Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous Youth in Foster Care through Storywork

by

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B.A., Douglas College, 2012

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

in the
Counselling Psychology Program
Faculty of Education

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Fall 2017

Approval

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Degree:	**Master of Arts**
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Date Defended/Approved:	September 11, 2017

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Abstract

This qualitative study uses Indigenous Storywork methodology as described by Jo-ann Archibald (2008) to explore the relocation experiences of four female Indigenous youth. Additionally, this study draws on Métis Beadwork methodology informed by Métis Knowledge Holder and artist Lisa Shepherd. This study answers the question, "What stories of relocation are told by female Indigenous youth in foster care who have relocated from rural northern communities and are residing in a Lower Mainland residential program?" Indigenous youth are over represented in the Canadian Child Welfare system as a result of colonization, residential schools, and the removal of Indigenous children from families. There is limited understanding of this populations' experience of relocation while in foster care. Using Métis Beadwork/Indigenous Storywork methodology, I used beadwork teachings combined with the seven Storywork principles to guide my research and engage with storytellers which include: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Findings from this study reveal the youth's perspective on their experiences of relocation and create space for youth voice in research. Findings may also guide service providers in providing culturally appropriate, effective, and meaningful services to female Indigenous youth in the child welfare system. Findings are presented in three sections: leaving, arriving, and adjusting.

Keywords: relocation; adolescent; Indigenous Storywork; child welfare

I would like to dedicate my thesis to the young people who participated in this study by sharing their inspiring stories of relocation. I feel privileged to have met each one of you and grateful that each of you intrusted me with your stories. Thank you for sharing your journey, resilience, and advice. I have learned so much from each of you and I am hopeful that your stories will allow others to learn as well.

Acknowledgements

My first acknowledgment is to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people for providing me with a place to live, study, and carry out my research while on their traditional and un-ceded territories.

The production of this thesis has been made possible by my many supports, ideas of several individuals, storytellers, agencies, both in the Lower Mainland and in the Northwest Territories.

I would like to express my gratitude to my family: to my partner and best friend, Osvaldo, your patience and endless support over the past five years have provided me with a foundation to pursue my goals. Thank you for always being my practice audience and my tech person. To my parents, thank you for your unconditional love, sacrifice, and for providing me with the opportunity to attend college and university. To my sister, Cindee, thank you for always being my teacher and reading over my assignments over the past ten years. To my niece, Kezzy, thank you for playing with me when I needed a break. To my brother, Gerson, thank you for encouraging me to pursue graduate studies. To my brother, Jeffery, thank you for providing me with a quiet space to write my thesis. To my sister, Brittany, thank you for being my gym and yoga buddy. To my little sister, Mercedes, thank you for all of the fun hang-outs. To my grandma, Willy, thank you for the meals, sleepovers, chats, and encouragement.

I would like to thank my supervisors and research committee: Dr. Sharalyn Jordan, Dr. Amy Parent, and Elder/Scholar Dr. Richard Vedan. Dr. Jordan, thank you for believing in this research and making it a possibility. Thank you also for your guidance and support throughout my graduate studies. Dr. Parent, thank you for sharing your knowledge and providing me with valuable comments. Thank you also for reminding me to have balance and attend to my whole self. Dr. Vedan, thank you for sharing your teachings, wisdom, and providing guidance for this project. I will always remember when we first met and you shared about ooligan grease. With your guidance, along with my other supports, I believe I have a rich finished product. Dr. Jordan, Dr. Parent, and Dr. Vedan I am very grateful for your time and effort in reading and checking this thesis.

I would like to thank my Métis beading teacher, artist, and Knowledge Holder, Lisa Shepherd. Thank you for sharing your teachings with me over the years and being a part of this study. Thank you also for your patience and guidance as I learn beadwork. You, as well as the beads, have taught me so much that I will always remember. Applying the beadwork teachings to this thesis kept me grounded and I thank you for sharing those teachings with me.

I would like to thank Dr. Jo-ann Archibald for your work and guidance with Indigenous Storywork. Reading your book felt like you were alongside me as I worked on this thesis. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to meet and work with you on the Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium Committee

I would like to thank others who have supported me throughout my studies. Thank you to Ron Johnston for encouraging me to get involved with the Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium and introducing me to Dr. Vedan. Thank you to William Lindsay for your support and guidance. Thank you to Dr. Robert Lees for supporting and encouraging me while getting ready for my thesis defense and throughout my practicum. Thank you to David Snook for our chats, for letting me run ideas by you, and for your encouragement. Thank you to Hala for your encouragement and support, both personally and professionally, over the past ten years and for all of your advice.

Thank you to my classmates, Alex and Amy, for your support with my thesis. Thank you to the rest of my cohort for your encouraging presence as we went through the program together. Thank you to the rest of my friends for your encouragement, time, and friendship: Tehilla, Ramil, Dev, Carol, Becka, Ashley, and Heng-zi. You have helped me stay balanced.

Thank you to my professors at Douglas College, Tara Chang, Kristy Dellebuur O'Connor, Elizabeth Barbeau, and John Fleming for encouraging me to attend graduate school and for providing me with a strong foundation and practical application for my studies and career.

Thank you to the social service agency involved in this study as well as Andy Langford from the Northwest Territories for granting permission to carry out this study and for sharing your stories. Thank you also to the youth workers who assisted me in meeting with the storytellers.

Thank you to all of the amazing young people I have had the privilege of meeting and working with over the past ten years. You have all inspired me to do this work and I am grateful.

Thank you again to all of the storytellers involved in this study (whose names are withheld due to confidentiality). Thank you for sharing your stories.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

I arrived at the Yellowknife airport in the Northwest Territories and was unsure where to go. The organization I worked for as a youth worker sent me to Yellowknife to accompany a youth who had been subpoenaed for court. I will call her Leah. Leah and I got off the airplane, collected our bags, and went outside. I noticed a man in shorts walking in front of me as I walked outside. It was so cold!

In the parking lot I met someone who had been sent to meet with us. I got in a van and we drove an hour to Rae-Edzo, or Behchokǫ̀ as it is formally known. I met a social worker and was given a key to a van and told that I could use it to drive myself and Leah back and forth from our hotel to Rae. I mentioned that my cellphone was not getting reception on the hour long drive to Rae and I asked what I should do if the van breaks down. I was told to just pull over and wave down the next traveller and hitch a ride back to town.

I drove us back to town and we looked for a place to eat. The big city of Yellowknife was so small. I was use to Vancouver with many buildings, busy streets, and people everywhere. I do not think I saw more than three cars on the hour drive back to town. Once in Yellowknife, I felt more comfortable as it was busier. I looked around for something that I recognized but it was all new. We drove through the city and Leah pointed out the surroundings. We drove through town so fast! That was it? I thought. I saw Walmart, Subway, and Tim Hortons and felt a bit better. I know these places, I thought.

The next day we drove back to Rae for court. We went to what seemed like a small community center and met with a lawyer. I was use to attending court for work but at the large, formal courthouses in Vancouver. This was so different. The judge was just sitting on a chair at the front of the room. It seemed more like a casual hangout than court being in session.

Court went quickly and we took some selfies outside on the porch. I dropped Leah off at her family's house for a visit and was told to come back the next day to pick her up to return to Vancouver. It took a while to sort out permissions for the overnight visit, so I waited in the van as Leah arranged her visit with her social worker. While I sat there, several small children came up to the van and smiled and knocked on my window. I think they saw me taking pictures of the landscape with my phone. One small girl, her face and clothes covered in dirt, confidently opened up the door to my van and hopped in. She grabbed my phone and asked to look at it. I helped her take a few pictures.

After my visitor left the van, I was told I could leave Leah with her family for the night and pick her up in the morning. I felt a little relieved and nervous. Relieved because the previous night we spent in the hotel together, Leah phoned several friends and invited them to our hotel room, ordered a pizza at 1:00am for which she could not pay for, and then took off and returned around 3:00am. It was a stressful night and I was in a new place and crossed my fingers that she would return.

After getting permission to head back to Yellowknife, I was nervous to return back alone. I thought, I hope the van doesn't break down because I don't want to hitchhike. I drove quickly. The radio was fuzzy and I felt lonely. I remembered Subway! I know Subway. When I arrived in Yellowknife I went to Subway and got enough for dinner and breakfast so I wouldn't have to go out again and quickly went back to my hotel room. I felt safe there. I had a nap and watched a show on the television. That lasted an hour and then I was lonely again. I could not wait to go home.

My personal experience reveals my interest in this study. In 2011, when my former employer sent me to Yellowknife to accompany a youth, I experienced a temporary relocation. I found it difficult to adjust to a new community for my short stay. I did not know where I was, who anyone was, and everything was new. It was overwhelming. For three years while I worked for this community agency, I worked as a youth worker with young people who were relocated from northern communities and placed in foster placements in the Lower Mainland. In my job as a youth worker, I experienced tensions navigating my role as a support person between helping youth adapt to their new environment and preserving connections with their home communities. My work experience left me with many questions such as: were the youth better off living in the Lower Mainland? Will they return to their home communities? How

important is it for Indigenous young people to be connected to their communities and culture? It was with these questions in my mind and heart that I began this study.

Locating Myself

I would like to acknowledge the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh people for providing me with a place to live, study, and carry out my research on their traditional and un-ceded territories. I was born in Vancouver, British Columbia and I grew up nearby in Surrey, British Columbia, with my family. I have lived in the Lower Mainland for twenty-nine years. Through my father's side of the family, I am Métis and a member of the Métis Nation of British Columbia. My family name, Inkster, comes from Scotland and on my father's side I am also of Scottish, Polish, and Ukrainian decent. On my mother's side, I am of Ukrainian and Dutch decent.

Before working with youth who experienced relocation, I worked and volunteered in different capacities with children and youth in foster care and the youth justice system since 2007. In 2007, I attended Douglas College to complete a Youth Justice Diploma and I graduated from Douglas in 2012 with a Bachelor's Degree in Child and Youth Care. Throughout my undergraduate training, I worked as an Intensive Support and Supervision Worker (ISSP) with youth involved in the criminal justice system who were incarcerated or on probation. After some time working as an ISSP worker I transferred within the same organization to a specialized residential program for youth in foster care. It was in this program that I worked primarily with Indigenous youth from northern communities. My current experience with children and youth is as a counsellor within my master's program practicum course.

In addition to my work and volunteer experience, I am a Métis woman who grew up in British Columbia and rarely visited my father's side of the family in Manitoba. Growing up I did not feel connected to the Métis culture. Through my work experience, I started connecting with Elders, teachers, and youth that I worked with and developed an interest and longing to learn about my Métis heritage. I became a member of the Métis Nation as an adult and began to learn more about my Métis culture. Being born and raised on the west coast distanced me from my Métis relatives. My interest in this study comes from my own disconnection from Métis culture as well as from my previous work experience with Indigenous female youth in foster care who had been relocated to the

Lower Mainland from the Northwest Territories. Identifying myself in relation to place and family allows me to share how I fit within the larger collective and is part of the holistic Indigenous framework that I will be using in this study (Archibald, 2008). I will discuss this research design further in the section below.

Beadwork

Part of reconnecting with my Métis culture has been through learning traditional beadwork. I had the privilege of learning from Métis knowledge holder and artist, Lisa Shepherd, when I worked as a youth worker. I would take youth to meet with her and learn from her. At the same time, I had the opportunity to learn from her and work on beading projects and moccasins. Métis people are known for their floral beadwork, with beadwork being a time to come together, share stories, and focus on beading and creating a sense of community. It was through the practice of beadwork that I found my Métis culture and connected with traditions. For this reason, in this thesis I use beadwork to tell my story of learning about research, stories, and my approach to learning from storytellers.

When I learned traditional beading it was much like the process of entering university for the first time and later learning to conduct research. When learning to bead, I remember not knowing what needle to use and I would sometimes use my leather needle that I used to make moccasins with for my beadwork. I would become frustrated until I realized I needed my smaller beading needle. I would get confused over the thread and the names of the threads. Recently, I started a beading project and I started using my sinew instead of the beading thread. When I met with knowledge holder Lisa Shepherd to prepare for this research project, she reminded me of the beading teachings so that I could start my beading projects in the right way. Early on in our meeting, Lisa pointed out to me that the needle I was using was very crooked from past projects and I needed a new, fresh needle to start my work. Lisa gave me a new needle and supported me in setting up my beading projects. Much like the crooked beading needle, I needed to refresh myself before working on this research project.

Learning process

Similar to the beadwork process, my university experience and this research project was a learning process. It was uncomfortable, awkward, and at times I did not know what I was doing or that I could continue. During these times I would remember beadwork and how learning something new is not an easy, straightforward process. As I would seek guidance from Lisa in my beadwork, I sought guidance from my professors and research committee for the research process. Learning to seek guidance and support was a difficult but necessary process that I had to go through in order to move forward in graduate school and with this research project. The protocols of beadwork reminded me that this is also an important step. I did not learn beadwork on my own but I was taught by an experienced teacher and guided along the way. Early on in graduate school, I felt out of place and struggled to keep up with my classes. In many classes I attended, I would write down many words to look up afterwards because I did not know what the professor was talking about. I felt out of place and this lead me to meet with professors for support. This was an important step in my university experience and allowed me to gain the necessary support to succeed. Just as I learned beadwork from my teacher, I learned from my professors how to succeed in university.

Commitment

When I do beadwork projects I sometimes, especially early on in learning beadwork, want it to go faster. It takes a long time to place each bead, secure it, and keep going. When I first started making projects and would show them to others I would often get asked if I could make one for someone, or make someone a pair of moccasins. It was always asked as though it was something simple that I could whip up quickly. Early on, I do not think I, and others, realized how much time and commitment goes into making a beading project. I was taught by my beading teacher that it is not meant to go fast and that some things should not go fast. I apply this teaching to my beading as well as to the research process. This project should not have been rushed through and it needed to take time and it was a commitment. This research project is important to me and I also think that if it only took me five minutes to complete then it would not be as meaningful. Beadwork has taught me to take the necessary time for important work.

Good place

I was taught that when I work on a beading project, I must come to the work with good intentions. If I am not in a good place then I take time to get into a good place before I touch my beadwork. If I cannot get into a good place, I put my beadwork down and come back to it later when I am in a better place. I was taught that when I work on a beadwork project, the energy I have will transfer to the project. I kept this in mind when writing this thesis as well and I will discuss this in greater detail in the methods section.

Spirit bead

One of the main things that always sticks with me about beadwork is the "spirit bead". I was taught to place one bead in each project that does not fit with the pattern, a wrong bead. This is a way to keep someone humble and learn that nothing is perfect. I have kept this in mind throughout my graduate school experience and during this research project. I have a tendency to move towards perfectionism and it is humbling to remember the spirit bead. The spirit bead also allows me to attend to my spirit because when I feel perfectionism coming I often think of the spirit bead and realize that it is perhaps time to take a break or spend time feeding my spirit in nature. The spirit bead allows me to accept my own imperfections as well as the imperfections of others. When I am less judgemental towards myself and others I feel more at peace and in a good space to do work, like this research project. Early on in the designing of this research project, I took a class and was advised to have a specific object with me at all times while I write to motivate me, much like a mascot. I chose an old beaded bracelet that I made with a youth when I worked as a youth worker. I brought it with me to my research courses and, as I write this thesis, it is hanging on my computer screen, spirit bead facing forward. This has been a reminder as I work on this project that nothing is perfect and a reminder to not be judgemental towards myself as I work on this project. Also, it has been a reminder of the purpose of this work which is to allow the stories of Indigenous girls to be heard. When I place a spirit bead in a project there is always an inner battle that occurs. If I am laying down a line of purple beads that is so neatly organized and I put in a red spirit bead, there is a battle that occurs inside of me and a voice that tells me not to put the wrong bead as it will ruin the project. Placing the spirit bead is an important protocol and step in beadwork. It is also an important step in this

research project and I will further discuss the spirit bead in the discussion chapter under the limitations of this study.

One at a time

Beadwork has taught me many lessons. One more lesson that I was taught about beadwork is to put one bead down at a time. When working on a beading project I can only physically work with one bead at a time. I approached this research by keeping this teaching in mind and took each step one at a time. I encourage readers to keep these teachings in mind when reading this thesis, focus on reading one section at a time, and take breaks if not in a good space and return.

Rationale for the Study

Displacement and relocation are experiences that occur all over the world but little attention is paid to the experiences of relocation among female Indigenous youth residing in Canada (Berman, Mulcahy, Forchuk, Edmunds, Haldenby, & Lopez, 2009). Relocation experiences represent a turning point in a person's life and have considerable consequences for Indigenous people's mental health, identity, and social networks (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). The purpose of this study is to explore the relocation experiences among female Indigenous youth in the Canadian foster care system who have been relocated to the Lower Mainland from rural northern communities.

There are multiple problems involved that lead to a need for a study on the relocation experiences of Canadian Indigenous youth in foster care including the historical and current relocation of Indigenous people, the negative effects of relocation, and the importance of maintaining cultural and community ties for youth in care (Moffatt & Cook, 2012; O'Sullivan & Handal, 1988; Tsuruda, Hoogeveen, & Smith, 2012).

Care system

Youth in the foster care system in BC are among the most vulnerable and often enter with histories of loss, abuse, or trauma. In a 2008 BC study, youth living on reserves were more likely than youth living off reserves to have been in care in the last

year (Tsuruda et al., 2012). The same study also stated concerns that once youth entered the child welfare system their cultural needs were neglected even though the Ministry of Children and Family Development aims to maintain cultural ties of children in care. Additionally, preserving contact with family, community, and friends is particularly important for young people while they are in care.

Reserves and relocation

There is a negative history of the relocation of Aboriginal people in North America. Historically, the relocation of First Nations people in Canada was focused on moving them due to land development or to make it easier for the government to administer resources (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Reserves established across North America were often in areas that lacked resources and this contributed to current issues on reserves of high unemployment rates, disparities in education, and underfunded health resources (Roubideaux, 2005; Sandefur, Rindfuss, & Cohen, 1996; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). The relocation of Indigenous people from reserves to urban areas was a response to unemployment and economic hardship on reserves (Peters, 2002; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Relocation is still occurring and is influenced by historical factors which have a large effect on the lives of those being relocated.

Effects of relocation

Displacement has been found to be problematic for cultural groups that are community oriented (O'Sullivan & Handal, 1988; Scudder, 1973; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Indigenous culture is community oriented and much of Indigenous cultural identity is connected to land and community (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). O'Sullivan and Handal (1988) found that even the threat of relocation can affect well-being and can be a cause of cultural death. Many Indigenous cultures view lives as interconnected and generational ties are important because elders pass on cultural knowledge, language, and spirituality (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Elders are respected and valued for their advice and when these ties are disrupted the consequences effect future generations. Historically, government policies disrupted intergenerational ties due to forced acculturation through such methods as residential schools and relocation. Parents and grandparents were physically and emotionally separated from their children who did not

benefit from having role models and guidance. Youth growing up in these oppressed communities are susceptible to disadvantage and adversity across their life span due to historical events and trauma (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012).

Linking past to present problems

It is important to understand what has occurred in the past as it still effects the current experiences of Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal children still face potential prejudice and racism, poor health, shorter lifespans, and less success in the workforce compared to other Canadians (Moffatt & Cook, 2005). Aboriginal youth continue to face challenges and require supportive communities to navigate adolescence and transition to adulthood (Tsuruda et al., 2012). Over the past few decades there have been many changes in Aboriginal youth health and a hopefulness to strengthen and restore communities from the impact of colonization (Tsuruda et al., 2012). The effects of relocation, historical treatment of Indigenous populations, and over representation of Aboriginal children in care prove the need to explore the relocation experiences of Aboriginal youth in foster care.

Conceptualizing Relocation and Cultural Connection

Relocation is simply defined as the movement to a new place. Relocation is more than the act of moving and is a complex process. Much of the research on relocation and displacement is centered around the movement from one country to another. Moving from homes and communities is also a reality for Indigenous girls in Canada (Berman et al., 2009). Relocation involves the loss of “home” and the disruption of social ties (Berman et al., 2009). Much of the research on individuals who have been displaced or uprooted is on adults and there are few Canadian studies on the experience of uprooting on girls (Berman et al., 2009). Youth are relocated from remote northern communities to urban centers in the Lower Mainland. In this study, relocation is defined as a process which unfolds over time and not just the event of moving. Relocation involves the physical relocation, displacement, spiritual dislocation, and cultural transition from Indigenous northern reserve communities to urban non Indigenous dominant culture communities.

Indigenous culture is both distinct and diverse (Cunningham & Stanley, 2003). There are commonalities between Indigenous cultural groups such as the importance of living in connection with nature and experiences of colonialism (Cunningham & Stanley, 2003). While there are commonalities, Indigenous culture is also diverse with differences between groups, traditional and contemporary culture, urban and rural communities (Cunningham & Stanley, 2003; Kiraly et al., 2015). Cultural connection has been described as connection to land, family, community, knowledge, language, and spirituality (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Additionally, cultural connection may include participation in cultural practices, ceremonies, and working with elders (de Finney, 2014; Shea, 2011; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012).

Objective and Research Questions

This study explores the relocation experiences of female Indigenous youth in foster care being moved from the Northwest Territories or other northern rural communities to the Lower Mainland. Moving from a rural reserve community to the urban Lower Mainland is a tremendous change that has consequences for identity, mental health, and social networks (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). The purpose of this study is to give voice to this population of youth and create an informative resource for service providers, counsellors, social workers, policy makers, and others who are interested in this population's experiences. Few studies have included Indigenous youth perceptions and attitudes of their experiences and there is a lack of research on Indigenous youth experiences of relocation. Caringi, Klika, Zimmerman, Trautman, & van den Pol (2013) challenge researchers to make space for youth voice and be prepared to listen to the voices of youth regarding the issues they are experiencing. This study addresses the issue of the lack of youth voice in research and creates space for the stories of Indigenous youth in care regarding their experiences of relocation. To accomplish this, I asked the following central research question: What stories of relocation are told by female Indigenous youth in foster care who have relocated from rural northern communities and are residing in a Lower Mainland residential program? The following three questions guide this study: a) What stories do female youth narrate as important in their relocation process? b) Within the stories, what needs and sources of support are reflected? c) How do female Indigenous youth describe their cultural connection before, during, and after relocation?

Significance of the Study

Findings from this research project contribute to a sparse literature on female Indigenous youth experiences of relocation while in the Canadian foster care system. This knowledge may raise questions about best approaches and inform service providers' interventions with female Indigenous youth in care. Findings reveal the youth's perspective on their experiences of relocation. Furthermore, findings can potentially guide service providers in providing culturally appropriate, effective, and meaningful services to female Indigenous youth in foster care system. This is in accordance with the TCPS 2 (9.13 Mutual Benefits).

Overview of the Thesis

In Chapter One, I introduced myself, the research topic and questions, as well as the rationale for this study. In Chapter Two, I further situate this research with a review of the literature on relocation, Indigenous youth, trauma, youth voice, and the foster care system for Indigenous youth. In Chapter Three, I provide an overview of the current study, including the research question, methodology, story gathering process, meaning making process, and trustworthiness of the proposed study. In Chapter Four, I present the results of this study using the girls' stories. Lastly, in Chapter Five, I provide a discussion of the results in relation to the relevant literature as well as a reflection on the implications of this study. Additionally, I identify strengths and limitation of this study and propose ideas for future research.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

In this chapter, I build upon topics introduced in chapter 1. A review of the literature on residential school survivors, displaced populations, as well important documents related to this study are presented in this chapter. Additionally, literature on cultural connection, transitions, identity, and being labelled “at-risk” as it relates to Indigenous youth is presented. Finally an overview of mental health, resilience, and the importance of female youth voice in research is provided.

The term Indigenous is used to describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. I use the historical term “Indian” or “Aboriginal” when referring to specific policies (Woolford, 2013). Key search terms entered into the SFU library database as well as Google Scholar to locate materials for this literature review include: Canadian child welfare system and Indigenous/Aboriginal/First Nations/Native, relocation and Indigenous/Aboriginal/Native American, refugee and youth and dislocation/relocation, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Indigenous/Aboriginal/Native youth/adolescents/teen and culture/transition/identity, and Indigenous/Aboriginal and trauma/mental health/resilience. Further literature was obtained by reading reference lists and through suggestions by search engines. Additionally, a literature map (a hierarchically organized visual picture of the research literature) was created to organize and position this study within the larger body of literature on this topic (Appendix A). The literature map was used to develop an initial plan for reviewing the literature that included the following major headings: Indigenous youth, rural Indigenous youth, cultural connection, transitions, identity, relocation and treatment of Indigenous populations, historical, current, foster care system, trauma, mental health, resilience, and youth voice. As I discussed the literature review with my research committee I recognized a need to add further literature to review in the following areas: displaced populations, refugee youth, implications for counsellors, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and “at-risk” youth.

Relocation and Treatment of Indigenous People

Historical

Since time immemorial, stories continue to be used to transmit Indigenous knowledge regarding history and relationships to the land (Archibald, 2008). Indigenous oral narratives are also recognized in Canadian court proceedings (Miller, 2011). In 1997, the *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997) decision of the Supreme Court of Canada's Chief Justice Antonio Lamer recognized Indigenous oral histories as equal to written western histories in the courts. Lamer highlighted that oral histories express cultural values and contain historical knowledge. Further, anthropological and archaeological advances are in a state of continuous change when it comes to Indigenous history. Although Indigenous history is still unfolding, there are over 12,000 years of Indigenous history in Canada before the arrival of European settlers (Wright, 1999). This history has been largely ignored because of the lack of pre-European written records. Advances in anthropology have contributed to a greater appreciation in documenting Indigenous history prior to European contact and the devastating effects that resulted.

In the 16th century, first contact between the Indigenous peoples and Europeans occurred in Canada. Much of the interaction between the groups at the time was related to the fur trade and missionary activities (Fisher, 1992). Since first contact, there have been many policies created by European settlers to destroy Indigenous ways of life. Indigenous people have been through a systematic attempt at genocide which began with colonization in North America. The effects of colonization have physically and psychologically devastated Indigenous groups (Duran & Duran, 1995).

Historically, Indigenous people in North America have been the most neglected group of people in several domains including education, health, and mental health (Duran & Duran, 1995). Until recently, governmental policies had been in place that facilitated the termination and oppression of Indigenous people. Current policies continue to oppress Indigenous people. Internalized and externalized oppression responses such as suicide, addiction and alcoholism, abuse, neglect, violence in Indigenous communities, and the continued removal of Indigenous children from their parents and communities by the social welfare system are a result of on-going

colonialism and the attempted genocide (Duran & Duran, 1995; Woolford, 2013). Today, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada was established in 2008 to address the negative effects of this history and will be discussed further in this chapter.

Many Indigenous people have been displaced from their communities and land through forced relocation policies. The Indian Act was first passed in Canada in 1876 and continues to be the main document that governs how reserves operate, with added amendments since 1876 (Belanger, 2014). The constitutional basis for the Indian Act was section 91(24) of the British North America Acts, now known as the Constitution Act, in 1867 which provided the federal government jurisdiction for setting up reserves and relocating Indigenous people. Indigenous groups were forcefully relocated to areas of land unfamiliar to them. Traditionally, North American Indigenous psychology involved environmental harmony and oneness (Duran & Duran, 1995). Connection to the land was part of the culture. The unfamiliarity of the artificially imposed reserve system added to destroying Indigenous culture as culture was based on the traditional land base that groups inhabited (Duran & Duran, 1995).

Residential schools

Due to regional differences in the colonial process, it is difficult to offer a brief overview of residential school history in Canada (Woolford, 2013). The following is intended to orient the reader to key aspects.

One of the most devastating policies was the implementation of residential schools. The foundation for Canada's residential school system was created by Christian missionaries (TRC, 2015). The earliest residential schools for Indigenous people in Canada were established by missionary organizations. Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations, in partnership with the federal government, operated the national residential school system from 1883. The administration of most of the schools was handled by the churches until 1969. Church involvement in administration meant that their values and methods were enforced as well as a common purpose of conversion to Christianity (TRC, 2015). Residential schools were created to implement a policy to break apart Indigenous families, with devastating impacts. Residential schools were an effort to weaken the relationships between Indigenous children and their families and communities (Glenn, 2011). Children were forcefully removed from their families to be assimilated into the Eurocentric worldview (Duran &

Duran, 1995). Children were forbidden to speak their language or maintain ties to their culture. They were given haircuts to make them look like members of the dominant Euro-Canadian culture. They were taught skills corresponding to European gender norms. Boys were trained for a trade and girls were taught to sew and care for the house. Many children suffered from loneliness, anger, and alienation from siblings.

The harms of residential schooling of Indigenous children was further compounded by poor management and inadequate funding. Management and funding issues led to pressure being placed on those operating the schools and subsequent actions against the Indigenous children attending them such as forced labor, lack of food, poor facilities, inadequate clothing, crowded living conditions etc. Many children from isolated communities became infected with tuberculosis and other serious diseases and died due to inadequate treatment (Glenn, 2011).

Many survivors of residential schools have reported being sexually abused by religious staff and fellow students within the schools (Woolford, 2013). According to the *Survivors Speak* (TRC, 2015) document from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2012), reports of sexual abuse were common among the many forms of abuse that children suffered. Survivors reported being abused at more than one school and by both same sex and opposite sex perpetrators. Survivors shared that they were carefully recruited by being offered favors and treats while others shared that they were threatened and abused with physical force. Survivors also shared of being sexually abused by other students within the schools.

Many students ran away from the schools and this caused government and school leaders to recommend that schools take younger children (Glenn, 2011). In *Survivors Speak* (TRC, 2015), many survivors reported that they ran away to escape the harsh discipline and other forms of abuse they experienced in the schools. Some survivors reported running away by themselves and others reported running away with other students.

Relocating children to residential schools was a way that place was used to assimilate Indigenous peoples and dispossess them from their lands. Geography and place have held power in Canadian colonial projects (de Leeuw, 2009). School spaces were colonially constructed and Canadian colonialism focused on Indigenous children.

There was a focus on developing the Indigenous child into a non-Indigenous adult. Residential schools were directed and operated by non-Indigenous adults and considered to be in the best interest of Indigenous children. Many schools were surrounded by agricultural land which were different spaces than traditional Indigenous peoples occupied. School spaces were used to deindigenize children (de Leeuw, 2009).

Many children were provided a different and inappropriate education and environment than their parents would have taught and provided for them (Glenn, 2011). Parents both opposed having their children taken and some believed they would be provided better opportunities. Many Indigenous young people found it difficult to adjust to life after residential schooling. Many youth returned to their home communities and could not use the knowledge and skills they acquired in residential schools and were unprepared for life in their communities. Young people from tribal communities missed out on receiving instruction that would have prepared them for participation in their communities. These young people returned to their communities to find themselves unable to participate in daily life because they had not been taught the customs which they would have learned throughout their childhood and adolescence (Glenn, 2011). Residential schooling had not prepared Indigenous youth for white-dominated society and society failed to accept Indigenous young people as equal. Residential schools had a profound impact on Indigenous youth who attended them.

