in turn reverses language loss.



# 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

## Reconceptualizing and Reclaiming Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management Through Differing Ways of Knowing

**Lawrence Ignace**  
**Member of Lac Des Mille Lac First Nation Treaty 3**  
University of Victoria  
PhD Student in Environmental Studies



The consideration of Indigenous Knowledge systems in the management of natural resources is growing in Canada to meet legal requirements, fill gaps in knowledge, and improve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The recent *Yahey (Blue Berry First Nations) v. British Columbia*, Supreme Court of British Columbia decision has brought cumulative effects to the forefront. In this presentation, I discussed three Indigenous frameworks that could be used to re-shape cumulative effects assessment and management.

While it is recognized there are complementary aspects of western science and Indigenous Knowledge, there remain questions as to how best to align these worldviews. Much of the recent natural resource management literature reviewing the bridging of Indigenous knowledge systems with Western science continues to be generated from the dominant colonial point of view. There is a need to ensure Indigenous Knowledge systems are reflected in an equal manner while allowing Indigenous communities and nations the necessary capacity and time to consider these pressures more fulsomely. Cumulative effects on their own are complex, broad, and pervasive and are not well considered in natural resource management processes. As a result of the complexity, the assessment and management of cumulative effects suffer from a lack of integrated baseline data, consideration of social-ecological thresholds and coordinating management responses. By exploring three examples of Indigenous worldviews, I demonstrate how cumulative effects assessment could be reframed to better address these complexities while supporting community level needs and interests.

## Indigenous Well-being Through the Eyes of our Ancestors

**Roger John, Tsalalh (Seton Lake Band) - St'at'imc Nation**  
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
PhD Candidate in Counselling Psychology

Despite some improvements in the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada, a significant gap in mental and physical health remains. Barriers include a lack of access; lack of Indigenous service providers; lack of culturally safe non-Indigenous service providers; racism and discrimination in the health care system; remaining trauma from colonization, residential schools and child welfare systems and ongoing acts of colonization.

Indigenous Knowledge Keepers (IKKs) are a repository of knowledge on Indigenous worldviews of health and well-being; however, their expertise is rarely respected or incorporated in mainstream medical and mental health programs. To address this discrepancy, my research asked IKKs to articulate their views on wellness. Through many conversations, IKKs shared rich stories, experiences and conceptualizations of wellness.

The researcher has processed eleven key themes so far from these research conversations:

1. “Wellness is Connection”;
2. “Reciprocal and active belonging is key to wellness”;
3. “Wellness is non-binary”;
4. “Relationships are lateral and non-binary”;
5. “Joy/vitality is key to wellness”;
6. “Adaptiveness consists of flexibility and steadfastness”;
7. “Respect for autonomy and tolerance for others”
8. “Resurgence”;
9. “Intentionality/Agency”;
10. “A state of accompaniment is key to wellness”, and
11. “Harmony is achieved through friendliness.”

The overarching theme of these conversations was the knowledge and influence of the teachings of ancestors. Guided by this persistent value, this presentation is titled after one participant’s statement: “Wellness is only through the eyes of our ancestors.”



## Métis Moon Time and Decolonizing Women's Body Image

**Hanna Paul, Citizen of the Métis Nation of Alberta**

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan  
Master of Arts Student in Interdisciplinary Studies



Indigenous women's bodies have been studied and erased through Western scholarship. Métis women's bodies and knowledge around experiences with Métis moon time (menstruation) has received little to no attention. My research centers on Métis women and youth of the North Vermilion Settlement (Buttertown), Alberta and their embodied experiences with moon time (menstruation) concerning body confidence. I come to my research as a Métis community member and a researcher. My aunties expressed that we must share our stories to combat the colonial master narrative in the region. Therefore, this call to action grounded my research in ancestral Buttertown land.

