Becoming Whole:
A Grounded Theory Analysis of Empowerment in Aboriginal Women Leaders And Professionals

Kathryn F. M. Ritchot

A Thesis Submitted to

The Faculty of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Becoming Whole: A Grounded Theory Analysis of Empowerment In Aboriginal Women Leaders And Professionals

BY

Kathryn F. M. Ritchot

A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree

Of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father,

Gustave George Ritchot

Dear Dad,

This thesis was written

in an effort

to bring some of the power

back to our family

that was lost every time the nuns

'whipped' you at 'boarding school'

With all my love

(still miss you)

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All my Relations

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment has been labeled an important route to psychological wellness for the field of Community Psychology (Cowen, 2000). Yet, little research has examined the extent to which Aboriginal people, arguably the most marginalized group in Canada (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 1995; York, 1990), would find empowerment as it is commonly understood to be meaningful. The purpose of this research was to generate an understanding of the meaning, processes, and outcomes of empowerment in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine Métis and First Nations women, resulting in 394 pages of transcripts. The data were generated and analyzed according to grounded theory method (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The results showed that the research participants struggled with the basic psychosocial problem of powerlessness, which took different forms for each research participant. Notably, all research participants had felt the burn of racism and discrimination, and many had suffered other forms of abuse. Nonetheless, they had managed to overcome these and other obstacles to become leaders and professionals. A model, Becoming Whole, was developed which outlines the processes and outcomes grounded in the research participants' experiences of empowerment. It has three main parts: 'The core concepts' and two subprocesses, 'Healing within the community' and 'Healing within the Self'. Empowerment was defined by research participants in a manner consistent with current theoretical perspectives (Rappaport, 1981, 1987;

Zimmerman, 1995; 2000) and with themes developed from the model. Overall, research participants believed that empowerment was meaningful in their lives. Empowerment as experienced by the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals was similar but not identical to empowerment experienced in other groups (Kar, Pascual, & Chickering; 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan, Waugh, and Espeland; 1984; Shields, 1995) and was consistent with empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 1995; 2000). The results are discussed in terms of implications for empowerment theory, intervention, and clinical practice with Aboriginal women and with other marginalized groups.

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Research Question

There is a long held belief in North American society that all citizens have certain inalienable rights. These include equality, freedom, and the right to pursue happiness (Hess, 1984; Prilletensky, 1990). Indeed, although the actualization of these ideals has not been entirely successful in North American society (Prilleltensky, 1990), democracy itself is based on citizens being empowered enough to participate in choices regarding their welfare (Swift, 1984). Empowerment is, therefore, an important societal value. It is also important theoretically for community psychology because it is understood as a social movement (Rappaport, 1981) and is concerned with the betterment of psychological wellness in those it intends to assist. With empowerment labeled one of the routes to psychological wellness (Cowen, 2000), it has the potential to play a role in improving the psychological well being of persons from disadvantaged groups.

This thesis explores empowerment, in depth, as it is understood within community psychology. The theoretical definition of empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998) used for this thesis posits that empowerment is multidimensional, multi-leveled, and includes both processes and outcomes. Moreover, it is dynamic, context-sensitive, and will take different forms for different people. This makes developing a universal measurement of empowerment an unrealistic goal. Instead, empowerment is best understood by studying it within

different contexts and with different populations (Perkins, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). Yet, research to date on empowerment and disadvantaged groups, for example, some ethnic minorities (Snowden, Martinez, & Morris, 2000) and women (Swift, Bond, & Serrano-Garcia, 2000), is limited.

Aboriginal women in Canada, as a group, have been largely ignored in research conducted on empowerment. This is unfortunate because Aboriginal people are, arguably, the most disadvantaged group in Canada (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 1995; York, 1990). Both the residential school (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003) and reserve systems (York, 1990) have had a devastating and lasting impact on Aboriginal people. Psychological wellness has been largely ignored for Aboriginal peoples and the high rates of alcoholism, unemployment, suicide, and murders in this population (York, 1990) demonstrate the need for a means to increase psychological wellness. Women's issues, specifically violence against women including rape, incest, sexual harassment, woman battering, and the feminization of poverty (Swift, Bond, and Serrano-Garcia, 2000) make Aboriginal women doubly disadvantaged. Given that empowerment has been labeled a route to psychological wellness, determining the extent to which Aboriginal women would consider it helpful seems imperative. This thesis sought to develop an understanding of the extent to which, and in what ways, empowerment holds meaning for Aboriginal women leaders and professionals.

Developing an understanding about the extent to which empowerment fits for this population is a worthy goal because if empowerment is a potential route to psychological wellness. Therefore, if it does have significant meaning for Aboriginal people, learning about the specifics of empowerment for that group may provide a road map for future research, intervention, and clinical practices. A literature review conducted on empowerment studies with other marginalized groups showed that empowerment tended to occur in persons who were leaders (Kieffer, 1984), involved in empowerment movements (Kar, et. al., 1999; O'Sullivan et al.), or who were primarily professionals (Shields, 1995). Thus, a group of leaders and professionals was chosen because it was believed that they would be likely to have lessons to teach about empowerment. However, no assumptions were made regarding whether the research participants would view themselves as empowered, how they might define empowerment, or what they might view as empowering processes and outcomes. Rather, these questions were all aspects of the research question.

The remainder of this Introduction provides first, an overview of, and theoretical definition of, empowerment. Next a literature review highlights key research conducted with populations similar to Aboriginal women. Then, a critical analysis of the empowerment literature is provided. The Introduction also offers background information regarding Aboriginal people in Canada, a discussion of potentially relevant Aboriginal ethics, and a section about cultural sensitivity and

conducting research with Aboriginal persons. This section ends with a summary of the research question.

Overview of Empowerment

Beliefs congruent with the empowerment perspective have been present in the community psychology literature for some time (Sarason, 1972). However, it was Rappaport who brought empowerment into focus as a guiding metaphor (Rappaport, 1981, 1984) and the primary phenomenon of interest for community psychology (Rappaport, 1981, 1987). Empowerment has since been dubbed an agenda (Rappaport, 1990), a new approach for helping professionals (Zimmerman, 1995), and a set of values (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). In general, Zimmerman's empowerment values or his empowerment approach in community psychology (1995) refer to the same basic concept as Rappaport's (1981, 1984, 1987) terms for empowerment, including "world view", "phenomena of interest", and "metaphor". Empowerment has become a dominant theory (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998) in community psychology. Rappaport's early writing on empowerment (1981, 1984, 1987) appeared to be a self-conscious attempt to shift community psychology's world view to empowerment and away from paternalism, the old world view in his opinion.

Paternalism has been influential in all aspects of Western society for centuries. It is not surprising, therefore, that until relatively recently, it also shaped approaches to human services delivery (Swift, 1984). Paternalism refers to

administering or behaving in a fatherly manner towards others, such as one's colleagues or underlings (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990). It includes limiting independence, freedom, and accountability by imposing well-intended regulations (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1990). Obviously, this teaches dependency, not autonomy. Experts are believed best able to control material and specialized resources and to judge how they will be used. The persons or groups at the receiving end of assistance are not asked about their perceptions or beliefs regarding their needs. Although such persons, for example, indigenous populations of third world countries, disadvantaged American citizens (Swift, 1984), or Aboriginal people in Canada have often resisted (sometimes forcibly) attempts by experts to change their lives, paternalism was a driving force in social policy for some time.

Empowerment differs from paternalism (Swift, 1984) because it offers new perspectives (Rappaport, 1987) including, (a) a shift in the helper/client relationship; (b) an emphasis on mutual and self-help models; (c) a model of helping resources being synergistic; and (d) a purposeful effort to stop victim-blaming; (e) a shift in language in order to effectively shift attitudes and approaches to helping. Each of these will be discussed.

The empowerment world view requires that "helpers" no longer play the role of "all-knowing experts," deciding what is best for those who are disempowered. Instead, helping professionals work as collaborators by challenging persons to access their own strengths and to themselves as valuable resources (Rappaport, 1987).

Empowerment concentrates on strengths, competencies, celebration, and hope, rather than focusing on problems one may be encountering (Berkowitz & Wolff, 1996). Both the helper and helpee are open to grow from their experience (Perkins, 1995; Rappaport, 1990). Those who promote empowerment are aware of the benefits and possibilities of mutual-help and self-help groups (Cowen, 1991; Rappaport, 1985). This requires that interventions be enacted with people, not to people or for people (Rappaport, 1985). The empowerment perspective does not assume that taking control over one's life requires complete independence. Rather, persons learn to both provide and accept help.

Related to the mutual help approach alluded to above is the belief that empowerment is synergistic (Katz, 1984). Synergy occurs when phenomena, including people, relate to each other in a harmonious way and maximize each other's potential. For example, Katz reported that the !Kung people engage regularly in a healing ritual, in which healing energy is shared in a dance. This healing resource is renewable and valuable. This synergistic approach contrasts with the scarcity model, which posits that both human and material resources are scarce (Katz, 1984), which in turn increases the value of resources. Although material resources may in reality be scarce within the synergy paradigm, human resources are renewable. Empowerment emphasized that one's ability to heal need not belong solely to 'experts' but can often be activated within one's self and peers.

Another aspect of the empowerment world view is a purposeful effort to stop victim-blaming (Ryan, 1976), which refers to the tendency to look at social problems experienced by disadvantaged groups as their own fault. This occurs by seeing the victim as different from the norm, a stranger. The essence of victim blaming is constituted as follows: (a) disadvantaged people are different in one or more identifiable ways; (b) these differences are the cause of their disadvantaged status; (c) because they caused their own problems, they are inferior and helping them is voluntary, not morally required; (d) society can help them or not as it sees fit. Empowerment goals remind community psychologists not to blame victims for their situations and "for their own victimization" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 132). Rather than focusing on intrapsychic explanations for individuals' problems in living (Rappaport, 1981), which can be a subtle form of blaming people (Heenan & Seu, 1998), the reasons for individuals' 'problems in living' are situated within inequitable systems where the problems originate (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Friere, 2000).

Empowerment approaches require a different language of healing, which focuses on people accepting themselves and honoring their own power to help themselves (Rappaport, 1985). This new language characterizes augmenting wellness rather than mending problems (Zimmerman, 2000). Although empowerment provides a more positive, wellness-focused approach to human service delivery, it has some limitations. These are described later in this introduction. Further, whereas empowerment began as a new way of conceptualizing

the way community psychologists work (Rappaport, 1981), it needed to be understood theoretically. This is described in the next section.

Empowerment Theory

The development of empowerment as a theory was influenced by Rappaport (1987) and Prilletensky (1994). Zimmerman and colleagues (e.g., Zimmerman, 1990, 1995; Zimmerman & Warshausky, 1998) have most recently developed an integrated theoretical model of empowerment. The theory is complex because it assumes that empowerment is contextually determined and that no single model can fully capture the meaning of empowerment for all people in all circumstances. Instead, different groups or populations require a slightly different model of empowerment. This thesis provided an opportunity to develop a model specific to one group, Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. Zimmerman's theoretical approach (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998) was used as the underpinning of empowerment for this study.

Zimmerman's (2000) model posits both empowerment processes and outcomes. Empowerment processes are defined as the means by which people, organizations, and communities gain command over those issues that concern them. Individuals develop a consciousness about their environment and learn how to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Empowerment processes can include developing knowledge about how to

gain access to resources, promoting education and collective learning, as well as having the opportunity to influence one's environment.

Empowerment outcomes have been defined as the products or consequences of empowerment processes (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Empowerment outcomes refer to control, consciousness, and being involved. The empowerment approach has the individual, group, or community choose their own goals. Success in terms of empowerment outcomes is measured by the extent to which the goals chosen by the intended recipient, not goals which have been imposed by a helping professional or by other outside influences, are met.

Empowerment is generally described as having three levels of analysis. The first level is the individual, referred to as psychological empowerment (PE) (Zimmerman, 1990, 1995). The second is organizational empowerment (OE) (Foster-Fishman et al. 1998; Strawn, 1994). The third is community empowerment (CE) (Kar, Pascal, & Chickering, 1999; Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Table 1, reprinted from Zimmerman (2000, p. 47), illustrates the differences between processes and outcomes across these levels.

Table 1
Empowerment Processes and Outcomes by Levels of Analysis

Level of Analysis	Process ("empowering")	Outcome ("empowered")
Individual	Learning decision-making skills Managing resources Working with others	Sense of control Critical awareness Participatory behaviors
Organizational	Opportunities to participate in decision-making Shared responsibilities Shared leadership	Effectively compete for resources Networking with other organizations Policy influence
Community	Access to resources Open government structure Tolerance for diversity	Organizational coalitions Pluralistic leadership Residents' participatory skills

Note: Table 1 is from "Empowerment theory: Psychological, organizational, and community levels of analysis" by M. A. Zimmerman, 2000, in Handbook of Community Psychology (p. 47), edited by J. Rappaport and E. Seidman, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. Copyright 2000 by Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. Reprinted with permission from M. A. Zimmerman, 2001.

Empowerment Theory: Relationships Among Three Levels of Analysis

The majority of psychological research to date has focused on the study of the individual (Rappaport, et al., 1992). This can be problematic if it is used to blame individuals (Heenan & Seu, 1998) in situations where the problem resides within inequitable systems (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Berkowitz, Zimmerman, & Wolff, 1996; Friere, 2000). Empowerment, alternatively, as a multilevel construct, is not limited to individual competencies. Rather, it is one way of examining interrelationships between the individual, one or more organizations, and the community, and of making organizations and the community the focus of study and intervention. Although most empowerment researchers tend to focus on one or two levels of analysis in a particular study, the empowerment orientation takes into account the nesting of the individual within organizations and the community (Swift & Levin, p. 79). Thus, the individual must be viewed within the context of her or his environment.

Organizational Empowerment (OE)

Zimmerman (2000)'s conceptualization of OE posits two distinct aspects; empowering and empowered organizations, but any given organization may be both. Table 1 shows empowering processes for empowering organizations. Empowering organizations provide the chance for people to exert influence over their lives and an opportunity for individuals to develop their skills and to gain a greater sense of mastery and control. Organizations that provide a supportive atmosphere where

persons can share responsibilities are more empowering than those with a hierarchal structure (Zimmerman, 2000). There is considerable evidence supporting this assertion (Foster-Fishman, Salem, Chibnall, Legler, & Yapchai, 1998; Kar, Pascual, & Chickering, 1999; Maton & Rapaport, 1984; Maton & Salem, 1995; Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, & Chavis, 1990; Strawn, 1994).

Empowered organizations, on the other hand, successfully develop policies and influence policy decisions (Zimmerman, 2000). [See Table 1.] The focus with these organizations is on competing, meeting goals, and being effective. An empowered organization also plays a key role in decision-making processes beyond their organization. An empowered organization will not necessarily be empowering to all those who are connected with it and, arguably, if it is extremely competitive may be disempowering if members are used as pawns to further the organization at a personal cost to the individuals involved.

Community Empowerment (CE)

Community empowerment is not simply the aggregate of many empowered individuals (Zimmerman, 2000). Instead a community must have reciprocal and communicative relationships among the individuals. It focuses on improving the community and using empowerment values (Zimmerman, 2000). Table 1 shows other key attributes. The well-being of the whole is an important focus for an empowered community. Different constituents work together interdependently towards goals. It has settings for recreational activities and wherein persons can

become involved, such as in neighborhood crime prevention groups. An empowered community has opportunities for individuals to have a voice in its administration (Zimmerman, 2000). Criticisms of the empowerment approach and theory are provided after the literature review.

Psychological Empowerment (PE)

PE has three underlying assumptions (Zimmerman, 2000). Table 2 provides an overview of these assumptions. PE will take different forms for different people (Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990,1995) and within-person variables will influence the form it will take. This accounts for empowerment being a constantly evolving construct. The second assumption is similar to the first, in that both relate to contextual determinism (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 586). While the first assumption focuses on the within-person variables, the second assumption focuses on the extra-personal context in which the person is experiencing PE. Thus, empowerment will appear different in different contexts (Zimmerman, 1995). The third assumption is that empowerment is dynamic and is expected to increase or decrease over time (Zimmerman, 1995). This distinguishes it from a static personality trait. An individual may develop a sense of empowerment with certain experiences and feel less empowered with others. This dynamism is an integral reason for community psychology's interest in empowerment because community psychology envisions itself in part as a social movement (Rappaport, 1981) and, thus, change must be a possibility within its theory of choice.

Table 2
Psychological Empowerment has Three Underlying Assumptions

Within-person context	Extra-personal context	Dynamic
PE takes different forms for different persons	PE will take different forms in different contexts	PE will fluctuate over time
• age • ethnicity • sexual being • gender • handicaps	• home • occupation • recreation • family situation • country	• is not static • will increase or decrease with experiences

PE has been divided into three components, namely the intrapsychic, the interactional, and the behavioral. These components are linked and interrelated and will be discussed in some depth.

Intrapersonal PE. This component refers to the individual's thoughts about self. Intrapersonal PE includes such elements as perceived control, self-efficacy, motivation to control, perceived competence, and mastery (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 588). This aspect of PE is the basic internal element that provides the permission to act and assert influence within their world.

Interactional PE. This refers to the understanding persons have of 'causal agents' (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 588) and a critical awareness of one's environment. Critical awareness means that one understands how to get, use, and manage the resources required to achieve one's goals. It indicates environmental mastery (Zimmerman, 1995), including developing skills and being able to transfer skills across contexts. Skill acquisition gives persons greater control over events and allows them to become better advocates for themselves. This component of PE is the interface between one's ability to act and the action taken (or behavioral component). In order to successfully take action in the world, knowledge and skills must be in place.

Behavioral PE. This refers to taking action to activate change (Zimmerman, 1995) and may include behaviors designed to manage stress (Zimmerman). The theory posits that when the three components of PE (intrapersonal, interactional, and

behavioral) are all present, persons are more likely to believe in their ability to influence a situation, to understand the situation, and to behave in a way which suggests mastery (Zimmerman).