Woolford (2013) studied residential schools in relation to colonial genocide in Canada. Woolford (2013) emphasizes that the removal of several generations of children, disconnection from family and community, and the cold world of residential schools, resulted in the lack of ability to form healthy relationships. At the same time as children experienced residential schools, their home communities faced further problems such as denial of rights, removal of their lands, and prohibition of events. These experiences are understood by Woolford (2013) as a colonial genocide due to the destruction of group life. Woolford (2013) argues that to form a better understanding of this genocide, the Indigenous group context or collective existence and how these groups form should be considered.

In the late 1980's, people began to look at the impact of residential schools as they came under legal scrutiny (Nayar, 2014). This awareness has been pivotal to healing for residential school survivors. Nayar (2014) outlines the experiences of one

residential school survivor, revealing the challenges of living in Canadian society and the importance of reconnecting with traditions. Nayar (2014) highlights that many residential school survivors have struggled because important requirements for resilience, family and culture, were taken away by government programs and policies. Nayar (2014) further contends that there is no common template for healing for survivors because First Nations children had different experiences before and during attending residential school. Building resilience among survivors of residential schools has been challenging given the socio-historical context. Survivors had to seek alternate attachments and navigate discrimination, racism, deprivation, and abuse. The disconnectedness from family and culture, combined with the socio-historical context, made it more difficult for the building of resilience and prolonged the process of restoring wellness for many survivors.

Indigenous Women

In many traditional, pre-European contact Indigenous groups, women held important positions of authority and leadership such as Clan Mothers (Jaimes, 2003). Clan mothers often determined role responsibilities among members through reciprocal traditions and collective cultural practices. Many groups followed communal models of governance which provided women with roles of respect and authority through their use of both matrifocal and patrifocal councils to make decisions. For example, the Nisga'a Nation is matrilineal, where women are considered the leaders in the community because they are the life givers and raise children. The traditional authority of Indigenous women has been disempowered as a result of colonialism and patriarchal structures (Jaimes, 2003).

Indigenous women in Canada experience disproportionately low levels of poor health compared with non-Indigenous people and compared to Indigenous men (Bourassa, McKay-McNabb, & Hampton, 2004). Bourassa, McKay-McNabb, and Hampton (2004) argue that sexism, racism, and colonialism are measurable determinants of health and are dynamic processes. Gender and ethnicity are influential determinants of health. Further, research highlights that understanding how processes of sexism, such as higher exposure to violence, contribute to poor health outcomes for women is an important distinction compared with only biological differences between men and women. Sexism, like racism, is dangerous for women's health and both occur

through external power structures which contribute to poor health. Indigenous groups have experienced colonization which is another threat to the health of Indigenous women. The multiple oppressions that Indigenous women experience disempower them and pose risks to their health. Women experience multiple oppressions and are therefore more vulnerable than if they experienced one form of oppression. Sexism, racism, and colonialism have negatively impacted Indigenous women and have forced them to challenge racist, sexist, and colonial policies. Researchers suggest that past and present colonization practices have had a direct effect on Indigenous women's health, identity, and well-being.

The Indian Act has both past and on-going impacts, affecting Indigenous women differently than it does for men in Canada (Bourassa et al., 2004). The results of the Indian Act disproportionately disadvantaged Indigenous women. For example, Indigenous women lost their status if they married non-Indigenous men. Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men had to leave their reserves because non-status and non-Indians were not permitted to live on reserves. Indigenous women also had different land ownership rights than men. Indigenous woman were not given the full benefits of Canadian citizenship. These Euro-centric and sexist ideologies disrupted traditional Indigenous families and definitions of family. Sexism and racism were reinforced both on and off reserves through colonialism.

The use of policies to exclude and disconnect Indigenous women from their communities and culture have far reaching effects over time. Indigenous women have often been excluded from decision making in their communities due to the Indian Act policies mentioned above. Further, Indigenous women have also been excluded from research because they have not fit defined categories for research or membership in their communities (Bourassa et al., 2004).

Ramirez (2007) studied race, tribal nation, and gender in Native American Studies and outlined how Indigenous women's needs to be free from misogyny and sexism have been ignored because of the need to support their communities and male leaders. Additionally, issues of race and sovereignty have been prioritized over gender issues. Ramirez (2007) urges both Indigenous women and men to develop a Native feminist understanding of the struggles faced by Indigenous communities and to no longer leave out concerns and rights related to gender. Ramirez (2007) further

highlights how Indigenous scholars and researchers have also focused less on gender issues because of the privileged focus on race and tribal sovereignty issues. Ramirez (2007) calls for incorporation of gender issues within activism and research because issues such as sexism and misogyny continue to affect and damage communities. These strategies are important for Indigenous women to become full members of their communities and change the course that past and present legislation and practices have negatively had on the lives of Indigenous women.

Language and culture

In Canada and the United States, it is reported that at the time of European settlement, the Indigenous peoples have spoken more than 600 different languages (Glenn, 2011). Today, over half of these languages are non-existent. There are over 60 Indigenous languages in Canada and approximately 118,470 people report an Indigenous mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2016). The most frequently reported Indigenous languages in Canada are Cree, Inuit, and Ojibway languages and these three account for over 80% of the population that have an Indigenous language as their mother tongue, despite the diversity of Indigenous languages in Canada.

Schools were one of the major forces that contributed to the decline of languages among younger generations (Glenn, 2011). Around 1895, the Canadian government moved towards assimilating Indigenous peoples through the English language. The government pressured mission schools to discontinue using Indigenous languages. In many schools that Indigenous children attended, there was an emphasis on the English language and many schools banned the use of Indigenous languages in schools both on and off reserves. Many Indigenous people in North America have become proficient in the English language. Learning to speak and write English, or French in Quebec, has been a step for Indigenous groups to advocate for their peoples. Alternatively, it has also contributed to the abandonment of Indigenous groups ancestral languages.

In Canada, there has recently been efforts from tribal authorities to promote the use of their ancestral languages (Glenn, 2011). This has not been without problems. Linguists suggest that only a few of these languages have long-term prospects of continuing. Indigenous languages are an endangered aspect of culture and difficult to preserve. Cultural and familial practices may be maintained with less effort but preserving a language requires more disciplined effort. Language allows groups to

communicate amongst themselves and the significance of language for a group can change over time. Language also contributes to ethnic identity but it is not the only way that culture is transmitted. One issue includes lack of written languages used in community life. Many business and social settings use only English for written communication and so children might not see a social value placed on their efforts to learn to read and write in their ancestral languages. Another issue is the lack of schools with bilingual education programs. Additionally, school programs are not enough to maintain languages (Glenn, 2011). Another significant barrier has been the lack of government support for language revitalization and preservation. A recent Canadian report on Indigenous language revitalization urges the Government of Canada to take steps by enacting legislation and policies to preserve languages (Galley, Gessner, Herbert, Thompson & Williams, 2016).

Current

The impact of colonialism and relocation is still evident in Indigenous communities with Indigenous individuals and families relocating for various reasons. Relocation can be propelled by negative circumstances such as neighbourhood violence, lack of housing, access to medical services, or moving to pursue education and training (Lavoie, Kaufert, Browne, Mah, O'Neil, Sinclair & BlueSky, 2015; Snyder & Wilson, 2015). Snyder and Wilson (2015) studied Aboriginal peoples who have moved to urban settings and how mobility effects health. Snyder and Wilson (2015) found that migration and residential mobility impact physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of health for the individual, family, and across generations. Similarly, Walls and Whitbeck (2012) studied multigenerational effects of relocation on Indigenous families and highlight that the relocation experiences of Indigenous North Americans represent a considerable life course turning event with consequences for mental health, identity, and social and family networks. One way to break the cycle of negativity from historical cultural loss is to reconnect generations to support the healthy development and growth of the next generation (Walls & Whitbeck, 2012). Researchers also suggest for government prioritization of urban Aboriginal health and to challenge structures and policies that create climates for frequent mobility (Snyder & Wilson, 2015).

Canadian Child Welfare System

Indigenous children are overrepresented in the child welfare system across Canada (Fluke, Chabot, Fallon, MacLaurin, & Blackstock, 2010; Galley, 2010; Tait, Henry, & Walker, 2013). Nearly half of the children in Canadian foster care are Aboriginal according to the 2011 National Household Survey from Statistics Canada. In 2011 there were 30,000 children under 14 years old in foster care and 14, 225 of them were Aboriginal children listed as wards of the state. This number does not take into account those over the age of 14 who are in foster care. Although Indigenous children make up almost half of the children in care, Indigenous people only represent about four percent of Canada's population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Large numbers of Indigenous children are raised away from their families, culture, and communities due to being placed in non-Indigenous foster care and adoption placements (Tait et al., 2013). The term *foster care* includes placing children in the care of families, group homes, or residential settings (Pecora, Kessler, Williams, Downs, English, White, & O'Brien, 2010). Colonial policies that influenced practices like the residential schools and the Sixties Scoop have contributed to these drastic rates. The Sixties Scoop refers to the practice growing in the 1960s in which large numbers of Aboriginal children were placed in state care or for adoption with non-Aboriginal families, often without consent from their families or communities (Sinclair, 2007). Indigenous children continue to be apprehended at high rates despite awareness of overrepresentation and colonial policies (Tait et al., 2013). These children and communities are located in a complex system that has been shaped by historical, economic, and social forces (Tait et al., 2013).

The child welfare system has the responsibility for acting in the "child's best interests" (Child and Family Services Act, 2006). Scholars and critiques of the child welfare system argue that it continues to fail to accomplish the goal of placing children in environments where they can thrive (Tait et al., 2013). There is a typical crisis driven focus on interventions. This focus demonstrates to society that there are no other alternatives but to remove these children at such high rates. This representation takes attention away from the need for governments to provide resources towards prevention and being accountable for the enduring problems faced by Indigenous children in the child welfare system (Tait et al., 2013).

Johnston and Tester (2014) studied social work practice in Nunavut and found that social workers often come from southern Canada and work short-term in Northern communities. There is a disconnect between social workers who come from Southern Canadian communities whose culture emphasizes individualism and individual responsibility versus the Inuit collectivist culture. This disconnect is demonstrated through social workers implementing individualized interventions (Johnston & Tester, 2014; Nichols & Cooper, 2011). Communities often struggle with violence and substance abuse and instead of addressing these issues collectively and incorporating traditional knowledge, social workers usually provide individualized interventions (Johnston & Tester, 2014). Social workers primarily focus on child protection which leaves little time for community development work that is needed to address the larger issues like violence and substance use (Johnston & Tester, 2014).

In a study by Fluke et al. (2010), it was found that one source of overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the Canadian foster care system is the lack of appropriate agency or community level resources. It is argued that the child protection focus in social work has moved away from building relationships to a focus on individual supervision and monitoring (Johnston & Tester, 2014). This individualized focus has narrowed the scope of problems and has taken the focus off of the need for larger community level and policy level changes.

Researchers contend that social work is embedded in colonialism (Johnston & Tester, 2014). The mandates of social work towards supervision and monitoring rather than building relationships have placed social workers in a colonial role. Johnston and Tester (2014) challenge social workers to critically think about their role and move towards breaking out of colonialism. Child protection services need more than a small inclusion of culture and a move towards including community members and paraprofessionals in order to shift the child welfare system from a system designed for the dominant culture to one created for Indigenous people. Johnston and Tester (2014) urge for a re-definition of the social work profession and challenge social workers to seek to understand how their colonial positioning contributes to the continued oppression of indigenous peoples. Researchers suggest that social workers from the dominant culture unpack the values and norms in their western idea of professional practice and consider their role in social change.

There has been little research conducted on the psychological and emotional distress that Indigenous children experience when brought in and moved around in the child welfare system (Tait et al., 2013). Researchers urge child welfare policy makers and those within Indigenous child welfare agencies to ethically consider what effects the current policies and practices have on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous children across their life span. Lastly, researchers urge governments to allow for transparent research to be conducted by Indigenous led research groups on the experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children, youth, and their families that are involved in the child welfare system throughout Canada (Tait et al., 2013).

Impacts of Neoliberalism

Public services are influenced by neo-liberal approaches to policy and practice (Liebenberg, Ungar, & Ikeda, 2015). "Neoliberalism" refers to the set of economic policies and their supporting ideas that dominate global politics in recent years (Connell, 2010). A central policy is the "free market", where competition between privately owned businesses determine prices, and deregulating measures to "free up" capital markets. As more countries came under neoliberal policies, controls were relaxed or terminated over banking, currency exchange, and capital movement (Connell, 2010). After the 1970's, most western democracies started following variations of neoliberal policies (Haly, 2010). Neoliberal policies, with their reliance on individualism, placed much of the economy in the private sector and limited government services and the scope of government interventions, making as many resources and services available for private investment as possible. Child welfare services shifted to a neoliberal model and started outsourcing child services, whereas in previous eras these services would have been under the purview of the Canadian government exclusively. Bezanson (2010) argues that the way neoliberal practices are played out limit people's options. For example, direct income in the form of a Universal Child Care Benefit given to parents is a good public policy but this practice does not create childcare options and it cannot influence conflicts between family life and the labour market.

Haly (2010) examined the impact of neoliberal policies on child protection in Australia, specifically exploring the consequences of outsourcing child welfare services to the charitable sector. Haly (2010) points out that child protection issues are

influenced by poverty, access to healthcare services, mental health and drug rehabilitation interventions and the resourcing of these services to other towns. Haly (2010) concludes that failing to address these underlying issues means that interventions will only be "band-aid" solutions.

Similarly, Liebenberg et al. (2015) agree that taking a narrow perception of risk puts the focus on the individual rather than looking at family and community risks. Responsibility for well-being is placed on the individual in Western democracies which is counter to the interdependencies and interconnected relationships that are vital to the maintenance and revitalization of Indigenous families, communities, and social institutions. Responsibility in Indigenous communities is often considered a shared responsibility amongst individuals, families, and governing structures. However, service providers in child welfare, mental health, and corrections sectors operate under a neoliberal ideology (Liebenberg et al., 2015). In this way, a neo-liberal ideology negates the social context and focuses attention on the individuals and their ability to manage their own risks which may lead to them not receiving the support they need. The lives of youth at high risk are influenced by neo-liberal ideologies which limit their potential towards healthy outcomes. Additionally, young people who cannot manage their access to services or take responsibility for their well-being are further marginalized as they may turn to alternate coping strategies.

Child Welfare Practice and Reconciliation

Child welfare scholar and advocate, Dr. Cindy Blackstock (2015) critiques child welfare policy and practice. Blackstock (2008, 2015) argues that the Canadian child welfare system has failed Indigenous children. Blackstock (2015) states that the Canadian child welfare system has "assimilative roots". There are more First Nations children in care today than there were in the time of residential schools. Drawing links to colonial practices, Blackstock (2007) questions if residential schools actually closed or if they have morphed into child welfare.

Blackstock (2008) outlines that many sources of risk that affect Indigenous families are at a societal level and that those who should be held accountable are the child welfare system and contracted social service agencies. Blackstock (2008) predicts that the number of First Nations children in child welfare will continue to rise unless child welfare and social service agencies make changes to policies and practices to address

structural risks and systemic funding inequities. In a recent media statement, Blackstock (2017) reported that she has not seen a lot of progress in this area and calls on the public to take action against the racial discrimination of children.

The implementation and support of Jordan's Principle, a principle used in Canada to resolve disputes in jurisdictions or between governments regarding the payment of government services for First Nations children, has placed the idea of putting children first at the center of child welfare practices. Blackstock (2008) argues that putting children first should be at the foundation of reconciliation in order to ensure that the experiences of children in residential schools are not repeated.

Blackstock (2015) highlights that the government is not held accountable and there is a lack of provisions to hold governments and their agents accountable. Further, Blackstock (2015) explains that governments are largely protected from maltreatment claims. Blackstock (2008) argues that the federal and provincial governments have no more excuses due to the abundance of knowledge and resources available to address inequalities that have a direct effect on Indigenous children and families. Blackstock (2008) urges governments and child and youth professionals to make a difference by putting children first so that apologies towards Indigenous children and communities do not have to be made again in the future. Blackstock (2008) explains, "if reconciliation does not live in the hearts of children, it does not exist at all (p. 173)."

Displaced Populations

The following section on refugee experiences of settlement is presented to orient the reader to other populations that experience forced displacement and relocation. Similar to relocation as described for this study, settlement is ongoing and involves adjusting to a new culture, language, city, food, school system, and making new peer connections (Davy, Magalhaes, Mandich, & Galheigo, 2014).

Refugee Youth

The experiences of displacement and relocation of refugees have relevance to Indigenous populations' experiences of forced displacement. Similar to Indigenous populations, refugee displacements and forced relocations have been related to

colonization and genocide. The literature on refugee youth provides a rich source of information that assisted with understanding and theorizing the experiences of relocation among Indigenous youth.

There has been research conducted on the settlement experiences of refugee youth. Researchers have studied refugee youth and their transition processes, including what helps and hinders settlement, wellbeing and social inclusion, place-making, and access to education and careers (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett 2010; Davy et al., 2014; McWilliams & Bonet, 2016; Peyman, McMahon, & Rossouw, 2015; Sampson & Gifford, 2010).

In a study on refugee youth and their transition process in Canada, Davy et al. (2014) found that the following helped the youth's settlement: educational opportunities, the faith of participants, access to family and friends, desires for better futures, and time. Researchers found that language presented a barrier for many participants during their settlement process (Davy et al., 2014). Related to transitioning, Correa-Velez et al. (2010) conducted a study on the wellbeing and social inclusion of refugee youth during their first three years in Australia. The researchers drew on a longitudinal study of settlement and wellbeing, the Good Start Study (Gifford, Correa-Velez, & Sampson, 2009). The study focused on identifying the psychosocial factors that assist in making a good start when moving to a new country. Researchers discovered predictors of health and wellbeing which included: where they were born, age, time in Australia, sense of control, family and peer support, school performance, social status of their families in the Australian community, and discrimination and bullying experiences. Researchers found that indicators of belonging were strongly associated with wellbeing outcomes for youth with refugee backgrounds. The researchers highlighted that the refugee youth's experience of either social inclusion or social exclusion had the most impact on their wellbeing. Subjective social status in the new community, discrimination, and bullying were the most important predictors of subjective wellbeing (Correa-Velez et al., 2010).

Health and Place

Sampson and Gifford (2010) researched place-making, settlement, and well-being among refugee youth in Australia and found ways that youth create connection to place in their early resettlement. Researchers posit that little is known about place-making and the promotion of well-being during resettlement. Researchers found that

during the early part of resettlement, the youth in the study sought out and placed value on places that promoted their healing. The researchers called these places "therapeutic landscapes" (Sampson & Gifford, 2010, p. 1). The researchers discovered that these places were important for well-being and creating positive connections to place. Researchers also found that these places contributed to youth feeling at home in their new country. The researchers discovered four places that were important to youth and they included: places of opportunity, places of restoration, places of sociability, and places of safety. The researchers concluded that youth are drawn to these places during their process of settlement. An important finding in assisting youth to create connections to a new place is to actively involve authority figures. The researchers suggest to create experiences within places for youth to be welcomed by authority figures. The researchers highlight the healing properties of place and the importance of place to aid youth in improving their well-being and becoming at home in their new country (Sampson & Gifford, 2010).

McWilliams and Bonet (2016) studied the experiences of refugee youth and their transition to postsecondary school in the US. The researchers highlighted that the experiences the youth had prior to moving to their new country shaped their ability to benefit from the supports in their new schools. The experiences that made youth more vulnerable included interrupted educational backgrounds, grade instability, poverty, and trauma from exposure to war and conflict. The researchers conclude that the stories of refugee youth experiences show how vulnerable populations in impoverished communities can experience a dismantling because they will need to access more supports in their educational experience (McWilliams & Bonet, 2016).

Implications for counsellors

A study by Peyman, McMahon and Rossouw (2015) outlines the challenges that refugee youth face and approaches for career counsellors to support this population. The researchers highlight the importance of counsellors being flexible to adapt their practices in order to respond to the challenges that refugee youth face. They suggest an approach based on culture-infused counselling, the cultural preparedness model, and narrative counselling. The researchers outline four suggestions related to career counselling. The authors specifically highlight the use of narrative approaches within the four suggestions for facilitating refugee youth to transition to work in a new community.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In 2016, Canada officially adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This declaration was introduced in 2007, signed by all but four countries- White Settler states of New Zealand, the United States, Australia, and Canada. This declaration includes forty-six articles that apply to Indigenous peoples. The following articles further relate to this research study. UNDRIP emphasizes the rights to freedom in article 7.2 stating:

> Indigenous people have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group (Article 7.2, p. 8).

Article 8.1 relates to assimilation and states, "Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture (p.8)." Article 8.2 (a) states, "States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of, and redress for: (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities (p.8)." Article 10 addresses forceful removal:

> Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return (Article 10, p. 9).

Article 11 addresses cultural practices:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their culture, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature (Article 11, p.9).

Article 12 addresses access to culture:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and

> cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects (Article 12, p.9).

Article 13.1 addresses passing on knowledge and states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons (Article 13.1, p. 10).” Article 14.3 addresses access to culture within school:

> States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measure, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language (Article 14.3, p. 10).

Article 21.2 addresses the improvement of conditions for children and youth:

> States shall take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities (Article 21.2, p. 12).

Similarly, Article 22.1 outlines the importance of this document for children and youth stating, “Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration (Article 22.1, p.12).” Article 24.2 discusses standards of health and states, “Indigenous individuals have an equal right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. States shall take the necessary steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of this right (Article 24.2, p.12).” Article 25 addresses spirituality and the land and states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard (Article 25, p.13).

Article 26.1 addresses the right to their land and states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired (Article 26, p.13).” Article 31 relates to developing cultural heritage and states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain,

control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions (Article 31, p.14)." Article 33 addresses identity and states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of Indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live (Article 33, p.15)."

Further, Article 43 outlines that these rights are the minimum standards, "The rights recognized herein constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world (Article 43, p. 14)."

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created to inform people of what happened in the Indian Residential Schools (TRC, 2012). The commission documented the experiences of those affected by the experience of Indian Residential Schools and prepared a report of *calls to action (*TRC*,* 2015*)*. Related to the UNDRIP, the report of the calls to action include recommendations 43 and 44 which call for "federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for reconciliation (Action 43, p 8)." Further, recommendation 44 outlines, "we call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Action 44, p 8)."

The TRC calls to action contains important recommendations related to child welfare within the first five recommendations.

Child welfare

The first call to action calls upon the:

> federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by…Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside (Action 1.2, p. 5).

Another call to action under section one includes, “Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing (Action 1.4, p. 5).” Under Action 4.2, the TRC calls:

> upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that…Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making (Action 1.2, p. 5).

Another principle under section four recommends that the federal government “establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate (Action 4.3, p 5).”

Education

The TRC addresses discrepancies in education under the recommendation. Recommendation 8 states, “we call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves (Action 8, p. 6).” Section 10 of the TRC calls to action addresses the importance of “protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses (Action 10.4, p.6).”

Language and culture

The TRC calls to action build upon their recommendation to teach languages in schools and specifically highlights a section on Language and Culture. Recommendation 13 states, “we call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights (Action 10, p. 6).” Similarly, recommendation 14 addresses several points and states:

> We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles…(i) Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them …(iii), the federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation (Action 10.1 & 10.3, p. 6).

Health

The TRC outlines calls to action related to health. Action 21 states:

> we call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority (Action 21, p. 7).

Indigenous Youth

Cultural Connections

Studies have found correlations between engagement with traditional Indigenous culture, cultural identity, and mental health (Browne-Yung, Ziersch, Baum, & Gallaher, 2013; Clark, Walton, Drolet, Tribute, Jules, Main, & Arnouse, 2013; Kral & Idlout, 2009; Wexler, 2014). Clark et al. (2013) studied Indigenous youth health and discovered that the following are important for Indigenous youth health: a strong Indigenous identity, cultural connectedness, and awareness of and resistance to colonization, colonialism, and structural racism. Over half of participants shared that traditional healing approaches were important for their health. Relationships to Elders were also central to the health of youth (Clark et al., 2013). In another study on health and social capital by Browne-Yung et al. (2013), the researchers found that narratives of participants included strong networks of social support and the role of cultural identity as being beneficial for health and wellbeing. They also found evidence of the negative impact of dense social ties and racism as it excluded Aboriginal people from resourceful bridging networks and was made worse by already existing economic disadvantage (Browne-Yung et al., 2013). Clark et al. (2013) conducted a study in an Indigenous Arctic community on narratives from three generations who have experienced cultural suppression. This study highlights how historical experiences shape understandings of culture. Researchers found that culture can motivate people's sense of identity, feeling of commitment, and purpose. These factors were found to be protective and young people need assistance in developing ideas around cultural identity because belonging to a group can promote resilience. The research findings point to a need for culturally centred and culturally safe health care which includes Elders, families, communities, and traditional healing methods (Clark et al., 2013).

There is much literature surrounding cultural connection and Indigenous peoples but there are areas where additional research is needed. Wexler et al. (2014) claim that studies fail to provide a framework for understanding how culture is meaningful. Researchers also claim that how people use culture to promote well-being is understudied (Wexler, 2014).

Transitions

Adolescence is a time of transition in a person's life. Going through puberty is a gradual transition over an extended period of time as well as transitioning from adolescence to emerging adulthood (Feldman, 2008). Transitions are significant because they offer youth the opportunity to engage in developmental tasks. Developmental tasks are determined by society and culture and include activities and achievements that are typical for development at certain stages of life. Adolescence is a time of being in transition from being a child to becoming an adult (Feldman, 2008). Additionally, Indigenous youth in the child welfare system experience further transitions such as caregiver and cultural transitions.

It is important to examine the transition needs of Indigenous youth within their cultural context in order to minimize risk and increase protective factors (Friesen, Cross, Jivanjee, Thirstrup, Bandurraga, Gowen, & Rountree, 2015). The concept of transition is based on Anglo culture which highlights independence and emancipation as opposed to Indigenous values of interdependence. These contrasting value positions are also reflected in larger society through laws and regulations such as when a person can access housing assistance and when a child ages out of government care. Friesen et al. (2015) studied the transition needs and experiences of urban Indigenous youth and their findings suggest to connect Indigenous youth to culturally specific services when possible, use consultants, and use holistic approaches to mental health.

Youth in the foster care system encounter caregiver and placement transitions (Garrido, Culhane, Petrenko, & Taussig, 2011; Havlicek, 2011). Abused or neglected youth experience a greater number of caregiver transitions compared to nonmaltreated youth (Garrido et al., 2011; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Egolf, 2003). Youth who experience a greater number of caregiver transitions are at risk of developing behavioural and psychosocial problems (Garrido et al., 2011). Garrido et al., (2011)

stress that caregivers who care for youth with histories of many caregiver transitions and violence exposure should be equipped with evidence-based behaviour management interventions. Havlicek (2011) studied child welfare research on foster youth transitioning to adulthood and found that the common experiences of former foster youths can include high rates of placement instability, placement in congregate care settings, and occurrence of other adverse events. This research review suggests that the viewpoint from which foster youth are usually studied should shift to include the substitute care contexts leading up to the transition to adulthood and the services that prepare youths for adulthood. Substitute care contexts should be incorporated more into future child welfare research that looks at outcomes of foster youths transitioning to adulthood (Havlicek, 2011).

Identity

Exploring and integrating identity is a difficult developmental task in adolescence. Racial and ethnic identity formation takes time to form and is not a simple process for majority and minority youth (Jones & Galliher, 2007; Feldman, 2008). Identity development is a greater challenge for members of minority racial groups (Feldman, 2008). Colonization has impacted cultural identity for Indigenous people both historically and presently (Goodwill & Mccormick, 2012; Neville et al., 2014). Indigenous youth are at a disadvantage in regards to ethnic and cultural identity due to forced assimilation policies like residential schools and relocation, which resulted in the loss of connection to traditional culture over generations (Jones & Galliher, 2007; Walls & Whitbeck, 2012).

Ethnic identity has been linked to psychosocial adjustment (Jones & Galliher, 2007). Jones and Galliher (2007) found that a strong sense of pride in one's ethnic identity may assist adolescents in developing their role as Indigenous in a bicultural world. Additionally, belonging is a core aspect of racial and ethnic identity and feelings of belonging to one's ethnic group may help youth overcome negative effects of acculturation (Jones & Galliher, 2007; Neville et al., 2014). Goodwill and McCormick (2012) studied what helps and hinders Aboriginal identity development and found that personal identity is a vital part of Aboriginal identity formation. Additionally, individual, cultural, and community contexts of participants were linked to their personal and cultural identities. An exploratory stance is suggested for use in identity work with

Aboriginal research participants and attention to interdependency of personal and cultural identity (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012).

The current research on identity does not present prominent definitions or labels for ethnic identity (Jones & Galliher, 2007). It is suggested that more thought should go into describing and labelling sociocultural processes such as identity formation (Quintana, 2007).

Identity and Culture

There is no common Indigenous identity as Indigenous groups' languages, belief systems, traditions, and ways of life are different (Glenn, 2011). Residential schools in North America contributed to categorizing Indigenous people into one group as they brought children from different communities together and imposed a way of life upon them. Additionally, the relocation of Indigenous peoples to urban areas in North America has also contributed to categorizing a generic Indigenous culture (Glenn, 2011).

"At-risk" Youth

Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) studied the practice of designating children and youth to be "at-risk" within the school system. These researchers argue that a refocusing of policy and research, effective use of resources, and a utilization of existing knowledge bases are required to respond effectively to "at-risk" learners. Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) suggest that there is a tendency for interventions to focus negatively on students who are considered to be a part of a 'problem' population and for these interventions to take on a pathological orientation. These researchers overview that for much of the 20th century, students requiring special education were thought of in pathological terms. The problem with a pathological or medical understanding is that it places the responsibility on the individual or cultural background of the student. This model has, over time, expanded from focusing on deficits in the learner to include a sociological model which considers sensitivities in the educational, home, and community environments of students.

Children and youth with Indigenous ancestry are thought of to be "at-risk" within the school system due to low levels of educational attainment and completion. Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) challenge assumptions that high-school completion is

favorable on its own without questioning or raising concern about the extent to which high school graduates may have access to quality employment. They also outline the potential challenges with being young and Indigenous, including poverty as well as social and economic marginalization.

Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) explain that the understanding of risk over time has led to the development of strategies which consider early childhood, family, school, and other social factors versus narrowly focusing on the individual. These researchers critique this understanding as the focus on the influence of culture, biological traits, and familial behaviour can, consequently, minimize the impact of structural disadvantages. Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) urge for discussions to consider unfair social structures as well as irrelevant institutions and exploitative adults.

Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) highlight that youth have to live in an adult world and are placed in danger due to a "business as usual" (ie: neo-liberal) ethic which places the health of adolescents in jeopardy. Further, these researchers argue that the language of risk can disguise biases, racism, and sexism and shift the focus away from more enduring problems to factors like class and regional inequalities. Wotherspoon and Schissel (2001) suggest a social-justice orientation to schooling. Further, they highlight the importance of the adult community viewing "at-risk" young people as an important part of the education system and as real people.

Trauma and Mental Health

Mental Health

First Nations people suffer from disproportionately high levels of mental health problems such as depression, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). The many assaults on Indigenous people have profoundly affected the mental health and wellness of adults and the healthy development of children (Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011). There is a limited understanding of the impact of these traumatic events on child mental health. Traumatic events often have long term ramifications for survivors as these events can take a physical and psychological toll (Bombay et al., 2009). Traumas can occur at personal levels such as a car accident or at collective levels such as a war or genocide and all

responses are not identical. For trauma at a collective level, there is much research proving the effects of traumatic experiences are often generationally transmitted and affect the children and grandchildren of those originally traumatized (Bombay et al., 2009).

Historical trauma plays a critical role in Indigenous health and wellness. Historical trauma is pervasive in Indigenous communities and is a factor in many challenges that communities face (Campbell & Evans-Campbell, 2011). The historical trauma concept as a clinical and social concept has emerged for organizing and representing relationship to the past and can bring considerations of individuals and groups together (Crawford, 2014). Collective violence has been experienced by many Indigenous groups. Duran and Duran (1995) describe this as creating a "soul wound."

Viewing trauma in a historical trauma framework in contrast to PTSD emphasizes not only the effect on the individual but also on the family and community (Crawford, 2014). Crawford (2014) studied Inuit populations and historical trauma and states that the historical trauma concept goes beyond the individual and takes a more complex viewpoint. The history of Indigenous populations from self-reliant and self-governing people into coerced relocation and settlement is a history that is shared by many Indigenous communities across Canada although each group has its own unique experience (Bombay et al., 2009; Crawford, 2014). Despite differences, all Indigenous populations endured multiple traumatic events in their history (Bombay et al., 2009). Bombay et al. (2009) emphasize that stressful events should be contextualized in terms of long-standing traumas encountered by First Nations groups. This is important because of possible intergenerational effects due to trauma experiences. Researchers argue that the collective trauma experience of Indigenous people, combined with related memories and sociocultural disadvantages, have increased this population's vulnerability to the transmission and expression of effects of intergenerational trauma. The past and current traumas experienced by Indigenous people have had intergenerational effects that have not been largely examined. Effects such as loss of culture, languages, identity, pride, and a sense of kinship have not been evaluated. These effects occur at individual, family, and community levels as they are interrelated (Bombay et al., 2009).

Resilience

Resilience is the ability to do well despite adversity (Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, & Williamson, 2011; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006). In relation to physical materials, the metaphor of resilience describes the ability of the material to return to its original state after experiencing stress or being bent out of shape. This understanding of resilience is critiqued as being too static in capturing the human adaptation experience across a lifespan (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Resilience in biological systems is a dynamic process involving adjustment and adaptation in response to challenges. In psychology, resilience is attributed to certain traits or characteristics of an individual such as intelligence or flexibility (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Ungar (2013) uses an ecological definition of resilience as the capacity of the individual and his or her environment to work together to optimize developmental processes. Unger (2013) posits that an ecological definition avoids blaming individuals for not flourishing when there are minimal connections to resources.

It is important to understand resilience through a collective and cultural lens (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Resilience can be approached from a dynamic, systemic, and ecological view by applying Indigenous concepts. Historically, the First Nations had their own systems to meet the needs of their members before the arrival of European settlers (Duran & Duran, 1995; Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010). Kirmayer et al. (2011) view resilience as a dynamic process and as a characteristic of individuals, families, communities, and larger social groups that can present as a positive outcome of historical and current stressors.

There is much research on resilient and negative outcomes for Indigenous peoples but negative outcomes gain more attention in the media which contributes towards discrimination (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010). A study by LaFromboise et al. (2006) found that perceived discrimination was a risk factor for Indigenous youth who lived in medium-high adversity households in predicting pro-social outcomes. In the same study, protective factors included connection to family, community, and culture (LaFromboise et al., 2006). Additionally, research suggests that self-government and connection to spirituality and culture allow for better outcomes for Indigenous peoples (Fast & Collin-Vézina, 2010: Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1998).

Much of the literature on resilience are qualitative studies which are difficult to generalize findings across populations (Ungar, 2013). Using Unger's (2013) ecological definition of resilience, it is suggested that a move be made from focusing on what individuals need to change to what aspects of the social ecology need to change for individuals to adopt new coping patterns.

Youth Voice

There is a lack of youth voice present in the literature on youth in care (Caringi et al., 2013; de Finney, 2014; Nybell, 2013). de Finney (2014) studied Indigenous girlhood, trauma, and place and found that girls' knowledge is rarely included in research and policies that affect them. Further, colonial institutions have treated Indigenous females very differently than males. Girls' identity formation is influenced by the spread of patriarchy, sexism, racism, migration and other factors at many levels. de Finney (2014) highlights the need to move away from generalized understandings of trauma as it relates to Indigenous girls. It is important to put away the focus on pathology that narrowly looks at pain and damage which continues to keep girls marginalized (de Finney, 2014).

Youth research can promote or silence youth voice (Caringi et al., 2013). Caringi et al. (2013) studied place, power, and possibility in social work practice in Alaska Native communities. The researchers conclude that youth voice is not absent in their work but it has been neglected in the understanding of Tribal health and well-being. Research highlights the importance of youth voice and suggests incorporating it in research. Caringi et al. (2013) challenge researchers to make space for youth to speak and also for researchers to listen. Further, Nybell (2013) studied youth voice and experience in foster care in order to strengthen the ability of youth to give voice to their concerns. There is research being conducted that is moving towards making space for youth voice but much more needs to occur.

The literature presented outlines relocation practices and the effects on cultural connection, mental health, and resilience for Indigenous youth. Considering the importance of youth voice, research is lacking on the experiences of relocation that Indigenous youth face within the Canadian child welfare system. This study makes space for youth voice in research on their experiences of relocation.

In the next section I describe the research methodologies that I used in this study. I also explain the detailed procedures followed in this study.

Chapter 3.

Métis Beadwork/Indigenous Storywork Methodology

…then down

between each bead

by seed bead

seed

over and over

repeated

this gesture petal

takes patient shape…

(*In her poem, "With second sight, she pushes", Marilyn Dumont writes of beadwork;* Dumont, 2015, p. 35)

In this chapter, I reflect on learnings from Métis beadwork that informed this inquiry. I start by describing Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous methodologies. I then describe and outline the methodology of Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) and how it may have decolonizing impacts. I then describe the inquiry process, starting with storyteller recruitment. I explain how I selected and conducted knowledge holder interviews to provide additional context to the girls' stories. I present the procedures I applied for inviting the girls to tell their stories and meaning making. I discuss responsibility to those involved in this study as a way of understanding issues of trustworthiness and rigour in qualitative inquiry through the principle of responsibility. Lastly, I overview ethical considerations.

To answer the central research question of what stories of relocation are told by female Indigenous youth in foster care who have relocated from rural northern communities and are residing in a Lower Mainland residential program and sub-questions, I designed my study to centre the voices of this population. There is a lack of youth voice in the literature as well as a lack of research on Indigenous youth

experiences of relocation (Caringi et al., 2013). The purpose of this study is to address this gap and create space for youth voice in research on their experiences of relocation. This study allows youth to share important stories of their relocation process, identify needs and sources of support, and describe their cultural connection before, during, and after relocation.

Indigenous Research Paradigm and Design Rationale

Connecting with my Métis culture and learning beadwork taught me the importance of protocols. Years ago I connected with Métis artist and knowledge holder, Lisa Shepherd, who taught me beadwork and has been my teacher and guide in learning about my Métis culture. When working on early beadwork projects I often wanted to skip steps and rush through projects, putting aside protocols. The times when I would not follow protocols I could feel it in my body and see it in my beadwork. When I would follow the protocols the projects would turn out well and I would feel a sense of peace as I was doing them because I was doing them in the right way. Through beadwork I learned that protocols are in place for a reason and they have been passed down for many reasons and stayed alive because they work. I kept this teaching in mind when I approached this research project. I thought of the importance of protocols when designing this research project and in choosing a research methodology. Early on in my graduate studies I took a research course to prepare a proposal for this project. I was advised not to use Indigenous research methodologies for this project as they were not as familiar or common in academia. This advice did not feel right to me or for this project. I knew the importance of protocols and I knew that an Indigenous methodology would strengthen the probability that this study would be conducted in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner.

Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Methodologies

Indigenous knowledge has always existed. Indigenous knowledge is the result of the teachings and experiences of Indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2002). Indigenous knowledge is dynamic and context specific. Indigenous knowledge is often oral and symbolic. Indigenous beliefs and knowledge are shaped from a culture's understanding of the world (Chilisa, 2012). Indigenous belief systems shape a culture's rituals,

practices, and patterns and are embedded within the culture. They are based on generations of wisdom and experiences that have been passed down (Battiste, 2002). Indigenous knowledge is passed on through languages, modeling, practice, and animation. Indigenous knowledge has been systematically excluded from Eurocentric knowledge systems and from contemporary educational institutions. Indigenous knowledge cannot be compared to Eurocentric knowledge or ways as it is its own way of knowing. Additionally, there are limits to how it can be understood if coming from a Eurocentric point of view.

Western epistemologies have been colonially established as superior and privileged through research practices (Chilisa, 2012). Research in this tradition suppresses and ignores colonized groups' knowledge systems and positions the colonizer as the knower. Research conducted within Western traditions typically views the group or "colonized other" as a group in need of help from outsiders. Research protocols tend to focus on the individual rather than the community. Chilisa (2012) argues that Indigenous knowledge frameworks should be recognized within academia. Further, these frameworks should be used within research and when creating researched-based interventions. Similar arguments have been made by other researchers and scholars (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Wendt & Gone, 2012). It is important to use Indigenous epistemologies in intervention development in order to create more appropriate interventions that are context-sensitive and locally relevant (Chilisa, 2012).

In order to create a space for female Indigenous youth voices in the research literature on youth in care, a qualitative research design was deemed appropriate. The methodology of Indigenous Storywork as described by Jo-ann Archibald (2008) was used to reflect the stories of relocation among the storytellers in the study. Firstly, qualitative methods are useful when the subject has not been looked at with a specific group (Creswell, 2014). Gathering first person stories from youth in care of their relocation experiences provided useful information to explore this topic.

Indigenous Storywork

To invite, witness, and convey the stories of relocation among the girls in this study, I followed the research protocols of Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008), and conducted in-depth individual interviews with four young girls with experiences of

relocation. Indigenous Storywork provides a framework embedded in Indigenous cultural protocols to respectfully explore the ways girls experience the world described through their stories. These cultural principals have survived colonization attempts and taking the time to plan, talk, and ensure correct representation of Indigenous knowledge is a way of engaging in decolonizing the production and outcomes of research (Archibald, 2008). Archibald (2008) outlines the importance of following cultural protocols and taking the necessary time for various protocols before teaching and learning can occur. Similar to Archibald, I entered into research with storytellers not as an expert but as a "research and cultural learner" (Archibald, 2008, p. 37). I asked storytellers to share life experience stories that contained values, background, and contextual information and issues that allowed meaning to be made through Storywork (Archibald, 2008). Using personal life experience stories in an extension of Archibald's work described in *Indigenous Storywork* (2008). Amy Parent (2014), Dawn Marsden (2005), and others have used stories in this way in their research (Christian, 2017; Davidson, 2016).

According to Archibald (2008), story research should enable people to meaningfully talk about their Indigenous knowledge. Further, this knowledge can be "effectively used for education and for living a good life and to think about possibilities for overcoming problems experienced in their communities" (Archibald, 2008, p. 81). It is for these reasons that storytellers were asked to tell stories as well as invited to share advice based on their experiences.

There are seven principles that Archibald (2008) uses which create a Sto:lo and Coast Salish theoretical framework for using and making meaning from First Nations stories in education and research contexts which include: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. I used respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence to guide my ethics for the design of this study. Each principle is separate like the individual beads used in beadwork and each principle works together with the next to create a picture. The seven principles guided the research process and assisted me in looking for themes.

Respect

Respect and caring guided my interactions with storytellers, knowledge holders, and my supervisory committee. I hold deep respect for everyone involved in this study.

I kept in mind respect in my interactions with storytellers by offering them to choose times and places that were most convenient for them to meet. When storytellers told their stories I did not verbally interrupt them until they finished speaking. When storytellers chose not to answer certain questions, I respected their decision and moved on. During interviews, I checked with storytellers to make sure they knew that we could take breaks. I created time to listen to storytellers and knowledge holders and had patience to learn from these stories. Creating time and having patience to learn are fundamental for creating respectful relationships (Archibald, 2008). I further demonstrated respect with girls' stories. Storytellers were offered written transcripts and audio recordings of their interviews and invited to edit them as they wished and they were also given the option of withdrawing their stories. The guidance of my research committee allowed me to learn how to respect Indigenous knowledge and prepared me to learn from storytellers in a culturally appropriate way (Archibald, 2008). Practicing respect is also a cultural responsibility (Archibald, 2008). When looking for themes I kept the principle of respect in mind to remind me to respectfully represent the stories of storytellers and knowledge holders. Further, while discussing the themes in the discussion chapter, I used respect when I wrote up my discussion, keeping in mind my respect for all of those involved in this study and those who may be impacted by this study.

Responsibility

I demonstrated responsibility at various stages in this research project. I met with Elder and Scholar Dr. Richard Vedan (this will be discussed further in this chapter under ethical considerations). I met with Knowledge Holder Lisa Shepherd. I conducted professional knowledge holder interviews. I met with all of these people prior to meeting with the youth in order to conduct my actions with storytellers in a responsible manner. Additionally, I held responsibility in mind while listening to the girls' stories and interacting with my supervisory committee. If I did not know what storytellers meant I would wait for a moment to ask and find out. Similarly, if I was confused about what my supervisors were sharing with me I would take responsibility to find out what they were telling me (Archibald, 2008). Responsibility also includes content accuracy (Archibald, 2008). The girls' stories and professional knowledge holder interviews were transcribed and given to the girls and professional knowledge holders to review and modify as needed. During the process of meaning making, I used the principle of responsibility by

working closely with the transcripts and making sure I accurately represented the storytellers' words within the themes. Most of the themes used in this thesis were named and formed from the storytellers own words. Additionally, responsibility was used through making sure I maintained a clear record of meaning making.

Reciprocity

Practicing respect and responsibility in relationships and stories leads to reciprocity (Archibald, 2008). This research may not have been possible without the participation of the Lower Mainland social service agency as well as the Director of Social Programs in the Northwest Territories, Andy Langford. My personal history with the Lower Mainland social service agency assisted in making this research possible. Additionally, I conducted this research in a manner intended to create mutual benefits for the storytellers, Lower Mainland social service agency, and Northwest Territories professional knowledge holder. This research provided a platform for youth to share their stories. Storytellers were also provided a meal and a $20.00 gift card. Feeding the storyteller is a symbol of reciprocity (Archibald, 2008). The community agency involved in this study will be given a copy of this thesis and both the community agency and the Northwest Territories professional knowledge holder will be sent an invitation from myself to discuss the findings. Others interested in the findings will be able to read this study and use the information to inform their work with individuals who are relocated. Passing on what I have learned to those who are interested is important to me and a way of building knowledge (Archibald, 2008). The knowledge I pass on based on what I have learned may benefits both those who receive services, such as current and future youth, and those who provide services for Indigenous youth. I used the principle of reciprocity when looking for themes by searching for themes within the girls' stories as well as the stories of the professional knowledge holders in order to create mutual representation within this thesis.

Reverence

I used reverence when conducting this research through my preparations for meeting with storytellers, knowledge holders, and committee members. Before working on this thesis and engaging with those involved, I spent time in nature to allow my heart, mind, body, and spirit to interact and prepare for my work (Archibald, 2008). Further, I took many breaks and worked on a little bit at a time which allowed me to take care of

myself and prepare for the work. When interacting with people involved in this study I used silence when they were sharing with me. Silence is a way of creating a place for reverence (Archibald, 2008). Reverence was also at the forefront of my mind as I wrote the discussion chapter. The information presented in this thesis could have the potential to be represented in a disrespectful or irreverent manner and I acknowledged this to myself and my research committee. I kept this in mind while I wrote the findings and discussion chapters. Specifically, I took several breaks to reflect and reword the discussion. I carefully chose how I would present the discussion and sought guidance from my research committee in this process.

Holism

Holism informed my interactions with the storytellers. Before beginning a meeting I offered storytellers food and drinks to attend to their physical needs. I discussed resources with storytellers including their personal counsellors and other community supports. During the interviews, if a storyteller showed a sign of distress such as crying, I attended to her distress and asked the storyteller how she was doing. During all interviews I checked with the storytellers to see if they needed breaks. Storytellers were invited to bring a photograph or personal item into the interview to assist them in sharing their stories as personal items could represent another aspect of their stories. Additionally, I kept in mind holism when reading the girls' stories and creating themes. The principle of holism informed my understanding of the health and wellbeing of the storytellers.

Interrelatedness

Learning through stories has an interrelated aspect (Archibald, 2008) and when I was listening to the girls tell their stories I was in interaction with them. Sometimes it took storytellers a long time to tell their stories, sometimes it was fast. Interacting with the girls and hearing their stories revitalized my being in a holistic manner (Archibald, 2008). For example, one storyteller requested to take breaks during her storytelling and play hide and seek with me. All of the storytellers shared stories of courage which made me feel inspired. One storyteller shared of the painful experience of losing a friend to suicide and how she coped during this time in her life. The research process was stressful at many points for me and being in interaction and listening to the girls' stories provided an energy and strength that allowed me to continue the research. Additionally,

when writing the findings I included my past experiences working as a youth worker with youth from northern communities. When searching for themes I kept in mind interrelatedness as I compared themes across the four storytellers involved in this study.

Synergy

Storywork allowed me to make meaning through the synergy of the different parts. There is a synergy between the girls' stories, the context, the way they were told, and how I listened. There is a synergistic process that happened between myself as the learner and the girls' stories (Archibald, 2008). When looking for themes I kept in mind synergy as I read through the girls' stories, the context given by professional knowledge holders, the way both stories were told, and my experiences as I was listening to them.

The seven principles created a theoretical framework for me to approach this research and make meaning from stories. Early on I learned that I had to become humble if I was going to take on this research project (Archibald, 2008). To prepare to hear girls' stories, I had to learn how to listen and make meaning (Archibald, 2008). This involved bringing together my heart and my mind in order to listen to a storytellers' story. This is necessary to make meaning from a story because sometimes the meaning is not explicit (Archibald, 2008). In order to do this I would center myself by being quiet and breathing before engaging with storytellers as well as during different stages of the research process. Quieting oneself is a way to get ready for listening to stories (Archibald, 2008). The principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy helped me learn how to make meaning with the stories (Archibald, 2008). As discussed in the previous section, the seven principles informed my meaning making and interpretation process. These principles must be practiced and applied for stories to be used meaningfully in an educational context (Archibald, 2008). The seven principles informed my representation process as I took time to carefully describe the principles for my audience, incorporate the principles throughout this thesis, and when considering how I represented the stories of the storytellers.

The underlying assumptions of Indigenous Storywork methodology are in line with my constructivist worldview and assumptions that people develop meanings of their subjective experiences. The ideas of constructivism as an approach to qualitative research came from Berger and Luekmann (1967), Lincoln and Guba (1985) and more

recently from Mertens (2010) and Crotty (1998). As a constructivist researcher, I am interested in the complexity of views and I planned to focus on the storytellers' views of their experiences (Creswell, 2014). Constructivist researchers focus on specific contexts that people live and aim to understand historical and cultural settings (Creswell, 2014). I also understand that my own background shaped my interpretation as it comes from my personal, cultural, and historical experiences. Indigenous Storywork and the constructivist worldview work well together because of the main focus that people are active meaning makers.

Decolonizing research

This study incorporates the contributions of qualitative research and Indigenous methodology that may have decolonizing impacts. Using qualitative methods within an Indigenous methodological framework has the potential to be a decolonizing methodology for Indigenous people (Wendt & Gone, 2012). The goal of a decolonizing methodology is to assist colonized groups to reclaim their specific cultural traditions as well as to reveal the effects of colonialism (Smith, 1999). Scholars have shown that most, and perhaps all, major issues for Indigenous groups cannot be separated from the atrocious histories that continue to effect Indigenous groups (Wendt & Gone, 2012). Additionally, qualitative methods are well suited for inquiring about cultural meanings due to their complexity (Wendt & Gone, 2012). Qualitative methods allow for serious attention to questions and specific meaning from Indigenous groups rather than a generalized understanding (Wendt & Gone, 2012). Qualitative methods can be a decolonizing method through four contributions including: framing the context of colonization, focusing on cultural meanings, providing detailed or "thick" description of processes, and using participants' own words to report results (Wendt & Gone, 2012). In this study I use qualitative research methods informed by Indigenous epistemology through Indigenous Storywork and the seven principles developed by an Indigenous methodologist. Using Indigenous Storywork in this study goes further than Western qualitative inquiry by drawing on Indigenous epistemology and specifically using the seven principles of Indigenous Storywork.

Go-along method option

If storytellers preferred to be in motion during the interview, such as on a walk, I offered the "go-along" technique while listening to their stories. The go-along technique is a mobile method of data collection techniques where researchers move alongside participants (Kusenbach, 2012). This approach can be used by asking participants questions and then leaving room for participants to talk. Mobile methods, like the go-along, can resemble structured interviews (Kusenbach, 2012). Mobile methods have been successfully used with a youth population, aged 12-16 years, in a study by Van Hecke, Deforche, Van Dyck, De Bourdeaudhuij, Veitch, and Van Cauwenberg (2016). The go-along technique will complement Indigenous Storywork methodology in the event that storytellers do not want to sit face-to-face in an interview.

All of the storytellers were offered the "go-along" technique and all of the storytellers declined. All of the storytellers sat and shared their stories. I conducted my interviews in a flexible manner with the safety and comfort of the storytellers as the first priority. For example, one storyteller requested to take a few breaks and play hide and seek with me in between sharing her story. In this way, I was open to working flexibly to make sure storytellers were able to tell their stories in a way that was most comfortable for them.

Role of Researcher

My interest in researching Indigenous youth in care comes from my previous work experience as a youth worker, undergraduate degree in Child and Youth care, current volunteer experience as a youth mentor, and current practicum experience as a youth counsellor. I worked for five years as a support worker with primarily Indigenous children and youth in foster care and the youth justice system through a Lower Mainland social service agency. I currently volunteer with the same social service agency I conducted research at as a youth mentor in a different program. I have been a mentor for the past ten years with this program and have gained experience supporting a youth in care in a mentorship relationship. The one youth I volunteer with is not associated with this study and there was no potential for a dual role through my volunteer work with the social service agency. I also gained experience from four practicum placements during my undergraduate training working with youth in care and the youth justice

system. Three years of my work experience consisted of working with Indigenous youth primarily from the Northwest Territories who had been relocated by their social workers to live in the Lower Mainland for various protection reasons. I also had opportunities to accompany youth on visits to their home reserve communities. As a result of my work experience, I wanted to gain a better understanding of what helps or hinders female Indigenous youth in care relocating to the Lower Mainland from northern rural communities.

In addition to my work experience and as previously mentioned, I am a Métis woman who was born and raised in the Lower Mainland, away from my father's home community in Manitoba. My own experience of disconnection from my Métis family members and culture influences my interest in this study

As a counselling psychology researcher, I am developing my skills to become a culturally competent counsellor. I believe that my skills have assisted me in connecting with storytellers to create a trusting environment for sharing stories of relocation. My work experience with youth in foster care, our shared Indigeneity, and my counsellor training assisted me in having a better understanding of what the storytellers have been through.

My biases and experiences may have an influence on this study. I am aware that my personal, education, and work experiences shaped how I listened to storytellers. Going into this study I thought that it may be harder to relate to different stories than I have heard in the past when working with this population. I thought that I might be biased to listening to aspects of stories that aligned with the stories that I heard from my work experience. I also recognized that I have been sensitized to the challenges and struggles of youth from this population. I understand that my experience of living in an urban mainstream settler community, disconnected from my Indigenous culture, is a different experience than growing up and living in a northern rural reserve community. As a counselling psychology researcher I have received training to focus on individuals and I may struggle with focusing on individual issues and ignore larger issues. However, I did my best to be open to systemic issues and I sought the advice and expertise of my research committee as an additional safeguard.

In accordance with the TCPS 2 (9.14 Strengthening Research Capacity), this study supported my own capacity in building research skills as an Indigenous student and researcher.

Storyteller Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment

Female Indigenous youth in foster care who had relocated from rural northern communities to the Lower Mainland were recruited to participate in this study. Storytellers were recruited through professional network contacts at a Lower Mainland community agency that provides residential care for Indigenous youth from northern rural communities. Storytellers were recruited until four youth had been interviewed. Given my previous work experience with the community agency's residential program, I only selected female storytellers whom I had not had a working relationship with in the past.

Storyteller criteria

The following criteria used for eligibility to participate in the study were: (a) be between 11 to 25 years of age; (b) female; (c) self-identify as being Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit); (c) residing in a residential care placement; (d) relocated from a northern rural community to the Lower Mainland as a youth in care.

Storyteller demographic information

There were four female Indigenous storytellers involved in this study: Kayla, Ashley, Farah, and Jade (pseudonyms). All of the storytellers were living in separate homes within the same community agency program. Storytellers included one 11-year-old, two seventeen-year-olds, and one 18-year-old. Originally the study was created for ages 12-25. During storyteller recruitment, I was informed by the community agency that an 11-year-old girl expressed interest in being included in the study. I made the appropriate amendment submissions and the study was changed to include the 11-25 age range. At the time that storytellers were interviewed, they had been already living in the Lower Mainland for at least one year, with a range of durations: two storytellers had

been living in the Lower Mainland for about four years, another for three years, and another for one and a half years.

Inviting Their Stories

Storytellers

After receiving approval from the community agency, I sent recruitment letters (Appendix B) to the program manager to give to youth workers that work directly with the youth. Youth were informed verbally through their youth workers and in writing about this study (Appendix B). I contacted youth workers to assist with informing the youth of the study and discussed any issues with consent. If interested, youth were invited to phone me for a screening interview (Appendix C). If the youth met the study criteria, an introductory meeting was scheduled at the youths' home, the community agency office, or a location most convenient to the youth. Storytellers were also invited to bring a photograph or personal item that reminded them of their experience if they wished. During the screening interview, youth were told about consent and sent a consent form (Appendix D) to have their legal guardian sign if under the age of 16. Youth under the age of 16 were also given an assent form (Appendix E). Youth aged 16 and older were given a consent form (Appendix F) and asked if they were able to sign for themselves. After the introductory meeting, an interview was scheduled at a time and location convenient for each storyteller. Interviews were audio recorded and followed an open-ended interview protocol design. I used an interview guide (Appendix G) consisting of open-ended questions which allowed storytellers to direct the focus of conversation. Using open-ended questions to gather responses from participants enables the researcher to capture the points of view of participants without predetermining viewpoints through prior selection of questions as in questionnaires (Patton, 2001). Using open-ended questions also aligns with Storywork (Archibald, 2008). Interviews were debriefed (Appendix H) at the end of the meetings and storytellers were offered support resources as needed and given a resource list (Appendix I). Storytellers were shown appreciation with the offer of a meal preceding the interview and an honorarium of $20.00 in the form of a gift card. Providing food and gifts before an activity where people are expected to share personal stories is a sign of respect (Goodwill &

McCormick, 2012). Interviews were transcribed and subsequent meetings were scheduled to allow storytellers to read the transcripts and clarify or add any information.

My initial verbal contact with storytellers was over the phone, facilitated by the youth worker and youth giving me a call to express interest in meeting. I introduced myself to them and asked the screening questions. Over the phone, I schedule a first in person meeting. I met with storytellers casually at a place that was convenient for them and their youth workers to bring them. I met two storytellers at a local coffee shop, one at a local mall food court, and I met one storyteller at her home. All storytellers met me with their youth workers for our first introductory meeting. During this first meeting I engaged with storytellers and told them about myself, the study, and answered any questions. During this first in-person meeting, we scheduled a date and time to meet to hear their stories. Three storytellers were able to sign their own consent forms as they were 17 and 18 years old. The 11-year-old storyteller's consent form was scanned to her social worker in the north and then scanned back to me. The 11-year-old storyteller read and signed an assent form. I met with three storytellers for the recorded interviews in between December 2016 through February 2017. I interviewed two storytellers, on separate occasions, in a private meeting room inside of a Waves coffee shop. I interviewed one storyteller in the community agency office board room. I interviewed one storyteller in a private study room at Simon Fraser University campus.

I started the interview meetings by offering to get something to eat. One storyteller wanted to eat first and we went to Subway. Two storytellers wanted to get a drink so we did that first. One storyteller wanted to eat after the interview so we went to Subway after we finished talking. One storyteller did not want to eat anything. At the beginning of each interview I reintroduced myself, the purpose of the study, and followed the interview protocol preamble (Appendix G) which invited storytellers to tell their story of relocation. I intended for the storytellers to be the ones to first identify stories that were important and appropriate to share (Archibald, 2008) before I would ask them questions. Most storytellers asked for prompting questions from the interview protocol. During the interviews, I showed each storyteller how to use the recorder to give them more control of the interview process. Some wanted to press the buttons and others did not want to.

The storytellers directed the timing and pace of the discussion (Archibald, 2008). Three storytellers sat through the interview until they were finished telling their stories. One storyteller asked to take a break half way through and requested that we play hide and seek. We played hide and seek for fifteen minutes and then we went back to record more of her story. She also requested to play more hide and seek when she finished her story. I played hide and seek with her for about twenty minutes after we finished the interview as a form of debriefing. One storyteller brought a personal item to her interview, a scrapbook of pictures and quotes. She shared this book with me and told me stories about the pictures.

Following the principles of respect and responsibility, in order to practice ethical responsibility and to minimize harm, I debriefed each storyteller after the interview. I debriefed storytellers by asking how they were doing and sharing the resource list. Additional debriefing including playing hide and seek with one storyteller and walking to Subway to eat and chat with another storyteller.

