

THE INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM JOURNAL

Vol. 2 (2022)

Indigenous Empowerment and Resurgence



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 a portion of permissioned abstracts from student presentations shared during the 19th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS) which was hosted virtually on March 19, 2022.

The 19th Annual IGSS theme was *Indigenous Empowerment and Resurgence*.

Students presented on the following sub-themes:

1. Indigenous Languages, Ceremonies, Pedagogical Practice, and Knowledge Systems for Healing Colonial Trauma
2. Indigenizing the Academy (e.g., Pedagogies, Research, Policies)
3. Indigenous Resurgence (e.g., Health, Science, Mathematics Employment)
4. Indigenous Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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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IGSS Journal

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Additional students who presented during the 19th Annual IGSS:

Gerald Alexander Bent, Graduate Student,
University of Northern British Columbia
“Indigenous Restorative Justice: An
Investigation of Xitl’ix and the Lytton
Restorative Justice Prevention and Education
Program”

Brandi Anne Berry, Health Sciences,
Simon Fraser University
“Estimating the impact of Indigenous language
fluency on holistic wellness and suicidality: A
quantitative analysis in the counterfactual
framework of causal inference”

Starleigh Grass, PhD Student in Education,
Simon Fraser University
“Employment Equity in Education: An
Unfulfilled Right Under Section 35 and
UNDRIP”

Lawrence Ignace, PhD Student in Environmental
Studies, University of Victoria
“Towards reconciliation: 10 Calls to Action to
natural scientists working in Canada”

Robert Mahikwa, PhD Student in Education,
University of British Columbia, “Indigenous
Mentorship in Academia”

Brooke Mounsey, Faculty of Medicine,
University of British Columbia
“Exploring the role of Secwépemc language
learning & cultural practices in community
wellbeing”

Karen Pheasant-Neganigwane, PhD Student in
Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta
“DIA: Department of Indian Affairs to Decolonizing
and Indigenizing the Academy”

Joe Tobin, Master of Counselling Psychology,
Simon Fraser University
“Counselling & Indigenous Knowledge: Processes
which enable Indigenous Counsellors”

Cherry Y.E.W. Yamane, MPHc, Public Health,
University of Washington
“(Re)connecting Indigenous Cultural Identities with
Behavioral Health Interventions: A Community
Needs Assessment”

2022 INDIGENOUS GRADUATE STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

How Housing Influences the Decisions of Indigenous Learners to Pursue and Complete Higher Education: A Case Study at Western University

E. Victoria Bomberry, Mohawk, Six Nations of the Grand River
Western University Department of Geography & Environment

This session shared the Author's ongoing research study exploring the unique student housing experiences and needs of Indigenous learners pursuing higher education in Ontario. The research study is connected to two national conversations seeking to address the disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in the areas of postsecondary education attainment and housing access. General research studies examining the benefits of postsecondary student housing have demonstrated a strong consensus that access to student housing is beneficial to students in areas of retention, completion, and nurturing a sense of belonging on campus (1-3). However, lacking Indigenous-specific data general studies do not sufficiently disentangle the unique student housing needs of Indigenous learners. Research specific to Indigenous learners pursuing higher education in Canada reveals that their housing experiences and needs are socially, culturally, and economically distinct (4-7). Although there has been a significant increase in the development and offering of Indigenous-specific supports and resources at Canadian universities (8), the role of housing in enhancing access and success in higher education for Indigenous learners has not yet been meaningfully brought forward in these conversations.

[1] University of Toronto (2018). University of Toronto Student Housing Case Study: Institutional picture. Retrieved from: <https://files.cargocollective.com/c269960/4.3-University-of-Toronto-Student-Housing-Policy-and-Views---Ceara-Marcelo-Ashish--2019--copy.pdf>

[2] Garvey, J. C., Ballysing, T. A., Dow, L. B., Howard, B. L., Ingram, A. N., & Carlson, M. (2020). Where I Sleep: The Relationship with Residential Environments and First-Generation Belongingness. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 38(1), 16-33.

[3] Silva, M. R., Kleinert, W. L., Sheppard, A. V., Cantrell, K. A., Freeman-Coppadge, D. J., Tsoy, E., . . . Pearrow, M. (2017). The Relationship Between Food Insecurity, Housing Stability, and School Performance Among College Students in an Urban University. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(3), 284-299.