PE as the Focus For the Present Research

A large proportion of empowerment research has used PE as the chosen level of analysis (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). However, PE as the primary focus to some extent recapitulates the problem that mainstream psychology has of focusing on the individual while ignoring the social context and influences. It has been recommended that psychologists look beyond intrapsychic explanations for behavior (Perkins, 1995). If the attention of the current research were on the Euro-North American majority, as most of the 3600 research articles to date on empowerment have been, a shift to the organizational and community levels would be desirable because there is already a base of research on PE with this group. However, with Aboriginal women, virtually no research exists. Therefore, research regarding empowerment and perceptions of empowerment must begin at the basic level of PE (Zimmerman, et al., 1992). Therefore, the present research sought to better understand empowerment in Aboriginal women by exploring PE in this group.

Literature Review

This literature review highlights research conducted on each level of analysis: community, psychological, and organizational empowerment with groups similar to Aboriginal women on one or more dimension. Included first is a study of community

empowerment with American Yavapai Indians (O'Sullivan, Waugh and Espeland, 1984). Second, Kieffer (1984) examined psychological empowerment in a group of grassroots leaders who came from poverty and powerlessness. Third, Shields' (1995) also examined psycholgical empowerment. Her group comprised primarily Euro-American women who self-identified with empowerment; Last, a meta-analysis by Kar, Pascual and Chickering (1999) examined community and organizational empowerment. In that their meta-analysis examined empowerment movements (community empowerment) conducted by 'powerless women'. These movements eventually consolidated and became organizations, for example, COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics) began as an empowerment movement and developed into an organization for sex worker's rights, begun in 1973. Since then, local chapters have been created in most major cities. It also helped form the National Task Force on Prostitution. The above studies have been summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Comparison of Four Key Studies Conducted with Marginalized Groups

Study & Analysis Level	Method	Group Characteristics	Findings about Empowerment
O'Sullivan et al. (1984) - Community	Qualitative - researchers were external observers	Yavapai Indians in Arizona • Poor • Aboriginal	Yavapai tribe • Was to be forced to relocate due to the proposed Orme dam in Arizona. • Showed stress equal to death of loved one. • Received media attention and public support. • Were successful at keeping their land. • "We beat the White man at his own Game." • Received increased respect from others. This victory brought greater cohesion to the tribe and an interest in their own culture, history, language.
Kieffer (1984) Individual	Qualitative - researcher/ participant collaborator - interview data	10 women and 5 men grassroots leaders who Kieffer described as having been transformed from once 'helpless victims' who felt powerless	Kieffer developed a four stage linear developmental model of empowerment • Stage 1 Era of Entry: sense of integrity was violated by tangible and direct threats to participants' interests, provoking a response. • Stage 2 Era of Advancement: social and political bonds were cultivated with mentor and peer relations, fostering action. • Stage 3 Era of Incorporation: Organizing, leadership, and survival skills development (approx 1 year) Women find resolving role conflicts and social strains difficult. • Stage 4 Era of Commitment: Bring new integrated sense of themselves as leaders and new skills into day-to-day lives

Table 3 (continued)

Study & Analysis Level	Method	Group Characteristics	Findings about Empowerment
Shields (1995) Individual	Qualitative - interviews - small group meetings	15 primarily Euro-American women (one African-American women) • self-described as empowered • varied re socio-economic origins	Shields described 3 basic themes in the research participants having undergone a transformation from dis-empowered to empowered • 1 Internal sense of self: the women had changed their identity in some way, developed self-value, self-acceptance, and learned to trust themselves. • 2 Motivation to Action: the women developed a voice, learned to take positive risks, and developed a sense of competence, including learning skills and abilities • 3 Connectedness: the women felt more whole and integrated, more committed to themselves, and their communities; more interested in both women's and general history. Developed skills.
Kar et al. (1999) Organization	Meta-analysis of 40 successful empowerment movements by Women and Mothers	International women's movements • all from disenfranchised groups • many from poor	Key empowerment methods were identified that made up the acronym: EMPOWER • Empowerment education and training. • Media use, support, and advocacy. • Public participation, including education. • Organizing associations. • Work training and micro-enterprise. • Enabling services and support. • Rights protection and promotion.

Table 3 (continued)

Study & Analysis Level	Method	Group characteristics	Findings about Empowerment
Kar et al. (1999) Organization			Empowerment was the process and improved quality of life was the outcome Organized movement regardless of success, empowered those persons who participated. An empowerment model was developed with four stages • Stage 1 Motivation and Innovation: persons felt dissatisfied with situation and wanted change. Support from others was provided. • Stage 2 Initial Collective Action: a critical mass of supported the innovators and action was taken to resolve problem. • Stage 3 Organized Movement: Effects from earlier action were consolidated. Plans were made to develop an organization to carry on the work. • Stage 4 Institutionalization: Successful groups took 2 pronged approach (a) maintained momentum and (b) established an organization to continue the work "Disenfranchised and deprived women and mothers can and do lead successful social action movements that are self-empowering and significantly enhance the quality of life of their families and communities" (Kar et al., 1999, p. 1437)

Community empowerment was examined in the Yavapai, a tribe of American Indians (O'Sullivan et al.,1984) who were being threatened with relocation. They gained power by taking advantage of certain aspects of the situation and empowering themselves. Both a strength and a limitation of this research was the lack of hands-on involvement of the researchers. The strength is that this distance provided them with a measure of objectivity often absent with insiders. However, the O'Sullivan et al. stated that it limited their ability to learn all the empowerment strategies used from an insider's perspective. Another strength of this research is that it highlighted the transformation of the Yavapai tribe, who had been under extreme stress, from powerlessness to empowerment. The Yavapai made use of the media in order to bring others on side. An important offshoot of the Yavapai's success was a renewed interest within the tribe about their own cultural identity and a desire to learn more about their history, culture, and language.

In Kieffer's (1984) study, the researcher intentionally worked in collaboration with his participants and conducted interviews with them (see Table 3). A key strength of his approach was the development of a four-stage developmental model of empowerment, which outlines important empowerment themes in the participants' transformation from 'helpless victim' to empowered grassroots leaders. A limitation was that Kieffer presented the findings from both female and male grassroots leaders together. However, he reported one gender difference, that the women leaders had more difficulty than the men with resolving role conflict and social strains

that were created by community involvement. This may have been the only gender difference. However, it would have enhanced our understanding of each gender as grassroots leaders if the data from each gender had been analyzed separately, in order to determine whether any other gender differences occurred in their transformation from poor and powerless to empowered leader.

Empowerment in the disadvantaged gender (i.e., women) is a topic with surprisingly little research devoted to it (Swift, Bond, and Serrano-Garcia, 2000). A qualitative study was conducted by Shields (1995) on individual empowerment in a group of primarily Euro-American women (see Table 3) who defined themselves as empowered. A key strength of this study was the development of three empowerment themes, as outlined in the table. However, a limitation was that Shields's themes were not sufficiently distinct entities. For example, her first theme included 'self-liking' and her third theme included 'self-love.' Another example of this limitation is Shields's inclusion of development of a voice as part of the second theme and development of communication skills as part of the third theme. Shields does not clarify why overlap occurs in her themes and it seemed that further refinement was needed.

Shields (1995) chose not to impose a definition of empowerment onto her participants as this would have been incongruent with empowerment values. Instead, she conducted interviews with self-described empowered women who responded to a flyer asking for women who were empowered to participate in a study.

This may be considered a strength because Shields did not want to impose her own expectations and it is consistent with empowerment values. However, it may also be considered a limitation because it is unclear whether Shields's themes are, indeed, empowerment. It is unclear whether individuals who call themselves empowered and respond to an ad about empowerment would be the same or different from what the theoretical definition of empowerment would consider empowerment. That is, it is possible that persons who call themselves empowered may be responding to internal, intrapersonal PE, or may call themselves empowered because they have high self esteem. Thus, missing the interactional or behavioral aspects of PE.

Another major criticism of Shields' (1995) analysis is that she did not describe how her themes work together. This could have taken the form of model development or a more thorough description of how the elements from the themes interacted, influenced each other, or were distinct from each other. Further, it would have been helpful to know whether the one Afro-American women in the group had any different approaches or experiences or whether she experienced empowerment in exactly the same way as the rest of the research participants. Shields seemed to have proceeded from the assumption that all women's empowerment experiences, regardless of cultural or racial background, would be alike. Given that Afro-American women have had the historical context of slavery and its sequelae, it would have added a greater degree of confidence in her findings if she would have discussed how culture and race may influence empowerment. This tendency to expect that all

women's experiences are similar and to ignore or deny that differences may exist for women from different cultural or racial groups trivializes the importance of culture and race in one's experiences (Brownmiller, 1999).

The Kar et al. (1999) meta-analysis of empowerment strategies led by 'powerless' women and mothers from both industrialized and less industrialized countries is an extremely thorough and comprehensive piece of work (see Table 3 for summary). Kar et al. (1999) define empowerment, theoretically, as a process and improved quality of life (QOL) as the outcome when empowerment processes are in place. They state that the relation is synergic and dynamic. This differs from Zimmerman's theoretical model, which proposes both empowerment processes and outcomes (2000). Kar et al. provided tables illustrating main features of all the studies analyzed and found seven frequently used methods used to empower. Although each of these methods were used by different groups, assorted combinations of the methods were used. That is, no one empowerment method was effective for every group. Kar et al.'s focus was on empowerment movements but more work is still left to be done to learn about Empowerment and Aboriginal women.

When comparing across these four key studies, an interesting similarity among Kar et al.'s (1999), O'Sullivan et al.'s (1984), and Kieffer's (1984) participants is that they all had clear change goals. That is, individuals in three of the four studies were focused on making significant changes in their social or political environment. Kieffer's (1984) and Kar et al.'s (1999) empowerment findings are

quite similar, although Kieffer examined individuals and Kar et al. examined empowerment movements. Kar et al.'s model maps onto Kieffer's model, as follows. Both had a first stage characterized by a 'motivation' or 'catalyst' to action in which participants were unhappy with their situation and took action to change it. Both Kar et al.'s and Kieffer's second phases feature the importance of the participants' relationship to helpful others in their empowerment process. That is, in both studies, external sources of support are important. This is also true of the O'Sullivan et al. (1984) results, which showed that outside support furthered their goals.

It is at the third phase that the two models diverge, given their level of analysis. Kar et al. (1999) focused on the "organized movement of the group," while Kieffer (1984) focused on individuals honing their skills. The fourth phase for Kar and colleagues is the "institutionalization" of the movement, focusing on maintaining momentum and establishing a stable organization. This is similar to Kieffer's last stage, in that the individuals stabilize their sense of themselves as empowered.

Three of these studies (Kar et a., 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan, 1984) help provide key elements of empowering processes and outcomes in individuals and groups who have been "helpless victims" of some form of systemic discrimination, but who have managed to rise above this. These key elements are presented in greatest depth in the Kar et al. study of empowerment movements and their seven empowerment methods are provided in Table 3. Although these three studies provide examples of successfully taking on systemic or political issues, most persons

will not take on government systems and be successful. Instead, most individuals meet challenges and goals that are at least somewhat less macroscopic. The average citizen is not likely to take on government policy or make far-reaching social or political changes. Shields's (1995) empowered citizens led more ordinary lives, yet they also found empowerment to be meaningful for them.

These four empowerment studies (Kar, et al. 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan et al. 1984; Shields, 1995), with populations similar on one or more dimension to Aboriginal women, show that disadvantaged and marginalized persons can and do become empowered. Although the research presented in this review has both strengths and limitations, it is clear that empowerment is meaningful and that people from disenfranchised, marginalized groups can gain more power. A major limitation in this literature review is that no research has been done to examine empowerment processes and outcomes, or to determine the extent to which empowerment would hold meaning, for Aboriginal women. An analysis of Aboriginal ethics, which is provided later in this introduction, suggests that there may be ways in which Aboriginal ethics and culture may not fit with the empowerment paradigm. Thus, a basic analysis of the meaning of empowerment and the development of a model that outlines empowerment processes and outcomes for Aboriginal people would add an important piece of knowledge to the research field. Focus turns now to an examination of the major criticisms of empowerment.

Criticisms of Empowerment and Empowerment Research

This section is devoted to exploring criticisms that have been leveled at the empowerment approach, including the theory. Empowerment has been embraced with an almost evangelical fervor by many of the helping professions, growing in popularity in the last 25 years to the extent that it has now become mainstream and ubiquitous (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). However, it has limitations, including ambiguity, its paradoxical nature, the difficulties of implementing empowerment in certain contexts, and the extent to which it may promote individualism. Empowerment theory also has limitations, discussed below.

Ambiguity of Empowerment

Whereas empowerment is seen by community psychologists as a way to enable disadvantaged persons to become better able to govern themselves in a way that is healthy and helpful for them, some constituents such as government agencies have used the idea of empowerment as a reason to 'empower' themselves at the expense of others. For example, Silka and Tip (1994) reported that US federal policy regarding Southeast Asian immigrants has used the rhetoric of having immigrants 'empower' themselves. This translated into a decrease in the financial resources offered to help these immigrants become accustomed to their new setting. This ambiguity is an important limitation and researchers must articulate the circumstances under which genuine empowerment occurs, versus other outcomes such as neglect (too little help) or dependency (too great help).

Paradoxical Nature of Empowerment

Another limitation of empowerment is the inherent paradox which the concept offers (Gruber & Trickett, 1987). From Gruber and Trickett's point of view, one person can not empower another. A person, group, or community may help to set the stage so empowerment can occur or may aid empowerment in some other way, but it is up to the individual, organization, or community that is to be empowered to make the shift. Related to this is the practical problem that even when people attempt to empower others, it is difficult because the structures that would allow one group to empower another can also work to undermine that happening. For example, Gruber and Trickett (1987) reported an example in which the governing body of an alternative school could not empower students and parents because the school structure was hierarchal. The teachers, principal, and council held the power and, although egalitarianism was held as an ideal, the structures which provided teachers with day-to-day power were not altered and, therefore, the teachers and administration continued to hold power.

Simon (1990) takes a similar view of the paradoxical nature of empowerment in the context of social work. That is, the one function that members of the helping profession can not carry out for another person is empowerment. Persons who 'are empowered' by their social workers are dependent on them and, therefore, not really empowered. Again, the point is that persons must empower themselves, in this case "in collaborative 'alliance' with social workers" (p. 32). This differentiation is subtle

and helping professionals must be highly sensitive to nuances which this differentiation might entail. Social workers can assist clients in their struggle towards empowerment by providing a relationship, the methods, and the means, but these persons must enhance their own lives (Simon).

Empowerment Interventions

Attempts at intervention highlight the paradoxical nature of empowerment within the helping professions. Telling persons what they need to change about themselves is, arguably, counter to empowerment values (Zimmerman, 2000). Katz (1984) likened experts to gentle oppressors who decide what is best for a group of persons without specifically asking those already oppressed individuals what their perspective is on the issue.

An example of an empowerment intervention described by Serrano-Garcia (1984) shows the difficulties of empowerment when the researcher/interventionist has her own agenda. Serrano-Garcia was disillusioned by her 'failure' to 'empower' a community of 1400 residents, called Esfuerzo, Puerto Rico in the early 1980s. At the end of her group's empowerment project, the Esfuerzo residents had achieved many of their stated goals but Serrano-Garcia was disappointed that the participants did not gain more consciousness regarding their political situation. Serrano-Garcia's (1984) study showed paternalism, in that she stated that consciousness-raising was not the residents' goal but her groups' goal for the community.

The above example illustrates how easy it is for an empowerment researcher to inadvertently perpetuate patriarchal approaches by believing they know what is best for the intervention population, and focusing on their own agendas. It highlights the complexity of empowerment interventions and demonstrates that the interventionist must remain sensitive to those persons who are to receive the intervention.

Byrne (1998) provides an example of empowerment intervention by nurses charged with facilitating empowerment groups of persons with serious mental illness. The nurses began the process by feeling a lack of professional control, after a time, they began feeling comfortable dismantling professional boundaries, and eventually, they felt capable of facilitating empowerment groups. They had to learn how to interact with persons who expected to be controlled and told what to do, and who had rarely been asked about their needs. Issues of responsibility had to be considered and reconsidered within the new paradigm. A criticism of empowerment is that persons from the helping profession must constantly struggle with this shift between 'doing for' and 'being with' and understanding issues of responsibility within the new framework. Some helping professionals do not change themselves, only the language they have used to express what they do.

Individualism

Empowerment has been criticized as promoting individualism (Riger, 1993) and inherently valuing those traits typically associated with masculinity. Riger

posited that the concepts of control, mastery, and power are traditionally masculine traits and that these concepts are imbedded in the paternalistic model. She wondered why the more traditionally feminine concepts of community and cooperation were not highlighted in community psychlogy's conception of a world view. She asserted that this accentuates psychology's taking as its highest value independence and autonomy over connectedness. Riger argued that "women strive to achieve communion and are motivated to work cooperatively to attain a sense of harmony with others" (p. 285). Similarly, Bakan (1966) asserted "Agency manifests itself in the urge to master; communion in contractual cooperation" (p. 15). These concepts are not bipolar opposites, as some theorists would have it, but can exist together in one person (Bakan, 1966; Riger, 1993). Shields' (1995) findings give empirical credence to Riger's (1993) critique because empowered women in her study expressed both agency, what Shields calls movement to action, and connectedness.

Criticisms of Empowerment Theory

Empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000) was intended to add clarity to the concept, but can be criticized for its imprecision. The underlying assumptions of contextual determinism and dynamism, which requires it to be defined within the context and culture within which it is studied, makes it very difficult to know when it is present, absent or, from a clinical perspective, what degree is required in order for empowerment to be meaningful. A related criticism concerns the teleological nature

of empowerment outcomes. Empowerment outcomes are defined as the products or outcomes of empowering processes (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Again, this imprecision makes it difficult to know exactly when empowerment outcomes are present, and to what extent. Further, it is difficult to know what is an outcome when such things as 'being involved' is called an outcome, given that involvement could just as easily be considered a process. Another criticism, related to ambiguity, concerns the vast number of labels that have been placed upon empowerment by different researchers. Examples including world view, construct, guiding phenomenon, and metaphor were listed at the introduction to this section. This has made it difficult to understand exactly how the term empowerment is being used at any moment and where it is situated within the field community psychology.