In order to present the stories of the storytellers in an accurate and responsible manner, I sought the girls' perspectives on their stories that they shared in the interviews. As listed on the consent and assent forms, three storytellers requested to review their transcripts. I met with two storytellers in person to review their transcripts. One storyteller read through her transcript and one read and listened to the audio at the same time. One storyteller requested I email her transcript to her to review. One storyteller did not want to review her transcript. Two storytellers did not want to review the quotes I selected to use. Two storytellers requested to review their quotes I selected to use. Three storytellers requested that they be emailed results of the study and one declined.

Knowledge holder interviews

I conducted several knowledge holder interviews to learn contextual information and to guide my study. I conducted professional knowledge holder interviews before making contact with storytellers. First, I interviewed an employee from a Lower Mainland social service agency that the storytellers were involved in. Both the employee and the agency requested their identity to be kept confidential. The second professional knowledge holder interview I conducted was with the Director of Social Programs, Andy

Langford, from the Department of Health and Social Services within the government of the Northwest Territories. Professional knowledge holder interviews allowed me to gain an understanding of the programs and agencies that the storytellers are connected with so that I could develop a contextual understanding. Professional knowledge holders were invited by email to participate in an interview. I met the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland at her office for the interview. The second interview with the professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories was conducted over the phone. Both professional knowledge holder interviews were audio recorded with permission and permission forms were used (Appendix K). Professional knowledge holder interviews went through verification procedures. I emailed the interviewees notes and then final quotes from our interviews and invited them to remove, add, or clarify information. Professional knowledge holders were given the option to be named or to be anonymized.

Knowledge Holder

I conducted a third knowledge holder interview for personal and cultural reasons. I intended to discuss the findings of the research by using a story metaphor of beadwork and my personal practice of beading. To prepare for this I met with Métis Artist and knowledge holder Lisa Shepherd to discuss using this knowledge in a culturally relevant and respectful manner. I used oral consent with Lisa Shepherd in order to honour her words and actions (Appendix L). Orality is a significant component to Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and ways of being. Oral consent has been used in studies when working with Elders (Baydala et al., 2013; Loppie, 2007). Information shared by Lisa Shepherd was sent to Lisa to verify and approve. I did this by sending Lisa an email of the notes from our meeting and invited her to remove, add, or clarify information. This is in accordance with the TCPS 2 (article 9.1) use of traditional knowledge.

Stewardship of Story Recordings

The interviews gathered were transcribed. Audio recordings were securely destroyed afterwards. Typed transcripts of the interviews were de-identified by assigning a pseudonym. A master list was used to store the storytellers name and pseudonym and protected by being placed in a locked cabinet. The transcripts and

master list were stored separately within the locked cabinet. The transcripts were also stored on a password protected USB.

I conducted meaning making and interpretation keeping in mind the seven Storywork principles described earlier. I used Nvivo software, a qualitative software program, to assist me with managing the stories. I placed all of the story text into Nvivo to assist me in viewing the stories and I created initial demographic codes. In order to work more closely with the transcripts I printed them out and coded and analyzed them by hand.

Retention and destruction of story recordings

The digital audio recordings were stored on a password protected USB. File transfers were managed through SFU Vault. As mentioned, digital audio recordings of the interviews were destroyed soon after the process of meaning making. All transcribed electronic documents are identified only by a code number and will be kept on a password protected USB. These documents will be kept, along with other digital and hardcopy data relating to this research study, in a locked filing cabinet at SFU in an office in the Faculty of Education (5210). The USB will be kept for five years and then destroyed. During this time, only the principal investigator and supervisors (Dr. Sharalyn Jordan and Dr. Amy Parent) will have access to the data.

Meaning Making

Close work with the girls' stories, both in audio and transcribed form, informed my meaning making and interpretation, keeping in mind the seven principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (Archibald, 2008). Being present in my interactions with storytellers by talking, listening, and feeling as well as meditating on their stories after the interviews helped me to form some thematic notions that were later verified by the text of their transcripts (Archibald, 2008). I connected with the stories of the girls emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually (Archibald, 2008). There were some stories and parts of stories that I connected with right away based on my emotions. When I heard some stories they challenged me to reflect on my past behaviors as a youth worker. While listening and reading the stories, I visualized the storytellers and other characters in order to help me

think about the stories and possible meanings (Archibald, 2008). Over the time that I interacted with the stories I became connected to them and would sometimes dream about them and think about them when I was not working on my thesis. These stories were embedded in my consciousness and also bring out the principle of synergy (Archibald, 2008).

I read through the storytellers' transcripts several times. I did not read more than one transcript in a day to allow myself to focus on one story and not be confused. The interview transcriptions were broken down into episodes. First I read through transcripts for the relocation process. I coded the questions and responses from the interview protocol as well as key people, events, and places. Second, I drew out a timeline of events for each storyteller to aid me in understanding her story. Third, I read transcripts again to look for key meanings in events that storytellers shared such as how they coped. Themes were determined through thematic analysis from the stories. After reading through the transcripts I wrote out what stood out from others, generating themes for each individual interview. To relate and connect themes across interviews I read through the themes of the individual interviews and created a column of matching themes from the four interviews. I created an Excel spreadsheet to view the quoted text and assist with meaning making and added the codes from the interview questions. After coding and placing story quotations in the spreadsheet, I wrote interpretive memos about each storyteller.

Another part of my process of meaning making included spending time on the land each day. Being on the land is an important context when learning stories (Archibald, 2008). "Land" includes the earth and water (Archibald, 2008). I incorporated hikes and walks into my days as part of the meaning making process. Going into nature provided a space for me to attend to my spiritual and physical needs as well as create space for my mind to sort through the information from the stories. During the meaning making phase I also paid careful attention to my mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs in order to work with the stories in a respectful manner. Using Indigenous stories through Storywork requires bringing together heart, mind, body, and spirit (Archibald, 2008).

In addition to working with the stories and spending time on the land, I wrote personal reflections of my experiences working with youth who were relocated as well as

conducting this research. I also looked at old pictures I had from when I visited the Northwest Territories for my past job. These experiences informed how I went into writing the findings. I used the raw story text to write analytic memos. I used my reflections of my experiences to remind me to stay close to what storytellers were saying. I used my time on the land to reflect on the key themes and learnings from the stories. I also read through the professional knowledge holder information as well as my work experience reflections to reflect on the context before I wrote out the findings that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Responsibility

In this study, the results were taken back to storytellers to be checked (Appendix J). A) Storytellers were emailed or given a hard copy of their transcript to check for accuracy. B) Storytellers were asked to review and give input on their transcripts (Appendix J). I did this by inviting storytellers to view the interview transcripts and remove, add, or clarify information. C) Storytellers were invited to review and give input on the findings. D) I had a colleague review a sample of my story interpretation to enhance the validity by reviewing and asking questions (Creswell, 2014). I met with a colleague after I conducted my meaning making process. She read through a sample of the coding and findings. She asked me questions and we had a conversation about the quotations and discussed presentation of the findings. Additionally, I presented the preliminary findings at the Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium at Simon Fraser University and had conversations with colleagues at the symposium about this research.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with TCPS 2 (9.9), approval to conduct this study was obtained from Simon Fraser University's Research Ethics Board (REB). Additionally, a copy of the REB's ethics approval and proposal was sent to the selected community agency's Research Committee for review and approval. Permission forms (Appendix D) were sent to storytellers' guardianship social worker or legal guardian if under the age of 16. Storytellers were told in advance that if they disclose any violence that has occurred in the past or present, I was required to report this information to the appropriate agency as consistent with provincial and professional regulations.

As a counselling psychology student at SFU, I entered this study with significant training and experience in interviewing as I had taken interviewing skills courses and other related courses as part of my course requirements in my undergrad and current graduate program. I was prepared with the skills to conduct interviews and handle potential sensitive information. The design and facilitation of this research project explicitly avoided eliciting stories of traumatic events. This project was purposefully designed to focus only on storytellers' experience of relocation. Storytellers were not asked to describe any events that led them to being placed in foster care. The interviews were structured for the safety of storytellers as the first priority. My counsellor training allowed me to be attuned to potential signs of distress in the girls and I was prepared to recommend services if they were needed. I debriefed interviews if sensitive information was discussed (Appendix H) and provided a resource list (Appendix I) for the girls. The resource list included a variety of community support contacts as well as the storytellers' personal counsellors' name and contact information that I obtained before the interview. When meeting with storytellers, I stayed aware of signs of distress, finished meetings on a positive topic, and was prepared to take time at the end of our meetings to do emotional grounding if necessary. I also affirmed to the girls that they had the right to not answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable with. Additionally, I gave storytellers control over what was shared by explaining the use of a recording device and offering the option for the girls to shut it off at any time. I used a trauma informed lens (Berger & Quiros, 2016) when engaging with storytellers to ensure their safety. Lastly, the researcher and storytellers in this study were all Indigenous peoples.

I contacted the delegated Aboriginal agency (TCPS 2 9.1) that each storyteller was connected to which is the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services which exists to support and protect children in the NWT in accordance with the *Child and Family Services Act*. Given that these youth are in care under this delegated Aboriginal agency, this extinguished the need to contact the youth's Band directly. The reasons why the youth's Bands were not contacted directly were due to concerns regarding their safety and confidentiality.

I was also in consultation with Elder Scholar Dr. Richard Vedan in designing this research project. Additionally, I consulted with Elder Richard throughout the research process. This is in accordance with the TCPS 2 (9.15 Recognition of the Role of Elders). I asked my supervisors if I could work with an Elder for this research project and we

considered this as essential to this research. Elder Scholar Dr. Richard Vedan was approached because of his connection with Simon Fraser University and his background in social work. He willingly agreed to be the Elder for this research project and met with me throughout the research process. The guidance, stories, and insight he shared with me are and were invaluable. I was extremely fortunate to have Elder Scholar Dr. Richard Vedan guide and teach me during this research journey and I respectfully followed his wise teachings.

Reporting Results

I present my findings using a story of relocation by separating the findings into three sections representing the trajectory of relocation: leaving, arriving, and adjusting. Within these sections I present my findings organized into themes and subthemes. I use storytellers' voices by summarizing information and including quotations.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the methodological framework of Indigenous Storywork and my use of Métis beadwork to guide and ground my inquiry process. I outlined the process of recruitment, story gathering methods I used to gather and make meaning from the stories, responsibility, and ethical considerations. In the next chapter I will describe all of the findings in a way that stays close to what storytellers have shared in their stories of relocation.

Chapter 4.

Results

Overview

Stories were and are important for Indigenous peoples (Archibald, 2008). As readers of this thesis read about the stories of girls, consider why these stories were made, how you are receiving them, and what they have to teach. In my beadwork, I was taught that the beads have spirit and they have much to teach me. The beads and the process of beading has taught me many lessons as described throughout this thesis. In this section I present the stories of the youth involved in this research project. Like the beads, these young people have spirit and much to teach us from their experiences.

This chapter contains the stories that were gifted to me from those involved in this study and these stories contain deep and rich knowledge. In this chapter, I present the meaning made of the stories from four youth interviews. Additionally, I present the findings of two professional knowledge holders' interviews I conducted for the study. I draw on perspectives from my previous work experience related to this study to inform interpretation. In line with the storytellers' experiences of relocation, this chapter is presented in three sections: leaving, arriving, and adjusting. Themes are presented within each section. Figures are displayed at the end of each section to highlight themes. Information from professional knowledge holders' interviews is provided within relevant sections to provide contextual information. After the three sections, there is a fourth section on advice from storytellers for youth and services providers. Lastly, contextual information from professional knowledge holders' interviews is included to provide information on the future of relocation for Indigenous youth from the Northwest Territories.

Storytellers

The four female Indigenous storytellers who shared their stories of relocation were from the Northwest Territories. They are Ashley, Farrah, Jade, and Kayla. At the time of the interviews, their ages ranged from 11-18 years old. Storytellers varied in the

time they had spent in the Lower Mainland which ranged from one and a half to four years at the time of the interviews. Some storytellers did not share exactly which community they relocated from in the Northwest Territories. Some shared that they relocated from Yellowknife and the community of Behchokǫ̀. Behchokǫ̀ is also known as Rae-Edzo. Behchokǫ̀ had a population count of 1,874 according to the 2016 census (NWT Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Yellowknife is the capital city and largest community in the Northwest Territories. Rae and Edzo are sister communities located 110km away from Yellowknife. In order to protect the storytellers' identities, some quotes will not include the storytellers' pseudonyms as the information shared might identify them.

Leaving

Youth Background of Prior Disruptions

Young girls who relocate to the Lower Mainland experience many challenging life events and disruptions prior to being relocated. Ashley, Kayla, Jade, and Farah all described adverse events prior to moving to the Lower Mainland. They shared about being in foster care, running away, attending school, accessing treatment, and instances of incarceration before moving to British Columbia.

In my experience as a youth worker working with youth with similar relocation experiences, the youth were placed in foster care for a variety of reasons. Some reasons include sexual abuse by a family member, physical abuse and neglect, and caregivers struggling with addiction. The storytellers in this study were not asked to share about their experiences of going into foster care. Some storytellers mentioned their experience of entering foster care while they told their story of relocation and some storytellers did not.

Foster care

All storytellers recounted being in foster care in their home communities. Most storytellers described moving around to several foster care placements before moving to the Lower Mainland. Some had lived with siblings in foster care placements and then were placed in foster care placements without their siblings. Storytellers described these multiple disruptions in their living arrangements as difficult. One storyteller who originally went into foster care with her sister and later was separated from her sister

shared, “it's been really, really hard moving back and forth to a new place and it's been really scary and annoying when you keep moving to a place.” Another storyteller also described being separated from her sister while in foster care, “we used to live together, and then we got separated until I think I was like 10-11 and then she moved down here and then I was depressed for a long time.” One storyteller described her many moves in foster care and recalled a story of when her first foster parent quit and the multiple moves that came afterwards saying:

> she quit foster, so we moved closer to uptown, as you call it, and we lived, I lived with this person for about a week and they moved somewhere, I don't know where they moved. And stayed at that same place and had different family move in. So there is a lot going on within that month, which was kind of weird cause moving into a new place with new people that I barely know is weird, like, having to live with them for a month and then them leaving to have new people come. Yeah, it was quite weird. Like having to move with different people within the whole month is lot of chaotic. (Storyteller)

Youth in this study relayed stories of recurring disruptions and adjustments in their family and foster care homes, causing mixed feelings of loss, frustration, and anger. Each move entailed disrupted bonds and care along with disorientation from familiar routines and places.

School disruption

Disruptions in foster care arrangements often meant disruptions in schooling. Some storytellers described their school disruptions while in foster care before moving to the Lower Mainland. One storyteller described attending a school that had programs for Aboriginal students and then moving to a different school. She shared, “at this one school we had like a class where all Aboriginals go to learn how to bead, to like speak the language, and like just learn about cultural things.” She later described the shift that occurred when she had to move schools and shared:

> in Yellowknife I went from a school named Weledeh to another school that's across the City in Range Lake North, and Range Lake North is more, there's not a lot of Aboriginals there so they don't really have a cultural class or anything like it. (Storyteller)

The young girls arriving in BCs Lower Mainland brought experiences of interrupted education and inconsistent schooling opportunities.

Treatment

Further disruptions were experienced by storytellers who needed to access treatment services. Two storytellers described their experiences accessing treatment services. All storytellers who attended treatment shared that they had to move out of their home communities to access treatment services. Initial treatment was provided in Ft. Smith in the Northwest Territories. Ft. Smith is approximately an hour plane ride or an eight hour drive south of Yellowknife. Those who required further services were sent to Calgary, Alberta. Storytellers who attended treatment described attending several treatment programs and running away. One storyteller who accessed treatment services shared:

> I had some problems, to focus on everything, cause friend committed suicide. And it was really hard. (pause). And that's where everything went off the road. And I started skipping school, I didn't care about anything. I didn't care about people. So they said they were going to send me to treatment for at least 2 weeks and, turns out I was there for about 3 or 6 months. (Storyteller)

One storyteller described being sent to multiple treatment centers and hospitals. She stated, ”I was in Yellowknife and my whole, my whole foster was Yellowknife. And then my treatment, my first treatment was in Ft. Smith and then after Ft. Smith was in Calgary.” She later described her hospitalizations due to self-harming, “I figured that they were sending me to Calgary, which is a, Foothills hospital, and before that I was at the Alberta Children's Hospital.”

Prior to moving to BCs Lower Mainland, some of the youth had experienced recurring relocations to residential treatment centres in more urban and Southern locations. These periods of treatment took the young girls out of familiar care settings, away from important relationships and place.

Incarceration

Incarceration, for one storyteller, brought further disruptions, loss of familiar, and constraints on self-determination. One storyteller shared her experience of being arrested in Alberta and being incarcerated during a time that she ran away from treatment. This storyteller first described moving from Yellowknife to Ft. Smith to access treatment. She then described moving to Calgary for further treatment. While discussing her treatment in Ft. Smith she shared, “I kept taking off so I moved to

Calgary. And then I kept taking off, got three charges and went to jail. And then now I'm here."

The storytellers who reported instances of running away did not share what these instances were connected to. In my past work experience working with youth in care, youth would run away for a variety of reasons with some including: arguments with caregivers or other youth, avoiding probation conditions, or wanting to stay with non-ministry approved contacts.

Professional Knowledge Holder Interviews Background Information

Professional knowledge holder interviews outlined the complex background and context that the decision to relocate youth from the Northwest Territories to the Lower Mainland occurs in. Andy Langford, the Director of Social Programs from the regional office in the Northwest Territories shared of recent changes to treatment and residential programs, relevant population information, as well as budget constraints that have influenced the relocation of Northwest Territories children and youth to the Lower Mainland. Andy Langford outlined the reasons for accessing services out of province, "we have a large range of needs, a fairly limited pool of people, and a relatively small budget." According to the professional knowledge holder, the needs of the Northwest Territories population are similar to other provinces but the smaller population of just over 40,000 people and a small budget creates a limited amount of resources. The budget for services meets the needs of most of the population, according to the professional knowledge holder interviewed. Andy Langford added that when the previous addictions treatment center was closed down, they were able to use that money to send people to programs out of province and have more of a variety of options versus the single program that they had in the Northwest Territories, which may not have been an appropriate fit for everyone. Andy Langford highlighted, "when we're able to offer people a choice between four different programs, we're able to get a better match between what the client's needs are and what the program can deliver." Andy Langford related this to the out of territories placements budget money and shared, "the Out of Territories Program actually gives the NWT residents far more options then they would have if we only had a single program operating in the NWT." The intention behind sending children and youth out of province to access services is that they will recover so that their needs can then be met in their home community and they can return. The

professional knowledge holder added, “others, especially those who are suffering from long-term, chronic conditions, are likely to spend the rest of their lives in a southern placement.”

Additionally, Andy Langford shared how there are limited placements to send children and youth to as well as limited placements within the Northwest Territories. The professional knowledge holder outlined how the northern treatment facility for addictions was closed down three years ago and subsequent addiction referrals go to one of the four treatment centers in Alberta or British Columbia. For residential services such as group homes, the professional knowledge holder shared that in the Northwest Territories, there are a couple of group homes that take children and youth and one placement facility that takes those with mild cognitive impairments. The professional knowledge holder added, “we have very little by way of residential treatment services.”

A second professional knowledge holder interview with an employee of a Lower Mainland social service agency which provides services for Northwest Territories children and youth, provided further context. This professional knowledge holder shared about the expansion and evolution of the program over the years in the Lower Mainland, recent changes within the referral process, and her experience visiting the Northwest Territories and supporting children and youth from these communities over the years. The Lower Mainland program receives contracts from both the BC ministry as well as the Northwest Territories to provide foster care placements for children and youth. The program first started with six participants and has grown over eight years to have up to forty-seven participants. Sixteen of the current participants are from the Northwest Territories. The program exists in various cities in the Lower Mainland from Vancouver to the Valley. Caregivers within the program are provided training opportunities to be able to care for the needs of the participants.

This professional knowledge holder shared how she has seen a shift in the needs of children and youth who join the program over the years and shared:

> it's changed from sort of maybe three hallmark behaviors that we've seen and now we're seeing like ten or twelve that are an evolution in the caregivers learning. So making sure we're providing all the updated training and research and tools that they can use to better their jobs. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

To elaborate on what the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland highlighted, in my experience as a youth worker I saw changing patterns in the issues children and youth presented with. Many of the youth I supported within this program over the years were diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). I also had youth on my caseload who were developmentally delayed, on the autism spectrum, or in active psychosis.

Over the past eight years, the Lower Mainland program has worked with the Northwest Territories to provide residential care for children and youth. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared how this relationship has evolved:

> with the kids from the north, they're trying to be a little bit more preventative with the referrals that they send. Knowing that we've got specialized school programs and the youth worker component and certainly the assessments. I mean I think last year we did six FASD and one autism assessment that the kids up north just wouldn't have access to. So they're paying more attention to trying to have success attached to a referral verses just holding a kid until they age out of care. The north has done a great job of taking advantage of sending kids earlier, kids that have not been so entrenched into different systems. To provide sort of more possibility of success. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland highlighted how children and youth are being sent to the program at younger ages and experiencing more success. There are sometimes youth who leave the program and return to the north, the professional knowledge holder added:

> we've had maybe two discharges in the last couple of years of kids that have come down here and you know maybe the systems been too overwhelming or the draw back to family has been too much and so they've returned home. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The same professional knowledge holder shared that when youth do return to the north, usually they do not have as many supports and they have poor outcomes:

> maybe two or three that have returned home to the north, usually not with great outcome because when they're returning home most of their supports and all the structure that they've had while they've been here disappears and they just don't yet have the capacity to do that on their own. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

In her experience, most youth stay in the program:

> for the most part we've seen kids come down here who've had multiple placements and been able to stabilize, stay in the same home, stay in the same school, maintain the same youth workers and so you're getting a better foundation for those types of kids. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The Lower Mainland professional knowledge holder added that youth come to the program with a background of multiple placements and this typical background of youth who enter the program is shifting. In arranging placements with the north, the professional knowledge holder added, “they know what we offer and they’re trying to get to the point where they don't have to put their kids through multiple moves before they come.” Shifts in who is being sent for services has changed and age ranges for care in the north have also affected changes within the program. The professional knowledge holder shared that as of April 2016, youth can stay in care up to age twenty-four and she added, “it's kind of new territory for [Program Name] in having kids that would be an adult in BC but in the youth program in the north.” She highlighted how with this change the program will also change, “we're sort of fine tuning what it's going to look like for kids that are in that new age bracket for the north.”

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared when children and youth enter the program they maintain their Northwest Territories residency as it is connected to their supports such as their healthcare card. The participants that enter the program need long term support which changes as they grow older within the program. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> the majority of the kids that are coming into [Program Name] need life-long support so it might not be as hands on or close as it was when they were fifteen but even at twenty and twenty-one they’re needing someone to help them cook and manage a bank account and maintain proper friends and not be taken advantage of. They just don't have that kind of support mechanism built into just regular foster care in the north. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This looks different for every youth and the professional knowledge holder shared an example:

> some of the kids they move from being a center point in many of the family caregivers homes to maybe living in a downstairs suite, and they’re looking after their breakfast and lunch but then eat dinner with the caregivers and they’re in supported work environments. Some of them are in post-secondary school that focus on youth or young adults with disabilities. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The program has changed over the years to tailor its services to the evolving needs of the children and youth as well as the policies in the north.

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared of her experiences visiting the north and reflected on her work with children and youth. She highlighted that there is not a straightforward answer to address the lack of supports in the north and in the meantime, these children and youth should not be denied access to opportunities. She stated:

> I don't necessarily have the answer but it doesn't mean that these kids don't deserve the opportunities that our kids from Richmond and Vancouver and New West all get. When I see kids that come down here and have very basic reading skills you know, don't necessarily know if they're going to be living in the same house from one month to the next, they don't have youth workers, they don't have a community center, they don't have a pool, they've never maybe gone to Girl Guides or all the opportunities that we just sort of take for granted. I see those kids just come out of their fear and come out of their isolation and they get to experience joy and they get to experience what it means to have a birthday party and have friends and have a teacher that shows up every day and cares about them you know, from elementary school and sort of see them transition and graduate high school and get awards for being leaders in their school around their culture, the pride that's attached to their culture, that they become leaders within their graduating class. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland highlighted that there is not an easy answer to addressing issues with services in the north for children and youth or in sending youth back to live in the north. She reflected on her experience and shared how she observed that some children are not able to attend school in their home communities but have to bus to further communities to attend school in a place that might feel unfamiliar to them.

She pointed out the "lack of stability in the community to provide the supports" and not knowing where to start if there would be changes made. When reflecting on repatriation and sending youth back to live in the north who have lived in the Lower Mainland, the professional knowledge holder shared:

> people talk about repatriation and wanting to send the kids that we've had here back and then my challenge back to them is what are you sending them back to? And you've invested money and time and energy and they've made tremendous growth and then you, with I

> think good intentions, send them back to their home communities but they don't have all of those pieces built in to then support and maintain all the growth that they've done and they fall and that to me is unjust and unfair to the kids that have put in so much work into bettering themselves, going back to a community that can't help support and maintain that. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The importance of maintaining growth through supports and the difficulty of doing that by sending youth back to the north stood out and the professional knowledge holder added, “so in the meantime, our kids shouldn’t be denied access to having all of the same things that our kids locally here have.”

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland stressed the importance of providing opportunities to youth from northern communities so that they can grow and feel valued.

> For me it's more about, it's that opportunity that every kid from a northern community or from the Northwest Territories or from you know, Prince George it wouldn't matter, for them to have an opportunity that just isn’t at their back door but is an imperative part of growth and feeling valued and I want all of our girls here to feel valued and feel connected and I watch it all the time with different youth workers and certainly with their caregivers. They become you know, like sort of an auntie or a family friend that, and I said all of us are here to do is just provide them with what they need around support and guidance and you know for each of our caregivers and each of the staff they approach it differently but that's essentially what it is we all just sort of got our arms out and sort of directing all of our kids in a way we know is best to keep them out of harm and keep them safe and again sort of provide that opportunity that they never would be exposed to or have access to living in their communities back up north. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Youth Finding Out They Are Moving

Ashley, Kayla, Jade, and Farah all described how they first found out that they were going to move to British Columbia and could recall the events surrounding that time. Storytellers’ ages ranged from eight years old to sixteen years old when they first found out they would move to BC. Two storytellers shared they found out one month before they moved to BC. One found out the day before and one found out a few days before. Storytellers described being told by either their social workers or their foster parents. Some girls were living with foster parents at the time of relocating to BC. Other girls were living in Alberta due to being incarcerated or attending treatment.

Storytellers described a range of feelings over finding out they were going to move to BC. Some described being excited, nervous, upset, sad, and scared. Others also shared that they did not want to leave the family they were staying with or that they wanted to stay in Yellowknife with their friends. Ashley shared, “It was kind of scary like I wanted to stay back in Yellowknife and stay with my friends.” Another storyteller shared, “I was sitting in jail and I either had the option to come here or sitting in jail so I came here.” Another storyteller described her experience of finding out she would be moving:

> Nobody actually told me that I was moving, I think a few days before, my foster parent he came up to me and was like (name) you’re moving and I was like oh, where am I moving? And he was oh you're gonna go see your sister in BC. You're going to go live with her. I didn't know what to think, I was like excited but I wasn't at the same time. (Storyteller)

This storyteller also added “the time that they told me I was going to move was a little too short.”

Another storyteller shared when she discovered she would be moving:

> I also figured it out cause I heard them talking about it about a month ago before they were picking me up. So, I was excited and I was also gonna miss the family that took care of me. Then a month later on the 2nd they picked me up at school, and they picked me up, then I, and then they took us to the a, drove us to the airport from Y- from Ray to Yellowknife. It took us about an hour to drive there. So, they took us to the airport, it was really fun going on the airplane. (Storyteller)

Forced Move, No Choice, and Disruptive

Forced and no choice

Most storytellers described a lack of choice around the decision to move to the Lower Mainland from their home communities. Some storytellers described feeling forced to move because of a lack of options. Other storytellers shared they felt forced because the move was not presented as a choice. Kayla shared, “it was a force kind of move, it wasn't like, here do you- would you like to move? It was more like you're going, there's no questions asked. We have to force you to move.” Another storyteller shared, “I really didn't have a choice kind of because I didn't want to sit in jail.”

Disruptive

Some storytellers shared that the move to the Lower Mainland was disruptive to their lives and relationships. Storytellers described the timing of the move and how it disrupted their schooling. Storytellers shared that they did not have enough time to leave their homes and a rush in saying goodbyes to loved ones.

One storyteller shared about the disruption she experienced in school as well as in her relationships with her foster sisters and brothers:

> So it was really unexpected. I also moved during school so it was like, it was like the ending of grade 8 and it was in the middle of a school day and then I couldn't really say goodbye to all the family I had, I was living with. So then I just went from one classroom to the other saying goodbye and, I don't know, it got me really really upset and then it got them upset too and they're like in kindergarten, grade one, grade three and I think grade four. It was like, I don't know, I felt really bad because it's like you're leaving somebody and they don't really fully understand. (Storyteller)

The same storyteller added how the timing was disruptive. She shared, "not being able to graduate grade eight with my friends, that it- so I couldn't- it was like, a month, it was like a month before grade 8 ended. It was like right in the middle of everything." Another storyteller described, "when I've been living for this, at this place for three years, and, after three years past and then, I'm like comfortable where I am and, I didn't wanna move but I had to."

As shared by storytellers, the timing of departure was rarely chosen by the girls and often felt both abrupt and disruptive. The themes discussed in the above section are presented in Figure 2.

