

**Cu7 me7 q'wele'wu-kt. "Come on, let's go berry-picking". Revival of Secwepemc wellness approaches for healing Indigenous child and youth experiences of violence**

by  
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# Approval

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is part of an intergenerational genealogy of Secwepemc and Indigenous feminist resistance to colonial violence and, more importantly, of the repudiation of state-sanctioned approaches through the construct of “trauma” and instead the avowal and resurgence of Secwepemc laws, practices, and processes. This thesis shares stories from my research with 11 multigenerational Secwepemc and Indigenous healers working with Secwepemc and Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemculecw, the land of the Secwepemc people. Through the methodological framework of Stesepetekwle-Secwepemc storytelling, together with the theoretical framework of Red Intersectionality, these stories illuminate the ongoing resistance to colonial power, but also demonstrate the ways in which we are reinstating our Secwepemc child wellbeing and healing praxis through everyday acts of decolonial love, relationship and kinship. Along with the stories of the healers interviewed, this research co-constructs a birch bark basket of decolonial knowing rooted in Secwepemc teachings and practices. This basket also holds the theoretical framework of Red Intersectionality (Clark, 2012; Clark, 2016), an Indigenous feminist and holistic model that follows in the tireless tradition of Indigenous and Black feminist theorizing of love, rage, desire, resistance, and creative regeneration as the foundation from which to challenge violence against Indigenous children and youth. In doing so together, the stories reveal and amplify Indigenous agency while refusing the colonial gaze, which assumes and demands Indigenous people are in need of help or saving. Ultimately this dissertation functions to crack open the interstitial spaces of the colonial arteries of violence and the broken narratives of risk, and instead reveals the deeper practices of witnessing each other and our children in this work.

**Keywords:** Secwepemc child and youth healing; Red Intersectionality; Indigenous feminism; Indigenous witnessing; trauma; violence;

accountable to the not-yet-born who are waiting

accountable to dreams

accountable to you

accountable to Elders

accountable to truth-telling

accountable to the little people

accountable to ancient transformers

accountable to this moment

I dedicate this to Woodpecker who visited me often – finding her body, her feathers everywhere while doing this work I offer this poem

Woodpecker is thrumming  
thrumming  
Her protection around me

“remember to remember”  
“remember to remember”

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To Secwepemculecw: welme7yews, welme7yews

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## Glossary of General Secwepemc Terms

Etsxe, Etsce7 or E'tsxe: to train on the path of; Take care of yourself; strengthen self

Il'e: refers to children

Knucwestsut.s: to take care of yourself, and help yourself

Kweseltken: family, kin

Kwselktnews: we are inter-related, connected

Kukstsemc: Thank-you

Kye7e: Grandmother

mecécye7: birch bark basket

Sek'lep, Sklep: Coyote, the trickster

Secwepemcstin: The Secwepemc language

Secwepemculecw: The land of the Secwepemc

Snine: Owl

Stsptekwle: Secwepemc storytelling; oral tradition

Stemtumen: Dreams

Temtumen: Dreaming

Xqwlewmén: berry-picking basket

Welme7 yews: Forever

### Phrases:

Me7 yécwékstmens ri7 k skúlem tek mir̄c: She'll learn how to make a birch bark basket

Elkésén te re7 mir̄c: work on your basket

k̄wcum: to make a birch bark basket

Me7 tskwenc re7 mir̄c e q̄wlewm-ucw: When you pick berries, bring along your basket

Stemi7ne xqwlewmén: What is in your basket?

### Glossary of Healing Secwepemc words

Pigwt: to revive

Xena7elltse: Mind body injury, the state of being hurt

Yucwmenil'e: to look after children

Yucwmenilet̄n: a tool or place to look after children

Yucwen: to look after

Sekwew: Rose Hip  
Skeplellp: rosebush  
stsets'éd: to witness  
tsíxtsaxt: painful experience (traumatic)  
styelép – to come full circle  
pwentés: to doctor someone  
p'ext [p'ex](t): healed of wound  
tsenqéy (tsen)[qéy] – wounded  
Itwíl, letwíl – recover healthy once again  
Yecwiminte r tmicw – “taking care of the land”

Sources for language are from Dr. Janice Billy, Kathy Manuel, Elder Flora Sampson who has many pages of healing words, and from the websites for Chief Atahm Secwepemc language school <http://chiefatahm.com> and First Voices <http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Secwepemc>



Art and Design by Secwepemc Artist Tania Willard for this dissertation. (2017). Reproduced with Permission

# Chapter 1.

## **Stemi7ne xqwlewmn: What is in your basket? Secwepemc wellness approaches to addressing Indigenous children and youth experiences of Xena7elltse<sup>1</sup>**

### **1.1. Introduction**

This dissertation is part of a genealogy of Secwepemc and Indigenous resistance to colonial violence in the lives and wellness of Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities. Colonization is not a thing of the past<sup>2</sup>, but instead is a “regular, active” process happening “again and again”, over and over and over again. Indigenous children and youth are experiencing the “colonial fallout” (Tagaq, 2015, Jun 02) of past genocidal policies and practices as enacted in residential schools, at the same time as they are experiencing unrelenting and ongoing acts of colonialism through child welfare and other state policies that continue to remove them from sacred relationships with family, community, and land<sup>3</sup>. These policies and the genocidal practices that flow from them are enacted by state actors employing the gendered-colonial logics of “best interest”<sup>4</sup>, over and over again within child welfare, delegated Aboriginal agencies,

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I will resist the use of the word ‘trauma,’ instead using the Secwepemc word Xena7elltse for addressing mind and body injury.

<sup>2</sup> I draw here on Caribbean Canadian writer Marlene Nourbese Philip’s (1989) decolonization of language as seen in her definition of the word rape: “Raped – regular, active, used transitively, the again and again against women participle into the passive voice as in ‘to get raped’; past present future-tense(d)” (p. 66). This is echoed by Muscogee Creek scholar Sarah Deer (2015), “Native women experience the trauma of rape as an enduring violence that spans generations” (xi).

<sup>3</sup> The harm of residential schools was and is enacted again and again through a wide range of intersecting gendered-colonial policies and practices including “the systematic disenfranchisement of indigenous women, forced relocation of communities, criminalization and incarceration of indigenous people, erosion and violation of wild harvesting rights and destruction of traditional livelihoods, imposition of the welfare system, and forced confinement for tuberculosis treatment subsequent to removal from home communities” (Maxwell, 2014, pp. 425-426)

<sup>4</sup> Manitoba Judge Edwin C. Kimelman in a 1982 inquiry into the child welfare system and Indigenous families in Manitoba described it as follows: “It would be reassuring if blame could be laid to any single part of the system. The appalling reality is that everyone involved believed they were doing their best and stood firm in their belief that the system was working well. Some administrators took the ostrich approach to child welfare problems – they just did not exist. The

education, health, and justice (de Finney & Tomaso, 2015; Johnson, 2011; Kovach, Thomas, Montgomery, Green & Brown, 2007; McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day., 2016; Sandy, 2016). Health programs and interventions that are based on western values systems and/or regulated through state “interventions”<sup>5</sup> serve to further colonize and pathologize the health and bodies of Indigenous children and youth as is evidenced by increasing rates of Indigenous child and youth incarceration, mental health diagnosis, and child welfare involvement<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, the increased attention to Indigenous mental health needs broadly, and through the framework of “trauma” more specifically, is contributing to what I call the “shock and awe”<sup>7</sup> campaign against Indigenous children and youth who have experienced injury and violence (Clark, 2016b); leading to more harm and resulting in the ongoing removal of children from their land<sup>8</sup>. The over representation of Indigenous children and youth in child welfare systems<sup>9</sup> across Canada today highlights the need for immediate transformation, as called for in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation final report: “Without action to reduce the number of Aboriginal children taken from their families, the child welfare system itself will take the place of residential schools in doing damage to them” (p. 35). What is required at this juncture is in fact a repudiation of state sanctioned “interventions” and instead a return to

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miracle is that there were not more children lost in this system run by so many well-intentioned people. The road to hell was paved with good intentions, and the child welfare system was the paving contractor” (pp.275-276).

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Secwepemc scholar Rebecca Jules for our discussion about the word ‘intervention’ and the ways in which it masks the violence of these intrusions in the lives of Indigenous children and youth.

<sup>6</sup> Indigenous youth are over-represented within the child “protection” system, and within the criminal “justice” system of Canada (Representative for Children and Youth, 2009, 2013). Mohawk lawyer and scholar Patricia Monture-Angus (2006) argued that criminalization is as a strategy of colonization that not only locks up Indigenous children and youth, but also does not address violence, including the violence enacted through state policies of child welfare that criminalize them in the first place.

<sup>7</sup> I utilize the term “shock and awe” from Naomi Klein’s work *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) and apply it to the ongoing colonization of Indigenous children and youth - through trauma discourse, policies, and practices - that perpetuates statistics of horror and shock in order to justify ongoing colonial control and intervention, including through child protection.

<sup>8</sup> Secwepemc legal and child welfare scholar Nancy Sandy (2011) describes how the genocidal policies and practices founded on the settler-colonial logic of “best interests” disrupted Secwepemc traditional child safety laws – from residential school through to the professionalization of child welfare, adoption laws, and the changes to the Indian Act in 1951 that gave access to Indigenous children resulting in the “60’s scoop” (p.13).

<sup>9</sup> More Indigenous children and youth in Canada have been extracted by child welfare agencies then during the height of the residential schools (Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, 2016).

Indigenous paradigms and models, ones grounded in culturally specific relationships to lands and waters extending across rural and urban spaces, and in nation-based ideas of child and youth growth, wellness, safety, and every day acts of resurgence (Corntassel, 2012). In the words of Grand Chief Edward John (2016),

“what is required is that citizens and governments recognize the considerable cumulative damages of past and present policy and practice and take immediate steps to support Indigenous children, parent, families, and communities to develop and nurture their own solutions – this is the only road to re-establish patterns of connectedness” (p. 58).

This dissertation aims to advance the understanding of Secwepemc wellness approaches for Secwepemc and other Indigenous children and youth who are experiencing Xena7eltse as currently understood by Secwepemc and other Indigenous healers<sup>10</sup> working within Secwepemculecw-the land of the Secwepemc people- in order to improve access to culturally restorative services and supports.

This dissertation includes three interrelated papers, published over the last two years, that explore a central question using Secwepemc storytelling methodology, alongside Red Intersectionality. To inform this work interviews were done with 11 Secwepemc/Indigenous healers working with Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemculecw<sup>11</sup>. The central question guiding my work is “what is in your basket?” What does it mean to have a Secwepemc theory and practice guide survival and recovery/healing, as they had for centuries? Through this question, I examine the narratives of Indigenous healers who work on the frontlines of colonial intervention in Secwepemc children and youth lives – and witness the multiplicity of scales<sup>12</sup> of

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<sup>10</sup> I use the term ‘healers’ throughout this paper to represent the time immemorial work of Indigenous peoples in addressing the wellness needs of Indigenous children and youth. I also recognize the distinction between this word and the Secwepemc word for medicine doctor, tkwilc, and the sacred knowledge they carry and continue to practice in Secwepemc communities.

<sup>11</sup> The Secwepemc Nation is made up of seventeen ‘Indian bands’, which comprise about 180,000 square kilometres of territory in central British Columbia. The smallpox genocide of the 1800’s wiped out at least 11 bands completely and greatly impacted all Secwepemc communities. For a list of the 17 bands and their traditional names see: <http://www.landoftheshuswap.com/bandname.html>

<sup>12</sup> My own scholarship and activism, alongside my friend and colleague Sarah Hunt (2016) continually reminds us that the binary between the lived experiences of violence and the public sphere needs to be challenged. In a review of Glen Coulthard’s book, Hunt (2016) attends to the scales of violence, reminding us that “these sites of resurgence and recognition are not separate,



violences that are written on Secwepemc children's bodies. In my work, I define violence as acts of abuse on the bodies of Indigenous children and youth through colonial policies, practices, and programs, alongside the everyday enactments of this "colonial fallout" of past genocidal policies, on and in their bodies and kinship networks, including non-human relations, through the intersections of grief and loss, physical abuse, sexual abuse, lateral violence, poverty, racism, heterosexism, ageism, resource extraction, and all acts of removal from land and community.

My Xqwlwmen,<sup>13</sup> the berry picking basket methodology, is based on my understanding of Secwepemc ontology, and the emergent methods that have been revealed through this research and guided my process. Xqwlwmen methodology emerges from my readings and learning on the land through which I strive to embody the concepts of xqen'we`n's - to find out; xeqpenwe`llen' - to learn; and xeqpenwe`ns - to understand. This Xqwlwmen methodology is rooted in a specific space, xq'wle`wten, my berry picking location on Secwepemculecw (the land of the Secwepemc people). Along with the knowledge of my participants, I aim to co-construct or weave a basket of decolonial<sup>14</sup> knowing rooted in Secwepemc teachings and practices. This research utilizes decolonial in the ways it has been taken up as refusal, rage, resistance, resurgence, flight, constant moving, and creative regeneration<sup>15</sup>— while remaining firmly

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but unfold in the same spaces, within our territories, in relation to the same people, upon the same bodies" (p.112)

<sup>13</sup> As a form of oral footnoting, I recognize my teachers of the Secwepemc language Janice Billy, Garry Gottfriedson, Kathy Manuel, my own notes from my language course with Kathy; and my learning from family members including Johnny Ben Jules, Elders Mike Arnouse and Flora Sampson. Any mistakes are my own. I have followed the format of Kathy Michel (2012) in leaving out the accents, and other Indigenous scholars who resist italics as these connote difference. Oral footnoting is also important as in storytelling; the Elders will always share where they learned the story, allowing them to acknowledge the story as true, where it comes from (its origins/permissions), and to honour who they learned it from (Ignace, 2008, Jules, personal communication).

<sup>14</sup> In this work I take up decolonial as more than a metaphor (Tuck & Wang, 2012) but instead lived in everyday acts of loving and living in relationship with family, with friends on the land but also in the Indigisphere as found on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and in urban and rural spaces, in our homes, in our breathing and in our ceremonies (see Martineau, J. & Ritskes, E. 2014; Hunt & Holmes, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Indigenous artist and activist Buffy Sainte-Marie was banned from radios and blacklisted for her music and use of the word "genocide." The blacklist did not stop her – she moved on to Sesame Street where she was the first woman to breastfeed live on television: "It didn't get me down at all because I was moving on in other directions those folks had no idea even existed" (Elliot, 2017, p. 29).

rooted in land and place. In doing so together, the stories reveal and amplify Indigenous agency while refusing the colonial gaze, which assumes and demands Indigenous people are in need of help or saving. This basket is created from an intimate and intergenerational process, one that Caribbean-American scholar and activist June Jordan (1974) described as “a new kind of political project, one centred on intimacy, relatedness, and affection for self and community” (p. 228).

This dissertation uses the theoretical and methodological framework of Red Intersectionality (Clark, 2012; Clark, 2016a) building on the tireless tradition of Indigenous and Black feminist theorizing of love<sup>16</sup>, rage, desire, resistance, and resurgence as the foundation from which to understand and to act on the issue of violence against Indigenous children and youth. The stories shared by the Indigenous healers working with children and youth in Secwepemculecw provide examples of intergenerational Indigenous healing approaches to Xena7eltse. As such, I suggest that these stories are acts of love, healing, and wellness in and of themselves through the act of creating alternatives to the colonial project.<sup>17</sup> This research demonstrates the ways in which Secwepemc laws and wellness approaches are being reinstated and revived by Indigenous healers through everyday acts of refusal (Trask, 1999; Simpson A. 2007, 2014) alongside and simultaneous with revealing<sup>18</sup> (Simpson, A. 2014, 2007), creation

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<sup>16</sup> Love is taken up through a Red intersectional framework – an Indigenous feminist, political, decolonial, antiracist, intergenerational, and desire-based approach. Craig Womack (Creek-Cherokee) describes this love as an act of resistance as found within the work of Joy Harjo (and I would add other Indigenous women). It is love that is “not trivially universalizing but fully contextualized within an awareness of the colonization process” (p. 259). This love is embedded in Indigenous feminist resistance and rage. As Leanne Simpson (2014a) asserts “But the correct emotional response to violence targeting our families is rage”.

<sup>17</sup> Secwepemc Educator Paul Michel had to fight in his Master’s work to “prove” that stories are healing. “Our stories are healing. When I did my master’s degree, Simon Fraser University was uneasy about that. And then I said, no, when you talk a philosophy of education and you talk learners that I can engage a four-year old to a ninety-year old and what it is, is they plug in a listen to that story. The brain goes from a fearful state to a live state. So you can take a picture of somebody’s brain when I’m telling a story. I can tell a story to 5,000, 6,000 people or 4 people or 2 people or 1, just sharing stories. One person to 7000 people – but what it is, is that you get all the minds and if you took a look at their brain when someone is telling a story it just lightens up – and I said, isn’t that healing? And they were ok with that. I had to do brain research just for them to get convinced of healing” (Secwepemc Lands and Resources Law Research Project, 2016, p. 187).

<sup>18</sup> Refusal is not the same as resistance but instead as Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Audra Simpson (2014) describes it – bringing into focus “the prior,” thus rejecting colonial state power relations. “There was something that seemed to reveal itself at the point of refusal—a stance, a principle, a historical narrative, and an *enjoyment in the reveal*.” (p. 104 emphasis in original).

and assertion (Trask, 1999), witnessing (Brant, 1994), mirroring and recognition (Simpson, L. 2017), desire (Tuck, 2009), dreaming (Million, 2011), and ultimately decolonial love<sup>19</sup> (Simpson, L. 2013). The Indigenous healers are not only witnesses to the stories of Indigenous children and youth, but through their own stories and histories they call into account the workings of colonialism and of power – in particular through and between Indigeneity, sex, gender, age, and violence. These stories are speaking, most importantly, to each other, but they also speak “to and across the world” (Philip, 1997, p. xxviii) as they overflow “with memory” (Alexander, 2006 p. 3). This memory includes the stories of colonial gender-based violence, of rage against “the hydra-headed quality of violence” (Alexander, 2006 p. 3). The stories also reveal how Indigenous peoples are dreaming together and loving within and through these intersecting oppressions, reinstating Secwepemc laws and healing approaches in everyday acts of relationship, storytelling, and kinship. This research reflects what Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2007) calls “our own on-the-ground practices of freedom” (p. 456) and contributes to new narratives that illustrate the persistent survivance<sup>20</sup> (Vizenor, 2008), and ultimately, sur-thrивance<sup>21</sup> (McNeil-Seymour, 2017) of Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities. Further, this research seeks to contribute to the revitalization and renewal of Indigenous healing and wellness approaches to address violence on Indigenous girls, boys, and Two-Spirit people<sup>22</sup>.

As a whole, this dissertation provides a unique and important contribution. First, I engage in truth-telling by naming the impacts of the “trauma industry”, exposing how it

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<sup>19</sup> Decolonial love was first put forward by Junot Diaz in an interview for the Boston Review (Moya, 2012, June 26th) as “the only kind of love that could liberate...from that horrible legacy of colonial violence”. It has been theorized and imagined in the intimate sphere by Anishnaabe writer and activist Leanne Simpson in her 2013 book *Islands of Decolonial Love*.

<sup>20</sup> Vizenor (2009) describes survivance as a “fourth voice that embodies challenging and alternative narratives that can counter dominant and oppressive stories” (p.85).

<sup>21</sup> “Sur-thrive” was used by Carrie Fisher in an interview for Vanity Fair (Miller, 2016) to describe her childhood: “If anything, my mother taught me how to sur-thrive”. Secwepemc Two-Spirit scholar and activist Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour (2017) combined his love of Star Wars, Carrie Fisher with Vizenor’s (2008) theorization of survivance in the show he curated, Never Apart’s Two-Spirit Sur-Thrивance and the Art of Interrupting Narratives.

<sup>22</sup> Kwakwaka’wakw activist scholar Sarah Hunt (2016) defines Two-Spirit as a term “used by Indigenous people to identify a range of roles and identities which may span, and even complicate, distinctions between gender, sex and sexuality. Indeed, for many Two-Spirit people who identify with a gender identity distinct to their own Indigenous culture, these western categories fail to capture the ontologies of gender and sexuality within their own Indigenous language and culture” (p. 5).

functions to create a continuing colonial subject who requires intervention, support, and saving, by arguing that these “trauma” practices function as a form of “shock and awe”, a form of covert colonialism in our Nations. As Summerfield (1999) asks “whose knowledge is privileged and who has the power to define the problem?” (p. 1449). In the colonial trauma industry, “west knows best” (Gone, 2010) approaches are foregrounded, while Indigenous community approaches are ignored, decimated, and systematically eroded. Further, this dissertation enacts decolonial paradigms of refusal (Kay-Trask, 1999; Simpson, 2007) and redirection<sup>23</sup> (Tuck & Wang, 2014). By turning away from “trauma” theory, this research redirects us to Indigenous practices of wellness in addressing injury and violence. Indigenous girls groups are located as one example of a practice rooted in the Secwepemc values, ethics, and approaches. Additionally, this dissertation works to centre, reveal, and amplify the wellness strategies and practices used by Secwepemc and other Indigenous healers who are responding to Xena7eltse experienced by Indigenous children and youth within Secwepemculecw. These stories forefront a theory and practice of healing violence for Indigenous children and youth that honours the diverse ontologies, epistemologies, and wellness practices within specific Indigenous Nations--in this case the Secwepemc Nation--while recognizing the complex everyday enactments of refusal, rage, and resistance to experiences of violence, racism, sexism, and oppression at the structural and individual level. The goal of centering Indigenous Nations’ own healing practices is at the centre of this work. Theories of Indigenous feminism, black feminism, and decolonial love within a Red intersectional witnessing practice guide the analysis of the following chapters.

Before I provide a more in-depth introduction to myself and my relationship to the approaches I use to inform this dissertation, I offer a brief outline of this introductory chapter: I first describe my purpose, scope, and organization of each of the three papers that together form my thesis and my methodology. I then introduce how I have come to know the relationship between ontology and methodology within Secwepemc worldviews, and describe how worldview and ontologies shape methodologies within my relationships to these knowledge(s); I discuss Secwepemc Ontology and Methodology,

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<sup>23</sup> “Refusal is not just a “no,” but a redirection to ideas otherwise unacknowledged or unquestioned” (Tuck and Wang, 2014, p. 239). Haunani Kay-Trask (1999) described it this way “surviving as a Native person in any colonial situation is a strange mix of refusal, creation and assertion” (p.89).

providing an exploration of Secwepemc ontology as revealed through stories, and the values (axiology) and implications for a Secwepemc methodology. I provide a brief introduction to my theorization of Red Intersectionality, which draws on Indigenous feminist concepts of refusal (Simpson, A., 2014, 2007), decolonial love (Simpson, L., 2013) and intimate resurgence (Hunt, 2013). Red Intersectionality is offered as a framework for addressing the complex challenges and, in particular, the intersection of colonial gender-based violence in the lives of Indigenous children and youth<sup>24</sup> (Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2014). I then discuss my use of storytelling methodology alongside the theoretical framework of Red Intersectionality, and the ethics within this approach, sharing how the re-emergence of this knowledge provides hope for the decolonial present and future of Indigenous communities and for Indigenous children and youth. I reflect on the significance of this research and how it might impact the field as a whole, as well as my own praxis as an Indigenous anti-violence practitioner working with Indigenous children and youth. Finally, I provide an outline of pathways through this dissertation – essentially an outline of the chapters that follow.

### **1.1.1. A note on writing style: If I could write with water<sup>25</sup>**

writing water  
flowing  
this paper can hold water  
creeks rivers tributaries flowing in this work  
it cannot be watered down  
it will come out what cannot be buried.  
Surfaced.  
A poem for you  
Witnessing  
Writing with water  
Flowing this  
Paper holds water  
Just as you now  
Hold the stories shared

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<sup>24</sup> The Native Youth Sexual Health Network webinar (2014, Nov. 24) is an excellent example of hearing directly from Indigenous youth about they understand and resist the impacts of this colonial gender-based violence on their bodies and lands.

<sup>25</sup> Jacqui Alexander (2006) titles a section in her book “If I could write with Fire: A Word on How to Read.

Dripped  
Seeped into your body memory  
You are not watered down  
But moving deep within tributaries  
How do I witness water moving?  
Water never forgets.

In considering the title for this dissertation I reached out to my community circle of knowledge keepers and Elders: Janice Billy, Elder Flora Sampson, Garry Gottfriedson, Kathy Manuel. Elder Flora shared a story with me about how her grandmothers and aunties always took her on the mountains to go pick berries, or they would take her out on the water. She was always with them. She is a fluent Secwepemcstin speaker because of this. She shared the title for this dissertation, within a story that described the healing approaches that she learned and observed while in this circle of women. Through her interviews with Elders, Secwepemc activist and educator Janice D. Billy (2009) identifies not only the devastation of colonization, but also points the way forward by centring the teaching and re-learning of language, medicines, and ceremonies on the land. Mi'kmaq Marie Battiste and Chickasaw James Youngblood Henderson (2000) remind us that Indigenous languages and their revitalization are key to “unlocking knowledge” and for providing the “theory for understanding that knowledge” (p. 133). Thus, as context is primary, the words, practices, and methods that are used to describe and activate our methodologies must flow like water from the ontologies and languages from where they are born. In this dissertation, I strive to include elements of this by including my own journal entries, poetry, dreams, and Secwepemc language learning alongside English. This dissertation is also written in a three-published paper format. In many ways, I suggest that this is an important Indigenous thesis style as it allowed me to publish and share knowledge directly from my thesis throughout my journey. As a solo-parent for the ten-year journey of this dissertation, who was continuing to work and practice on the topic of violence, this format also supported my knowledge sharing throughout this journey, through published papers and in conferences, webinars and healing workshops across the country. As such, I recognize the temporal quality of this style leads to some repetition throughout the chapters, but it also reveals the changes in my thoughts over time. Secwepemc scholars Ron Ignace (2008) and Dorothy Christian (2017) alongside Indigenous philosophers (Stewart-Harawira, 2005; Waters, 2004) have described the spiral nature of Indigenous knowledge. In this way my writing is also consistent with the spiral, as my thinking has changed over the time of this dissertation,

but it also has an abiding connection and resonance. Like the poem that begins this section, this dissertation is like water, it reflects the changes over time in the landscape of my thinking and writing, while holding a deep abiding constancy.

I present this as a form of intergenerational writing and dreaming – not only across the generations and to my Secwepemc children – but also to my younger self in the spirit of love offered by Indigenous women in their writing<sup>26</sup>. I write this with a loving ferocity. I write this as a witness. I write this knowing that just like wind blows fire over the mountain, some stories, some words, once ignited cannot be put out, cannot be called back, cannot be suppressed. I write this knowing only water can calm this fire and bring sacred relief. I write this in response to the question that keeps reverberating in my life and my work - what does it mean to not remember to heal? I write this to remind myself that “water always remembers” (Alexander, 2005, p.285).

## **1.2. Self-in Relation: my relationship to Secwepemc people, territories and knowledges**

I approach this research through the multiple roles and responsibilities I hold as an Indigenous counsellor/healer, a mother to Secwepemc children, and an invited member of the Secwepemc community through years of kinship, friendship, and ally-ship within Secwepemc territories for much of my life. As an Indigenous woman, I see this work as a form of “ancestor accountability”<sup>27</sup> to my own Metis and settler roots and as a mother of Secwepemc children; it is one that is embedded in kinship relationships and, more importantly, my learning on the land together with my children and Elders. These relationships define my responsibility and my role within Secwepemculecw. My anti-violence work and activism are enriched and informed by my more than 20 years of experience as a child/youth sexual abuse counsellor, addictions counsellor, and

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<sup>26</sup> See for example, Shirley Sterling (1992) *My Name is Seepeetza* as an example of an Indigenous woman writing to her younger self.

<sup>27</sup> I am grateful to the workshops I participated in with Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2016, 2017) for the reminder that we are ancestor accountable.

Indigenous girls group facilitator. In these ways, I occupy a similar space<sup>28</sup> to the Indigenous healers I interviewed for this research; I theorize from within my own experiential knowledge as an Indigenous healer throughout this dissertation.

Just after I completed my comprehensive exams I had a dream. I am in a gym and realize I have left something on my seat but when I return, it is gone, stolen. I keep looking in the spot where it had been, where it was taken, and then I realize I need to leave the gym. I see a set of stairs lined with sacred pipes. I pick up a corn pipe and I put it around my neck. I know it is the one for me. I realize then that this is sacred work and that you cannot return to the scene of the crime, in this case a metaphor for colonialism and all that has been stolen – in turning away, these are acts of refusal and acts of resurgence. Warriors often wore pipes around their necks into battle.

### 1.2.1. cteksle7ílt – to give birth to twins: Twin stories

*Mom I know what you do. You don't think I know history, I do. Why would you be a social worker? How does that help children? (Cohen Clark, age 9)*

*for every one of your questions, there is a story hidden in the skin of the forest. use them as flint, fodder, love songs, medicine. you are from a place of unflinching power, the holder of our stories, the one who speaks up. (excerpt from Leaks, Leanne Simpson 2013, p. 132 written for her daughter)*

Clear in this question from one of my Secwepemc twin sons, is truth-telling – or what Leanne Simpson (2013) calls the “medicine” of the “one who speaks up” – of the harms done to Indigenous children and youth through state interventions, in this case through social work. Importantly, the resistance of Indigenous children and youth to

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<sup>28</sup> Instead of the hybrid or mixed identity, I draw inspiration instead from the holograph as described by Indigenous Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli Meyer (2013). If each piece always contains the whole, then there is no hybrid but instead a heteroglossia. Thus, our identities and methodologies are also a heteroglossia – determined by context, and through a matrix of relationships with spirit, land, and human and non-human relations. Rather than an intersection, instead I position this as a meeting of centripetal and centrifugal forces, where they collide, and push in/out of a self who emerges only in this context.



ongoing colonial violence also burns at its core. But, as introduced in the previous section, colonization and anti-colonial resistance are not the only reference points for my relationship to Secwepemc children and youth.

Secwepemc ontology and worldview, and my relationship to them, can also be found within Indigenous stories about twins and the ceremonies and meanings associated with them. As the mother of Secwepemc twins, I have been told the Secwepemc twin stories, and learned the significance of the Grizzly bear dreams<sup>29</sup> that visited me during my pregnancy, as twins were considered to be bear children. In Teit's (1909) writings, twins are considered a "great mystery" as "a woman was considered lucky to have twins, for she thus gained powerful manitous for her children before their birth." (p. 586). Twins were seen as having power over the elements, including the ability to bring rain if they bathed in the river or streams. The significance of twins was also noted in the Catholic encyclopedia (Mooney, 1912) reference on the Shuswap, where twins are described as "uncanny", and were to be kept separate from the tribe with their mother until they could walk.

The stories collected by Teit (1909) are significant in revealing the gendered nature of colonialism and its impact on the written record of Indigenous stories<sup>30</sup>. For example, in 1897 Teit and Boas collected songs from Elders in the Spence's Bridge area. Boas wrote in a letter afterwards:

While the sand they acted out all their old stories and ceremonies. An old woman sang the song into the phonograph which serves to 'cleanse' women who had borne twins. She took bundles of fir branches and hit her shoulders and breasts with them while she danced. The song imitates the growl of the grizzly bear because they believe that the children derive from the grizzly bear (as cited in Wickwire, 1988, pp. 1888-189).

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<sup>29</sup> My children's father, Benny Anthony, had a naming ceremony after these dreams where he was given the name of Stkwikwey, silver-tipped, or frosted on the shoulder Grizzly.

<sup>30</sup> Wickwire (1993) in an early article traces the contribution of Indigenous women to Teit's early work, noting that his first publication on pictography was learned from Indigenous women. Wickwire describes Teit's work as "sensitive and full" (556)

Yet as observed by Wendy Wickwire (2001) the published record makes no note of the female Elder XwElinkEk, a Nlaka'pamux woman, nor of the female grizzly bear. Instead the published record refers to the twin stories, both human and animals, as male.

I suggest that the erasure of these gendered ceremonies and songs in the written record are part of a larger colonial disappearing and erasure of female and maternal roles and power, both human and non-human. As such resurgence of Secwepemc twin stories challenge the binary and patriarchal thought found in European thought. Twin stories instead represent a form of non-locality as described by Manulani Meyer (2013) wherein they are intimately connected although in separate places and as revealed through the twin's special connections to land, water and animals. Indigenous philosopher Anne Waters (2001) describes twins and Indigenous ontologies as examples of holistic nonbinary dualism. Water's (2001) suggests that the ontology of binary thought, "or discreet dualist logic, operated as the colonial framework that deeply embedded EuroAmerican thought and language" (p. 5).

In contrast to the powerful stories told to me of birthing Secwepemc twins, my own experience of becoming a mother within the colonial system was one marked by risk:

When my twins were born, they chose to come a month early into this world, and as a solo parent, I was home alone with my daughter when my water broke. Living in Vancouver, we were far away from home in Secwepemc territory. Jimi Hendrix played in the truck as my friend Emily's boyfriend at the time drove me to the hospital. I remember him saying, "it would be so fucking cool if you gave birth right now." I arrived at the hospital with a man, not the father of my children, and was met by another man – a dear friend, a Jewish rabbi and midwife. The nurses looked to both of these men as fathers, to which we all laughed and shook our heads. Later, after Tyee and Cohen come into this world.... I am in the room recovering and the social worker comes in. I know her. I even hired her and trained her. I work at this very hospital as a youth health consultant where I develop curriculum for doctors and nurses to better meet the needs of "vulnerable" youth. I am surprised to see her. "K, what are you doing here?" She is visibly distressed – and then says they sent her. Indigenous solo parent of twins – the box was checked somewhere, the risk box. I was in it and had not requested to be there. I send her away. We both laughed, but this story stays with me still. How do I respond to the violence in that room, in that moment from a friend – violence written onto my children's small bodies, coating them with risk and need before they are even a few hours old?

I share this story to contrast systemic narratives of risk, with the sacred Secwepemc stories of birthing twins that I received in community – stories that blanketed them in power and place, and ultimately Secwepemc love.

This research has been informed by previous and ongoing research conducted by myself (Clark, 2013) and Secwepemc researchers (Billy, 2009; Billy, 2015; Ignace, 2008, Michel, 2012), as well as the experience of community leaders, all of which has highlighted the need for Secwepemc knowledge and research that would identify wholistic practices in addressing child and youth wellness. This research is situated in Secwepemcul'ecw, the territory of the Secwepemc people in the interior of BC; this region is largely rural, with the city of Tk'emlúps, meaning 'where the rivers meet,' as a main urban hub. This research is also part of my ongoing commitment and responsibility to the Secwepemc community, as the parent of Secwepemc children and as part of the community through kinship ties. The research questions were identified as a priority by members of the Secwepemc community, against the backdrop of state acts of recognition such as the 2008 residential school apology, settlements and the September 2013 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) gathering in Vancouver. Further, with the recent transfer of health governance to the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) within British Columbia, together with the efforts of many First Nations and Friendship Centres to create wholistic health centres, it is timely and pressing to find examples of what works to strengthen Secwepemc children and youth who have experienced violence. This research addresses these gaps by amplifying and revealing the stories and practices of Secwepemc and other Indigenous healers working with Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemc territory; and by sharing the wise practices (Wesley-Esquimaux, & Snowball, 2010) and wellness knowledge within Secwepemculecw, and across Canada at both community and academic forums.

### **1.2.2. Ontology: How did I know? Spirit: Etsxe**

*We have lived here, in my language we call that Welme7 yews welme7 yews (forever and ever) ... that is the way things have been for ever – for time immemorial – we are just as Indigenous as those salmon out there we are not greater than they are... in fact, they might be greater as they don't really need us, it's us that need them... it takes away some of the*

*mysteries away from spirituality... how when we eat the food it turns into life and there is something that transfers into us... our peoples are going back to ceremonies, going back to their language, going back to their creators, and watching our relatives you know. (Secwepemc Elder Uncle Mike Arnouse, 2011)*

My understanding of Secwepemc ontology is rooted in ceremonies and relationship to the land – and through enacting sacred kinship – in my roles as Auntie, Sister, Daughter, Niece, and Mother. One example that demonstrates the wisdom and knowledge found in our Elders’ teachings, like that of Elder Uncle Mike, is found in the Birch Bark Camp I attended in June 2013. (See Appendix A for my full journal entry from this camp). As noted by Absolon and Willet (2004), “berry picking and hunting are traditional practices that require a specific set of knowledge and research skills and when we translate those forms of traditional seeking into the 21st century, we have transformed our knowledge and skill set into contemporary contexts” (p. 5). To reveal how I have come to know Secwepemc ontology, which is foundational to this dissertation, I share stories from the camp as a present-day example of Secwepemc land-based practices. Further these stories are shared in efforts to resist seeing this knowledge as belonging only in the past, such as in the historic writings of anthropologist James Teit (1909), which is a continuation of the colonial and gendered narrative of the disappeared and disappearing<sup>31</sup>. Secwepemc scholar Nancy Sandy (2011) describes how stories and laws are changing to meet our modern conditions:

St'exelcemic cultural beliefs are not frozen in the past. Current practices don't need to replicate the space of our ancestral practices. Our laws should not solely be viewed from an archaeological or anthropological microscope. Our law can be interpreted today through oral evidence, as a modern form of a practice. Our laws are living legal traditions that can answer the complex, interconnected problems we encounter in the world today (p. 121).

At the camp, with the teachings of Secwepemc knowledge keepers and wisdom from the land and animals, I came to learn that the basket represents our relationship to the trees, made with Birch and Cedar, gently harvested with spirit and ceremony. The sense of “all my relations” and kinship with all nature was present in the camp through

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<sup>31</sup> The significance of the birch bark baskets to Secwepemc peoples is evident in Teit (1909) with his descriptions and drawings of the baskets filling several pages. Yet these baskets often on display in texts such as Teit's or in museums belie the ongoing and lived experiences of birch bark basket making.

the ceremony, attended by the Monarch butterfly (there to remind us that we were all witnesses together), my own dreams during the camp of the Badger, and the three Eagles flying over the city. The mosquitoes were also there to remind us of persistence. They felt like colonialism at times, impervious to our ways of keeping them away.