A final criticism of empowerment is related to the somewhat naively idealistic nature of the theory (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000). To some extent, this naive idealism is both a limitation and a positive aspect of the theory. On the positive side, the core belief that people can become better able to manage their lives is both hopeful empirically supported by the research cited here. However, a limitation is that empowerment may be very 'White' and middle-class in it's assumptions. Does empowerment as a theory become a more sophisticated form of victim-blaming when change does not occur? The relative lack of research with disadvantaged groups makes it difficult to know the extent to which empowerment is meaningful for these populations. More research is required on empowerment and women (Swift, Bond,

& Serrano-Garcia, 2000); women of color (Bond, 1997); and ethnic minorities (Snowden, Martinez & Morris, 2000) in order to understand whether the empowerment approach can be applied more universally than to predominantly White, middle-classed males. The next section introduces the ways in which Aboriginal people in general, and Aboriginal women in particular, have been disadvantaged in Canada and introduces other topics relevant to an examination of empowerment in Aboriginal women.

Sources of Powerlessness for Aboriginal Women

Community psychologists are interested and involved in recognizing the relevant social influences in individuals' lives (Rappaport, 1977). Women, persons from ethnic minority groups, and persons from lower socio-economic status are disadvantaged in North American culture (Swift & Levin, 1987). In a review of the community psychology literature on women between 1965 and 1990, Swift, Bond, and Serrano-Garcia (2000) assert that women's issues were largely ignored. Paternalism and violence against women including rape, incest, sexual harassment, woman battering, and the feminization of poverty are issues discussed by Swift et al. that act as barriers to women's well being. They argued that greater consciousness and attention to gender issues is required in the community psychology literature and that gender should be acknowledged as an important factor in research. Women from ethnic minorities are arguably doubly vulnerable because they must contend with both racism and sexism (Swift et al., 2000). Aboriginal women in Canada, for

example, encounter the same issues as other women, such as paternalism and violence against women, but also must contend with cultural racism (Cassidy, Lord, & Mandel, 1995; Waldram, Herring, & Young, 1995). Aboriginal people have been subjected to the dominant culture's imposition of its culture and values upon their minority group (Allen, 1986; Miller, 1996, Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Other disadvantages Aboriginal people face include the high rate of infant mortality which, according to the Statscan website, (www.statcan.ca, checked Jan, 2004) is twice as high as the National average and even higher after the newborn phase. Structural discrimination increases the high levels of stress experienced by this group and has caused many of the Aboriginal ways, culture, and teachings to be lost (Blondin, 1999). This has resulted in Aboriginal people being described as "powerless" (Driedger, 1978). Two examples of Canadian structural discrimination are the reserve and the residential school systems. Reserves are small parcels of land set aside by the Canadian Government for First Nations persons. These were, historically, government by an Indian Agent, a representative of the Government who had tremendous control over the inhabitants. Residential schools were the schools set up by the Canadian Government for First Nations children who were taken from their families and expected to live in these residences in order to be assimilated into European-based culture. Thousands of Aboriginal children spent their formative years away from home, on these reserves. The reserve and residential school systems are discussed briefly below and in some depth in Appendix A.

Overall, the residential school system left a legacy that amounted to cultural genocide (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003). Both the Canadian government and the churches believed that the 'Indian Culture' was savage and barbaric (York, 1992). The government's stated policy of assimilation was intended to obliterate the First Nations way of life (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003). That is, Aboriginal beliefs, attitudes, culture, and language were to be replaced with rigid European-based structure, including regimented hours of indoor activities. Aboriginal people were also taught Christian religion and codes of conduct (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

Historically, Aboriginal people have been treated as second class citizens in Canada, a country that prides itself on its high standard of living. Aboriginal women, historically, were granted even less 'status' than Aboriginal men by the Government of Canada. For example, in 1869, the Dominion of Canada Act stipulated that

> An Indian woman who married a non-Indian man would lose her status. Both she and her offspring would cease to be Indians and to qualify for annuities or band memberships if she married a non-Indian... The federal government would later insist that it had no obligation to 'non-status Indians' (Miller, 1991, p. 114-115).

Aboriginal people have suffered enormously due to both the structural and personal impact of discrimination. Aboriginal women face both the societal and structural barriers affecting women and the barriers imposed by being Aboriginal in Canada (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). The next section highlights ways in which Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian culture differ, discusses the implications of these

cultural differences in terms of empowerment, and provides a brief overview of the concerns regarding doing research with Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Culture: Ethics and Principles

Aboriginal culture is different in many respects from the dominant society (Brant, 1990) from which empowerment theory has developed. In a discussion of Aboriginal people, as with any group, it is important to be wary of generalizations (Brant, 1990) because there are many different First Nations (e.g., Mohawk, Haida, Lakota, Dakota, Sauteaux, Micmac), each with their own history and customs (Brant, 1990; Waldram, 1997b; Waldram et al., 1995). Therefore, the following will not apply equally to all Aboriginal people.

Generally, Aboriginal people traditionally tend to suppress conflict in order to preserve harmony (Brant, 1990). This is done in a number of ways, including ethics of non-interference, non-competitiveness, emotional restraint, and sharing. Non-interference refers to the belief that it is not appropriate to attempt to coerce others in any way, including physical, psychological, or verbal coercion. It is the most widely-accepted principle within Aboriginal culture (Brant, 1990; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Attempting to persuade and advise others about the way they ought to do things is considered a form of interference and, thus, is considered inappropriate or bad form (Brant). By Aboriginal standards, an "advisor" is an "interferer" trying to establish dominance and should be avoided in the future. Aboriginal people acquire knowledge by listening, looking, and learning (Miller, 1996; Schissel & Wotherspoon,

2003). Looking refers to modeling behavior. Listening and learning refer to the belief that the eldest members of the community have gained knowledge from experience and have stories to share that could teach others about the wisdom gained from these experiences. Elders are listened to with respect and life lessons are passed down in this tradition. Life and vocational skills are also passed on through emulation and play (Miller, 1996; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003)

Aboriginal people, traditionally, do not attempt to "progress" in a linear fashion (Kelley, Nelson, & McPherson, 1985). Instead, the 'cycles' of life are acknowledged and honoured. This means that what has come to be known as 'progress' in western society, striving towards a materialistic goal, is negative when it is done without respect for the cycles of life.

Non-competitiveness is a second aspect of conflict suppression. Aboriginal persons tend to shy away from competition (Brant, 1990). Everyone is simply expected to perform their best. To notice when one does well is to draw attention to another doing less well, or failing. Unfortunately, this non-competitiveness has been misunderstood by others as a lack of ambition, or laziness (Brant). A third aspect of conflict suppression is a tendency to restrain emotions (Brant, 1990). This is believed to promote self-control.

Sharing is a fourth avenue to conflict suppression in the Aboriginal community (Brant, 1990). It is a social norm that encourages everyone to take only what he or she needs (Brant, 1990; Kelley, et al., 1985). This norm is imbedded in the practice

of sharing all that a tribe has in order to increase the probability that all tribe members survive. This communal sharing is believed to aid in conflict suppression because it also serves to decrease "the likelihood of greed, envy, arrogance and pride within the tribe" (Brant, 1990, p. 536). Each person is given equal treatment. Unfortunately, although sharing and equality are traditional cultural values, the advent of the reserve system with its Indian Agents and the residential school system, which was created to assimilate Aboriginal people, has been influential in teaching many Aboriginal people the competitive approaches of the dominant society. On some reserves, counter to traditional values, there are marked differences between the wealth of some and the poverty of others. On most, there is simply marked poverty (York, 1990).

Implications for Empowerment In Aboriginal Women Leaders and Professionals

Implicit in the empowerment world view is the idea that everyone will want to be empowered. However, as was discussed in the sections on criticisms of empowerment, it may not be congruent with the values of every ethnic group (Silka & Tip, 1994) nor may it be feasible with multiply disadvantaged persons. Empowerment researchers must be cautious not to simply assume that empowerment values will fit for cultures that are different from their own. The four principles (non-interference, non-competitiveness, sharing, and emotional restraint)

which comprise the ethic of conflict suppression may put Aboriginal culture at odds with empowerment.

As an example of potential incompatibility, empowerment has been criticized as too individualistic (Riger, 1993). If this criticism holds true, empowerment may run contrary to the Native ethic of non-competitiveness. Riger also criticized empowerment efforts for giving one a greater sense of control but not greater political power. In the shadow of a history of state-sanctioned powerlessness, Aboriginal people require an increase in real power (O'Sullivan, et al., 1984). An increase in a "sense" of power alone may simply add frustration to their lives.

Another example of potential incompatibility in terms of empowerment values and Aboriginal culture is with regard to the issue of non-interference. Would an empowerment approach to intervention be construed by Aboriginal persons as interference? As mentioned above, Aboriginal persons feel that even relatively mild forms of intrusion, (e.g., giving advice) is interfering and they will avoid the interferer in the future (Brant, 1990). This is one way in which an empowerment researcher/collaborator may find themselves out of step with Aboriginal persons.

Concerns about Research with Indigenous Peoples

This section refers to 'Indigenous peoples' to signal a temporary shift to focus on Aboriginal peoples from a global perspective. Indigenous peoples is the term used at the international level to refer to those persons who were first to inhabit the land prior to European settlement (Smith, 1999). The term includes the aborigines of

Australia and the Aboriginal people of North and South America. The plural, 'peoples,' reflects the separate and distinct bodies within this international grouping (Smith, 1999). This section shifts to a broader perspective because many of the issues of research with Indigenous peoples are global.

Historically, so-called research often contributed to Indigenous peoples being considered sub-human and savage (Smith, 1999). The underlying dynamics of this were that White researchers tended to view Indigenous peoples from a Eurocentric perspective. That is, instead of learning from Indigenous peoples about their ways of being and valuing those traditions, they looked at Indigenous culture and knowledge from their own perspective and thought no culture or knowledge existed. They used their research to 'prove' that Indigenous people were inferior. This dehumanization was then used to rationalize ill-treatment of Indigenous people world wide. Examples of this include filling the skulls of Aboriginal people with millet seeds and comparing the amount of millet seed to the Indigenous person's capacity for mental thought (Smith, 1999). Another example that Smith provides is the widespread use of zoological terms to describe Indigenous Peoples. Smith articulates the feelings regarding research by Indigenous people as follows,

> Research is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that Indigenous people even write poetry about research. The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's

> colonized peoples. It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity (Smith, 1999, p. 1).

Smith (1999) referred to herself having the "vantage point of the colonized" (p. 1). She identified "research as a significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other" (p. 2). Further, she stated that a discussion of research and Indigenous peoples requires an understanding of the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is linked to imperial and colonial practices. Smith stated that the Indigenous person does not differentiate between what is now considered ethical research and what was carried out by untrained persons or travelers reporting on Indigenous (savage) ways. Unfortunately 'real' science has been lumped in with the perspective of "inquisitive and acquisitive strangers" (p. 3) and this has resulted in 'unspoken cynicism' (p. 3) among many Indigenous persons.

Given the history of distrust of research in the Indigenous community, the current study was conducted with an awareness that Aboriginal people may be mistrustful of even this research. The researcher approached the research participants with an open, honest attitude. This is consistent with the spirit of empowerment literature's insistence on treating research participants as collaborators (Perkins, 1995; Rappaport, 1990). [The researcher's experience and approach is discussed in depth in the Reflex and Reflexivity section of the Discussion.] Moreover, qualitative research tends to be more in keeping with

Aboriginal ethics and values because it calls for subjectivity rather than the objectivity that is integral to the quantitative paradigm. Qualitative research methods provide a scientific way to learn about the lived experiences of research participants. A specific qualitative method called grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used in this study for a number of reasons, which are discussed next.

Rationale for Use of Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, first articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a qualitative field research methodology. It provides a method for collecting and analyzing data, as well as a means to develop a substantive theory. Grounded theory was chosen for this research because it is rooted in the theory of symbolic interactionism (Carpenter, 1999a), developed by Blumer (1969). [A brief explanation of symbolic interactionism is provided in Appendix B.] Symbolic interactionism is an appropriate root theory because it emphasizes the importance of the meaning ascribed to things and asserts that these meanings result from the interactions that occur between persons, consistent with the assumptions underlying this research. It is expected that Aboriginal women will ascribe different meanings to empowerment based on interactions that have occurred between themselves and others.

Carpenter (1999a), an important writer in grounded theory, asserts that grounded theory is best suited to situations in which the researcher would like to answer one of several questions. These questions will be addressed in turn as the rationale is presented. Carpenter's first question was whether individual's viewpoint

on the phenomenon of interest has been given enough attention. (Carpenter, 1999a). As has been described in this introduction, there is a gap in the literature on empowerment and Aboriginal women. Whereas a great deal of research has been conducted on PE in other groups, focusing on a basic understanding of empowerment and Aboriginal women has not been attempted to this point.

Carpenter also asked "Is there a need for a deeper understanding of specific characteristics related to a particular phenomenon?" (Carpenter, 1999a, p. 105). This question best articulates the reason grounded theory is an appropriate method to achieve the goals of this research project. Little is known about the basic characteristics of the meaning, processes, and outcomes of empowerment by Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. Thus, grounded theory provides a means to conduct this examination of the specific characteristics related to empowerment in this group of women.

In answer to Carpenter's question, "Has the phenomenon been previously investigated?" (Carpenter, 1999a, p. 105), there is a paucity of information on empowerment and women in general (Swift, et al., 2000) and, more specifically, on Aboriginal women. Thus, a need existed for greater understanding of the mechanisms of empowerment in this group.

Grounded theory methodology was also chosen because qualitative research demands that we develop an insider's perspective on the phenomenon of interest (Deyhle, Hess, & LeCompte, 1992). Therefore, field research is vitally important.

With grounded theory procedures, an empowerment model was generated from the data gathered from this group of participants. [Grounded theory procedures differ from quantitative procedures and are explained in some depth in Appendix C]

Summary of the Research Question

According to the theory, empowerment is complex, multi-dimensional, multi-layered, context-sensitive, and dynamic (Zimmerman, 2000). It's complexity means that a global, one-size-fits-all measure or definition of empowerment can not be articulated. Although complex theoretically, it is considered a route to psychological wellness (Cohen, 2000). Aboriginal people are, arguably, the most disadvantaged group in Canada (e.g., Waldram et al., 1995; York, 1990). Yet, no research exists on the theoretical meanings of empowerment and Aboriginal women.

The literature review provided an in-depth examination of the research conducted with populations similar to Aboriginal women on one or more dimensions (Kar et al., 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan et al., 1984; Shields, 1995). These studies have considerable strengths and each brought a slightly different piece of new knowledge to our understanding of disadvantaged groups. However, the empowerment area still lacks research on empowerment and Aboriginal women. As empowerment theorists (Perkins, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995) purport that empowerment is best understood by studying it within different contexts and populations, it is important to discover the extent to which empowerment is

meaningful for Aboriginal women and to develop a definition and model of empowerment that suits Aboriginal women.

If the goal is to study empowerment in Aboriginal women, it makes sense to find a group of such women who would be relatively more likely to have experienced empowerment. Participants in previous studies tended to be either leaders or professionals: Kieffer's (1984) grass roots leaders; Kar et al.'s participants were involved in empowerment movements; O'Sullivan's Yavapai Indians were successful at fighting to keep their land; Shields (1995) participants were, in general, well-educated professionals at the time of the interviews. Thus, the literature review suggests that persons who hold leadership or professional positions are likely to feel empowered. It is for this reason that Aboriginal leaders or professionals were targeted for this study of empowerment. However, it was assumed that participants would have experienced empowerment or would find empowerment meaningful. Discovering the extent to which these phenomena were true was an important aspect of the research. Thus, this study was conducted in order to generate a better understanding of the meaning, processes, and outcomes of empowerment in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals.

METHOD

Participant Characteristics and Confidentiality

Research participants met four criteria for inclusion in this study. First, they were women. Second, they were all Aboriginal leaders or professionals, either First Nations or Métis. 'Leaders and professionals' included any persons who were deemed such by a third party, using a snowball sampling technique (described later in this section). Third, they were from a range of professional fields of endeavor. Fourth, they all lived within the city of Winnipeg (because the researcher did not have the funding to travel outside the city). Winnipeg is the capital city of the province of Manitoba, Canada. It has a culturally diverse population of approx 685,500 people and over 12% (55,700) of the population are Aboriginal persons (Statistics from www.Winnipeg.Ca on October 29, 2003). This is a significantly larger proportion of Aboriginal people than the 3% that occurs Canada wide (Statistics from: www.Canada.Ca on October 29, 2003).

As part of informed consent, the researcher assured participants that their identity would remain confidential. Given the relatively small size of the community of Aboriginal women leaders and professionals in the city of Winnipeg, it is likely that a research participant's identity would be accurately guessed if too many details were provided here. In order to keep each participant's identity confidential, a letter of the alphabet was assigned to each participant which did not correspond to their names or occupations in any intentional way.

A description of the nine participants is presented in a relatively global manner for two main reasons. First, specific demographic information was not requested from the participants, as an act of respect and, second, to increase confidentiality. Some demographic information was supplied, in the interview process, by less than half the participants. Participants ranged in age from late 30's to early 60's. All participants were mothers, several were grandmothers, and about half had a romantic partner. Their primary occupation (at the time of the interview) fit into the following categories: (a) educators (2), (b) political activists (2), (c) heads of social service delivery agencies (3), and (d) business women (2). [One of these women is also an Elder. However, she is categorized, for the sake of simplicity, in her wage earning occupation.] The number of years the women had held their current positions ranged from one to fifteen.

The Experience of Participation

Participants were very open about their experiences and most said afterwards that they enjoyed being interviewed. In general, they reported that the interview process gave them the opportunity to reflect on how far they have come and how much they have done, rather than on what is still required, which is their usual focus. One participant reported that she had never told anyone else details of her life that she had shared with the researcher. An in-depth description of the details of the interviews is described later in this chapter.

Procedure

Obtaining Ethical Approval

This research was peer-reviewed and approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba (Protocol #P2001:066). Documents submitted and approved by the board include the following:

- Appendix D: Phone Script for Prospective Participant
- Appendix E: The Interview Guide
- Appendix F: Informed Consent for Snowball Sampling
- Appendix G: Participant Informed Consent Form
- Appendix H: Confidentiality Contract
- Appendix I: Request for Copy of Transcript

Appendix J is the ethical approval form. It was obtained once the project had been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Ethics Review Board.