My project focuses upon: (1) the historical legacy of Western menstrual teachings and its effect on Indigenous women's body images; (2) how Métis women's teachings can create space for knowing, healing, and identity; and (3) how does body sovereignty connect to moon time and land sovereignty? The Métis method of Visiting fostered my research and reconnection journey back to my community. My methodology concentrates on the process of saskatoon berry picking that draws from my lived experiences in community and parallels them with my Indigenous research approach. This presentation guides us through my journey back home and focuses on Métis women and youth in my community past, present, and future. Through collective dreaming of Métis futurisms, my research re-centers women as the beating hearts of our communities and women's teachings to re-establish body confidence for our youth and future generations.

## Reimagining Knowledge as Gardening: Planting Seeds of Knowledge and Imagining Future Blossoms

**Holly Reid (they/them), Métis Nation British Columbia**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

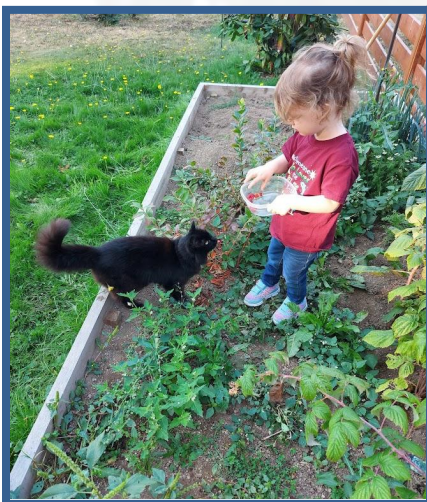
PhD Student in Rehabilitation Sciences

**Justin Turner (he/him), Métis Nation British Columbia**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

PhD Student in Rehabilitation Sciences

Within a Western research paradigm, knowledge translation is often approached in a predictably linear fashion, as evidenced in research manuscripts with delineated sections (e.g., background, methods, findings and implications). This approach to knowledge sharing is oftentimes one-directional and involves the researcher ‘telling’ the audience what knowledge was gained. This prescriptive framework may not be culturally relevant or appropriate for Indigenous researchers or research contexts. In this presentation, Reid and Turner shared how they are approaching knowledge translation differently, through the lens of their own identities and intersections - some of which the co-presenters share (both are occupational therapists, citizens of Métis Nation BC, current PhD students in UBC’s Rehabilitation Sciences Graduate Program, and identify on the queer spectrum) and some of which are different. Rather than approaching knowledge as something to be translated, the two approach it as a knowledge gardening process.



As the co-authors come into relationship with ideas and teachings that are planted (learned), knowledge blooms and can be shared with others in a range of ways. For Reid and Turner, this may look like creatively sharing joy-based perspectives that are informative, relevant and which spark audience imagination and relatability. Within an Indigenous framework of relationality, knowledge gardening can be a means of honoring one's own relationship to ideas while also bringing listeners into relationship with knowledge that bloomed throughout the research journey. This presentation left the audience with a re-imagining of what knowledge translation, or gardening, could grow into in their own work.



## 2023 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

### The Big Michif Dream: Enacting Love & Healing Through Kîyokêwin

**Céline Wick, Métis Nation of  
Ontario/Métis National Council**  
Lakehead University  
PhD Student in Health Sciences



This presentation focused on my master's thesis research, "We Are Links in a Daisy Chain: The Important Role of Relationships in the Cultural Identity of Métis Women." For my thesis research, I visited with my maternal Métis grandmother and mother to collect family stories to create a more fulsome account of life as a Métis woman on the prairies. The data I collected was stitched together with archival research to "locate the ways in which familial and colonial histories intersect" (Hunt, 2016). I facilitated informal gatherings, or 'visits', with my mother and grandmother to discuss our understanding of Michif culture, tell stories, strengthen our bonds through kîyokêwin (visiting) and contribute to the repairing of cultural knowledge transmission pathways to create a better life for future generations. I took cues from my family on the best ways in which to facilitate the kîyokêwin and Indigenous life history research. My work is for them, for the future generations and for other people like me who are finding their way back to themselves and their identity. By employing Indigenous feminist methodologies of kîyokêwin and storytelling in my research, I privileged ways in which Métis women had been sharing and producing knowledges for generations.