So how are these land-based Secwepemc teachings related to what we consider research or knowledge production? Secwepemc Kuk7pi and scholar Ron Ignace (2008) in his doctoral thesis *Our Histories are our iron posts: Secwepemc stories and historical consciousness* presents the Secwepemc ontology as a helix, or spiral<sup>32</sup>. Ignace builds on his earlier work (Turner, Ignace & Ignace, 2000) in developing a model of “traditional ecological knowledge and wisdom (TEKW)” of the Secwepemc peoples (p. 161). The spiral demonstrates the connection between Secwepemc philosophy and worldview out to the practices and strategies or methodology for sustainable living including knowledge of the changing landscape, climate and seasons, observation and monitoring of the land and harvesting, adaptability, and finally communication and exchange of this knowledge through the stories, oral histories, ceremonies and protocols, trade, dreams and visions, and learning and teaching on the land. The transformational and experiential learning of the community is key to its survival and is linked to research; it is through this approach the community can adapt and change.

In contrast to the community and intergenerational experience of research as found through the birch bark camp, is the individual work of research. The solitary work of research is perhaps best described by the Secwepemc concept of Etsxe. Secwepemc language activist/scholar Kathy Michel (2012) writes of how her own “academic etsxe required that I return home to bring the dreams, visions, and theories back to the community” (p.142). Although the work of training and preparation for this appears a solitary journey, it happens in the context of the community and the land. Similarly, Secwepemc language activist/scholar Janice Billy (2009) describes how, in the training of youth in the etsxe, “time honoured ways of knowing such as dreams, visions, revelations from solitude, messages obtained through ceremonies, rituals, the land, and

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<sup>32</sup> Secwepemc/Sylx scholar Dorothy Christian (2017) builds on the work of Jeanette Armstrong and Ron Ignace in the development of her spiral model. L.T. Smith (1999), E. Hampton (1995) and T. Jojola (2004) also utilize the spiral in contrast to the Aristotelian step-by-step process. The transformative worldview found within the spiral, includes movement inward and outward and in all four directions.

the Creator were acknowledged” (p. 66)<sup>33</sup>. For me, the birch bark camp was an intergenerational community space of creating, learning, and sharing knowledge together, alongside my own academic etsxe, paralleling my approach to research.

### **1.2.3. Epistemology: What were my ways of knowing? Tmicw, on the land and intergenerational**

The birch bark camp I attended was on the land, near the sacred headwaters of the Secwepemc people<sup>34</sup>, a type of land-based university or “law school” (Sandy, 2016) in which people learn, listen, and observe together in community with Elders, parents, aunties, uncles, and children. It included walking and doing together with storytelling. Thus, it is a methodology embodied and anchored by place and ceremony. The seasonal rounds are an integral part of Secwepemc life and are reflected in the calendar of seasonal activities. These cycles also apply to research in that the preparation and gathering are seasonal activities rooted in time and activity: from the Pesqulqlelten, many Salmon month, to the Pell 7emtmin, stay at home month with the preparing for winter and the storytelling time sharing back with the community. The methods used were based on the activity, but each incorporated the essential elements and values, including preparation.

An integral part of Secwepemc peoples’ ways of knowing is through the bringing of the Elders together with the children. The Elders’ own thirst for knowledge can inspire the courage “to investigate and experiment, to think and reflect on the past, or natural phenomena and causes, in searching for medicinal cures, for social and economic cures” (Ignace, 1999, p. 1). Similarly, the Elders interviewed by Billy (2009) described processes of intergenerational teaching and mentorship between Elders and teacher, where children practiced under a mentor. Billy shares the story of Secwepemc Elder William Ignace (Wolverine) who recalled how:

He was the last young person to train under Elders who still maintained the knowledge and language of the land. He travelled all over the traditional

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<sup>33</sup> The key role of dreaming for the Secwepemc people is well documented (Teit, 1909).

<sup>34</sup> A mine is currently under exploration there, and thus the camp also served as engagement in the very real issues of violence on the land and our role to take care of the land, Yecwiminte r Tmicw.

territory with Elders learning the cultural skills, sometimes staying for months at a time in the mountains (p.172).

My ways of knowing have been intergenerational and on the land, together with Elders, children, and youth.

#### **1.2.4. Axiology: What were the values and sacred teachings? Stsptekwel<sup>35</sup>, Stories**

Each basket is unique and each basket maker is identifiable, but they are also connected and identifiable as Secwepemc baskets (Teit, 1909). The process of learning to make a birch bark basket taught me of each of the Secwepemc values that were embedded in the ceremony of basket making – that of kinship, of self-discipline, of humility and gratitude, and also of sharing with the community. As illustrated earlier, stories were, and continue to be, central in the Secwepemc ontology, Secwepemc law, and child safety and as such, are central in the process of learning to make my basket. Michel (2012) reminds us “well-developed oral traditions helped to create an interconnected ‘mind map’ so that members of society could incorporate geographical features of land within their interrelationships between the plant and animal world” (p. 8). Thus, I applied the values and sacred teachings of basket making in this research as I carried my own basket to each interview, being clear of my own intentions in this work, and sharing while also learning.

#### **1.3. Methodology: Raised up as researchers on the land: xq'wle`w'men – my berry-picking basket**

*I was very young when my grandmother taught me how to make a basket. Because sooner or later, we were going to [be] part of the food gathering. They would tie a little basket around a little girl's waist. The little girl might fill it with leaves, or dirt, or anything, but she learned that that little basket was a container and it has to be filled. And she'd go along. The bigger [the child] got, the bigger her basket would be. And she was made at a very young age to fill one basket before she would go play.... (Elder Mary Thomas, 2001, p. 10).*

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<sup>35</sup> Stsptekwle are sacred stories that are from the time of the transformers and most often include animals with powers including transformation, shape-shifting, and regeneration including Coyote, Tlii7sa, and his brothers. In contrast, slexe'yem are stories about an event that the storyteller witnessed or that has been shared with them (Ignace, Lyon & Ignace, 2017).

In this section, I outline my Indigenous qualitative methodology, including Secwepemc ontology and methodology as revealed through stories, and the values and methods that emerged through my process of “a researcher-becoming”<sup>36</sup>. My Xqwlewmen, or berry picking basket, holds my methodology, based on my understanding of Secwepemc ontology, and the emergent methods that have been revealed through this process, and that guided my dissertation research. Xqwlewmen methodology emerged from my readings and learning on the land, where I strove to embody the concepts of xqen`we`n`s - to find out; xeqpenwe`llen` - to learn; and exqpenwe`ns - to understand. I offer this basket as an example of what Oivi Maoli Manulani Meyer (2013) calls an “epistemological hologram” that represents the relationship between knowledge, knowing and understanding, a holism that includes body, mind and spirit in methodology (p. 25). It is the basket that holds my healing practice in relationship to Secwepemc knowledge. This methodology is rooted in a specific space, xq`wle`wten, my berry picking location on Secwepemculecw (the land of the Secwepemc people). This research co-constructs a birch bark basket of decolonial knowing rooted in Secwepemc teachings and practices. This basket also holds the theoretical framework of Red Intersectionality (Clark, 2012; Clark, 2016), an Indigenous feminist and holistic model that follows in the tireless tradition of Indigenous and Black feminist theorizing of love, rage, desire, resistance, and creative regeneration as the foundation from which to challenge violence against Indigenous children and youth.

Within the Secwepemc culture, the oral tradition of Stsptekwle, reminds us first and foremost of the presence of the Secwepemc people on the land for over 10,000 years (Billy, 2009; Billy, 2015; Ignace, 2008; Michel, 2012). The stories of Sk`elep, or Coyote as they are known in English, together with the transformer stories, contain information about the ice age, about climate change, and about colonization as it evolved and changed from the first contact in the 1800s to the present day (Ignace, 2008). I further suggest that the stories of Sk`elep contain a holistic and interlocking complexity through notions of time as circular, simultaneous, and multi-dimensional, and of relationships as operating among humans, animals, and spirit<sup>37</sup>. The research

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<sup>36</sup> Cherokee Scholar Polly Walker (2013) uses the term researcher-becoming to better describe the “constant flux”, and I would argue emergence of self as researcher in community.

<sup>37</sup> Secwepemc scholar Ron Ignace (2008) draws attention to this complexity; “Sk`elép stories link the past with the present, continuing to engage our emotions, notions of contradictions and



methodology that forms my basket is guided by Stseptekwle, or Secwepemc storytelling approach, an Indigenous qualitative and storytelling or storywork (Archibald, 2007) approach. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) asserts the decolonizing ability of qualitative research based on oral storytelling and narrative is derived from listening to the stories of the individuals and the meaning of their stories. Further, Secwepemc law, protocol, and child safety policies and practices are taught through these stories (Sandy, 2016).

Ignace (2008) further states that Secwepemc stories are medicine not only for the past, but also often foretold of what is to come, like the story of the ‘people eaters’ w7ec re ts7ellenellts’us to qelmucw (p. 14). As such, Secwepemc storytelling has always been a form of medicine and has provided an important space for Indigenous children and youth to resist and replace colonial narratives, but also a space within which to heal. As described by Sium and Ritskes (2013) “in the face of colonial extermination, the articulation of Indigenous stories, epistemologies, and cultural groundings, are inherently resistant and threatening” (p. vi). I show in this research how Indigenous healers’ stories can provide understandings of strategies and unique solutions to challenges facing Indigenous communities. Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko (1997) writes about the Laguna Pueblo’s concept of story as “the old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors” (p. 152).

In the interviews I conducted for this research, the Indigenous healers and I worked together using Secwepemc storytelling methodology along with Red Intersectionality. Sto:lo scholar Jo-Ann Archibald (Q’um Q’um Xiem) (2008) describes her Indigenous method of storywork as “synergistic interaction between storyteller, listener, and story” (p. 3). This relational storywork approach is similar to the conversational method as described by Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Maggie Kovach (2009) and collaborative storying as described by Maori researcher

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ambiguities of life through multiple layers of reality and experience.” (93). Sk’elep is also described as the most ancient of “transformers” (Teit, 1909, p. 23), and as a great traveler (Ignace, 2008; Michel, 2012) and Sk’elep work spans from the time of “great winds, heat and fires”, to the stories of colonial contact that describe the negotiation of the relationship with the British Crown and her representatives (p. 67).

Russell Bishop (1999) where both the researcher and the participant are involved in a spiritual process that “binds the listener to the teller beyond the words themselves” (p. 7).

Relational storywork is a kind of collective process that I call story weaving, weaving the basket together, or in the words of Fred Moten “an ensemble” <sup>38</sup>(2015). It is a kind of knowledge making that emerges in the spaces where our body-hearts-minds-spirits come together. It is where conversations create meaning as they are happening, a form of relational conversation, where you push my ideas further and I yours – where I am not even sure whose idea came first. In my interviews, I observed a point in each interview, wherein we began to finish each other’s sentences. I can read the text of these conversations later, in a coffee shop at UBC, with people all around me, and the emotion returns. We weave others into our meaning making, through the naming of them, through oral footnoting (Ignace, 2008), recognizing the words and wisdoms of the stories shared with us.

Thus, my methods emerge from Secwepemculecw-the lands of the Secwepemc people-whereby Secwepemc children and youth are, as I explain below, ‘raised up as researchers’ and includes an interweaving of intergenerational teachings, seasonal rounds, walking and being on the land, intergenerational dreaming practices, sensing, listening to spirit and storytelling. This place-based and kinship pedagogy together with embodied practices and ceremonies – such as a berry picking camp I participated in – anchor my knowing. Secwepemc scholar Nancy Sandy (2016) describes how the colonial system interrupted the essential role of seasonal rounds as anchored in Secwepemc law and child safety:

The family structure was fractured, and every means of transmitting St’xelcenc knowledge was interrupted by the genocidal practice of denying us the use of our language, our spirituality, and our culture – everything that is contained in making, implementing, and maintaining our laws. (p. 197)

My own scholarship and activism are rooted in healing from this interruption and resistance

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<sup>38</sup> I listened to this interview with Fred Moten (2015) and resonated with this feeling that my writing is always in conversation with others. Moten said, “I feel like all the work is collaborative work, it’s just that it comes out under an individual name so the other people you’re in collaboration with are subordinated in a certain kind of way to one’s own name, even though all of those voices are constantly with you and in your head... but then the actual practice that you’re practicing for, so to speak, is in the ensemble, in the encounter”.

to colonial violence at the macro and structural level of policy, as well as at the individual and intimate level of the body.

### **1.3.1. Ethics: the ethical work of witnessing stories**

*And the more I learned about my culture, the values, the philosophy of our culture, I never realized how it was changing me. ... from there on my life totally changed. I began to see my culture from a different perspective. I could see there was a lot in it to offer our people. (Mary Thomas, 2001, p. 27)*

In this quote, the late Secwepemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas tells the story of how she was approached to be involved in research, specifically to do research with her own people, and how her research project was a crucial and important first step in healing from the impact of residential school and the ongoing colonization of her people. This research is grounded in this teaching of research and stories as having healing potential – as contained in the values and ethics of the Secwepemc people. These values include: the value of relationship – Kweseltnews (we are all family); the value of individual strength and responsibility – Knucwetsut (take care of yourself); the value of knowing your gifts – Etsxe; The value of sharing – Knucwentwe'cw; the value of Humility – Qweqestin; and the value of renewal – Mellelc<sup>39</sup>.

The Value of Relationship – Kweseltnews: this value speaks to the importance to the Secwepemc people of kinship and the multiple interrelationships, connections across and between communities and outside of these as well. These relationships are not with only our human family through kinship ties, but also speak to the sacred relationship with the natural world. As described by Mary Thomas (2001):

It was a must, to have a strong family unit. All these adults, young moms, young dads, uncles, big brothers, sisters, grandparents, were on the outside circle. In the middle was the little children and each one of these people on the outside circle had an obligation to teach these little ones in the middle how to become strong, to be part of the strong family circle. And it was a must. And with it, you have a dozen strong family units within a community; you have a strong community. (p. 80)

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<sup>39</sup> My information on the values is compiled from Elder Mary Thomas, 2001, Billy, 2009; Ignace, 2008 and Michel, 2012.

As applied to an ethical research framework, this network of relationships holds us accountable, answering the questions: who are you, and to whom do you belong?

The Value of Individual Strength and Responsibility - Knucwetsut.s: this value speaks to the importance of self-development in order that the community would utilize one's gifts, and that one's training or the strength one gained would be of benefit to all in the circle. As described by an Elder interviewed by Celia Haig-Brown (1989):

The methods used to teach skills for everyday living and to instill values and principles were participation and example. Within communities, skills were taught by every member, with Elders playing a very important role. Education for the child began at the time he or she was born. The child was prepared for his role in life whether it be hunter, fisherman, wife, or mother. This meant that each child grew up knowing his place in the system. (p. 33)

As it applies to my research framework, this requires doing the work necessary to be of use in the community and being able to respond, and being responsible to the community.

The Value of Knowing Your Gifts – Etsxe: this value speaks to the importance of ceremony and connection to the spiritual world. The Secwepemc approach to childrearing demonstrates attention to identifying and supporting the gifts of children through ceremony, prayer, song, dance, sweats, and personal training. Secwepemc activist and educator Janice Billy (2009) in her important doctoral thesis, *Back from the Brink: Decolonizing through the Restoration of Secwepemc Language, Culture, and Identity* describes how one of the important ways to transmit values was through the “etsce7” the traditional training at puberty in the ceremonies, traditions and knowledge required from “etsxe”. In my research, this value speaks to the importance of ‘revealed knowledge’ (Brandt-Castellano, 2002) as offered through my gifts of dreaming and healing, and through ceremony and spirit.

The value of sharing – Knucwentwe'cw & the value of Humility Qweqestin: these two values combine how I will share back what I have learned through the research, and recognize my own humility and gratitude for life and my place in it. A research model based on values is essential. As Mary Thomas (2001) responded to the question, “‘why should we be digging in the past?’ I feel it's very important to take some of these values and put it in our studies today, in order to put things in their right perspective” (p. 23). Thus, the values in my research framework will ensure that things are “put in their right perspective.”

The Value of Renewal – Mellelc: this value speaks to the importance of balance and taking care of oneself. Play, humour, and celebration are all examples of this important value. I would argue that this is a vital component in any research framework, yet discussions of balance, play, humor, and renewal are absent from most research methodologies and ethical guidelines.

I draw on Elder Mary Thomas's story as I return to the spiral of Secwepemc ontology as described by Ignace (2008), as I do not want to imply that these values and methodologies that I have shared are separate and distinct, because they are in fact deeply interconnected and woven together. A research model based in values and ethics is essential. As noted in the important work of Kirkness & Barnhart (1991), values of relationship, respect, reciprocity, and relevance to Indigenous worldviews are fundamental. Elder Mary Thomas (2001) also linked the importance of Secwepemc values guiding research, "I feel it's very important to take some of these values and put it in our studies today, in order to put things in their right perspective" (p. 23). Thus, the values of my research framework ensure that things are "put in their right perspective." (See Appendix B for my ethical framework document). Ethical approval was also provided through Simon Fraser University ethical review process.

### **1.3.2. Sts ts' ax (to witness): /Red Intersectional Witnessing**

*As I have come to understand witnessing methodology, I view these experiences as shared with me in the context of reciprocal relationships with an Indigenous cultural framework, and in witnessing the stories, I am obligated to ensure they are not denied, ignored or silenced (Sarah Hunt, 2014, p. 37)*

*Pay-Tention. We have to become better witnesses (Nobrega-Olivera, Lily, & Stewart, May 18th, 2016).*

*Here the body can speak a language that breaks the silence (Philip, 1989, p.104)*

In this research, I conducted interviews with Indigenous child and youth counsellors and therapists (referred to as healers) within Secwepemc territory over a one-year period from the summer of 2015 through to the winter of 2016. In addition to being healers, I view these practitioners as witnesses. Within Indigenous Nations, the concept of witnessing is a sacred and ceremonial role, with the witness required to remember the event in her heart and mind, in order to remember and record the

intergenerational knowledge and resistance by how we carry this message (Koptie, 2010). My analysis is consistent with Indigenous witnessing methods that include witnessing of all our relations (Brant 1983, 1994; Harjo & Bird 1997; Harjo, 2011; Hunt, 2014). As Mohawk writer Beth Brant (1994) describes it, this witnessing methodology is not just to one another but also to the natural world. She notes: “As an Indigenous writer, I feel that the gift of writing and the privilege of writing holds a responsibility to be a witness to my people. To be a witness of the natural world, to be a witness to Salmon...” (Brant, 1994, p. 70). This witnessing moves in all directions as throughout this research I was aware of the ways in which the natural world was witnessing me. This included visits from Owl while doing my interviews, as well as Coyote, and Turtle.

A purposive sampling method was used to identify participants, through the community advisory of knowledge keepers, youth, elders, and activists, and through my own position as a therapist, Indigenous girls group facilitator, and my own community and family relationships. Together, the advisory members and I drew on our relationships to identify Indigenous individuals living or working in Secwepemc territories who work to address the impacts of Xena7eltse on children and youth.

I used the following criteria to identify participants:

- i) Self-identified as an Indigenous counsellor or therapist (See Appendix C for participant biographies)
- ii) Currently working directly with Secwepemc children and youth in the Secwepemc territory

Individual in-depth interviews with participants were audio recorded, as well as documented through my own reflexive field notes, including Secwepemc dream analysis and poetry. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured qualitative story work approach with the aid of a pre-written interview guide (see Appendix D). All participants were also asked to submit a reflection or art piece that represented the role of resistance in their work with Indigenous children and youth who have survived violence. This was an optional activity. I will include the art pieces and responses I received in a future publication for practitioners.

I engaged in a relational analysis consistent with Secwepemc storytelling, dreaming and Red intersectional witnessing methods. Teit (1909) wrote of the sacred and intergenerational dreaming practices of the Secwepemc people – with Indigenous youth painting their dreams on the rocks. In this way this research strives to bring back the

pedagogy and practice of Secwepemc dreaming, Temtumen, supported through intergenerational community practices. Further, through the poetry I wrote and shared after each interview, alongside the creative pieces shared by the interviewees, I invited the participants, alongside myself, to make the meaning visible. This poetic embodied engagement with each story involved a sensing, thinking, and feeling, and an accountability to each story – it invites ongoing reflection on my relations with land, spirit, plants, and animals in my theorizing and accountability, together with an understanding of my body as an archive in breaking the silence and truth-telling as I witnessed in these interviews.

#### **1.4. Theoretical Framework: Red Intersectionality and Decolonial Love**

*Perhaps we need more complex and messier forms of love, ones that can, in their otherworldliness, sustain native peoples' attachments to themselves. Love might be our last hope. (Billy-Ray Belcourt, 2015, August 20th blogpost)*

*Our resistance is written in both rage and love (Rachel Flowers, 2015, p.40).*

*I am the one whose death was intended and didn't die (Connie Fife, 1997, p. 480.)*

*We have a spirit of rage (Beth Brant, 1983, p.7)*

*And the core, the pivot, is love (Beth Brant, 1983, p. 8)*

*That is why sexism came... they had to attack (Indigenous peoples) perceptual reality about the woman in relationship to the earth and life/ so sexism... – it was like a mining tool to help turn us against the earth and make the earth available for plunder...it's almost like a predatory behavior – the behavior pattern never really changes itself, what the behavior pattern does is it just outlasts the generations ...the terminology changes, the technology changes, ... it re manifests itself, it eats our spirit, it feed off us in some kind of way... see it is the same war... the behavior pattern remains the same... the generations that it gets conducted on changes... severing our relationship to power is the objective (John Trudell, 2012, Recorded speech)*

In my research and practice, I have developed and implemented a Red Intersectionality theoretical and witnessing framework that I assert is necessary to theorize not only past forces of colonialism, but current and emerging ones as well. Poet

and AIM activist John Trudell in the quote above describes how sexism was and is a necessary tool of colonialism, a form of predatory and repetitive violence that occurs over and over again across generations. Similarly, Juan Diaz in a 2012 interview (Moya, P. L. M. June, 26) further theorizes that this racialized and sexualized violence that came with colonization manifests as rape culture<sup>40</sup> and it “is the rape culture that stops the family from achieving decolonial intimacy, from achieving decolonial love.” I suggest that Red Intersectionality makes visible the love, renewal, resurgence, and healing as well as the “spirit of rage” (Brant, 1983, p.7) and resistance found within Indigenous stories, and within our practices. As such, it can support us in providing examples of transformative justice<sup>41</sup> – it can theorize the intimate spaces of violence on the body, as well as the larger structural violence done through colonialism, racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, and the many ways these come together to create harm.

Red Intersectionality is inspired and informed by the important work of Sandy Grande’s (2004, 2007) “*Red Pedagogy*” and Indigenous feminisms’ long history of recognizing, naming, and resisting gendered colonial violence on the land and on the body (Arvin, Tuck & Morrill, 2013; Danforth, 2008; Native Youth Sexual Health Network, 2014). It answers the question asked by Laguna Pueblo author Paula Gunn Allen (1984) “where are the red roots of feminism?” It builds upon this extensive history of Indigenous and black feminist activists, writers, and scholars who have named and theorized the interlocking arteries of colonial violence on girls, women’s, and Two-spirit bodies (Campbell, 1973; de Finney, 2014, 2015; Danforth, 2008; Jordan, 1974; hooks, 1991, 1996; Hunt, 2014; Maracle, 1996; Million, 2008; Simpson, 2011; Tuck, 2009). My work also is inspired by the work of critical queer Indigenous and racialized scholars<sup>42</sup> (Allen, 1986; Chrystos, 1988; Jordan, 1977; Gumbs, 2010; Brant, 1994, Belcourt, 2015; Hunt & Holmes, 2015; McNeil-Seymour, 2015; Wilson, 2008). Indigenous and racialized queer feminists, as described by Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2010), strive to “generate an

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<sup>40</sup> Sarah Hunt’s keynote on this topic can be found on Emma Talks Podcast <https://soundcloud.com/user-210912628/sarah-hunt-decolonizing-the-roots-of-rape-culture>

<sup>41</sup> Mia Mingus (2014), the disability and transformative justice organizer, describes it this way: “I came to transformative justice because it was the only framework I found that could hold the complexities of intimate and state violence, accountability and healing, and systemic and personal transformation” (p. 140-141).

<sup>42</sup> I have chosen to use a citation practice of Indigenous writers in particular Indigenous women and girls and what Beth Brant calls “*telling the truth for ourselves*” (1994, p. 13, emphasis in original).



alternative intergenerational sociality through which the violent narratives of patriarchy and capitalism can be replaced by dynamic forms of community accountability, desire and transformation” (p. 59).

Prior to colonization, many Indigenous communities had strong matrilineal and gender-complimentary traditions, multiple categories of gender, and holistic understandings of and approaches to health (Hunt, 2012; Danforth, 2009). Syilx scholar Jeanette Armstrong (1995) calls this “a complex holistic view of connectedness that demands our responsibility to everything we are connected to” (p. 13). This complexity or wholism found in Indigenous communities was and continues to be the target of gendered colonial violence. Colonization policies and practices attacked intersectional ways of being within Indigenous communities including the complimentary roles of women as well as the sacred place of Two-Spirit people<sup>43</sup> and children within the community (Driskill, 2010; Hunt, 2016). As described by Alex Wilson (2008), “Two-spirit identity is about circling back to where we belong, reclaiming, reinventing and redefining our beginnings, our roots, our communities, our support systems and our collective and individual selves” (p. 198). Through frameworks of Red Intersectionality, we are also invited to re-centre, re-claim, and re-imagine these practices through the ontologies and epistemologies of each Nation. McNeil-Seymour (2015) writes that for him he has been reminded that first and foremost he is Secwepemc and in addition to identifying as two-spirit he suggests the Secwepemc word yucamin’min identifies his roles and responsibilities within the Secwepemc nation, which means “protect the Earth and protect the people” (p. 91).

As seen in the early writing of Sioux activist Zitkala-Sa (1901) and Sarah Winnemucca (1883), Indigenous women were central in fighting issues of violence on the land and on the body as they witnessed it at the turn of the century. They did not separate their activism around tribal rights and water rights from their activism against racism, sexism, and ageism under colonialism. Sarah Winnemucca (1883) describes not only her own experience of being buried alive as a child by her mother to protect her from the settlers, but also her own sister’s rape at the hands of settlers:

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<sup>43</sup> Secwepemc scholar activist Jeffrey McNeil-Seymour (2015) offers a cautionary note in the use of Two-Spirit. He states, “My concern is that the use of the term Two-Spirit creates the impression that sexuality and gender identities are understood in the same way across the many First Nations” (p. 87).

My people have been so unhappy for a long time they wish now to disincrease, instead of multiply. The mothers are afraid to have more children, for fear they will have daughters, who are not safe even in their mother 's presence. (p. 48)

Similarly, Zitkala-Sa (1924)<sup>44</sup> was instrumental in collecting the testimonies of three Indigenous girls violated by the imposition of capitalism through oil and mining in the tribal lands. Zitkala-Sa put together the legal argument of gender, race, and age in her essay "*Regardless of Sex or Age*", in which she describes how "greed for the girls' lands and rich oil property actuated the grafters and made them like beasts surrounding their prey" (as cited Nason, 2010, p. 52). Zitkala-Sa and all the Indigenous feminists writing since contact continue to remind us, over and over, again and again, that colonial violence has always been gendered, raced, and linked to access to land – and as such targeted girls, women, and Two-Spirit bodies. As Muscogee Creek legal scholar Sarah Deer (2015) suggests, "rape is more than a metaphor for colonization – it is part and parcel of colonization" (10). The ongoing structural and predatory nature of gendered colonial violence as enacted literally and figuratively through mining and extraction is persistent across generations from Zitkala-Sa' to the resistance of the Secwepemc Women Warriors Society and activists against mining today<sup>45</sup>.

These "resurgent Indigenous and Black feminisms are the spine of our collective liberation" (Simpson, L., blogpost Nov. 28, 2014); "theorized from the "body-logos" of lived experiences of interlocking oppression and colonial violence – and as such contain the "source code of our future liberation" (Diaz. J in interview with Moya, P. M. L. June 26, 2012). In particular, Red Intersectionality enacts the refusal and persistence against patriarchal and gendered colonialism "<sup>46</sup>with the desire and theorizing of love and of lustful erotic activism as necessary in our struggle (Akiwenzie-Damm, 2008; Jordan, 1974; 1977; Simpson 2011)<sup>47</sup>. Through everyday acts of loving and of re(matriation) we

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<sup>44</sup> I had already found the writings of Zitkala-Sa and Winnemucca prior to beginning this research but I am indebted to Anishinaabe scholar Dory Nason (2010) for the three cases describing Zitkala-Sa's activism.

<sup>45</sup>For more information: <https://noii-van.resist.ca/secwepemc-women-warrior-society-disrupt-meeting-no-to-kinder-morgan-trans-mountain-pipeline/>

<sup>46</sup> "We grew despite the crazy killing scorn that broke the brightness to be born" (Jordan, 1969, p.65)

<sup>47</sup> Akiwenzie-Damm (2008) invokes this when she writes "I instinctively knew that the erotic is essential to us as human beings and that it had to take its rightful place in our lives and cultures before we could truly decolonize our hearts and minds" (pp. 109-110).

are imagining and creating a future for our children – one that exists beyond traditionalist and heteronormative patriarchal ideas of relationship to land<sup>48</sup> (Maracle, 1996; Waaseyaa-sin, 2015; Waters, 2001) family (Barker, 2017) and instead imagines an Indigenous feminism that can “provide paths and routes to heal the rifts and borders that maps of difference (such as men’s/women’s space, Rez/urban) continue to construct in the wake of colonialism” (Goeman, 2009, p. 184). Red Intersectionality resists discourses of risk and damage-centred research (Tuck, 2009, Clark & Hunt 2016) and instead attends to Indigenous acts of refusal (Simpson 2007) of presencing (Simpson, 2011; de Finney, 2014), of desire (Tuck & Wang, 2014) of the erotic (Akiwenzie-Damm, 2008), and of everyday decolonial love practices within our relationships.

Most importantly, Red Intersectionality responds to the recognition by Indigenous feminists of the need for a:

native feminist practice that kindles a new look at the historical and Native futurities, or the vertical, and the connections among peoples and places out from a specific event, or the horizontal, is a powerful key to disrupt processes of spatial injustices that rely on the cooptation of both axes to ensure settler regimes” (Goeman, 2017, p.105).

Through the framework of Red Intersectionality alongside Secwepemc storytelling, this thesis is working on multiple fronts simultaneously; it aims to move backwards and forwards, structurally and intimately in this way--to disrupt, to give pause, and to dream. It further seeks to resist, reclaim, recover, regenerate, and renew our own Nation-based and territorially specific ways of addressing the wellness and healing needs of our children and youth.

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<sup>48</sup> We must be cautious to not fall into the trap of the binary within our theorizing, and Red Intersectionality offers a way through this. Specifically, this approach addresses the inherent tension between those Indigenous people who are connected to their land and their traditions and those for whom the scatter of colonization and perhaps their own resistance and survivance has resulted in movement. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) in their paper on Indigenous identity and colonialism set up a dichotomy between those who are truly Indigenous and those “incidentally Indigenous”. If, as Alfred and Corntassel argue our “true power as Indigenous people ultimately lies in our relationships with our land, relatives, language, and ceremonial life” (p.605) then what existence or hope is there for those residing in cities, that Bill C-31 and other colonial legislation displaced and disconnected? How is the occupying of urban space by Indigenous bodies not an ongoing form of reclaiming? Red Intersectionality reminds us of the multiplicity of resistances, and of kinship relationships that exist, including through spirit, and dreaming.

### 1.4.1. Pigwt (to revive): The resurgence of Secwepemc intergenerational love and healing

*Decolonial love refuses that, and generates a series radical attachments, empathys and compassions as practices, in the face of ongoing violence, based on the ways love is conceptualized and practices within for me Nishnaabewin (Leanne Simpson 2016).*

*the transformative power of love is the foundation of all meaningful social change (bell hooks, 1991: p.17)*

*And I always like to use it as a circle. With a circle, there's no beginning, no ending. Within the family circle, we have the grandparents, who were the teachers, the young moms, the young dads, big brothers, big sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins. They're all in the outside circle. **And every one of them had an obligation to the little ones in the centre.** Children were never growing up without somebody there all the time (emphasis added Elder Mary Thomas, 2001: 1- 2).*

What does it mean to have a Secwepemc theory and practice guide survival and recovery/healing, as they had for centuries?<sup>49</sup> I suggest that these practices have been not forgotten but frozen, as in the individual response to violence, but enacted on a community scale. What are the scales of colonial violence at work? By attending to the scales of violence in this work I am linking the violence enacted through policies and practices of people, in relationships of trust, as equally abusive and violent as those done in the intimate, personal realm of the family and relationship by people we trust including sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. If the body's reaction to violence is to freeze, fight or flee, then we must attend to the scales of violence and honour the survival strategies that were and are employed collectively to resist this violence. Kathy Michel (2012) describes how people can be just like Coyote, and they need and have to rely on others to jump over us and revive them (p. 243). This message was also repeated to me by Kukp7i Ron Ignace, who told me that "healing comes from another power, see how Tlesa brings his brothers back to life, after the Grizzlies kill them, he jumps over them and brings them back to life" (personal communication, November 22, 2017,).

The Secwepemc stories provide the medicine here. The stories of the healers I interviewed all provide strong examples of how this revival is taking place. They all pointed

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<sup>49</sup> This question is inspired by Chaya Ocampo Go's (2016) Master's thesis for which I served as external examiner, and our directed reading together in 2016.

to the resurgence and renewal of Secwepemc ways of being and doing in the healing of our children, what one participant described as “let’s do it this way first.” In returning to the question that guided my research – “what’s in your basket?” – each interviewed healer shared examples of Secwepemc and Indigenous approaches in their baskets. As one participant shared “now in terms of working with children, it was always needing that basket and always needing to carry something with you... something that the kids could hang on to” (Marilee Draney, Thompson/Cree healer interview). The Secwepemc phrase P<sup>x</sup>wentés re imts.s ell m-ltwilc speaks of intergenerational healing of a grandchild by her grandmother.<sup>50</sup> This concept captures the essence of my research findings of returning our children, and ourselves as healers to the circle – through approaches of Indigenous family and community-centred approaches, and the centering of love and resurgence in our approaches. Participants all spoke of the importance of a gentle family and community-based approach, walking beside children and youth and families, “asking what do you need from me” “walking alongside” and the recognition that people know what it is they need and honouring this through the creation of “sacred space.” In addition, the Indigenous healers I interviewed shared examples of wise practice approaches such as the Secwepemc girls groups operating throughout the Secwepemc Nation, and the importance of working in programs and spaces that allow the “freedom to just be and to do what I need to do to help the families” (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer, interview).

Ultimately this dissertation functions to provide hope for the future of a time where risk is no longer written on our children’s bodies at birth, where our children are not “a vessel for white settler shame” (Simpson, 2013, p. 132), where our children are able to rest in connection. This hope, Sandy Grande (2007) reminds us in her chapter “*Red Pedagogy: The Un-methodology*” is not a future-focused colonial version of hope “but one deeply entwined and ‘contingent’ upon the past traditions... one that trusts the believes and understandings of our ancestors, the power of traditional knowledge, and the possibilities of new understandings” (p. 142). Thus, this research responds to the call by Grand Chief Ed John (2016) raised earlier in this paper – but worth repeating – of the need to “take immediate steps to support Indigenous children, parent, families, and communities to develop and nurture their own solutions – this is the only road to re-establish patterns of connectedness” (p. 58). In the words of one of the healers I

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<sup>50</sup> I have included other Secwepemc words offered to me in the Glossary. All mistakes are my own.

interviewed, her hope for the future is one that recognizes “we have within our own Nation, within our own communities, our own jurisdiction, our own laws, and we will look after our children and not have any influences from the government or other threats” (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer).

Each story shared in my basket is an example of what Metis writer Frye Jean Graveline (1998) calls the “politicization of love as a powerful force that challenges and resists domination” (p. 45). This everyday and intimate act of loving is political, and as such it does not deny the fear and rage<sup>51</sup> that is felt by Indigenous peoples, and it is based in the desire for survival, in the desire for decolonial love to be imagined, and to again encircle Indigenous children. As James Baldwin (1963) wrote to his nephew and namesake about his birth:

Here you were to be loved. To be loved, baby, hard at once and forever to strengthen you against the loveless world. Remember that. I know how black it looks today for you. It looked black that day too. Yes, we were trembling. We have not stopped trembling yet, but if we had not loved each other, none of us would have survived, and now you must survive because we love you and for the sake of your children and your children's children. (pp. 6-7)

This loving is an act of intimate resurgence, in its everyday enactment of kinship, in the ways in which racism and rage are named alongside love and desire for an unknown future. As one of the Secwepemc healers said when I asked what was central in her approach “you know what, I’m going to say is, love – unconditional love” (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer interview). This unconditional love, and defiantly practicing that decolonizing love in our own families and communities, is the way forward.

This dissertation is my attempt to “think right about something”, slexlexs – to develop wisdom and knowledge and to tie this into a bundle, cxqusens. My basket holds this bundle of Secwepemc ontology together with the stories of Secwepemc and Indigenous healers and the resurgence of Secwepemc law and reinstatement of Secwepemc healing approaches as offered through these shared stories. My

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<sup>51</sup> Mohawk, Two-spirit writer Beth Brant (1983) in the introduction to her anthology of Indigenous women’s writing, *A Gathering of Spirit*, writes, “I want to talk about blessings, and endurance, and facing the machine. The everyday shit. The everyday joy. We make no excuses for the way we are, the way we live, the way we paint and write. We are not ‘stoic’ and ‘noble’, we are strong-willed and resisting. We have a spirit of rage” (p.7).

responsibilities to this bundle are rooted in my kinship relationships to the Secwepemc community and to this land.

Ceremony for completing a poetry reading  
This is a give-away poem  
You have come gathering  
You have made a circle with me  
Of the places where I have wandered...  
I have more to give this basket is very large  
I have stitched it together of your kind words  
Here is a necklace of feathers & bones  
A sacred meal of choke cherries  
Take this mask of bark which keeps out the evil ones  
This basket is only the beginning  
There is something in my arms for all of you...  
Come  
This is a give away poem  
*I cannot go home*  
*Until you have taken everything*  
*And the basket which held it*  
*When my hands are empty*  
*I will be full (Chrystos, 1981, p. 191-192).*

## **1.5. Pathways Through this Thesis: an outline**

This dissertation follows the three-paper dissertation guidelines – a format that allows for three stand-alone published papers. These papers form the critical interventions this research makes into theory, policy, and practice. Each of the papers that make up this thesis functions to intervene within a different cohesive exploration of

my area of study. As the format of this thesis allows an interdisciplinary project drawing upon and engaging different audiences, it is particularly well suited for my area of research. However, as I noted earlier in this thesis it also presents challenges of repetition for the reader given the temporal nature of papers published over a three-year period, and representing a ten-year journey.