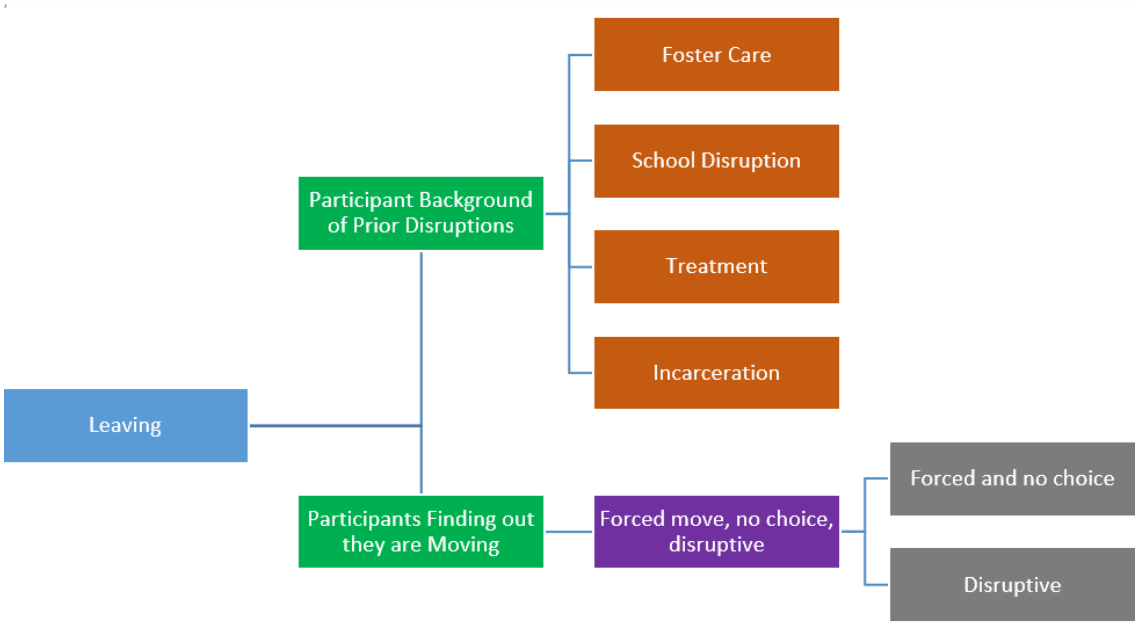

Figure 2: Leaving Themes

Professional Knowledge Holders Process of Referral

Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed the multi-stage process of referral within the Northwest Territories and in the Lower Mainland (Figure 3). Within the government programs in the Northwest Territories are the Territorial Social Programs. Within this division is the Out of Territories Program. Andy Langford from the Northwest Territories shared, "this program facilitates placements outside of the Northwest Territories when our resources within the territories are insufficient to meet their needs." This program is available for children, youth, and adults. Within this program there is a Southern Placement Coordinator who arranges placements for youth outside of the Northwest Territories. The professional knowledge holder added that a referral will start in the regional office and the regional office will send the referral to the Southern Placement Coordinator. The referral form will include the details about what the individual requires based on needs and why those needs cannot be met within the Northwest Territories. The coordinator will take this information and consult with appropriate staff either within Child and Family Services or with Mental Health and Addictions Services. After consulting and reviewing the referral information the decision is made to move an individual by the Southern Placement Coordinator in consultation with the regional office.

Figure 3: Out of Territories Program Referral Process

A professional knowledge holder in the Lower Mainland revealed how the process works within a social service agency that receives placement contracts from the Northwest Territories (Figure 4). The Lower Mainland agency will receive a referral document from the Northwest Territories. The referral document will contain the social history, school history, incident reports as well as other relevant information for the individual. The Lower Mainland social service agency will then sometimes contact the social worker and possibly the parent or previous caregiver to gather additional information about the child or youth. After they get an understanding of the individual, they match the child with a specialized caregiver.

For example, the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared:

> caregivers come to us with a whole plethora of skills and one of the recent trends that we've seen is kids that are coming to us either queried or suspected of or diagnosed with having autism spectrum, so we have a couple of specialized caregivers who have taken lots of training, it's a passion of theirs to understand more about the spectrum, and so we've been doing very specific placements with those caregivers of kids who have an autism spectrum diagnosis. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

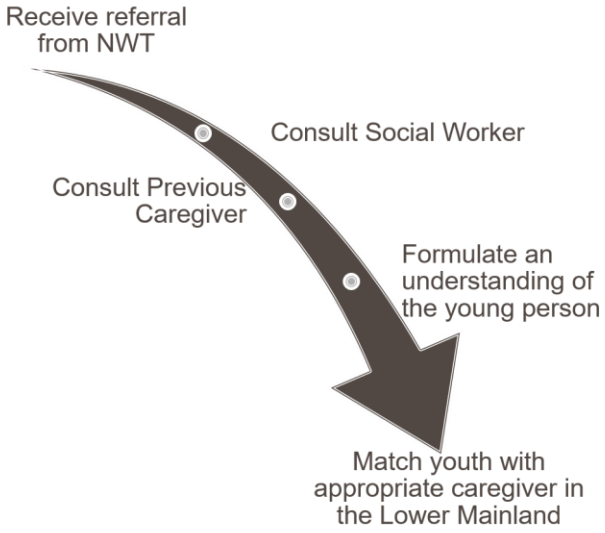

Figure 4: Receiving Referrals In Lower Mainland

This professional knowledge holder also shared that the current referral process takes between six and eight weeks to do a placement. This process has been slowed down recently due to the interprovincial agreement which ensures that they have all of the services in place before children and youth come to the Lower Mainland.

The professional knowledge holder highlighted the changes with the interprovincial agreement:

> for the kids that are in high crisis or a high risk situation, that delay sometimes puts our kids more at risk, so it's sort of that balance between putting in the best practice aspect of services before kids come but also allowing for those emergent placements to be placed timely. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder added that the placements that are referred and accepted are long term placements and last several years. The professional knowledge holder shared that depending on the age of the child or youth, they can stay for multiple years as children and youth in the Northwest Territories can stay in care until age twenty-four. The professional knowledge holder shared, “kids will have had to exhaust most of the resources within their own communities first.” Priority will be given to children and youth who have had placement breakdown in several high structured and supported placements. Children and youth who are referred are on a permanent custody order and require services that are not available in their home communities such

as a structured specialized family care environment and access to counselling and assessments. The professional knowledge holder highlighted, “there's always the underlying piece around taking kids outside of their home communities but also recognizing that the needed supports aren't available in the north for many of these kids.”

Professional knowledge holders shared of the tensions of determining a placement. Professional knowledge holders outlined the complexity of the placement process as well as the reality that some children and youth’s needs cannot be met by services in their communities.

Arriving

Once placements were arranged in BC’s Lower Mainland, the young girls relocated from the Northwest Territories. Most storytellers boarded multiple flights to travel approximately 2,300 kilometers, from Yellowknife to Vancouver, often accompanied by a worker they had just met. On arrival, they are accompanied to their new foster home but remain under the official guardianship of the Northwest Territories.

Hard to Transition for Storytellers

Many storytellers described that it was hard to adjust to a new place. Storytellers discussed several areas that it was difficult to adjust to including people and place, amount of new information, land and climate, language, culture, and school.

Confusion over people, place, and information overload

Early arrival was experienced as a time of confusion over people, place, and information overload. Storytellers shared instances of being confused over where they were, who they were with, and the overwhelming amount of new information they were taking in. Jade shared, “I was confused where I was cause I never heard of this place before.” She continued, “BC's a huge, huge place and you can get like lost pretty easy.” Many storytellers described not knowing where they were or who they were with when they moved to the Lower Mainland. Jade shared, “you move into a new place and you don't know who they are or where you are. So, you really don't know where you are and just, and you get, and you get scared.” Similarly, Kayla shared:

> it was hard. It was really hard moving from one small thing to a small town to a very big town. Well it's not even a town it's like a city, but, I don't know it was just, very strange. It was weird seeing like, there's a lot more cars, a lot more traffic, and like a lot more buildings and like houses. It's a lot more people. It was hard to transition from a place where you have like similar people that you see all the time to like a whole new crowd where you don't even know them, where you rarely see them and it's like, I'm not a people person. I don't like hanging out with people. So it's really hard to transition. (Kayla)

Storytellers described a need to know where they were and who they were surrounded by. The unfamiliar urban landscape and people were disorienting for the girls.

Storytellers shared of feeling rushed to adjust to their new environment. One storytellers shared:

> I had like a new social worker at that time too, so having new social worker, then moving, and then meeting a new caregiver, it was just, all of a sudden it like, it was like way too fast for me to digest everything in my mind. And like, how my, my caregiver, she was rushing everything all at once so it was like, really hard for me to catch up to reality I guess you could say. So like, I think it would be better if somebody actually listens instead of telling the person what to do cause then having like a move and then somebody rushing you to adjust to this place and then getting all these questions asked all at once is like, think it's a bit of, a little too much for the person. (Storyteller)

Storytellers described dealing with an overwhelming amount of new information when they arrived in the Lower Mainland. One storyteller stated, “it was like a rush it was like one thing after the next after the next after the next. It makes a person very confused.”

Drawing on my past work experience and professional knowledge holder interviews, once youth arrive at their new foster homes they meet their new caregiver and residential coordinator to discuss and fill out various forms related to safety plans, monthly goals, and service plans. Within a day or two, youth meet their new youth workers and go on outings in the community. Some tasks that might be accomplished soon after arrival include: setting up doctor’s appointments, shopping for clothing and personal care items, enrolling in school, or connecting with a tutor. As storytellers shared, the amount of new information is difficult for young girls to adjust to once arriving in the Lower Mainland.

School

Young girls who relocate to the Lower Mainland from the Northwest Territories go through school disruption and difficulty adjusting to new school settings. All storytellers described their experiences with school. Several storytellers came to the Lower Mainland with a history of disrupted school experiences due to moving around in foster care, accessing treatment, or being incarcerated. Most storytellers had attended several different schools before moving to the Lower Mainland. Several storytellers shared that once they started attending school in the Lower Mainland, it was hard to adjust. Jade shared, “school was hard. What we learned, we didn't learn that. Well we do Math but not the kind like Math that we do here now. It's just, it's just so hard.” Another storyteller discussed the size of the classes as difficult to adjust to. Kayla shared:

> I thought moving schools was very hard. Moving from one school to the next, like, from your hometown to here and going from a school that's not very big to a school that is huge and, I don't know, I thought that was really hard to like transition to. (Kayla)

She also shared how her learning needs differed from her peers and how it was difficult when she first arrived in the Lower Mainland. She stated:

> that was really hard for me cause like when I was at home I, my, how I learned was different from a lot of others. Which made me fall behind so when I first came here, moving schools and having a lot more students in my class made it a, made it difficult for me to adjust. (Kayla)

Storytellers experienced the transition to new schools, with distinct curriculum and much larger class sizes as both challenging and alienating.

Culture loss

Young girls who relocate to the Lower Mainland from the Northwest Territories experience shifts in their connection to their culture. All storytellers described changes to their cultural connections through the process of relocating to the Lower Mainland. Storytellers shared of changes to their sense of community, connection to family, use of language, relationship with the land, and cultural practices and ceremonies.

Language

Storytellers who had been raised with their Indigenous language reported loss of fluency in their first language. They were not surrounded by speakers of their language once they arrived in the Lower Mainland and they lost access to speakers and opportunities to learn in Tłı̨chǫ. According to the 2016 census, there were 1,020 people who reported Tłı̨chǫ, also known as Dogrib, as their first spoken language (Statistics Canada, 2016). One storyteller who had been living in the Lower Mainland for three years, shared that she felt less connected to her culture since moving to the Lower Mainland. She specifically mentioned losing the ability to speak and learn her language of Tłı̨chǫ. She stated, “there was no one like talking to me in my language so I feel coming, I just don't understand. I can't speak it.” This storyteller added that that her auntie comes to the Lower Mainland once or twice a year to visit her and will sometimes speak to her in Tłı̨chǫ. She added, “sometimes I understand, sometimes I don't.” This storyteller lost the ability to speak her language and is losing the ability to understand her language. Similarly, another storyteller described that she also lost the ability to speak her language. She shared, “I lost my language because I had to move schools.” For this storyteller, this occurred from moving schools in Yellowknife as the class where she was taught her language was not taught at her new school. She added, “I never really learned after that.” Relocation to BC intensified these storytellers’ disconnection from language.

Community

Some storytellers described missing a sense of community since moving to the Lower Mainland. Kayla shared:

> it was hard to transition from a place where you have like similar people that you see all the time to some- to like a whole new crowd where you don't even know them, where you rarely see them and it's like, I'm not a people person. I don't like hanging out with people. So it's really hard to transition. (Kayla)

Similarly, Jade shared of the difficulty of losing a sense of community. She described, “you move into a new place and you don't know who they are or where you are. So, you really don't know where you are and just, and you get, and you get scared.” Another storyteller spoke of missing her friends and foster family from the Northwest Territories.

Land/climate

Some storytellers described missing the land and having difficulty adjusting to the new climate and environment in the Lower Mainland. Jade shared, “I miss being around the snow. But this year it's different than last year, cause, last year there was barely any snow at all. Now, there's a lot of snow.” Another storyteller who has lived in the Lower Mainland for four years described difficulty in transitioning to the weather. She shared, “I'm not used to the weather yet, but, I am used to most things here. I do not like the rain. I can't stand it.”

Because storytellers were placed in Southern foster care placements, thousands of kilometers away from their home communities, storytellers experienced difficulty transitioning to the new warmer and wetter climate of BC’s Lower Mainland. Some were able to feel more comfortable in the winter months when there was snow. For others, they were never able to adjust.

Family

All storytellers shared how moving to the Lower Mainland has affected their connection to their family. One storyteller shared that, since moving to the Lower Mainland, she gets visits with her auntie once or twice a year but that it is not enough time to continue to pass on their language. Another storyteller shared that her family visited her in the Lower Mainland over the time that we met for interviews. This storyteller shared that she met her biological brother and sister for the first time. Another storyteller shared that her connection to her family included them participating in ceremonies together in the Northwest Territories and that in the Lower Mainland she is not able to connect with them in this way. Farah shared, “I don’t know I just, I just don't do it. I use to do it with my family. So, I just don't do it anymore.” Every storyteller shared about the effect that relocation has had on their connection to their family.

Some storytellers shared that they became closer to siblings since moving to the Lower Mainland. One storyteller moved to the Lower Mainland with her sister. Another storyteller’s sister was already living in the Lower Mainland when she moved there so she got to see her sister more since moving. She described that the move to the Lower Mainland made it easier to connect with her sister. She shared, “cause it was like, I don't know like probably like an hour to get to her, before it was like I could only see her

once or twice a year." She also added that having a sister already living in the Lower Mainland "made it much, it made it easier."

Cultural practices and ceremonies

Relocation to the Lower Mainland impacted young girls' participation in cultural practices and ceremonies. Some storytellers described changes to the cultural practices and ceremonies they engaged in and had access to during their relocation process. One storyteller described participating in smudging and sweat lodges when she lived in Yellowknife and no longer engaging in these ceremonies in the Lower Mainland. She shared, "I don't really do it anymore like I don't do anything to do with my culture anymore." She continued, "I don't smudge anymore, I don't do anything ever since I moved out of Yellowknife." She also shared that she participated in some smudging and sweat lodges while in treatment and custody. She added, "Yeah I use to do sweat lodges in Yellowknife and Ft. Smith and now I don't. The only thing I really do with my culture is beading, that's about it." This storyteller shared that she had a few opportunities to smudge when she first relocated to the Lower Mainland with her respite worker, cultural teacher, and youth worker. When asked why she no longer engaged in this practice this storyteller responded, "I don't know I just, I just don't do it. I use to do it with my family. So, I just don't do it anymore." In referring to her culture, this storyteller added:

> It kind of like went down when I moved here I guess. Like not went down but like I don't really practice anything anymore that's like really the only thing. I don't know I'd like to, I'd like to start doing stuff like maybe like go to sweat lodges or something or start smudging again. (Storyteller)

The same storyteller remembered participating in cultural practices while in custody. She shared, "I did some stuff actually, to do with my culture in jail in BC." Another storyteller shared that she lost connection to cultural practices from moving schools in Yellowknife. She shared:

> In Yellowknife I kind of lost my culture when I was moving schools, so, around grade 5 I lost everything. I lost my language because I had to move schools and then so then I lost, like, at this one school we had like a class where all Aboriginals go to learn how to bead, to like speak the language, and like just learn about cultural things. And then after I moved schools it was, I think I lost a lot of that. I never really learned after that, so then moving here in the Lower Mainland it like, it gave

me new experiences with my culture, so I kind of learned, well I'm still learning a lot about my culture and a lot about other different cultures. So then I think it's a good thing. (Storyteller)

This storyteller also added:

In Yellowknife I went from a school named Weledeh to another school that's across the City in Range Lake North, and Range Lake North is more, there's not a lot of Aboriginal's there so they don't really have a cultural class or anything like it.

Because opportunities to participate in cultural practices and ceremonies varied from locale to locale, several storytellers experienced repeated disruptions in their access to cultural practices. For others, once away from family and community they stopped engaging in cultural practices and ceremonies. The themes discussed in the above section are presented in Figure 5.

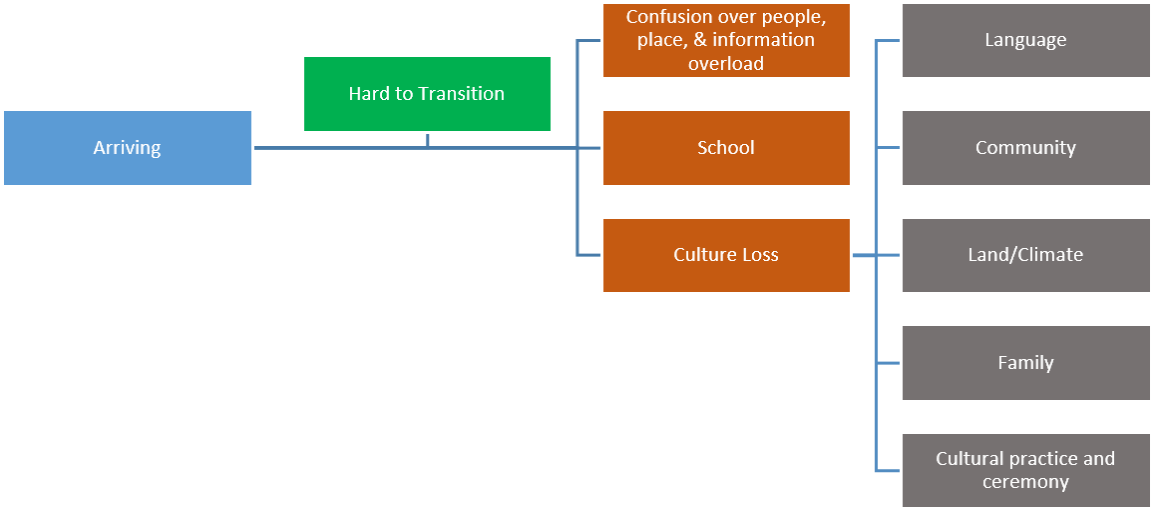

Figure 5: Leaving Themes

Arriving and Transitioning Information from Professional Knowledge Holders

Supports, goals, and service/safety plans

Professional knowledge holder interviews outlined the process that youth experience when they relocate from the Northwest Territories to the Lower Mainland in one residential program. An interview with a Lower Mainland social service agency employee revealed the process of goal setting, safety plans, and staff and social worker involvement for youth who are relocated. Youth who relocate and enter the program

connect with various supports during their relocation process. Youth in the program live with caregivers who provide foster care. Youth meet with youth workers on a weekly basis who take them into the community to engage in various activities based on their goals and service plans. Youth also meet with a coordinator for the program who manages their supports and service plans. The youth have social workers from the north and they also get connected with a courtesy social worker in BC. The professional knowledge holder described:

> each of the kids that are coming now from the north are assigned a courtesy social worker with the BC ministry and so we'll include them in our intake process and generally the courtesy social workers see the clients about every three to four months and they sort of have an arm's length distance support relationship with them. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The social workers from the north will maintain connection with youth who relocate. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared, "our social workers from the north are coming down about every, some more than others, but at least twice a year just to visit with the kids and maintain that connection to home community and supporting family visits." The professional knowledge holder shared that many youth maintain connection with their home communities. The professional knowledge holder shared, "many of our kids go home at Christmas and summertime for camps, National Aboriginal Day lots of our kids went home and celebrated that with their communities."

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland outlined the process of youth being involved in setting up their service plans and goals within the program. The professional knowledge holder for the Lower Mainland program shared that, prior to the youth arriving in the Lower Mainland, the program will receive referral information about the youth and program staff will make additional phone calls to various connections to find out more information about the youth before they arrive. Once youth arrive, the professional knowledge holder shared, "we get to meet them and spend a couple weeks with them before we sort of get a sense of maybe it's more of this or less of that. We sort of get to know them as an individual." The professional knowledge holder added:

> they'll take part in a thirty question survey and they get to grade if they need a little bit of help, a moderate amount of help or a lot of

> help based on everything from life skills to education, to financial planning, to health and wellness, a whole series of questions. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared that it does not always go as smoothly with goals as youth and program staff may have different ideas of what the youth could use assistance with. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> sometimes we can make a determination that might be opposing what they think and so we sort of find a balance between what we know kids will need as they continue on their care journey and what they determine as sort of a priority for what their goals want to be and balance that out with how many youth worker hours they have, what other community support people do we need to bring in. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The questionnaire that youth fill out includes various areas such as culture. The professional knowledge holder shared, "If culture is a big component to what they want to do and learn more about but I don't have somebody on my team that does that, then we'll bring in a contracted service." The professional knowledge holder shared that youth will have various assessments conducted once they are in the Lower Mainland and this helps in determining a variety of supports to connect them with. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> we've been connected a lot more with the schools and they've been through like a fee for service program, they've been bringing in Aboriginal support workers and learning assistants and all the different components that are suggested through all the assessments that we do. So they are really well supported. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder added that when youth have a different view of what they need, program staff will follow the advice of the assessments. The professional knowledge holder stated:

> the kids may not think they need it but their assessment says otherwise, you know they've got deficits around reading or mathematics. So it's sort of finding that balance of what we know is best based on our experience working with hundreds of kids and then respecting the kids need to focus on different areas. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The program strives to make the process of setting goals with youth collaborative. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> it's very collaborative. When we ask the questions and there's a section for the kids to write a comment, it's written in their language. Sometimes it's pretty colorful and you know, we don't care about grammar or spelling it's just around keeping it youth focused and paying attention to what they're needing and what maybe they're excited about and sort of how do you build strength attached to something that a kid has some initial passion about. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder shared how goals and service plans are not just made once but that they are reviewed each month. She explained:

> it evolves every month you know you might have an initial goal of doing some really primary stuff like getting ID and getting a bank account and then it's achieved and it's moved off. Then it might come up again around developing a savings plan attached to that initial goal of a bank account and then it's working towards a specific goal of maybe buying a bike. So from one initial goal it builds into five secondary ones. Then every month when we do our reports it generates new goals that the kids you know, they might have completed a math component that was really difficult for them and they needed extra tutoring hours and so that gets incorporated into the goal. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder highlighted the importance of involving youth in the process of making service plans. She shared:

> it is sort of checking in with the kids around making sure that it's their service plan, it's their goals that they want to work on and I mean like anybody else if it's not your goal and you're not invested in it it's not going to get achieved. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Along with service plans, youth collaboratively create safety plans when they enter the program. The professional knowledge holder added:

> each of the kids have this evolving safety plan that initially might come in and address some really primary safety pieces around self-harm or they can't take the bus on their own. Very primary pieces but again if the kids aren't well one aware, or two invested, they're not going to follow a safety plan that we've written and just put on the fridge. So getting them to put it into youth friendly language you know compromising around things like curfews and bedtimes, getting them to play an active role because again it's their safety plan. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The program tailors the service plans, goals, and safety plans to each youth. The professional knowledge holder shared that this process is:

> based on age, development, risk factor and sometimes location you know if kids are far out away from a bus service and they need to be home at a certain time and that needs to be incorporated in too and taken into account based on a bus schedule. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

School Transition

Professional knowledge holder interviews outlined the process that children and youth experience who relocate from the north when transitioning to school in the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland described the comparison of school's between the schools in the north versus the schools in the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> all of the kids talk about the comparison, what we have here to what we didn't have in the north. Probably the biggest comparison is school. So school being you know, one that is a proper school and that there's all kinds of built in supports you know education supports but many of them they're going to high schools that are bigger than the communities that they come from. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Similar to the storytellers, the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland social service agency also shared about the overwhelming experience that youth who are relocated go through when entering school in the Lower Mainland**.** The professional knowledge holder shared, "these kids are coming from six, seven hundred person communities and going to high schools that are twelve hundred kids. I can't imagine like that's beyond overwhelming." The professional knowledge holder added that their program has made connections with a school in the Lower Mainland to try to build connections and community for the youth when they attend school. The professional knowledge holder highlighted:

> they go from a small town to this big high school but yet still feel connected to a particular teacher or principal that has extended himself and made them feel really welcome or the fact that they allow our youth workers to go in and maybe support until the kids get integrated. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland also shared how their program has worked with one school to integrate aspects that they have in their

foster homes. The professional knowledge holder shared of her experience working with the principal:

> he totally thinks outside the box in meeting the kids where they're at based on their strengths and interests. He's mirrored what we do in our homes in his school and it's just such a perfect marriage of those two pieces coming together, very inclusive and inviting like he'll let any of our staff come in, any of the caregivers come in any time. It's our school according to him. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Culture Connection Transition

Family Connection

Professional knowledge holder interviews outlined how the youth's connection to their culture is supported when they move to the Lower Mainland. Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed that youth are actively supported to maintain connections with family, create memory items, and engage in cultural practices. Youth in one Lower Mainland residential program are supported by the north to have visits with family members. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared:

> the north supports home or reverse visits so youth will go home to their communities for a visit or their family will come here if that's more appropriate. We've been finding more often that it's more appropriate for a family, like mom and a sister, to come to Vancouver for a visit because then we can provide the youth workers and transportation and support and access to different activities. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared that these reverse visits allow family members to see what their young person is experiencing. Reverse visits involve a family member of the youth to visit the Lower Mainland to spend time with the young person rather than a visit that involves the youth leaving the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder described, "it also gives a chance for the families to see their son or daughter at their school, what their bedroom looks like, just to sit at the caregiver's dinner table." Youth are encouraged to maintain connection with family or important people. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> if we have a birth parent or even we've had adopted parents and former foster parents involved that maintain a relationship and provide you know, maybe they'll go camping with them for two weeks in the summertime so throughout the year they're actively involved in some

> of the integrated case management planning around providing some of those updates. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder also added:

> with one of our moms, we've done Skype counselling with one of our young men, he has a Registered Clinical Counsellor that he meets with every two weeks and then every other month we do a Skype session with the counsellor and mom and sister.(Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder added that the program follows a co-parenting model when engaging with youths' families in their hometowns. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland described:

> we always talk about these co-parenting models that we work with and when we have families that are attached that's what I try to invite them into is that we're just co-parenting with you and we want you to be a part of this in whatever way you can. We'll invite you in as long as it's healthy for our young person and you know, recognizing that some of it might just be a financial piece or looking at creating ways for kids to do extra work experience to afford to maybe buy Christmas presents for a sibling that's up north. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Similarly, another professional knowledge holder interview with a member from the Northwest Territories involved in making arrangements for youth to relocate to the Lower Mainland, shared similar information about maintaining connection with family. The professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories also outlined the trade-off that occurs due to relocation. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> there are always trade-offs. Culture is critically important and if possible we try and ensure that those cultural connections are maintained. The program is funded such that young people who are placed outside of their home communities are able to make return visits at least once a year. We encourage families to stay in touch with each other and keep in mind, we're talking about young people who are able to make their own decisions to some extent about the connections that they want to maintain. It's always a trade-off, it's always a trade-off between maintaining family ties and accessing the services that are available. (Andy Langford)

Memory Projects

A professional knowledge holder interview outlined how youth in the program are assisted to create memory projects over their time in the Lower Mainland residential program. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shard that youth

will work with staff to create movie clips, photo albums, or scrapbooks. The professional knowledge holder described:

> one of our youth workers does this amazing piece where he takes, he creates videos like it looks like a movie, a little mini move clip of our kids, whereas others have done scrap books and shutter fly little photo albums just to maintain that visual connection and demonstrate all the different, amazing things that our kids get to do when they're here. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder added how this process allows youth and support workers to see the changes in the youth over time. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> the videos have been really helpful for even some of our social workers to see, just you know look at just how healthy somebody looks when they first get here to six months later and they've gained appropriate weight or they've been going to the gym and they're just more physically fit or just even the backdrop of some of the stuff they get to go and see and take part in. So we've been really pushing that memory aspect, not only for our kids but for people that are attached to a family member. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Youth are given their memory projects when they leave the program. The professional knowledge holder described:

> you're creating a memory bank for them to take with them when they're not with us anymore or to send back to family members and vice versa. When kids go up there we'll buy them cameras, disposable, or they take things on their IPhone and come back and we'll include that into their memory bank that we've established for them. It's a great way to send kids off and not only give them a historical aspect of maybe their five or ten years they had with us but also they know that when they leave we're all still here and so if something goes sideways they can come and find one of us and get redirected or pointed in contact with a new community support person. So they're not left going I don't know what to do next and so you create these different pillars of support between social workers that are dedicated to that community and you know, three or four different youth workers that they might have worked with and caregivers. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder outlined the importance of creating connections. She shared:

> so you're creating connectivity in different ways you know, pictures and sending report cards up you know, every couple months our kids get certificate for various things you know, attending school or having

> twenty one days with no AWOLS or whatever the case is you know, getting their first job. So taking a picture of that certificate and sending it up to the social workers and up to the family it helps them not feel forgotten in the whole process of their kid not living in their home anymore. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Cultural Practices

A professional knowledge holder interview outlined the process of youth engaging in cultural practices in the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared that youth are asked about their cultural practices in their intake meeting. The professional knowledge holder shared, “if culture is a big component to what they want to do and learn more about but I don't have somebody on my team that does that, then we'll bring in a contracted service person.”

My Work Experience with Youth Who Arrived in the Lower Mainland

I worked as a youth support worker with youth from the north for about three years. During this time, I interacted with and supported youth from the north as they arrived in the Lower Mainland. Part of my job entailed meeting with youth one-on-one in their foster homes and then taking them out into the community to do activities. When they first arrived we would do activities that allowed us to get to know each other and assist them in settling into their new environment. Many of the youth from the north that I worked with enjoyed visiting Tim Hortons during our visits as they were familiar with this coffee shop. Many youth I worked with also enjoyed walking around Walmart and telling me about how there is also a Walmart in the Northwest Territories. Some youth that I worked with taught me some words in their language of Tłı̨chǫ. One youth I worked with, upon arriving, expressed how she had a craving for dry buffalo meat that she would have at her family’s home in the north. I remember calling a few local stores and driving with this youth to look for this food item and having an unsuccessful trip. Many of the youth I worked with enjoyed going to the library often when we would meet to access the internet and connect with friends and family from their hometowns. As a youth worker, I was mostly advised not to allow the youth from the north to connect with each other in the Lower Mainland. Sometimes we were given permission to allow youth to go on joint outings with youth workers in the case of siblings. Many youth I worked with would often tell me how they would be going back to the north and some youth expressed being upset that they were moved to the Lower Mainland. Some youth had

shared with me that they thought they were only in the Lower Mainland for a visit or for a temporary stay. I had a range of experiences over my three years of work experience with youth who were relocated from northern communities.