## Knowledge and Contemporary Effects of Historical Trauma on American Indian and Alaska Native People

**Jennifer Yazzie, Navajo Nation - Diné**

Utah State University

PhD Student in Combined Clinical-Counseling Psychology

Previous generations of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people endured traumatic events that continue to affect current generations. These traumatic events are remembered across generations and include community massacres, rapid spreading of diseases, forced relocation, forced removal of children to Indian boarding schools, and illegalization of spiritual and cultural practices.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the historical trauma response manifests in feelings of sadness, grief, and anger when Indigenous people remember the historical losses their group has experienced.<sup>6</sup> However, the study of historical trauma is new in understanding what these effects are and how they impact individuals, families, and communities.

This research examines the knowledge and experiences of historical trauma by American Indian and Alaska Native college students at a four-year college in the Mountain West that has a history of being an Indian Boarding School from 1891 to 1911. Students were asked to tell their stories of how historical trauma has impacted them, and their communities, and how historical trauma influences the way they see the world. Findings within these interviews suggest an impactful journey through storytelling of how each participant conceptualized historical trauma for themselves, their families, and their communities; the initial impact of first learning about historical trauma; connecting the past events to current events, the importance of talking and sharing this information with others; the process of hurting and healing; and the feeling of realization, empowerment, and acceptance of historical trauma.

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<sup>5</sup> Stannard, D. E. (1992). *American holocaust: Columbus and the conquest of the New World*. Oxford University Press; Thornton, R. (1987). *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492*. University of Oklahoma Press.

<sup>6</sup> Duran, E., Duran, B., Brave Heart, M. Y. H., & Yellow Horse-Davis, S. (1998). Healing the American Indian soul wound. In *International handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma* (pp. 341-354). Springer.



# Nurturing the Relationship between Community & Research





## Me7 knucwentwécw-kt e k7épes: “We Will Help Someone Who is Sick”

**Cara Basil, St'uxwtews te Secwepemc**  
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
Master of Arts Student in Interdisciplinary Studies

In the language of the Secwépemc peoples, “We Will Help Someone Who is Sick” is said as “Me7 Knucwentwécw-kt Swat ce re K7épes.” Esk’et is one of 17 communities in the Secwépemc Nation and our research partners who have helped us gain knowledge surrounding illness and end-of-life care from an Esk’etemic perspective to determine the feasibility of adapting the Nav-CARE program to suit the needs of Indigenous Peoples. Since 2021, we have embarked on a collaborative journey with Esk’etemic that has required establishing a respectful, meaningful, and reciprocal relationship between the “researchers” and community. The presentation will focus on sharing our journey of how we have nurtured our relationship from the outset of the research to where we are today—data analysis. Further, the presentation will provide insights into the knowledge Esk’etemic have shared with us surrounding the topic of illness and end-of-life, how the Nav-CARE program can address barriers and community needs, and the way the community has in-turn nurtured the graduate student in reconnecting with her grandmother’s community.



## Improving First Nations Health Using Digital Health Technologies

**Nadia Green, Berens River First Nation**

University of Alberta

PhD Student in Nursing

### **Background:**

Integration of digital health technologies in First Nations communities promises to enhance access to health services and improve health outcomes; however, little is known about the extent and impacts on First Nations health, especially following the pandemic. This study aims to synthesize published literature to determine what is known about the topic, and to understand the First Nations care experiences with digital health technologies and identify care gaps and areas for improving health care outcomes.

### **Research Questions:**

- 1) What is the role of digital health technologies in the care and communication for First Nations?
- 2) How do First Nations receiving care and healthcare professionals providing care with the support of digital health technologies describe their experiences?