This thesis is organized into four chapters. Chapter one has described my purpose, scope, Red Intersectionality theory and storywork methodology, research methods and ethics, and a roadmap of the thesis as a whole<sup>52</sup>. Chapter two is the first paper, “Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier” (Clark, 2016b), offers my theoretical intervention into trauma theory and outlines steps towards decolonizing and transforming it. I problematize “trauma” theory and practices, suggesting that these are forms of covert colonialism continuing to create a colonial subject founded on risk and requiring intervention and saving. “In other words, the pathologization of certain population allows not only their expendability, but also pedagogical acts of archaic violence that enforce the disciplinary exclusion of some life from social meaning” (Gumbs, 2010, pg. 96). This chapter is intended for critical trauma theorists and practitioners and provides an international intervention into trauma theory. I have honoured my commitment to Indigenous communities through sharing this paper through webinars, invited talks, and workshops throughout BC and Canada, as well as specifically in Secwepemc territories. In Chapter three, in the paper “Red Intersectionality and Violence-informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls” (Clark, 2016), I outline a witnessing praxis that emerged from my interviews with Indigenous healers using a framework of Red Intersectionality that centres everyday practices of resistance, refusal, presencing, and resurgence. In this paper, I explore an intimate witnessing practice that emerges from our own lived experience and as witnesses to Indigenous children and youth in our lives and in ceremonial spaces such as Indigenous girls groups and other rites of passage spaces. The paper theorizes a critique of western notions of self-care, offering instead the idea of communities of caring and

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<sup>52</sup> Part of this chapter has been presented and then published in two separate publications. Clark, N. (forthcoming February 2018). *Intimate Acts of Resurgence: Witnessing the Resistance of Indigenous Children and Youth in Corntassel, Alfred, Goodyear, Silva & Aikau (Eds). Everyday Acts of Resurgence: People, Places, Practices. Olympia: Intercontinental Cry* and as Clark, N. (2017). *Raised up as researchers on the land: xq'wle`w'men – my berry-picking basket. Knowledge Makers, Thompson Rivers University, Kamloops, BC.*



considerations for decolonizing wellness and our own witnessing practices. This chapter is written for practitioners working with violence and Indigenous girls and it provides an important reflexive and practice intervention. Chapter four is the third paper – titled “No one cares more for your community than you: A new Owl Story” – presents the stories from multigenerational Indigenous practitioners working in Secwepemculecw as important examples of “living traditions” (Goeman, 2008 p. 300) for Indigenous child and youth wellness approaches in our current context. This paper addresses the need for a theory and practice of healing violence for Indigenous children and youth that honours the unique and diverse ontology, epistemology, and wellness practices within specific nations, in this case the Secwepemc nation, while also recognizing the complexity of resistance to experiences of violence and oppression as they are shaped by the intersections of age, race, gender, geography, spirituality, and other interlocking factors within and between the interstices of Indigenous identity. This paper is written for Indigenous social workers, counsellors, and also non-Indigenous practitioners who are engaged in healing with Indigenous children and youth. This paper centres practices of Indigenous healers working in the Secwepemc nation and provides an important intervention into violence practices within social work, and other allied professions and helping practices. In Chapter five, the final chapter, I share the combined interventions of these papers. I also offer hope for the future of our children and youth and the wellness responses. Ultimately this dissertation as a whole functions to crack open the spaces between the colonial arteries of violence, resisting the all-too familiar broken narratives of risk in order to reveal the return of Secwepemc and other Indigenous children to the centre of our circles in our communities through the deeper practices of witnessing and loving each other and Secwepemc children in this work.

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## Chapter 2.

# Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier<sup>53</sup>

**Abstract:** The health of Indigenous girls in Canada is often framed and addressed through health programs and interventions that are based on Western values systems that serve to further colonize girls' health and their bodies. One of the risks of the recent attention paid to Indigenous girls' health needs broadly and to trauma more specifically, is the danger of contributing to the "shock and awe" campaign against Indigenous girls who have experienced violence, and of creating further stigma and marginalization for girls. A focus on trauma as an individual health problem prevents and obscures a more critical, historically-situated focus on social problems under a (neo)colonial state that contribute to violence. There is a need for programs that provide safer spaces for girls that address their intersecting and emergent health needs and do not further the discourse and construction of Indigenous girls as at-risk. The author will present her work with Indigenous girls in an Indigenous girls group that resists medical and individual definitions of trauma, and instead utilizes an Indigenous intersectional framework that assists girls in understanding and locating their coping as responses to larger structural and systemic forces including racism, poverty, sexism, colonialism and a culture of violence enacted through state policy and practices.

### 2.1. Introduction

Indigenous Hawaiian scholar Manulani Aluli Myer says "See your work as a *taonga* (sacred object) for your family, your community, your people—*because it is*" (Aluli, 2008, p. 219). Opaskwayak Cree researcher Shaun Wilson calls for starting from our intentions, our beliefs in the work we do. Similarly, protocol within many Indigenous communities requires a person to situate themselves and their relationships to the people and the land (Wilson, 2008). I write this paper from unceded Musqueam territory,

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but the coming to know, *s/lex/exs*, of my readings and learning on the land was completed from my time spent in Secwepemc territory. This work is grounded in my own intersecting relationships to Indigenous communities and the systems in which our lives are shaped. I was born in Saskatchewan, Canada in Cree territory but have been on Secwepemc territory since I was young. In many ways, my worldview has been shaped by Secwepemc land and through kinship relationships. My identity is formed not only through my own metis roots but also through my own connection to the Secwepemc community, through what Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson calls a “feeling citizenship” (Simpson, 2003, p. 173). I know whom I am accountable to, and whom I belong to. These are the important questions that define my responsibility and my role within the Secwepemc nation. My work is informed and mobilized through my interconnected identities as a solo-parent of three children who are Secwepemc and from the lands of the Secwepemc peoples, and my twenty years as a community based researcher, activist, and trauma counsellor with Indigenous girls in urban and rural spaces. Furthermore, I draw upon the insight I have gained through conducting interviews and sharing stories with many Indigenous therapists who address violence, healing and trauma in the Secwepemc nation, and who have also witnessed the ongoing resilience, survivance, and positive resistance of Indigenous children and youth.

## **2.2. Context**

Several years ago a 14-year-old Indigenous girl walked into a girls group I was facilitating and asked if she could make an announcement. She proceeded to tell the other girls that she had been sexually abused since age seven by her stepfather, and that she was not going to remain silent anymore, and, moreover, wanted them to know that they did not need to tolerate abuse. In the weeks and months that followed this act of truth-telling and collective witnessing, she was labeled, stigmatized, pathologized, and ignored by police, social workers, and mental health professionals who she encountered. Instead of focusing on the disclosure, it was suggested that she was “using drugs” and her mental health repeatedly questioned. These were provided as evidence of her credibility, her believability, and her motivation.

Weeks passed, and I then saw this young woman walking on the street. I stopped the car and said hello and asked how she was doing. We exchanged cell phone

numbers and the advocacy began. The other girl's group facilitator and I began making phone calls. I became more strident with each one as I encountered the labeling of this young woman. It was clear that a very different narrative had been formed by the agencies and health care providers of a young woman who made up a story in order to leave her small community. I was told that she used drugs, that she is a lesbian, and that she had a clear plan to leave her community. Together, the other facilitator and I supported this young woman in calling a meeting, where she, together with us as supports, presented a different "picture" of herself. She was articulate, strong and clear about the abuse and about her right to live in a safe home and attend school where she chose. She got her day in court and the judge marveled at her strengths and her ability to represent herself and her needs. She became a leader in the new girls group she was attending, speaking up and naming her feelings, and her challenges. She wrote a support letter about the need for Indigenous girls groups and presented the model at a School District board meeting.

Caught in a web of government policies and community norms around violence towards Indigenous girls and women, her act of resistance to longstanding abuse was shaped by intersecting colonial discourses and practices. On paper, these relevant policies and practices may have appeared to acknowledge the unique intersecting factors that impacted her safety, health and mental health, but they (and the people who administered them and had written them) lacked an analysis of colonialism and were, in fact, part of a legacy of colonialism in perpetuating violence against her and other Indigenous girls.

I suggest that the current construction of trauma continues to create a colonial subject who requires intervention, support, and saving. A focus on trauma as an individual health problem, as in this girls story, prevents and obscures a more critical, historically-situated focus on social problems under a (neo) colonial state that contribute to violence and harm. This paper will consider the following: What are the historic and current impacts of the creation of a "trauma industry" within Indigenous communities, and how does the individualized and medicalized approach to trauma undermine community and individual girls' resilience and resistance?

The young woman's story that begins this paper joins with the voices of Indigenous girls and women who have been truth-telling and speaking about violence at



the intersections of Indigeneity, gender, age, and geography since colonization began. These “word warriors” are and were always writing, re (membering), and re-telling complex stories of Indigenous girls and women. Zitkala-Sa, Lee Maracle, Maria Campbell, Jeanette Armstrong, Joy Harjo, Gloria Anzaldúa, Chrystos are a few women among many others. As Indigenous feminist Dian Million states, “Our voices rock the boat and perhaps the world. They are dangerous. All of this becomes important to our emerging conversation on Indigenous feminisms, on our ability *to speak to ourselves, to inform ourselves* and our generations, to counter and intervene in a constantly morphing colonial system. To ‘decolonize’ means to understand as fully as possible the forms colonialism takes in our own times” (Million, 2009, p. 55, emphasis added). The young woman in the girl’s group I was facilitating was not only speaking to other Indigenous young women, as Million describes it speaking to ourselves in order to inform ourselves a form of Indigenous storytelling, but she was also engaging in this truth-telling in an intimate relational space of Indigenous witnessing. This young woman and the circle of girls and women who received her story, were all engaged in an intimate act of decolonizing, both through theorizing about violence and the forms that it takes, but through the telling in certain spaces and relationships, such as the Indigenous girls groups that facilitate and allow for relational witnessing and accountability.

### **2.3. Shock and Awe**

In a discussion on trauma, Freud states, “the causal relation between the determining psychic trauma and the hysterical phenomena is not of a kind implying that the trauma merely acts like an *agent provocateur* in releasing the symptom, which thereafter leads an independent existence” but “the psychological trauma—or more precisely the memory of the trauma—acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work” (Freud, 1952-1966, p. 6). This begs the questions: How is trauma theory and practice not the same invader that is reverberating in Indigenous communities and mental health practice? In what way is trauma as it is currently constructed and enacted within Indigenous health, an invader, and a colonial form of warfare that continues to act long after?

Health programs and interventions that are based on Western values systems and/or regulated through State interventions serve to further colonize and pathologize

Indigenous children and youths' health and their bodies. This is evidenced through increasing rates of Indigenous child and youth incarceration, mental health diagnosis, and child welfare intervention. Moreover, the increased attention to Indigenous mental health needs both broadly and through the framework of trauma more specifically, is contributing to what I call the "shock and awe" campaign against Indigenous children and youth who have experienced violence. This leads to ineffective interventions resulting in the ongoing removal of children from their land. I utilize the term "shock and awe," from Naomi Klein's seminal work *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) and apply it to the ongoing colonization of Indigenous children and youth through trauma discourse, policies and practices that perpetuate statistics of horror and shock in order to justify child protection intervention and ongoing colonial control and intervention (Klein, 2007). It is well recognized within critical scholarship that in order to get to the land, the colonizers had to remove the power and central role of women in Indigenous communities (Harry, 2009; Lawrence, 2003; Charnley, 1990). Similarly, I would argue that neo-colonialism has extended this to Indigenous children and youth through child welfare removals, incarceration, and mental health interventions.

Policy and policy processes have been, and continue to be, central to the colonization of Indigenous peoples, locally and globally (Harry, 2009; Lawrence, 2003; Yee, 2011; Clark, 2012). In order to understand the violence experienced by Indigenous children and youth today, it is necessary to situate this violence within the violence of colonization and consider how it continues to be enacted through policy. Colonization required the silencing of Indigenous women, as the matriarchal and co-operative societies did not fit within the individualistic and patriarchal ways of the colonizer. To get to the land, they had to remove the women and children (Charnley, 1990; Yee, 2011; Clark, 2012; Representative for Children and Youth, 2009; Monture-Angus, 2006). In Canada, this violence did not end with the closing of residential schools. It continues within the Indian Act and with the removal of children through child welfare policies and practices that further disconnect and displace Indigenous children and youth through adoption and foster placement (Yee, 2011). In my own practice, I continue to witness the harm and violence that intersecting policies have on Indigenous children, youth, and families. Indigenous children and youth are more likely to be in the child welfare system, and in the juvenile justice system, not only in BC and Canada, but internationally (Representative for Children and Youth, 2009). Indigenous lawyer and scholar Patricia

Monture-Angus asserts that criminalization is as a strategy of colonization that not only locks up Indigenous children and youth but also does not address the violence, including through state policies of child welfare that first criminalized them in the first place (Monture-Angus, 2006).

Trauma discourse has become part of the mainstream narrative in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, globally and locally. Alternatively described as the “age of trauma” (Miller & Tougaw, 2002) an “empire of trauma” (Fasson & Rechtman, 2009) and as a “trauma economy” (Million, 2009), trauma has become an umbrella term that includes experiences ranging from single incident experiences such as car accidents, to genocide. Maurice Stevens describes how trauma is the centre of thousands of articles within social work, psychiatry, literature; however, a universal notion of trauma is yet to be defined (Stevens, 2009). The dominant discourses of “trauma” continue to define violence within normative neo-colonial constructions, thereby functioning to obstruct and erase the naming of certain kinds of violence such as experiences of racism, structural violence enacted through state policy (Clark, 2012), and violence to Indigenous lands through mining and other development (La Duke, 2005). Craps suggests that definitions of trauma are rooted in European hegemony, resulting in psychiatric and medicalized definitions of trauma, thereby perpetuating a subsequent form of cultural imperialism (Craps, 2013). Foucault describes discourse within the colonial project as the “way of seeing that is produced and reproduced by various rules, systems and procedures—forming an entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is produced and shaped” (Foucault, 1980, p. 3). Trauma theory has emerged out of a time, place and history of ideas, and since its original formation, has been raced, classed and gendered (Stevens, 2009; Rivers, 1924). Young argues that trauma theory “is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources” (Young, 1995, p. 5).

Examples of the “conceptual territory” of trauma can be evidenced in state funded and controlled research and media coverage of Indigenous children and youth that ultimately perpetuates statistics of horror and shock in order to justify intervention and ongoing colonial control and intervention. In fact, there is a global phenomenon and expansion of trauma into Indigenous and racialized communities and Nations throughout

the world, with a focus on children and youth as inherently<sup>54</sup> vulnerable and in need of Western intervention, and with practices rooted in Western models of trauma and ideas of childhood and adolescence (Summerfield, 1999; Gilligan, 2009). As Summerfield asks “whose knowledge is privileged and who has the power to define the problem?” (Summerfield, 1999, p. 1449).

Some scholars argue that even the Indigenization of government services in many ways continues the colonial project (de Leeuw & Greenwood & Cameron, 2010; Warry, 2007) as it has increased the reach into the community, with trauma often being used as a justification for child welfare removals (de Leeuw & Greenwood & Cameron, 2010). As Landertinger writes, “they do not establish an alternative but rather carve out the same space within a system that continues to work in favour of the settler society” (Landertinger, 2011, p. 81–82). This echoes the work of both Fanon and Coulthard who call for a turning away from the state for the solutions, as in the words of Secwepemc leader George Manuel, “they must convince the conquered” (Fanon, 1963; Coulthard, 2007; Billy, 2009).

Evidence of the use of trauma as a justification for child welfare intervention and removals is also found within recent child protection responses within Australia. In 2008, the Howard government launched a national emergency response to address the sexual abuse of Indigenous children in the Northern territories. This program utilized the “shock and awe” terminology that is most often associated with going to war and deployed troops to over 70 Aboriginal communities. The Howard government seized control of these Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and forced Aboriginal parents to follow strict conditions in order to receive their welfare and family support payments. One newspaper described how “the troops posed for the cameras as they were dispatched into action, and the government issued an urgent national call for volunteer recruits, as policy was unfurled on the run. A year later, and the military analogy still seems appropriate for a campaign that has been, in the words of one doctor, like a bomb going off”. Dr. Tamara Mackean, the president of the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association, spoke of the link to colonization and further trauma, stating, “If you take

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<sup>54</sup> I thank my committee for challenging my use of the work “inherently” in my writing. This paper has been published so I will not change it in this chapter but acknowledge the essentialist meaning of this word.

away people's sense of autonomy and control, we know that's bad for their health," she says, "like any act of fear and disempowerment, it's another layer of trauma for Indigenous people. People are exhausted. They're overwhelmed and overloaded by this whole thing that's been called the intervention." (Sweet, 2008, p. 7).

Left uninterrogated and unchallenged, this dominant discourse of trauma not only erases the harm done to Indigenous children and youth through policy but can also function to silence the local and Indigenous ways of knowing and of addressing the wellness of our children and youth.

The definitions of trauma and the meanings we make of it are historically constructed and defined, and are shaped by the intersection of structural factors, including our access to power and our experiences of oppression. Further, these constructions of trauma shape what we consider as violence, what kinds of violence are erased, and the kinds of supports and access to services that flow from this.

## **2.4. The Master's Tools May Not Dismantle the House but Will Get You in the Door**

It is important to assert that knowledge of how to address violence and wellness in our communities has always existed. This knowledge of what Indigenous scholar Eduardo Duran called the "soul wound" has been with us since time immemorial. Engagement with the discourse and language of trauma emerged within Indigenous communities in the 1990s (Duran & Duran, 1995), and there has been an increase in Indigenous writings on Indigenous mental health and trauma in the last 20 years (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson, 2008; Brave Heart, 1995; Hunter, 1998; Napoleon, 1991; Wesley-Esquimaux, 2004; Evans-Campbell; Gone, 2008). Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran assert that situating the discourse of the "soul wound" within current Western constructs of trauma was important to bring "some validation to the feelings of a community that has not had the world acknowledge the systematic genocide perpetrated on it" (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 341).

Other Indigenous scholars such as Maria Yellowhorse Brave Heart, an Oglala Lakota social worker also worked within the mainstream model of trauma, while widening the frame through the development of what she called Historical Trauma Theory (Brave Heart, 1995). Brave Heart developed this out of her over 20 years of

clinical experience with Indigenous communities and in response to what she saw as the inadequacy of post-traumatic stress disorder as a diagnosis within Indigenous communities. More recently, Indigenous scholar and social worker Tessa Evans-Campbell (Snohomish) offers what she calls Colonial Trauma Response (CRT) as a theory that links historical and contemporary acts of trauma within Indigenous communities (Evans-Campbell, 2008). It is important to honour the work of these scholars in expanding the framework of trauma to include naming colonialism and genocide within the discourse of trauma.

In spite of the work to expand the framework of trauma to include the experiences of Indigenous peoples, there has continued to be a domination of Western constructs of trauma and the related evidence-based practices with Indigenous peoples. Further, the failure of these approaches with Indigenous people who have experienced violence has been well documented (Gone, 2008; Jackson & Schmutz & Wenzel & Tyler, 2006; Herring & Spangaro & Lauw & McNamara, 2013). Consequently, there is widespread recognition, both within Indigenous (Gone, 2008; Hart, 2002; Linklater, 2011) and non-Indigenous critical scholarship (Hill & Lau & Sue, 2010) of the need for a radical re-visioning of theoretical and practical approaches to “trauma” theory, intervention and training in Indigenous mental health. My past scholarship and that of other Indigenous and critical trauma scholars have attempted to address this need through offering new ways of understanding trauma within decolonized, feminist, intersectional, social justice, liberatory, and politicized approaches (Clark, 2012; Duran & Firehammer & Gonzalez, 2008; McKenzie-Mohr & Coates & McLeod, 2012; Walkins & Shulman, 2008).

Recently, Indigenous critical scholars have been at the forefront of rejecting state interventions and western defined framing of Indigenous communities health and healing. Duran, Firehammer, and Gonzales describe counsellors as the “new priests” of the society, the authors argue that therapists perpetuate racism and injustice through imposing incongruent helping paradigms [46]. Similarly, Indigenous psychologist Joseph Gone writes, “mental health professionals are the missionaries for a new millennium” (Gone, 2008, p. 391). Further, Kirmayer, Simpson, and Cargo argue that there is great danger in framing this ongoing violence of the state in mental health language, as it may in fact “deflect attention from the large scale, and, to some extent, continuing assault on

the identity and continuity of whole peoples” (Kirmayer & Simpson & Cargo, 2003, p. 597).

Indigenous critical theorists and activists such as Leanne Simpson, Dian Million and Glen Coulthard, argue that sovereignty and the future health of Indigenous nations will not be found through state recognition, and that the “processes of engagement” including state recognition, and the resulting discourses of healing, can and will replicate the very harms of colonialism (Million, 2009; Coulthard, 2007; Simpson, 2011). As Leanne Simpson says:

We need to rebuild our culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and economy. We need to be able to articulate in a clear manner our visions for the future, for living as Indigenous Peoples in contemporary times. To do so, we need to engage in Indigenous processes, since according to our traditions, the processes of engagement highly influence the outcome of the engagement itself. We need to do this on our own terms, without the sanction, permission or engagement of the state, western theory or opinions of Canadians” (Simpson, 2011, p. 17).

In his seminal essay *Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the “Politics of Recognition”* in Canada, Coulthard engages with the work of Fanon in the context of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Coulthard argues that Indigenous communities need to be less concerned with the politics of recognition by a settler society, and instead focus on recognizing Indigenous ways and practices, in what he describes as “our own on-the-ground practices of freedom” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 444).

I echo the work of Indigenous scholar Dian Million in applying this same reasoning to the concept of trauma and suggest that the theory, practice and ways of doing trauma in Indigenous communities, and with children and youth in particular, are part of the process of reproducing the colonial system, and are an example of what Foucault called “power-knowledge” (Foucault, 1980). This power-knowledge, through the discursive framework of trauma functions to efface the naming and addressing of the real harm and violence done through colonial systems, at both the structural, and what Fanon called the “psychoaffective” level (Fanon, 1963). I would argue that trauma theory and practices function at both levels of colonialism, that is, they simultaneously erase the naming of the structural acts of violence, while creating and exacerbating the psychological symptoms, through a form of colonial recognition or misrecognition

(Taylor, 1994). According to Taylor, “Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being” (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). I suggest that this is what has happened within trauma theory. We have moved from a space and place of nonrecognition of the harms of colonialism, to what I would argue is misrecognition of these harms through the frame of trauma, as put forward by Indigenous trauma scholars and others. Both are, as Coulthard and Fanon argue, a form of oppression, and over time these images and the power relations that co-construct them will then be related to as natural (Fanon, 1963; Coulthard, 2007).

I do not want to take away from the work by Indigenous scholars and other critical scholars who have worked to make space for the recognition of the violence and genocide that have, and continue to, impact Indigenous peoples worldwide. However, I do believe that it is time to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of including these acts of violence within the frame of trauma.

## **2.5. Red Intersectionality**

As the early writings of Sioux activist Zitkala-Sa and Sarah Winnemucca remind us, the binary of gender and race as a result of colonization were identified long before the writings of the early African American women activists part of the Combahee Collective or Kimberle Crenshaw, the critical race scholar who coined the term intersectionality (Zitkala, 1901; Winnemucca, 1969; Combahee River Collective, 1995; Crenshaw, 1989). These early activists were central in fighting the issues of violence on the land and on the body as they witnessed it at the turn of the century. They did not separate out their activism around tribal rights and water rights from their activism against violence under colonialism. Sarah Winnemucca describes not only her own experience of being buried alive as a child by her mother to protect her from the settlers, but also her own sister’s rape at the hands of settlers: “My people have been so unhappy for a long time they wish now to disincrease, instead of multiply. The mothers are afraid to have more children, for fear they will have daughters, who are not safe even in their mother ‘s presence (Winnemucca, 1969, p. 48). Similarly, Zitkala-Sa<sup>55</sup> was

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<sup>55</sup> I had already found the writings of Zitkala-Sa and Winnemucca but I am indebted to Dory Nason (2010) for the three cases describing Zitkala-Sa’s activism.



instrumental in collecting the testimonies of three Indigenous girls violated by the imposition of capitalism through oil and mining in the tribal lands. Zitkala-Sa put together the legal argument of gender, race, and age in her essay “Regardless of Sex or Age”, describing how “greed for the girl’s lands and rich oil property actuated the grafters and made them like beasts surrounding their prey” (Nason, 2010, p. 52). Zitkala-Sa reminds us again and again in her writing that violence has always been gendered, aged, and linked to access to land.

This paper argues for an Indigenous wholistic and intersectional-based framework of violence, which I call Red Intersectionality. Red Intersectionality is inspired and informed by Sandy Grande’s “Red pedagogy” (Grande, 2004), Dory Nason’s “Red feminism” (Nason, 2010) and the rich tradition of Indigenous critical scholars including Rigney (2011), Grande (2004), and more recently Tuck and Yang (2012) who advocate for methodologies that are rooted in Indigenous sovereignty and are grounded in specific Indigenous Nations’ ontologies and epistemologies. Red Intersectionality is grounded in five principles: respecting sovereignty and self-determination, local and global land-based knowledge, holistic health within a framework that recognizes the diversity of Indigenous health; agency and resistance, and approaches that are rooted within specific Indigenous nations relationships, language, land, and ceremony (Grande, 2004; Manuel & Polsuns, 1974; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005).

This critical analysis allows us to consider the construction of Indigenous girls within policy and the structural intersections of this in their life as a form of violence. An anti-colonial and Indigenous intersectional perspective of violence does not center the colonizer but instead attends to the many intersecting factors including gender, sexuality, and a commitment to activism and indigenous sovereignty. It helps understand and address violence against Indigenous girls as it foregrounds context, which in Canada’s case has to include gendered forms of colonialism and dispossession of Indigenous lands.

## **2.6. Decolonizing Trauma: Implications for Wise Practice**

Indigenous social workers Yellow Bird, Coates, Gray and Hetherington challenge social work to not only address the complicity in the past colonial projects, but also the ongoing colonial interventions:

Decolonizing social work requires that the profession acknowledge its complicity and ceases its participation in colonizing projects, openly condemns the past and continuing effects of colonialism...and seeks to remove the often subtle vestiges of colonization from theory and practice” (Yellow Bird & Coates & Gray & Hetherington, 2013, p. 6–7).

Decolonization and transformation within trauma requires us to note sites of struggle between Western and indigenous and the need to reclaim the intellectual knowledge of Indigenous communities, healers and to reassert Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies (Hill & Lau & Sue, 2010, p. 41) Indigenous scholar Renee Linklater in her 2011 doctoral thesis describes her research as decolonizing in two ways: not only the critique of mainstream approaches but also the importance of advancing “principles of self-determination and community control in regards to Indigenous health in the context of healing” (Linklater, 2011, p. 243).

“Mom I know what you do. You don’t think I know history, I do. Why would you be a social worker? How does that help children?” (Cohen Clark, age 9). Present in the question from my Secwepemc twin son is the truth-telling, or naming of the harms past, and ongoing to Indigenous children and youth through State interventions, in this case through social work. However, in my son’s question is also the resistance of Indigenous children and youth through acts of naming, and relational accountability through questioning and processes of relational witnessing. In this next section, I will outline how a framework of Red Intersectionality that centers resistance and resistance spaces, can point the way forward.

Wesley-Esquimaux and Snowball reveal how Indigenous healing approaches and epistemologies have been ignored and erased within the Western health care system (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010). The authors argue that an Indigenous “wise practices” model of healing is required in order to move forward and address the inequities within our current system. This paper will build on the call for “on the ground practices of freedom” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 456), through the framework of Red Intersectionality to identify examples of “wise practices” or practices rooted in Indigenous communities’ “unique body of knowledge, manifested through oral histories and lived experiences” (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010, p. 3). Thoms proposes the term “wise practices” as better suited to reflect “the fact that the Aboriginal world is culturally heterogeneous, socially diverse, and communally ‘traditional’ while at the same time

ever-changing” (Thoms, 2007, p. 8). Furthermore, “wise practices” are called for given the diversity of Indigenous communities, in particular within British Columbia where there are “more than 200 contemporary bands, that collectively speak 14 mutually uninterpretable languages, occupy a territory bigger than Western Europe, live in sharply different ecological niches and spiritual worlds, and have radically different histories” (Wesley-Esquimaux, 2010, p. 3).

Trauma treatment and social service agencies exist within a web of evidence-based treatment approaches that are evaluated, and “proven” through empirical testing and evidence-based research. These “best practices” however are often deeply rooted in Eurocentric perspectives, and biased testing that fails to recognize the realities of Indigenous peoples (Gone, 2008; Jackson & Schmutzer & Wenzel & Tyler, 2006, Thoms, 2007), and Indigenous young people in particular (Williams & Mumtaz, 2008). In a review of the evidence-based literature on Indigenous youth mental health promotion in Canada, researchers Williams and Mumtaz note:

Of equal concern are the glaring absence of Aboriginal epistemologies in recognized approaches to evidence and largely unquestioned acceptance of this situation by policy makers. Indeed, it would appear that much work needs to be done with communities in re-discovering traditional knowledges and ensuring their legitimization within institutions (Williams & Mumtaz, 2008, p. 29).

Further, best practice approaches to mental health and trauma or “West knows Best” (Gone, 2008) approaches are foreground, or Indigenous needs are addressed through an add-on approach of culture through cultural competency while specific Nations and community approaches are ignored, decimated, and systematically eroded within these dominant paradigms (Brass, 2009). An example of this can be found in the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) review of 103 projects to examine what they called “promising healing practices”. Their research revealed that more than 80 percent of these projects included Indigenous cultural activities and traditional healing interventions [68]. These included a range of activities such as “[E]lders’ teaching; storytelling and traditional knowledge; language programs; land-based activities; feasts and pow wows; learning traditional art forms; harvesting medicine; and drumming, singing, and dancing” (Castellano, 2006, p. 130). Further, in the AHF review of five healing programs they attempted to identify best practices but realized these could not be identified, and, in fact, the language of best practice can often contribute to a pan-Indigenous approach as

healing (Waldram, 2008) the authors conclude, however, that given the diversity of Indigenous nations and their respective healing approaches, there is no one Indigenous best practice approach (Waldram, 2008).

I would argue that best practices are colonial practices, and often these forms of covert colonization are difficult to see and name. These medical model approaches towards mental health issues further label and pathologize Indigenous children and youth, and result in increased criminalization or medicalization. These approaches often do not address the long-term wellness needs of children and youth who have experienced structural and individual acts of violence, nor the intersecting factors of age, gender, and rurality that put Indigenous children and youth at risk for violence. The resulting coping mechanisms and acts of resistance that place Indigenous children and youth in contact with mental health or the criminal justice system are also left unaddressed.

We need programs that provide safer spaces for Indigenous children and youth to address their intersecting and emergent health needs, without furthering the discourse and construction of Indigenous girls and women as “at-risk”, or further criminalizing and medicalizing our children, our families, and our communities. Programs such as the Indigenous girls group model offered in the next section resists medical and individual definitions of trauma, and instead uses an Indigenous wholistic, or intersectional framework that assist girls in understanding and locating their coping as responses to larger structural and systemic forces including racism, poverty, sexism, colonialism, and a culture of trauma.

## **2.7. Centering Resistance and Activism**

The issue of violence against Indigenous children and youth, as represented in the State discourse, media, mental health and counselling systems, and child welfare interventions are important to understand. At the same time other images of strength, resilience, and resistance, beyond narratives of risk and harm of Indigenous children and youth, are missing from the discourse. Many studies have focused on the harms of colonization, and this deficit-based research has identified disproportionately high health challenges as a result of the interlocking oppressions for Indigenous youth such as higher rates of sexual and physical abuse, suicide as a leading cause of death especially

for Indigenous males, higher rates of violence for Indigenous females, experiences of racism, and increased tobacco and marijuana usage (McCreary Centre Society, 2000; McCreary Centre Society, 2005; BC Children's Commission, 2000; Chandler & Lalonde, 2009).

Research has only recently begun to consider Indigenous understandings of resilience and healthy child development (Chandler & Lalonde, 2009) in contrast to the deficit and binary construction of children within Western child development. Recent research has linked strong cultural beliefs and values with resiliency among youth and with positive health outcomes, including improved educational achievement, self-esteem, and less risky drug and sex activities (McCreary Centre Society, 2000; McCreary Centre Society, 2005; BC Children's Commission, 2000; Chandler & Lalonde, 2009; McCormick, 2009; Belanger & Barron & McKay-Turnbull & Mills, 2003; Clark, 2013). Research linking positive health outcomes for Indigenous youth living in reserve communities where there is strong cultural continuity has been established (Belanger & Barron & McKay-Turnbull & Mills, 2003). Further, there has been an increased focus on Indigenous youth in large cities. Similarly, Mohawk scholar Rod McCormick describes how in his research Indigenous youth with a strong cultural identity identified this as key in recovering from suicidality (McCormick, 2009). There is a need for research that documents and centers the ongoing resilience, survivance, and positive resistance of Indigenous children and youth by Indigenous youth themselves. The work of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network is one example of research and practice that exemplifies this.

There is a gap in the literature in considering what healing practices exist with Indigenous children and youth who have experienced violence, and, in particular, their acts of resistance. In my recent research with Indigenous youth in the Secwepemc nation, my colleagues and I attempted to address this gap of strengths-based research. We found that, 96 percent of the youth were proud of their Indigenous identity, and that youth who spoke their language and practiced their culture and traditions, rated their health the highest (Clark, 2013). Furthermore, consistent with other research with urban Indigenous youth (Belanger & Barron & McKay-Turnbull & Mills, 2003), we found that the binaries of rural and urban and on-reserve and off-reserve need to be challenged, as cultural identity is formed within a wide circle of activities including access to Elders,

language, First Nations education workers in schools, community health spaces such as in Friendship Centres, and the internet (Clark, 2013).

I turn again to the work of Fanon and the role of resistance, what Fanon has been critiqued for as advocating for violence, but instead I take up resistance in all its forms as necessary to free oneself and to create a “change of fundamental importance in the colonized’s psycho-affective equilibrium” (Fanon, 1963, p. 148). Indigenous communities have always resisted colonialism not only individually but through the creation and maintenance of “resistance communities” (Watkins & Shulman, 2008). This I would argue is an essential element of healing for Indigenous children and youth and Nations, not in acts of violence themselves but in acts of resistance for liberation (Robinson & Ward, 1991). Cree Elder and Scholar Madeline Dion Stout describes in her powerful memoir of residential school how her parents’ resilience is working through her now, and how even her triggers give her life: “Their resilience became mine. It had come from their mothers and fathers and now must spill over to my grandchildren and their grandchildren” (Dion Stout, 2012, p. 179). Similarly, Indigenous scholar Vizenor describes survivance, as “a narrative resistance that creates a sense of presence over absence, nihility and victimry” (Vizenor, 1994, p. 41). I know that many of the young women I work with write poetry, songs, short stories, plays, and these truth-telling, theorizing narratives need to be centred in our work. Part of my practice with Indigenous girls is supporting their writing and art making, reframing and restorying their behaviors as resistance to larger colonial systems, instead of the mental health labels they are invited to carry and identity with. Resilience and survivance are thus not viewed as individualistic but are instead linked to past, present, and future generations.

## **2.8. Indigenous Girls Groups as Relational Spaces of Resistance and Witnessing**

Returning to the young woman’s story that begins this paper, I invite the reader as a witness to this to consider the meaning of her sharing in the context of the Indigenous girls group she was part of. Bakhtin writes that:

A word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to

recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 2631).

Thus, if context is primary, then the spaces that Indigenous girls name acts of violence and the witnessing of this naming, through spaces such as girls groups, are important.

In 1992, in my Master's thesis I wrote, "I believe that all young women engage in daily acts of resistance" and I situated the key role of women as partners in the resistance, to witness and name girls resistance and to receive their stories (Clark, 1992, p. 133). Trinh T. Minh-ha writes, "the world's earliest archives or libraries were the memories of women" (Minh-Ha, 1989, p. 121). The storyteller in Indigenous communities is often a mother, sister, auntie, poet, teacher, warrior, musician, historian, and healer of her community. Minh-ha states that storytelling involves a speech, which is "seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched" (Minha-Ha, 1989, p. 121); and the process of telling the story "destroys, brings into life, nurtures" (Minha-Ha, 1989, p. 121). bell hooks echoes this when she writes, "It should be understood that the liberatory voice will necessarily confront, disturb, demand that listeners even alter ways of hearing and being" (Hooks, 1984, p. 16). Thus, as listeners or receivers of these stories, we are witnesses and essential partners in the resistance of young women. Indigenous women and girls have always resisted the construction of themselves within policy and media. Storytelling and other forms of creative writing have been a political act and have provided an important space for Indigenous women to resist and replace the colonial images. Choctaw scholar Devon A. Mihesuah writes that poetry and literature are a source rarely utilized, and yet are essential as they reveal the complexity and diversity of Indigenous women: "Indeed, it is through their writings that we can learn that Native women were and are powerful, they were and are as complex as their cultures are diverse" (Mihesuah, 2003, p. 5).

Indigenous women and girls' stories can provide understandings of strategies and unique solutions to challenges facing indigenous communities. For example, Leslie Marmo Silko writes about the Laguna Pueblo's concept of story as: "the old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors" (Marmon Silko, 1996, p. 152). Similarly, intersectionality scholar, Patricia Hill Collins also describes the importance of storytelling, in particular, the process of call and response, in order to link emotion with reason and as such situates knowing, within the context of the relationship with the

larger community (Hill Collins, 1991). This is similar to practices such as “counter-memory” as described by Foucault, it is a form of storytelling that “combats our current modes of truth and justice, helping us to understand and change the present by placing it in a new relation to the past” (Foucault, 1977, p. 160, 163–64) while problematizing the dominant discourse and understanding of a particular issue.