Access to Participants

Snowball sampling. Sampling was conducted using a snowball approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994). With this approach, either interested parties or participants who had already been interviewed identified persons who met the inclusion criteria. In this way, it was up to the person making the nomination to determine who the leaders and professionals in the Aboriginal community were. Those who nominated participants signed a form, which gave the researcher permission to call the women they had recommended and that the researcher could

identify the source of the referral when asking permission to meet the potential participant. The snowball sampling began with interested parties acquainted with the researcher recommending potential persons. After participants were interviewed, they also identified potential participants. By the end of the data collection process, the researcher had stopped asking for more nominations because over 50 women were identified, far more than the researcher intended to interview. The final number of interviewees, nine, was determined by a specific grounded theory approach to data analysis called saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), described later.

The choice of specific participants was based on several factors. First, participants were more likely to be asked if they had been recommended by several people or were highly recommended. Participants were also selected based on the criteria that the sample represent several different occupations. And last, participants were chosen based on their availability. The specifics regarding enlisting participants is described later.

Data Collection: Preliminary Steps

Development of the Interview Guide. In order to prepare for this research, the researcher/interviewer acquired essential knowledge by auditing a qualitative research methods course delivered via Internet, through the College of Nursing at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center, Memphis. It was offered through the Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba. Underlying theoretical assumptions regarding quantitative and qualitative research methods were discussed (e.g.,

Degroot, H. A., 1988) as were more practical issues, such as ways of observing (e.g., Shank, 2002), developing themes and concepts from raw data (e.g., Shank, 2002) and developing interview guides (e.g., Berg, 2001). The interview guide (Appendix E) used in this research was developed with the intention that the interview would follow a semistandardized or semi-structured format (Berg, 2001). This approach is considered preferential as the structure ensures that certain topics are covered whereas freedom is still available to allow the interviewer to pursue relevant, yet unanticipated, information (Berg).

The interview guide began with questions about the participants in their professional role, and about their families. This was intended to "break the ice" (Berg, 2001; Fontana & Frey, 1994); that is, it provided a way for the participants to begin to feel comfortable with the researcher and become accustomed to the interview process. Information gathered during the 'icebreaker' section of the interview was not included as part of the transcripts because it was relatively irrelevant and, more importantly, could potentially identify the participant. Following the icebreaker section, were questions regarding participants' attitudes towards their culture, their specific joys, and sorrows, the obstacles and barriers they have faced, their attitudes and perceptions about their family, and their community's attitudes towards their role in the community and their success. Prior to each question being asked, the participants were asked how they defined each term. This was recommended by an Aboriginal woman leader and professional who checked the

interview guide for cultural appropriateness. Prior to each question being asked, the participants were asked to define each word, as was recommended by an Aboriginal women leader/professional who checked the interview guide for cultural appropriateness. All these questions were asked with the intention of understanding the participants' experiences, perceptions of themselves, their beliefs, and values.

This information was gathered with the expectation that gaining an understanding of the participants as individuals, including their challenges and accomplishments, would help the researcher to articulate the participants' empowerment processes and outcomes and what empowerment means to participants. After these questions were posed, focus turned to questions based on the Shields' (1995) findings. These included questions regarding the participants' sense of themselves, their self-acceptance and self-rejection, and their perceptions of their choices, control, and communication. Participants were also asked about change over time. The next series of questions were specific to empowerment, including its meaning, whether they saw themselves as empowered, what they found empowering and what they thought could be empowering. Last, the participants were given an open ended question regarding whether there was anything they would like to add. This was intended to open the conversation up to any topic the researcher may have missed. At the end, a request was made to suggest other potential participants.

Researcher's attitude toward the participants. The researcher conducted all the interviews herself and was very conscious about her approach. The researcher/interviewer attempted to be aware of how important one's attitude is to the process (Smith, 1999). The importance of treating participants as a 'holder of knowledge' and their experiences with respect was emphasized (Fontana & Frey, 1994). As part of this respect, the interviewer intended not to impose her meanings nor viewpoints on the participants.

The researcher made every effort to convey her genuine gratitude to these women for sharing their time and knowledge. It was suggested by a committee member, to bring a gift to each meeting as a symbol of this appreciation. She did so regardless of the length of the meeting. Gifts were small, such as jars of jam, candles, or coffee mugs and were intended as gestures of appreciation.

Feedback on the interview guide from an Aboriginal woman leader. As described in the introduction, research has historically held extremely negative connotations in many Aboriginal communities (Smith, 1999). In an to attempt to avoid ill feelings caused by inappropriate or clumsy questions, a potential participant was asked if she would be willing to be interviewed and provide feedback regarding the interview guide. This individual is both an Aboriginal woman leader and knowledgeable about Aboriginal-nonAboriginal relations. When contacted, this potential participant explained that, although she could not take the time to be interviewed, she would be willing to provide feedback on the interview guide. At a 90

minute meeting prior to conducting the official interviews, she provided valuable feedback regarding the interview guide, and some information regarding the impact of colonialization on the Aboriginal community. Further, she recommended that the participants be asked how they define the terms being used in the interviews because Aboriginal people often have different experiences with English words than mainstream people. This procedure was followed and the participants were asked what each term meant to them.

Data Collection

Beginning the process: Making the phone calls. After feedback was obtained regarding the interview guide and names of prospective participants were identified (and permission granted to call them), the researcher contacted potential participants.

The interviews. Interviews with a total of nine Aboriginal women leaders and professionals commenced in December, 2001 and concluded in April, 2002. Seven of nine participants invited the researcher to conduct the interviews at their places of business. Two participants invited the researcher into their homes for the interviews. The interviews included all the content areas provided in the 'Interview Guide' (Please see Appendix E) with seven of the participants. The interviews followed a semistandardized or semi-structured format (Berg, 2001). This approach is has enough structure to ensure that certain topic areas are covered and allows the freedom for the interviewer to pursue relevant, yet unanticipated, information (Berg).

The interview guide was adhered to quite closely. However, the researcher made use of her clinical psychology skills and always sought clarification about any point that seemed unclear. She also followed leads that the participants offered. For example, when a participant said she had developed courage. The interviewer asked how this courage was developed. The questions proved to be broad enough that the participants discussed topics that had not been broached. For example, racism was discussed by all although it was not on the interview guide and was never raised by the interviewer. Two participants did not provide answers to all questions because they were unavailable to finish the process. Despite not specifically answering all the predetermined questions, both of these participants provided a substantial quantity of data, as they were both interviewed twice. One participant with missing data was interviewed for a total of about 105 minutes (1 3/4 hours) and the other was interviewed for over three hours.

Individual interviews ranged from 25 to 185 minutes. The mean total interview length was 194 minutes (3.25 hours), standard deviation was 81 minutes, and the range was from 105 minutes to 375 minutes. The researcher devoted a total of 29.25 hours to conducting the interviews. The number of sessions per each participant varied. Two completed the interviews in the first session; three participated in two interviews; three participated in three interviews, and one participant completed the process in four interviews. In total, each participated in an average of 2.3 interview sessions.

Cassette recordings. Interviews were recorded on cassette audio tapes. After a recording difficulty was discovered in one of the initial interviews, two recorders were brought into every subsequent meeting and two audiotapes of the interviews were made. Very little of the data were lost when the recorders malfunctioned on two occasions. In both instances, the researcher made field notes as soon as the problem was detected.

Interview Transcripts. Overall, the interviewing process was quite lengthy. It often took several weeks between the individual's initial agreement to participate and the end of the interview process. Transcription was also a lengthy process, requiring approximately four hours to transcribe every half hour of tape. After the researcher worked on transcribing interviews for the first several months, two transcribers, each of whom signed a confidentiality contract (Appendix H), were hired to transcribe portions of three of the interviews. Once the interviews were transcribed, the researcher checked all the transcripts while listening to the tapes, for the purpose of ensuring accuracy and to edit identifying information.

Editing the transcripts was done, in part, to delete or alter any information that could lead to the identification of the participants. For example, all participants, whether they reported having one or more children were discussed as having child(ren). Occasionally, the term child or children was purposefully switched to appear as if the researcher had missed these pronominal references, 'accidentally' making a mistake, as it were. However, the editing process was done in a very

conscious and conscientious manner. Similarly, in many cases, when a participant spoke of a family member or parent, these generic terms were either used or, on occasion, an alternate term was used. For example, 'my mother died when I was younger' might be replaced in the transcript with either 'my family member died' or 'my father died'. This was, again, done intentionally so that in any one transcript, a given family member's identity could be portrayed differently in different parts of the transcript. The intention of this procedure was that it would be a safety measure for confidentiality purposes. Information that was very personal or about other persons, unless its impact was relevant to the topic, was left out of the final transcript entirely. Alterations to the transcript were strictly of a biographical nature. The women's description of their experiences remained unchanged. The information that was purposefully switched to secure the participants' anonymity was too specific and personal to have a bearing on the themes that emerged from the data.

As will become evident in the Results section, the sort of information that comprises the 'results' of this study focuses on the experiences and processes common to all or most of the participants. Whether the participant had one child or six, or whether it was a father or a mother who passed away, arguably, does not significantly alter the experience of either motherhood or loss.

The transcribed interviews ranged in length from 20 to 78 single spaced pages. As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), once data analysis was underway, only segments of the interviews that were relevant to the themes were

transcribed. Thus, portions of several of the interviews that were tangential to the topic were not transcribed. Therefore, some of the transcripts were substantially edited for theme-specific content. The transcript from interviewee C, for example, with 6 1/4 hours of data, was only 53 pages long after editing. A total of 394 single-spaced pages of interview data remained after substantial editing.

At the beginning of the interview process, participants were asked if they would like to see their transcript once completed, in order to either add or delete content if they felt their intended message was not adequately conveyed. Those who wished to see a copy of their transcript completed a 'Request for copy of transcript' form (Appendix I). As promised, a copy of the edited transcripts were sent to all 6 participants who requested one. An accompanying letter (Appendix K) explained that there was information missing from the transcripts due to confidentiality reasons. It also invited the participants to contact the researcher if they had any concerns regarding content or confidentiality issues. No one did.

Management of the Data

The edited transcripts were kept together in a binder. The computer files were kept together on the researcher's hard drive and copies were made on floppy disks in case of computer problems. The audio cassettes were kept in a locked cabinet and will be erased in a timely manner after completion of the research.

Grounded Theory Data Analysis

The rationale for the use of grounded theory for this research was described in the Introduction and a detailed description of grounded theory procedure including data collection, determining sample size, and analysis are available in Appendix C for the reader unfamiliar with grounded theory. This section focuses on the specific procedure used by the researcher. The analysis was conducted by the researcher in frequent consultation during the collection and analysis phase with Advisory Committee member, David Gregory, Professor, University of Manitoba, who teaches a qualitative research methods course in the Faculty of Nursing.

Coding the data began after the first two interviews were transcribed. Following protocol (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), coding occurred at three basic levels: Level I is the open coding, level II coding is the constant comparative method, and level III, selective coding. Level I coding began when copies of the transcripts were produced with two and a half inch right margins so that codes could be written in the margin (Carpenter, 1999a). As the transcripts were read, any segment of the text that could serve as an independent datum was assigned a code. Meaningful datum "bits" ranged in size from one or two words to several paragraphs. Many of the datum "bits" were coded with more than one code.

At the level II coding stage, the constant comparative method was begun. Each 'information bit' that had been generated from the data was compared with each other (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As the new interviews were transcribed, new

data were compared with the data already collected and coded, and information bits were clustered together and categories were assigned based on comparisons and fit (Streubert, 1999). Coded data were then put together in different groups. The goal was to delineate categories and the conditions that give rise to them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Determining the specific categories was accomplished by questioning what each level I code meant and then comparing it with all other level 1 codes (Carpenter, 1999a). This process, again, was labor intensive. Many categories and clusters were developed and then abandoned as more data came in. This process focused on finding connections between and among the 'information bits.'

Level III coding, or selective coding, was more abstract. At this level, the goal was to determine what the data were saying about the processes involved. In this final step, core categories were selected and these were related, systematically, to the other categories. Both Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Glaser (1992) point out the importance of integration at this level of coding. The relationships between variables were validated by checking out concepts and producing attributes of categories. As the categories became more abstract, previously unrelated categories emerged as relevant to each other, becoming more inclusive categories. Glaser (1992) noted that "emergence and discovery just happen"(p. 76) (with patience). This seemed to be the case, to some extent. Although, once the categories emerged, they were always reconsidered and reexamined, with the researcher always returning to the data (Carpenter, 1999) to verify the extent to which the core categories fit.

That is, once a category was developed from an insight or from bringing a number of datum "bits" together, the researcher would go back to transcripts to determine whether a category would hold for all or most participants. The categories which needed further development and refinement were identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Those categories that were redundant were merged with another similar category. Categories that did not have enough data to support them were dropped.

In order to illustrate the entire process, the levels of coding will be described with examples. First, copies of the transcripts were made with 2.5 inch right margins and were cut into pieces by information bits. That is, any small or large piece of information that seemed to have one single meaning was cut from the remainder of the page and given a code (pages were cut into strips). The following examples come from what eventually came to be known as the core concept, 'community connectedness.' This concept will be described in the Results section more fully. For now, the intention is to provide sufficient information for an understandable example of the analytic process. At Level 1 coding, the researcher read through the transcripts and began assigning codes to each 'information bit.' These datum "bits" were originally coded with a word or phrase that would fit, often using the words of participants. For example, the phrase, "because shame is such a big thing, I mean peer pressure" was coded 'family shame = important shaper of behavior.' Seeing this quote out of context, it seems unclear that this is about the participant's 'family' or that it 'shaped' her behavior. However, from the previous context, the coder was

aware that the participant was discussing her belief that if she did not follow her family's wishes she could bring shame on her family. Thus, although "information bits" were taken from the transcripts, the context within which the information bits were taken remained important. Another example regarding 'family connection' was from another participant, "I feel good when my family is doing well." This was coded as 'family doing well brings good feelings.' A third quote at Level 1 coding, was "Probably one of the biggest joys in life were having my child(ren).... That was just amazing, it was just amazing" and was coded, 'joy = family.'

Similarly, land-relevant 'bits' of interview data were coded as follows, (a) "We spent all our time on the land, going out to the river, fishing, just a traditional life style" was coded, 'spent time on land in traditional life style,' (b) another quote, "Dealing with Aboriginal rights automatically comes right down to the issue of land" was coded, 'Aboriginal rights = land issues,' (c) another quote, "I spend a lot of time on the land" was coded, 'land = culture,' and with this one, again, this code was partially based on the context and, (e), another quote, "Because that's where your rights arise, from your long ancient attachment to the land" was coded, 'Aboriginal rights = long ancient attachment to the land."

Thus, these small pieces of information were each given a code. In this level I coding, the researcher generated approximately 1500-2000 codes that each had no apparent connection to the others. Grounded theory analysis requires that each piece of data is assigned as many codes as would fit. For example, either of the

quotes regarding land rights could also be coded, 'Aboriginal issues = land issues.' Similarly, the quote from the previous paragraph, "Probably one of the biggest joys in life were having my child(ren).... That was just amazing, it was just amazing" could be coded, 'motherhood = important.'

Once the first two interviews were level one coded, the level II coding, or the 'constant comparative method' required that each of these 'information bits' be compared with each other. In this phase, codes with a similar word or phrase were brought together. These 'information bits' were sorted and placed into piles based on similar content. For example, at one stage in the data analysis, quotes, including those mentioned above, that discussed feelings towards family were brought together and labeled, 'self-in-relation: family.' Those that discussed the participants' relation to the land were brought together and labeled, 'self-in-relation: land.' Thus, the coded material was brought back together in new ways, as the grounded theory protocol requires (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As mentioned, this coding and bringing material together began early in the process and the data were continually compared to each other. Categories were considered and reconsidered as each new interview was transcribed and more data were added and coded. In this stage, 'information bits' were assigned existing codes, if they fit within the codes. So for example, the quote, "We had an awareness of berry picking and gathering as part of how we lived," was assigned the code, 'The Foundation: Self-in-relation: Land/Nature.' Notice that the category has shifted slightly, as this quote was added after the category had

been altered somewhat to include "The Foundation" to Self and nature was added as part of the land. Both of these additions were made as more data were added and the categories were made more inclusive to incorporate more information.

Level III coding was similar to Level II coding. However, assigning categories and concepts became increasingly more selective and abstract. The goal was to find what the commonalities were among 'information bits' and to compare these between participants. Ultimately, the goal was to gain theoretical and conceptual parsimony. That is, to determine core concepts that would not be redundant with other concepts or categories. Regarding the specific example of what eventually became the *community connectedness* category, six 'self-in-relation' categories were eventually brought together. With regards to the development of this concept, it became clear, early on, that the women often described themselves in relation to others but having six categories to describe this lacked parsimony. Thus, eventually, the existing categories were brought together under a more abstract label, the underlying theme, of *community connectedness.* [Appendix K provides a more in-depth explanation of category development using the *community connectedness* category as an example.]

Grounded theory protocol required that data analysis direct data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized the importance of sampling with the aim of building the frame within which the concepts apply and do not apply. Data collection is intended to be undertaken with the emphasis on

categories becoming more fully integrated and developed with each addition. In this research endeavor, in the first month or two, the researcher booked few interviews and had substantial time to transcribe and code data. By the beginning of the third month of data collection, there were many tapes to transcribe, and the interview dates were set with participants. Thus, because emphasis was placed on interviewing and transcribing for several months, the later-collected data were all analyzed at roughly the same time, after the initial three or four interviews. Still, the grounded theory method was followed in that the constant comparative approach was used. Thus, data collection diverged slightly from the grounded theory protocol in one way. At the latter stage of data analysis, data sampling generally becomes more focused. This would require that the interviewer ask fewer, more focused questions. This is referred to as discriminate sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, what occurred was that the data collection stopped after the current participants were interviewed, in order to spend more time in the analysis phase and to determine what further information was required. In this pause in the data collection, after analyzing the data that had already been collected, it became clear that there were sufficient categories, each with enough evidence to support them, that saturation had occurred. Pausing during data collection for a time in order to examine what one has and to determine what one needs, including that no more data is required is in keeping with Glaser and Strauss's (1967) intention that data collection be flexible as long as it serves its purpose, which is that saturation be reached. "Saturation" refers

to the state when relationships between categories are rich and integrated, categorical gaps are filled in, and no new categories are emerging from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That is, when adding new data no longer brought new information or insights, it was determined that saturation had occurred. Thus, saturation determined the current sample size.