### **Methods:**

A mixed methods approach will be used consisting of two stages. In stage 1, a scoping review based on the Joanna Brigg's Institute (JBI) methodology will be conducted and a review protocol will be developed and published to enhance rigor. Results will be reported following the PRISMA-ScR reporting guidelines. Findings will determine whether a systematic review is warranted and inform stage two of the research. Engagement of Indigenous communities will be initiated prior to stage two, to ensure interest and establishment of research partnerships and to follow the OCAP principles. Stage 2 will involve semi-structured interviews and the arts-based research method, digital storytelling.

### **Outcomes:**

Findings will serve to inform nursing education, practice, and policy relevant to First Nations access to care and the use of digital health technologies in their care.



## At the Heart of the Stories: A Process of Bringing Forward Indigenous Heart Work/Pedagogies

**Lori Huston (she/her), Métis Nation Ontario**  
The University of British Columbia, Vancouver  
PhD Student in Faculty of Education Curriculum and  
Pedagogy

The pathways to enlightening the heart work of the Indigenous early childhood educators (ECEs) in northern Ontario First Nation communities are connected to their local stories and cultural knowledge and inspired by personal work and relationships, which have been an experiential process(es) with Indigenous ECEs. The work is within the Storywork methodologies of reciprocity, lifelong engagement with knowledges, sharing new knowledges, relationality, and incorporating many stories.<sup>7</sup> The presentation's relevance is connected to the pathways between communities and research on Indigenous people's lived experiences through the impacts of colonial history in Canada. Shirley (2017) speaks to how "Cultivating the heart through Indigenous epistemological aspects is necessary when educators teach into the risks by exposing the oppressive present-day conditions linked to colonialism" (p. 167).<sup>8</sup> Indigenous heart knowing/teaching has been shared through stories and experiences by Elders, educators, children, and families. The work is grounded in critical and Indigenous pedagogies during the presentation with a view of place as "an expression of culture that represents the outcome of human choices and decisions" (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 627), and that reflects place-conscious educational theory (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 627), a multidisciplinary and critical pedagogy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Archibald, J., & Parent, A. (2019). Hands back, hands forward for Indigenous storywork as methodology. In S. Windchief, & T. San Pedro (Eds.), (pp. 3-20) Routledge.

<sup>8</sup> Shirley, V. J. (2017). Indigenous Social Justice Pedagogy: Teaching into the Risks and Cultivating the Heart. *Critical Questions in Education*, 8(2), 163–177.

<sup>9</sup> Gruenewald, D.A. (2003a). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Educational Researcher* 32(4), 3–12; Gruenewald, D.A. (2003b). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 619–654.



## Indigenous Network Researchers' Perceptions of Readiness to Practice Indigenous Health Research

**Tyara Marchand, Okanagan Indian Band**

University of Calgary  
Doctor of Medicine Student



The concept of Indigenous Readiness to Practice (RTP) encompasses the capability of healthcare professionals to execute their responsibilities competently and effectively. Indigenous RTP takes into account the distinctive cultural, historical, and social background of Indigenous people and their contribution to delivering culturally appropriate health and education services. The aim of this knowledge translation initiative was to utilize the Indigenous RTP framework and identify the skills required for a researcher to operate within the field of Indigenous health.

Eleven researchers and staff members from an Indigenous health research network participated in a knowledge translation event that combined Western and Indigenous qualitative research methodologies, using a talking circle format. The participants were queried about the competencies necessary for conducting ethical Indigenous health research.

Eleven key areas were recognized as the foundation of Indigenous RTP research, including: On-boarding experiences, relational disposition, cultural immersion, decolonized practice, educational experiences, personal attributes, professional development experiences, clinical experience, social experiences, Indigenous professional support, cognitive aspects, and research skills.

Although there was considerable overlap with the domains of Indigenous readiness to practice, there were also distinct competencies specific to Indigenous health researchers. This study will serve as the basis for creating and utilizing an evaluation tool to track changes over time in an individual's preparedness to conduct health research within Indigenous contexts.