Indigenous witnessing invokes not only a responsibility to the stories, but truth-telling and activism linked to what we have heard (Hunt, 2014). Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt says, “As witness we have a role that is not to take up the voice or story of that which we have witnessed, nor to change the story, but to ensure the truths of the acts can be comprehended, honored and validated” (Hunt, 2014, p. 38). Similarly, Rwandan social worker Rwigema, in writing of the ethics of witnessing with Rwandan survivor communities, describes the power of relational and intimate spaces of witnessing within family and community where testimony is woven into every day alongside laughter and food and is part of building an intergenerational collective knowledge (Taylor & Sollange & Rwigema, 2015). She calls for attending to the context of relationships and spaces involved in listening, spaces such as the Indigenous girls groups of which I have been a part.

Through a violence-informed and Indigenous intersectional approach, the groups that my colleagues and I have developed provide the girls with the space to name, comprehend, honour, and validate their experiences of abuse, sexual exploitation, body image, and violence, as well as their strengths and daily lived realities in a safe and non-threatening environment (Clark, 2012, Gadsby & Clark & Hunt, 2006; Clark & Hunt, 2012). My work in partnership with the Secwepemc community through the Interior Indian Friendship Centre and school district 73 has involved developing an Indigenous girls’ group within a framework that reintroduces Secwepemc Nation specific cultural teachings of girlhood, or “rites of passage.” The model for the group was developed in a unique format—with youth, Elders, community leaders and practitioners in a traditional circle and facilitated by an Elder in the community. This talking circle identified the key issues for Indigenous youth in our community, and how to address them. Through partnerships with community, the school district and Elders, the goal of these groups are to provide Aboriginal/First Nations girls, aged eight to 18, with a space to explore a range of issues affecting their daily lives.



A violence-informed and intersectional girls' group locates the source of girls' challenges within structural and systemic problems such as racism, poverty, sexism, and the intersections of these in their lives. We support the young women in healthy resistance to these problems, and in their efforts to move back into connection with themselves and others. We do this through a range of violence-informed strategies of naming, educating, and supporting healthy resistance strategies [78]. Violence-informed practice allows us to provide girls with safety, support, and the tools to deal with violence and its effects in their daily lives within an intersectional framework. Key violence-informed practices that inform my work include truth-telling and conscious use of self, safety and containment, naming and noting, and fostering healthy resistance strategies. These practices are elaborated on in our girls' group manual [90] and in a chapter on trauma-informed practice (Clark, 2012).

In addition, the essential elements of the groups include Indigenous worldview through the traditional Secwepemc values and seven sacred teachings, a focus on strengths and healthy resistance, and trauma-informed wholistic and relative safety that recognizes the diversity within and between Indigenous girls and their identities and communities. In an interview with my friend and colleague Sarah Hunt, I described Indigenous girls groups as forms of ceremonial models of supporting girls through adolescents into adulthood: "If the circle is that piece of ceremony we can reclaim until the other ways of witnessing violence are returned or remembered or rehonored then that's maybe why in itself it's been of value" (Hunt, 2014, p. 40).

The following key questions are important to consider in our work to decolonize trauma: Honouring coping: How do we name and frame girls' coping as healthy resistance strategies and support their movement toward healthy resistance while honouring their current strategies? Locating violence, strength and resistance: What are the daily experiences girls are resisting? What strengths and resistance can you identify in their stories?

## **2.9. Conclusions**

Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck has called for a need to stop research focused on problems in Indigenous communities in order to "suspend the damage" of "deficit-based" research (Tuck, 2009). Extending this to the concept of trauma, I propose that we need

to develop models for addressing violence that are aligned with Indigenous values, Indigenous paradigms, and epistemologies and that are based in strengths, resistance, and survivance. I suggest that we should move beyond decolonizing Western models of trauma, and instead attend to the centering of “wise practices” and specific Indigenous Nations approaches to within a network of relational accountability, a form of “hands forward, hands back” that holds us accountable within non-linear ideas of time and space (Archibald, 2008). This paper offers an alternative model, one that centres, remembers, and revitalizes the historic and ongoing resistance of Indigenous girls and women, and articulates an Indigenous relational process of decolonizing and centering “wise practices” such as the example offered through Indigenous girls groups.

As Indigenous activist Winona La Duke challenges us:

And the question, I think, that should be asked and needs to be asked of each of us is how much and how brave we are in our ability to deconstruct some of the paradigms which we have perhaps embraced. If we are able to liberate our minds to be the people that are going to be here on this land. The people who are going to protect our mother, and care for ourselves (La Duke, 2005).

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## Chapter 3.

### Red Intersectionality and Violence-informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls<sup>56</sup>

**Abstract** In this article I will centre the historic and ongoing resistance of Indigenous girls to violence through colonial policies and practices. I challenge conventional intersectionality scholarship by foregrounding anti-colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty/nationhood. Using examples from my own work, I illustrate the manifestation of colonial power and persistent resistance in the lives of Indigenous girls. Through these stories, I will discuss the everyday practices of witnessing and resisting the discourses of risk. Red Intersectionality will be offered as one way forward in relation to my ongoing work on violence.

My body has melted. Ice cracking from oppression, revealing bone and sinew.

My language is screaming inside my flesh,

buried under your schools, Your words,

Your wounds,

Left

Me

Here.

Emerging.

I drape myself in orange.

I tattoo freedom on my body.

I pierce remembering on my face.

You will never enter me again.

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<sup>56</sup> This chapter was published as Clark, N. (2016a). Red Intersectionality and Violence-informed Witnessing Praxis with Indigenous Girls. *Girlhood Studies*, 9(2), 46-64

I have marked my territory this time.

I wrote this poem in my journal shortly after I left the small town in which I grew up and moved to Vancouver. This poem speaks to the legacy of colonization, the absence of consent, and the violations of Indigenous girls' lands and bodies, but also names and evokes the power of resistance and survivance in the face of abuse, violence, and the absence of consent. My work with Indigenous girls is rooted in my more than 20 years of front-line work as an activist, auntie, sister, violence counsellor, community-based researcher, and group facilitator, and finally my own journey of identity as an Indigenous woman and mother.

This is a give-away paper.

I offer it as a prayer, as a give-away poem.

There is no Ceremony for Completing an Academic Paper. Post-colonial, anti-colonial, decolonizing,

All words that swim around inside my head While poems offer islands of refuge  
from this academic space I now traverse Inspired by the poetry of Chrystos

I ask; "How can I make an offering for this paper"? It forms in strange corners  
and spaces of my mind

As I move between the library taking books out on theory, And dance with my  
children at the pow wow

Where I am reminded of older unrecorded ways Writing with my children all  
around

Ancient truth-tellers, momma you are not on holidays Calling me on the work, the  
work that is all around us All around me.

This article will move between the poetic and the theoretical, rooted in the recognition that theory emerges from this place and the Indigenous girls and Indigenous women artists and writers are bringing life and form to theory every day. In this switching from first to third person, from poetic to academic, and from personal to political analysis I am following the inspiration of Gloria Anzaldúa's writing style that brings to life the very theory she speaks of in that "this ... product [of writing] seems an assemblage, a montage, a beaded work with several motifs and with a central core, now appearing, now disappearing in a crazy dance" (1981, p. 89). Thus the writing and the structure of

this article itself is an act of resistance, but also of relationship. Further, I would argue that Indigenous intersectionality as a theory invites and even calls for a new way of writing that has been ignored largely in current inter-sectional scholarship. Carol Lee Sanchez, Laguna/Sioux, says that she:

writes as a way of connecting to her people... What she does is ... knit the old ways to the new circumstances in such a way that the fundamental worldview of the tribe will not be distorted or destroyed. In her task she uses every resource of her present existence: technology and myth, politics and motherhood, ritual balance and clear-sighted utterance, ironic comments and historical perspective (quoted in Charnley 1990, p. 19).

Indigenous scholars no longer willing to leave spirit at the door have reminded us to situate ourselves in our writing, to start from our intentions, to answer the question: Who are you and why do you care? (Wilson, 2008; Meyer, 2008). In this article I draw on work previously published<sup>57</sup> as part of my accountability to the stories I have heard and witnessed in my work with Indigenous girls, and the spaces and sites of truth-telling in which my writing is mobilized including the political, the theoretical, and the personal.

Bakhtin writes that:

a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve (1981, p. 2631).

Thus, if context is primary, then the words we use to describe our methodologies must flow from the ontologies and languages from which they are born. In this article I strive to include elements of this by including my own journal entries, poetry, and practice-knowledge alongside my learning from knowledge keepers and Elders on the land.

“This is not anything new. For centuries it has been so.” These words from Indigenous queer activist Beth Brant about collecting the writings of Indigenous women into a collection indicate that she sought to include the unheard voices of Indigenous women. Her voice echoes into me now.” *We are not victims*. We are organizers. We are

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<sup>57</sup> In previous work I have explored policy analysis (Clark, 2013) and Trauma theory more fully (Clark, 2016)

freedom fighters. We are feminists. We are healers. This is not anything new, for centuries it has been so” (1994, p. 11 emphasis in original). From the words of Sioux activist Zitkala-Sa (1901) over a century ago, through to the voices of my friends and sisters and the Indigenous feminist activists writing and speaking out today this knowledge of the interlocking arteries of colonialism has always been part of our truth-telling (de Finney, 2010; Hunt, 2014; Simpson, 2011). Long before the writings of the early African American women activists who were part of the Combahee Collective in 1977 or Kimberle Crenshaw, the critical race scholar who coined the term intersectionality in 1989, early Indigenous activists such as Zitkala-Sa and Winnemucca (1883) were central to fighting the issues of violence on the land and on the body as they witnessed it at the turn of the century. Zitkala-Sa<sup>58</sup> was instrumental in collecting the testimonies of three Indigenous girls violated by the imposition of capitalism through oil and mining in the tribal lands. I would argue that prior to the legal precedent of Kimberle Crenshaw, Zitkala-Sa put together the legal argument of gender, race, and age in her essay “Regardless of Sex or Age” (1924) in which she describes how “greed for the girl’s lands and rich oil property actuated the grafters and made them like beasts surrounding their prey” (quoted in Nason 2010, p. 52). Zitkala-Sa and other Indigenous feminists remind us again and again in their writing that violence has always been gendered, aged, and linked to access to land.

The understanding of the concept of intersectionality, as Mohawk activist Jessica Danforth (2011) has identified, is not new to our communities. Indigenous communities prior to colonization had multiple categories of gender, holistic understandings and approaches to health, and many had strong matrilineal traditions and complex systems of governance, systems of treaty, and peacemaking processes (Hunt, 2013). Patricia Monture-Angus puts it thus:

[T]o artificially separate my gender (or any other part of my being) from my race and culture forces me to deny the way I experience the world” (1995, p. 198). This is echoed by Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson who argues that “we have to understand people within the multiplicity of frames that shape their lives—everyday frames of experience that they choose, that

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<sup>58</sup> Although I knew the work of Zitkala-Sa and Winnemucca, I am indebted to Nason (2010) for drawing to my attention the three cases describing Zitkala-Sa’s activism

they inherit, that are imposed on them and that may be transformed, disintegrated, forgotten or ritualized (2003, p. 41).

Indigenous ontology is inherently<sup>59</sup> intersectional and complex in its challenging of the notions of time, age, space, and relationship. Prior to colonization in many Indigenous communities, identity existed in a “space, time and place continuum” (Jojola, 2003, p. 95). This complexity, or holism inherent in Indigenous communities was and continues to be the focus of colonial violence through policies inflicted on the land and on the body; colonial processes were not only gendered, they also attacked the other intersectional ways of being within Indigenous communities, including the complimentary roles of women and also the sacredness of Two-Spirit Indigenous peoples (Driskill, 2010) as well as the roles of children and youth within the community (Winnemucca, 1883).

In order to address the root causes of violence against Indigenous girls and women, it is crucial to center the knowledge of Indigenous girls and affected Indigenous communities and to support Indigenous researchers and policy processes grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. This article challenges conventional intersectionality and trauma scholarship by foregrounding Indigenous girls’ resistance, Indigenous sovereignty/nationhood, and anti-colonialism. At the same time, discussions of colonialism must not grow so abstract that they overshadow individual Indigenous girls’ interpersonal experiences of violence and the particular forms of gendered colonialism operating within Canadian society and within Indigenous communities and our every-day practices of witnessing and receiving these disclosures. I therefore argue for an Indigenous Intersectionality framework, what I call Red<sup>60</sup> Intersectionality—inherently activist, responsive to local and global colonization forces, and theorized for the emergent “multifarious, polyvocal” (Grande, 2004, p. 2) indigenous identity with the clear goal of sovereignty. I draw here on the work of Grande’s “Red Pedagogy” (2004, p. 2) and Lester-Irabinna Rigney’s indigenist pedagogy “whose goals are to serve and inform

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<sup>59</sup> I recognize the essentialist roots of the word inherent in this work, and have shifted my use of this word since this paper was published.

1. <sup>60</sup> I take up the concept of Red as a political space that includes specific Nations but also recognizes the larger global Indigenous struggle as defined by Sande Grande’s Red Pedagogy (2004) and Dory Nason’s Red Feminism (2010).

Indigenous struggle for self-determination” (1999, p. 119). Rigney (1999), Grande (2004, 2008a), and Smith (1999) advocate for methodologies that are rooted in Indigenous sovereignty and grounded in Indigenous ontology and epistemologies and, most importantly, are committed to work that is anticolonial, activist, and focused on the goals of transformation, Indigenous sovereignty, and liberation.

In my own research and writing in this area with my friend and Indigenous activist and scholar Sarah Hunt (2011), I have joined the voices of other Indigenous scholars (de Finney, 2010; Kenny, 2006) in calling for a more complex understanding of policy and programming as it affects Indigenous girls. Carolyn Kenny describes the impact of what she calls the “double bind” (2006, p. 552) in the lives of Indigenous women and girls of being silenced in key decision and policies that have an impact on their lives while, at the same time, their participation is essential to social change, leadership, and healing in their communities.

Theoretically, Red Intersectionality provides the tools to theorize not only the past but the current forces of colonialism as found within reserve politics, lateral violence, and identity politics. Red Intersectionality recognizes the importance of local and traditional tribal/nation teachings, and the inter-generational connection between the past and the present, while also recognizing the emergent diversity of Indigenous girlhood and the geo-geographic movement off and on reserve, and the construction of Indigenous girls through the Indian Act. A Red intersectional perspective of Indigenous girls and violence does not center the colonizer, nor replicate the erasure of Two-Spirit and transgendered peoples in our communities, but, instead, as I have already mentioned, attends to the many intersecting factors including gen-der, sexuality, and a commitment to activism and Indigenous sovereignty. It helps us to understand and address violence against Indigenous girls since it foregrounds context, which in Canada’s case has to include gendered forms of colonialism, and the dispossession of Indigenous lands.

Furthermore, any social justice action or outcomes must be situated within a framework that holds onto tradition and intergenerational knowledge while making meaning of modern Indigenous struggles. Finally, it needs to flow from and be of service to Indigenous epistemology and world-view that recognizes the relationships between humans and all of nature as equal and important sources of knowing.

The work of activists like Jessica Danforth, Sarah Hunt, Leanne Simpson and many more, together with my own work with Indigenous girls' groups and that of Indigenous writers and artists is essential in its providing of examples of developing programs that resist colonial images of Indigenous women and girls, as well as offering strategies and solutions rooted in the community and in tradition, while recognizing the complexity and diversity of these communities.

### **3.1. Shock and Awe: Trauma as the New Colonial Frontier for Indigenous Girls**

As I have argued elsewhere (Clark, 2016), the current focus on trauma and trauma-informed practice continues the colonial reach and the entrenchment of Western European medical model approaches and colonizing health services that continue to perpetuate narratives of risk located within Indigenous girls and their families and communities. Community-based approaches, such as models of Indigenous girls' groups and the reinstatement of ceremonies, are important since they provide spaces in which girls can be seen in the circle, and because they allow us to understand their experiences of violence, as well as naming and situating their resistance to such experiences. Applying a Red intersectional analysis to trauma and girls requires us to consider how the so-called trauma industry has continued a colonial legacy of labeling and pathologizing Indigenous girls that manages their behavior through criminalization, medication, and talk therapy programs which ultimately serve "to reinforce a sense of powerlessness and undermine women's ability to resist" (Nadeau and Young, 2006, p. 89).

#### **3.1.1. A Case Study**

Here I offer a case study from my journal that is comprised of elements of Indigenous girls' lives that I have witnessed and written about elsewhere (Clark, 2013, 2016).

A 14-year-old Indigenous girl living on a small reserve discloses sexual abuse at the hands of a male foster parent. She walks into a girls' group and asks if she can make an announcement and then she proceeds to tell the other girls that she has been sexually abused since the age of eight



and that she is no longer going to take it; she is not remaining silent any longer.

Weeks go by and she has not been interviewed by police, nor has the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD) removed her from the home, in spite of the fact that her family will not believe her. She is no longer attending school and has been referred to mental health services. In a meeting with MCFD her disclosure is questioned as a story created to help her leave her home. Instead of focusing on the disclosure, the authorities see her actions as the result of her 'being a lesbian' and it is suggested that she is 'using drugs.' Her mental health is also questioned. These details are provided as evidence of her lack of credibility and her motivation.

Together, the other facilitator and I support this young woman in calling a meeting, during which she, together with us as supports, presents a different picture of herself. She is articulate, strong, and clear about the abuse and about her right to live in a safe home and attend school where she chooses. She gets her day in court and the judge marvels at her strengths and her ability to represent herself and her needs. She becomes a leader in the new girls' group that she is attending, speaking up and naming her feelings, and her challenges. She writes a support letter about the need for Indigenous girls' groups and presents the model at a School District board meeting.

A Red Intersectional Analysis would begin by asking some of these questions.

What are the intersecting axes of social location, power, and resistance in the life of this girl? How are these health needs framed or pathologized in the current health system? How are her experience and her coping framed by the current mental health, criminal justice, and child welfare system policies and programs? How is she resisting this? What are the daily, lived experiences of violence that she is resisting? What strengths and resistance can you identify in her story? If we situate the girl and the present policy within the context of colonialism, poverty, racism, and discrimination among others, how is this policy, in reference to her, shaped by mainstream institutions and ideas of health that exclude cultural, gendered, and spatial experiences of young women's health and wellness and the intersection of these in girls' lives? Does this policy support through referral and advocacy the use of local resources, capacity and strengths? This case study and many others like it can provide examples of the ways in which mental health policy intersects with other policy to create harm, but also provides an example of how Indigenous girls are currently resisting, negotiating, and challenging this construction.

### 3.2. Resistance Practices

*Resistance is a woman whose land is all on fire perseverance and determination are her daughters... (Fife, 1989, p. 19).*

Understanding the complacency of society is important to understanding the failure to act in the case of violence against Indigenous girls and women. Indigenous women and girls have always resisted the construction of them-selves within policy and media, and, as demonstrated in the case study example, this resistance is an important place to begin to understand the way forward. Storytelling and other forms of creative writing have always been a political act and have provided an important way for Indigenous women to resist and replace the colonial images, and to challenge the complacency (Armstrong, 1990; Brant, 1994). These word warriors, as they have come to be known, like Lee Maracle in *Bobbi Lee: Indian Rebel* ([1975] 1990) and Maria Campbell in *Halfbreed* (1973) were writing, remembering and re-telling complex stories of Indigenous women and girls that reflected a holistic perspective and understanding. By the 1980s writers like Jeanette Armstrong (1988), Joy Harjo (1981), Gloria Anzaldúa (1981), Chrystos (1988) and others were writing and resisting the construction of Indigenous women from within both Western feminism and their own communities. Indigenous writer Jo-Ann Episkenew has identified the key role of Indigenous literature and writing in speaking back to and critiquing the policies of the government of Canada and also the key role of writing since our “stories are a type of medicine” (2010, p. 2) in healing our communities.

The listeners or receivers of the stories of young women are essential partners in their resistance. I believe that Indigenous girls’ stories, writing, and poetry are medicines, and are also acts of resistance against the colonial and academic presentation of Indigenous girls. I know that many of the young women with whom I work write poetry, songs, short stories, plays, and yet these narratives that are not saturated in notions of their being at risk are not published nor are they part of the discourse about Indigenous girls. In the words of Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “Storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of Elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place” (1999, p. 144). The work of Jo-Ann

Archibald (2008) and Leanne Simpson (2011) are powerful examples of the pedagogy of storywork and the relevance of storytelling in our communities today.

As Eve Tuck (2009) has noted, we need to suspend the ongoing creation of Western stories of damage and harm. Otherwise the statistics become toxic narratives of identity that are not situated within lives of resistance and strength, nor placed in historical and changing place and time. Madeline Dion Stout, in her powerful memoir of residential school, describes how her parents' resilience is working through her now, and how even her triggers give her life. "Their resilience became mine. It had come from their mothers and fathers and now must spill over to my grandchildren and their grandchildren" (2008, p. 179). It is vitally important in our listening and our witnessing that we do not continue to create narratives of risk and harm separated from the stories of strength, resiliency and survivance.

### **3.3. Towards Witnessing Spaces**

It is common for many adolescent survivors of violence to have experienced violence as children or witnessed violence towards their mother or other adults in their lives and to have had a bad and/or racist experience with police, the justice system, and other systems with which they have interacted. Thus it is very important for us consider the spaces in which and between which Indigenous girls move, in particular their homes, schools and the venues of community programs where they report violence. We must be aware, in particular, of the spaces and the web of relationships within these spaces in which Indigenous girls choose to share their stories of violence. In my practice experience, the spaces in which girls share their stories of violence and of resistance and strength are often those that center our own processes of law and witnessing, such as in Indigenous girls' groups.

#### **3.3.1. Transformation through Resistance Spaces: Indigenous Girls' Groups**

During my 17 years in Vancouver, I created and facilitated girls' groups for girls who had experienced violence; many of these girls were Indigenous and were from communities across British Columbia and the rest of Canada. When I returned to Secwepemc territory I had a kitchen table conversation with my mother-in-law, Donna

Jules, a Secwepemc woman and a strong role model in the community. We were discussing Indigenous girls who are strong, resilient young women in spite of the violence, abuse, and ongoing colonial legacy that surrounds them. Together we questioned what made the difference in the girls who managed to navigate the “colonialscape” (Hunt, 2014, p. 1) of adolescence and those who struggled. We both identified that in the health of the girls we knew the key role was played by their connection to culture and language and identity, as well as by their strong female role models, including Elders.

Through a violence-informed and Red intersectional approach, the groups that my sisters and colleagues, alongside our Elders and knowledge keepers, have developed provide the girls with the opportunity to explore their experiences of abuse, sexual exploitation, negative body image, and violence as well as their strengths and daily lived realities in a safe and non-threatening environment (Clark and Hunt, 2011; Gadsby et al., 2006).

A violence-informed and Red intersectional girls’ group locates the source of girls’ challenges within structural and systemic problems such as racism, poverty, sexism, and the intersections of these in their lives. Key violence-informed practices that inform my work include truth-telling and the conscious use of self; safety and containment; naming and noting; and fostering healthy resistance strategies and activism (Clark, 2012). The health of Indigenous girls must be accounted for in models based in Indigenous traditions and belief systems and local knowledge in order to incorporate spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health in any programming. Rather than promoting any one model with a fixed concept of Indigeneity, gender roles, sexuality or other aspects of identity, programs such as Indigenous girls’ groups are able to respond to the unique needs and experiences of local girls and provide the support for their healthy development.

### **3.4. Towards Witnessing Practices**

As witness, we have a role that is not to take up the voice or story of that which we have witnessed, nor to change the story, but to ensure the truths of the acts can be comprehended, honored and validated (Hunt, 2014, p. 38).

In my work I view Indigenous girls' groups as forms of ceremonial spaces for supporting and witnessing girls through the transitions into adulthood. "If the circle is that piece of ceremony we can reclaim until the other ways of witnessing violence are returned or remembered or rehonored then that's maybe why in itself it's been of value" (Clark cited in Hunt, 2014, p. 40). In our Indigenous family and community contexts we weave and tell stories of violence, resistance, and healing. We are telling in order not only to share about the violence, but also to change it. It is vitally important that we see and honor Indigenous girls as truth-tellers and activists. Similarly, Taylor et al. describe the ethics of witnessing with Rwandan survivor communities and the power of relational and intimate spaces of witnessing within family and community where testimony is woven into every day alongside laughter and food and is part of building an intergenerational collective knowledge. Taylor et al. call for attending to the context of relationships and spaces involved in listening, and caution against seeing the women as "victims telling their stories of survival but rather as educators, theorists, analysts, and social change agents who overtly demand accountability, responsibility, and responsiveness" (2015, p. 97).

Indigenous feminist Dian Million states:

Our voices rock the boat and perhaps the world. They are dangerous. All of this becomes important to our emerging conversation on Indigenous feminisms, on our ability *to speak to ourselves, to inform ourselves* and our generations, to counter and intervene in a constantly morphing colonial system. To 'decolonize' means to understand as fully as possible the forms colonialism takes in our own times (2009, p. 55, emphasis added).

The young woman who disclosed her sexual abuse in the girls' group I was facilitating was not only speaking to other Indigenous young women, or, as Million (2009) describes it, speaking to ourselves in order to inform our-selves as a form of Indigenous storytelling, she was also engaging in this truth-telling in an intimate relational space of Indigenous witnessing. This young woman and the circle of girls and women who received her story were all engaged in an intimate act of decolonizing, both through theorizing about violence and the forms that it takes, and through the telling in certain spaces and relationships, such as these Indigenous girls' groups that facilitate and allow for relational witnessing and accountability.

My current work and activism is in providing training and support to Indigenous girls and the women and youth workers who work with them on the front lines in our communities. Through webinars and community facilitator trainings such as that provided for the Ask Auntie program in British Columbia, I have always asserted that we must remember that the sexual abuse/assault disclosure is embedded within a web of strengths, inter-generational resiliency, resistance, and everyday survivance. In addition, we receive stories every day of cumulative experiences of exclusion, victimization, intimidation, and injustice including everyday acts of racism by people and institutions. Thus we already have a witnessing disclosure practice. The following questions reflect my support of Indigenous women on the frontlines in our communities who are facilitating girls' groups out of the band offices or community centers. How can we/I create spaces of relative safety (physical, mental, emotional, and cultural)? How can we/I centre Indigenous laws and the voices of Indigenous girls in these spaces? In what ways can we/I attend to the spaces and the relationships involved in the act of listening and witnessing? How do we/I currently receive and witness disclosures from Indigenous girls of the everyday acts of violence, racism, and genocide they experience in places from people, policies, and practices? How can I be a good witness to violence and/or abuse? How can we comprehend, honor and validate the stories we receive from girls? How can we walk beside Indigenous girls and those we work with after a disclosure? What are the key areas in this Indigenous girl's life where we can support, and name, and build strength? How can I honor the strength in sharing or in not sharing another's story? What are the daily experiences that girls are resisting? What stories am I not hearing? What strengths and resistance can we identify in their stories? How do we name and frame coping as a healthy resistance strategy and support girls' movement toward healthy resistance while honouring their current strategies? What areas of support will I need—supervision, consultation, and/or training?

### **3.4.1. Grounding in our Own Experience**

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare” (Lorde, 1988, p. 132). A first step in Witnessing Practice is to begin with ourselves, with our bodies and with our relationships to the lands, and the Nation where we are located. I speak of communities of caring as part of the political work of survival.

As part of my work supporting Indigenous women who work with girls in our communities I ask women to consider some questions. What is my own story of resistance? Who has been the witness to my stories, to my truth-telling, to my disclosures? What did I need? What have been my ways of resisting across the lifespan, and in different roles and relationships? What is ethical witnessing? Since there are witnesses to violence and abuse who do nothing to intervene, how do we not replicate this harm in our work with girls? How do we not create more harm through enacting colonial processes of reporting? What is it to move towards embodied relational and reflexive listening/witnessing? How are the stories of girls affecting my body and my knowing? What is my own embodied experience of witnessing testimony in my family, community, and culture? What practices and processes will support collectives of caring in the work we do with children, youth, and families/communities who have experienced trauma/violence? Who are my support systems? Who do I turn to? Do I belong to a community of caring?

From the work of Robinson and Ward (1991), we know that assisting girls to cultivate healthy resistance strategies and to develop an “oppositional gaze” (hooks, 1992, p. 115) is crucial; we need, in other words, to offer them support them to resist stereotypes and to replace these with strong and affirming messages and images of themselves. This includes naming and challenging negative cultural messages and abuse of power in society. Sharing our own stories and strategies for coping with sexual harassment, racism or other abuses of power is an important practice of truth-telling.

A specific strategy for those of us in the circle with Indigenous girls is what we call truth-telling, or directly naming and challenging negative cultural messages, in particular those that Indigenous girls face every day. In my experience in girls' groups, girls would ask the racist questions they heard every day in their relationships with non-Indigenous girls and in spaces all around them. Truth-telling involved introducing girls in person to Secwepemc lawyer Katrina Harry and her work (2009) on the Indian Act and

its impact on Indigenous women, as well as Indigenous youth activists like Jessica Danforth who created the Native Youth Sexual Health Network.<sup>61</sup>

I have brought books to girls' groups to provide examples of girls and women resisting violence and speaking up about oppression and trauma, as well as speakers. Girls are hungry for these stories. I realize that they need to hear from other girls like themselves and from Indigenous women and role models who have resisted and continue to resist violence and abuse and, ultimately, colonization. The girls want to hear about the specific strategies that these women used, whether they were political, legal, artistic, or therapeutic.

I also encourage women to share their own strategies for resisting violence and oppression and to tell stories that provide the girls with understanding, tools, and strategies for coping with daily challenges. As group facilitators and sisters, aunts, mothers, and grandmothers we will be challenged to share aspects of our own lives and struggles. Articulating these experiences can be difficult since we have often been socialized to be silent about these issues. Central to this practice is the importance of reflexivity, what I call grounding in our own experience, in order to consider the intersections of power and privilege within our lives. The girls with whom I have worked often ask who I am and why I care. We must be ready to answer these questions. As Beth Brant writes, "And the core, the pivot is love .... We made the fires. We are the fire tenders. We are the ones who do not allow anyone to speak for us *but us*" (1994, p. 459, emphasis in original).

### **3.5. Conclusion**

We need programs that provide spaces in which Indigenous girls can address their intersecting and emergent health needs without furthering the dis-course and construction of Indigenous girls and women as being at-risk, or further criminalizing and medicalizing our children and our communities. Programs such as the Indigenous girls'

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<sup>61</sup> Jessica Danforth is the Executive Director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network. See [www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com](http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com)



groups in the Secwepemc Nation and the Ask Auntie program throughout Indigenous communities in British Columbia resist medical and individual definitions of trauma and violence, and use, instead, an Indigenous holistic, or Red intersectional framework that assists girls in understanding and locating their coping as the response to larger structural and systemic forces including racism, poverty, sexism, colonialism, and a culture of trauma. Ultimately, the resistance of Indigenous girls and women to policies that are not reflecting their realities has been historic and ongoing. Coming back to the poem with which I began this article, I believe that knowing your map, your body, and tracing not only the histories of violation on the land and body, but also raising up the resistance and centering the strengths and activism of Indigenous girls within our policies and programs is essential. It is important in our work with Indigenous girls that we are grounded in our own teachings, stories, and identity. Through considering our own roots and cultural heritage, we are in a stronger place to share this with the young women with whom we work. I do this work for the future generations and the hope that my daughter, my sons, and my nieces and nephews will know themselves as strong Indigenous males and females. In the words of one of the girls participating in a group, whom I will call Laura, "In girls' group they showed me how to be a better person... I have learned to respect others as well as myself ... I have also kind of learned about [how] you should never pretend to be someone you're not just to fit in. Being who you are is simply the most greatest thing ever."

My own scholarship and activism are rooted in healing from and resistance to colonial violence and trauma at the level of policy, as well as at the individual level of the body. I offer my basket, together with its intentions around resistance to violence and activism. I will end with a poem I wrote:

Awoke from a dream a word whispering whispering

over and over again in my head

Entomology

I awaken, enact modern poetry in motion google search engine

Wikipedia - That shit is Greek!

Breaking into parts, segmented, cut into parts,

Severed as in insects

I will not be severed. I cannot be fragmented. Manulani writes of the hologram,

Indigenous knowledge cannot be divided, each piece contains the whole Like a dream, grasping one piece is a connection to a greater story

My grandmother reaching forward and backwards for me now She will not be divided, nor will I.

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## Chapter 4.

### **“No one cares more about your community than you”: Secwepemc and Indigenous healers re-storying and re-viving Secwepemc approaches to healing injury and violence on Secwepemc children and youth**

**Abstract** This paper shares stories from my research with 11 multigenerational Secwepemc and Indigenous healers (including social work and counselling practitioners) working with Secwepemc and Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemculecw, the land of the Secwepemc Nation<sup>62</sup>. Through the methodological framework of Steseptekwle- Secwepemc storytelling-together with Red Intersectionality, these stories are examples of new telling's, or re-storying of the Snine, Owl, story that not only illuminate the ongoing resistance to colonial power, but also of the resurgence and reinstatement of Secwepemc ways of addressing wellness and healing.

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<sup>62</sup> The Secwepemc Nation is made up of seventeen 'Indian bands', which comprise about 180,000 square kilometres of territory in central British Columbia. The smallpox genocide of the 1800's wiped out at least 11 bands completely and greatly impacted all Secwepemc communities. For a list of the 17 bands and their traditional names see: <http://www.landoftheshuswap.com/bandname.html>

## 4.1. Preface

This work is a form of “ancestor accountability”<sup>63</sup> to my own Indigenous/metis and settler-colonial roots and as a mother of Secwepemc children; it is one that is embedded in kinship relationships and, more importantly, my learning on the land together with my children and Elders<sup>64</sup>. The Secwepemc people have been in Secwepemculecw—the land of the Secwepemc People—for time immemorial. They are in a sacred and ongoing relationship with the land and with all relatives, including the salmon, the eagle, and the non-human world. As Elder Mike Arnouse said, “They don’t really need us – it’s us that need them” (2011).

I honour and recognize the teachings, resistance, and activism of Secwepemc Elders Mike Arnouse, Janice Billy, Minnie Kenoras, Flora Sampson and the late Elders and activist scholars Irene Billy, George Manuel, Arthur Manuel, and Dr. Mary Thomas among others. I have also learned from, Secwepemc scholars/activists, the modern day storytellers, transformers, and “word warriors” (Vizenor, 1988), whose activist scholarship in land, language, and restoring children to the centre of the circle have led the way (Billy, 2009; Gottfriedson 2010; Ignace, 2008; Ignace & Ignace, 2017; Manuel & Posluns, 1974; Manuel, 2017; Michel, 2012). Their words, and, their sustained resistance have provided a trail for me to follow; any mistakes in the sharing of this knowledge are mine alone.

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<sup>63</sup> I am grateful to the workshops I participated in with Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2016, 2017) for the reminder that we are ancestor accountable. I invoke the names Mary Baker, Sarah Bull, and Elva Guynn – the ancestors who dreamed me into dreaming, who held me in DNA, who birthed me into family and who witness me now.

<sup>64</sup> As a form of oral footnoting, I recognize my teachers of the Secwepemc language Janice Billy, Garry Gottfriedson, Kathy Manuel, and my own notes from my language course; alongside my learning from family members including Johnny Ben Jules, Elders Mike Arnouse, and Flora Sampson. Any mistakes are my own. I have followed the format of Kathy Michel (2012), and other Indigenous scholars, who in leaving out the accents resist the use of italics as these connote difference. Oral footnoting is also important in Indigenous storytelling as Elders always share where they learned the story, allowing them to acknowledge the story as true, and to honour who they learned it from (Ignace, 2008).

I would like to begin with a story, and I invite you, the reader, to join with me on this journey by reading the Owl story below. Do not remain absent from this knowing. I write you into this paper with this story.

#### **4.1.1. Owl Story<sup>65</sup>**

A very long time ago, a woman who lived in a village gave birth to a baby boy who cried all the time. “If you don’t stop crying, I’ll leave you outside in the cold and Owl will take you away,” threatened the child’s mother. It was cold outside, for this was in the middle of winter. The baby boy continued to cry.

Finally, the woman took the child outside and left it there. The child continued to cry. After a while, the child’s grandparents, who were living with the young woman, heard Owl swoop down and land. Then the child stopped crying. Suddenly, the people realized what was happening, and they dashed outside, just as Owl was carrying the child away. “Hoo-Hoo-Hoot!” cried Owl. “Owl has gone in that direction,” the people agreed. They listened until they couldn’t hear the Owl any longer.

The people looked everywhere, but they couldn’t find the baby boy. In the morning, they resumed their search. The brothers of the baby decided to look for him, so they packed what they would need for their trip and started off in the direction that Owl had taken.

The brothers walked and walked, until they came to Owl’s first camp. They camped the night and started their search again in the morning. Every day the boys travelled in the direction that Owl was flying. When they found one camp, they stayed there for a night and then continued on their journey in the morning.

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<sup>65</sup> This version of the Owl story was given to me by my other Father Johnny Ben Jules and my other mother, Donna Jules. The Owl story precedes colonization but its use in this context demonstrates the key role of Secwepemc stories in helping us understand the challenges before us. Other versions of the owl story can be found in Teit (1909, p. 698) as told by Sixwilexken of Dog Creek.



The boys followed Owl from one camp to the next. They searched in the valleys and up the mountains.

Finally, after a long journey, the boys came to the first camp where Owl had stayed for a length of time. The little boy was growing older by this time and had killed a mouse; Owl had showed him how to skin it and stretch the hide. He had then killed a chipmunk. Owl, who was the little boy's grandmother, made a bow and arrow for him and showed him how to use it.

Eventually, Owl moved her camp to another place. The little boy, by this time, was able to kill larger deer. Whenever they left their camp, the skins of rabbits and deer were left stretched out in the sun to dry.

The young boy's two brothers reached the camp and found the stretched skins drying in the sun. They searched and searched around Owl's first camp, but they couldn't find which way Owl had gone. After they circled around the camp, they finally came upon a sign indicating which way Owl and the boy and gone.

Then the boys reached Owl's second camp. They searched around until they found the skins that their little brother had stretched and then they looked for a sign which would show them which way Owl had gone. The boys followed Owl for a very long time.

The little boy was growing up and becoming a young man.

One day while the boys were travelling around, they met their little brother, who was out hunting. They were very happy to meet each other, for it had been a long time since the boy was taken from his home. "Owl is a very smart old lady," said the youngest boy, "she knows everything that happens! I will go home to her now, but in the morning, when I go hunting, I'll go far way and kill a deer which I will leave for her to pack home."