Developing the Model

A substantive theoretical model, Becoming Whole, (described in detail in the Results chapter) was developed from the 394 transcribed pages of data that were generated from the nine research participants. In order to accomplish this task, the grounded theory researcher must become immersed in the data (Glaser, 1992). Many hours over the course of about seven months were spent reading the transcripts, assigning codes, making connections, developing insights and playing hunches. This process was so time-consuming that the researcher sent a letter to the participants in the fall of 2002 explaining that the preliminary results, expected in May, were not yet completed (Appendix M). As part of grounded theory analysis, it is customary for the researcher to keep track of the connections, insights, and hunches by writing theoretical memos to one's self (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is to aid in the ultimate theory development and report writing. This researcher wrote memos and also worked with insights, hunches, and hypotheses by developing, changing, and editing the categories. Thus, insights, hunches, and hypotheses tended to be both written into memos and notes, which will serve as a record of the process and

were also brought together in terms of physically moving and shifting the codes, on slips of paper, into envelopes at a relatively early stage. These slips of papers (the information bits with attached codes) were brought together, arranged, and rearranged. This helped develop the key theoretical concepts for the model.

Once there was so much data that the slips of paper became unwieldy, the researcher began coding data in a different manner. Preliminary categories were developed and all the transcripts were copied and coded again, using the preliminary categories, in order to determine if the categories would remain viable. These preliminary categories were arranged into an outline and numbered. That is, each category was assigned an outline number. While coding in this new fashion, the numbers were placed in the margin of the transcript. For example, an early category (which eventually became "the context", and finally became the basic psychosocial problem, powerlessness), was called, I. Surviving a vicious reality: Living in the Hell, with a subsection called, A. Systemic Issues, with a subsection called, 4. Sexism/being sexualized (Aboriginal women treated as more sexually available). Thus, if an information bit was found where a woman talked about being 'sexualized' as an Aboriginal woman, it was labeled I.A.4. directly on the transcript. In this stage, the transcripts were not cut up, but lines were drawn to delineate where one information bit began and the next ended. Again, some interview data were assigned more than one code. Whenever an 'information bit' was found that seemed to be relevant but there was no category in which it would fit, a new category was

considered. Next the information bits (quotes) were pulled together under category topics, in order to compare with each other to determine if they still fit together. Early in this stage, this process was input into a WordPerfect file, on the computer. However, because so much was being changed as new insights were developed and more abstract categories were discovered, it quickly became evident that this was too time consuming. Instead, the existing outline was referenced with any information bit that applied, using the participant's identification notation and relevant page and line numbers. This is the process the Aboriginal lay woman (described in the next section) also used when she read the transcripts and coded them. That is, she had a copy of all the categories developed to that point. This was in an outline format with plenty of room between each category. She also had a paper copy of all the transcripts. She went through each transcript line by line and assigned a category to each 'information bit.' She cross referenced this on the outline by putting a reference to where a relevant information bit could be found. From this, she provided her comments and insights regarding the categories.

As categories were developed, they were brought together in meaningful ways in attempts to develop the model. The empowerment model that was finally developed went through, at least, 10 iterations. Final phases of model development were aided by meetings held individually with each Advisory Committee member in late 2002/early 2003. At that time each member was given a verbal presentation of progress to that point, including the number of participants, hours of interviews, and

length of transcripts. They were also provided with a description of the preliminary model. Each member provided either suggestions for further development, gave the go-ahead to write the thesis based on the findings, or both. Shortly after this series of meetings, the model validation process, described in the next section, was carried out.

Methods Used to Attain Qualitative Rigor (Trustworthiness) in this Study

Qualitative research has been criticized for not being 'rigorous' by persons accustomed to working within the quantitative paradigm. For example, critics ask, what is to prevent a researcher from simply seeing what one wants to see? These criticisms arise, in part, because there is an expectancy that qualitative research should be judged by quantitative criteria (Sandelowski, 1986). Sandelowski (1993) points out that whereas it is important to ensure the trustworthiness of our research projects, it is important not to allow our attempts to make our research so rigorous that it is virtually meaningless, or as she puts it, suffers from 'rigor mortis'. Researchers such as Sandelowski (1993) and Rose and Webb (1998) have highlighted the importance of keeping a balance in one's approach to rigor in a manner that allows the researcher the freedom to creatively anguish over the data but not to obsess and force them. This section demonstrates the means used to ensure rigor or, as qualitative researchers frame it, the trustworthiness of the findings. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest four criteria with which to judge the

general trustworthiness or adequacy of qualitative research. These include credibility, generalizability, transferability, and confirmability.

Internal validity in quantitative research examines basic issues of truth (Sandelowski, 1986). In qualitative research, truth resides in the discovery of human experiences and phenomena as they are lived, in their 'life worlds' as Berg (2001) puts it, and it is measured by credibility. Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend 'member checks' to increase credibility. This can be done in two ways, First, researchers can ask the participants, at some point in the process, to check on the categories, interpretations, or hypotheses generated from the data. Second, the participants can check and validate transcripts from the interviews. As was mentioned previously, edited transcripts of the interviews were sent to all six of the participants who requested them, to provide the opportunity for them to criticize any problems they found with the transcript. None of the six participants had any concerns. Credibility was also established with a model validation process. Member checks were done by asking participants to comment on the 'preliminary findings'. Three of the participants individually collaborated in this experience and all were positive about the findings. One participant helped to further refine the model. This process allowed the participants to comment on the 'truthfulness' of the findings and to validate the model.

External validity refers to the extent to which quantitative research is generalizable to the external world (Sandelowski, 1986). In quantitative research,

such issues as having a representative sample play a role in external validity. One of the cornerstones of quantitative research conducted in the laboratory is a high degree of control over the variables. However, greater control in the laboratory tends to decrease the extent to which one can generalize outside of the laboratory. The current research project was conducted with a community sample, in their offices and homes. Glaser (1992) proposes that generalizing from grounded theory is possible because the processes that emerge from the data go beyond the boundaries of any given unit of analysis. The processes that come out of grounded theory are based on the participants' life experiences and these processes are expected to apply to other similar persons.

In qualitative research, one concern is known as the 'elite bias.' This refers to the tendency for qualitative samples to be drawn from persons who are well spoken and have higher profiles than those who are not chosen as participants. This issue was not considered applicable in the present case because the research was intentionally aimed at an elite group.

Fittingness is the qualitative answer to applicability. It requires that the study findings "'fit' or have meaning for others in similar situations outside the study situation (Sandelowski, 1986; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999) . Another word for this is transferability (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Fittingness or transferability requires that the findings are firmly based on the life-worlds of the participants studied. The findings must reflect both typical and atypical units of behavior. That is, in qualitative

research, representativeness of the data is sought by sampling from a broad range of experience within the phenomenon of interest (Sandelowski, 1986). Thus, the researcher expects that there will be certain instances where a given phenomenon is 'not' present or only present in small quantities. All participants were not expected to, nor did they, respond to all questions in the same way.

As the categories were developed, variability was present, and acknowledged. The concepts described in the model provide information about general processes. Within each, each participant discussed their experiences in ways that are specific to them. Going back to the example of 'community connectedness', this concept refers to the overall experience of the participants being intricately connected to their community. The term 'Community' included the land, culture, families, their home reserve, all Aboriginal people past and future, and their spirituality. Regarding typical and atypical instances, not all the participants discussed, nor was it necessary for them to each discuss every aspect of this connection in order to be able to generalize that a 'community connectedness' exists. For example, not all the participants had grown up on a reserve. Or, another example was that spirituality was articulated differently by different persons. If one of the nine women said that she had no spiritual beliefs, that would be an atypical instance and would not prove the category wrong, but, instead, represent one anchor on the continuum of the category. The specifics regarding each participant's life experience provided a slightly different glimpse at similar processes. This variation in experience added a richness to the

results, rather than detracting from the cohesiveness of it. Further, in the model verification process, one participant acknowledged that not every aspect of that iteration of the model applied to her but she said she believed that the model applied to Aboriginal women across Canada. This is an important observation because she was able to see that the model has broad categories and each individual is not required to be described by every individual category, in order for it to be validated. The researcher considered this participant's validation to be an endorsement of the fittingness of the model.

Neutrality refers to a lack of researcher bias in the research process affecting the study results (Sandelowski, 1986). Objectivity is one of the criteria for a rigorous quantitative study. It is said to be achieved when validity and reliability are achieved. Part of quantitative objectivity is the belief that distance must be maintained in order for biases not to creep into the process and alter the findings. This objectivity is achieved through careful control of protocol, instrumentation, and theory. Qualitative research differs in that subjectivity is valued. The investigator asked directly about the subjective reality of the study participants. Subjectivity is said to be a necessary ingredient of the relationship between interviewer and participant because that engagement is more likely to bring about truth. This makes for a complex process but the qualitative researcher believes that the benefits outweigh the difficulties. Neutrality in qualitative research refers to the findings, not to the researcher's

stance. In qualitative research the intention is confirmability, not objectivity (Sandelowski, 1986).

Two methods were used to attain confirmability. First, a committee member read over the first transcript and gave feedback regarding the interview process. He also examined the researcher's first attempt at categorizing the data and gave feedback regarding those early efforts. He also checked and confirmed the process at many stages. The second method was to hire an Aboriginal laywoman in order to address add confidence that, within a cross-cultural topic area, the words and concepts that the research participants provided were done justice.The Aboriginal laywoman was enlisted to check whether the general impressions and interpretations that had been made seemed on track and whether the themes 'made sense'. She had no research experience and was asked to provide general impressions about whether the themes used were meaningful. She compared the data with the categories that had been developed to that point and was invited to tell the researcher her general impressions and if more or different categories were required. She also provided her hunches and feedback regarding the processes that she perceived in the data. As described in the Results section, this Aboriginal laywoman's input helped the researcher confirm a key aspect of the data.

Reliability in quantitative research examines whether or not a research finding is stable or consistent (Sandelowski, 1986). With quantitative research one can determine stability or consistency by observing whether behavior changes or remains

the same over time. Qualitative research aims to understand those phenomena which are not knowable from observation alone and, therefore, consistency can not occur by observation alone.

Auditability is the criterion of rigor related to consistency in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 1986). This criterion requires that researchers keep track of all the methods that are used in the process of conducting research (Sandelowski, 1986; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). In this research project, copies of each stage of the codes and coded categories were kept. It is intended that a second researcher would be able to derive similar conclusions given the researcher's data, insights, and generated categories (Sandelowski). That is, if a second person were to go through this process, they could understand how the current researcher came to the conclusions she did, not necessarily that a second researcher would come to exactly the same model (Sandelowski). To some extent, this is similar to how results are written up in quantitative studies. If you gave exactly the same quantitative results to two different researchers, they should have very similar ideas about what is happening in the data but they might use different words, phrases, or emphasis to articulate and report those results.

Attention turns now to the Results, which begin with a description of the basic psychosocial problem, powerlessness. Next, the model, which was developed to integrate the findings, is described. Last, is a section called "Definitional Issues".

RESULTS

The primary purpose of this research was to generate an understanding of empowerment definitions, processes, and outcomes in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. A model, Becoming Whole, was developed, which articulates these empowering processes and outcomes. The description of the model begins with a discussion of the basic psychosocial problem which the women faced in their empowerment. This description of powerlessness for this group provides a context for, and background to, the model.

The Context: Powerlessness

Powerlessness was identified in the Introduction as the basic psycho-social problem for Aboriginal people in general. Within the context of the interviews, each participant described different sources of powerlessness. Some of the interviewees described physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and/or neglect in their families. Several described other forms of loss, particularly by tragic deaths and suicide. Another source of powerlessness for many was a sense of having few choices, in terms of careers or education. All of the participants described being the victims of racism and poverty. Racism occurred in the lives of participants on multiple levels and in a number of ways. It is noteworthy that participants were never asked directly about racism but all talked about it's impact. Each time the topic arose, a slightly different perspective was described. One participant described how common it is for Aboriginal women to experience racism.

> Around the time that I started working at [Aboriginal organization], we had women from all different regions, different languages, different experiences - but there was something we all had in common, there was a really strong bond. We have a strong understanding what it's like to grow up to be Aboriginal - especially if you're visually Aboriginal: You experience racism, you experience discrimination: Just thought you weren't as worthy as other people (C, 3, 67-75.)

Government of Canada policies, such as the Indian Act, the reserve system, and the residential school systems and their repercussions, described in the Introduction, were also discussed by most participants. Of these, the residential school system and its sequelae was most frequently cited by participants as a painful influence. Participants described how the residential school system forced entire generations of Aboriginal people to leave the love and acceptance provided by families and enter environments of non-acceptance, including rejection of their language and their culture. Many of the participants had no knowledge of the traditional Aboriginal values and traditional ways as they were growing up. Residential schools had a negative influence on participants' families. Many of the participants' parents or grandparents lacked the ability to adequately raise their children because they had never been parented. This left a legacy of Aboriginal parents who lacked the ability to fulfill this role. As a result, several participants described themselves as being robbed of their childhood. That is, they were neglected and abandoned when very young, and a few had to care for younger siblings when only 9 or 10 years old themselves. Some described childhood sexual abuse and being sexualized as young women, both within the family and in

mainstream situations. A few described vivid accounts of family violence and living in fear of violence from caregivers. For example, "C" reported,

> It's really hard to talk about it...It's hard to disclose... And I remember when I first disclosed it to anybody.. And I'm going...I can't believe myself it's happening. Because it's locked inside of you forever and ever and ever...It was really really hard. But my story is not a rare story - it's a common story. And I was growing up in a violent home. My [parent] was an alcoholic. And [s/he] was abusive - not just to me but my siblings..and growing up in a time when people didn't pay attention to that. Like it just happened in homes and I remember the screaming, and the blood, and the terror...and I know it has affected each one of us in our own way. (C, 6, p183 - 190).

Many of the participants described alcohol abuse by family members and the influence that alcohol abuse had on the family. A few of the participants also described early and tragic deaths (including suicide) of family members. Although many participants mentioned growing up in poverty, none directly linked poverty to racist practices and policies (e.g., the reserve system and discriminatory hiring practices). Nor did poverty emerge as the most painful aspect of their experiences. Several participants who had lived in poverty described relatively healthy, happy childhoods within their families, on the reserve. These participants generally did not encounter racism until they moved off reserves often to go to high school. With this change of context, a few described suddenly encountering racism and prejudicial attitudes towards them. One participant described learning, in school, that Aboriginal people were 'savages'. She felt confusion. She knew she was not a savage and could not comprehend being told she was one by a person in authority. Participant "F" described her experience with racism in schools.

> There was a lot of racism in the school I was in....I didn't realize until I was an adult that kids didn't like me [not] because the ugly orange dress my mother made me wear...It wasn't that at all..It was the fact that I was Indian (F, 8, 273- 275).

Another repercussion of Government of Canada policies and the racism they engendered was that many of the participants experienced the personal burn of how racist attitudes made them feel unworthy, unlikeable, or that they did not belong. The first of the next two quotes shows what this was like and the second shows that although "K" experienced racism in the high school and got into fights over it, she was 'too white' for the reserve.

> I didn't want to be a Native person because back then: It was not good, we were labeled as - 'you're lower class people' - and, yeah, that has an impact on you....I got into fights because of things that were said [at high school]" (K, p. 26, 1017-1020).

> Another thing that was said to us, 'You're too white', your [family member] is white... You don't belong here. You guys are going to get kicked off the reserve.. So you got it at both ends. So it was almost like, where the hell do you fit in? So for me, that was hard! So, I'm not sure how I coped, but somehow... (K, p. 26, 1040-1042).

Thus, a few of the participants who were either Métis or light skinned First Nations persons felt there was no place of belonging. Another example of this came from "F"'s experience.

> And I didn't spend a whole lot of time on the reserve. As an adolescent and as a teenager I resented that. But I also resented going there because they called us white city kids. And here they called us Indian trash. So it was a place of not belonging to either place (F, p. 11, 374-376).

Another aspect of powerlessness that participants conveyed was a belief, early on, that they had a bleak future. Racism and discrimination contributed to a sense of hopelessness. There were few role models of healthy Aboriginal women leaders or professionals. One participant reflected that attending university was outside the realm of her possibilities. She had absolutely never considered it as an option. Another participant who attended university commented on how few Aboriginal persons were part of the university campus community.

In sum, participants had a sense of hopelessness, unworthiness, and a sense of not belonging. From the participants' perspective, the most negative influence derived from the racist attitudes of individuals and Government of Canada policies, and the repercussions of these. These attitudes were articulated both in the behaviors of individuals, for example, when making racist comments and in Federal policies that resulted in instilling dependence and self-loathing in many Aboriginal people. These policies impaired earlier generations of Aboriginal people and are still present and active today

The Becoming Whole Model

Despite the negative context, the over-arching themes which emerged from the interview process are those of strength, courage, and selfless work for the benefit of others. The participants are leaders and professionals in a society within which the influences of racism have often left them feeling alien and unwanted. A model was developed which describes the processes and outcomes involved in their

empowerment. The overarching process was *becoming whole*. This occurs in two fundamental contexts, the community and the self, and the model is developed into two subprocesses, in order to reflect this: (a) healing within the community and (b) healing within the self. Core concepts were shared between the two subprocesses and serve to drive the model. (See Figure 1 for model.)

'Community' is defined for the purpose of this model as all things Aboriginal and not the self. It includes one's family, one's First Nation, or the Métis community, one's place of employment if it has an Aboriginal focus, the land, Aboriginal traditional spirituality and culture, and Aboriginal people past and present. The inclusion of all Aboriginal people in this definition of community is congruent with 'G's experience that there is a common bond between Aboriginal people in Canada in other parts of the world.

When asked, "do you see your community as all Aboriginal people?," G said,

> Absolutely, oh absolutely, under the skin, it's like easy. It doesn't matter where you go. I traveled to [another continent] and you see the Aboriginal people there. I can reach out. I know who they are. I can relate to them. You know, I'm sure if I traveled to Australia, it would be the same thing. Doesn't matter where you go. You go to an Aboriginal Community, you know they're Aboriginal because you're Aboriginal. You know the signs, you know basically what to do when you go there, you know? The protocols are the same (G, 7, 236-241).