## Lichen Mapping for Caribou Recovery Efforts in Northeastern B.C.

**Carmen Richter, Saulteau First Nations**  
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan  
Master of Science Student in Biology

The Níkanêse Wah tzee Stewardship Society<sup>10</sup> (NWSS) is recovering a caribou herd in Northeast British Columbia. This Indigenous led recovery project is guided by the values of two First Nations communities and the only positive recovery project in Canada. The caribou, once in a maternal pen, require natural food such as lichen. The research aims to model and verify lichen sources for the Klinse-za caribou penning project and future uses. The work is important in securing food for not only the penned caribou, but also identifying long term food security for the herds. The research will estimate the amount of food required for the penned caribou under this emergency interim measure.

Research methods include:

- Predictive modeling to determine the location of lichen stands
- Visit lichen stands and estimate a distribution for each area
- Prepare a 5-year collection plan
- Observe regrowth rates post-picking



In order to create a 5-year harvest plan for the Klinse-za maternity pen; research is aimed to predict lichen site locations and determine regrowth rates of the lichens harvested. To validate the predictive heat map for lichen, data over 100 sites were collected within the Quintette herd range. In 2021, the extent of known patches were delineated in the field to examine the extent of known food supply. Post harvest, 30 regeneration plots were set out to measure growth. In addition, over 70 transects were completed to determine the trend of less noticeable harvest over time. Preliminary results show harvested sites are regrown approximately in 8 years. We found 2 years left of lichen supply, and therefore a need to move the model to other areas to search for more lichen.

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<sup>10</sup> A non-profit organization led by Saulteau First Nations and West Moberly First Nations related to Caribou recovery and habitat restoration.



## Tying the Liis: The Connection of the Haida to Ancestral Belongings in Museums

**Sdahl K'awaas Lucy Bell, Haida Nation**

Simon Fraser University

PhD Candidate, Independent Interdisciplinary  
Department (Indigenous Museology)



In Haida culture, we have a concept of an invisible *liis* (string). It ties us to our mothers and all the mothers before her. It also ties us to Haida Gwaii. I believe there is a *liis* connecting us to our Ancestors' 12,000 belongings in museums. My research goal is to strengthen the *liis* connecting us to our Haida belongings. I aim to tell the story of Haida museology, to support the Haida control and return of Haida belongings; and to show the Haida way of bringing reconciliation to the heritage sector.

I will combine my traditional practice with my academic learning. My research is situated in *yahgudang* (respect) *kangang* (responsibility) *yahk'ii* (to tell the truth) and *tla yahda* (to make things right). I use a blended theoretical and action-based approach, including grounded theory, auto-ethnography, and participatory action, to conduct qualitative community-based interviews, literature review, and archival research in a Haida way.

The Haida community not only guides my research but is actively involved in my research journey. It is important to me that they feel involved and see and hear themselves in my research.

I call upon *Jaad ahl K'iiganaa* (Story Woman) to bring stories and experiences to life in my dissertation. I aim for my research to be meaningful and accessible for the Haida and Indigenous communities and for academic and museum audiences.

I honour the Haida community and our *Kuniisii* (Ancestors) by telling our story.