The youngest boy went home to Owl and went to bed. Early in the morning, he walked over the mountain ridge and killed a deer. Then he skinned and quartered it and left it with a tumpline for his Grandmother, Owl, to use while packing the meat home. The boy spoke to the tumpline, "as Owl lifts the pack, I want you to

break. Break several times when she tries to lift the meat.” Then, leaving the meat and the tumpline, the boy went home.

It was very late in the day when the boy got home. Noticing that he wasn't hungry, the old woman felt sorry for him and said, “Oh, you poor boy, you must be tired, for you have walked a long way.” “Yes Grandmother, I am very tired. Would you pack the deer home for me?” he replied.

In the morning, the old lady prepared everything that she would need in order to pack home the meat. She looked and looked for her tumpline, but she couldn't find it. “Oh, you don't need it, Grandmother. I made a tumpline for you and left it on the tree beside the deer,” the young man told her. “I'll take my own, if I can find it,” replied the old lady. “You don't need it,” insisted the boy. Owl agreed and left for the mountains.

The boy waited until he was sure that Owl was far away before he called his brothers. They packed up the best dried deer meat and bundled up some hides. They pressed the packs down so that they could take as much as possible. Taking some bones, the boy placed them on his bed and spoke to them, “when Owl comes home and finds these bones, she will think that it is me. She will think that I was burned to death.”

When they were completely ready, they set the house on fire, and then they all ran away. Old lady Owl was far away from her house when she saw the smoke. She flew back home and looked among the ruins where her grandson used to sleep. All that she could find were some burnt bones; Owl felt very sorry!

The boy passed judgment on Owl, “never again will you bother children. If someone dies, you, Owl, will tell them about it. You will deliver messages to the People, but never again will you steal children.” The brothers travelled for a long, long time before they reached the home of their parents. The old couple were happy to see their sons, and comforted them after their long journey. (Charley Draney, 1979, p. 42-43).

## 4.2. Background

The Owl Story that begins this paper has many versions within the Secwepemc Nation. It has been interpreted a number of Secwepemc scholars (e.g., “Stesmemelt Project, 2014; Jules, 2016) to represent the harms done to Secwepemc children and youth by the colonial system of child removal. This chapter shares stories from my research with 11 multigenerational Secwepemc and Indigenous healers<sup>66</sup> (including social work and counselling practitioners) working with Indigenous children and youth in the Secwepemc Nation. In each of these interviews, participants shared examples of stories that situate and describe the harm of child welfare policies and practices, but also reveal their own commitment to changing them by reinstating and reviving Secwepemc child wellness approaches.

A Secwepemc Elder, grandmother, leader and healer interviewed for this research shared a story of her own journey to working with children that illustrates the Owl story and the removal of children from the Secwepemc community in the 1950s and 1960s:

In 1955, '56 I was probably one of the few adults that were sober on this reserve and during that period I met [Ms. D.] She was a social worker with the provincial government, she was in charge of all of these areas. She worked with the police. There was a report about these children, it was down by the bridge where they came in and took five children and what I did was go over there and tried to stop them from taking them and I knew the parents would eventually come back so I said, “Can’t you just wait for a while?” And they say, “No, because there is no food in the house.” And at that time I could not provide and that was really hard. So she made all the arrangements and the saddest thing is that none of those children ever

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<sup>66</sup> In this research we chose the word healer to represent the work we are all doing. While acknowledging the many meanings of this word within Indigenous communities and within the Secwepemc Nation, it was the best description of the approach to the work. I shared a story with one of the participants I interviewed that describes my own connection to this word: “I was thinking of an Elder who I saw at a training at TRU, it was actually a research presentation, but there was an Elder there from the North and she came up to me, and said, “thank you for your presentation and your work here, but you’re a healer you know.” And I was like, “Uh, I’m an academic now, I used to do counselling.” She just kept looking at me and saying it. Those moments, and then I found myself back working as a counsellor at a youth clinic. But here’s something that I’m drawn to in that word. I think of her and reverberation. What does it mean to sit with that word healer? I don’t even think I was comfortable with that word, a healer, what does that mean? It’s funny because I might spend a whole lifetime trying to figure out that word”.

came back, they all died. Suicide, whatever. They never came back home ... so from that time on, I became interested (Elder Norma Kenoras, Secwepemc healer).

Colonization is not a thing of the past, it is a “regular, active” process happening “again and again.”<sup>67</sup> Syilx activist/scholar Jeanette Armstrong (1996) described residential schools as “the single most devastating factor in the breakdown of our society. It is at the core of the damage, beyond all the other mechanisms cleverly fashioned to subjugate, assimilate, and annihilate” (p. x). In addition to truth-telling about the devastation of residential schools and its ongoing impacts in Indigenous communities, it is also important to name the very real harm and violence done through a wide range of intersecting gendered-colonial policies and practices including:

the systematic disenfranchisement of indigenous women, forced relocation of communities, criminalization and incarceration of indigenous people, erosion and violation of wild harvesting rights and destruction of traditional livelihoods, imposition of the welfare system, and forced confinement for tuberculosis treatment subsequent to removal from home communities (Maxwell, 2014, pp. 425-426).

In fact, I would argue that Indigenous children and youth are experiencing the “colonial fallout” (Tagaq, 2015, June 02) of past genocidal policies as enacted through residential schools and other simultaneous agents of destruction, at the same time as they are subjected to unrelenting acts of colonialism through the “etiquette of lies” (Gottfriedson, 2010, p.51) and the logics of “best interest” (Kimelman, 1985, pp. 275-276; Sandy, 2011, p.13) of the state actors of these policies operating in child welfare and other state policies that continue to remove Indigenous children and youth, including Two-Spirit children and youth, from sacred relationships with family, community, and land.

Policies have been, and continue to be, employed by state actors; however, focusing on policy as the only site of harm can also remove the focus from individual and professional bodies. The Eurocentric logic of ‘best interest’<sup>68</sup> continues to operate and

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<sup>67</sup> I draw here on Philips (1989) decolonization of language through resistance of hegemonic enactments as seen in her definition of the word rape; “Raped – regular, active, used transitively, the again and again against women participle into the passive voice as in ‘to get raped’; past present future-tense(d)” (p. 66).

<sup>68</sup> Manitoba Judge Edwin C. Kimelman in a 1982 inquiry into the child welfare system and Indigenous families in Manitoba described it as follows: “It would be reassuring if blame could be

function through neocolonial policies and practices enacted by social workers and other helping professionals with “good intentions” (Blackstock, 2005) including those working in delegated Aboriginal agencies and in systems of education, health, and justice (de Finney & di Tomaso, 2015; Johnson, 2011; Kovach, Thomas, Montgomery, Green & Brown, 2007; McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day, 2016; Sandy, 2016). Further, the intersection of racism and gendered-colonialism within social work and other “helping professions” including education and nursing cannot be overlooked. Against the backdrop of the ‘60s scoop and other colonial policies, the central role of white women and the professionalization of caring within Canadian caring professions continue to be persistent background noise<sup>69</sup>. As Jeff expresses in our interview together:

What I’m realizing ... also right at this moment thinking back to the stories I received when I was little, the need for counsellors came when we stopped telling the stories. So now we need to get back to the stories. The culture workers hear me say that and they are on the same mindset. It tells us what to do, how to do it (Jeff More, Mohawk healer).

There has been a long history of Indigenous social workers speaking out about, and advocating against racism and gendered-colonialism (Blackstock, 2005; Bruyere, 1999; Hart, 1999; Reid, 2005; Sinclair, 2008), each desiring to make change within a system that many have had direct personal and intergenerational experience. The current over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in child welfare systems<sup>70</sup> across Canada today highlights the need for visioning, and for immediate transformation, a transformation that is called for over and over again by Indigenous social workers and communities and in report after report (John, 2016; Representative

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laid to any single part of the system. The appalling reality is that everyone involved believed they were doing their best and stood firm in their belief that the system was working well. Some administrators took the ostrich approach to child welfare problems – they just did not exist. The miracle is that there were not more children lost in this system run by so many well-intentioned people. The road to hell was paved with good intentions, and the child welfare system was the paving contractor” (pp.275-276).

<sup>69</sup> Lee Maracle (1996) perhaps best points to this tension when she wrote; “That is the madness, the psychosis, of racism; the mistress accords herself distinction as a certain type of woman while erasing the womanhood of other peoples... Sojourner Truth told you already, ‘Ain’t I a woman?’ She asked the white feminist movement on our behalf, a hundred years ago, and the white women of North America have yet to face the answer. She served up the question; we need do no more” (p. 138).

<sup>70</sup> More Indigenous children and youth in Canada have been extracted by child welfare agencies then during the height of residential schools (Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, 2016).

for Children and Youth, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). While I honour the work of other Indigenous and allied scholars inside of social work, including situating my own past scholarship and advocacy for transformation (Clark et al; 2010, 2012), this dissertation will explore a different line of inquiry. It is interested in turning away from the focus on the transformation of social work, to instead consider what resources we have inside of our Indigenous communities to support transformation for Indigenous children and youth.

In the words of one of the healers I interviewed, “what can we do differently, what kind of approaches” (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer). This question resonates with the work of Leanne Simpson (2011):

I am not so concerned with how we dismantle the master’s house... but I am very concerned with how we (re)build our own house. I have spent enough time taking down the master’s house and now I want most of my energy to go into visioning and building our new home (p. 32).

I suggest that what is needed at this juncture is in fact a turning away from state sanctioned “interventions” and instead a return to Indigenous paradigms and models, ones grounded in culturally specific relationships to lands and waters extending across rural and urban spaces, and specifically, Indigenous Nation-based ideas of child and youth growth, of protection and safety, of connectedness and love, of wellness, and every day acts of resurgence<sup>71</sup>. In the words of Grand Chief Edward John (2016):

What is required is that citizens and governments recognize the considerable cumulative damages of past and present policy and practice and take immediate steps to support Indigenous children, parent, families, and communities to develop and nurture their own solutions – this is the only road to re-establish patterns of connectedness” (p. 58).

Secwepemc legal and child welfare scholar Nancy Sandy (2011) describes how the genocidal policies and practices of the government – from residential school, day schools, and Indian hospitals through to the professionalization of child welfare, adoption laws, and the changes to the *Indian Act* in 1951<sup>72</sup>- are all founded on the settler-colonial

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<sup>71</sup> The Indigenous feminist condom cases and beaded condoms designed by sexual health educator and artist Erin Marie Konsmo together with the Native Youth Sexual Health Network are excellent examples of Indigenous youth everyday resurgence. <http://www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/beadingandcondomcases.html>

<sup>72</sup> The *Indian Act* was amended in 1951 through the efforts of social workers who lobbied to permit provincial laws to provide services in Indigenous children’s ‘best interests’ thus beginning the

logic of “best interests of the child” (p.63). Sandy (2011) asserts that this European logic of “best interest” and its enactments through child welfare policies and practices has resulted in the disruption of Secwepemc child safety laws, and the health and wellness of Indigenous children, their families, and their communities. It is time to focus on the building of our own house, as called for by Leanne Simpson, and to turn to the work of Secwepemc scholars, artists, and activists who are all working to develop and nurture our own solutions.

### **4.3. Methodology: My Xqwlewmén, the berry picking basket**

*Just as we can turn to the ways that our stspetekwll (ancient stories) refract the consequences of our colonial history, we can turn to them for wisdom about how to heal ourselves from being divided, broken into fragments, and colonized (Ignace & Ignace 2017, p. 496)*

*My Creation Story tells me that collectively we have the intellect and creative power to regenerate our cultures, languages and nations. My Creation Story tells me another world is possible and that I have the tools to vision it and bring it into reality (Simpson, 2011, p.42).*

The Secwepemc oral tradition of Stspetekwle, storytelling, reminds us first and foremost of the presence of the Secwepemc people on the land for over 10,000 years (Billy, 2009; Ignace, 2008; Michel, 2012). The creation stories of Sk’elép, or Coyote as s/he<sup>73</sup> is known in English, together with the transformer stories contain information about the ice age, climate change, and colonization as it evolved and changed from the first contact in the 1800s to the present day (Ignace, 2008).

Owl story, which is similar to Secwepemc stories about Sk’elép, contains guidance for the future as they contain “all the knowledge we need to untangle ourselves from the near destruction we are draped in” (Simpson, 2011, p.43), including colonial child welfare contact and harm. As Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief shared in regards to the Owl Story:

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genocide of the 60’s scoop that continues to impact Indigenous children and youth across the country. In the Secwepemc Nation the strongest example is the Słatsin First Nation, who “lost virtually an entire generation of its children to child welfare authorities” (Johnston 1983, xx).

<sup>73</sup> I have chosen to utilize s/he as Coyote and Owl throughout this thesis, despite Teit, or Boas through his edits of Teit’s work, assigned a male gender in his telling’s – the Secwepemc language does not have a gender binary. Further, as I am also writing myself into this story, as storyteller I choose to use s/he.

The main one [story] that's universal within our Nation is the story of Owl. Even myself growing up, I remember it but it was more like, "You can't play outside long or else Snine is going to come get you and take you away." Within all the Secwepemc Nation, the Owl story was similar (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer).

Secwepemc scholar Ron Ignace (2008) reminds us that Secwepemc stories are medicine not only from the past, but also often foretell what is to come. Similarly, Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko (1997) describes the Laguna Pueblo's concept of story as "the old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even to heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors" (p. 152). Similarly, Secwepemc stories, such as the Owl story, provide a form of protection, healing and guidance for the challenges that we are experiencing now, as well as those that are to come.

Storytelling is relational and intergenerational and it was often done by the grandmothers, as described by Secwepemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas (2010): "it was how we were taught morals and values – every story had a lesson to be learned from it ... my grandmother used to tell us the legends every evening ... she would rub our heads our back – oh it was so good."

Each story is embedded with the values and laws of Secwepemc society. Secwepemc Elder Flora Sampson (2017, Dec. 10, personal communication) also shared with me that the touch of a grandmother while sharing stories is a healing medicine.<sup>74</sup> In the words of Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999):

Storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of Elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. (p. 44).

Each story also contains the laws, protocols and ethics that guide the Secwepemc Nation. As such, this research is grounded in this teaching of research and

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<sup>74</sup> My son Tyee loves to have his hair stroked by his Secwepemc grandmother Donna Jules – when he is distressed or anxious he will ask me to do this for him. I am also reminded of my grandmother rubbing my feet when I could not breath from an asthma attack and we were hours from the hospital. In a violence-informed approach these are both sensory approaches that promote self-regulation, and a sense of relative safety or calm.



stories as having healing potential—as contained in the values and ethics of the Secwepemc people. These values include: the value of relationship – Kweseltnews (we are all family); the value of individual strength and responsibility - Knucwetsut (take care of yourself); the value of knowing your gifts – Etsxe; The value of sharing – Knucwentwe'cw; the value of Humility Qweqestin and the value of renewal - Mellelc<sup>75</sup>.

This Xqwlewm methodology is rooted in a specific space, xq'wle`wten, my berry picking location on Secwepemculecw<sup>76</sup>. Along with the knowledge of my participants, I aim to co-construct or weave a basket of decolonial<sup>77</sup> knowing rooted in Secwepemc teachings and practices. This research utilizes decolonial as refusal, rage, resistance, resurgence, flight, constant moving, and creative regeneration<sup>78</sup>. In doing so together, we reveal and amplify our own agency while refusing the colonial gaze and the toolbox of risk, which assumes and demands Indigenous people need help or saving.

I suggest that these practitioners' stories are examples of re-storying the Owl story and of “narratives of resistance and cultural persistence” in the face of ongoing colonial violence (Ignace, 2008, p. 5). The stories and their inherent protocols are the ways that Secwepemc law is “learned, lived, and passed down through the generations” (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 2016, p. 1). Secwepemc stories, such as the stories told by Indigenous practitioners as part of this research, remind us that Secwepemc

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<sup>75</sup> My information on the values is compiled from Elder Mary Thomas (2001); Billy, (2009); Ignace, (2008) and Michel, (2012).

<sup>76</sup> For an excellent resource on Secwepemc land and language see the Chief Atahm School website [chiefatahm.com](http://chiefatahm.com). The website includes the "Connecting Stories Research Project" which is a collaborative, community research project, in partnership with the province-wide research initiative, "First Nations languages in the twenty-first century: looking back, looking forward".

<sup>77</sup> In this work I take up decolonial as more than a metaphor (Tuck & Wang, 2012) but instead lived in everyday acts of loving and living in relationship with family and friends on the land, as well as in the Indigisphere (Clark, 2016), and in urban and rural spaces, in our homes; in our breathing; and in our ceremonies (see Martineau, J. & Ritskes, E. 2014; Hunt & Holmes, 2015).

<sup>78</sup> Indigenous artist and activist Buffy Sainte-Marie was banned from radios and blacklisted for her music and use of the word “genocide.” The blacklist did not stop her – she moved on to Sesame Street where she was the first woman to breastfeed live on television: “It didn’t get me down at all because I was moving on in other directions those folks had no idea even existed” (Elliot, 2017, p. 29).

people have always resisted colonial policy and practices; there are lessons for us in each of these stories that can be applied to the challenges that are before us now.

This basket also holds the theoretical framework of Red Intersectionality (Clark, 2012; Clark, 2016), an Indigenous feminist and holistic model that follows in the tireless tradition of Indigenous and Black feminist theorizing of love<sup>79</sup>, rage, desire, resistance, and resurgence as the foundation from which to challenge violence<sup>80</sup> against Indigenous children and youth. Red Intersectionality is inspired and informed by the influential work of Sandy Grande's (2004, 2007) "Red Pedagogy" and a long history of Indigenous (Allen, 1986; Armstrong, 1986; Maracle, 1996; Zitkala Sa, 1924) and black feminist activism (Combahee Collective, 1974; Crenshaw 1991; hooks, 2000; Collins, 2000). From the early writings of Sioux activist Zitkala-Sa (1924) over a century ago who wrote about the violence and sexual assault of Indigenous girls in order to access oil and land<sup>81</sup>, through to the voices of my friends and sisters and the Indigenous feminist activists writing and speaking out today, this knowledge of the interlocking arteries of colonialism, in particular age, race, and gender, has always been part of our truth-telling (de Finney 2014; de Finney & di Tomasso, 2015; Hunt 2014; Simpson 2011, 2013, Willard, 2006). As such, Red Intersectionality is a necessary medicine in our basket to assist in understanding and taking action on the issue of violence against Indigenous children and youth.

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<sup>79</sup> Love is taken up through a Red intersectional framework – an Indigenous feminist, political, decolonial, antiracist, intergenerational, and desire-based approach. Craig Womack (Creek-Cherokee) describes this love as an act of resistance as found within the work of Joy Harjo (and, I would add, other Indigenous women). It is love that is "not trivially universalizing but fully contextualized within an awareness of the colonization process" (p. 259). This love is embedded in Indigenous feminist resistance and a "spirit of rage" (Brant, 1983, p.7). As Leanne Simpson (2014) asserts, "But the correct emotional response to violence targeting our families is rage" (para.4).

<sup>80</sup> I define violence as acts of abuse on the bodies of Indigenous children and youth through colonial policies, practices, and programs, alongside the everyday enactments of this "colonial fallout" of past genocidal policies, on and in their bodies and kinship networks, including non-human relations, through the intersections of grief and loss, physical abuse, sexual abuse, lateral violence, poverty, racism, heterosexism, ageism, resource extraction, and all acts of removal from land and community.

<sup>81</sup> Zitkala-Sa describes the rape and coercion of an Indigenous girl for her land – the document uses the words evil, legalized robbery and to describe the deeds "this is an appeal for action, *immediate action*" (p. 26) and asserts that "there is no hope of any reformation of the present system" (39). Almost 100 years later, these words are still as relevant now as then.

Red Intersectionality recognizes the importance of local and traditional Secwepemc teachings and the inter-generational connection between the past and the present; it also acknowledges the emergent multiplicity of Indigenous child and youth identities that have arisen from colonization, the geographic movement off and on reserve, and the gendered construction of Indigenous peoples through the Indian Act. As such, Red Intersectionality addresses the inherent tension between those Indigenous people who are connected to their land and their culture, and those for whom the scatter of colonization, and perhaps their own resistance and survivance, has resulted in movement<sup>82</sup>. Red Intersectionality reminds us of the multiplicity of connections and kinship relationships. Although language, land, and connection to Nation are important spaces of healing, we must remember that revival and resurgence also exists in kinship with spirit and in dreams. I invoke Dene theorist and activist Glen Coulthard's (2013) words to point the way forward:

If colonial power is dispersed much more diffusely today, how do we go about resisting it? Fanon suggests that those of us struggling against colonialism must 'turn away' from the assimilative lure of the politics of recognition and begin to direct our struggles toward our own "on-the-ground strategies of freedom (last paragraph).

I suggest that these stories continue the tradition of the Owl story as they illustrate the revival and resurgence of 'on-the-ground practices' of healing that exist in Indigenous communities.

#### **4.4. Method**

In this research, I interviewed 11 Secwepemc and/or Indigenous practitioners who are working with Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemculecw. Through the overarching question guiding my work -- "What is in your basket?" -- I examine the narratives of Secwepemc and other Indigenous healers who work on the frontlines of colonial disruption in the lives of Secwepemc children and youth.

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<sup>82</sup> Secwepemc artist and scholar Dorothy Christian (2000) describes her own dislocation while living in Toronto, "thankfully, my ancestors were travelling with me, even in the concrete jungle... my grandmother who gave me strength as a child was still guiding me" (p.92).

A purposive sampling method was used to identify participants through a community advisory of knowledge keepers, youth, Elders, activists, my own position as a therapist, and Secwepemc kinship and community relationships. These Indigenous practitioners occupy an important “interstitial space” (Jojola, 2004), or in-between space, that allows for a unique form of storytelling and theory-making emerging out of colonialism.

The specific forms of analysis are through stories, ext7e or spirit, dreams, ceremony, and through the pedagogy of multigenerational learning on the land. I also include my own body as evidence. In particular, I considered the following questions: how does witnessing the stories of violence, including the interviews themselves, impact different bodies across the intersections of Indigeneity, gender, age, and geography? How is my body a witness to these stories of violence--as shared by the participants--also a form of testimony and evidence? How are the traces of the interviews themselves impacting my body, and the bodies of other Indigenous healers doing this work? Considering these questions, as part of my analysis I developed a Red intersectional witnessing praxis, an intimate and embodied witnessing practice.

Within Indigenous cultures, the concept of witnessing is a sacred and ceremonial role. My analysis of the interviews with my participants draws on Indigenous witnessing theory (Brant 1983,1994; Harjo, 2011; Hunt, 2014) and Indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2008). As Mohawk Beth Brant (1994) describes it, this witnessing methodology is not just to one another but also to the natural world: “As an Indigenous writer, I feel that the gift of writing and the *privilege* of writing holds a responsibility to be a witness to my people. To be a witness of the natural world ...” (p. 70). Similarly, Sto:llo scholar Jo-ann (Q’um Q’um Xiiem) Archibald (2008) describes her Indigenous method of storywork as “synergistic interaction between storyteller, listener, and story” (p. 3). My own practice builds on these theories of relational witnessing, through what I call Red intersectional witnessing. This intimate and embodied witnessing practice considers how the work itself of witnessing the stories of violence, impact different bodies across the intersections of Indigeneity, gender, age, and geography—and how this embodied knowledge is a form of archive and evidence (Gumbs, 2015).

This paper outlines the themes emerging from the practitioners’ stories: (a) their own story of being raised up as healers on the land; (b) “Let’s do it this way first”,

centering Secwepemc approaches; (c) family and community as central; (d) Children and youth resistance narratives; and, (e) (re)newal of the Owl story as medicine. These narratives form what Caribbean Canadian scholar Marlene Nourbese Philip (1997) calls a “public genealogy of resistance” (p. 25). Drawing on this concept, each person that I interviewed shared their story against the ongoing struggles, resistance, and sites of active colonization through policies and practices. This storytelling and the subsequent retelling or re-storying of the Owl story is part of a genealogy of resistance to colonialism and, more importantly, points to the resurgence of Secwepemc child safety laws and practices of healing. Through the framework of Red Intersectionality, we are witnesses to Secwepemc law and to our own children through the stories, and the ways in which these stories also call into account the workings of colonialism: in particular through and between Indigeneity, sex, gender, age, and violence.

Perhaps the understanding of how violence is intersectional and directly linked to patriarchy and gendered-colonialism is best defined for this paper by how it is understood and witnessed in the lives of Secwepemc children and youth. In my interview with Marilee Draney, we spoke of the intersections of violence that impact our children and our communities. I shared with her the story of my son Tyee asking me a question:

“Mom, what’s that memorial for with the rock?” And I said for the missing and murdered Indigenous girls, women and Two-Spirit. And he said, “Well, could that happen to you?” And so I was like how to even talk about even just, racism and whiteness, but there’s even just that part of racism that’s targeted around perception and poverty and so I did and asked, “So do you think everything could just come together?” And they’re like “Yeah, being a girl and being native, or being young and being native, or being two-spirit.” And they kind of got it, and I’m like wow, my twins can get this, that there’s more risk in those things coming together, racism, hetero-sexism, poverty. And they really wanted to know, like could this happen to us and what is this?” And here we are in the car driving, and I’m like it’s one thing to teach this to my students or talk about these issues, but really how do our children understand it and why do they think that the risk happens. They kind of got that racism could come together with sexism, basically. And I was like, “wow, you guys are seven.” (Tyee Clark, personal communication, September 2014).

The stories of the Elders, aunties, sisters, and brothers in healing that I interviewed for this dissertation, stand alongside the stories from our own children and youth, and the children and youth we work with in the Secwepemc Nation. These stories are shared in the same tradition as the stories that emerged after colonialism. As

described by Ignace (2008), these stories, such as the story of Red Cap and Tli7se, that emerged after colonialism not only told the truth about colonialism but provided guidance for addressing its violence. Each of my participants shared stories that not only hold truths about the violence of colonialism, specifically that perpetuated through the systems of social work and against the backdrop of the changing states of colonialism, but also stories are forms of medicine and guidance for addressing the violence against Indigenous children and youth.

These narratives raise many important questions: What does it mean when Owl is no longer the non-Indigenous social worker removing our Indigenous children and youth? What does it mean when Indigenous social workers and counsellors from Secwepemc or other Nations are working with our own children, and within the Secwepemc Nation? How will these stories help our future generations understand this time period? What guidance will these stories provide? Will it be of resistance, survival, and, more importantly, what it means to provide protection to our children and youth? These stories all affirm the importance of not removing Indigenous children and youth from their families and communities, and instead provide examples of the “on-the-ground-practices of freedom” (Coulthard, 2013) or Red intersectional transformative justice approaches in the Secwepemc Nation.

#### **4.5. Findings: Raised up as healers on the land and in the circle**

Almost all of my participants spoke of being “raised up” to be healers or social workers in their family. This was further demonstrated in the family groupings that I interviewed for this research, including two Elders and their children, as well as an aunt and her niece. Many Secwepemc writers describe how skills would be recognized and nurtured in children from a young age by their Elders and community through this intergenerational practice of training (Ignace 2008, Martin 2014).

I'm Metis and I was raised in a huge, large Metis family and so we were exposed to a lot of people coming into our home. Our parents, whenever there was anyone in need of crisis support, they always brought them in. We also experienced poverty, discrimination, alcoholism, racism, and all of the -isms. But we still had unconditional love and so they brought people in and I think we were actually raised to be social workers all of us, as you can see in our family. (Sharon Todd, Metis healer)

Well, I always say I got into social work for several reasons. The first was growing up and seeing the work that was done at home. My mother was a foster parent back in the day before foster parents, that was even the definition or term, so what she did, I remember this is a little girl, getting excited because I knew the weekend was coming and I knew kids were going to come over and I would have a house full of kids to play with and it wasn't until I was an adult that I learned that they were actually kids that were taken by the police and brought to our house for a safe place for the weekend. (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer)

I think my journey started at a really young age. My mom worked in the school district with Indigenous youth and children and always seemed to work outside the square. So I would see my mom often taking food from the house and often jackets that we may have not fit, my mom took those in... So I got to watch her do that work and on a bigger scope my grandparents were working at a political level for the betterment of Indigenous women and Indigenous families on the reserve in BC. I just watched and observed them ... (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer).

In addition, to being raised up as healers, each of the participants I interviewed shared examples of their own healing as necessary, and of teachers, and training as including Elders, knowledge keepers, and ceremonies. This citation practice, or oral footnoting (Ignace, 2008) is another way of creating a circle. Although they all were trained in Western trauma and counselling approaches-- social work, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), art therapy, counselling psychology and family therapy-- this training was not the focus in their interviews. There was a strong sense of the ways in which “trauma” best practices were not working:

No, it was CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and that wasn't working, so how could be do things differently? So what really did it for me was my work with Jeff Moore who is at Secwepemc Child and Family Services as an art therapist. I mentored under him and we really talked a lot about the struggles with our Indigenous families with the youth and families we worked with, the disabilities we were seeing, the lack of parenting skills, the process that our families were enduring, and decided we have to do things differently. And all of the EMDR and the CBT and solution-focused wasn't going to help our Indigenous families. So Jeff and I really talked about an Indigenous perspective, and who we are and how do we bring that into sessions with the kids and youth and families that we worked with. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

Many spoke of how narrative therapy, art therapy, and play therapy are all approaches that originate in Indigenous communities and fit within the work they do. If they are using a “western trauma” approach, they were doing so as an Indigenous

person, first and foremost, and sought training and mentorship from other Indigenous healers:

I've heard, that even within the research, the rhythm is connected to the rhythm of the drum. And I remember just doing my practicum with (Mohawk healer Jann Derrick) and how she would practice EMDR with clients and it was so comforting even in terms of having clients be almost like blanketed and it's just that protection, And I found that seeing Jan do it, she did it in such a way that was more Aboriginal-focused." (Marilee Draney, Cree/Thompson healer).

Similar to Marilee's story, the healers I interviewed all situated themselves in a network of community accountability and responsibility. Like the child in the Owl story, we were all trained away from our communities in Western counselling or trauma approaches, yet all of the healers I spoke with identified the importance of being part of the circle with the children and youth with whom they work. This is illustrated in a story from Sharnelle: "I recently had an Elder who knew that my partner has been struggling badly with diabetes and she gave me some soup. Like how touching is that. That's being part of." She goes on to say that that is the change she would like to see for the future. "I think that would be the biggest change – having a more "we are part of the circle" as opposed to having that families and communities there and we are separate" (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer).

Marilee also describes how in her practice she connects herself with her clients in the circle:

"It's tying it back to that relationship. So what community they're from, trying to find a connection. So who knows who, and then all of sudden you've formed a relationship and then "when can I come back to you?" So connection to communities, the sharing of stories." (Marilee Draney, Cree/Thompson healer)

#### **4.6. "Let's do it this way first": Centering Secwepemc approaches**

All of the practitioners shared stories of how they advocated for starting with Secwepemc ways, and listening to and focusing on the community, family, or child and youth needs in their practice. Instead of the first intervention being a Western trauma response, the healers all shared examples of "let's do it this way first." In the example



below, the Secwepemc healer challenged a colonial response to a public community tragedy, in the form of dispatching mental health clinicians from outside the community, and instead she promoted the sovereignty of the community:

I was the person saying, “Whoa, what does the community want?” When we have things like this happen to us, we have a way, we have a process and it’s collaborative, we need to hear what they want and what they need. So, the first couple of days, some of the things they wanted was Indigenous counsellors and they wanted Indigenous healers. So, it was a little bit of a battle because I just kept saying, “I want to hear what the community wants’: ... We know we don’t need to be fixed, we know, and we just have to listen to what our people are asking for (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

Further examples of the reinstatement and resurgence of Secwepemc healing approaches are found in the work of other Secwepemc counsellors trained in spiritual work, or from Mohawk and Metis therapists bringing in their own ceremony and traditions while working within Secwepemc storytelling and ceremony:

[P.] and I worked with these two girls that came in and they were in there and they were seeing spirits. So, I got a hold of [P.], so he came out right away, he's done this before and he knows the song he was taught, the song when there are spirits around. So, we called the family, we explained to them what we wanted to do and we brought the smudge and we talked about what prayers are and why spirits might be around. So we all sat in a circle and did that, and then [P.] sung that the song and talked more in the language with regards to when spirits come. He had a story, so that was something that we used. So, thank goodness the principal was very open. Once we did that she was like, “Do we need to call mental health?” and we were like *let's do it this way first* and we did and after that there wasn't any other episodes (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer).

#### **4.7. Family and Community as central**

Instead of removing children or using a risk and deficit based approach that is focused on problems, and/or diagnosis, all the healers I interviewed spoke of walking alongside children and youth - together with their families, Elders, and communities - and trusting that the families know what is required in order to address their own wellness needs. This healing practice is necessary given the colonial polices focus on the breakdown of the family and community circle with the child in the middle. As described by Jann:

Rather than indigenize family therapy, be Indigenous and bring family therapy into it. And that's really what my dissertation journey has been about... It's when you unwrap a whole family and you've unwrapped the person and the family and the community and unwrapped the culture, which is exactly what they did (colonization), in order to get back on those two paths of respect side by side then this side has to do the wrapping up again (Jann Derrick, Mohawk healer)

A focus on reinstating Indigenous ways of being and knowing, and in particular family and community centred practices grounded in the strengths of the Elders, family, and of children and youth, was reflected in all narratives:

Just recognizing that people are the best judge of knowing what they want... and just that piece of when mom is well, or parents are well, then the whole family is well. So just pulling in that holistic piece and always thinking parents have the skills already so how do I enhance those (Anonymous, Secwepemc healer).

I began to work more spiritually including family, traditions, and customs and belief systems ... and saying to children and youth we are finding out about the wisdom of your family (Barb Dubois Paynter, Metis healer).

Sharnelle shared a story of her work within the school system to include the family in decision making, meaning making, and healing:

I was working with a family and they were very traditional, they were involved in the Native American church. We were at a school board meeting and they really wanted myself and someone involved, and I said we're not valuing the family by not having them have a voice in this process and maybe we should be considering that we might not be the answer here. Everyone has a belief different from us. For one, I don't want to approach the family, and two, the family voice isn't here, we're saying what we think that family needs. And there were a lot of decisions being made, so the principal asked me what my recommendation would be. And I said "I would have a meeting with mom and dad and whoever else mom and dad wants to bring to the meeting." So the principal had a meeting with mom and dad and it ended up being grandpa who talked about what they were seeing and whether they noticed anything, and the family said that they had noticed this behavior. So the little boy started working with grandpa more and sharing more and was a huge change, but not understanding that the family had the strength and had all the solutions, and assuming that we have the solutions. And it was really amazing, and that principal came back to me and said, "wow, we would've lost the family with all our assumptions." But it was amazing because they didn't need us. (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer)

A similar story is shared by Sharon of her work with a family within the hospital/psychiatric system:

Really to invite the whole family into the sacred space, and this room gets smudged out every Sunday. But just recently there was someone in one of the communities ... she got into drinking and mom's worried about her, and I used to work with the family years ago and so I had the whole family in here, grandma was in here, mom was in here, and he was in here, and then the young woman and we're trying to decide, because she ended up in the hospital and we had a circle with the psychiatrist up at the hospital, they are beginning to become more culturally aware. (Sharon Todd, Metis-Cree healer)

In Lynn's interview she makes central the importance of respect for families, as well as taking the time to build relationships given the distrust Indigenous families have of the colonial system:

As we talk, that's one of the main things that the family says, being so beaten down by the system that they have no trust and so whatever entity it is, if it's MCFD [Ministry of Children and Family Development] or if it's court, even at the schools, if they are in there they feel that they have no voice and maybe lack confidence to even say anything. So my role has always been to be their ally and advocate. So, garnering their trust. (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer)

Participants also spoke of approaches that are anchored in an understanding that the wellness of children, youth, families, and our communities are all rooted in everyday acts of resurgence and reclamation on the land, but also in our kitchens, and in our homes. These everyday practices include the picking of medicines, and the harvesting and preparation of food, together with ceremonies that flow from these that are embedded in Secwepemc values and knowledge.

I think in our Secwepemc Nation we're seeing a lot more of giving back to the land ... and our medicines, we need to keep the medicines rejuvenated and the sacredness of it and the rituals and traditions of how we harvest and how we do things. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

Similarly, one Secwepemc healer shared that healthy community events are returning and she marked this as a sign of wellness for children and youth:

I remember when I was growing up we would have community nights and have those cake walks, whereas I feel like there might've been a period when those went away and I think they're coming back. So I think even if communities are struggling, they are starting to find their voice. So whether

it's, so I know (my community) had a spaghetti night a couple nights ago ... And just wellness, when we come together as a group, good things happen. So for example, just this spaghetti dinner, they felt they were going to get 40 people, but they ended up getting like 200, they ended up running out of spaghetti... So I think to back to the question, because no one cares about your community more than you do. (anonymous, Secwepemc healer)

#### **4.8. “Let’s open the door and see what we can get through”: Everyday acts of resistance**

It is important to note that in the Owl story, the child is not passive: the child who is removed by the Owl also resists, as does their family. S/he tricks Owl after learning her ways and returns home. These stories point to the resistance of Secwepemc children and youth and their ingenuity and bravery in confronting and naming the harms of colonialism, in all its forms, which in this case is in the form of child welfare practices in social work.

“Mom I know what you do. You don’t think I know history, I do. Why would you be a social worker? How does that help children?” (Cohen Clark, age 9, Secwepemc). My son’s question demonstrates the everyday acts of resistance and resurgence of Indigenous children and youth within intimate relationships and spaces, and the revealed practices of naming and questioning the harms done through state interventions via social work. I shared this story with Duanna in our interview, as part of sharing my own journey to social work and relationship to the Owl story. I also told the story of taking my children to the Splatstin reserve to see the Runway Theatre and Splatsin Language and Culture Program production of Secwepemc stories that included the telling of the “sixties scoop” and Owl story with the Owl a social worker (Froneman, K. 2014, Aug. 1). Months later, my son asked me this question.