Adjusting

Youth Experiences Adjusting

Young girls who are relocated to the Lower Mainland experience an adjustment period. The storytellers in this study shared about adjusting over time to cultural changes, shifts in their attitudes towards being relocated, and school experiences. Additionally, storytellers shared things they learned over time through their experience of relocation.

Cultural Changes

Young girls who relocate to the Lower Mainland experience changes to their experience of their culture over time. All storytellers in this study had been living in the Lower Mainland for one and a half to four years when they were interviewed. Storytellers shared how being relocated has affected their experience with their language, family, and connection to the land. Many storytellers shared of losing cultural practices and also gaining new practices. Most storytellers expressed a desire to participate in cultural practices but that some practices were not available to them in the Lower Mainland.

Language

Some storytellers reflected on how they lost the ability to speak their language. These storytellers shared that by moving to the Lower Mainland, they were no longer in regular contact with language speakers and so they lost the ability to speak and understand their language. One storyteller described that she lost the ability to speak and understand her language of Tłı̨chǫ and that she is now learning a new language in her school. She shared since moving to the Lower Mainland, “there was no one like talking to me in my language so I feel coming, I just don't understand it.” She added, “I'm learning to do French.” This storyteller shared that she feels less connected to her culture since moving to the Lower Mainland because no one is talking to her in her language. Another storyteller shared she lost the ability to speak and learn her language

when she moved schools within Yellowknife and that since moving to the Lower Mainland she never again gained access to learning the language.

Losing cultural practices and gaining

Storytellers described both losing cultural practices and gaining cultural practices since moving to the Lower Mainland. Kayla shared:

> moving here in the Lower Mainland it like, it gave me new experiences with my culture, so I kind of learned, well I'm still learning a lot about my culture and a lot about other different cultures. So then I think it's a good thing.

One storyteller who had been living in the Lower Mainland for almost four years, reflected on her time and experience with her culture. She shared how she lost the ability to speak and learn her language and, since moving to the Lower Mainland, she connected more with other aspects of her culture. She shared, “I went to different conferences, I met a lady who teaches me about like different cultures, and so, I don't know, I'm more into my culture than I've ever been.” When asked about the lady who teaches her, the storyteller added, “She taught me cultural dance, she taught me traditional beading, she like teaches me like medicine. Like different types of medicines and teas and certain things that will help you that's from the land.” One storyteller shared that moving to the Lower Mainland allowed her to have more access to her culture. She shared:

> I think the move, coming down here, made it much more easier for me to learn more things because in Yellowknife, the part where, there's one place that I was living at which, there was not a lot of Aboriginals, there's a lot of different religion. So I learned more about, um, I don't know, I learned more about other cultures than I did about mine, cause there's certain areas in Yellowknife that the population of Aboriginals is like a lot and then certain where there's not a lot. So yeah, I think it's better that I moved down here cause then I got more, I don't know, I got more support in my culture. (Storyteller)

This storyteller also reflected on how she has become open to other cultures. She shared:

> I think the different cultures that are here in Vancouver, or the Lower Mainland, I think the different cultures have opened me up to learning a lot, a lot of different things about different areas and like different people. I understand more. (Storyteller)

Another storyteller also described meeting with a lady who teaches her beading since moving to the Lower Mainland. She shared, “I use to do sweat lodges in Yellowknife and Ft. Smith and now I don't. The only thing I really do with my culture is beading, that's about it.” This storyteller shared how she stopped engaging in some practices that had been important to her when she lived in Yellowknife and during treatment. She also shared how she has started to practice beading since moving to the Lower Mainland.

Desire to participate but not offered

Some storytellers expressed a desire to practice aspects of their culture that they did in their hometown but that it was not available to them in the Lower Mainland. As previously mentioned, storytellers shared of no longer having access to learning their language, participating in smudging, and participating in sweat lodges. Some storytellers shared about their language and how moving to the Lower Mainland moved them away from the language speakers in their home communities. Another storyteller shared how she use to participate in sweat lodges and smudge in her hometown with her family and desires to do this practice. For this storyteller, the cultural practices were connected to her family. She shared, “I don’t know I just, I just don't do it. I use to do it with my family. So, I just don't do it anymore.” She added, “I don't really do it anymore like I don't do anything to do with my culture anymore.” Referring to her cultural connection, she added, “It kind of like went down when I moved here I guess. Like not went down but like I don't really practice anything anymore.” This storyteller expressed a desire to participate in practices that she did with her family. She shared, “I don't know I'd like to, I'd like to start doing stuff like maybe like go to sweat lodges or something or start smudging again.” Storytellers shared of desires to engage in aspects of their culture that were not available to them in the Lower Mainland.

Family

All storytellers described how their connection with their families have been affected since moving to the Lower Mainland. Some storytellers reflected on moving closer to family, having access to family visits, and losing the ability to practice cultural activities with their families. One storyteller shared how she was relocated to the Lower Mainland with her younger sister. Another storyteller shared that her older sister had already been previously relocated and that moving to the Lower Mainland allowed them

to reconnect and live closer to each other. One storyteller reflected on how she use to engage in cultural ceremonies with her family when she lived in her hometown but now that she lives in the Lower Mainland she does not have access to this practice with her family. Some storytellers were able to be closer to certain family members and others lost contact with family members.

Land, climate, and city life

Some storytellers reflected on how they have not been able to adjust to the land, climate and city life over the years. One storyteller shared that she felt less connected to her culture because of the lack of snow in the Lower Mainland. When asked why she said she felt less connected to her culture, Jade shared, “Well I miss being around the snow.” Similarly, Kayla shared how it took her a long time to adjust and she is not able to get use to the rain in the Lower Mainland. Kayla shared,

> I think I'm just starting to get use to it now. I'm not use to the weather yet, but, I am use to most things here. I do not like the rain. I can't stand it but other than that, it's okay. I'm use to everything else. (Kayla)

One storyteller reflected on moving to the big city in the Lower Mainland. Kayla shared:

> It was hard. It was really hard moving from one small thing to a small town to a very big town. Well it's not even a town it's like a city, but, I don't know it was just, very strange. But it's really good. (Kayla)

Moving to a new city and adjusting to the landscape, climate, and busyess was difficult for storytellers and some storytellers feel less connected to their culture as a result of relocating.

Stopped attending Church

One storyteller shared how she attended church in the Northwest Territories but does not attend church in the Lower Mainland. She shared a picture of her church from her hometown, “this is the church I went to in Yellowknife and it's called Church of Christ. Yeah, so I don't go to any other churches but this church.” She shared how she will only attend this specific church and she does not have access to it in the Lower Mainland. She shared, “I don't go to church here at all I, the only church I'll go to is this one.”

Shifts in Attitude About Relocation

Don’t Regret, good thing, and helpful

Most storytellers reflected on their attitude towards moving to the Lower Mainland. These storytellers shared how they looked back and viewed their relocation to the Lower Mainland as helpful. Storytellers had been living in the Lower Mainland for one and a half to four years at the time of being interviewed. Storytellers who were older shared how their attitude towards relocating has changed. One storyteller who has been living in the Lower Mainland for almost four years shared:

> at first, I don't know, I got pretty angry for a while, I wasn't really a happy kid, but after like a couple months, or a few months, I realized this was for the better so then I kind of like, I was okay with it and then now, I don't know, I think it was like a really good move and I don't regret it, at all. (Storyteller)

She emphasized that it was hard at first:

> it was hard. It was really hard moving from one small thing to a small town to a very big town. Well it's not even a town it's like a city, but, I don't know it was just, very strange. But it's really good. (Storyteller)

Another storyteller who had been living in the Lower Mainland for four years shared how the move was helpful. She shared, “moving out of Yellowknife was really helpful.” When asked why the move was helpful, the storyteller responded:

> Because I hate Yellowknife, it's just the same stuff, like I don't know like people are shady and they're doing the same stuff they were when I left. So, nobody's changed. I don't want to move back. I never do. No. (Storyteller)

Similarly, another storyteller who had been living in the Lower Mainland for one and a half years also shared:

> it was kind of scary like I wanted to stay back in Yellowknife and stay with my friends but, now that I'm here and I look back there's a lot more drama back in Yellowknife. So it's a good thing I'm staying here and having to visit Yellowknife sometimes. (Storyteller)

All storytellers shared how, over time, they viewed the move as helpful overall.

School

Many storytellers reflected on their experience of attending school in the Lower Mainland over the years. Storytellers described aspects of their school experiences that were helpful. One storyteller shared her experience of attending a new school in the Lower Mainland. She shared, “I met the principal before I started high school. I met the principal and I got to know some teachers before I started there so, I made a few connections so like that made it easier.” Many storytellers shared that their experiences attending school has improved. One storyteller shared her view on how the move to the Lower Mainland has impacted her experience with education. She shared:

> it made me more open to possibilities, and I think for education wise. I think it was a really good move for that because a lot more education, is more, teachers who went to school longer and have like a better schooling so then how they teach is, they’re more open to teaching somebody who learns this way or that way so I thought that was better for me. (Kayla)

Several storytellers shared that they were attending school more since moving to the Lower Mainland and many shared how they are going to graduate this year. One storyteller shared about changing her mind about school. She stated, “I changed my thought of dropping out.” This storyteller had attended different schools in treatment and in custody and had previously decided to drop out of school when she was off probation. She shared, “when I was fifteen yeah, I wanted to drop out of school. I don't know I just, cause I could I guess hehe. But yeah, now I'm almost graduated.”

Changes and Learnings Over time

Young girls who relocate to the Lower Mainland from the Northwest Territories experience changes over time. All storytellers shared about changes they noticed and things they have learned over time during their experience of relocation.

Gaining independence and growing up

Several storytellers shared how they became more independent and grew up from relocating to the Lower Mainland. Kayla shared:

> I became a lot more independent when I came here. Because bigger city, which then, if you want to experience something you have to be like independent and like, be like strong about yourself. So I think I

> became a lot more independent a lot faster than I thought I'd be when I, if I was home. (Kayla)

Similarly, Farah shared, “yeah I grew up.” She continued, “I don't know I think I just like grew up you know, it's changed me a lot I guess. I'm not young and dumb anymore.”

Trust and give people a chance

Several storytellers shared how during their process of relocation they learned to trust or give others a chance. Kayla shared about her experience with her caregiver in the Lower Mainland:

> once you do get to know her and you think that she's like good for you to stay with then I'd say like give them a chance. Which I didn't really do, but I eventually did after a few years. (Kayla)

Similarly, Ashley shared how she learned to trust people when she was in treatment. She shared:

> this is where I actually got to learn to trust people, like the staff and everyone, and they said if you need help or need someone to talk to I'm here for you and I said okay. So I felt really comfortable there and that's where I started to learn to trust people. (Ashley)

Got help in treatment

Some storytellers shared how they attended treatment centers during their relocation experience. One storyteller reflected on her experience of getting help in treatment. She shared:

> the things that helped me honestly, was the staff that was at the treatment. Um, mostly in Foothills and Stabe. Um, helped me get through the things I needed to get help with and I was actually surprised that I got help and, I don't think anyone can do that. I don't know. (Storyteller)

She shared how she developed other coping skills and stopped self-harming behaviors. She shared what she learned:

> mostly about cutting, cause, that's really, that really does nothing but scar and leave bad memories like, you're giving the dark side to one half of your body and, the other half of your body is the bright side, well sometimes you look at the dark side and sometimes you look at the bright side, but, I pretty much, 25% look at the dark side and 75% look at the bright side. (Storyteller)

She shared what she learned about cutting:

> like cutting does nothing but leave scars like, if you don't have scars from cutting then you weren't really cutting, you didn't have that much problems. Um, or, you were talking to someone about it and, went half way through and didn't continue to talk about it. Like, if someone had like bigger problems than I have and they were talking to someone about it and they got triggered and they said I don't want to talk about this anymore and just walked off and didn't continue about it. (Storyteller)

Temperament and appetite

One storyteller shared how she noticed her temperament and appetite changed when she relocated to the Lower Mainland. She shared:

> for some reason I got, a little bit meaner, I don't know how but I wasn't as mean, I wasn't like mean at all when I was at Rae but when I started, when I moved to, um BC I started grow mean. I don't know why. (Storyteller)

She added:

> at first when I moved there, on the first day of school I started to grow mean, I don't know why. And then, yeah I started to grow mean, then, um, I just don't know why I became mean all of a sudden. (Storyteller)

This storyteller shared that she noticed she became meaner and shyer. She also shared how her appetite has changed since moving to the Lower Mainland. She shared, “my appetite. I barely eat much. From the first time we got here I eat anything on the plane. Now I'm really picky.” She compared this to when she lived in the north and she shared, “I wasn't picky at all.” This storyteller experienced changes over time to her temperament and appetite during her experience of relocation to the Lower Mainland.

Grew out of thug life

One storyteller reflected on her experience of growing out of her thug life. She shared, “I just grew up. I grew out of my thug life phase. Gangster phase. I am no longer a gangster anymore. I'm just (name).” This storyteller had been in custody a few times over her relocation process. She reflected on her last incarceration in the Lower Mainland, “once for a month and a half, that was shit. That changed me actually too.” When asked how that changed her she added:

> I stopped getting in trouble with the law like I stopped getting breaches. Yeah when I got out, I'm now off probation, I've been off probation for almost three years now. Yeah so I feel like that changed me too. (Storyteller)

She reflected on how she has made some better choices, “I learned to grow up I guess. Yeah I learned to make better choices. I'm off probation and I'm graduating.”

Life skills

One storyteller pointed out that she had learned many life skills since relocating to the Lower Mainland. She shared, “I learned, I don't know like life skills I guess.” She added:

> my boyfriend is teaching me how to cook. How to make food. I can make spaghetti now like all the veggies in it and everything. I can make no bake mini Oreo cheesecakes. I can make tacos, I can make a bunch of stuff, skillets, I can make quesadillas I can make lots of stuff. (Storyteller)

She added, “how to budget I guess, yeah budget. I learned how to properly budget groceries like I do, I walk around with a calculator so I know exactly how much I'm spending.” She continued, “I had a job so I learned yeah I had my first job. Sixteen I think was my first job. I worked at a pizza place, food truck pizza place so that was pretty fun actually.” She reflected how she wants to get another job and what she learned from her first job. She shared:

> sadly I am not currently working. I want to get a job though. So yeah I had my first job, I learned that if you say you're coming in a day you can't just not show up cause you'll get fired. (Storyteller)

She shared a few more life skills she learned, “I learned how to build a resume, I kind of learned how to do my taxes. Yeah there's a website you can do it on.” She also shared how she volunteered to help hand out food to homeless individuals. She reflected on this experience, “I learned to give back I guess.” This storyteller shared about the many life skills she learned over her relocation process.

Quit smoking

One storyteller shared how she quit smoking during her process of relocation. She shared, “I use to be a smoker. I use to smoke two packs a day.” When asked about her current experience with smoking she replied, “I don't smoke.”

The themes discussed in the above section are presented in Figure 6.

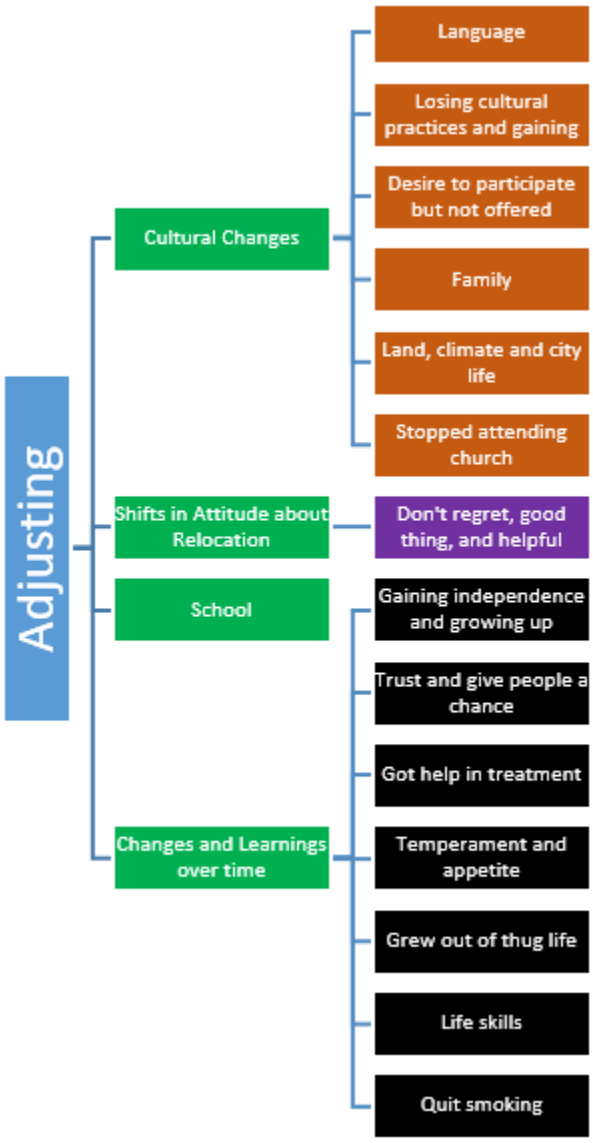

Figure 6: Adjusting Themes

Adjustment Information from Professional Knowledge Holders

Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed aspects of the adjustment process. Interviews highlighted the adjustments to culture, access to opportunities, length of placements, program adjustments, and future changes.

Culture

School and culture

A professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland revealed how some youth adjust to school and cultural experiences in the Lower Mainland over time. The professional knowledge holder reflected on her experience working with children and youth from the north who have relocated to the Lower Mainland. She shared:

> I see those kids just come out of their fear and come out of their isolation and they get to experience joy and they get to experience what it means to have a birthday party and have friends and have a teacher that shows up every day and cares about them you know, from elementary school and sort of see them transition and graduate high school and get awards for being leaders in their school around their culture, the pride that's attached to their culture, that they become leaders within their graduating class. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder specifically drew on her experience working with one youth. The professional knowledge holder highlighted the support that participants receive with school in the Lower Mainland versus in the north. She added:

> we had one young woman, when we were up at SFU for the graduation and in front of two thousand people she was recognized as an Indigenous woman with these unbelievable goals and it had a standing ovation from the graduating class and all the audience members around the work and the progress that she had done over her three years at that one school, she'll never forget that and it will be imprinted in her and be a sort of a, like her jumping off point had far exceeded where she ever would have come having stayed in that community that was just so broken. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Family and community

A professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland revealed how youth adjust to living with caregivers in the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> so I think girls that can come down, the girls that I've worked with that have come down here and they, they have the stability of a home and truly what that means is just to have people in it that care about you. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder highlighted the process of adjusting to a new home and the battle that she observes within youth. She added:

> when I've worked with lots of kids who sort of had that internal battle around this isn't my family, this isn't my community and try to get them to see that family is just people that share a roof who have common values and common interests and care about each other, it doesn't have to be who you're born from and when I can get them to make that paradigm shift and their thinking around that they're worth being cared about, and worth being loved and worth having you know, someone to have positive influence with them, they start to buy in a little bit more around what we can offer and what opportunities are here. And never take away that hope that they could go back with the new skills that they've learned here and maybe help fix their home communities. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Intending to Create Opportunities and Relationships

A professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared how youth adjust to the different opportunities available to them in the Lower Mainland. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> for me it's more about, it's that opportunity that every kid from a northern community or from the Northwest Territories or from you know, Prince George it wouldn't matter, for them to have opportunity that just isn't at their back door but is an imperative part of growth and feeling valued and I want all of our girls here to feel valued and feel connected. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder also highlighted the importance of relationships in the adjustment process. The professional knowledge holder added:

> I watch it all the time with different youth workers and certainly with their caregivers. They become you know, like sort of an auntie or a family friend that, and I said all of us are here to do is just provide them with what they need around support and guidance and you know for each of our caregivers and each of the staff they approach it differently but that's essentially what it is we all just sort of got our arms out and sort of directing all of our kids in a way we know is best to keep them out of harm and keep them safe and again sort of provide that opportunity that they never would be exposed to or have access to living in their communities back up north. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Long Term Placements and Program Adjustments

Professional knowledge holder interviews outlined how many children and youth who are relocated to the Lower Mainland will stay in the Lower Mainland long term. A professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories, Andy Langford, shared his views related to long term placements and access to services. He shared, "part of the reason that they stay has to do with the fact that there's a much broader range of

services available to them in Vancouver than there would be in their home community." The professional knowledge holder highlighted the difference in population size from the Northwest Territories compared to the Lower Mainland and how this affects services that can be provided to children and youth. He added:

> keep in mind when we talk home community, the average community size, I mean there's thirty-three communities in the NWT and the average community size would be about a community of five to six hundred people. Now in a community of five to six hundred people there is absolutely no way you're going to have the range of services that are available in a large city like Vancouver. Just not going to happen. Even BC faces the same problem. Take a look at some of the communities in northern British Columbia, they don't have the resources that Vancouver does. (Andy Langford)

Similarly, a professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared that children and youth who relocate to the Lower Mainland will stay for long term placements. The professional knowledge holder reflected on her experience working with children and youth from the north and the time they spend in the Lower Mainland. She shared:

> it varies but typically they're long term placements, multiple years, and again depending on when the kids come down, and currently kids in the Northwest Territories can stay in care up until the age of twenty four. So that's pretty new as of April. Kids can stay on a youth agreement until twenty four and before they would maybe qualify for adult services or independence. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland added that the program is adjusting to this shift. She added:

> so it's kind of new territory for [Program Name] in having kids that would be an adult in BC but in the youth program in the north, typically when kids have turned nineteen they would stay in the adult program but go to our [Program Name] program so we haven't encountered yet a kid aging out at nineteen. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder also highlighted the importance of keeping services constant as youth grow older and how the program aims to provide continuing support to youth. She added, "at nineteen and one day their needs don't change, their caregiver shouldn't change, and all of their supports should maintain and be there just as long as the kids need them or are in our program." This professional knowledge holder

added how the program is flexible in adapting to the changing needs of participants. She shared:

> we're sort of fine tuning what it's going to look like for kids that are in that new age bracket for the north. Sort of having maybe a graduated [Program Name] program where kids are in between that transition of a youth program and going into [Program Name]. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland reflected on her experience working with youth and when some return to their home communities. She shared:

> we've had kids that have been with me for as long as I've been in this program and I know some of them have gone on to [Program Name], maybe two or three that have returned home to the north, usually not with great outcome because when they're returning home most of their supports and all the structure that they've had while they've been here disappears and they just don't yet have the capacity to do that on their own so many have come back and re-entered through the [Program Name] program.(Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder reflected on one experience where a youth from the north became a BC resident. She shared, “one that stayed here and became a BC resident which is not typical. Most of our kids maintain their Northwest Territories residency because it's attached to their healthcare card and many different supports.” She reflected on another youth who was in the program. She shared, “another one that stayed here and was independent, went to school, and was supported by the north to do all of her schooling and they paid for her housing.”

The professional knowledge holder interviews highlighted the need for supports for youth. The professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared:

> the majority of the kids that are coming into [Program Name] need life-long support so it might not be as hands on or close as it was when they were fifteen but even at twenty and twenty-one their needing someone to help them cook and manage a bank account and maintain proper friends and not be taken advantage of. They just don't have that kind of support mechanism built into just regular foster care in the north, never mind adult services. So some of the kids they move from being a center point in many of the family caregiver’s homes to maybe living in a downstairs suite, and they’re looking after their breakfast and lunch but then eat dinner with the caregivers and they’re in supported work environments. Some of them are in post-

> secondary school that focus on youth or young adults with disabilities. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

More strategic placements

A professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland shared about the adjustments that have been made over time to the program. The professional knowledge holder highlighted that the decision to relocate a young person is given more consideration that in the past for the success of placements. She shared:

> I think they're being a lot more strategic about who they send, which I think it creates a deeper appreciation for our BC ministry around why these kids need to come out of these pretty broken communities and have access to the supports that they just, not that they can't get them there, they just don't have them there in many of these communities. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

My Work Experience with Youth Who Adjusted to Living in the Lower Mainland

Over my three years of work experience with youth from the north, I had the opportunity of watching youth adjust to living in the Lower Mainland. I worked with some youth on a consistent basis over three years. Many of the activities we engaged in on a weekly basis included driving youth to school, tutoring, counselling appointments, doctors' appointments, and various other appointments. I spent a great deal of time with youth in my car, getting coffee, and driving to various appointments. We would spend time talking, listening to music, and getting them ready for whichever appointment they were going to attend. Sometimes youth would have difficulty attending school and various other activities in their schedule, so part of my job was to pick them up and make the transition easier by providing a coffee and a chat along the way. We would also engage in more leisure activities together such as hikes, swimming, and visiting various museums and attractions in the Lower Mainland. Several youth that I worked with had ongoing legal involvement and dealt with being subpoenaed for court in their home towns. I supported a few youth during this process and attended court with a youth in her home town in the north. Another aspect of my work was taking youth to cultural classes with a Métis cultural teacher. I enjoyed these classes as they allowed me to learn more about my Métis culture. Over the years I worked in the program, I helped facilitate some reverse visits with youth and family members who came to visit in the Lower Mainland. These visits usually involved taking the youth and the family member

on outings in the community. While I was working in the program, we started making memory projects with the youth. The memory projects I participated in were creating scrapbooks with the youth. This was an enjoyable part of my job as many of the youth loved to take pictures of what we would do together, get them printed, and then work on the scrapbooks together. Another aspect of my job included monitoring some youth while they were out in the community. Some youth who moved to the Lower Mainland would take off from their foster homes for periods of time and when that youth was on my caseload, I would spend time looking for that youth in the community and phoning the police. This part of my job was stressful as I was often concerned for their safety when they were missing. My work experience with youth provided me with a variety of experiences related to supporting youth in adjusting to living in the Lower Mainland.

Advice from Storytellers Based on Relocation Experiences

Storytellers who relocated to the Lower Mainland offered advice based on their experiences. Storytellers shared about their experiences of leaving, arriving and adjusting. After reflecting on these aspects of their relocation stories, storytellers also reflected on their experiences and offered advice to youth and service providers. Storytellers shared advice for youth who may go through the same relocation process. Storytellers also shared advice for service providers who are involved in relocating youth to the Lower Mainland.

Advice for Youth

Try best/do it right

Some storytellers shared advice to youth around trying their best and doing it right. One storyteller shared:

> you just gotta deal with it and if you do it right then it wouldn't be as hard and they're sometimes strict on how you um, sleep, but if you like, if you listen very well and, um, you pay attention and then they tell you what to do and then if you do it right then they won't get mad at you. (Storyteller)

Ashley shared, "I would say, just try their best to like keep their head held high."

Participate, give them a chance, and words of encouragement

Most storytellers shared encouraging advice to participate in the program based on their experience. Kayla advised youth to get to know their caregiver's and give them a chance. Similarly, Farah advised youth to participate in the program and follow the rules. Farah, shared, "they should, I don't know, participate in the program I guess and just follow the rules, it would just make it a lot easier." She added:

> yeah, and not take off cause if you take off that will just result in you moving home. Yeah, or moving somewhere else I don't know. I almost got sent home. Yeah, and my friend also got sent home for taking off too much. (Farah)

She also added a caution for youth, "don't try to take off. If you like it here you'll get moved back. Most of the places they move from are pretty shitty and BC's where it's at." Lastly, she encouraged youth to take advantage of the resources in the program. Farah shared, "just go out and live I guess, like go do stuff with your youth workers I guess. They do fun stuff." Another storyteller added her words of encouragement. Jade shared, "well I would say, um it's alright you don't have to be afraid cause I've done it before and it's not as bad, and, yeah."

Say something and don't be scared to talk

Some storytellers advised youth to use their voices and speak out about what they need. One youth reflected on her experience in a foster home. She shared, "and if you feel comfortable at that house then it's a really good fit but if you don't then like say something so then you don't have to go through a lot of experiences that are negative." She also advised youth to talk about what is going on and not to be afraid to speak out. She added, "and don't be scared to like talk cause a lot of things, a lot of people will be on your side than against you." Similarly, Ashley encouraged youth to talk to an adult if things are not going well. Ashley shared, "talk to an adult before it gets worse and worse and learn that there are happy, colorful sides and, not having to keep coloring it black and stay in the dark side." One storyteller advised youth to talk about things based on her own experience with self-harming. She advised:

> But now that I look back and say I use to cut, I have scars. What's the whole point, you could just talk about it. Yeah, cause it leaves scars and sometimes it could trigger you and brings back memories but, for me it's like oh I use to cut, there's a story behind that, it's not triggering. (Storyteller)

One step at a time

One storyteller shared about the importance of taking things slow. She cautioned youth on how hard it will be when they first move. She advised, “I would say just take once step at a time. Cause like, cause when you first move it will be extremely hard not knowing anybody. So then like, don't push anything too fast (Kayla).” She offered this advice based on her experience. She shared:

> for me it was like a rush it was like one thing after the next after the next after the next. I think taking one step, or like one question, or one experience is like, make the time go longer so you understand it, instead of having everything mashed into your head and then trying to unscramble something. It makes a person very confused. (Kayla)

Advice for Service Providers

Listen and be open to hearing

Some storytellers shared advice related to the importance of service providers being open to hearing from children and youth. One storyteller reflected on her arrival to the Lower Mainland and how it was difficult when she did not feel heard. Kayla shared:

> I think for when they get here, I'd say um, being, whoever's picking them up on the other side, if it's like the new caregiver, or like the new social worker here, youth worker, anybody like that, I think they then need to be more open to hearing what the child needs to say or the youth needs to say. Cause then it's like more, it's extremely difficult when nobody's listening to you. (Kayla)

Kayla also added, “I think it would be better if somebody actually listens instead of telling the person what to do.” Similarly, Ashley advised service providers to ask children and youth who relocate to share how they are doing. Ashley advised, “I would just say ask how they’re feeling and what do they want to do at that moment and, just ask what their emotions are.”

More preparation time before moving

One storyteller advised that it would be helpful to have more preparation time before moving. She shared:

> I would say preparation time like, from the time they get told that they’re going to move to the time they’re actually going to be on the

> plane to moving. I think they need a lot more time so they can like, know what they're expecting and stuff. (Storyteller)

Time to know what to expect was important for this storyteller as she found out she was moving a few days before being relocated to the Lower Mainland

Time to adjust

Some storytellers advised that it would be helpful for children and youth to have time to transition and adjust once they arrived in the Lower Mainland. One storyteller shared, "have time to adjust to the environment and everything." She added:

> for me it was my caregiver. I think that transition from being, honestly, I had like a new social worker at that time too, so having new social worker, then moving, and then meeting a new caregiver, it was just, all of a sudden it like, it was like way too fast for me to digest everything in my mind. And like, how my, my caregiver, she was rushing everything all at once so it was like, really hard for me to catch up to reality I guess you could say. Cause then having like a move and then somebody rushing you to adjust to this place and then getting all these questions asked all at once is like, think it's a bit of, a little too much for the person. (Storyteller)

Another storyteller shared that having time to unpack helped her adjust. Jade shared, "when I got there, the thing that was helpful for me is my own privacy and, um, and I need some alone time. And, and I also need to unpack cause I was also confused."