# Embodying & Actioning Interventions through Indigenous Research

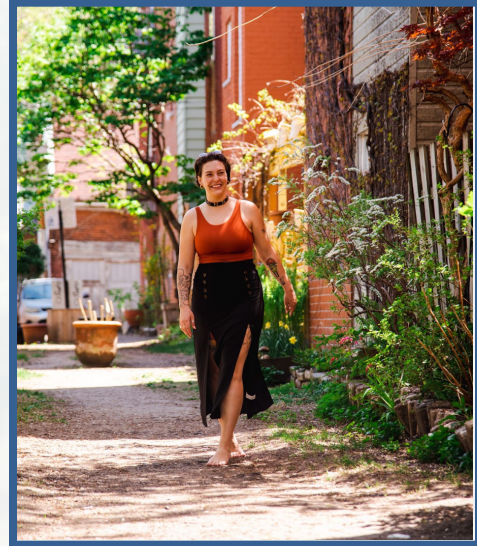




## Erotic Praxis of Indigenous Urbanism in Surrey, BC

**Tsatia Adzich, Cree-Métis (Tri River Métis)**

Simon Fraser University  
PhD Student in Geography



This presentation reflects on how Indigenous women call on and embody the erotic, as theorized by Black feminist writer Audre Lorde, to cultivate and sustain urban Indigeneity, in settler colonial cities like Surrey, BC. In “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” Lorde situates the erotic as a political and spiritual worldmaking force, radiating from “the assertion of the lifeforce of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, and our lives” (Lorde, 1973). I connect Lorde’s use of the erotic to Dorries (2023) call for Indigenous urbanism to “be understood as a heuristic for uncovering possibilities and modes of being that exceed the possibilities for Indigenous life that are typically prescribed by settler colonial urbanism” (110). This analytic considers how Indigeneity is mobilized to both contest and create ‘the urban’, situating the dialectic tensions between these terms as a generative place from which to reimagine local spatialities. Drawing on personal experiences as an Indigenous woman living and working in Surrey, this paper contributes to the emerging discourse about Indigenous urbanism as an analytic attending to the ways in which Indigenous urban spaces are being made and (re)made.

### References:

Dorries, H. (2023). Indigenous Urbanism as an Analytic: Towards Indigenous Urban Theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 47(1). 110-118.  
DOI:10.1111/1468-2427.13129

Lorde, A. (1973) *Sister Outsider*

## Bringing Indigenous People Home: Decolonizing through Indigenous-led Community Housing

**Jillian Ames, Métis Nation of Alberta**

University of Alberta

Graduate Student in Master of Arts

Indigenous peoples make up 4.9% of the entire Canadian population, yet between 28-34% of people experiencing homelessness identify as Indigenous. Adequate housing has been recognized as a human right within Canadian law, and investment in community housing is a key mechanism for the federal government to fulfill its redistributive role, ensuring equity for all Canadians. This research seeks to expand our understanding of community housing led by Indigenous organizations by identifying what Indigenous-led community housing organizations need from housing policy in order to serve Indigenous peoples successfully.

Using an Indigenist research paradigm, this project centres on Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing and is built upon a framework of decolonization and relational accountability. Specific methods include decolonial participatory action research and OCAP (ownership, control, access, and possession) by the Indigenous communities engaged in the research.

In a community-led, relationship-focused approach, workshops will be held with Indigenous-led community housing organizations in Alberta, Canada. The researcher and the community will co-develop a vision and strategy that leads to greater access to housing for Indigenous peoples and ultimately, decolonization.



### Transgressing White Supremacy Culture in Education: A Lakota Baha'i Approach

**Jelana Bighorn, Fort Peck Sioux Tribes**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Master of Arts Student in Educational Studies

Despite the promising incorporation of decolonization and anti-racism themes present in the provincial curriculum, public schools in British Columbia struggle to produce a racially equitable reality for students and staff. Consuming workshops and trainings have a limited effect if educators do not eventually produce anti-racism and decolonization initiatives and learning environments through their praxis. Using my own research methodology that is grounded in teachings from the Lakota medicine wheel, I will explore how relationality, kinship and critical consciousness can disrupt emerging and fluctuating iterations of white supremacy culture within secondary schools. Sacred moments of learning between myself and students will be relived, reviewed and reflected upon to gain greater insight. Memories and imagined conversations with my late father, who was himself a teacher and school administrator, will provide a strong connection to the spirit world. This methodology will allow me to witness and express white behaviors and attitudes as an observer within the educational setting. To an extent I am researching our white relatives. The task requires a good intention and a good heart. I will rely heavily on my theoretical framework to guide my steps. The Lakota medicine wheel teachings, the Ruhi education model developed through the global Baha'i community, and the transformative education practices of Paulo Freire and Bell Hooks act as the three primary posts that comprise the foundation of a tipi. Within the warmth and shelter of these three distinct paradigms, I can safely withstand the blizzard, the hostility, and rancor that lies just beyond.