Duanna story-shared her own related experience of this with her son:

My five-year-old came home and was crying and said that “today we were doing graphs and we had to put up our hands on what parents do for a living and when I said that my mom was a social worker someone said, “Your mom takes kids away from their parents.” And my son asked me if I really do that. Trying to explain to him that mom wants to do things differently. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

In each of the stories shared, including my own, there are encounters with the harms of colonialism and state intervention, and in particular social work. Each of the healers shared examples of the harms done through their western education and their resistance strategies within this system. Participants spoke of having to “fight” or “make space” within their education for Indigenous ways. For example, Jeff shared of his own education:

They were trying to understand Aboriginal culture but they were still very Eurocentric, I just wrote an academic paper saying that canoe making is art therapy. I said, ‘fuck you, I’m not even going to back that up with any citations.’ (Jeff More, Mohawk healer)

The impact of colonial social work policies and practices on the children, youth and families with whom they worked with and on their own bodies was also clearly identified by all participants. Some described how they made decisions to never work within the provincial social service ministry, or refused to contract with it, or report to the State:

I refused to sign a contract with a system that I totally disagreed with... it was simply, that’s my boundary and they figured it out. (Jeff More, Mohawk healer)

The impact of witnessing the impact of this system on children, but also on one’s self, is echoed again and again. As Barb described it:

How children go into care, and how we think about them in care and how we look after their needs in care and how we decided... I have worked closely with the ministry...I will never do this again. It is too heart breaking ... It’s the systemic piece.” (Barb Dubois Paynter, Metis healer)

Jeff also named an experience of being yelled at by a social worker for telling the truth and naming the harms in the system, and the impact this memory still has on him:

Just say your truth. And then it just got ugly. I remember this one social worker screaming at me because I’d done something ... the conversation was going nowhere and they were screaming at me, and I just walked away. There’s a hurt there still. (Jeff More, Mohawk healer)

Similarly, Jann named the impact on wellness for Indigenous peoples working within the child welfare system, even within Indigenous child welfare:

I think too that we're learning, just as we did in education, that we can't, we can only Indigenize so much and then the colonization maintains. So delegated agencies, they just don't work. I asked one of, she's Indigenous, social workers to come and speak with the decolonization class, and she said, "I come home from work every day and I quit. And I get up every day and say if I'm not going to do this, who is?" It's like how do you maintain your sanity? I don't know how she does it, it's not easy. And that's wrong, that's not how you should feel doing your work. (Jann Derrick, Mohawk healer)

The acts of trying to change the system from within, or refusal to engage with the system, are told alongside stories of activism about ways they tried to be a force of resistance and change within the system:

I've always kind of been a rebel, when I practiced at MCFD as social workers we only had a \$25 limit of a budget, that's all we could spend on incidentals if we had a family that needed something. Say a family of a single mom of three, her two school-aged children came home with lice and she needed help, all I could spend was \$25. So I would spend \$25, send one check out, two checks out, three checks out, all at \$25 (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer).

The thoughtful and engaged praxis of resistance is also found in decision-making about sites of harm, and deciding when and how to push or advocate within the system. As Sharnelle describes her work within the education system:

There are some parts, so I'll give you an example, working with a principal, sometimes you just have to let things go to serve the family because at the same time, if you push too hard, I'm there but that family is there every single day getting services from the school so I have to be careful that a principle doesn't take it on and talk to the LA, and whoever, and then the children in result get impacted by that relationship because of me. So I'm really careful of those pieces. At the end of the day I always say to myself, "if I die tomorrow does it really matter?" There are some situations where I just have to bite the bullet and talk to my administrator and say, "I'm pushing this because it doesn't feel good." And usually with good dialogue they'll say, "ok, go in, do what you gotta do and tell me how the dust settles (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer).

In addition to their own stories of making space in the system, what one healer described as "lets open the door and see what we can get through" (anonymous Secwepemc healer), the participants also told stories of the resistance practices of the children and youth they worked with. They gave examples of transformative justice that ranged from disclosing offenders on Facebook, to speaking up at school about racism and its impacts:

I love this piece of working with children who were sexually abused and when you work with them as teenagers and adolescents and they think that they made it happen, they let it happen, it was clothes they wore, that they were cuddling too much and they think they were powerless and couldn't do anything. But when we retrace the stories they begin to see how powerful they are. They'll tell you they wore a belt, they slept on their stomach, they put knives on the table, they stayed awake, and you show the resistance and they change it and it makes, and they go, "I was strong." That is powerful. So having those moments and even working with women and saying, "what did you do." And they'll tell you, "I made sure supper was ready because I knew he was going to be in a bad mood," and I'll say, "you did what you could" and they'll change the story, "hey, I was strong, I did what I did for my family." So changing the story from them feeling like they weren't powerful to showing them all the resistance they did. I think it's phenomenal, to me that's the most impactful thing in my work. (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer)

Sharon described an important example of resistance, but also of transformative justice in the ways in which the sexual abuse was named and responded to by the family:

You know what this one girl did, come to think of it, she put it on Facebook because it was an uncle and it was generational sexual abuse in one of these communities and she was like 18 and told all her family on Facebook. Isn't that awesome? So now all the family knew, she didn't have to gather them. And so you know what her mother did even? It was her mother's brother, so the mom she was really angry I worked with her one day she brought in this thing that she had seen on CBC about men's healing and they talked about how they learned to hurt women, they learned that women was their territory. But it's a healing place in Manitoba for men. So what she did, she Facebooked him and let him have it what she thought of him, disappointed, hurt, but here's some help. Isn't that awesome? I'll give you the website. (Sharon Todd, Metis-Cree healer)

#### **4.9. Restorying and resurgence: Owl stories**

In telling new Owl stories, participants shared their own connections to colonialism, residential school, and abuse, alongside events and stories of hope and healing. In all stories, there is a particular emphasis on the reinstatement and reclamation of ceremony and of the backlash and consequences they encountered in first practicing in an Indigenous way. For example, Jann shared how in her first private practice, she challenged herself to work from an Indigenous perspective – but it was safer to become more mainstream and continue to hide the ceremony:

I was like, “Okay, find a medical building, go in and challenge yourself to do Indigenous work.” So I did. I found this medical building and I had to smudge in evenings or on weekends and I just challenged myself to incorporate what I had done with myself and share it with other people. But I found that, I think because of the depth of the work and the multitude of people that were coming I found it safer to become more and more mainstream. So any kind of ceremonies that I did, I did them carefully. I set them up carefully and I didn’t tell people. (Jann Derrick, Mohawk healer)

Duanna, similarly reflects back on a few years ago and how she almost lost her job for teaching a child she worked with about residential school:

I actually got thrown out of a school for talking with a student about residential school. I got called by the secretary down to the principal’s office and they said that it’s not my place to speak about it and I shouldn’t be speaking about it in his school.” The principal then escalated his use of power through contacting her employer and the school district. D. shared that her mother said to her, “Why so much fear?” I often think about that principal because he’s still in the district and I wonder what he’s thinking now with the Truth and Reconciliation [Commission] and we’re teaching it in the school, what he’s thinking now. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

Duanna’s and Jann’s stories, alongside the stories of my other participants, remind us of the dangers and risks that Indigenous practitioners face in not only speaking about residential school and truth-telling about genocide and violence, but also in practicing social work in an Indigenous way. However, it is important to note that all of the participants described the risks they took in shifting their approach, in acts of refusal, yet all now practice from a Secwepemc or their Indigenous way. Duanna shares that by shifting her approach to a Secwepemc and land based approach, it also shifted her work:

I was bringing my place and my culture into it and I did see a difference. I saw a stronger relationship building and I started to see Indigenous kids wanting to see me as an Indigenous counsellor. Jeff and I really stayed away from, we did the same work as any mental health clinician did, but we really stayed away from that kind of wording. We changed that we were ‘counsellors’ and we got away from documentation being private and Secwepemc owned it, as opposed to “I’m writing notes, would you like to see what I’m writing?” So a real different movement and the big one was incorporating the families which was a real struggle in a child protection agency because these parents have had their children removed, but taking a different look at it and saying “you’re still the parents.” Jeff and I talked a lot about some things that we really saw with our Indigenous kids, one was regardless of how long they remained in care or the behaviors that their



parents exhibited, they loved their parents very much. And the other one is that they will come back to their Nation, to their land, to be connected. That was something I often say you can never take away from an Indigenous child. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer).

Their stories also highlight the courage and ongoing resistance of Indigenous practitioners and communities. Similar to the parents and siblings in the Owl story who search for their child and struggle to return her home, I suggest that the narratives of Indigenous practitioners reveal the persistence and ongoing hope that each one of them has sustained in this work. In each story, we see how these Indigenous healers are now centring Secwepemc knowledge, or sharing from their own specific Indigenous cultures' teachings while engaging with Secwepemc knowledge holders and Elders. They all spoke openly of using ceremony in their work, and of community resurgence.

Even for those who not of Secwepemc ancestry, all healers have kinship and friendship ties to the Secwepemculecw, and worked within Secwepemc protocols and practices from within Secwepemculecw. The healers also acknowledge the specificity of teachings from their own Nations. In addition, many of the children and youth that they work with are from diverse Indigenous Nations as well – so bringing together these teachings of place is important—even for urban Indigenous peoples and those with ancestry from elsewhere.

The cool thing about being at the Friendship Centre is because it's catering to urban populations, everybody working there was from different Nations, from Manitoba, F. for example, and V. (Secwepemc) and then my husband's family, growing up in Kamloops and in recent years have all gained status. They are members of the Lytton band but they're first cousins with the Sugar Cane band and they are also Grinders, their family is huge... a full diverse cultural teaching for myself. So I know very little about Mohawk culture compared to what I do know about the Secwepemc culture, but that's where I've been residing for the past 14 years." (Tara Tribute, Mohawk healer)

There is a strong recognition of the importance of creating those relationships and connections, and sharing medicines and approaches across and between Indigenous Nations. As Duanna shared of her work with Mohawk healer Jeff More:

And so that really enhanced my practice and my self-reflection and understanding that as Indigenous people we are different and therapies need to be different. That doesn't mean that mainstream doesn't work sometimes, but we need to do things differently and so in my practice with

Jeff, we started bringing in the drum and the smudge and talking about different ceremonies. And Jeff with his Mohawk ancestry was different than my Secwepemc ancestry, so we talked a lot with our youth and children how they can look different and how we do things differently as Indigenous peoples... We just started doing things differently and we started practicing differently and it was good, really good. (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer)

#### **4.10. Discussion: Pexwem, Ways to Heal: The stories are the Medicine**

While writing this paper, I had a dream in which I was told that the wellness approaches are within the stories. In each of the interviews, the participants shared stories of their work with children and youth that had touched their hearts. The Secwepemc stories provide the medicine here. The stories of the healers I interviewed all provide strong examples of how this revival and healing are taking place. In returning to the question that guided my research --“what’s in your basket?” -- each healer shared examples of Secwepemc or their own Nation’s approaches in their baskets. As one participant shared “now in terms of working with children, it was always needing that basket and always needing to carry something with you... something that the kids could hang on to” (Marilee Draney, Cree/Thompson healer).

What does it mean to have a Secwepemc theory and practice guide survival and recovery/healing, as they had for centuries?<sup>83</sup> I suggest that these practices have been not forgotten but they were embodied and protected until it was safer to revive these practices, as in the individual response to violence, but enacted on a community scale. What are the scales of colonial violence? If the body’s reaction to violence is to freeze, then we must attend to the scales of violence<sup>84</sup> and the survival strategies that were and are employed collectively to resist this violence. Just like Coyote never dies in the Secwepemc stories (Michel, 2012), Secwepemc wellness and healing practices are being reinstated and revived through the collective resurgence of language, ceremony

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<sup>83</sup> This question is inspired by Chaya Ocampo Go’s (2016) Master’s thesis that I served as external examiner on, and our directed reading together in 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Sarah Hunt’s work continually reminds us that the binary between the lived experiences of violence and the public sphere needs to be challenged. In a review of Glen Coulthard’s book, Hunt (2016) asserts that “these sites of resurgence and recognition are not separate, but unfold in the same spaces, within our territories, in relation to the same people, upon the same bodies” (p.112)

and every day practices of returning Indigenous children and youth to the centre of the circle. Secwepemc Kukp7i and scholar Ron Ignace (2017) reminds us that “healing comes from another power, see how Tlli7sa brings his brothers back to life, after the Grizzlies kill them, he jumps over them and brings them back to life (November 22nd, personal communication).

These stories shared by the participants I interviewed are examples of renewal in the re(storying) of the Owl story within the Secwepemc Nation and more importantly of the reinstatement and re(vival) of Secwepemc laws and approaches to child safety and healing. The stories are one medicine in our berry-picking basket that includes language revitalization, traditional medicines, or melamen, such as rose-bush<sup>85</sup>, sekeplenllp and other traditional medicines that address emotional and physical injury and restore health and balance (Ignace & Ignace, 2017), alongside our songs, ceremonies including the sqilye or sweat lodge<sup>86</sup>, and tkwilc.<sup>87</sup>

In sharing these stories in some length from the healers I interviewed, we are invited to witness through our own listening and engagement with the story the power of stories for healing.

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<sup>85</sup> I have had many personal teachings from Elders and knowledge keepers on this medicine and have used it ceremonies in particular for grief and loss. These ceremonies are not to be shared in this way, but I acknowledge these teachings. I also acknowledge the wild rose medicine in Metis teachings as women’s medicine. While writing this dissertation, in October 2017 I had a tattoo put on my left arm of the sekeplenllp to remind me. Ignace & Ignace (2017) quote Elder Garlene Dodson in describing how she teaches the girls about this real medicine. “Re skeplenllp ri7. Welllenwi7-kt re melamen-kt te m-sq-7es m-kwentem, m-wellqentem, m-tsewentem re tsitcws” – “that’s the rosebush, that’s our real medicine since long time ago they gathered it they boiled it they washed their house with it” (p.393).

<sup>86</sup> Ignace & Ignace (2017) describe how the sqilye is the one practice that allows people to “subdue and channel the power of Snine” (p.395).

<sup>87</sup> As told to me by Elders (Flora Sampson & Mike Arnouse personal communication), and witnessed in ceremony with my own children and family, the tkwilc, or “Indian doctor” utilized many approaches to remove injury and to promote healing including “laying on of hands, massaging parts of the body and by sprinkling water on the head, and by blowing, sprinkling of water, and blowing it over the body (Teit, 1909, p. 612). In my personal experience with this the Tkwilc came to the house, he didn’t want payment, just certain foods. I experienced the re-connection with my children, as well he said, “I’ve taken something off and you don’t need to know what it is.” I have also observed this at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, when they brought in a couple who were traditional healers for their Indigenous social work graduates and they did energy work to help them to be able to take certain things off and prepare them to be able to go into practice, and I was invited to me a part of this circle.

Metis healer Sharon Todd shared a story of her work with a family where she used Secwepemc storytelling approaches to work with the family. The power of storytelling to predict and create healing in the future is also evident in this story:

There was one example actually, a boy who, his mother, he lived with his father. I was a social worker back then and he was really missing his mom. His mom left the home because of drinking. So we worked together... we wrote a story together, and it's kind of really interesting how it turned out because in our story we called him Rolling Thunder because whenever he came into the community everybody heard him because he was rolling thunder. And this is what he made up: "Yeah, my mom and I were in this field and we were picking berries and this huge wind came up, and I was hanging on to her hand, and I couldn't anymore, and she flew away, and I lost her." So anyways, in the story he finds her, this eagle comes to sit beside him on a log, and the eagle says, "I can help you." And so the eagle flies through and, because eagles can see forever, he was seeing his mother in a cage. Isn't that interesting? And so the eagle helped the mom get back to him, but it was a time that he was able to have some closure around the story. In our story he was a drummer, he was just learning how to drum he was probably eight or nine, but now he's a man and he goes to ceremonies and he has the hugest, loudest voice. And his mom is back in his life, she's sober. (Sharon Todd, Metis-Cree healer)

Lynn also shared her work in co-creating story while creating a forgiveness quilt within an Indigenous girls' group:

Again, going with what felt right - this was something that we have to do and sitting and storying with her. It was the quilt of forgiveness, so as we were saying, that was the main theme we talked about forgiveness. So, at first I shared my stories of when I forgave and what I needed to forgive and individual stories and then she started sharing hers. So then we finished it off with her quilt of forgiveness. Storytelling, it's like a magic that happens, at first we're sitting together and at first I open it up with like, "Who has a homemade quilt?" And there might be the odd girl that has a couple, and some not and those who say, "I can't even sew." And so we talked them into sewing, and they're like, "This is fun." Just sitting there quilting and eating and telling stories. (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer)

Tara describes how she brought in a Secwepemc Elder and grandmother to assist with violence between Indigenous girls and the key role of Elders and the girls groups were themselves places and space of healing and for the re-viving of the telling of stories, and teachings of values and ethics, in addressing and healing this violence.

What I'm seeing is for sure the Elders connectedness, I made sure to have Elders in all of my groups this year. And the girls groups themselves are part of the healing. We have a lot of cultural components there that we talk

about. Bringing in the drumming, drum making, jigging, the Metis piece. So I try to bring in different cultures within our culture too. So I think that's definitely healing as well as talking about the seven sacred teachings as well as the use of medicines (Tara Tribute, Mohawk healer)

Amongst the students, the lateral violence I'm seeing is crazy. From reserve to reserve –... I felt a lot of lateral violence between the girls in our group and really struggled with the group, a big group, so 16 – 17 girls. And I was alone on it and it was interesting because there was so little respect amongst the girls in the group and at times I struggled with them being respectful with me in check-in, but there was such little respect and cross talking. There was so little respect so I ended up bringing an Elder in because I was so disheartened and I didn't want to give up the group but I was so frustrated. So we brought Elder Charlotte Manuel in and talked about the seven sacred teachings and I really feel like, especially with one girl in particular, that they reconnected with that. It was so helpful for this particular situation; I can't even tell you. It really did a turnaround for us. (Tara Tribute, Mohawk healer)

It is also important to identify that storytelling does not always happen with words; in the case of children art and play are in and of themselves a form of storytelling. All of the participants identified play and art as key approaches in the work with children. Jeff illustrates his own learning about this early in his career:

I remember having this one kid, every session was videotaped, and he would just do the same thing over and over and I was horrendously bored, it was almost disabling, I didn't know what to say, I was like 25, I was ignorant and arrogant but really caring about this kid. And yeah, he (an Elder and teacher) just told me, "stick with it, he's telling a story, sometimes they'll never put words to it but when they're done, the play will shift and then you know there's been a change. (Jeff More, Mohawk healer)

Jeff goes on to connect his teachings from a Secwepemc Elder with his art practice within the community:

This is what I got from (Elder) – even though we, like my kids don't know our language, they forget because they did have some at the beginning, but some of the, for lack of a better word, rules of Secwepemc have been passed on, and I always wondered why he and she were used interchangeably, and then he explained why, "there is no he and she, there is no gender" and so I would think about that and that's alive in the people I'm working with so art can maybe translate some of that because of the visual, and then there are just some things that there are no words for because it is so horrific or what I learned with children, the trauma or neglect that happened before they were verbal. That's why learning art therapy with children was so easy to translate. (Jeff More, Mohawk healer)

Sharnelle provides another important insight from her practice of how to work with children's stories from a Secwepemc perspective in her practice:

We don't have that European "dig, dig, dig" and "probing, probing, probing." We allow people to share what they need to share. And I like the piece of not having to challenge. You're going to laugh; this is what I love. I work with children who have different realities. I've heard people say that they're liars and they challenge them, and I just say, "You know they're telling a story. People tell a story for an important reason. Try and get under what they're needing from the story. What are they trying to get?" And for me, don't ever discredit that some people might have that spiritual realm that people forget about. They might have things that aren't explainable within this sort of paradigm. So I don't ever forget about those cultural pieces. That people could be spiritually in tuned. There could be all sorts of things. But when I've listened to some counsellors in the school and they tell me (how they interrupt the child's story), "I stop her (the child's) dead, I don't let her go on," and I just think, "wow, we've just stopped her story and her process." So she's going to hide her stories or we don't have an idea about how that impacts her. (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer)

Jann's story reveals how her approach of using stories in her work includes the entire family, together with ceremony and a focus on reconnection:

So I would be working with the parent and I'd be working with the child, and if all possible I'd have the parent in the room with the child and build those attachments and they would be reading those stories. I do EMDR with the child sitting on the mom's lap or the dad's lap, so I built all that. And there's also one ceremony that I was taught way back early in my healing, and it was about attachment and it was also about releasing and I found it, I did it with each of my children. And I did it with a number of people and that was one ceremony that I continued to do in my office... And then just teaching them to touch, and for many of them that's not what they would do. So soft touch and gentle touch as a way to reinforce their words and also to reinforce that you belong to me. (Jann Derrick Mohawk healer)

As the quote from Ron Ignace and Marianne Ignace (2017) that begins this paper asserts, Secwepemc storytelling and stories are alive, providing guidance and transformation. Similarly, I suggest that the stories of Indigenous healers, like the ones I have interviewed for this research, are important examples of the assertion of sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Nations in addressing their own care, wellness, and healing from violence (Hill, Lau, & Sue, 2010). The stories shared also document Indigenous resurgence and creative resistance to colonial powers. I argue

that through an intergenerational practice and revival of Secwepemc law and storytelling, a Red intersectional and transformative justice<sup>88</sup> is being created. This includes stories of the “on-the-ground practices of freedom” (Coulthard, 2013) found within grassroots movement within Secwepemc, like the “Indian Child Caravan” in 1980 where Splatsin Chief Wayne Christian, along with Indigenous women, children, youth, and families, including my children’s father, Benni Anthony, and his mother Donna Jules, fought for sovereignty and jurisdiction over child and family services<sup>89</sup>.

Through a Red intersectional framework, we can ask questions of the stories and of Owl including: how Owl is gendered in the story? How do we think about and define protection and the role of the protector? Who is the Owl? How has this story been important at different historical moments, and who or what is the protection from? I suggest that through a Red intersectional and transformative justice we can consider the multiple layers of protection from the colonial state, from Indigenous child welfare agencies and agents, and from all acts that result in the removal from land, from parents, and from community. The Owl story and the stories of the healers I interviewed all raise multidimensional considerations of healing, of justice and ultimately of care, love, and protection. Furthermore, the narratives of Secwepemc and Indigenous healing practitioners from other Nations are essential in providing examples of programs and practices like the Indigenous girls groups offered in the Secwepemc Nation, that resist colonial images of Indigenous children and youth, and offer strategies and solutions rooted in the community and in tradition, while also recognizing the complexity and diversity of these communities. These stories illustrate the importance of not removing children from their families and communities and instead offer a Red intersectional transformative justice. Queer, black, love evangelist Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2010)

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<sup>88</sup> I consider Red Intersectionality to be a framework that allows for the revealing of transformative justice practices and approaches. Queer femme sick and disabled Sri Lankan/ Irish/Roma writer, educator and disability and transformative justice organizer Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha in an interview describes transformative justice as “any way of creating safety, justice, and healing for survivors of violence that does not rely on the state by which I mean the prison industrial complex, the criminal legal system, foster care, children’s aid, the psychiatric and disability prison industrial complex—e.g. psych hospitals, nursing homes, and extended care- Immigration, the TSA, and more) A movement created by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color feminist revolutionaries to free our people.” (Imarisha, Gumbs, Piepzna-Samarasinha, Brown, & Mingus 2017, April 17).

<sup>89</sup> For an excellent discussion of Secwepemc and other Indigenous women’s activism and role in this Caravan see Secwepemc scholar Nickel, S. A. (2017). “I Am Not a Women’s Libber Although Sometimes I Sound Like One”: Indigenous Feminism and Politicized Motherhood *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Fall 2017), pp. 299-335

articulates how Indigenous and racialized queer feminists strive to “generate an alternative intergenerational sociality through which the violent narratives of patriarchy and capitalism can be replaced by dynamic forms of community accountability, desire and transformation” (p. 59).

Thus, as Indigenous counsellors, social workers, and healers, we are transforming what protection looks like: the multiple forms of protection from the colonial State, from the neglect of parents, or from sexualized violence in all its forms. The narratives of these practitioners working in Secwepemc communities are multidimensional and they combine together to form a larger narrative and shared meaning that both bears witness to the realities of ongoing colonialism but also places at its core the love, resistance, and activism of Indigenous peoples. “In creating a new story, there is a chance for creating a new experience for future generations: a story based on culture and language” (Jules, 2016, p. 19).

Again and again in my interviews the naming of love and respect resonates. When I asked Secwepemc healer Sharnelle Matthew, “What would you identify as the key components of an Indigenous violence-informed approach?” She replied, “You know what, I’m going to say it, love. Unconditional love.”

Sharnelle goes on to share her understandings and teachings about love – connecting the loss of love, or the teachings and experience of love to residential schools, and the healing to the return to love, in our communities:

What I’ve found, I find that I’ve talked to older people and Elders and it is love. Not understanding love, and to me, I’ll tell you what my opinion is. We’ve been so colonized to believe that love shouldn’t be this way, that I think sometimes when I’m listening to Elders, they don’t trust that what they have been experiencing is love... I’ve heard this a lot and it saddens me, “I’ve never experienced love, I don’t know what love is, how will I ever find love.” So to me the concept of love is traumatizing for people who’ve been through residential school or they’re second generation, third generation, I’ve heard this quite similar. ... I love working with Elders because of that piece. I find that the trauma, working with them, is just that nurturing love piece, when we go back to attachment. Not really understanding those pieces, and how they do have it but they’re measuring it to something around them, and not feeling that they ever quite got there (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer)



This perhaps is the greatest evidence of Secwepemc resurgence – the return of the radical possibilities of love. As Mohawk Beth Brant (1983) writes, “And the core, the pivot is love. We made the fires. We are the fire tenders... We are the ones who do not allow anyone to speak for us *but us*” (p. 8, emphasis in original).

## 4.11. Implications

Decolonization and transformation of the ways in which we work with our children and youth require us to reclaim the intellectual knowledge of Indigenous communities and healers, and to reassert Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies (Hill, Law & Sui, 2010 p. 41). The everyday acts of resurgence and reinstatement of Secwepemc laws and healing practices are present, not only within ourselves as Indigenous healers, but also in the narratives of our children and youth. The Secwepemc phrase P<sup>x</sup>wentés re imts.s ell m-Itwilc speaks of intergenerational healing of a grandchild by her grandmother.<sup>90</sup> This concept captures the essence of my research findings of returning our children, and ourselves as healers to the circle – through Indigenous family and community-centred approaches, and the centering of love and resurgence in our practices. This storytelling is part of a genealogy of resistance to colonial intervention and, more importantly, resurgence and re-vival of Secwepemc laws, practices and processes. Through the framework of Secwepemc storytelling and Red Intersectionality, we are all witnesses to the stories and the ways that they call into account the workings of colonialism – in particular through and between Indigeneity, sex, gender, age, and violence. These stories are speaking most importantly to each other, but the stories also speak “to and across the world” (Philip, 1997, p. xxviii) and they overflow “with memory” (Alexander, 2006, p. 3). This memory includes the stories of colonial genocide and “the hydra-headed quality of violence” (Alexander, 2006, p. 3) that have now touched everything and everyone on this planet – but also we are dreaming together inside of, and through these intersecting oppressions – reinstating Secwepemc laws and healing approaches in everyday acts of relationship and kinship.

The narratives of Secwepemc Indigenous healing practitioners working with Indigenous children and youth are essential in providing examples of programs, like the

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<sup>90</sup> I have included other Secwepemc words offered to me in the Appendix.

Indigenous girls groups described by many of my participants, that resist colonial images of Indigenous children and youth, and offer strategies and solutions rooted in the community and in tradition, while recognizing the complexity and diversity of these communities. As Sium and Ritskes (2013) write in their special issue of *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*, Indigenous stories are central in “resurgence and insurgence, as Indigenous knowledge production, and as disruptive of Eurocentric, colonial norms of ‘objectivity’ and knowledge” (p. 1).

Together, these stories of Secwepemc and Indigenous practitioners working with children and youth in our Nation are examples of new telling’s of the Owl story that not only centre the ongoing resistance to colonial power, but also of the resurgence and reinstatement of Secwepemc ways of addressing wellness and healing.

Secwepemc Elder Mona Jules (n.d.) tells an important story of a birth that she witnessed as a child that describes the Secwepemc way of raising children:

When the baby was born, my grandmother boiled some medicine bathwater. He was called by a Secwepemc name. He was bathed in the medicine water. Grandmother washed him all over with the medicine water. She wrapped him up in a blanket and put him in a birch bark baby basket. My grandmother sang a lullaby to the baby. In this way the baby knows where he comes from and who he is. He smelled the medicine. He heard his language. He gets to know the baby basket and the songs of the grandmother and how she comforts him. He knows a lot of his culture from all of that. He knows how people do things culturally and how they speak and how they talk to the children. He heard the songs sung to him. He felt everything that was done to him. Within hours of his birth he has already experienced so much of his culture. But now it is hard to bring back how the people used to do things long ago. We forgot a lot of our ways. If we could bring back what we have learned from the past, the young ones coming behind us will know the ways. (Secwepemc Elder Mona Jules)

Colonization in all of its forms has continued the removal of children from the land, and from the sacred birch bark basket of teachings and child wellness as described by Elder Mona Jules – of language, of story, of medicine, of song. The healers that I interviewed are part of a larger re-vival of Secwepemc child and youth wellness, through their acts of refusal of engagement with the State but also through their love and yearning towards Indigenous futures. As Lynn shared, these approaches are passed down through stories from grandmother to mother to daughter:

I'll share with you what my mother shared with me [about traditional Secwepemc healing approaches]. When she was a little girl she would see that her granny was a medicine woman, her granny always had a medicine pot brewing, on the fire. And people would come. So, for the physical sense, so, if they had a sick child they would come see her or they would bring the child to her and she would fix them up with the medicines and stuff and then as my mother grew older, my granny Susan kind of took on a role too when there was chicken pox, didn't see this, her granny was telling her this story, my granny was really lucky in that she must've had some sort of resistance to chickenpox or smallpox because as a young girl she was able to help her mom and go help the other kids and nurse them and she never got it but she does know that there is this big part of the Neskonlith graveyard that's all children. And my granny would go out there and what tell whoever was listening, like that's all the babies and when I was a girl they all died of smallpox and chicken pox and me and my mom try to help them but they didn't make it. So that's kind of like the physical. (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer)

Lynn's story of her great-grandmother describes not only the ways in which healing had happened in the Secwepemc community in the past, but also the important role of intergenerational storytelling in keeping these traditions alive. This story also holds a powerful metaphor for the raising up of healers with an ability to work with and resist violence.

Within the Secwepemc Nation there are many examples of reviving practices such as the Cleq'melt girls and boys groups happening in the schools and community (Clark, 2013)<sup>91</sup>, traditional hunting camps (Billy, Anthony & Jules, 2013), Secwepemc artists (Willard, Bose) the Wild Salmon Caravan<sup>92</sup>, the birch bark camp (Secwepemc News, 2013) - all of which are part of intergenerational healing, and helping the young ones coming behind us in knowing their ways. Further, the importance of bringing back the healing power of Secwepemc stories is essential more than ever.

In my interview with Elder Norma Kenoras, she shared a story in contrast to the one that begins this paper, where a non-Indigenous social worker removed the five

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<sup>91</sup>For more information on the Secwepemc girls groups see: [http://www3.sd73.bc.ca/sites/default/files/users/npankewich/Girls-Group-Manual\\_web-2.pdf](http://www3.sd73.bc.ca/sites/default/files/users/npankewich/Girls-Group-Manual_web-2.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> The Wild Salmon Caravan was inspired by intergenerational work between Elders, children and youth on the land in October 2014 at the Wild Salmon Convergence organized by Dawn Morrison of the BC Food Systems Network Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Janice Billy, Natalie Clark, Elder Minnie Kenoras of the Neskonlith Secwepemc community. For more information, <http://farmed-salmon-boycott.com/news/wild-salmon-caravan-big-success/>

children and none of them ever returned to the community. She offered instead a new story where through her love and work in opening her home as a foster parent to Secwepemc children and youth she has been keeping Secwepemc in the community:

Afterwards when the police did not bring them, the kids just came on their own. Some nights I'd have 25 kids just playing in the yard. I'd only got 12 cinnamon buns we had to cut them in two. ... And now I get fish and they know to give me little packages. They know I like liver so they give me these little packages. (Elder Norma Kenoras)

## 4.12. Closing

For each of my sisters, brothers, and Elders who walked with me on this journey as participants, I wrote a poem for them as a way of meaning making and offering thanks for their sharing. One of the poems I wrote after the interview with Lynn captures the feeling of the healing work and the love with which it is being done inter-generationally in the Secwepemc community and of the power and wingspan of the renewal of the Owl stories.

Each interview there is a story shared,  
in my basket,  
this one is so powerful as it is a story of your great grandmother,  
a medicine woman,  
You are like your great grandmother, and your mother after her  
I see you with your medicine pot brewing, on the fire  
I feel myself warm here and your medicine is here too  
You have a resistance to the violence,  
like your great grandmothers to chickenpox and scarlet fever  
you can work with this and not get sick

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## Chapter 5.

### Conclusion: Sharing my Speqpeq, Berries

*“Secwepemcstin welme7yews, welme7yews” (Secwepemc Elder Annie Michel, 2017).*

#### 5.1. Intentions – Why do I want to go pick berries?

I am writing this final chapter in Pellc7ell7ullcwten-remaining-at-home month- the time of storytelling, and gathering together in the s7istcen, the winter home. It is not the time of berry-picking<sup>93</sup>. Instead, it is the time of enjoying the berries. I put the speqpeq7u'w'l, or Saskatoon berries, in my oatmeal as I write this. Frozen still, I bite into them and I can remember picking these with my daughter, my sons, my partner, on our land. And so I come full circle.

The three papers that, together with my introductory chapter and this final chapter, form my dissertation and draw upon insights I have gained through conducting interviews and sharing stories with 11 Secwepemc/Indigenous healers who address violence, injury, and healing with Indigenous children and youth in Secwepemculecw. The central question guiding my work, “what is in your basket?” – addresses the need for the stories of Secwepemc and other Indigenous healers who work on the frontlines of colonial intervention in children and youth lives. What does it mean to have a Secwepemc theory and practice guide survival and recovery/healing, as they had for centuries? The stories from these healing practitioners are important as they are witnesses to the violence and injury, and, more importantly, the strengths, resistance, and healing. The healing practices they are using are examples of the resurgence and

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<sup>93</sup>The Secwepemc had 13 months in their season calendar, “and their survival over thousands of years indicated they were correct in their knowledge of the seasonal round of activities.” (Kye'7e Sulye'n of Skeetchestn retrieved from: <http://www.secwepemc.org/secwepemc-calendar.html>).

reinstatement of Secwepemc law and offer examples of “living traditions”<sup>94</sup> (Goeman, 2008, p. 300) for addressing Secwepemc child and youth wellness.

In this final chapter, I will outline the intentions of this work, engage with the challenges, outline the contributions, and the potential futures of this work. I do so in this way as guided by Secwepemc Elder Uncle Mike Arnouse who shared a story with me that has guided my research journey (Clark et. Al, 2010) and continues to guide it now. This story instructs that on any journey, we need to take time to stop and look back at where we came from, to take notice of where we are, and then we can move forward. I have organized this last chapter in order to give back, to offer or share the berries first with Secwepemc children and youth, as I was taught by the late Secwepemc Elder Granny Regina Arnouse, my children’s great-grandmother, who always said to feed the children first. I then offer to the Elders, the knowledge keepers, and the ones who were not able to pick berries this year due to grief and loss. Next I offer to the Secwepemc community, in particular the People of the Lakes where I am honoured to live and love, and the community of my children, Sk’etsin, and the Neskonlith reserve. I then turn to the profession of social work, counselling, and to other Indigenous healers, and Indigenous students in social work or other professions, working with Secwepemc and other Indigenous children in Secwepemculecw. I offer to the guests on this land, non-Indigenous social workers, counsellors, and allied health practitioners who work with Secwepemc and Indigenous children, youth and families in this Nation. Finally, I offer my thoughts to policy, and to the Indigenous future.

### **5.1.1. Looking back**

In writing this, I invoke an intergenerational writing practice (Gumbs, 2010). I speak first and foremost to my children, and to the children and youth with whom I work. Cree scholar Eber Hampton (2002) states that we need to go back to our memory, to unfold the sacred bundle that is our memory to understand our intentions and our motives in doing research. Aluli-Myer (2013) challenges us to answer with our life and our research the questions that give it meaning. This is part of the memory work of academics in fighting oppression. Indigenous scholars who are no longer willing to leave

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<sup>94</sup> John Borrows (2006) states that a living tradition “points us beyond itself” (p.2).

spirit at the door (Wilson, 2001; 2008; Myer, 2008, 2013) have reminded us to situate ourselves in our writing, to start from our intentions, to answer the question “who are you and why do you care?” (Clark & Hunt, 2011).

I began this dissertation as a form of accountability, and witnessing, to my children, and to the Secwepemc community that I am part of through kinship ties, to the land of Secwepemculecw <sup>95</sup>. It is also part of my witnessing practice to the Secwepemc and other Indigenous children and youth and their families, that I have had the honour of working with over the last 20 years. Again and again, I would observe the harm done to Indigenous children and youth through policies, practices, and programs as enacted by State actors, in particular within the colonial child welfare and counselling/mental health system.

A Cree mother who I had worked with when she was only 12, and who inspired my development of violence-informed girls groups (Gadsby, Clark & Hunt, 2012), contacted me as an adult and a parent and informed me that the Ministry had removed her children and were denying her custody based on documentation in her file that indicated she had seen me for sexual abuse counselling as a child. The Ministry for Children and Families framed her decision to seek counselling for sexual abuse, alongside the acts of survival that she engaged in as evidence of a mental health condition. They set out a number of conditions for her including instructing her to see a psychiatrist for a psychiatric assessment.

At the same time, a young Secwepemc girl attending my girls group disclosed sexual abuse by her step-father, and this was not believed by the State, including police, child and youth mental health, and child protection. She was not interviewed for weeks, and a police interview only happened after persistent advocacy by myself and another Indigenous counsellor. She was seen as inventing the abuse in order to get out of her community, and she was described as having mental health issues linked to gender identity, sexuality expressions, and choices she had been making. The same week in

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<sup>95</sup> I note that I have struggled with the tensions and teachings for myself as a non-Secwepemc woman, but part of the Secwepemc community. A key practice has been within my community advisory circle of Elders, knowledge keepers, and family to encircle the understanding, to make visible my knowing, and to be corrected as needed.

the same school a non-Indigenous girl disclosed sexual abuse and was interviewed the same day and believed.