[4] Archibald, J., Pidgeon, M., Hare, J., van der Woerd, K., Janvier, S., & Sam, C. (2004). *The Role of Housing in Aboriginal Student Success: Post-Secondary institutions in Vancouver*. Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

[5] Currie, C. L., Motz, T., & Copeland, J. L. (2020). The Impact of Racially Motivated Housing Discrimination on Allostatic Load among Indigenous University Students. *Journal of Urban Health*, 97, 365-376.

[6] Wallace, B., Maire, B., & Lachance, A. (2004). *Aboriginal post-secondary student housing: Research summary*. Bridges and Foundations Project on Urban Aboriginal Housing. Retrieved from <http://datalib.usask.ca/portal/2005.07.14/WallaceAboriginalStudentHousingAssessmentrevisedfinal.pdf>

[7] Pidgeon, M., & Rogerson, C. (2017). Lessons Learned from Aboriginal Students' Housing Experiences: Supporting Aboriginal Student Success. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 44(1), 48-73.

[8] Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *ALTERNATIVE*, 14(3), 218-227. doi:10.1177/1177180118785382

IGSS Journal

Gathering Our Medicine: Strengthening and Healing Relationships Between Indigenous Youth and Their Kinship Circle



Denise Findlay, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw
Simon Fraser University Faculty of Education
PhD Student in Philosophy of Educational Practice
and Theory

Marla Klyne Kolomaya, Métis
Neufeld Institute Faculty
Counsellor and Parent Consultant

Long held beliefs about “right” responses to human suffering that underpin the dominant mental health paradigm are Eurocentric and marginalize Indigenous worldviews, including definitions of wellness and beliefs about the aims of healing. Also to be noted is the fact that the mental health field has evolved to the exclusion of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies resulting in ongoing subjugation and ethno-stress. Approaches characterized by superficial and reductionistic interpretations of symptoms further obfuscate understanding by the non-expert resulting in the ongoing disempowerment of Indigenous peoples, in particular, parents. For all these reasons, I contend that the dominant mental health paradigm is problematic for Indigenous peoples.

I propose an alternative way of seeing and responding to the impacts of intergenerational trauma, Gathering Our Medicine (GOM), that offers a more ethical response to the escalating mental health crisis that exists within Indigenous communities and families. GOM has an entry point to healing that invites questioning the very presuppositions that underlie long held and unquestioned beliefs about healing, wellness, and mental health. In this presentation, a concretely outlined protocol for healing was proposed entitled The Four Circles of Healing. Lessons learned through the creation and implementation of this community-based program, GOM, were also shared.

Healing the wounded spirit: A journey into Canada's justice system

Angelina Heer, Sucker Creek First Nation
University of New Brunswick, MEd Counselling



Introduction

Despite efforts to decrease the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian justice system, the issue persists (Zinger, 2018). Although the reasons for this are multi-faceted, it has been identified that there is a lack of research on the resources available for Indigenous offenders as they reintegrate back into the community, the obstacles they face and the support that they need (Griffiths et al., 2007; Howell, 2016).

Purpose

To identify workable and meaningful programs that can guide participants in their journey of healing.

Methods

This qualitative study will use semi-structured interviews to facilitate the sharing of stories with up to 15 Indigenous participants released from a federal prison, and who currently reside in New Brunswick. An Indigenous Wholistic Theoretical Orientation using the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel Model will be used. Stories shared will be transcribed to conduct a thematic analysis. Data will be coded, organized into pre-identified themes, and analyzed for common themes across the four quadrants of the wholistic model. Consistent with Story Work Pedagogy this research will recognize the diversity in Indigenous teachings (Archibald, 2008). Wolastoqi and Mi'kmaw Elders from the local area will be invited to oversee the research process and gather at three different points in the research project - beginning, middle and end.

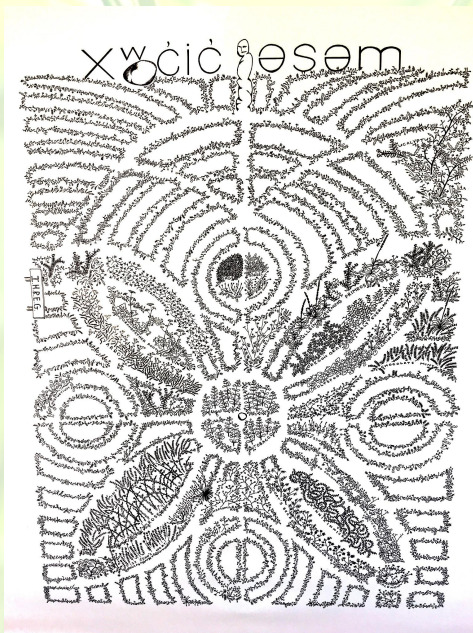
Significance

There is an identified need for Indigenous healing approaches to be considered in counsellor education and practice (Rowett, 2019). Counsellors have an ethical and social responsibility to increase their competencies when working with Indigenous clients who have different life experiences (CCPA, 2015; TRC of Canada, 2015). This research has the potential to contribute to culturally sensitive counselling practices with Indigenous ex-offenders, and the acquisition of knowledge that may be used by communities to shape the development of future policy. This is a summary of work in progress for the submission of a research ethics proposal.