Community tour

One storyteller advised that it would help children and youth to transition by providing a community tour. She shared how a community tour could be helpful for youth to adjust to the new environment. She shared, "I think one of the things that I would have liked is a tour around the community you're going to be living in. I never had that but I wish I did." She added:

> I think that would be really helpful. Cause, where you live and where let's say, the mall, or like your school, the library, or any place that you really hang out with, or feel comfortable going, I think it'd be nice where those, those things are. Um, just like knowing where you are so if you're lost you know where one, like, where one thing is then you can go there and then be like oh I'm here, I'm stuck I don't know what to do. So I think it'd be easier for the person to know where they are and like how far one store is to the next. (Storyteller)

Hard moving back and forth

One storyteller wanted service providers to know that it was hard on her to have multiple moves in foster care. Jade shared, “well it's been really, really hard moving back and forth to a new place.” Jade, like all the storytellers, had been in multiple foster placements before moving to the Lower Mainland. She added that moving around was also scary and annoying. Jade shared, “and, um, it's been really scary and annoying when you keep moving to a place.”

Do what you say you’re going to do

One storyteller reflected on her experience and shared about the importance of service providers keeping to their word. She shared about times that service providers told her they would do a certain thing by a certain time and then did not follow through and how this was difficult for her. The storyteller shared, “I wish (service provider) would do what she says she was going to do.” She added, “she's really forgetful sometimes.” She described a scenario where the service provider told her she would do something by a certain date but did not follow through. It was important for this storyteller that service providers keep their word.

Access to cultural practices

One storyteller shared her experience of losing access to her cultural practices that she participated in. She shared that she would like to engage in these practices again. The storyteller shared, “I don't know I'd like to, I'd like to start doing stuff like maybe like go to sweat lodges or something or start smudging again.”

Keep youth occupied

Ashley advised about the importance of engaging children and youth in activities. She advised:

> yeah, like if they’re alone and they’re not talking to anyone then, try and talk to them even though they don't want you to talk or anything, I don't know. Just try talk to them and see if they’re okay, how their emotions are, and try to keep them happy, and keep them occupied. (Ashley)

Ashley continued with examples, “like craft stuff, anything, crafty like, do things with their hands and like do you wanna like make snowflakes or do you want to draw

something, something like that." One storyteller reflected on her time in treatment and advised service providers to keep an eye on the youth. She shared:

> the thing is, um, they need to be, the one in treatment, they need to actually keep their sharp eye on the youth cause, what I was doing saying oh I wanna grab this, or I forgot this here, that's where the sharpeners were. And I just take them and sneak them. But now that I look back and say I use to cut, I have scars. What's the whole point, you could just talk about it. (Storyteller)

Storytellers shared suggestions and advice for youth as well as service providers. Storytellers reflected on their experiences and shared ideas that could have made the different stages of relocation easier for them such as more preparation time, time to adjust, a tour around the community, taking things one step at a time, and being able to share what they are going through.

The themes discussed in the above section on advice are presented in Figure 7.

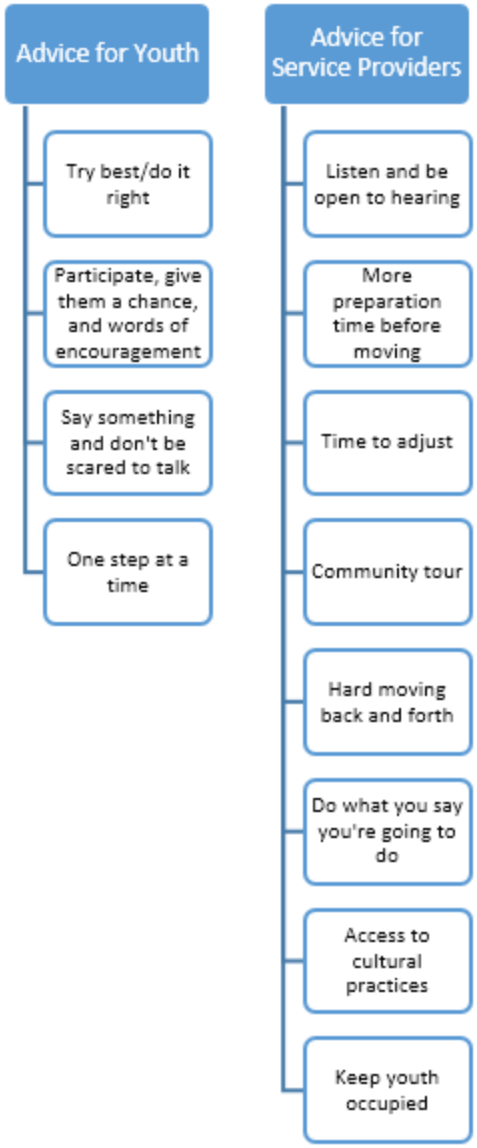

Figure 7: Advice Themes

Moving Forward and Looking Back

Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed information regarding mental health and addictions services for residents in the Northwest Territories as well as the relocation of Aboriginal children in foster care.

Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services

According to the 2015-2016 Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services (Government of Northwest Territories, 2016), 78% of child placements were

within their home communities for 2015-2016. This is based on the 942 children that received services under the Child and Family Services Act in 2015-2016. Out of the 942 children who received services, some received services in their homes, in group homes, in treatment centers, and in foster care. The percentage has been 52%-55% across the last ten years. According to the report, in the last fiscal year, placements of children outside of the Northwest Territories were at 8%. Placements of children within the NWT but outside of their home communities were at 14%. The exact number of children placed in the Lower Mainland was not publically available.

Mental Health and Addictions Services

A professional knowledge holder from the regional office in the Northwest Territories shared of upcoming adjustments to the mental health and addictions services for children and youth in the Northwest Territories. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> another piece of context comes out of the mental health and addictions side of the equation where mental health and addictions has landed as one of the top priorities for the current government of the Northwest Territories, and in particular for our current Minister of Health and Social Services. We are in the process of developing a ten year strategic framework for mental health and addictions and falling out of that framework within the next six months will be an action plan that is specific to meeting the mental health and addictions treatment needs of children and youth. So I think the youth who are currently being served in the Out of Territories Program will be considered front and center as part of that action plan. (Andy Langford)

This professional knowledge holder highlighted this new information and how it addresses services for children and youth. He added, “I think it's very good news. I think it's recognition that children and youth have historically been underserviced and not just in this jurisdiction, in many Canadian jurisdictions. Recognition that there's a government-wide responsiveness to that.”

Relocation of Aboriginal Children and Residential Schools

The professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories discussed the issue of residential placements and removing Aboriginal children from their homes and communities. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> the other piece of context, especially when we talk about residential placements, there is a long and very uncomfortable history particularly with Aboriginal people, Aboriginal children and youth who were taken away from their homes and their families and placed in residential schools. The impacts of that have been quite negative and are intergenerational so there's a sensitivity to residential placements, away from parents and families that we struggle with. (Andy Langford)

Further, this professional knowledge holder highlighted the importance of the findings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and he added that it is a "very important context for us in the north."

Similarly, the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland addressed the comparison of the current relocation of Aboriginal children in foster care and residential schools. The professional knowledge holder shared:

> I get challenged often with, now that we have this role of the courtesy social worker and we work with many of them who don't support or agree with the idea of kids coming from out of community to the Lower Mainland and sort of make parallels between that and kids going to a residential school. That coming out of community, I think it's a pretty big stretch. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

This professional knowledge holder shared that she disagrees with this comparison based on her experience of travelling to the north. She added:

> I've been up north five times and seen so many of these communities and it's not a question of, like in their lifetime it will never correct itself. And so I always sort of look at kids coming from out of community, and it's very often a last resort, if they had the homes, if they had the proper schools then kids would stay there but they don't and like I said, in their lifetime they never will. It's an infrastructure piece, it's a funding piece, it's a population piece that I don't necessarily have the answer to but it doesn't mean that these kids don't deserve the opportunities that our kids from Richmond and Vancouver and New West all get. (Lower Mainland social service agency employee)

Summary

As presented, storytellers shared their stories of relocation and provided detailed advice for youth and service providers. In the following chapter, I discuss the findings of this study in relation to the relevant literature as well as the implications, strengths and limitations, and ideas for future research.

Chapter 5.

Discussion

> *"…a good story can reach into your heart, mind and soul, and really make you think hard about yourself in relationship to the world." (Lorna Mathias, 1992, 79, as cited in Archibald, 2008).*

Sharing what I have learned is an important Indigenous tradition and I do this with compassion for others (Archibald, 2008). In this study, I explored the central research question: What stories of relocation are told by female Indigenous youth in foster care who have relocated from rural northern communities and are residing in a Lower Mainland residential program? This study aimed to allow girls to share their stories and focus on important components of their relocation process, reflected needs and sources of support, as well as their cultural connection before, during and after relocation. The girls' stories revealed three major aspects of the relocation process for Indigenous female youth in foster care relocating from the Northwest Territories to the Lower Mainland: leaving, arriving and adjusting. The following is a discussion of themes within the three major aspects of the relocation process. I end this section by presenting implications for those who interact with this population, discussing limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Leaving: Forced move/disruptive

I reflected on the stories of leaving that storytellers shared with me and found a theme that leaving their home communities was forced and disruptive. Storytellers shared they felt forced due to the lack of options or the move not being presented as a choice. Storytellers shared of previous disruptions to their living situations from being in several foster placements, school disruptions, relocating to access treatment, and being incarcerated. This theme of forced and disrupted reminded me of the experiences of residential school survivors and their experiences being taken from their families and placed in residential schools. As the storytellers shared the parts of their stories about leaving, I realized that forced relocation and disruption still continues to occur for Indigenous people. Like the storytellers in this study, previous Indigenous groups were

forcefully relocated to places they were unfamiliar with such as reserves and their children placed in residential schools (Duran & Duran, 1995; Glenn, 2011).

The storytellers in this study shared their experiences of forceful relocation and disruption during the process of leaving their home communities. The literature echoes that Indigenous communities continue to be impacted by colonialism and relocation (Lavoie et al., 2015; Snyder & Wilson, 2015).

Professional knowledge holders

Interviews with professional knowledge holders outlined that the current process of relocation for youth in care has changed due to the interprovincial agreement. A professional knowledge holder shared that the interprovincial agreement outlines that services and supports need to be set up before an individual is relocated to a new community and that this process is now taking between six to eight weeks. This stood out to me as different than the experiences of some storytellers who shared that they were told a few days or one day before. Hearing about the interprovincial agreement made me wonder if children and youth being relocated recently have had the same experiences as the storytellers involved in this study?

Another professional knowledge holder interview outlined that by having out of province services, residents of the Northwest Territories are given more options to choose from. In contrast, storytellers in this study did not report any options presented to them in the decision to relocate to the Lower Mainland. This finding reminded me of the literature on neoliberalism and the child welfare system (Bezanson, 2010; Connell, 2010; Haly, 2010; Liebenberg et al., 2015). The professional knowledge holder's emphasis on choice and cost effectiveness were highlighted but I also wonder about the social implications on relationships. This causes me to question if a neoliberal framework is the best way to help people? At the time of writing this thesis, the Canadian Liberal government has continued to delay making changes to providing services for Indigenous children. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's ruling in 2016 found that the federal government provides "inequitable and insufficient" services for Indigenous children (Ostroff, 2017). Money is being spent on neoliberal priorities and Indigenous children continue to suffer. The professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories also spoke of the budget constraints as well as the limited amount

of resources that are factored into the decision to relocate Indigenous children in care. Similarly, the professional knowledge holder from the Lower Mainland pointed out the differences in the education systems in the Lower Mainland versus in the Northwest Territories. This causes me to question what would happen if the Northwest Territories education system and foster care system were resourced to provide adequate care and educational support for Indigenous children and youth? Further, Blackstock calls on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address this issue of "inequitable and insufficient" services for Indigenous children and end racial discrimination by the government towards Indigenous children (Ostroff, 2017).

Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed that many Indigenous children and youth who are relocated to the Lower Mainland from the Northwest Territories will not be repatriated to the north because there are insufficient services to meet their needs. One professional knowledge holder highlighted how the youth in the Lower Mainland program put in a great amount of work into bettering themselves but then return back to a community that cannot support and maintain their growth. This causes me to ask what would it take for communities to be ready for their youth to return home? Further, professional knowledge holders as well as storytellers mentioned how services and supports are more readily available in the Lower Mainland and I wonder how these urban Eurocentric views overlook some of the wonderful strengths in the North?

Further, this discussion of service provision also reminded me of the literature on overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in the Canadian foster care system. The literature suggests that one source of overrepresentation is due to the lack of appropriate community level resources (Fluke et al., 2010). The literature also highlights the tendency for social workers to take a narrow, individualized focus on the scope of the problems and move away from looking at the need for larger community and policy level changes (Johnston & Tester, 2014; Nichols & Cooper, 2011). Similarly, Woolford (2013) argues that to form a better understanding, the Indigenous group context should be considered. This causes me to question what needs to be done to take a step back, remove the narrow focus, and look at larger community and policy level issues that contribute to the high number of youth in care and the practice of removing them from their communities?

Arriving: Hard to Transition

I reflected on the stories of arriving that storytellers shared with me and difficulty with transitioning is a strong theme. Storytellers shared that it was difficult to transition in several areas: people and place, land and climate, language, culture, and school. Storytellers described a rushed pace when arriving in the Lower Mainland and experiencing information overload. This theme of difficulty transitioning also reminded me of the experiences of Indigenous children being placed in residential schools. The placement of Indigenous children in residential schools broke apart Indigenous families by assimilating children into the white worldview (Duran & Duran, 1995). Children going to residential schools experienced tremendous difficulty transitioning to their new environment and setting.

The difficulty in transition experiences shared by storytellers also stood out as similar to experiences of other displaced persons such as refugee youth arriving in a new country. Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed that most youth who are relocated to the Lower Mainland do not return to their home communities because of a lack of resources for them to return to. For this reason, I compare the experiences of the storytellers in this study to those of youth with refugee backgrounds. Refugee youth, as opposed to immigrant youth, do not have the option of returning to their home communities (McWilliams & Bonet, 2016). The storytellers' stories of arrival outlined the importance of knowing people and place when in a new community. This is similar to the experiences of refugee youth settling in their new host country. The literature points out the importance of place and how it contributes to youth feeling at home in their new country (Sampson & Gifford, 2009). Further, Davy et al. (2014) found that the following helped refugee youth's settlement: educational opportunities, the faith of participants, access to family and friends, desires for better futures, and time. Some storytellers in this study shared that when arriving in the Lower Mainland they did not have access to some cultural or spiritual practices or the same connection to friends and family. Also, some youth shared about feeling rushed for time when they first arrived in the Lower Mainland and not being able to process everything that was happening. These are similar experiences that both populations describe and it causes me to question how could the transition experiences be made less difficult for Indigenous youth who are relocated?

Along with the move to the Lower Mainland, all storytellers discussed being moved around to different foster care homes prior to being relocated to the Lower Mainland. The literature also highlighted that youth in the foster care system experience caregiver and placement changes (Garrido et al., 2011; Havlicek, 2011). These stories of multiple moves caused me to question what effects these moves might have on the health of these storytellers? The literature points out that youth who experience several caregiver transitions are at a higher risk of developing behavioral and psychosocial problems (Garrido et al., 2011). The literature also points out that little research has been conducted on the psychological and emotional distress that Indigenous children experience when they are placed in and moved around to different homes in the child welfare system (Tait et al., 2013). Along with the literature, I wonder how these practices effect Indigenous youth in care over their lifespan?

Adjusting: Benefits and Challenges

I reflected on the stories of adjusting that storytellers shared with me and I found a theme that, over time, there were some benefits as well as some challenges to adjusting to living in the Lower Mainland. Some benefits included access to school and graduation, access to treatment centers, gaining independence and growing up, learning life skills, learning new cultural practices, connecting with family, and viewing the move as a good thing over time. Some challenges to adjusting to living in the Lower Mainland included losing the ability to learn and speak their language, losing access to cultural practices, losing connection to family, losing connection to community and land, difficulty adjusting to school, and changes in temperament and appetite.

When the storytellers revealed some of the challenges mentioned, I thought about the effects that these challenges will have on these youth over time. Professional knowledge holder interviews revealed that most youth who are relocated will stay in the Lower Mainland and many will not be repatriated due to lack of supports and resources in the Northwest Territories. This reminded me of the experiences of residential school survivors and their experiences of not being able to return to their home communities and the difficulty some experienced when they did return. This detrimental impact seems to be echoed in the experiences of relocation of Indigenous youth in this study. The challenges faced by the storytellers, combined with the unfortunate fact that most youth will not be able to return to their home communities due to lack of supports,

caused me to question what effect these challenges will have on these girls and future youth who are relocated? My question brought to mind the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action (2015).

In hearing the girls' stories, several articles in the UNDRIP (2007) are in contrast to what is occurring due to the relocation of Indigenous children and youth. These articles include Article 7.2 states (forceful removal of children), Article 8.1 (forced assimilation or destruction of culture), Article 8.2a (depriving cultural values), Article 10 (removed from land and option of return), Article 11 and 12 (practice cultural traditions), Article 13.1 (transmit language), Article 14.3 (access to education in own language), Article 21.2 (improve social conditions for children and youth), Article 24.2 (highest standard of physical and mental health), Article 25 and 26.1 (relationship with land), Article 31 (maintain and develop cultural expression), and Article 33 (identity). Several storytellers reported not having a choice in their relocation. Some storytellers reported losing the ability to speak and access their language after being relocated to the Lower Mainland. Some storytellers discussed not being able to practice their culture in ways that they would back home through language and access to family ceremonies.

What stood out to me most from hearing the girls' stories and reading the UNDRIP (2007) was Article 43 which outlines that these rights are the minimum standards that should be followed for well-being and survival. These rights represent the minimum standards and cause me to question Canada's response since adopting the declaration in 2016. Related, the *TRC* Calls to Action (2015) include recommendations to follow the UNDRIP (2007).

In relation to the UNDRIP (2007) and the TRC (2012), a professional knowledge holder in this study outlined the importance of the TRC and the importance of the Calls to Action (2015) around child welfare. In his interview, the professional knowledge holder from the Northwest Territories was referring to the first five Calls to Action (2015) under the section for child welfare. When I read over the Calls to Action (2015), several of them stood out to me as important for this study. The section on child welfare discusses keeping children in culturally appropriate placements and highlights "regardless of where they reside" (Action 1.2, p. 5). This caused me to wonder about the cultural appropriateness of the homes of the girls in this study which was not addressed

in this study. The Calls to Action (2015) related to considering the legacy of residential schools caused me to question what needs to be done to make sure that Aboriginal children in care do not continue to be forcefully removed from their families, communities, and connection to their culture? Similarly, I wondered how those individuals responsible for Indigenous children and youth in the child welfare system can be reflective on the limitations of their work?

Related to the education section in the TRC Calls to Action (2015), storyteller and professional knowledge holder interviews revealed differences in the education opportunities in the Northwest Territories compared with the education opportunities and supports in the Lower Mainland. The TRC Calls to Action (2015) addresses discrepancies under the recommendations in the education section. Recommendation 8 specifically addresses discrepancies in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on and off reserves. A storyteller shared that when she moved schools in the Northwest Territories, she no longer had access to her language course. Some storytellers shared that by moving to the Lower Mainland they lost the ability to speak and learn their language. Recommendation 10 addresses this issue stating the importance of "protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses (Action 10.4, p.6)." This caused me to question what can the professional knowledge holders and others who work with Indigenous children and youth do to assist in working towards this goal?

The TRC Calls to Action (2015) build upon their recommendation to teach languages in schools and specifically highlight a section on Language and Culture. Action 13 states, "we call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights (Action 10, p. 6)." Similarly, Action 14 addresses several points related to preserving languages and the responsibility of the government to provide funds for language preservation and revitalization. Some storytellers shared of losing the ability to speak and understand their language because they were no longer in contact with language speakers from their home communities since moving to the Lower Mainland. These storytellers' experiences, combined with these TRC Calls to Action (2015) caused me to question what can be done to preserve and revitalize the languages of Indigenous youth like those involved in this study? Specifically, I wonder what social service agencies, such as those involved in this study, might do to take on this Call to Action?

Several storytellers in this study attended treatment centers outside of their home communities because appropriate treatment facilities were not available for them to access. The TRC outlines Calls to Action related to health. Action 21 specifically addresses the priority of funding healing centers in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. All of the storytellers in the study were relocated from the Northwest Territories and many of them attended multiple treatment centers outside of the Northwest Territories. A professional knowledge holder interview also revealed the main treatment facility in the Northwest Territories had been shut down.

Additionally, the literature points out the importance of connection to family and culture as critical to building resilience and fostering healing (Nayar, 2014). The storytellers in this study shared of accessing services out of their home communities and how this affected their connection to family and culture. In the literature on youth in care, it is known that once youth are placed in care their cultural needs are neglected (Tait et al., 2013). The youth in this study shared that some of their cultural needs were neglected and some youth appreciated connecting with new cultural experiences. Having youth access services out of province disconnects them from important requirements for resilience, family and culture (Nayar, 2014). This is similar to residential school survivors who were taken away due to government programs and policies. Survivors of residential school were also disconnected from family and culture and this affected the healing process for many of them (Nayar, 2014). The youth in this study were not forbidden from speaking their language or having a relationship with their culture, but the distance placed between the storytellers and their home communities had the same effects over time. It also stood out to me the lack of institutional responsibility in helping youth have greater access to family and culture. This caused me to wonder how the disconnection from family and culture will affect the healing experiences of girls in this study as well as future relocated Indigenous youth in foster care?

Important Finding

In the literature on youth in foster care, there is a lack of youth voice presented (Caringi et al., 2013; de Finney, 2014; Nybell, 2013). This study focused on hearing the stories of Indigenous female youth in foster care and presenting their voices in research. Storytellers' stories agreed with the research on the importance of youth voice. In their

advice for youth, storytellers urged youth to use their voices and speak out about what they need. Storytellers encouraged youth not to be afraid to speak out. In their advice for service providers, storytellers urged service providers to listen and be open to hearing from youth. Storytellers offered this advice based on their experiences of not feeling heard.

This thesis presents the voices of children and youth on the issues that affect them. Storytellers shared their stories of how relocation has affected them at different stages over time, both positive and negative. Storytellers echoed the literature in highlighting the importance of youth voice. This important finding caused me to question what needs to be done to assure that children and youth are heard in ways that are meaningful rather than patronizing or tokenistic? Further, with issues such as sexism and misogyny continuing to affect and damage communities, how can these storytellers' voices and the voices of other Indigenous girls change the course that past and present legislation and practices have negatively had on the lives of Indigenous women (Ramirez, 2007)?

Implications and Recommendations

Stories of personal life-experience can be used as a way to teach others (Archibald, 2008). Stories have their own life and I was impacted by hearing the stories of the youth in person. Although readers were not able to be present when storytellers shared their stories of relocation, they are presented in this thesis. The impact of the girls' stories is different from being present in person during the telling and from reading it on a page as there is not the same contact between teller and listener. Some may think that the life force of the story has lessened (Archibald, 2008). I encourage service providers, mental health professionals, policy makers, and those involved with youth to consider the advice of the storytellers in this study and be open to hearing from children and youth. I also encourage those involved with children and youth to ask for their input and ask to hear their stories.

Readers of this thesis and those who are specifically involved with children and youth, whether as service providers or policy makers, can keep the spirit of the stories of the girls in this study alive by remembering them. Additionally, sharing the stories with others and interacting with the stories are other ways to keep the stories alive (Archibald,

2008). I encourage readers to remember the seven principles that guided this study which include: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Learn them and apply them to your understanding of these stories.

I encourage policy makers, practitioners, and those that work within child welfare agencies to consider the findings of this study as well as the literature presented. Researchers urge child welfare policy makers and those within Indigenous child welfare agencies to ethically consider what effects the current policies and practices have on the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous children across their life span (Tait et al., 2013). Further, research highlights that the child welfare system and contracted social service agencies should be held accountable for addressing the many sources of risk that Indigenous children and families are affected by (Blackstock, 2008). The stories of relocation shared by the storytellers were impacted by policies and practices and I encourage those involved in these decisions to consider the impact. I also urge government and child and youth professionals to make a difference by putting children first because "if reconciliation does not live in the hearts of children, it does not exist at all (Blackstock, 2008, p.173)."

Research highlights the importance and need for Indigenous informed and Indigenous centered research (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran 1995). This study contributes to the body of literature on child welfare issues and this understanding may inform mental health professionals' interventions with Indigenous youth in the child welfare system.

Those that are involved with children and youth are in relationship with them whether that is through providing direct service or at the policy level. A key principle in this study is respect which is important for relationships. "Maintaining a respectful and trusting relationship requires patience, open communication, the will to respond, and the ability to negotiate satisfactory solutions (Archibald, 2008, p. 110)." I encourage readers to take these words into consideration and find willingness to communicate, respond, and search for solutions.

I was taught that children play an important role within a Métis worldview. Children have spirits who come into people's lives because they have something to teach them. I was taught if we try to control or direct them too much, then the children

and ourselves do not grow. We both lose something important. The storytellers in this study have something to teach us and I encourage readers to be open to these teachings so that we all may grow.

Limitations

In reflecting on the limitations of this study I was reminded of the "spirit bead" in beadwork. The spirit bead reminds me that nothing is perfect. Similarly, there are limitations to this study as nothing is perfect. The next study may be better as I have learned much from the principles and the storytellers' teachings that I did not know before I started this research journey. The generalization of the findings of this study are limited due to the following facts.

The storytellers in this study are all from one Lower Mainland program. Additionally, the storytellers had all been relocated from the Northwest Territories. It is possible that children and youth relocated from other communities and placed in different programs or homes may have different experiences.

The sample size of storytellers involved in this study is small. There were four youth involved in this study. With the small sample size, it is not reasonable to generalize the findings of this study to other relocated populations of youth in care.

The girls' stories were mostly based on self-reported memories. One storyteller brought a photo album to assist her in sharing her story. The girls' stories were not based on observation. Sharing in an oral formant is different than accessing a written record. The oral process involves recalling what the person can remember to share with others (Archibald, 2008). For this reason, it cannot be confirmed that the storytellers', professional knowledge holders', and my own stories are completely accurate.

An additional limitation of this study is my own privilege. I identify as an Indigenous woman but my position is different than the youth involved in this study. Based on my life experience, I do not fully understand the challenges that the storytellers experience from colonization. This may have been evident to the storytellers while they shared their stories with me and possibly could have affected what they shared with me.

The spirit bead reminds me to keep coming back to the Elders, my supervisors, and storytellers as I have more to learn to ensure I do research in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner.

Suggestions for Future Research

Findings of this study contribute to the knowledge on youth in care and adds to the knowledge on the importance of youth voice in research. Based on my experience with this research project, I offer suggestions for future research.

I suggest that future studies explore the use of visual methodologies, such as photovoice, with youth. With some storytellers in this study, I jotted down a mini timeline while we spoke. This aided my understanding of their stories as they spoke. With one storyteller it helped her to speak about her experiences as she kept reaching over to look at the timeline I drew to assist her in recalling where she was at in her story. Researchers have used visual methods with youth in previous studies such as the study from Davy et al. (2014) on refugee youth. This may be a way to further engage youth in telling their stories. It can be an engaging process, collaborative, and a way to break down power imbalances (Davy et al., 2014).

The importance of youth voice in research was present in the literature as well as in the girls' stories. Future studies should include youth voice within the research on youth in care.

As presented in the literature, there has been little research conducted on the psychological and emotional distress that Indigenous children experience when brought in and moved around in the child welfare system (Tait et al., 2013). This study created space for the storytellers to discuss the difficulty of being relocated. Due to the limitations of this study, future research could further explore the experiences of Indigenous children in the child welfare system on a larger scale.

In thinking about future research and the findings of this study, several questions come to mind. When writing this discussion I reflected on the experiences of residential school survivors. There were several similarities between the experiences of residential school survivors and the experiences of storytellers in this study. Future research could consider how much has changed since Indigenous children and youth were placed in

residential schools? As Blackstock (2007) questions, did residential schools close or did they morph into child welfare? What type of power do those working with Indigenous children, families, and communities yield over their lives? How can we challenge and foster changes in colonial mindsets that continue to perpetuate benevolent paternalism (Regan, 2010) in child and youth care practice?

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the relocation experiences of female Indigenous youth in foster care who were moved from the Northwest Territories to the Lower Mainland. In order to accomplish this I asked storytellers to share their stories of relocation. Storytellers shared what was important during their relocation process, their needs and sources of support, and their connection to their culture.

The findings of this study suggest that young girls who are relocated while in foster care experience disruption, difficult transitions, as well as some benefits and challenges over time. The findings also highlight the importance of youth voice as the storytellers had much to share regarding advice for youth and service providers.

Indian residential schools only started to come under legal examination in the late 1980's (Nayar, 2014). It was then when society started to take a more serious look at the impact of these schools and a growing awareness started. This was a crucial step towards healing (Nayar, 2014). What can we learn through this history? In order to take steps towards improving the lives of children and youth, we need to take a serious look at the policies and practices that are impacting them, both historically and currently.

The stories in this thesis have a life and the listeners of these stories will shape them to their situations (Archibald, 2008). As readers listen to the stories of the storytellers, I encourage readers to be open to reflecting on how they apply to your situation.

While writing this discussion chapter, I had a memory of when I beaded and sewed together my first pair of moccasins (Figure 8). They were so special to me. The time and energy spent as well as the teachings and sense of community I felt while making them were invaluable. This strong attachment caused me to place the moccasins on my shelf in hopes of preserving them. While making my moccasins, I was

taught that I need to wear my moccasins and use them for what they are meant for, my feet. To this day they are still sitting on my bookshelf, outside of my office as I write this thesis. After reading this thesis, I encourage you to use this information. Do not put it on the shelf but apply and use it.

In Métis beadwork tradition, I was taught that I must give my first project away to someone and so I give this research story to you (Archibald, 2008).