I also was witnessing in our own Secwepemc extended family and community, our Grandmothers being refused custody of grandchildren, or required to have supervised access, and at the same time, other family members that were trying to adopt their nieces and nephews who were in care after their mother died, and again they were denied based on a mental health diagnosis. They were told they needed special training in addressing the mental health needs of their own family members, young children who had experienced horrible grief and loss.

This research is accountable to these stories shared with me. This dissertation is shaped by deep and abiding Indigenous love of children and youth, and from my “spirit of rage” (Brant, 1983) at the injustices and violence I was witnessing in the name of trauma counselling, in the name of “best interest,” in the name of helping, in the name of justice. The goal of this work is decolonization and sovereignty over care of Indigenous children and youth.

## **5.2. Methodological ethical engagements: txwey’t – to pick berries until all gone**

*I learned from my uncle that knowledge doesn’t belong to any one person, but there are some things that should never be shared. I would be cautious to mention my own private ways, but if we were sitting up on mountains I will mention it there – you will understand it better there – then you can realize what our people really mean with how close we are with our ways of life. (Elder Mike Arnouse, personal conversation, September 2010)*

Secwepemc Kukp7i and scholar Ron Ignace (2016), in the Secwepemc Lands and Resources Law Research Project, discusses the story of Sk’elep<sup>96</sup>: “...he (Sk’elep) goes, meet[s]... beaver man, fish oil man and likewise, he’s told the same thing, but he doesn’t listen. He tries to do what they do and he winds up hurt.” (p. 53). The story of Sk’elep and his hosts reminds us “Ta7ew ks t’e’yepnc k swet re tsu’wet.s., don’t’ copy

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<sup>96</sup> For the full story see Ignace & Ignace, 2017, pp. 63-72.

other peoples' ways. Tsukw re newi7 tsuwet yewske ri7 re swestec. It's your own ways you must hang onto" (Ignace, 2008, p. 346). This story teaches us to honour and recognize the gifts and hospitality of others; it teaches us the Secwepemc laws as they apply to being a guest, and it teaches that there is a danger in trying to use another's gifts or powers as our own.

While writing this paper my father-in-law Johnny Ben Jules, a Secwepemc language teacher and knowledge keeper, told me the story of a Seme7e (white) woman who studied with Dr. Mary Thomas and learned about the removing of birch from the trees to make medicine. On his travels in the territory of this woman, when he and his friend were in the high mountains, they came across birch tree after birch tree all stripped in the same way, and at obvious harm to the tree and surrounding ecology. This story reveals a danger, similar to picking all the berries – in that the specific knowledge of the practice of harvesting the birch and making the medicine was done in the absence of the protocols and practices of Secwepemc law and the teachings of spiritual and ecological guardianship of the environment (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 2016).

An example of engaging directly with the agency and relationality of land<sup>97</sup> is embedded in many of the stories and teachings from Secwepemc Elders. Secwepemc community member Randy Williams (2016) describes this responsibility and respect with a story about a teaching from his mother on how to harvest dandelions for medicine:

So she says if you just take [it] and kill it, it's just a dead plant. But if you ask it and tell it why you need its help and its medicine, then its medicine, its malama. So the different things like that. ...it was our traditional law to be respectful. Cause that's one of the laws that teaches us to be human beings: respectfulness and thankfulness (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, p. 21).

Each of these stories provide important reminders that apply to research on the necessity of listening, the value of humility, and the importance of deep learning of the protocols and practices. As it applies to this research, it is very important to name the protocols and the power relations in utilizing Secwepemc storytelling methods, and other

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<sup>97</sup> An excellent example of Secwepemc law and principles and protocols of engagement can be found in the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (2016) resource, Secwepemc Lands and Resources Law Research Project, with the legal guidance of Val Napoleon, and Secwepemc National Tribal Council Team.



Indigenous knowledges<sup>98</sup>, in particular within the university and in research. I have struggled with the tensions and teachings for myself as a non-Secwepemc Indigenous/settler woman<sup>99</sup>, but one who is part of the Secwepemc community. In this research project I utilized a protocol and principle-based ethics in order to avoid cooption, what Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2017, February 17) calls the “apocalypse of erasure”<sup>100</sup>, or what Metis scholar Zoe Todd describes as a form of “colonial violence” (2014, October 26). In forming a Secwepemc community advisory to guide this work, I have worked to ensure that this methodology is used with care, and encircled in community protocols, with guidance by Elders and community knowledge holders. (see Appendix B).

Further guidance on the protocols and practices of consent, and of sharing knowledge, trade and medicine can also be found within Secwepemc teachings. In considering what this research can offer other Indigenous communities, and non-Indigenous peoples, including the inspiration and transformation that can be made available through these stories, we must be reminded that the knowledge they contain only makes sense within the shape of these relationships, including those to the land and spirit. We are reciprocally accountable to each other, “humans, plants, animals, land itself, weather/sky” (Ignace & Ignace, 2017, p.381). There is a strong history of Indigenous global alliances, of trails of shared medicines, and of reciprocal accountability between Nations across Turtle Island and the world. For example, within the Secwepemc Nation, George Manuel was instrumental in developing the National

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<sup>98</sup> Joseph Gone (2017), in a paper called “*It felt like violence*”: *Indigenous knowledge traditions and the postcolonial ethics of academic inquiry and community engagement*, interrogates the use of Indigenous epistemologies within the academic/university system. The paper engages with eight questions and cautions with the use of Indigenous knowledges within the university.

<sup>99</sup> I also note that even this label “non-Secwepemc woman” is not always true as many times in ceremonies and events I am referred to and included as a Secwepemc woman. It is important that I continue to examine the spaces of this interstice, or in-between place. It is not who I claim, but who claims me.

<sup>100</sup> Alexis Pauline Gumbs in a recent lecture (2017, Feb) invokes, “this thing about one body, it was the black feminist metaphysicians who first said it would not be enough, never had been enough, ... they were the controversial priestesses who came out and said it in a way that people could understand, which is to say they were the ones who said it in a way that foolish would ignore, and then complain about, then coopt.... Without every mentioning the black feminist metaphysicians - Like with intersectionality but that is another apocalypse”.

Indian Brotherhood and the World Council of Indigenous Peoples; these Indigenous networks have developed out of the necessity of surviving past and present colonialism. (Manuel & Posluns, 1974). Similarly, within the Secwepemc territory the development of the language schools, such as Chief Atahm was inspired by the language nests of the Maori in Aoetera/New Zealand (Michel, 2012). The alliances are based on principles of non-interference<sup>101</sup> and mutual recognition as found in the Story of Porcupine (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 2016, p. 48); acknowledgement that one is a guest (SNTC, 2016); processes of deep consent (Hunt, 2016); transformation and expanded kinship circles of accountability and responsibility.

This practice of relational ethics is one which applies to us all. How does one go berry picking? As a Secwepemc person? What are the protocols and practices? As a visitor or a guest? How does one seek consent? How does one behave as a guest? How does one learn the protocols and practices that will not harm the berries, or the land? Who will you take with you, as no one should go berry-picking alone? How will you share back what you have gathered? How will you offer respect to the land, to the berries, to the people? I offer these questions as reflections and to gesture towards the practices of respectful engagement.

### **5.3. Feasting: What Speqpeq, berries, did we pick?**

*[Y]ou know, we lived according to our concepts and our law and our oral history and our culture and our experiences. Even though that we've had some interferences like...child welfare, or adoptions or residential [schools]. But we went out of our way to heal. So, you know, we didn't lose that training, we just misplaced it for a while [because] we didn't practice. But now we are. We've done a lot, like we are practicing more...for our way here it's winter dancing and we are re-learning the ceremony. (Juliana Alexander as interviewed Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 2016, p. 15).*

Witnessing is a form of remembering that can lead to renewal. We come together to witness and to share in the feast, the give away from this research. In listening to the stories shared through this research, we are gesturing to the past and the future at the

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<sup>101</sup> Mohawk Dr. Clare Brant (1990), the first Indigenous psychiatrist in Canada, describes the ethics and rules of non-interference between Indigenous nations.

same time. Mohawk writer Beth Brant (1994) describes this process as being a “witness to what has been and what is to be. Knowing what has transpired and dreaming of what will come. Listening to the stories brought to us by other beings. Renewing ourselves in the midst of chaos” (74).

In this section, I return again to the question that guided this research, to explore what Secwepemc and Indigenous healers have in their basket, and to imagine, and to vision together, what it would mean to have a Secwepemc theory and practice guide to survival and recovery/healing, as they had for centuries?

Through Secwepemc storytelling methodology together with Red Intersectionality, this research does not centre the colonizer, nor replicate the erasure of Two-Spirit and transgendered peoples in our communities, but instead, as I have already mentioned, attends to the many intersecting factors including gender, sexuality, and a commitment to activism and Indigenous sovereignty. It helps us to understand and address violence against Indigenous girls, children, and youth since it foregrounds context, which in Canada’s case must include gendered forms of colonialism and the dispossession of Indigenous lands. The Secwepemc stories provide the medicine and guidance here:

“Just as we can turn to the ways that our stspetekwll (ancient stories) refract the consequences of our colonial history, we can turn to them for wisdom about how to heal ourselves from being divided, broken into fragments, and colonized” (Ignace & Ignace, 2017, p.496).

The stories of the healers I interviewed provide strong examples of how this revival of Secwepemc healing approaches is taking place. The key teachings that emerged from my research all point to the resurgence and renewal of Secwepemc ways of being and doing in the healing of our children, what one participant described as “let’s do it this way first.” In returning to the question that guided my research -- “what’s in your basket?” -- each healer shared examples of Secwepemc and Indigenous approaches in their baskets. This research demonstrates the ways in which Secwepemc laws and wellness approaches are being reinstated, and revived, by Indigenous healers through everyday acts of refusal and revealing<sup>102</sup> (Trask, 1999; Simpson A., 2007, 2014)

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<sup>102</sup> Refusal is not the same as resistance but instead as Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Audra Simpson (2014) describes it – bringing into focus “the prior,” thus rejecting colonial state power relations.

alongside and simultaneous with practices that let Indigenous children know they are seen, and they are loved through practices of recognition, mirroring, and witnessing (Brant, 1994; Simpson, L. 2013, 2017), as expressed through Indigenous desire (Tuck, 2009) and dreaming (Million, 2011) for Secwepemc and Indigenous futures rooted in Secwepemc nation-based child and youth wellness approaches.

Specifically, Chapter two, Shock and Awe, demonstrates an ethics and practice of refusal, and of the “spirit of rage” as it turns away from the risk narratives of trauma theory, and the resultant anger, rage and resistance, towards Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Chapter three, Red Intersectionality, engages with Indigenous feminist witnessing practices of Red intersectional witnessing, of recognition, and of mirroring (Brant, 1994; Simpson, L. 2017). The Indigenous healers, alongside my own practice wisdom, all shared examples of “on-the-ground-practices of freedom” or transformative justice approaches, such as the Secwepemc girls groups operating throughout the Secwepemc Nation, and the importance of working in programs and spaces that allow the “freedom to just be and to do what I need to do to help the families” (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer). The specific practices and spaces of witnessing that let Indigenous children know they are seen, and they are loved are described throughout, but Chapter three focuses on the spaces, such as Indigenous girls groups, that point towards transformative justice models to respond to violence.

Finally, Chapter four, A New Owl Story, centres the stories from Secwepemc and Indigenous healers. These stories contain the essence of my research findings of returning our children, and ourselves as healers to the circle – through Indigenous family and community-centred approaches, and the centering of love and resurgence in this. Participants all spoke of the importance of a gentle family and community-based method, walking beside children and youth and families. “Asking what do you need from me” “walking alongside,” and the recognition that people know what it is they need and honouring this through the creation of “sacred space.” These stories reveal practices rooted in Secwepemc and Indigenous love (Simpson, L. 2013), desire (Tuck, 2009), dreaming (Million, 2011), and ultimately of resurgence and healing. The importance of the spiral resonates here, as the whole of Secwepemc ontology is contained in each

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“There was something that seemed to reveal itself at the point of refusal—a stance, a principle, a historical narrative, and *an enjoyment in the reveal.*” (p. 104).

ceremony, in each story, and in each teaching that returns. George Manuel, with Michael Polsuns (1974), shares that:

so long as there is a single thread that links us to the ways of our grandfathers (and grandmothers)<sup>103</sup>, our lives are strong. However thin and delicate that thread may be, it will support the weight of a stronger cord that will tie us securely to the land” (p. 4).

### **5.3.1. Come Berry Picking with Me: To the Children and Youth**

*It's great for children to learn about their culture so it can be passed on into the future. (Seren Anthony Clark).*

*We loved pulling the roots, and camping and learning from K7a Minnie. (Cohen and Tyee Anthony Clark).*

Your survival is necessary – you are the future ancestors. I have learned from this research about the ways we can bring you back into the circle with love, encircling you with your language, with relationship with your lands and with your kin, and through everyday practices of play and ceremony. We see you. We witness your gifts and name and support these.

I want you to know that the healers in interviewed want to walk beside you and they learned from you. They resist labelling you with the words of the mental health/trauma colonial system. You are not risk – the colonial system is risk. Every healer that I interviewed for this research shared that they have witnessed the harms done to Indigenous children and youth. They spoke of their anger, their refusals, their advocacy, but ultimately their love and desire to be alive for you in this work, to be a mirror of the brilliance in our culture, and to recognize and name your gifts. I offer this poem for you. Poetry is one way I truth-tell. It is one way that I can be a good witness and wrap you in my love.

Child

not yet adult

But changing changing

Every second  
Cellular  
Faster than snap chat  
Disappearing as quickly as images  
I can't screen shot this much beauty  
And in other ways you are  
Unchanging  
Solid like stone  
Buried deep your gifts are older than memory  
Daughter, dreaming tomorrow  
Dreamed of by ancestors  
Yesterday  
Who love you more than  
Instagram could ever capture

Thousands of followers  
Every second they like  
Your heart beat  
Your bones  
Your anger, your rage  
Your resistance  
Your lust your love  
Son, Future ancestor  
Tell me  
I am listening  
Show me

I am witness

### **5.3.2. Berries for the Elders and the ones who cannot go on the mountain**

*Elder Mike Arnouse often tells a story of a when he was asked to open a large health conference, with prayer and some words. When Uncle Mike finished his talk, he said that he was thinking to himself, I wonder if anyone really listens? He started to walk down the long hall from the conference room, and he felt someone grab his finger. He looked down and there was two-year old Tyee holding his finger. Uncle Mike said that Tyee began to talk to him, blah blah blah, a child language, that Uncle Mike heard from the heart. I heard you Uncle, I am listening (Mike Arnouse, personal communication, 2007).*

The Elders' basket holds the medicine and the teachings that they offer to the children and youth. These are the importance of storytelling, of play, of learning to pay attention, and of the Secwepemc values, of going out on the land with Elders for berry picking and other lived ceremonies, and in particular of the key role Elders played in seeing and nurturing the gifts of Secwepemc children and youth.

In stories from Secwepemc and Indigenous healers interviewed for this research, again and again, the importance of Elders' teachings was named in the wellness and healing of Indigenous children and youth. The healing power of the relationship with Elders, and of intergenerational storytelling, play, and ceremony on the land as healing has been named by Secwepemc Elders, and by children, youth (Clark, et al. 2017). Teit (1909) described the key role of storytelling with grandparents as being:

bed-time mythological tales were told by some old person until the people all fell asleep. On the following evening another elderly person told stories, and thus all the people who knew any myths took turns at relating them through the winter. These were the times when the old people would address the young, and when they would admonish them to follow the rules of proper ethical conduct (Teit, 1909, p.617)

Play is an essential element of the medicine of Elders, and in particular play in the context of intergenerational learning on the land. All the healers shared of the importance of having play in their basket. One Female Elder (Jules, D. 1996) described the role of play in raising Secwepemc children this way:

My grandmother would go out to gather bull rush for her mats or the rope hemp for making her rope. We'd go with her and it seemed like we always just made a game of everything we did... right away the old people would recognize (your working abilities), I can hear my grandmother saying, 'you're ambitious' and they praised you for that. That's one of the beginnings of identifying what you're going to be. They can tell when you are young. When they find that ambition in the child, right away the grandparents would spend more time with him or her. It wasn't through lectures (that they showed you how to work), it was by example. They did it and took part in (the work). It was mostly play, play, play but it was a part of a job. The training was happening already" (Secwepemc Female Elder, Neskonlith, p. 92)

The importance of being on the land with Elders was also an important way that Secwepemc children experienced wellness. Secwepemc Elder Flora Sampson, shared with me that she was often taken on the land, or on the water, by a group of older women. The link between wellness and picking berries was also described in the interview with a grandmother and Canim Lake Elder by Jules (1996):

"One time when I was home my mother sent me with some old ladies to pick berries. I asked, 'Why me?' 'Never mind, you go, learn from the old ladies'. I was taught that before you go up high in the mountains you must pray so that the mountain doesn't get mad. The old ladies blackened their faces before they went up. They also used to sing and drum. We would help one another, that is what I liked about the old ladies, they would pick berries for me while I looked after the horses and dried the berries. The nine old ladies each sang their own song and I learned mom's song. When they were ready to move, the old ladies would blacken their faces again. We'd stay two weeks at a time. Every night the old ladies would sit around the fire and tell different stories every night. I always wish now I paid more attention and learning things from them (Canim lake Elder as cited in Jules, 1996, p. 99 – 100)

The observation of children by the Elders to see their gifts, offer praise and support is also an essential part of the wellness for Secwepemc children and youth (Jules, D. M. 2009; Jules, R., 2016). The healers interviewed for this dissertation described the importance of working with children and youth to identify their gifts, and to support them from a strengths perspective. The Cleq'melt girls groups, as described in Chapter three, with the key role of the Grandmothers council, alongside aunties and other strong Indigenous role models, was provided as one example of a program that provided a space for the witnessing of Indigenous girls gifts and talents, in an intergenerational circle.



The importance of love in the wellness of Indigenous children and youth is perhaps the most important medicine in the basket. Love for Indigenous communities, love for children and youth, and love for language, ceremony, and land. The Secwepemc understanding of love as experienced by children is told by a Secwepemc Elder and grandmother:

Love, loving each other, caring for each other, where ever they were, it seemed like a warm blanket covered over them (the children). In their reserves, loving each other, welcoming each other, all over. The way we lived we were happy, free, we loved our neighbours (as cited in Jules, 1996, p. 85).

As described in Chapter 4, this love is essential to Secwepemc and Indigenous wellness approaches. It has been this way welme7 yews welme7 yews, forever and ever.

### **5.3.3. Feast and Give-away: to the Secwepemc community and families**

*In teaching basketmaking and the values (behind it) you work a whole day gathering material and another day preparing it. Maybe you spend another couple of days in forming it and finishing your basket. You know you put a lot of yourself and you'll really value it. (On the other hand) you compare that with what is happening today, If I told you let's go pick huckleberries, you'd probably be running around for a plastic bucket. When you come home you don't value that plastic bucket. (Whereas I, on the other hand, will) take my basket I wash it and I hang it up so next year when I'm going to pick berries and my baskets are still there. (Secwepemc grandmother and Elder as cited in Jules, 1986 p. 118)*

I offer this basket of what I have learned. This is my sharing back of what I have learned and my intentions.<sup>104</sup> This basket holds the medicine found within the stories, in particular the values of relationship and family, Kweseltknews: we are all family. The research emphasizes the importance of an intergenerational family approach that returns children to centre of our circle.

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<sup>104</sup> I have been offering healing workshops in the community, and groups for girls, youth, and Elders on taking care of ourselves in the circle and Indigenous violence-informed practice.

In the wake of colonialism and residential school in particular, the circle, that holds Indigenous children and youth at the centre with family, community, and Elders around them, has been fractured (Derrick, 2017). The importance of sharing our own stories as family with our children is also essential. Many of the healers I interviewed described having children and parents write stories to each other, and the healing found in this process. As described by Secwepemc educator Janice M. Billy, “Storytelling can be a way of connecting ourselves to a shared culture and identity and through our own stories, or *stsptekwle*, that our children will be able to understand how they are connected to each other, and to the land.” (g. 26).

#### **5.3.4. For Practice: What is in your basket? Medicines for this work.**

I want everyone to take a moment while you are reading this and draw a basket or container for your own wellness and for the stories you have and will receive in this work. What are its qualities? What is already in the basket to support you and the children and youth sharing their story with you?

As shared in the findings of this dissertation, the healing practices are grounded on the land, including in urban and rural spaces, and across dislocations from land through dreams, ceremony, and everyday practices of resurgence. The practices resist land dispossession, and they are practices of decolonization, of sovereignty, and of healing. The practices attend to the scale of violence, from the structural to the interpersonal. Through the “restorying” (Michel, 2012) of the Owl story as provided in Chapter four, we are provided with new stories, that are flexible and allow us to speak our truth, as none of us stand outside of this colonial system<sup>105</sup>.

The combined teachings from the healers I interviewed, together with my own experience, I offer as a practice for working with what I call a Violence informed Red Intersectional approach<sup>106</sup>. These approaches, as described in Chapter two, and in a webinar shared across Canada (Clark, 2017) include the importance of naming the violence and refusing the acts of shock and awe while attending to the everyday ways

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<sup>105</sup> I acknowledge all members of my committee for this teaching throughout my dissertation.

<sup>106</sup> The key approaches I have shared in a webinar (Clark, 2017, May 29th) and in numerous workshops and trainings within Secwepemculecw and across Canada. I will be producing a practice guide for social workers, and other health care practitioners.

that colonial violence plays out in our children's lives – racialized, gendered, aged, violence through poverty, and through policy in all its pervasive forms. This includes attending to our own complicity in this, through practices of reflexivity, and Red intersectional witnessing, practitioners can attend to how power and privilege move, and the impacts on healers and practitioners' wellness. Chapter three offers reflexive and witnessing questions for reflection that can guide practice. In all the interviews, as focused on in Chapter four, the healers shared examples of the cost of trying to work within the system, and strategies of refusal, advocacy, and activism. I suggest that Red Intersectionality can provide some of the ways to support practitioners in navigating the multiple subject positions we all have including my own in this research.

In returning to the question that guided this research, "what is in your basket", the healers I interviewed all shared their own journey to healing and to their practice with children and youth. This is an important starting place for this reflexivity; the ability to ground ourselves in the Nation and land where we are, and in our bodies. Practitioners working with Secwepemc and Indigenous children can begin by reflecting on their journey to healing work: Where you have come from (looking back)? What forms of cultural experience and education have informed your practice? What forms of academic experience and education have informed your work? Where you are now (role, practice context) – how have you integrated western and Indigenous counseling approaches as an Indigenous practitioner, non-Indigenous? specific Secwepemc nation approaches? What are the protocols with which you approach these practices? Where are you going? What approaches to Indigenous child and youth wellness would you like to see us move toward from a wholistic perspective?

***Start with Story: Creation stories, laws, protocols and practices.*** Secwepemc scholar Nancy Sandy (1987) explains how "the Secwepemc believe that when the world was just beginning it was not a very good place for people to live, there were floods, fires, and great winds; therefore the Old One (Tqelt Kukwpi7) sent Coyote, (Sek'lep) to come to earth and help to set things right" (p.31). The importance of creation stories in helping us to know our place in the world and to connect us to our teachings is crucial (Michel, 2012; Sandy, 1987; Billy, 2009). All of the participants shared the importance of stories in their work. As Secwepemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Nathan Matthew shared with me, it is important to learn the story, and tell the story. Beginning with the Creation stories in the Nation where we are

practicing, as they hold the knowledge of how to take care of Indigenous children/youth families and communities and the values and approaches to guide us in this work. Practitioners and agencies can learn the Stsptekwle, Secwepemc stories through having Secwepemc Elders and knowledge keepers on staff, and through workshops, language learning and other Secwepemc land-based approaches. Indigenous Nations' stories hold the values, and knowledge we need to guide us in our wellness and in our work with children youth and families. What stories guide you in your work?

Another important Violence informed Red Intersectional practice is truth-telling and naming. Decolonizing at its heart is about resurgence and reclamation. It is principled work and must be grounded in the principles of the Secwepemc peoples as I have suggested in this dissertation, or the sacred laws and stories of the Nation where you practice.

**Naming and truth-telling: Beyond Risk.** It is important that we define for ourselves and our programs how we define the violence experienced by children, and whenever possible use the words from the Nation and the language to describe the violence, and to describe the healing approaches.

I call it sexualized violence and many of the indigenous women that I see, we don't talk about the specific assault, we talk about the results or the after effects so to speak. You don't call it rape; we don't call it sexual assault. Someone hurt you, physically, spiritually, and mentally and that's when you can get into the emotional work. And what does emotional mean? So sadness, and some of them are even in their spirituality or culture, and some of them don't even want to be. (Sharon Todd, Metis healer).

It is important to learn, and to tell the truth about the history of social work and mental health practices within Indigenous communities, be willing to speak about racism within the history of trauma theory and practice, and to consider how this is impacting the work with Indigenous children and youth. Practices of noticing and naming the arteries of power, of control and of silencing through policies and programs. What does it mean to no longer centre Western ways of defining trauma? All of the healers I interviewed described that the word "trauma" is not enough. Instead the healers spoke of the grief, of the impact on relationships, of the violence. Questions for practitioners to

consider include: Is there a word in the Nation, in the Indigenous language for violence, for harm to children, and for the healing approaches? Are there stories that can guide this work? How will you define trauma/violence in your work? Across the lifespan? In different Indigenous nations/lands/geographic spaces? Communities?

Violence Informed Red Intersectional practices (VIRP) avoids individualizing the problem, or situating risk within children and youth because the focus is on multiple levels (e.g., how the individual level links to the structural level), and instead situates mental health and violence within a broader context that acknowledges Indigenous resurgence, rage, resistance, and love at the intersection of colonialism, poverty, patriarchy, racism, and discrimination, among other systems. Finally, VIRP understands the diversity that exists within communities and across Indigenous cultures. It can therefore support the use of local resources, capacities, and strengths, while sharing these with ideas of non-interference, transformation, and expanded kinship networks.

**Red Intersectional Witnessing practices.** Another important medicine in the basket of Secwepemc and Indigenous healers is their witnessing practice, that I call Red Intersectional Witnessing. Through Indigenous witnessing practices, practitioners can consider what it means to be a good witness to Secwepemc children and youth and what it means to see them and support them in the circle, as suggested by Secwepemc Elder Dr. Mary Thomas. Red intersectionality is grounded in Indigenous feminisms long history of recognizing, naming and resisting gendered violence on the land. It is vitally important in our listening our learning that we do not continue to create narratives of risk and harm separated from the intergenerational stories of strength, rage, resistance, and survivance. In our Indigenous family and community contexts we weave and tell stories of violence, resistance, and healing. We are telling in order not only to share about the violence, but also to change it. It is vitally important that we see and honor our Indigenous children/youth as truth-tellers, knowledge makers and activists. Remember that the child or youth is embedded within a web of strengths, intergenerational resiliency, resistance and everyday survivance. It is important to understand that colonial violence is not something that lives only in the past, but due to the reality of the intersection of sexism, racism and other abuses, many children and youth are constantly triggered by emotions throughout the day. Thus, our practices must name and provide strategies to deal with the continuum of violence in Indigenous children and youth daily

lives, providing tools to deal with issues such as racist comments, sexual harassment at school, are key in our work.

Practitioners and agencies working with Indigenous children and youth must consider how to be a good witness to Indigenous children and youth and families? How can we honor and validate the stories we receive from them? What ways can we create space, centre voices of children, youth, families, Elders in our practice and in our agencies? What processes, practices, and examples of witnessing are you already using? What ways do I currently receive and witness disclosures of everyday acts of violence, racism, and genocide in people, places, policies, and practices? Red intersectionality acknowledges the differential and ongoing impact and triggering based on oppression and intersections of age, gender, race, sexuality, and other factors – thus ensuring in our witnessing practice that we are seeing all of who the children, youth and families we work with are.

I offer this poem here as one example of my witnessing practice. It is remembering when risk was written on my body as a young woman, when my basketball coach told me he felt sorry with me. I wrote and shared this poem for a talk I gave to Indigenous youth.

*Basket*

*Ball*

*Hoop dancer*

*A pair of green high-tops lost*

*Most improved player*

*Red high-tops stolen*

*Removed*

*Beyond risk*

*Do not tell me of your fear for me*

*If you do not share your hope*

*My gifts hidden from you*

*By the old small pox blanket you have draped over me*

*Woven of my risk and statistics of harm*

*You cannot see beyond lives lived now*

*Leaders of today*

*Not tomorrow*

*I remember the story of this on my body*

*Basketball coach whispers words while draping the blanket*

*I feel sorry for you, sorry for you as a child of a single parent, on welfare*

*Punched me*

*No Air*

*Wrapped me in the small pox blanket of your words woven of pity of shame dipped in risk*

*I could not*

*Did not recognize myself*

*Anger. How dare you. I threw the blanket off – marching off to see the counsellor for the one and only time I did in school.*

*His words – Go now. Get him out of whatever class he is in and tell him how he made you feel.*

*Moment frozen – staring at him teaching through the school door, small window frozen in time.*

*Truth-telling. I know more and deeper than any of these privileged kids.*

*How Dare you?*

*I refuse this blanket you have made for me woven of your stories of single moms and wild child.*

*I hand it back to you. But not without the gift of my own blanket.*

*I can sink a three pointer, and I am much more than your story of me.*

*Pride. Resistance. Resistance. Survivance. (Poem by Natalie Clark November 2015)*

The practices and protocols of working with Secwepemc and Indigenous children and youth can be found within the Secwepemc values and practices to guide the work. Kwselktnews and Knucwetwecw– the importance of family, kinship, and community. The findings of this research strongly assert the need to begin with Secwepemc approaches, what one healer described as “Let’s do it this way first” (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer). Mental health, social work, and family counselling practitioners can consider how they are centering Secwepemc approaches in their work with children and youth. Are they beginning with asking what does the community want or need, rather than rushing in with colonial risk-based responses? The healers all spoke of the importance of family and community centred approaches in the work.

The centering of love, rage, resistance, and resurgence in our healing practices is essential. The strongest medicine in the basket of the healers I interviewed is love, and the kinship and connections to strong grandmothers, aunties and women in the community. As Sharnelle shared:

I think growing up we were connected a lot to aunts and females in the community. And even though there was a lot of families who had the same challenges as our family did, the alcohol and the violence, but the healing really came from the strong structure of the females. We had healthy, amazing things. Like we had, even though it sounds crazy, catechism. They had that going, we had all of these events that provided that healthy environment that you might not have had at home. I can think of so many from my reserve who were phenomenal, that I have a loving feeling towards when I see them. I was at their home having lasagne, this mom would bring us baked goods when we had our swimming lessons. That for me was a lot of healing” (Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc healer)

The important role of a circle of women was also shared with me by Elder Flora naming all the women who would take her berry picking and to the mountains.

Finally, I offer to practitioners an important Violence informed Red Intersectional practice, how we begin and how we end our work with children and youth. All of the healers I interviewed shared practices of beginning and ending with clients that included ceremony, respect, humility, and honouring. Healers shared of ending sessions with a story and a gift:



And I always ended with a story and a gift. And I sometimes used the \_\_\_\_ stories, and they would often get it. But I also had, there are so many story books that are emerging within the Native, so I had quite a few of those and I remember sitting reading these stories and I would be crying. Why are you crying? Because I just feel so much (Jann Derrick, Mohawk healer).

### **Decolonizing self-care: Sacred wellness and communities of caring**

Secwepemc healer Duanna strongly asserts that the work with children is rejuvenating, but the work within the system is the daily challenge:

It wasn't the work with the little people ever, that was the rejuvenating piece. It was the systems part that you had to deal with and that was daily. You never got a break from that; it was constant. No amount of smudging every morning or brushing off from the Elders or sweats seems to take that away. It felt good after you did it, but it didn't take it away (Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc healer).

Knucwestsut.s –this Secwepemc value speaks to the importance of taking care of ourselves in this work. All of the healers shared specific approaches and practices to decolonize wellness in this work, and centering Indigenous wellness approaches and community caring approaches. I have learned through my own practice of working with violence, and in my experiences teaching about violence in classrooms that we must address our own wellness in this work and the importance of moving beyond western individualistic ideas of self-care in this process. Decolonizing trauma work requires us to challenge the Western language of self-care and instead consider ourselves and our work as requiring political self-care within webs of communities and collectives of caring. When we are triggered in this work we can take care of ourselves through Indigenous sensory and community wellness approaches. These include smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. I encourage my students and survivors I work with to create a wellness vision board that includes physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and cultural safety/wellness.

Mellelc, this value of balance and play offers guidance on how to take care of oneself in this work, through practices of balance, through engagement with land, and through arts-based approaches. All the healers spoke of spiritual practices that allowed stories to pass through them, while honouring the sacred sharing. Each of the healers submitted images in response to the question of how they take care of themselves and enact resistance to the colonial system. Practitioners can consider what stories have you been told about your wellness? About Indigenous women's wellness? In our families? In

our communities? What stories could guide you in this work? What image can represent your wellness in this work? What is your vision for your wellness? The stories are the medicine and can provide guidance here, including the stories of other healers.

### **5.3.5. Implications for Policy**

Secwepemc activist and food sovereignty knowledge keeper Dawn Morrison (n.d.) asserts that “colonial policies designed to extinguish Secwepemc title and rights to the land and resources are considered by many of the wisest Elders to be the root cause of the continuing decline in all of the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects of Secwepemc health” (p.2). Echoing this, the research findings emphasized the ongoing structural and intimate violence done through policy on Indigenous children, youth, and their families and communities. It also revealed the ways in which the harms done through policy are embodied, as evidenced by the stories from healers as part of this research. I suggest that given the intersectional and “hydra-headed” nature of this violence as enacted through policy and policy actors – it is essential that an intersectional policy-based analysis (IBPA) in particular one grounded in principles and transformative approaches (Hankivsky, O., Grace, D., Hunting, G., Ferlatte, O., Clark, N., Fridkin, A., ...Lavolette, T. (2012); Hankivsky, Grace, Hunting, Giesbrecht, Fridkin, Rudrum, Ferlatte, & Clark, 2014) be applied to child welfare, and the other intersecting policies that disrupt Secwepemc ways of taking care of children and youth.

Returning to the stories I witnessed that begin this chapter, and so many of the stories shared throughout this research, policy continues to reify colonialism, and perpetuate violence against Indigenous children and youth. This research begs for the need to refuse and name the harms done through mainstream colonial policy responses to violence, and instead centre the stories of individual children and youth as an important and necessary theoretical foundation for policy analysis and justice (Clark, 2012). I developed my work in considering Indigenous approaches to intersectionality-based policy analysis, alongside my colleague Sarah Hunt in our work addressing sexualized violence, sexual exploitation, and sex work throughout BC. We developed an approach that foregrounds Indigenous sovereignty/nationhood, and that theorizes the current forces of colonialism, including reserve policies and politics, lateral violence, and

identity politics (Clark & Hunt, 2011) As part of my doctoral work I expanded this work to develop a Red Intersectionality-based approach to policy, Indigenous intersectional-based policy analysis (IIBPA), that highlights the role of gendered colonialism, past and present, alongside the contextualization of individuals within community and family history, and positioning agency and acknowledgement of resistance, rage and anger (Clark, 2012). I suggest that there is important work to do in building transformative policy solutions – ones founded in Secwepemc healing and wellness approaches to child and youth policy. Policy actors and agents should begin with asking what is the impact of policy on the healing of Indigenous children and youth? what are the gaps in policy and practice? what is needed? how do ‘race’, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other social locations and systems of inequality (racism, colonialism, classism, heterosexism) interact in relation to how this is framed in policy? A Red Intersectionality-based policy analysis situates the child/youth and policy “issue” within the context of colonialism, poverty, racism and discrimination among others; it understands the diversity that exists within our nations, and supports through referral & advocacy the use of local resources, capacity and strengths. In any policy work it is important to situate outcomes within the context of goals that advance Indigenous sovereignty, resurgence and healing.

Within the Secwepemc Nation there are examples of hopeful models such as through the partnerships of the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (2016) with University of Victoria Indigenous legal clinic under Indigenous legal scholar Val Napoleon (2016) in examining Secwepemc law in Secwepemc stories to develop a policy casebook as it pertains to land and resources; the Secwepemc Indigenous courts for children and youth with Elders providing support; and the amazing research supporting the reinstatement of Secwepemc language (Billy, 2009; Michel, 2012) and child-safety and child rearing approaches (Jules,2016; Sandy, 2016). However, I would argue that a Red Intersectionality-based policy model would be important to inform these processes – otherwise there is a danger of replicating gendered-colonial ideas of children and youth. Further, all healers I interviewed identified the issue of sexual violence and abuse as one that we are not addressing in our communities. Red Intersectionality, and its analysis of sexualized colonial violence can provide important transformative justice approaches that do not replicate, nor centre colonial processes.

Ultimately, there is an urgent need for a transformative approach to child and youth policies for healing and wellness – and I suggest that Red Intersectionality-based policy analysis can provide transformative models to guide policy and practice. Through centering sovereignty, resurgence, resistance, and community, family and individual agency, this work points towards policy solutions that build on and emerge from the strengths within the community and within Indigenous children and youth themselves. Indigenous children and youth are the best guides of determining their own needs in this respect, as they are already engaging in daily acts of understanding, negotiating and resisting colonial policy. My work with Secwepemc Indigenous girls groups, and the First Nations Health Authority policy team and wellness team to share about Red Intersectionality through a webinar and training are examples of the future of this work.

### **5.3.6. Looking forward: Implications for Future research**

I asked all of the healers I interviewed if there was something we were still not addressing within Indigenous communities. All of the participants shared that sexual abuse is an issue that continues to need our healing attention. I believe that an area for further research and policy development is in what I call Red intersectional transformative justice, or models of healing and justice that hold accountable the violence done structurally, and individually, without creating more harm through state interventions. Examples of transformative justice models include the Indigenous girls, boys and Two-Spirit youth groups, described in Chapter three that are happening in the schools and in the communities. These are spaces where Indigenous children and youth can be in the circle, with grandmothers, aunties, and healers, and talk about their joys, their hopes, and their dreams, alongside their experiences of violence without engaging the State.