Regenerative Land-based Learning Practices at x^wçic'əsəm Garden

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PhD Candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies of Land and Food Systems
The University of British Columbia

Alannah Young Leon, Ph.D., Opaskwayak Cree Nation
Medicine Collective Founder, Indigenous Research Partnership
Faculty of Land and Food Systems, The University of British Columbia



The past, present, and future of Indigenous food systems have always been dependent on Indigenous knowledge mobilization of sustainable land-based practices. Intergenerational approaches to teaching, learning, and researching are featured in this work at the x^wçic'əsəm Garden: 'The Place Where We Grow' situated on the ancestral and unceded territory of the hənq'əminəm speaking x^wməθk'əyəm (Musqueam) people located at the UBC Farm.

This presentation explored the Garden's land-based methodological implications in promoting Indigenous resurgence agendas. We will do that by drawing on Wilson Mendes's Ph.D. research on the intersections of land-based pedagogies, Indigenous food sovereignty, and Indigenous youth cultural identity and wellness. In this context, we will reflect on the Medicine Collective intergenerational pedagogical approaches to explore how Indigenous knowledge systems through language, protocols and ceremonies encourage Indigenous People's resurgence through regenerative land-based practices via Indigenous food systems engagement. We acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for supporting our research.

We raise our hands in gratitude to Dr Eduardo Jovel (Pipil and Mayan ancestry) for his leadership at the x^wçic'əsəm Garden. Dr. Jovel is the Interim Director of First Nation House of Learning and Director of the Indigenous Research Partnerships at the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, University of British Columbia.

Culture & Health Among First Nations in Canada

Jocelyn Marie Paul, Mi'kmaq (Membertou First Nation)

Dalhousie University

PhD Student in Clinical Psychology

Current health inequities amongst First Nations peoples are frequently attributed to various historical and ongoing effects of colonization. While some evidence suggests that certain aspects of First Nations cultural identity might protect against poor health outcomes often worsened through experiencing social stress, inconsistent evidence and minimal research in this regard has explored these links among First Nations peoples in Canada. That said, the current objectives of the study were to better understand what types of social stressors (e.g., bullying, cyberbullying) worsen levels of (psychological) distress and which cultural factors seem to be linked to reduced distress and/or moderate (protect) against unwanted impacts of particular social stressors on levels of distress. Secondary analyses (e.g., see Paul, McQuaid, Hopkins, Perri, Stewart, Matheson, Anisman, & Bombay, 2023 [manuscript titled “Relations between bullying and distress among youth living in First Nations communities: Assessing direct and moderating effects of culture-related variables” in an upcoming special issue of the Journal of Transcultural Psychiatry]) were performed using the First Nations Regional Health Survey 2015/16 youth data.

Overall, bullying and cyberbullying were associated with increased distress. Strong feelings of community belonging were directly associated with lower distress and buffered the relationships between bullying/cyberbullying and distress. Among youth who experienced cyberbullying, those who participated in community cultural events at least sometimes reported lower distress compared to those who rarely or never participated. These secondary analyses highlight the importance of certain culture-related variables as key factors associated with the well-being of youth living in First Nations communities across Canada. The full manuscript (e.g., see Paul, McQuaid, Hopkins, Perri, Stewart, Matheson, Anisman, & Bombay, 2023 [manuscript titled “Relations between bullying and distress among youth living in First Nations communities: Assessing direct and moderating effects of culture-related variables”]) will be available in an upcoming special issue of the Journal of Transcultural Psychiatry. It is hoped that this work supports the need for more culturally based health and social policies and programming for First Nations youth.

In addition, presenter Jocelyn Paul, discussed the role of psychologists in Canada and the “Blackfoot Model of Needs” during her poster presentation. Jocelyn stresses her work in Clinical Psychology to date, as a First Nations resident, and the importance of cultural safety training and competence working with First Nations clients and in community. Overall, the presentation illuminated the importance of understanding First Nations health within a biopsychosocial framework.



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