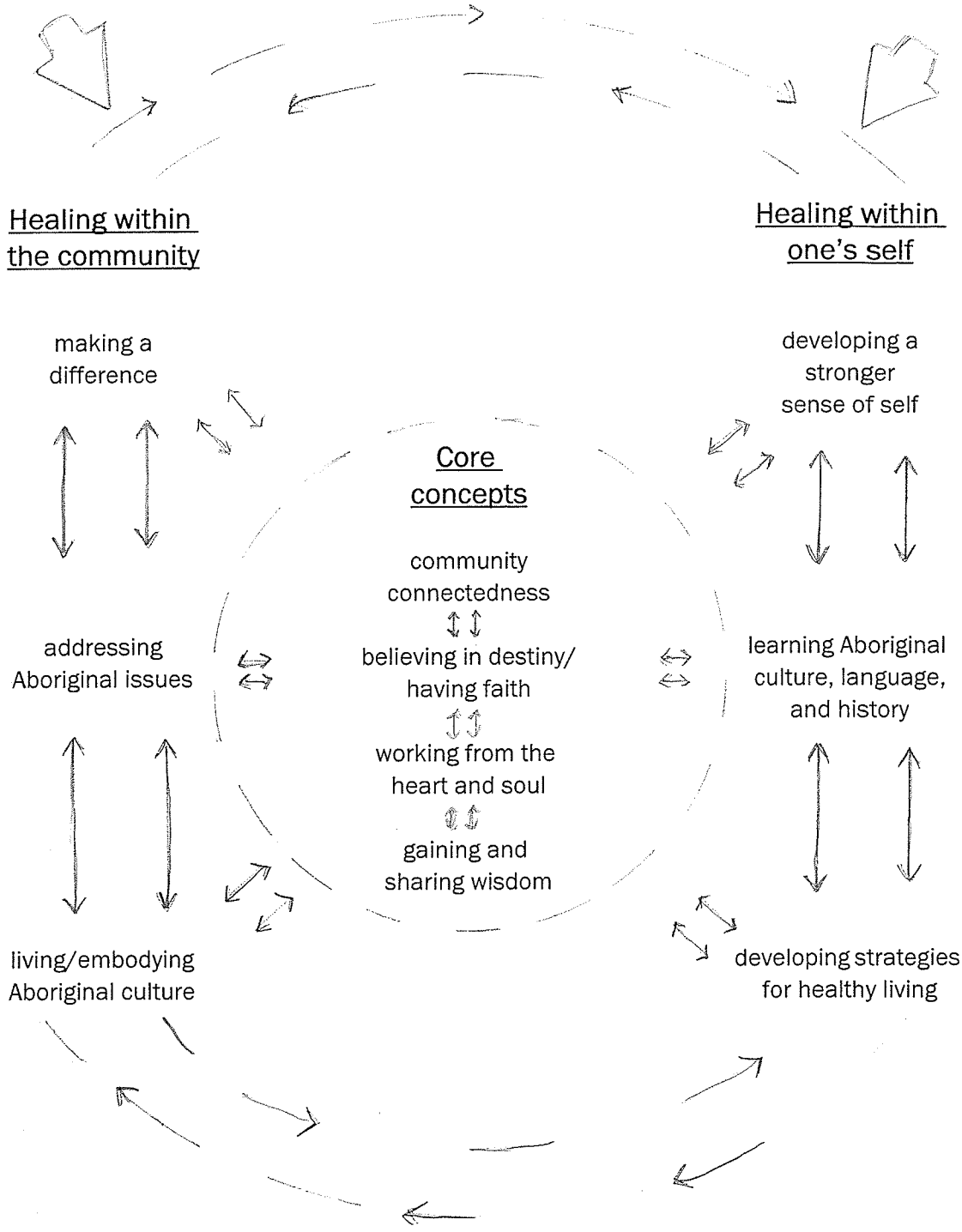

Figure 1: **Becoming Whole:** A Model of Empowerment in Aboriginal Women Leaders and Professionals (developed using grounded theory)

For most of the participants, healing within the self was of lesser emphasis than healing within the community, although they are integrally connected. Core concepts emerged from the data and are shared between the two subprocesses. Each of the three major constituents of the model is described below. After each of these is described, the dynamic relationship among the elements within each constituent part is detailed. Finally, the overall dynamic nature of the model is described.

Subprocess: Healing within the Community

The first of the two subprocesses in the 'Becoming Whole' model is healing within the community. It comprised three interrelated concepts namely making a difference, addressing Aboriginal issues, and living/teaching Aboriginal history, and culture.

Making a difference. This concept highlights the different activities in which participants were involved and that made changes in the community. These included working on different projects, such as conceptualizing, developing, and maintaining programs. For example, a few participants established organizations that benefit Aboriginal people, such as service delivery organizations for Aboriginal people. Others headed educational programs aimed at either K-12 curriculum for children, or programs that delivered specific skills training, upgrading education, or Aboriginal language education for adults.

Many participants started out working in entry level positions in community organizations and soon found themselves working on and then heading, boards of directors. More than one participant stated that, at some point, she was on 10 - 15 boards. One participant reported earning an education degree at University. Other participants who taught had less formally-developed teaching skills, through work experience in the community. Out of necessity, several participants learned how to raise funds for community development (e.g., to establish a women's shelter or to provide other services to those in need).

A key element of this concept was that participants' took responsibility for changes. The motivation to take responsibility seemed driven by a desire to 'stop the cycles of abuse'. This phrase, 'the cycles of abuse' refers to the tendency for families to engage in negative patterns of behavior over generations. This term is used both within and outside the Aboriginal community. Within the Aboriginal community, the term generally refers to the legacy left by the residential school systems, including poor parenting skills; physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse; neglect; and violence. 'Cycles of abuse' also include intergenerational alcoholism and substance abuse.

Making a difference in the community reflects a commitment that springs from a need for change. The participants learned how to combat destructive cycles and to deliver much-needed service and education out of concern for the disadvantaged nature of life for many Aboriginal people. All the women were mothers

and they wanted the situation to change for their children and for Aboriginal people as a whole. This commitment came from a sense of urgency regarding the well-being of the people, not necessarily from a belief in one's ability to make change occur.

> If I ask myself things about 'how am I going to deal with this?', I'd never deal with things. You don't ask yourself those kinds of questions when you know something needs to be done. And you don't know something needs to be done from here, in the head. You know something needs to be done from way down deep in your soul (F, 5, 164-167).

Addressing Aboriginal issues. This concept is similar to the making a difference concept in that the participants take responsibility for changes in the Aboriginal community. However, it is distinct in that it focuses solely on Aboriginal issues and content. An illustrative exemplar of this is an emphasis by two participants on working on Aboriginal political issues. For example, they dealt with representatives from different levels of government and other interest groups, in order to make policy changes or to ensure that certain legislation was not passed without adequate input from Aboriginal people. This political work also included working towards gaining resolution regarding land claim issues. This contrasts with the making a difference concept, which includes mainstream-inclusive service delivery and education. The addressing Aboriginal issues concept has two distinct parts namely, (a) addressing Aboriginal issues in both formal and informal ways and (b) promoting and celebrating successes within the Aboriginal community.

Participants addressed problems and issues within Aboriginal agencies and organizations. On the whole, those participants who held formal political positions

were most likely to address Aboriginal issues. However, a few non-political participants also mentioned publicly addressing any concerns within Aboriginal agencies and institutions, or publicly discussing Federal policies that negatively influence Aboriginal people. Several participants address Aboriginal issues by keeping themselves and others accountable (both within and outside the Aboriginal community).

> K: First Nations issues are going to be my priority for the rest of my life. I know that, I know who I am. Where I come from and all that. I've been looking at the bigger picture... someone's gotta help change that too. How do you do it? Those systems are so stuck.
> Researcher: when you talk about the bigger picture, are you talking about perceptions about Aboriginal people?
> K: Not just that - but the way this country is governed. It's so sick. It's so corrupt.....I'm very familiar with First Nations issues. I think I've done things to impact change there...I've been involved in the bigger picture and I see things on a bigger scale and I look in my own back yard and I think holy shit! This is where we learned from and why the heck did we adopt those systems that are so corrupt? Let's start coming up with our own... Let's start setting our own precedence... And the more I say that the more support I am getting. And they say - ok show us how we can do it! So we try to do things in this office to try and show them, yeah let's do it this way and let's set our own precedence and work at these systems so that it is more accountable to the people.(K, 29, 1137-1158).

Most of the participants took part in the second aspect of the Addressing Aboriginal Issues concept, to promote and celebrate successes. To some extent, this conscious acknowledgment of successes may counteract the negative media coverage about Aboriginal people and the Aboriginal community, which can be disheartening.

> When you see kids sniffing on TV. The whole country sees the worst of Aboriginal people... That's hard. At times, I think.. why am I doing this, why don't I just go on and do what I want to do and forget about doing this... you know...go get a job... keep working at [mainstream institution] and making my hundred grand, you know? And that can get you down. Because it hurts. Just seeing your people at their worst - when you know that's not how it is. You know! Practically all my friends are Aboriginal and all of them are professionals (A, 3, 92-98).

Participants chose to consciously acknowledge and celebrate all the small and large achievements in their families, organizations, and in the community. This acknowledgment of success increases the community's consciousness about the positive activities and changes that are occurring. It included acknowledging their own successes, as part of the community. For example, the following discussion with "G" demonstrated her sense of her accomplishments and her sense of the community's feelings about her work.

> Researcher: How has your community received your success?
>
> G: Probably just the same way as my family. Throughout the course of all the work that I've done throughout my life, there are certain things that have happened. There have been videos, there have been films that have been made...[mentions other things that put her in public view but which are not mentioned here because they are quite idiosyncratic and, therefore, may give away her identity]. Those visible milestones, I guess, if you want to call them that. There is usually some excitement. Someone will phone me from another province and say, "I'm watching you on [TV] network or on APTN, which is national... They'll say, "I was watching you on APTN, you know" and so they get excited about that. I don't think the excitement is as great now because we do have APTN. So, I think that any one of us... when we know our people have worked long and hard for their success, we're happy for them, You know, there's no competition. And, for the most part, that's how I see it. The people that I've encountered have always been happy. They've expressed their interest and their support (G, 8, 243-257).

Note that "G" also states, in this quote, that 'there's no competition.' This observation is congruent with the Aboriginal value of emphasizing team work and is related to the non-hierarchal nature of Aboriginal existence. If there is 'no competition', as "G" believes, it makes it easier to celebrate others' successes. This active celebration and acknowledgment of the positive things that are going on in the community is an important part of the cycle of healing because it shows mainstream and, more importantly, the Aboriginal community that there is much more than sniffing glue and the loss of land and lives occurring in the Aboriginal community.

Living/embodying Aboriginal culture. An important element in the healing that is occurring within the community is the participants' experience of and emphasis on teaching Aboriginal history and sustaining Aboriginal culture, including values. This emphasis on all things Aboriginal sprang from a belief that strength comes from greater knowledge regarding the history of Aboriginal people in Canada and a re-connection with one's cultural practices.

Participants were aware of the historical context regarding the loss of Aboriginal culture, language, and the expression, for many, of Aboriginal traditional spiritual practices (e.g., Government of Canada policies, such as the reserve and residential school systems). In order to address this loss, some of the participants believe that teaching Aboriginal history and re-educating others about culture is imperative and appropriate when Aboriginal people gather. Two of the participants

were educators who taught about both the historical context that resulted in the current situation and have re-introduced the old teachings.

Another way in which Aboriginal culture is embodied by the participants is in ceremonies. 'F' is an Elder who said some of her daily routines included bringing ceremonies into the workplace. For example, an important part of each morning for her is a smudge. A 'smudge' is the term used to signify purifying one's self with sacred medicines, including tobacco, sage, or cedar. This requires that you put the sacred medicine, sage, for example, in a natural container like a seashell, light it, and then as one person holds the shell, another gathers the smoke (to the best of his or her ability) and covers one's self with it. Usually, going back to the smoke several times to gather and spread more. At the end, the person holding the shell will generally pass it to another and will 'smudge' herself with the sacred smoke.

Although participants were interested in reconnecting with Aboriginal culture themselves, only a few were willing to invest energy into teaching about Aboriginal history and culture to mainstream people. 'A', for example, reported that she refused to try anymore.

> All the time I spent in the [work environment] trying to educate people about Aboriginal people... All that time and energy I spent trying to educate people... There is no pay back there (A, 13, 467-469).

> I made a commitment to myself: I'm not going to bother trying to educate mainstream anymore, I'm going to spend all my time educating Aboriginal people... because then, they'll go out and do that..I can't any more (A, 14, 570-571).

Teaching Aboriginal culture and spirituality to Aboriginal people was an activity that many participants, but not all, conducted. Within their work organizations, for example, two participants chose not to do any teaching about Aboriginal practices. Their position was that practicing culture is private and it was not appropriate to bring culture into the workplace. Instead, their focus was on teaching skills and carrying out the mandate of the organization. For example, if the mandate was teaching technical or computer skills, that was the sole focus of the organization. As mentioned earlier, 'A' believed that her own cultural practice is a private matter. Similarly, 'E' observed that it was inappropriate to bring cultural practices or discussions into the work setting, because different people have divergent views. On the other hand, 'C' reported that she, with a group of other women, aimed to create a work context in which the women could express themselves in a culturally appropriate manner.

> So we would blend all our beliefs and practices and not criticize anyone with different practices or who had none. We were trying to build a generic culture. And I think we were successful. We are all at different levels of beliefs and practice, but we all honor each other for that. And we all strongly support that (C, 3-4, 101-105).

The living/embodying Aboriginal culture concept also included the embodiment and perpetuation of Aboriginal values. One of the traditional Aboriginal values being perpetuated was the non-hierarchical nature of Aboriginal society. As was discussed in the introduction, traditionally Aboriginal values emphasize that all persons are equal. Holding a given role in Aboriginal society is based on skill and

ability. In traditional Aboriginal society, no person is considered more 'special' or important than any other person. Participants in this study expressed this non-hierarchal value by being able to approach, mingle with, work with, and confront mainstream leaders or CEOs of companies because their underlying value is that no person is better than any other.

> I'm functional at so many different levels and to me the ability to do that means there's something holding you together. You know, so I can go into a sweat lodge, into the parliament buildings...from talking to one of the old one's at home to going into a CEO's office or apartment and dealing with that and all that in between (G, 13, 462-467).

> You don't want to put yourself higher than others and in order for you to be effective in dealing with these guys - don't put them above you... They're at your same level...- you are just as smart as they are. That's how I look at it - in order to be effective and know you're not going to be intimated - and I don't care if you're the Prime Minister. And I always say - if I'm the Queen of England. Part of that, I guess it all goes back to being grounded - and I don't know how I got to be like that because I wasn't always like that - I never really thought about it. I don't want to put anybody above me or below me! (K, 27, 1057-1065).

Another way in which traditional values were expressed was in the high value the participants placed on women and women's contributions. That is, some First Nations communities were and still are, matriarchal.

> I come from a matrilineal society where women are valued because the strength of our house group depends on women and the birth of children (G, 1, 15-16).

Several participants claimed a woman-focused heritage or spoke of the strength of women within traditional life. They experience women as valuable

contributors to the community and that it is women's place to add to the wealth of the community.

> So I think women pass the culture on, they pass on the values, pass on all those things and that's just part of who they are and it shows up around them (L, 15, 584-586).

This emphasis was not common to all the participants' experiences. B, for example, described herself as coming from a sexist family. The following interchange and her comments regarding her family members' attitudes demonstrate the gender inequality in her family.

> Researcher: How has your success been received by your family?
>
> B: By my brothers it's a non-issue, because they just don't see me as successful at all. Like, you know, 'you're just a silly little sister.' I haven't quite figured that one out yet. Cause I think, you know, there's been things that happened that I thought would have been quite neat for them, but they've never wanted to come to something where I was being the centre of attention. Cause then it would... I don't know. Maybe it would make them think that women were equal. You know? (B, 8, 295-301).

And later in the interview, "B" reported the following about a brother's understanding of domestic violence,

> B: He just has no idea whatsoever about the whole cycle and why it happens. Obviously a woman must like it if she stays there. I don't even know if I won like a major award, whether the males in my family would ever take part. I don't think so. So I'm sort of an outcast, actually in the family, in some ways. I think my mother is proud. But I'm an outcast as far as not following what I'm supposed to. Which is interesting (B, 9, 318-326).

Dynamics Among the Healing Within the Community Concepts

The three concepts, making a difference, addressing Aboriginal issues, and living/embodying Aboriginal culture are all linked in that they all promote healing within the Aboriginal community (See Figure 2). All are aimed at bettering the community in

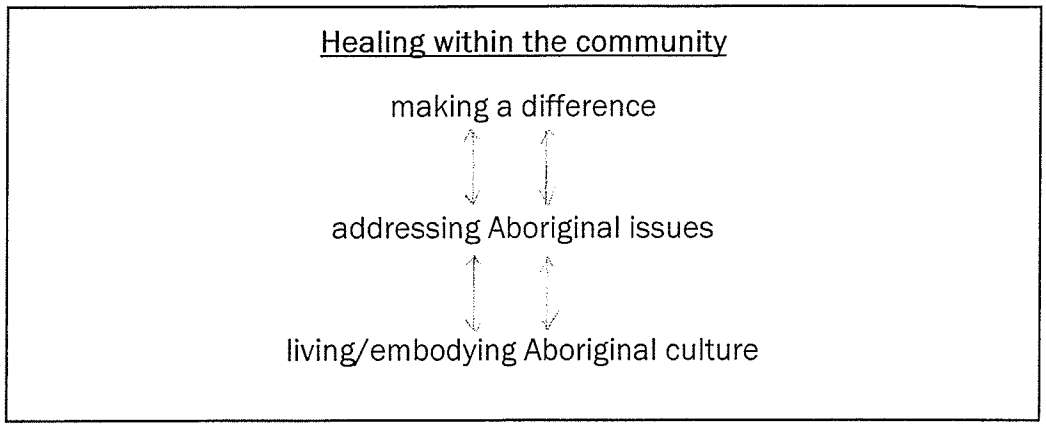

Figure 2: Healing within the community categories

some way and all feed back and forth between each other. For example, making a difference, or taking responsibility for changes, aided the participants (and others) to address Aboriginal issues and also promoted and furthered living and embodying the culture. They are all direct change activities. However, living/embodying Aboriginal culture promotes healing within the community in both a direct manner (because the participants are forwarding Aboriginal ways) and in an indirect manner (by carrying out the values). That is, behaving in a manner that is congruent with and reflects Aboriginal values is a way of modeling positive Aboriginal approaches which others may choose to follow or not. It is clear from this subprocess that identification with

Aboriginal history, culture, and heritage and sharing with others, is an important part of the healing. This theme of embracing the Aboriginal-ness of things is present in each constituent part of the model.