Figure 8: My Beaded Moccasins

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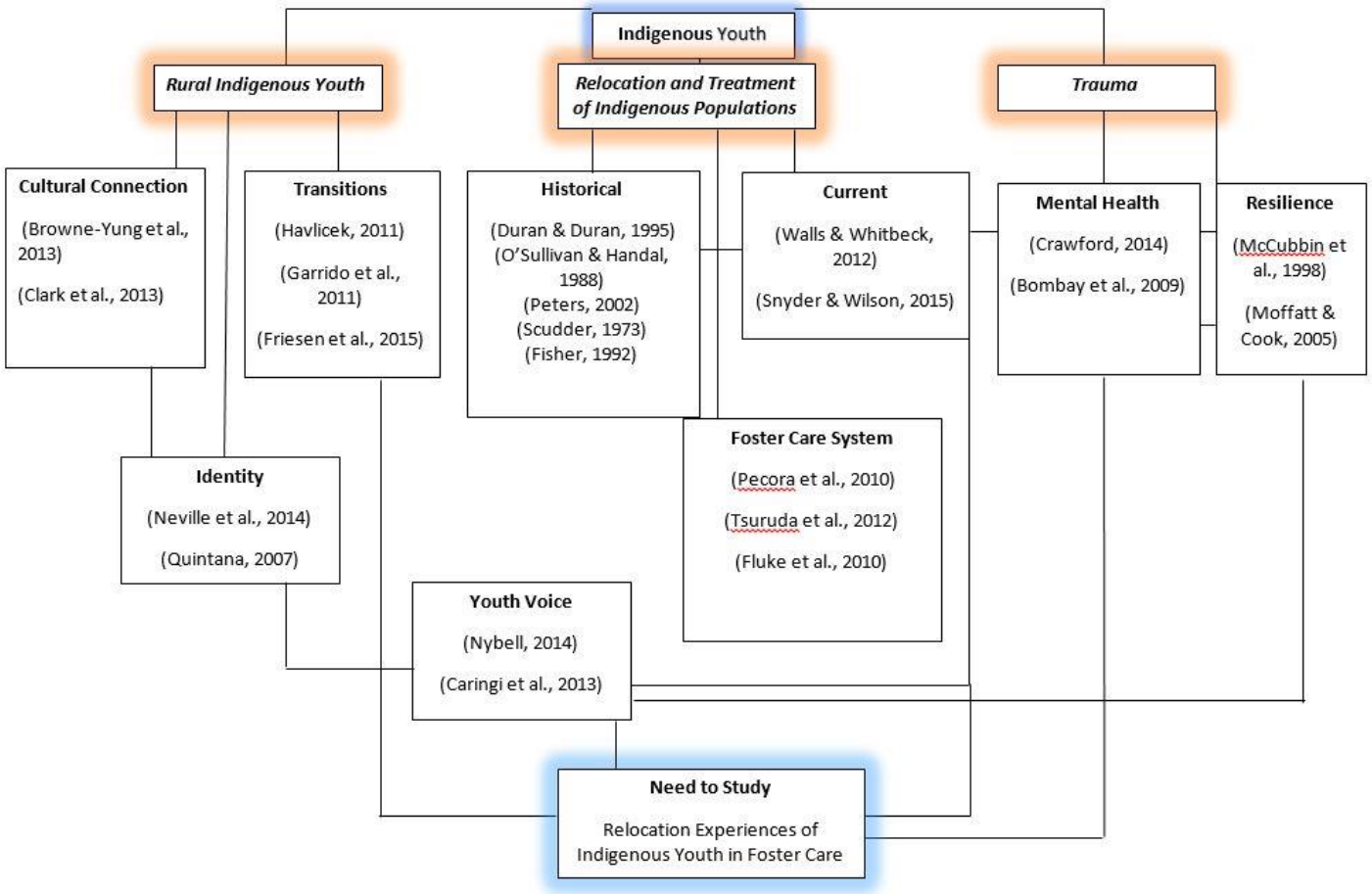
Appendix A.

Literature Map



Appendix B.

Recruitment Letter

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3676
FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Are you an Indigenous youth in foster care? Have you moved from a northern community?

I am a researcher at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and want to meet you to hear your story.

Who are we looking for?

Female youth between 11 and 25 who have moved to the Lower Mainland from northern communities while in foster care.

What happens?

If you want to be a part of this study you will be asked to meet with me (Cheryl), the principal researcher, to share your experience.

The meeting will involve:

Telling your story of moving to the Lower Mainland

You will receive a twenty-dollar gift card

How can I be a part of this study?

If you want to be a part of this study or find out more, we will arrange a short 5-10 minute phone call. The phone call will let you and Cheryl ask questions and make sure the study is a fit for you.

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

If you want to learn more about being a part of this study, please call or write to

Cheryl Inkster: email**:** **[…]@sfu.ca** or phone**:** [Phone Number]

Version November 20, 2016

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY ENGAGING THE WORLD

Appendix C.

Phone Screening Interview

Thank you for your interest in this study. The reason for this phone call is to make sure this study is a good fit for you. You may ask questions at any time or end the call.

Please answer the following questions:

1) What is your age?
   (be between 11 to 25 years of age)

2) What is your gender?
   (female)

3) Do you identify as Indigenous?
   (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)

4) Where are you currently residing?
   (residing in a residential care placement)

5) Did you relocate from a northern rural community to the Lower Mainland as a youth in foster care?
   (Yes.)

6) Do you have any questions?

7) When scheduling a meeting: If you like you may bring a personal item (photograph etc.) that reminds you of your experience that you want to share. You can bring this to the introduction meeting or the second meeting.

Version November 20, 2016

Appendix D.

Consent Form for Guardians

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3676
FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Consent Form for Guardians

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

STUDY TEAM

Principal Investigator: Cheryl Inkster, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Faculty Supervisors:

Dr. Sharalyn Jordan, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Dr. Amy Parent, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca. [Phone Number]

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the relocation experiences of female Indigenous youth in foster care. This study will help us learn more about the experience of relocation for female youth in foster care.

Voluntary Participation

Participation is voluntary. Participants have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to services which you are presently receiving. Participants will still receive the $20 gift card if they withdraw at any time.

How is the study done?

At the beginning, participants will receive a phone call from the principal researcher to determine that they meet the study requirements. This will take 5-10 minutes. The principal researcher will meet with the participant for an introductory meeting in person (approximately 1 hour) and participants will be offered to share a meal together or participate in an activity that the participant enjoys and option to bring someone (youth worker, caregiver etc.). A subsequent meeting will be scheduled where the participants

will be met by the principal researcher and asked questions about their experience of moving while in foster care from a northern community to the lower mainland. The interview will take approximately 1-2 hours. Participants will be given a $20 gift card of their choice for participating and a meal before or after the interview. The principal researcher will contact the participant after the final meeting to provide transcript information to review or change.
The interview will be audio recorded and participants will be given the opportunity to discontinue the recording at any time.

Potential risks of the study
This study is minimal risk. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with answering some of the questions. If so, participants can choose to withdraw from the study at any point by informing the interviewer that they wish to stop or take a break. Participants can also refuse to answer any questions.
Participants will be provided a list of resources, including personalized options obtained during the phone interview or introduction meeting.

Potential benefits of the study

There are no direct benefits to research participants. Some participants may experience positive emotions related to sharing their story. Others may benefit from what we learn in this study as the results obtained from this study will contribute to our understanding of the experience of relocation as an Indigenous youth in foster care from a northern community to the urban Lower Mainland. Knowledge mobilization projects will be used to distill the results of this study such as a possible report for [Agency Name] or workshop training material.

Payment

Participants will receive a $20 gift card to a place of their choosing as well as a meal before or after the interview even if they choose to withdraw from the study.

Measures to maintain confidentiality

Participant's identity will be kept confidential. Information that discloses participant's identity will not be released without their consent unless required by law. At any point in the study, if participants reveal that there has been an incident that involves abuse and/or neglect of a child (or that there is a risk of such occurring) please be advised that the researcher must, by law, report this information to the appropriate authorities.

All information gathered will be identified only by a unique code number and all personal identifiers will be removed to assure participant confidentiality. Documents and recordings will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will have an opportunity to review their transcript for verification. Digital audio-recordings will be destroyed soon after transcription. All transcribed electronic files will be password protected. Hard copies of materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years by the faculty supervisors and then destroyed. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports

of the completed study in order to protect confidentiality. Participants will be assigned a pseudonym.

Withdrawal

Participants may withdraw at any time without giving reasons. Participants can withdraw their data from the study by contacting the principal researcher or telling the principal researcher during a meeting. If participants choose to enter the study and then decide to withdraw at a later time, all data collected about them during their enrolment in the study will be destroyed.

Organizational permission

Permission to conduct this research study from [Program Contact Information] has been obtained.

I will contact the delegated Aboriginal agency that each participant is connected to which will be the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services which exists to support and protect children in the NWT in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act. Given that these youth are in care under this delegated Aboriginal agency, this will extinguish the need to contact the youth's Band directly. The reasons why the youth's Bands are not being contacted directly are to maintain safety and confidentiality throughout their participation in this study.

Study results

This research is for the principal investigators graduate degree and is part of a thesis requirement. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis. See *future use of participant data* section below.

Participants will be offered to be sent the study results electronically. There will be an option on the consent form to provide an email address for a report on the findings.

Contact for information about the study

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Cheryl Inkster.

Contact for complaints

If you have any concerns about a participant's rights as a research participant and/or experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

Future use of participant data

Future uses of the data collected in this study could include the development of community based projects to assist Indigenous youth and those who work within these

organizations. The results may also be published in journal articles and books. The main study findings will be presented at academic conferences**.**

Consent and signature page

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your services at [Agency Name]. You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

I consent / do not consent (circle one) to the participation of

_____ in this study

_____

Parent or Guardian Signature Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

_____

Printed Name of the Parent or Guardian signing above

If you wish to receive the results of this study, please include your contact information (email address):

_____

Version August 17, 2016

Appendix E.

Assent Form for Children

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3676
FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Assent Form

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

Who is doing the study?

Principal Investigator: Cheryl Inkster, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Faculty Supervisors:

Dr. Sharalyn Jordan, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Dr. Amy Parent, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Why are we doing this study?

We want to learn more about female Indigenous youth who have moved to a new community while being in foster care. This study will help us learn more about the needs of youth.

Your participation is voluntary

Being part of this study is up to you. You have the right to say no if you do not want to be part of this study. If you decide to be a part of this study, you may still choose to change your mind and stop at any time without any effect to services which you are receiving. You will still receive the $20 gift card if you change your mind at any time.

How is the study done?

If you say yes, you will get a phone call from Cheryl to make sure this study is right for you. This call will take 5-10 minutes. Cheryl will meet with you for a meeting in person (about 1 hour) to give you a chance to get to know her. You may bring someone with you if you like such as a youth worker, care giver etc. Another meeting will be set up. At this meeting, Cheryl will meet with you and ask a few questions. Cheryl will ask about

moving while in foster care. This meeting will take about 1-2 hours. You will be given a $20 gift card that you want for being a part of this study. You will also get a meal before or after you answer questions. The second meeting, where you talk about moving, will be voice taped and you will be given the chance to stop the voice taping at any time. Cheryl will contact you after the final meeting to go over what you talked about in case you want to change, take away, or add parts.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We do not think there is any part of this study that could harm you or be bad for you. Some of the questions we may ask may seem hard to answer. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. You can also choose to not be part of the study at any point by telling Cheryl that you wish to stop or take a break. You will be given a resource list which will include people you can contact if you want to talk to someone (such as a counsellor).

How will this study be good for me?

There may not be any benefit to you being a part of this study. You may enjoy telling your story of moving to a new place. In the future, others may be helped from what we learn in this study. The results from this study will help us learn about your experience.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research study?

You will be given a $20 gift card to a store that you choose for being a part of this study. You will also receive a meal before or after the second meeting. You will get the gift card and meal even if you change your mind and withdraw from the study.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your name and who you are will be not be shared. Forms that have your name will not be shared without your consent unless they are needed by law. At any point in the study, if you share that a child has been treated badly, Cheryl will, by law, share this with someone who can help. Also, if you share that there is a risk of a child being treated badly, Cheryl must report this.

All papers for you will be given a different code number so that your name and who you are will not be shared. Papers and voice tapes will be kept in a locked filing desk. You will have a chance to read what you said on voice tape after it is typed out in case you want to change or add something. Voice tapes will be destroyed soon after they are typed out. All typed out files of the voice tapes will be password protected. Paper copies of notes will be kept in a locked filing desk for five years by Dr. Parent or Dr. Jordan. After five years they will destroy them. Your name will not be put on any reports of the study when it is done. You will be given a different name or nickname to keep what you say private.

What if I change my mind about being in this study?

You may withdraw at any time without giving reasons. You can withdraw from the study by calling or emailing Cheryl or telling her during a meeting. If you choose to enter the study and then change your mind, all papers or voice tapes for you will be taken out and Cheryl will destroy them.

Organizational Permission

[Agency Name] has said it is okay for Cheryl to do this study with youth who want to be a part of the study [Program Contact Information].

I will contact the delegated Aboriginal agency that you are connected to which will be the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services which exists to support and protect children in the NWT in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act. Given that you are in the care of this delegated Aboriginal agency, I will not contact your Band directly. I will not contact your Band in order to keep what you share safe and confidential.

Study Results

This study is for Cheryl's school project. The results of this study will be written in a graduate thesis.

You will have the chance to be sent the study results by email. There will be a space on this form to put your email address so Cheryl can send you the results.

Who can I talk to if I have questions about the study?

If you have questions about this study, please contact Cheryl.

Who can I contact if I have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any questions about your rights in this study or you think you are being treated badly in this study, you may call or email Dr. Jeffery Toward, Office of Research Ethics […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

What happens with what I share?

The information collected in this study could be used for future projects. Along with Cheryl's school project, the information might be used in projects to help Indigenous youth and those who work with them. Cheryl may also share the results of the study in journal articles. The main study findings will be presented at academic conferences.

Future contact

Please consider these options for Cheryl to contact you. Check the boxes 'yes' or 'no':

Review your interview transcript (read over to make changes, add, or take out)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Review the draft copy of the thesis in the areas you are being quoted, before it is given to the university

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Future research publications/studies (if I write an article, or possible dissertation, report to [Agency Name])

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Participant consent and signature page

Being a part of this study is up to you. You have the right to say no to being a part of this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time. You can stop at any time without giving a reason and your services at [Agency Name] will not change in any way. You do not waive any of your legal rights by being a part of this study.

- **Signing below means that you have been given a copy of this consent form to keep**
- **Signing below means that you agree to be a part of this study**

_____

Participant Signature **Date (yyyy/mm/dd)**

If you want Cheryl to send you the results of this study, please write your contact information (email address):

_____

Version August 17, 2016

Appendix F.

Consent Form (16 plus)

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3676
FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Consent Form

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

Who is doing the study?

Principal Investigator: Cheryl Inkster, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Faculty Supervisors:

Dr. Sharalyn Jordan, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Dr. Amy Parent, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Why are we doing this study?

We want to learn more about female Indigenous youth who have moved to a new community while being in foster care. This study will help us learn more about the needs of youth.

Your participation is voluntary

Being part of this study is up to you. You have the right to say no if you do not want to be part of this study. If you decide to be a part of this study, you may still choose to change your mind and stop at any time without any effect to services which you are receiving. You will still receive the $20 gift card if you change your mind at any time.

How is the study done?

If you say yes, you will get a phone call from Cheryl to make sure this study is right for you. This call will take 5-10 minutes. Cheryl will meet with you for a meeting in person (about 1 hour) to give you a chance to get to know her. You may bring someone with you if you like such as a youth worker, care giver etc. Another meeting will be set up. At this meeting, Cheryl will meet with you and ask a few questions. Cheryl will ask about

moving while in foster care. This meeting will take about 1-2 hours. You will be given a $20 gift card that you want for being a part of this study. You will also get a meal before or after you answer questions. The second meeting, where you talk about moving, will be voice taped and you will be given the chance to stop the voice taping at any time. Cheryl will contact you after the final meeting to go over what you talked about in case you want to change, take away, or add parts.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We do not think there is any part of this study that could harm you or be bad for you. Some of the questions we may ask may seem hard to answer. You do not have to answer any question if you do not want to. You can also choose to not be part of the study at any point by telling Cheryl that you wish to stop or take a break. You will be given a resource list which will include people you can contact if you want to talk to someone (such as a counsellor).

How will this study be good for me?

There may not be any benefit to you being a part of this study. You may enjoy telling your story of moving to a new place. In the future, others may be helped from what we learn in this study. The results from this study will help us learn about your experience.

Will I be paid for taking part in this research study?

You will be given a $20 gift card to a store that you choose for being a part of this study. You will also receive a meal before or after the second meeting. You will get the gift card and meal even if you change your mind and withdraw from the study.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your identity will be kept confidential. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent unless required by law. At any point in the study, if you reveal that there has been an incident that involves abuse and/or neglect of a child (or that there is a risk of such occurring) please be advised that the researcher must, by law, report this information to the appropriate authorities.

All papers for you will be given a different code number so that your name and who you are will not be shared. Papers and voice tapes will be kept in a locked filing desk. You will have a chance to read what you said on voice tape after it is typed out in case you want to change or add something. Voice tapes will be destroyed soon after they are typed out. All typed out files of the voice tapes will be password protected. Paper copies of notes will be kept in a locked filing desk for five years by Dr. Parent or Dr. Jordan. After five years they will destroy them. Your name will not be put on any reports of the study when it is done. You will be given a different name or nickname to keep what you say private.

What if I change my mind about being in this study?

You may withdraw at any time without giving reasons. You can withdraw from the study by calling or emailing Cheryl or telling her during a meeting. If you choose to enter the study and then change your mind, all papers or voice tapes for you will be taken out and Cheryl will destroy them.

Organizational Permission

[Agency Name] has said it is okay for Cheryl to do this study with youth who want to be a part of the study [Program Contact Information].

I will contact the delegated Aboriginal agency that you are connected to which will be the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services which exists to support and protect children in the NWT in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act. Given that you are in the care of this delegated Aboriginal agency, I will not contact your Band directly. I will not contact your Band in order to keep what you share safe and confidential.

Study Results

This study is for Cheryl's school project. The results of this study will be written in a graduate thesis.

You will have the chance to be sent the study results by email. There will be a space on this form to put your email address so Cheryl can send you the results.

Who can I talk to if I have questions about the study?

If you have questions about this study, please contact Cheryl.

Who can I contact if I have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any questions about your rights in this study or you think you are being treated badly in this study, you may call or email Dr. Jeffery Toward, Office of Research Ethics […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

What happens with what I share?

The information collected in this study could be used for future projects. Along with Cheryl's school project, the information might be used in projects to help Indigenous youth and those who work with them. Cheryl may also share the results of the study in journal articles. The main study findings will be presented at academic conferences.

Future contact

Please consider these options for Cheryl to contact you. Check the boxes 'yes' or 'no':

Review your interview transcript (read over to make changes, add, or take out)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Review the draft copy of the thesis in the areas you are being quoted, before it is given to the university

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Future research publications/studies (if I write an article, or possible dissertation, report to [Agency Name])

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Participant consent and signature page

Being a part of this study is up to you. You have the right to say no to being a part of this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time. You can stop at any time without giving a reason and your services at [Agency Name] will not change in any way. You do not waive any of your legal rights by being a part of this study.

- **Signing below means that you have been given a copy of this consent form to keep**
- **Signing below means that you agree to be a part of this study**

_____

Participant Signature **Date (yyyy/mm/dd)**

If you want Cheryl to send you the results of this study, please write your contact information (email address):

_____

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Appendix G.

Interview Protocol

The principal researcher, Cheryl, will introduce herself to participants in the introductory meeting and/or before the interview. Cheryl will share the following information (who she is, where she's from, and why she is doing this research):

I am Cheryl Inkster. I am Métis through my father's family from Manitoba. I am also Dutch and Ukrainian through my mother's family. I live in Surrey and I am a student at Simon Fraser University. I am interested in doing research with Indigenous youth because I use to work as a youth worker and I got to know many amazing youth who inspired me to go back to school. I am now studying to become a counsellor and I plan to work as a counsellor with youth when I graduate.

Central Research Question: What stories of relocation are told by female Indigenous youth in foster care who have relocated from rural northern communities and are residing in a Lower Mainland residential program?

Definition of relocation used in this study: a process which unfolds over time and not just the event of moving. Relocation involves the physical relocation, displacement, and cultural transition from Indigenous northern reserve communities to urban non Indigenous dominant culture communities.

Preamble for the Interview:
I want to have a conversation with you about your experience of relocating to the Lower Mainland. I may ask you some questions and you can or cannot answer them. Also, I will be using a tape recorder. I will place it in front of us and you may stop it at any time (show how). If you need a break from talking with me we can stop at any time and take a break. If you prefer to move around while we talk we can go out for a walk.

The purpose of this conversation is to hear your story. The story of relocating to the Lower Mainland from a northern community. I am interested in what it was/is like. Anything you choose to share is important for my project as I am interested in your story. If you have any questions or anything you want to share please share.

Participants will be asked to share. If the following information is not covered, Cheryl will ask these questions as needed:

What do female youth story as important in their relocation process?

- **Question: Tell me a story about how you first discovered you were moving?**

Within the stories, what needs and sources of support are reflected?

- **Question: Tell me about some of the things that helped you**

- **Question: Tell me about some of the things that were not helpful**

How do female Indigenous youth narrate their cultural connection before, during, and after relocation?

- **Question: Tell me about the impact you feel moving has had on your connection to your culture?**
    - **Question: How do you feel moving to a new community has changed you?**
    - **Question: What have you learned through your experiences?**

Personal item

Question: Tell me about the personal item you brought (if applicable)?

Advice

Question: How can other youth be helped or supported going through this experience? Do you have any advice for other youth or people who assist these youth?

Version August 17, 2016

Appendix H.

Interview Debrief

Debrief

- What was it like to share your experience with me today?
- How are you doing?

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Appendix I.

Resource List

1) **Participant's Counsellor** (To be determined after speaking with participant if applicable)

   Additional Resources:

2) **Aboriginal Youth Empowerment Program-** 604-709-5720
   http://www.pcrs.ca/services/?city=&resource=&age=&service=counselling&keyword=
   For Aboriginal youth ages 13-24. Provides emotional support, outreach, cultural connections and referrals to Aboriginal youth who have been victims of crime and trauma in all aspects of the justice system.

3) **Residential Historical Abuse Program**- 604-875-4255
   http://www.vch.ca/locations-and-services/find-health-services/?program_id=10946
   Provides funding for professional counselling for adults who were sexually abused as children while living in a provincially-funded residence (group home, foster home, etc.)

4) **Qmunity**- Free Counselling Program- 604-684-5307
   www.qmunity.ca/get-support/
   Free counselling for members of the LGBTQ community

5) **Astra**- Addictions Counselling
   http://www.pcrs.ca/our-services/astra/
   For youth 13-24 who would like to change their relationship with alcohol and/or drugs. See website for multiple locations and their contact information.

6) **Broadway Youth Resource Centre-** Resource Room- 604-709-5720
   http://www.pcrs.ca/our-services/byrc-resource-room/
   Drop in space (between 2-6pm) for youth ages 13-24 in Vancouver. Connect with a support worker, meals, computers, and activities. Support workers can refer to variety of community supports.

7) **Surrey Youth Resource Centre**-Community Counselling
   http://www.pcrs.ca/our-services/community-counselling/
   Provides access to individual and family counselling for Surrey residents. Guilford (604-587-8100) and Newton (604-592-6200) locations. See website for further contact information.

8) **Aboriginal Wellness Counsellor**-604-254-7732
http://www.unya.bc.ca/programs/personal-support/aboriginal-wellness-counsellor
For Aboriginal youth ages 12-18. Youth can meet with wellness counsellors who provide mental health services.

9) **Simon Fraser University Counselling Clinic**- 604-587-7320
https://www.sfu.ca/education/centres-offices/sfu-surrey-counselling-centre.html
Provides free counselling for adults, children, and youth. Counselling provided by students in the Master's program in Counselling Psychology.

10) **UBC Scarfe Counselling Clinic**- 604-827-1523
http://www.ecps.educ.ubc.ca/cnps/scarfe-counselling-clinic
Provides free counselling in Vancouver by counselling psychology graduate students.

11) **UBC New Westminster Counselling Centre**- 604-525-6651
http://www.ecps.educ.ubc.ca/clinical-instructional-resources/new-westminster-ubc-counselling-centre
Provides free counselling by counselling psychology graduate students.

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Appendix J.

Member checking Questionnaire

Questions:

1) Do you feel that the information represents your story?
2) Are there parts of your story that you feel are missing?
3) Is there anything you would like to remove or add to the data?

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Appendix K.

Consent Form for Informant Interview

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

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FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Consent Form for Informant Inteview

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

STUDY TEAM

Principal Investigator: Cheryl Inkster, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Faculty Supervisors:

Dr. Sharalyn Jordan, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca, [Phone Number]

Dr. Amy Parent, Faculty of Education, […]@sfu.ca. [Phone Number]

Why are we doing this study?

The purpose of this study is to explore the relocation experiences of female Indigenous youth in foster care. This study will help us learn more about the experience of relocation for female youth in foster care.

Voluntary Participation

Participation is voluntary. Participants have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences to services which you are presently receiving.

How is the study done for Informant Interviews?

You will receive a phone call or email from the principal researcher to determine if you would be willing to engage in an informant interview regarding your experience working with Indigenous youth who have relocated to the Lower Mainland while in foster care. The principal researcher will set up a time with you to have the interview via phone, in person, or skype. A subsequent meeting, phone call, or email will be scheduled where you will have a chance to go over the information gathered from the interview. The principal researcher will contact you to provide transcript information to review or

change. The interview will be audio recorded and you will be given the opportunity to discontinue the recording at any time.

Potential risks of the study

This study is minimal risk. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with answering some of the questions. If so, participants can choose to withdraw from the study at any point by informing the interviewer that they wish to stop or take a break. Participants can also refuse to answer any questions.

Potential benefits of the study

You may not experience any benefit from participating in this study. You may experience positive emotions by participating in this study through sharing your knowledge in an informant interview. Others may benefit from what we learn in this study as the results obtained from this study will contribute to our understanding of the experience of relocation as an Indigenous youth in foster care from a northern community to the urban Lower Mainland. Knowledge mobilization projects will be used to share the results of this study such as a possible report for [Agency Name] or workshop training material.

Measures to maintain confidentiality

You will have the option to be referenced by name or to not have your identity disclosed. Information that discloses participant's identity will not be released without their consent unless required by law. At any point in the study, if participants reveal that there has been an incident that involves abuse and/or neglect of a child (or that there is a risk of such occurring) please be advised that the researcher must, by law, report this information to the appropriate authorities.

All information gathered will be identified only by a unique code number. Personal identifiers may be shared in the interview due to this being an informant interview. You will have the option to remove identifiers to assure participant confidentiality. Documents and recordings will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will have an opportunity to review their transcript for verification. Digital audio-recordings will be destroyed soon after transcription. All transcribed electronic files will be password protected. Hard copies of materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years by the faculty supervisors and then destroyed.

Withdrawal

You may withdraw at any time without giving reasons. You can withdraw your data from the study by contacting the principal researcher or telling the principal researcher during a meeting. If you choose to enter the study and then decide to withdraw at a later time, all data collected from you during your enrolment in the study will be destroyed.

Organizational permission

Permission to conduct this research study from [Agency Name and Contact Information] has been obtained.

I will contact the delegated Aboriginal agency that each participant is connected to which will be the Northwest Territories Child and Family Services which exists to support and protect children in the NWT in accordance with the Child and Family Services Act. Given that these youth are in care under this delegated Aboriginal agency, this will extinguish the need to contact the youth's Band directly. The reasons why the youth's Bands are not being contacted directly are to maintain safety and confidentiality throughout their participation in this study.

Study results

This research is for the principal investigators graduate degree and is part of a thesis requirement. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis. See *future use of participant data* section below.

Participants will be offered to be sent the study results electronically. There will be an option on the consent form to provide an email address for a report on the findings.

Contact for information about the study

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the principal researcher, Cheryl Inkster.

Contact for complaints

If you have any concerns about a participant's rights as a research participant and/or experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

Future use of participant data

Future uses of the data collected in this study could include the development of community based projects to assist Indigenous youth and those who work within these organizations. The results may also be published in journal articles and books. The main study findings will be presented at academic conferences**.**

Consent and signature page

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your services with [Agency Name]. You do not waive any of your legal rights by participating in this study.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

_____

Signature of participant Date (yyyy/mm/dd)

_____

Printed Name of the person signing above

If you wish to receive the results of this study, please include your contact information (email address):

_____

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Appendix L.

Oral Consent Script

SFU FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Education Building
8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL 778.782.3676
FAX 778.782.4203

[…]@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/education

Oral Consent Script

Study Title: Exploring the Relocation Experiences of Female Indigenous youth in Foster Care through Storywork

I am Cheryl Inkster, a student at Simon Fraser University in the Counselling Psychology program. I am conducting research as part of a Master's thesis at Simon Fraser University in Surrey, British Columbia. I am working under the direction of Dr. Sharalyn Jordan and Dr. Amy Parent of Simon Fraser University.

The purpose of this study is to explore the relocation experiences of female Indigenous youth in foster care. This study will help us learn more about the experience of relocation for female youth in foster care.

I have gotten in contact with you because of my previous experience with you taking beadwork lessons and learning traditional teachings related to beadwork. For the research study, I'm using an Indigenous research method which incorporates 7 principles to guide the research. The research method is called Storywork and I plan to ask the youth to tell me about their stories of relocation. In writing my thesis, I will plan to use a story/metaphor to present the themes. I was reflecting on my connection to my own Indigenous Métis culture and I tie that a lot to my relationship with you and the teachings you shared with me. So for my metaphor/story I want to connect it to beadwork.

Today I would like to have a conversation about beadwork and how I can incorporate the knowledge you have taught me around beading in an appropriate way.

Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you may stop at any time. We will also discuss if you would prefer to be named in the study or have your name anonymous.

There are no risks associated with your participation in this study. Taking part in this conversation is your agreement to participate.

With your permission I would like to audio record our meeting so that I can go over it later and not miss what you say. I will listen to the recording and transcribe portions of it. I will send this to you to review for verification. Digital audio-recordings will be destroyed soon after transcription. All transcribed electronic files will be password protected. Hard copies of materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years by the faculty supervisors and then destroyed.

If you would like a copy of this letter for your records, please let me know and I will give you a copy now.

Contact for complaints

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics […]@sfu.ca or [Phone Number].

To summarize,

- Your participation in this study is voluntary.
- You can decide to stop at any time, even part-way through the meeting for whatever reason.
- If you decide to stop participating, there will be no consequences to you.
- If you decide to stop I will ask you how you would like me to handle the data collected up to that point.
- This could include returning it to you, destroying it or using the data collected up to that point.

Please let me know the best way to send you transcriptions to go over and if you would like to be sent a copy of the final thesis.

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