## Instructions have been Provided: Actioning Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples in the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer

**Jorden Hendry, Tsimshian, Lax Kw'alaams Band**

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

Doctor of Philosophy Student in Public Health

### **Introduction/Background:**

We have been given clear direction on steps needed to address Indigenous-specific racism. Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples include the testimonies from thousands of survivors of colonial harms who informed recommendations laid out in Truth & Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action and National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice. Other Foundational Commitments include the recommendations on upholding inherent rights provided through the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the BC Declaration Act and Action Plan, and In Plain Sight.

### **Methods:**

As part of our two-year "Unlearning & Undoing White Supremacy Project" within the BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer (OPHO), we have begun to monitor progress towards implementing these Foundational Commitments. We have developed a mixed-method tool that focuses on measuring and understanding action that has been taken by the Government of British Columbia towards the Foundational Commitments to Indigenous peoples, particularly those related to anti-racism in health.

### **Results:**

Findings from OPHO's "Action on Foundational Commitments Self-Assessment" indicated variability in awareness of Foundational Commitments. We initiated "OPHO Foundational Commitments to Indigenous Peoples Series" to ensure all team members are familiar with each set of instructions and have required tools and direction to uphold them in day-to-day work. The workshop series includes 4 sessions: 1) UNDRIP, 2) TRC & MMIWG, 3) In Plain Sight, 4) Accountability. We provide a framework to begin engaging health leaders with these Foundational Commitments. Life-saving instructions have been provided; now it is the work of public health systems to enact them.



## When Culture Touches an Object: The U.S. Antiquities Act as an Antiquated Tool – Case Study of Bears Ears National Monument

**Milagros Mutsios-Ramsay, Peruvian**

Yale Law School

Master of Laws Candidate

The University of British Columbia

Visiting Researcher

For many, national monuments represent an excellent tourist place or a space packed with extractive resources that need to be exploited. For many Indigenous peoples, these areas contain a spiritual connection that needs to be preserved. Bears Ears national monument is an example of that cultural heritage encapsulated in a landscape. This paper analyzes the Antiquities Act and the powers that directly or indirectly “emanate” in favor of the President, Congress, and Native Nations in the United States. The aim is to question the presidential and congressional power over national monuments on Indigenous ancestral territories. By doing so, this paper will move from an “object” paradigm to a “cultural” paradigm, understanding national monuments as cultural spaces. I will question the faculty of determination and reduction of national monuments and the possibility of incorporating a substantial co-management of these areas between agencies and Native nations. The case study further takes into account implications of a Trump Administration decision to shrink, divide and rename Bears Ears National Monument.

## Restful Reflection: Collaborative, Arts-Based Rest Practices as Decolonial Resistance

**Dani Pierson, Métis Nation Alberta/Fort Nelson BC**

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Graduate Student in Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies - Power Conflict and Ideas



Following the calls from many anti-colonial scholars to reorient ourselves towards community and engage in decolonization, I seek to position rest as a mode of decolonial resistance to the biopolitical state built upon Indigenous genocide. Positioning rest as a way to respond to colonial biopower acknowledges the deeply exhausting ways the settler state has (historically and presently) attempted to subdue and annihilate our communities. From a Métis-feminist perspective, I will consider how collaborative, arts-based practices of rest can be

a method of turning away from settler recognition to prioritize community needs and well-being.

I will begin with a brief analysis of how I see biopower as settler colonialism while bringing in anti-colonial critiques of biopower. Then, I will consider the call from these anti-colonial critiques to turn towards community as a way to resist biopower. Finally, utilizing Métis community sources alongside texts that theorize on rest, I shape how collaborative, arts-based practices of building community can be a method of resisting biopower through rest. Engaging in community acts of rest can unsettle the compulsion to appeal to settler desires because it provides room for regenerative reflection and reckoning. Symposium attendees will be invited to participate in a collaborative arts-based intervention into this presentation to see this argument in action and to reimagine what engagement means in a presentation about rest.





**SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL  
GRADUATE ENHANCEMENT**