Subprocess: Healing Within one's Self

This subprocess is comprised of concepts which pertain to the healing that took place at the individual level. The three relevant concepts are: developing a stronger sense of self; learning Aboriginal culture, language and history; and developing strategies for healthy living.

Developing a stronger sense of self. This concept is essential to the healing within one's self subprocess. "D" made this clear in the following dialogue.

> Researcher: Is there anything that you feel has really helped you along, that really sticks out?
>
> D: Developing a strong sense of who I am, my identity, for sure, has had a great impact (D, 8, 272-273).

Developing a stronger sense of one's self meant that the participants learned to develop greater beliefs in their own merit. Many began to divest themselves of their feelings of worthlessness and hopelessness as they became more aware of their abilities. Development of self was enhanced by (a) learning to ask for and/or receive help, social support, and validation from others and (b) integrating one's past.

Support and validation came from a number of different sources and in a number of different ways for the participants. For example, several participants who had experienced personal trauma in their childhood and early adulthood received

counseling. One participant attributed much of her self-development to belonging to an Aboriginal women's sharing circle for several years. Another participant credited belonging to a grief group as one step towards developing a stronger sense of self.

Social support was also instrumental in many of the participants' developing sense of themselves. Participant 'G,' who had a healthy family background, attributed her increasing belief in herself to learning that the 'old ones' in her community believed in her. They validated her by acknowledging her abilities and the role that she would play within the community in this generation. 'C' reported being validated when persons in the community she had helped acknowledged that she had been instrumental in them changing their lives. 'K' was validated when an older family member supported her decision to apply for a position that she believed was beyond her abilities. Mentors in the workplace aided two of the women's development of a stronger sense of self.

Integrating one's past was an important aspect of developing the self for many of the participants. As mentioned in discussion of the context, many participants had suffered physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse or neglect in childhood. All participants had been subjected to racism. A part of their journey towards wholeness came from what one participant referred to as 'addressing the old ghosts' from the past. Several participants discussed their need to come to terms with the losses they experienced early in life and continue to experience, for example, with the epidemic suicides within the community. Integrating their past

meant the participants recognized their losses and learned to grieve. This integration was experienced by the participants as an ongoing process and reflects the layers of pain that exist within the individual and the community.

> For me, with all the things I have been through in life, I will probably always struggle with self-esteem and I will probably be healing right till I'm gone to the grave and I have accepted that. I just take things as they come. Sometimes I react in certain ways to certain incidents and I really look at myself and say, why is that impacting on me in that way? Sometimes I have the answers, sometimes I don't for awhile. If you don't, you accept it and just deal with your anger, your pain, whatever happens to be driving you from whatever incident that given day. I guess for me and not just for myself, so many First Nations women have gone through the loss of loved one's through suicide, have been physically and sexually abused and it's how we deal with those kinds of tragedies that helps us feel OK (K, 1, 16-26).

The participants' ability to integrate the painful experiences in their lives allowed them to be motivated to work towards 'stopping the cycles of abuse.' Some participants gave examples of the sorts of personal struggles they have had.

> I had great sorrow around abandonment. I feel I was abandoned by my child(ren)'s father. I felt for a long time resentment, anger and all those things. I don't recall when it was that I had to accept that I was going to be a single mom. And it wasn't about being a single mom. It was, "wasn't I important enough to stick around and be there, for him"? And I suppose a lot of it goes back to feeling abandoned by my own dad. He's there to be the strong one and to support and not to be violated, to be let down (C, 11, 375-381).

Learning Aboriginal culture, language, history. This concept is intrinsically linked to the Living/Embodying concept within the community subprocess. This aspect focuses on the individual's gaining knowledge regarding Aboriginal ways. It contrasts with the Living/Embodying concept, which is reserved for acting out

Aboriginal values in everyday life and imparting this type of knowledge. For many of the participants, as they went into the community to work towards becoming whole, they found that they had to make sense of the negative situation.

> Sad, but it took me time: Until I became [leader in the community] to start to look at the history of First Nations people: the state of affairs. I started to look at that and looked at the residential school system and it's impact, the 60s scoop - where our kids were taken away and placed out for adoption by Children's Aid Society. Especially the residential school stuff, though. The more I learned about that, the more I began to understand why things were the way they are... The loss of parenting skills and, of course, welfare and that coming into being and how that created a further state of dependency and oppression. And then I started to look at how the heck do we get ourselves out of this mess? (K, 2, 48-62).

Learning more about history and culture was an important aspect of the healing, for many of the participants. For example, when asked, "what do you think has had the most positive impact on you?" 'D' responded,

> I think - getting to know myself as an Aboriginal woman, 'who is [name]?', you know, and 'who do I want to be?' I had a good sense of who I was already from my family and from being from [Reserve] but I didn't have the historical context or the cultural context totally. I had pieces of that and I rounded that picture out for myself. That's what gave me confidence to overcome some of these barriers and challenge these obstacles (D, 5, 164-174).

'D' pursued this learning for personal reasons, which led to her increased sense of her identity as a First Nations woman. Learning more about the history of Aboriginal people, including the discriminatory policies that affected them, helped the women gain an understanding of the current state of the Aboriginal community. They learned it is not that Aboriginal people are intrinsically 'lazy' or 'no good,' as the stereotypes would have them believe. Instead, their dependency was imposed by

Government of Canada policies and learned over generations. Learning the history behind this situation served to increase participants' understanding and empathy for their community and, simultaneously, provided impetus for further action to both resolve these issues and teach others about the history.

Learning Aboriginal language(s) that had been lost to so many was an important component for D. She described how in early adulthood she was struck by a deep sense of loss regarding not knowing her language.

> Another sorrow I discovered in myself was the loss of my language. I grieved that for some time (D, 6, 191-192).

Another participant, "L," a Métis woman, described how the issue of 'legitimate' language was played out in her family.

> My grandfather was [a European immigrant] who spoke English, so my grandmother never really spoke the [Aboriginal] language at home because my grandfather would say, "don't speak that foreign language in the home", Which was hilarious because he was the one from [Europe] (L, 1, 25-28).

'L' described this as 'hilarious', demonstrating her sense that this debate was absurd. Yet, at a deeper level, it is clear how the loss of language reflected negative attitudes towards Aboriginal people, as the Euro-Canadian family member behaved as if he and the English language were superior and the Aboriginal language was 'foreign' and inferior.

From learning more about Aboriginal culture, the traditional teachings and beliefs, including learning about differences among different First Nations, many of the participants developed a stronger self-identity. This reconnecting with Aboriginal

values and appreciating the unique strengths of Aboriginal people was evident in many of the participants' stories. It can be described as a reclamation of identity.

Developing strategies for healthy living. This important concept refers to all types of strategies and skills. These include improving relationships of all sorts, including with family members, work colleagues, employees, employers, friends, romantic partners, and community members. It also includes learning to parent well. Participants who did not get their basic needs met in their family of origin were not provided with models of good parenting. For them, learning to parent well included learning to make conscious choices on a moment-to-moment basis about how to relate well to one's children. Similarly, when relationships in one's family of origin are unhealthy (e.g., if incest or abuse has occurred), relationships with one's parents and other family members tend to remain unstable and often unhealthy for some time. Again, conscious effort, energy, and work were required in order for participants to learn to relate better to their parents and family. Similarly, when relationships in the family of origin have been challenging, persons will often have strained relationships in other aspects of their lives. Basic trust and communication skills are sometimes lacking and, therefore, developing and sustaining healthy relationships of any kind can be difficult. Many recognized that their relationships had been a struggle and that part of developing healthy lives and nourishing healthy relationships included letting go of unhealthy relationships.

Another strategy for healthy living was finding a balance between the needs of family, the community, and the self. For a few participants, becoming immersed in work was a strategy for coping with life but it was not a strategy for building healthy relationships and, thus, finding the balance was a constant challenge. For example, "G" mentioned that she struggled with trying to put more energy into her personal life and relationships because, for a time, her work life seemed to take over as she faced work-related challenges. The following quote demonstrates both this specific concept and an aspect of the fluidity of the model. That is, participants are still 'in the process' of healing and moving towards greater wholeness.

> Although I didn't outright abandon my children, I was a workaholic. So my kid[s] say, I know how important what you did was.. You were fighting for our rights... you were fighting for us and our children, I know that... but it doesn't make it any easier. So we are dealing with issues like that now (G, 12, 419-423).

Good verbal and non-verbal communication skills are both important and necessary for relationship building and maintenance. Communication is important both in relationships and in gaining other skills, such as work related skills. Most participants believed their communication skills were very good. When asked about things that have helped along the way, 'D' mentioned the importance of being aware of how her behavior communicates different messages to others.

> Coming to understand how I want to develop relationships with people, you know and how my choices impact the kind of relationships I am going to have with people. In terms of how I might speak to them, how I might approach them, how I dress, all of me, the language I might use when I talk, all those things, what I choose to share with them, I think all of that, having that

> understanding has helped me develop relationships with different people (D, 8, 274-279).

Another important skill that the participants learned or improved upon was decision-making. Historically, Aboriginal people had their day-to-day decision-making opportunities usurped. The reserve system brought the Indian Agent and all decisions had to be channeled through him. The residential school system, similarly, took away opportunities for Aboriginal people to make their own decisions and they were forced to do things that were often counter to the traditional teachings. "C" notes this decision-making deficit in relation to her work in the Aboriginal community.

> We were dealing with addictions, we were dealing with dysfunctional families and we were dealing with child welfare. Every woman we were dealing with had either herself or her children involved within the child welfare system, and we are going, "what happened? What happened to families?" All these things are happening - and you start looking historically and you know what? - most of those people's parents, grandparents were in residential schools...a lot of those skills weren't transferred. A lot of those parents couldn't parent, couldn't make decisions, couldn't think independently, couldn't even look at defining future goals - because no one ever asked them...That's what I worked with! (C, 2, 34-43)

At the time of the interviews, participants generally felt they were making good choices and good decisions. D, for example, discussed how she learned to make decisions by being in an Aboriginal women's healing circle that met weekly for several years. Further, part of D's definition of success was that she wants to make good decisions for her life. "B" noted that temptations come up and these must be addressed in decision-making.

> You can make the great decision or the one you don't think is probably good." I usually will try and make the right decision. I think there's always temptations out there, that we get tested and test what we're made of and stuff. And hopefully we're made of the right stuff (B, 19, 740-744).

Although the participants did not specifically state how decision making skills improved, it seemed to come with experience. As they gained more experience in the world, they chose to make their lives healthier, they also decided to make more conscious choices about their lives.

Another strategy that the participants developed in their process of healing was to obtain work-related skills, such as report writing abilities, learning to develop budgets and/or grant proposals, learning to manage staff and a myriad other skills. Obtaining skills and abilities helped to increase the participants' sense of efficacy. Gaining experience both in Aboriginal and mainstream work contexts was also important. Attaining education in mainstream institutions (e.g., university) was another strategy used by participants.

Treating all others as equals is both an Aboriginal value, as mentioned earlier, and a good career- and work-related strategy. This strategy was important when the participants were working towards gaining access to resources. D, for example, said she did not let the status of others get in her way.

> Just because people have positions and titles - you take that all away - they are just a person (D, 4, 148-149).

Dynamics Among Healing Within One's Self Concepts

The concepts within this section are all interrelated (see Figure 3). Developing

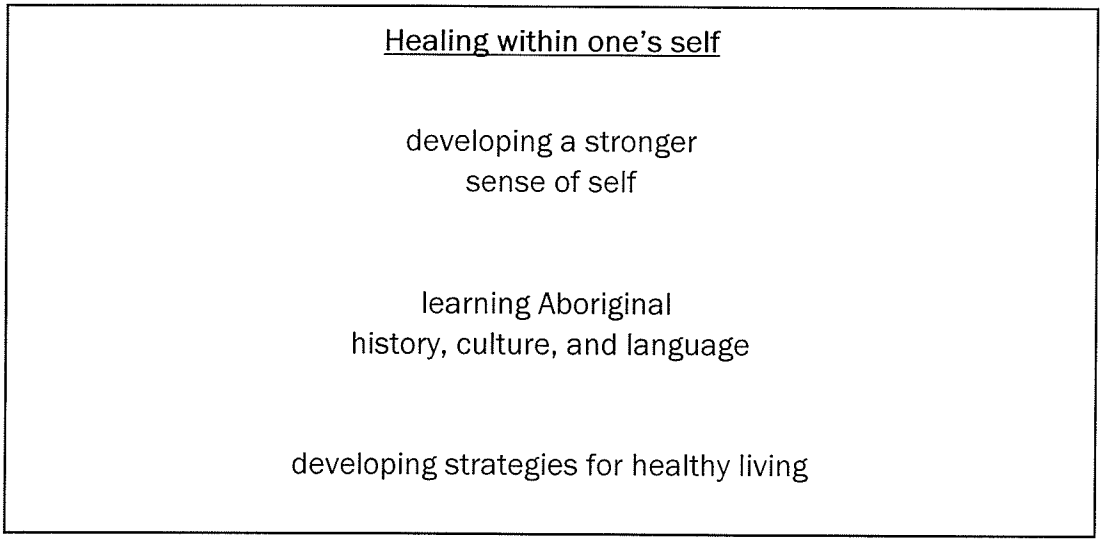

Figure 3: Healing within one's self categories

a stronger sense of self was promoted by learning Aboriginal culture, language, and history and by developing strategies for healthy living. As the research participants were validated by family and community members, they developed a stronger sense of themselves as they learned more about Aboriginal history, culture and, for a few, came back to their language. This fed back into their development of their sense of themselves. As they developed their sense of themselves, they learned more strategies for healthy living. Working on their relationships and other skills helped to increase their sense of themselves, in turn. As the individual developed in any one sphere, it tended to increase healing within the self.

Becoming Whole: Core Concepts

In Figure 1, the middle circle encapsulates the Core concepts shared by both subprocesses. They were originally identified as "Core concepts which make the whole model work" by one of the participants in the model validation process. That is, the presence of the qualities and attributes described in these concepts were necessary for the key process, becoming whole, to occur. Core concepts include community connectedness, believing in destiny and having faith, working from the heart and soul, and gaining and sharing wisdom.

Community connectedness. This concept refers to the Aboriginal sense of community. Aboriginal culture tends to be much more communal than mainstream culture, which emphasizes individuality. Community connectedness is integral to the model because it is the participants' connection to the community that drives them to act on its behalf. This concept includes recognizing, feeling, and expressing one's sense of self as interconnected with one's family, organization, the Aboriginal community, spiritual aspects of self, the land, nature, and culture. This connection was often simply implied by what research participants said and was stated in indirect ways. Participants demonstrated their connectedness in many ways.

> First Nations issues are going to be my priority for the rest of my life. I know that. I know who I am, where I come from and all that" (K, 28, 1137-1148).

Many participants discussed their connection to the land and/or nature. For example, "E" describes this connection, through her uncle's experience.

> In the north, the Aboriginal community are very much attached to the land. So my uncle would just disappear. He would just go off into the bush and it was nothing to hear people say he's just out in the bush... And it never dawned on me, what did they do in the bush? But that was the relationship, if stress was ever there, there was a connection to the land. It's the water, it's the grass, it's the trees, it's the wilderness. (E, 6, 239-245).

Spiritual connection is an important aspect of this connectedness as well, as one of the participants pointed out in the model validation process. For many of the participants, spirituality is a core part of the feeling of connection. The participants varied in terms of whether they expressed their spirituality through their connection to the land, in traditional approaches such as ceremonies like daily smudging, or other means, such as Christianity. One of the participants said that when she is in difficulty, she asks the Creator for guidance and is sent a spirit guide, who helps her and guides her work. 'F' discussed her traditional approach to expressing her spirituality and the importance of that in her work.

> For the last four years I have danced in the (specific) Lodge. The people who hired me asked me to ensure that the ceremonies are never again taken away from the children. And that's the only place I know where God's truth is not interpreted by man. God's truth is interpreted by the spirits at the Sundance pole and nobody can mess with that (F, 2, 60-65).

Another aspect of this connection is the participants' connection to culture. 'A', for example, feels her cultural connection is a very personal aspect of her life.

> I don't promote culture but I practice it on my own. That's who I am, that's just what I do. I don't even promote it to my children or my partner.... my view is that you can't separate the two in our culture, the whole medicine wheel, you can't separate them. I wouldn't accept anybody speaking about their religion all the time or trying to promote it, so I don't do that either (A, 1, 5-11).

Further, this sense of community includes connection to those persons who have gone before. As one participant pointed out, the phrase "all of my relations", often used to start traditional prayers, refers to the ancestors: The grandmothers and grandfathers who have already passed into the Spirit World.

Each participant's feeling of inclusiveness regarding 'Aboriginal' community varied. For example, both 'K' and 'L' stated that they had agreed to be interviewed based primarily on the fact that the researcher is a Métis person and, therefore, they were willing to help her. However, 'K' also reported that her political work focuses solely on making changes for First Nations persons. 'G,' another First Nations woman, when asked initially, defined her community as primarily her extended family and First Nation. When asked, "do you see your community, as well, as the whole Aboriginal people?," her answer was more inclusive and, as was quoted earlier, included Indigenous persons around the world.

Feeling connected to and within the Aboriginal community may be related to a developmental stage or it may be an indicator of the degree of healing that has taken place within the individual. That is, as was described in the earlier discussion of racism and other sources of powerlessness, several participants voiced a feeling of belonging nowhere. "K," for example, quoted earlier, said that she felt she did not fit anywhere when she was in high school. Yet, as an adult, she has a strong sense of her community and takes her responsibility for being a leader and role model very seriously.

Related to this, in a discussion with "G" regarding how Aboriginal people have a reputation for not supporting each other, she postulated that this most likely occurs in unhealthy communities.