There is a need for further research to examine the scales of violence, in particular gendered-colonial and sexualized violence as it operates in the spaces that Indigenous children and youth move through. Examining Secwepemc stories for the values, lessons, and medicine related to sexual violence prevention, healing, and justice is an important next step from this research. The stories of Secwepemc women, girls, and Two-Spirit resistance to violence are also important to document and uplift. As Sarah Hunt and I found, in our research for the Justice Institute of BC and for Victims

Services (2002; 2006), Indigenous girls identified that they did not report violence due to past histories of violence experienced by themselves and by their mothers. We found it was common for young women to have experienced violence or witnessed violence as a child, to have had a bad experience with police or the justice system and thereby develop a lack of trust in the system. Similarly, in this research several healers shared stories of the children and youth they worked with disclosing violence and abuse and not being believed by educators, counsellors, and other helping professions. We need research that challenges and decolonizes gendered colonialism, and rape culture in all institutions, including the culture of silence and complicity of State actors working inside of the institutions - including social workers, justice workers, health professionals, and educators. The Decolonizing Rape Culture events (2016, 2017) that I was part of organizing with Sarah Hunt at the University of British Columbia, and then at Thompson Rivers University are important examples of this work.

Finally, we need research that moves us towards models of Red intersectional and transformative justice and healing in Secwepemc and other Indigenous Nations. We need to move to models of violence-informed work that are part of larger social justice, decolonizing, and anti-colonial work that situates resurgence and reinstatement of Secwepemc and other Indigenous nations healing and wellness approaches.

## **5.4. Final Thoughts – vision for the future**

*Warning this story ends with a revolution (Metis Artist Christi Belcourt, 2016 keynote)*

This work offers hope and direction for Indigenous futurity. Our work is to dream and “to do that dreaming” as Two-Spirit scholar and poet Billy Ray Belcourt (2016) visions for us “in the name of a different revolution” (p. 5). He asks us, “the world we want is waiting in the breakages between now and the next, what might get us there?” (p.5). This research and the stories shared offer hope and ideas for the Secwepemc future as envisioned by Secwepemc healer Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief:

We won't be relying on government. That we will have within our own nation or within our own communities, our own jurisdiction, our own laws, and we will look after our children and not have any other influences from the government, or other threats. (Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc healer).

This work offers hope for our children and youth: that they will no longer want to die; no longer miss us because they are taken away; no longer live with a frozen survival response. This research offers hope for Secwepemc and Indigenous children from other Nations to once again be seen for their gifts, and for the statement: “let’s go pick berries” to be answered again and again with: “yes.”

I close this chapter with a story that, since reading it in the works of Teit (1909) about the Secwepemc people, has “stalked me.”<sup>107</sup> The story is of a young girl picking berries alone. In the story she is abducted, and left hanging in a tree, a handkerchief around her mouth, and her basket, full of berries, is hanging in the tree beside her (p. 468). Perhaps this story stalks me as it embodies why I do this work and what gives my life meaning. I know that colonization brought violence to this land, and that the violence on the land and the violence against Indigenous children and youth are directly connected. In my engagement with the story I gently cut the girl down from that tree, and she is buried with ceremony, in her community. We also gently return her basket to her, thus we honour her knowing, her basket, and what she collected. Even more than this, I want to imagine instead that she is not picking berries alone, that in fact she is with me, and together with other children, Elders, and family in the circle, we are picking berries together just as we do on the land every summer. I end with a poem I wrote about this story, my offering to the girl in the story.

Am I berry picking alone?  
Ancient sister taken  
Left hanging in a tree  
Your basket near by a reminder of what was full  
And all that has been lost.  
Is this a metaphor for colonization?  
A story of violence on the land

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<sup>107</sup> Elder Nick Thompson, “So someone stalks you and tells a story about what happened long ago... All of a sudden it hits you! It’s like an arrow, they say. Sometimes it just bounces off – it’s too soft and you don’t think about anything. But when it’s strong it goes in deep and starts working on your mind right away” (Basso, 1996, p. 58).

A girl left hanging in a tree, choked by her handkerchief while her basket lingers on...

I offer my basket to her,

I join it with the many baskets formed on this land in ceremony

In anticipation of berry-picking to come.

## 5.5. Temtumen: Dreaming of berry-picking

*“One morning Fox smoked his pipe, and muttered, “Last night I dreamed, and gained much knowledge” (Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 2016, p. 138)<sup>108</sup>*

I end with a dream, stemtumen, a vision that led me to a story. I offer this dream, knowing that in my basket are first and foremost my gifts as a healer, my semc, or spirit power, and the ability to foretell the future through dreams, and through sensing, something I have had since I was a little girl. I also invoke Secwepemc dreaming as intergenerational pedagogy and practice. Teit (1909) described how Secwepemc girls would paint their dreams on the rocks, and they would be supported in understanding these dreams through an intergenerational community approach. I imagine a future where Secwepemc children and youth are once again dreaming in the circle, guided by Secwepemc dreaming practices that support us in dreaming together, and having our dreams held collectively.

The dream was about healing, and about protection. I was directed to contact my father-in-law, Johnny Ben Jules, as well as Educator Rob Mathews, as both were in the dream. I will keep the content of the dream sacred, but I invoke it here as the path to the story shared with me. The day after having the dream<sup>109</sup>, I ran into Rob Matthew from my

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<sup>108</sup> This story is from *The Liberation of the Chinook Wind* in James Teit, “The Shuswap” in Franz Boas, ed. *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition: Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History Vol II, Part IV* (Leiden: EJ Brill/ New York: GE Stechert, 1909) at 624. The casebook of stories included in this important resource by the Shuswap Nation Tribal Council (2016) asks a number of questions of each story, including what is the main human problem the story focuses on? What facts matter? What is decided or how is the issue resolved? What is the reason behind the decision or resolution? Other questions? What did you need to bracket? In this case, the question asked is “what is the role of dreams as a source of law?” (pp. 138-141).

<sup>109</sup> At the time of this dream I had been working on this dissertation, thinking about healing, but also I had been gathering with Arthur Manuel and others against the Kinder Morgan pipeline. The night I had the dream – the bones of Secwepemc ancestors were being buried after being unearthed

dream, whom I had not seen in several years. I told him about my dream, and he said that he felt it was about a Secwepemc story he had been told by Joe Michel, and he shared it with me.<sup>110</sup>

The story tells of how horses came to the Secwepemc people. In the community there is a hearing-impaired boy whose sister watches over him. The community thinks the boy is crazy, but he is very smart. There came a time when the community was moving, and the community left, leaving the boy behind on his own.

After they leave he tries to follow his community – he falls down on his travels and a black worm comes out of his ear – for the first time he can hear the birds, he can hear the trees moving, he can hear his own heartbeat.

He goes further on his journey, following his community, and he falls down again – and again a black worm comes out of his other ear. He can hear fully now and learns quickly.

The boy catches up with the community who are still travelling, and he meets up with two Elders at the back of the people. The female Elder calls him crazy and dirty but the male Elder takes the boy in. He teaches him to cook Moose, he tells him to pay attention – and he tells him to gift the female Elder after he has paid attention. The boy notices she has trouble walking and he carves her a beautiful walking stick. He stays with the Elders, and they cut his hair, and get him new clothes.

The Elders send the boy on a journey. He is sent to get the big dog people to the South. He prepares for four days – etsxe – before he leaves on his journey. Then the boy walks to the lake he was told about, when he reaches the water the boy turns into a fish and disappears. He then walks for 16 days and he sees another boy who also turns into a fish.

In his instructions, the boy was told he would meet a great Chief of the horses, or big dog people, and if he can see the Chief's feet, then to ask for one quarter of his horses (and some other things) He is told, don't look back after you receive these things or it will all disappear.

The boy meets the Chief, who is wearing a tall white coat. All of a sudden the wind blows and the boy sees the feet of the chief. He asks for one quarter of his horses. The water disappears from the lake and he gets the horses and he goes back to the people – this is how the horse came to this territory.

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and moved from road construction. In the dream there was an orange snake, as well as a message of how to place Chestnuts as protection.

<sup>110</sup>I offer a shorter version here, and acknowledge that I am still learning this story and its meanings for this work, so any mistakes in its telling are my own.



As I engage with this story shared with me, I understand that it is about how we understand and label our children; it is about the healing found between children and Elders. The story holds lessons about paying attention, and about seeing beyond behaviours, beyond risk, to the gifts to the future. The Sly7e, male Elder, in the story can see the boy's gifts, beyond the dis(ability) and the poverty, clothing, or hair. The story also tells of healing. The boy falls two times while trying to return to his community that has left him behind, and each time a black worm comes out of his ear. Violence impacts us on a sensory level: smell, taste, hearing, sight, taste, and touch. The first time only some of the blackness comes out and the boy can hear and can learn. The second time the black worm comes out, he is able to get up and join the Elders. There is also a story of reciprocal love here. The boy sees the Grandmother Elder and her need for a walking stick and he carves it with love. He then is given a task for the community, as they now see his gifts, and he is the one who can bring the horses, a form of futurity I would suggest, to the community. This dream and the story I was given will continue to reverberate in me. It has been released; it cannot be called back.

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## Appendix A:

### Notes - Cedar Bark and Birch Basket Harvesting Camps, June 22 – 25th 2013.

***Preparation** Friday we left Vancouver, beginning the day in Musqueam territory and celebrating Aboriginal Day and then ending the day in Tk'emlúps in Secwepemc territory. Seeing old friends and family was heartwarming and a reminder of how much we are loved in this land. Late and dark on the night of the super moon we arrive in Chase, all four of us crawling into bed together.*

*Saturday I spend the day getting ready for the camp, preparation is very important. Food, water, gas, shelter – ensuring safety and sustenance for all. In fact, my preparation, and commitment to the community began before this. I had been given tasks by the Elders and the organizers too complete before we arrived at the camp. I pick up and drop off 40 pounds of Organic foods donated from Vancouver. Boxes of food arrive in my truck for the camp.*

***The Journey** The drive to the upper Adams and to the sacred headwaters is beautiful, 4 cars in a convoy. In front Garry Gottfriedson, poet, language speaker, pipe carrier and his son also a pipe carrier, and my family brother Gordon and Elder Uncle Mike. I travel with my three children, Seren, Tyee and Cohen. Cathy Arnouse and her daughter Ashley who carries a big name and an important role related to the water and the ceremony we are to complete follow our truck. Next is Chief Judy and her mother Minnie Manuel an Elder and knowledge keeper. Finally, Chief Wayne Christian who just received an honorary doctorate from TRU and his wife Marlene, a strong Okanogan woman.*

*We come to a fork in the road, travelling far up beyond the Adams Lake. No one is sure which way to go. We look at the map that does not go that far. I am silent. As Garry says we all know a little but together we know allot. We chose a road based on the map and had travelled about 30 minutes up the road and then Uncle Mike stopped us as he noticed we were moving farther away from the river. He had not travelled this road in a long time and the impact of logging and mining on the land had changed the markers as he remembered them. Again we stopped and the chiefs and men tried to figure out where we were going. Then Ky7a Minnie said we were to go back. I do not*

have anything to offer here. Yet my daughter also spotted the rock cairn that was meant to guide us on our path, she together with Ki7e Minnie remind us to turn back and the wisdom of Elders and children.

We go back and I drive to the rocks that were set for us. In our rush to get somewhere we can miss the markers along the way. The Coyote stories and other stories told by our Elders are like these markers. They are there for us – but we may not see them and even when we do we may not fully understand their meaning, or drive right past them.

**Ceremony** Today we are doing a water ceremony. Uncle Mike has spoken of this ceremony for some time. It is important.

We arrive at the camp, and the group that has been there for the last two days is excited to show us their baskets they have made. It's inspiring and slightly intimidating as I look at their beautiful work. I have thoughts how can my Sem7e hands ever create a Secwepemc basket? My Indigenous ancestry is not of this territory. My children are from here – but we carry much white blood – what does this mean? There was a point on the journey when we were lost that I feared our presence was the reason we could not find the way – we were not meant to be at the ceremony. This is not so. Only fear speaking. I am invited here and part of the community and this ceremony. I put on a skirt for the ceremony as we do. We? Yes, we – I allow my heart to feel part of.

The ceremony is powerful to witness. I do not write of it here as this is sacred knowledge. The water ceremony is important for more than just the salmon, it is one of the threads as described by George Manuel that is bringing back Secwepemc ontology and methodology.

A monarch butterfly comes and weaves its way in and out of the sacred circle, it opens and closes the ceremony. Each pipe carrier is circled. Janice and I witness this and whisper to each other. They have not seen any butterflies at the camp in the days previous. My daughter hands out the sacred tobacco ties after to each person. Uncle Mike asks her to do this. I receive a blue one. The food is also part of the ceremony. We eat together an amazing feast of food from the land. We all hug and say goodbye to those travelling back down the road.

**Gathering of Knowledge and Sacred Materials** After dinner we begin our lessons of the birch bark. I am going to try and remember as much as I can from these teachings.



*Picking the bark is very important, the birch with the small eyes, and white on the outside. I did not participate in the harvesting of the birch, and thus there is always more to learn*

*The cedar roots are also gathered, the straighter the better. Children are our teachers here with the youngest, Skiewelx, finding the cedar root right in the camp and my twin boys working together to pull them gently up.*

**Soaking, Scraping and Peeling** *After we have gathered the materials we learn about scraping of the birch (with a knife) smoothing it, my son Cohen does this together with Janice. He is so focused, a gift to watch. They talk together as they work and I know he is learning more than how to just scrape the birch.*

*My daughter works with the soaking and peeling of the cedar roots. I am told to imagine it going well, to focus and they will peel easily. This is a huge test for me, but I watch my daughter and she cleans each strip with a knife on her leg as though she has done this many times before.*

**The container, Setting the Pattern** *We then cut out our basket with a pattern. We are told to cut the patterns with the eyes of the birch horizontal and to choose a size. I choose a small one, thinking I am being humble, even though I remember Janice offering me a bigger one. This is a lesson for later. Next we slowly fold up the side pieces, I am shown to place these on the inside of my basket, creating my four corners.*

**Making the Basket & Lessons:** *I begin to sew my basket but quickly realize my first lesson, as small as it was at the top it was hard for my large hands to enter it. There is another lesson here. I remember listening to the words of Dr. Mary Thomas in the Indigenous library at UBC. She said that you need a basket for as big as you are. I think I need to make another one. I decide that this basket feels like my PhD – trying to squeeze my hands into a small space and understand it. I needed to ask for help from Seren, my daughter as only her small hands could sew my corners. With her smaller hands she easily sewed my four corners. A sacred number to the Secwepemc people, I celebrate each corner. I worked on my own and felt such excitement when it would work. One side first then up. Then the other side and up.*

*My second lesson was in the sewing of the cedar on the top of my basket. I started working on the top of my basket too soon, and did not pay attention to the examples of other baskets around me. I tried to sew in an even line, but as a result it cracked.*

*My third lesson was in fixing mistakes. Stuart collects pitch for me and I am instructed how to heat it on the fire in order to fix my basket. After I have done this, I redo my stitches learning to create a pattern that moves around, that allows for support*

*I know what I need to do different now. I understand the way lessons were taught. Gentle questions. Showing me how the awl goes in, do not twist it, as will leave too big a hole.*

**Sacred Teachings:** *Maybe the most beautiful lesson was that offered by Ki7e Minnie. I was taught to sew with the eyes horizontal, and to have the corners on the inside. However, Ki7e Minnie made a beautiful basket with the eyes running vertical, she called it her Water basket, and said she does not like to waste the birch. In the time that I made one basket, she made four, one of them this beautiful Water basket. I cannot stop thinking about Minnie's water basket, perhaps it resonates with the water ceremony. I know I am a researcher (becoming) and when I see her at the Neskonlith Pow wow several weeks later I buy this basket from her. I can identify the beauty, art and the wisdom and teachings within her basket. It is a beautiful basket. It sits now beside mine as they both are my teachers.*

**Ontology: How did I know?** *The basket represents our relationship to the trees, made with Birch and Cedar, gently harvested with spirit.*

**Epistemology: The ways of knowing** *were on the land together in community with the Elders and children – learning together. A walking methodology, and a storytelling and embodied and anchored by place. Intergenerational and involving storytelling and ceremony.*

**Axiology: the values of kinship and of self-discipline, of humility.** *working together and of self on a journey. Each basket is unique and each basket maker is identifiable, however they are also connected and identifiable as Secwepemc baskets.*

**Spirit:** *The butterfly, the Monarch was there to remind us that we all have to walk together. My dreams of the Badger that night and of the three Eagles flying over the city. One flies too low and his beak cracks, or freezes. I catch it when it falls. The mosquitoes were also there to remind us of persistence. They seemed, like colonialism at times, impervious to our ways of keeping them away. I am also reminded of the lesson of how colonialism impacts children as my son Tyee was so hurt by the mosquitoes, his inflammation became allergic and we had to leave the camp in order to get medicine.*

*I learned more in the two days, than in my whole PhD. There are so many teachings but here a few that I can share. Secwepemc epistemology, or our ways of knowing were on the land together in community with the Elders and children, learning together. The ways of learning were walking and sharing on the land. The Secwepemc values were shared together through stories and teachings while we worked together. The butterfly, the Monarch was there to remind us that we all have to walk together, and of the importance of ceremony. Perhaps most important the words of my children:*

*It's great for children to learn about their culture so it can be passed on into the future. (Seren Anthony Clark). We loved pulling the roots, and camping and learning from K7a Minnie. (Cohen and Tyee Anthony Clark).*

## Appendix B:

### Indigenous Ethics in Action

This is a living ethics guide that can be used in community with Elders, knowledge keepers, and other members of a Secwepemc community advisory to ensure that a research project is addressing Secwepemc values, protocols and principles.

The Value of Relationship – *Kweseltnews* We are all family<sup>111</sup>. This value speaks to the importance to the Secwepemc people of kinship and the multiple interrelationships, connections across and between communities, as well as relationships with not only our human family but also land, weather, animals, birds and also to the sacred relationship with all of the natural world. As described by Mary Thomas (2001), *"It was a must, to have a strong family unit. All these adults, young moms, young dads, uncles, big brothers, sisters, grandparents, were on the outside circle. In the middle was the little children and each one of these people on the outside circle had an obligation to teach these little ones in the middle how to become strong, to be part of the strong family circle. And it was a must. And with it, you have a dozen strong family units within a community; you have a strong community"* (80). As applies to an ethical research framework these network of relationships holds us accountable, answering the question who are you, and who do you belong to?

The Value of Individual Strength and Responsibility - *Knucwetsut.s* This value speaks to the importance of self-development in order that the community would utilize your gifts, and that your training or the strength you gained would be of benefit to all in the circle. As described by an Elder interviewed by Celia Haig-Brown (1989): "The methods used to teach skills for everyday living and to instill values and principles were participation and example. Within communities, skills were taught by every member, with Elders playing a very important role. Education for the child began at the time he or she was born. The child was prepared for his role in life whether it be hunter, fisherman, wife, or mother. This meant that each child grew up knowing his place in the system."(33). As it applies to my research framework this means doing the work necessary to be of use in the community and being able to respond, to be response able, to the community.

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<sup>111</sup> My information on the values is compiled from Elder Mary Thomas, 2001, Billy, 2009; Ignace, 2008 and Michel, 2012. For an excellent resource see the Chief Atahm website [chiefatahm.com](http://chiefatahm.com)

The Value of Knowing Your Gifts – Etsxe. This value speaks to the importance of ceremony and connection to the spiritual world. The Secwepemc approach to childrearing demonstrates the attention to identifying and supporting the gifts of children through ceremony, prayer, song, dance, sweats and personal training. Secwepemc activist and educator Janice Billy (2009) in her important doctoral thesis, *Back from the Brink: Decolonizing through the Restoration of Secwepemc Language, Culture, and Identity* describes how one of the important ways to transmit values was through the traditional training at puberty in the ceremonies, traditions and knowledge required. This value in my research speaks to the importance of ‘revealed knowledge’ (Brandt-Henderson, 2002) as offered through relationship with the land, Secwepemculecw, and through dreams, ceremony and spirit.

The value of sharing – Knucwentwe’cw & the value of Humility Qwegestin. These two values together are about how I will share back what I have learned through the research, and of my own humility and gratitude for life and my place in it. A research model based on values is essential. As Mary Thomas (2001) responded to the question, “Why should we be digging in the past?” I feel it’s very important to take some of these values and put it in our studies today, in order to put things in their right perspective” (23). Thus the values in my research framework will ensure that things are “put in their right perspective”.

The Value of Renewal – Mellelc. This value speaks to the importance of taking care of oneself and of balance. Play, humour, and celebration are all examples of this important value. I would argue that this important value is essential in any research framework, yet discussions of balance, play, humor and renewal are absent from most research methodologies and ethical guidelines.

<b>PRINCIPLE/Value</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>PROJECT RESPONSE</b>
<b>Determining groups own research needs and priorities</b>	<i>Has the community in its diversity identified and determined the development and needs of this project? Does the project have an intergenerational advisory committee?</i>	

	<i>Who wants this research to occur? Why?</i>	
	<i>Who will benefit from it?</i>	
<b>Indigenous sovereignty</b>	<i>How are cultural values, perceptions and expectations of the Secwepemc Nation included to respect the principles of Indigenous sovereignty? Have you sought permission from the Nation? Individual Bands and communities? How are urban Secwepemc voices included? Consulted?</i>	
<b>Intergenerational Leadership and Learning</b>	<i>Are Elders, youth and community members given leadership roles in the project?</i>	
	<i>How are youth and Elders supported in taking leadership positions in the project?</i>	
	<i>To what extent are community members involved in decision making about the research?</i>	
	<i>Are community members considered key stakeholders during evaluation of the project?</i>	
<b>The value of sharing – Knucwentwe'cw &amp; Collective Responsibility Sharing Back</b>	<i>Has our project created working partnerships with members of the community including elders?</i>	
	<i>How is the research giving back and sharing with the communities?</i>	

<b>The Value of Relationship –We are all family- Kw’selkten-e’ws, Kinship and Community</b>	<i>How do we/ foster relational accountability and kinship within the project? Do individuals feel they can approach the project?</i>	
	<i>Do community members have voluntary participation in the research project?</i>	
	<i>How is an Indigenous perspective centered in our strategies for accessibility for community members across the lifespan?</i>	
	<i>Do our research practices create barriers to accessing our project?</i>	
	<i>How do we people know about our research project? Are there any gaps in our communication?</i>	
	<i>Are we aware of all the Indigenous communities in our area? How are we engaging with them in an accessible manner?</i>	
	<i>How does the project community members feel welcome?</i>	
	<i>How is training and mentoring built into the project to build opportunities for everyone to participate?</i>	
<b>Secwepemc specific research processes and methodologies</b>		
	<i>Do we conduct our research project in a manner that addresses the specific cultural needs of the diverse Secwepemc communities?</i>	

<b>Red Intersectionality</b>	<i>Is there inclusion of children, youth and Two-Spirit peoples, as knowledge holders alongside Elders and other intersectional voices in the community?</i>	
	<i>How do we address racism, sexism and the intersection of others forms of colonialism in our research project?</i>	
	<i>Does our project honour the relationships that participants already have within their peer groups, families, and communities?</i>	
	<i>How do we deal with conflict between individuals involved in the project?</i>	
<b>Protecting Indigenous Knowledge</b>	<i>Has the Secwepemc bands and communities had the opportunity to organize what indigenous knowledge is to be shared, and in what format the knowledge will be shared, used, and stored?</i>	
	<i>How is the research meaningful to diverse community members?</i>	
	<i>Has the meaning of “informed consent” for sharing knowledge been determined by the Secwepemc communities?</i>	
	<i>Is consent built as a process rather than an event, in order that participants can leave the research if deciding to do so?</i>	



	<i>Is the research led within Secwepemc communities?</i>	
	<i>Are participants involved in all aspects of the project?</i>	
<b>The Value of Knowing Your Gifts – Etsxe.</b>	<i>Does the research project include ceremony, spirit, dreaming, and other practices as meaning making? How are the gifts that everyone brings to the research recognized and supported?</i>	
<b>The Value of Renewal – Mellelc.</b>	<i>What processes and practices of community wellness and political self-care are included for participants? For advisory members? For researchers?</i>	
<b>Knucwetsut.s The value of Humility Qweqestin Humility, and Self-Reflexive Practice</b>	<i>Does the project allow for continued reflection, evaluation and critique of ourselves as community researchers?</i>	
	<i>Have individual members of the research team answered the questions – why am I doing this research? How do I benefit in this research? What are my trespasses and privileges, if any here?</i>	

## Appendix C:

### Healers' Biographies:

#### **Anonymous Secwepemc healer.**

I offer here the poem I wrote for this healer after our interview.  
I invoke the spirit of our interview  
You name your nervousness, I name my gratitude  
you are holding your symbol of resistance  
Indigenous girl's art in your hands  
A tree created by a network, a circle of girls' hands  
Knowing made visible with each girls hand each branch of the tree  
Speaking wisdom to our younger selves we weave this knowing together  
"even the brush strokes, one side of the tree is different than the other  
because two different girls did each side  
Their advice to their younger selves also speaks to us now  
Smile often  
Life goes on  
Love who you want to  
Learn from your mistakes  
Embrace.  
Knowledge in your basket from your life  
In your story colonial resistance, strength, decolonial love and hope  
"no one cares more about your community than you".

#### **Barb Dubois Paynter, Metis**

Barb is proud of her Aboriginal heritage. Barb has a Master's degree in Social Work and has worked with children and youth over 25 years in Ontario and BC. Barb has worked specifically with Aboriginal children and youth over 8 years in the Kamloops area. Barb has facilitated Aboriginal Girls Groups in schools in both Kamloops and Merritt. Barb has two daughters that she describes as "amazing young women". Barb's passions are music and theatre and spending time at the beach.

### **Jann Derrick, Mohawk ancestry**

Jann trained first as a teacher then as a Counselling Psychologist with a specialty in Relationship and Family Therapy. She is a Registered Family Therapist and a member of the Canadian Psychological Association as well as a Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor with the Canadian Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Jann is of Mohawk heritage. She is the mother of three children and the Dotah/grandmother of nine.

She has been in practice for over 30 years in Vancouver and the British Columbia Interior. Jann has taught in all parts of Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia on topics pertaining to relationships, Indigenous Historical Trauma, Lateral Violence, Survivorship and Wellness, and two worldviews ~ “*The Box and the Circle*”. She continues to serve within Indigenous communities who are reclaiming traditional roles with children and youth, and healthy relationships.

She did pioneering therapy work with residential school survivors in Lytton, B.C. in the 1980's and was part of the first residential school court case in Canada. Jann was the clinical supervisor at Round Lake Treatment Centre where she also trained Drug and Alcohol counsellors, and provided therapy in the pioneering Trauma Recovery Program for Aboriginal trauma. In 1998 she facilitated a national Aboriginal Focus Group that created a Code of Ethics for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

She has published professionally on *The Box and the Circle* and *Aboriginal Family Systems*, as well as contributing to books such as *The Dispossessed* by Geoffrey York, *Voices of Colour – First Person Accounts of Ethnic Minority Therapists* ed. Rastogi and Wieling, and *Multicultural Couple Therapy* ed. Rastogi and Thomas. Her recent research publication is *Kahwà:tsire: Indigenous Families in a Family Therapy Practice with the Indigenous Worldview as the Foundation*, June 2017.

She has served as a director on the Board of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. She was part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, and currently advises the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Commission, as well as Strategic Priorities of the Ministry of Children and Family Development in BC. Jann was awarded the John Banmen Award for Outstanding Contribution to Family Therapy in B.C. in 2003.

**Marilee Draney, Nlkapamux Nation**

My name is Marilee Draney, I am of First Nations ancestry and a member of the Cooks Ferry Indian Band of the Nlkapamux Nation. I am of Thompson and Cree decent. I graduated from TRU, formally UCC in 2000 with a Bachelor of Social Work degree, and later in 2006 graduated from the University of Victoria with a Masters of Education degree in counselling psychology. My counselling style is holistic with a strengths, solution focused approach. I enjoy the culture and diversity of the clients I am able to work with, as well, I enjoy providing clients with social, emotional supports, which are sometimes barriers to learning, growing, and achieving success. Currently employed with School District No.73 in the position as Aboriginal Family Counsellor. My goal has been to help individuals and families towards their passion to success. In performing one to one counselling, group facilitation, and connecting children, youth, and families to services in the community, my work has aided students in making the most of their educational experience. My position has helped my clients socially and emotionally, which are sometimes barriers to learning, growing and achieving success.

Education is empowering for individuals, communities, and nations. Education has changed my life and is a strong value I have for my children to achieve one day. Building knowledge opens doors and provides choice and opportunity. I grew up in a small reserve community of Spences Bridge, BC, and even though the town had a population of about 100 people, I always knew I was one day going to leave and receive a university degree. My mother, a UBC graduate and my father the chief of our reserve for many years had instilled the value to be the best you can be, learn and grow, and to one day give back.

I am married and have two beautiful children ages 4 and 8, and am reminded everyday of how precious life is. My children are my teachers and every choice I make in life is the impact on my children and family. I have a great support system and value family and friends. In my spare time I enjoy playing hockey, camping, mountain biking. As a family we enjoy hiking, fishing, camping, and various other hobbies together.

**Lynn Kenoras-Duck Chief, Secwepemc**

Mother of 3 beautiful children, Lynn, her husband Craig and children reside on the Adams Lake reserve. Lynn obtained her Bachelor of Social Work through University of Victoria. Currently, Lynn is employed with School District #73 as an Aboriginal Family Counsellor.

**Corrina L. Lampreaux, Secwepemc**

**Norma Manuel, Secwepemc**

Member of Adams Lake Indian Band, she comes from a diverse background, blending traditional way of life with Western influences. Her main purpose in life has been caring for children. She opened the first Nursery School and daycare at ALIB. While employed at Round Lake Treatment Center she obtained her Master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Presently Norma is finishing her term as Band Councillor for Adams Lake Band.

**Sharnelle Matthew, Secwepemc**

My name is Sharnelle Matthew and I am an Aboriginal women of the Simpcw First Nation and I am a Mental Health Clinician for six Secwepemc Communities. I received my Bachelor of Social Work from Thompson Rivers University and my Masters of Social Work from University of British Columbia. My primary focus of practice for the last 18 years is working with Aboriginal peoples, families and communities I have a strong commitment with working with Aboriginal families. I promote a safe and positive environment with the people I work with and I love building strong healthy relationships with children, youth, parents and families. I have enjoyed the journey in learning and the opportunities my profession has given me to connect and watch people heal. It has been an honour to be part an integral process in loving self and finding peace in individual's lives as our history of colonization has had such a detrimental effect on Aboriginal peoples'.

**Jeffrey More, Mohawk and settler ally (English and Scottish).**

Jeffrey More is based in Kamloops, BC in the unceded territory of the Secwepemc Nation, his children's nation. Jeffrey is Mohawk and settler ally. He has a degree in psychology from McMaster University, a 2-year post-baccalaureate diploma in art therapy from the Kutenai Art Therapy Institute, and a master of social work (clinical focus) from University of British Columbia Okanagan.

Jeffrey has over 25 years of experience with concentration and training in trauma (primarily complex and intergenerational trauma), grief, substance abuse, attachment, and fostering in Indigenous families. Jeffrey is a registered art therapist with the

Canadian Art Therapy Association and a registered social worker with the BC College of Social Work. Supplementing Indigenous perspectives and approaches, including land-based engagements, Jeffrey uses art therapy, E.M.D.R., and comprehensive verbal counselling in his anti-oppressive, anti-colonial practice. He is a faculty member in the school of social worker and human services at Thompson Rivers University.

**Duanna Johnston-Virgo, Secwepemc**

Duanna is a proud member of T'kemlups Te Secwepemc, located in the Secwepemc Nation. Born and raised in her community she comes from a large family and is happily married to her husband Mark for 20 years. Together they raised three teenagers who are actively involved in many different sports activities. Learning is a constant part of her journey to bring about positive, and innovative changes for all Aboriginal people in the social and health fields. She is a strong advocate for Indigenous people and her passion lies in the work to improve all areas of wellness and substance use determinants.

Duanna is a Play Therapist that incorporates cultural teachings to her practice. Her approach maintains a gentle, non-intrusive, child-friendly tone that builds mutual trust with all that she works with. Play is an activity that children experience their greatest moments of familiarity, confidence and control. Her awareness of cultural safety, sensitivity, empathy and compassion guide her ability to do this work in a way that places children, youth and family as her primary focus.

Duanna has a Bachelor of Social Work from Thompson Rivers University and a Masters of Social Work from The University of Victoria. She has completed all levels of play therapy training from the Canadian Play Therapy Association. She has worked in the areas of Child and Family services, Mental Health/counselling for children, youth and families, as a sessional instructor in Social Work at an Aboriginal post-secondary institution, and has facilitated group-training sessions in mental health. Her most recent position is in a leadership role at an Aboriginal Health Agency. Duanna has an extensive background in expressive therapies and alternative healings with First Nations individuals, families and communities.

**Sharon Todd, Metis-Cree ancestry,**

Sharon Todd is an Indigenous woman of Cree Metis ancestry. Sharon was born into a large Metis family and was taught strong Indigenous values such as respect and acceptance of others. As an Indigenous woman who has experienced many of the

systemic challenges of Indigenous people, Sharon believes in the strength and resilience of people and is honored to be witness to their stories.

Sharon has been a counsellor for 25 years and has had the opportunity to work with many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Sharon is a Registered Social Worker and Registered Clinical Counsellor. She is currently the Clinical Supervisor at the Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Centre. Sharon has a private practice for therapy and consulting. She provides counselling support to Residential School survivors and families. Sharon has a private practice for therapy and consulting. She provides counselling support to Residential School survivors and families. Sharon integrates Trauma-Informed Practice with modalities of Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Narrative, Client-Centred, Solution-Focused and Strength Based therapies.

Sharon is a strong advocate for ending violence against women and girls.

**Tara E. Tribute (-Babcock), Mohawk ancestry,**

Tara is of Mohawk ancestry from the Gibson Reserve. She grew up in Windsor Ontario and began her undergraduate Degree at University of Windsor with a focus in Psychology. After a move to Kamloops, BC in 2001 she completed her BA (major in Psychology) in 2005. Having grown up believing her aboriginal ancestry was somewhat shameful, she began working at the Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Centre (youth worker) and discovered pride and connectedness to her Aboriginal cultural. Tara is also bilingual in French and holds strong French Heritage. She also identifies with British and German decent.

In 2009 Tara began working as an Aboriginal Family Counsellor with School District 73/ Aboriginal Education Council. She completed her Master's in counselling (Behavioural Science) in 2011. She continues to work as a counsellor and advocate from a culturally sensitive approach to Aboriginal families in the South Thompson region of BC. Further, she facilitates 6 Aboriginal Girls Groups and coordinates over 30 of them running yearly, within school district 73.

## Appendix D:

### Interview Guide

1. Please share with me a bit about your worldview and your journey within Indigenous child and youth trauma counselling.
  - a. Where you have come from (looking back) what forms of cultural experience and education have informed your practice? what forms of academic experience and education have informed your work?
  - b. Where you are now (role, practice context) – how have you integrated western and Indigenous counseling approaches? (two-eyed seeing approaches) specific Secwepemc nation approaches?
  - c. Where we are going -what approaches to Indigenous child and youth wellness would you like to see us move toward from a wholistic perspective?
2. Given your experience of working to address violence in Indigenous communities, how would you say you define this work? do you use the word trauma? if so how do you define this? what other words do you use to describe this work in the area of 'violence'? What does the category of 'violence' include for you? Is there a word in your nation for trauma?
3. One of the issues I'm interested in is the relationship between Indigenous people and western approaches to violence through the framing of trauma. What do you see as the benefits and harms of working with trauma and trauma informed practice with Indigenous children and youth through the framing of western trauma?
  - a. Are there any major incidents or issues that you feel have changed the way violence against Indigenous children and youth is understood? what assumptions underlie this framing?
  - b. Could you describe your understanding of how healing work with Secwepemc children and youth was before colonization?
  - c. Could you describe your understanding of how violence work with Secwepemc children and youth is done now, since this issue has gained some attention through the framing of trauma? what has been lost through this framing? How has the framing of the 'problem' changed over time (e.g., historically) or across different places (e.g., geographically)? What future directions do you see ...?
4. Although the issue of trauma and Indigenous people has gained some attention and recognition in recent years, other issues remain silent. What do you see as some of the ways that Indigenous people experience violence, maybe that remain unseen or not talked about? How has the framing of this as trauma contributed to this?
5. What is the impact of policy on the healing of Indigenous children and youth? what are the gaps in policy and practice? what is needed? how do 'race', ethnicity, class, sexuality and other social locations and systems of inequality (racism, colonialism, classism, heterosexism) interact in relation to how this is framed in policy?
6. Thinking of the network of professionals involved in violence against children and youth (MCFD, child and youth mental health, police) do you come up against



- people who have a different definition or understanding of violence than you? (i.e. police, judges, family members, victims, co-workers) how does their understanding impact the children and youth?
7. Thinking about the work that you've done with children and youth who have experienced violence can you tell me about the range of approaches that you utilize? Are there any specific to the Secwepemc nation, or the nation of the child/youth you are working with?
  8. What would you identify as the key components of an Indigenous violence informed approach?
  9. Other than turning to the mental health system for help, how have you seen Indigenous people or communities responding to and resisting violence or empowering themselves in response to violence? acts of resistance? how are these community actions linked to healing for children and youth? (i.e.). Which of these do you think has the biggest impact or the most positive outcomes? how do they centre agency and resistance?
  10. One goal of this research is to look at how different Nations approach healing of children and youth in different ways. Can you provide examples of cases in which you were able to work within or alongside the Nations healing approaches?
  11. Can you describe cases where Indigenous child and youth healing approaches specific to the Secwepemc nation were used to deal with violence instead of, or in addition to, western trauma approaches? What was the impact? Who was involved (types of people, knowledge keepers, traditional medicines etc.)?
  12. If you were making recommendations for changing counseling approaches to best meet the needs of Indigenous children and youth, families and communities what would you recommend?
  13. There are a number of factors which might impact Indigenous children and youth's experience of violence how might interlocking factors such as differences in age, gender, gender-identity, sexual orientation, ability/disability and class impact on their counselling needs? What approaches exist or existed to address this complexity?
  14. What would you consider wise practices in child and youth counseling for "trauma" from an Indigenous perspective and a land-based, nation specific approach? (prompt for strategies, tools, practices, examples)
  15. Can you give me one or two stories or examples of something that worked well, of a wise practice in child and youth counseling to heal violence?
  16. Is there any question I should have asked today but missed?