> Researcher: In some communities, when Aboriginal women, women especially, get successful, [I have heard that)] there is a sense of, "well who do you think you are?" Do you think there is truth to that?
>
> G: Oh, absolutely! And you probably experience it a lot more when you come into a really unhealthy community. That's what it is. It's the whole freaking thing about colonization that I just feel, you know... It gets me angry! (G, 8, 258-263)

Believing in destiny/having faith. The participants in this study were chosen because of the leadership role they hold in society. This concept refers to the perception that many had that their role was predetermined. That is, they see themselves as fulfilling the role they were 'supposed to' and their role in the community was 'meant to be.' For example, participant, 'A', referred to herself as a 'torch carrier.'

> I really feel like I'm one of the.. not the guardian.. but a carrier, I guess, of the torch. Whatever way you phrase it. I don't know where I got the idea from, that I have to do this but it's always been (A, 5, 148-151).

Similarly, L described a 'meant to be' quality to her position and, somewhat hesitantly, agreed to a sense of destiny in how she came to be in her position.

> L: You know, I guess I do believe that some people are driven to do stuff. And some of us get the opportunity to do it and that's all there is. It's not like I'm any smarter than any body else [or] I'm any more anything than anybody else. I've been very fortunate. I have had opportunities presented to me and, you know, I've taken those opportunities - or I've tried it... or.. And some people

> just never get those opportunities... So I've just been lucky, you know... or it's just the way it was meant to be for me - almost...
>
> Researcher: Are you kind of hinting at a destiny kind of thing?
>
> L: Yeah, a little bit ... yeah.. (L, 22, 827-835).

An aspect of this belief or faith seemed to come from many participants' sense that they had 'fallen into' their roles, rather than having planned them in a meaningful way. 'K' for example, thought about applying for the position just prior to the one she is in and asked a family member for advice. She reported that she fully expected him to laugh in her face. He supported her, she applied and, much to her surprise, got it. When her current position became available, someone she greatly respected strongly encouraged her to apply. She did so, thinking she did not have a hope of getting it but she did. Similarly, 'A' describes her role in a leadership position in a manner that suggested that she happened to be at the right place at the right time. She said she told a person in a positions of authority a great idea and received funding to make her dream a reality.

The believing in destiny/having faith concept is core and helps to drive the model because it is the participants' faith and belief in their destiny as leaders that permits them to work beyond their often limited sense of personal self-worth. The participants' belief that their role 'ought to be,' allowed them to let their faith guide their way. For example, as mentioned in the last section, 'K' has a spirit guide who is always present. She reported that when her rational side was against certain

behaviors (e.g., speaking up in public against certain policies), she would allow this spirit guide to direct what was required in the situation. Integral to the participants' belief in their role as preordained is a belief in the purposeful nature of one's commitment. Another example of this belief came from 'B"s experience.

> Cause I really believe that this is where I'm meant to be and the road that it's led (B, 10, 388).

When asked whether she felt 'destiny' was involved, 'G' pointed out that choice is important in terms of whether or not to accept destiny and then deciding to faithfully carry it out. She experiences herself as having made a choice about taking the path that has been set out for her.

> I don't know if destiny is the right word but when you believe in reincarnation, as a people, you know that maybe your path has been set out for you in a certain way. But I know that the good creator gave us souls and spirits and minds to be able to make that journey properly and it's our choice: It's our choice as humans (G, 11, 391-394).

Working from the heart and soul. An integral component in the participants' journey towards becoming whole was that their attitudes and behaviors showed their work was personally meaningful. They responded to the need in the community not as a means to heighten their own status or sense of importance but to improve the lives of others. Although the participants often acknowledged that they were comfortable financially, this had not been the primary motivator. The whole notion of materialism in the Aboriginal culture and the issue of 'success' were discussed at length with 'G.' The following quotation includes both the participant and the

researcher's words. Although lengthy, it is included in it's entirety because it illustrates many aspects of the concept of working from the heart and soul. In response to the researcher's question, "How do you see yourself in terms of your own success, where you've gotten to where you are?," 'G' responded,

> You know, I experience discomfort when you talk about success cause I don't know what you mean by success but I'll tell you where I'm at...I'm happy... because I am where I want to be and I've gotten here by doing things that I want to do and if that's success I'm happy with my success..
>
> Researcher: Could you tell me a bit more about what you mean by your feeling about that word?
>
> G: Success to me has a materialistic quality to it just as the word you asked way back, 'professional', 'success' kind of implies there is a visible prize there somewhere. You know, and if that's the case, given my experience, I'm a very unsuccessful person because materialistically, I don't have a thing. No retirement plan, no fancy car. And yet, I've made some really good salaries throughout my life but that part really hasn't been important to me. Now that I'm getting older, I could see why it should become important.
>
> Researcher: Can you tell me more about this, the way you perceive success? Success, then, what is it?
>
> G: Success is being able to continue on with my happy life.. Where I'm not suffering for food and shelter...where I'm not suffering for the love of my family... where I'm not isolated from the land that gives me so much happiness and connection. Where I still have the ability to go out and meet new people and greet new people and interact. Happiness is my ability to be able to continually deal with people throughout the rest of my life.. To me that's success. It's never been really important to me to build a fancy house. It's never been important to me to have a fancy car. I mean, living in the city, I can see where you need to have a vehicle to get around but that's why it's important to me.. But I feel like I'm successful, you know..
>
> Researcher: But in a different way... you are almost hinting that there is a difference in terms of the Aboriginal view of success... And the Euro-

Canadian...Like with Euro-Canadian, you think of more of material success...Is that how you ...

G: No... no.. Because maybe, I'm just not comfortable with the word success...

Researcher: And that's what I'm intrigued about... I kind of want to get at what's...

G: And I don't know if I can explain it so that you can understand it. People somehow look at us as if we shouldn't have expectations of ourselves for materialism and maybe it's the commercialism of it that I don't like. And I make a deliberate effort not to dive into it.. But materialism, if I understand the word correctly.. Part of who I am is to show off how much wealth we have. But it's a wealth that's attached to your family... Attached to your land... So I don't mind bragging about how wealthy I am as a family, because I've got lots of sisters.. I don't mind bragging about how wealthy I am in terms of the mother I've got and the father and the wealth in terms of the land, that's attached to the land... I don't mind bragging about that.. Just because our people aspire to having a nice home, that's not a negative thing. Maybe at a certain point in my life, I'll think, "ok, time to build a house". I want this, and I want this, and I want this. But it's not going to be because it's a status symbol, OK?

Researcher: OK, so the way you described it, just now, it's like the reason for the success....status is not what is driving you at all.

G: No... no..if someone had told me, back when I was a wet behind the ears nineteen year old... Do this because you are going to be famous in 15 years, you know, I didn't do it for that, I did it because it needed to be done and I had the skills... And I really enjoyed it. I'm not doing it because somewhere along the line I figure I'm gonna get a medal...I'm doing it because this is what I want to do at this point in my life and next year it might be that I don't want to do this anymore. (G, 17-18, 601-649).

"D" had a similar point of view about success.

Researcher: Do you see yourself as successful?

D: That's really relative. It depends in who's world. Some people really do define success it terms of money and material things. That's not for me. Success is more like reaching a point in your life where you are *conscious* of

> who you are and you want to make good decisions about the rest of your life. And you want to lead a good life and have really strong healthy relationships. For me, that's success and I feel I am there. And I try to make those conscious choices and decisions every day, in what I do. Even when I am interacting with my child[ren], being out in the community. For me that's important and I guess I see myself successfully reaching a conscious level where I try to be there every day in my relationships with those around me (D, 23, 810-819).

Another related aspect of working from the heart and soul is that the participants made a difference in the lives of others in the community while simultaneously remaining true to themselves. This concept relates closely to the core concept of believing in destiny and having faith because the participants discovered their destiny and then chose to be true to themselves by following that path. This 'meant to be' attitude carried with it a sense of humility. The participants were not taken with self-importance. They did not think themselves better than anyone else in the community. The work they were doing was simply theirs to do.

Working from the heart and soul required the participants act with courage, integrity, and honesty. A few of the participants stated that they had been honest in contexts that resulted in them getting into trouble. "L," for example, reported that, early in her career, she criticized the company she worked for because of how they chose to deal with a certain issue. This resulted in her being fired for her outspoken attitude. Similarly, "K" reported that she had been fired for being honest regarding what she saw as corruption in her superiors. Although both these women were fired

early in their career, they reported that these situations were positive because they resulted in gaining a reputation for honesty .

Respect is another aspect of this concept. One of the participants described her struggle with developing greater self-respect. 'K' discussed her struggle with respect as it pertains to 'all' Elders. She believed that respect must be mutual and provided to young people.

> I talked about Elders and how I struggled, myself, with respecting all Elders because I was abused as a child and when I went back to the community there was an Elder who was appointed to a [position of authority with regards to child issues] who had sexually abused children and that was community knowledge so I have a hard time when I'm told 'respect your Elders.' I believe the same respect has to be provided for youth but it has to be earned (K, 6, 203-208).

Gaining and sharing wisdom. This core concept refers to an attitude the participants held towards life experiences. It is important to the model because the participants' sense of obligation to learn from their experiences, to gain knowledge and wisdom, and to share this wisdom with others fueled their motivation to make changes. Although all of the participants were oppressed by racism and it's sequelae, and many experienced interpersonal trauma, they chose to grow as a result of their painful experiences. Part of gaining wisdom was also learning how to overcome obstacles and barriers. Most did this by addressing them as challenges. A few participants reported that they simply refused to allow obstacles and barriers to get between them and their goals.

> Barriers, I guess would be something that's preventing me from doing something that I want to do. Obstacles, I suppose, are things that are put in my way but I can get over them. Even the barriers - I can break some of those down... on a good day - with a lot of energy: you bet!! (D, 3, 85-88).

Another aspect of gaining wisdom included learning from the Elders and, for one participant, becoming an Elder herself. Becoming an Elder is an honour that is bestowed upon a member of the community, which signifies that the person is a valuable fount of knowledge. Becoming an Elder is not a function of age alone. Rather, it connotes that a person has an understanding of the traditional teachings and ways. The position of Elder is one of responsibility and obligation to the community.

Other aspects of the gaining and sharing wisdom concept include (a) validating the personal strengths and achievement of others, (b) helping others to believe in themselves, and (c) learning to enjoy and appreciate life. Many women mentioned how important it was to help to validate other Aboriginal persons who are doing well. For example, participant 'L' spoke specifically about her decision to be a participant in this study. She explained that she thought it was important that Aboriginal persons get advanced degrees and, therefore, she was willing to help a stranger, in order to promote an Aboriginal person earning a Ph.D.

As the participants gained wisdom, they allowed their wisdom to guided their behavior. Becoming leaders and role models gave them an opportunity to share their wisdom and to encourage others to believe in themselves. Participant "K" expressed

that an important message to teach youth is to believe in themselves. Her answer to the question, "What have you found empowering?" showed how important it is to teach good behavior by living it, by being a role model.

> The support of people...my kid[s] and just knowing that I'm a role model - I don't take that lightly - and walking the talk - and knowing when you are a role model young people are going to look up to you and by doing certain things you can empower them and make a difference in their lives (K, 41, 1666-1670).

Learning to enjoy and appreciate life is another aspect of having gained wisdom. Most of the participants seemed to have a joyful, appreciative quality to their approach. They tended to emanate this exuberance and share it with others. When asked about their joys, they generally talked about both their work and families giving them joy. Those women with grandchildren often would tell a story about the children.

> Probably my biggest joy in life were having my child[ren]. That was really the highpoint. Seeing them, that was just amazing! It was just a miracle! And seeing my grandchildren and watching them, watching my kids and watching my grandkids. It's a neat position to be in, in life: I knew my great granny, I knew my granny, I knew my mom. To see the traits in them... It just cracks me up (L, 2, 34-40).

Dynamics Among the Core Concepts

The four core concepts include community connectedness, believing in destiny and having faith, working from the heart and soul, and gaining and sharing wisdom (See Figure 4). These concepts are core because they are shared by both subprocesses and, more importantly, because it is these attributes that

Figure 4: Core concepts' categories

together provided the necessary conditions for healing to occur. They also promoted the occurrence of processes they found in both the healing subprocesses. The first core concept, community connectedness, is an important part of the motivation behind wanting to make changes. The participants could see many negative, painful things going on at the situation and did not want negative cycles to continue. The next three core concepts all speak to the participants' roles within the community. Participants believed that it was their role to take up the torch, roll up their sleeves, and do what they could to make changes. The concept working from the heart and soul articulates the attitude they brought to their work. They participated to the best of their ability in a deeply meaningful way. There is a sense of urgency in their desire

for change to occur. They desperately want things to be better for their families and the community, now and in the future. The gaining and sharing wisdom concept showed that they were motivated, in part, by getting something out of all their experiences, rather than being embittered or disillusioned completely by failure. This attitude seemed to free the participants to embark on their healing path. Their desire to gain and share wisdom motivated them and allowed them to engage in the behaviors and actions that are described in the healing within the community and healing within one's self subprocesses.

Dynamic Relationships Among all Constituents of the Model

The basic psychological processes within the model are the participants' intentions, desires, and efforts towards *becoming whole* (see Figure 1, p. 123). These processes are the participants' responses to the social, sociological, psychological, and economic problems that bring about powerlessness. The desire and the action taken to better the situation for Aboriginal people, or to 'stop the cycles of abuse' (as about half the participants phrased it), also assisted their personal flourishing. This became a 'cycle of healing.' As the participants developed personally, they were able to act as role models of healing, to encourage others' healing and to invest energy into the community. This cycle of healing is represented by the circular nature of the model. Movement in the model begins primarily from the subprocess healing within the community. Positioning this subprocess on the left, desiginates it as the beginning. However, the action could begin either within the

community or within the self. Positioning healing within the community as the beginning point was based on the observation that most participants were motivated to get involved, and eventually became role models and leaders, because they wanted to make a difference in the community. Many did not feel personally empowered, or particularly capable when they began their involvement but they could not sit idly by. They felt they had to do something. This participation, described in the making a difference and the addressing Aboriginal issues concepts began both the healing within the community and within the self. Arrows are shown going back and forth between the concepts because all the processes and core concepts influence each other. This demonstrates how healing in one area increases healing in the other, in a positive cycle.

The core concepts are located in the middle, signifying both their integral nature and the connection they have to both subprocesses. The model shows movement back from the subprocesses towards the core concepts, signifying the reciprocal nature of the relationships among concepts. That is, as growth occurs in the subprocesses, it affects the strength of the core areas. This movement works in both directions. The 'cycle of healing' is not 'all or nothing' but is repeated, in such a way that increasing healing in one area would increase the possibility for healing to take place elsewhere. Although becoming whole for most of the participants was initiated within the community (by making a difference), movement or positive

change at any point within the model increases the likelihood that the cycle of healing would be initiated and continue.

The Becoming Whole model focuses on the empowerment of Aboriginal women. It, therefore, shows the positive movement towards wholeness. It must be noted that the healing was not all or nothing. Instead, it was episodic and non-linear. There seemed to be times when the women would stall or fall back for a time, sometimes being negatively influenced by an event or situation, or be overcome with self-doubt. Thus, it is more a one step forward, pause, two steps forward, one back, three forward, two back and so on, process. 'A', for example, described how different she feels inside from how people see her.

> I think there's a hurt little girl in there that's been hurt a lot. That's the way I feel most of the time and I feel like people can see that. When I'm sitting around board room tables and I'm meeting with senior executives, MPs or whatever, I feel like, do they know they've got this scared little girl from [name of] Reserve? (A, 7,254-258)

Whereas, overall, the women became more empowered with time, they certainly had disempowering experiences along this journey to wholeness. Setbacks were described by the participants as they looked back on their lives. F, for example, reported that, early in her career, she still struggled in many ways.

> So I had [number of] children now. And I raised them pretty much on my own by hook or by crook. With the help of my sisters and my family, who managed to keep them out of CFS while I was doing my bullshit. My addiction stuff. I did manage to keep them in hockey, soccer, football. That's a pretty crazy time in my life (F, 10, 347-351).

The participants described themselves as struggling along the way. They would, at times, have crises of confidence or temporary struggles with whether or not they were doing the right thing. Other participants described more concrete struggles, for example, with their staff at work. There were times when they didn't feel very wise, or when they felt less connected to the Aboriginal community. One participant mentioned feeling exhausted sometimes and wishing that she would just be left alone for a bit. One participant mentioned often crying in the car, on her way home from work. "A"reported that she had a very difficult meeting the day before our interview. At the beginning of the interview she said that she had slept for 10 hours the night before and had come into work late, because she was recovering from this tough meeting. She alludes to this later in the interview.

> A: I think the fact that I really look at a barrier as a challenge... And I go home now and I lick my wounds when I'm challenged and the next day I come back and .... Sometimes maybe it takes two days...As you get older, it takes a little bit more time to come back... To bounce back. But I think, in the end it has a positive impact on where I want to go....instead of getting angry and hurt, I figure out a way to get even (A, 3, 80-86).

"A" focused on being able to 'lick her wounds' and 'come back' the next day. She does not state that 'licking her wounds' was recovering from a disempowering meeting, but it is implied. To some extent, empowerment was not so much that the participants did not experience difficult situations or relationships, it meant that they chose to learn and grow from them, and eventually bounced back from them.

Another aspect of the model is that it takes time. Participants were aware that it took time for all this to unfold and that it will take time to make it better.

> But it's the big picture, again... And I'm still sorting out in my mind, as time goes on, how to and what... Like if I can help other families to do the same... Especially in our communities because I know that kind of stuff is so predominant within our communities.. The abuse: physical, sexual, emotional...the suicides... If I can help families get out of that state, starting off with my own back yard...I've been able to do that..so, for me, the next big thing is helping other families within our communities to get there - and I know now, it's going to be a long term process (K, 39, 1571-1577).

The specific amount of time needed is unknown but probably different for each person. This model was derived from interviews in which the women described healing and changes that occurred over 15-35 years, suggesting that years, at least, and probably decades are required. Although time is necessary for the development of empowerment, the many Aboriginal individuals and communities still suffering suggest that time alone is not sufficient for change to occur. The model posits that these Aboriginal women leaders and professionals have certain key qualities and motivation. They have undergone empowering processes and have had empowered outcomes. They have engaged in behaviors that are necessary for the occurrence of the cycle of healing. The processes and outcomes described in this model appear to be sufficient for empowerment to have occurred in this group. As will be discussed later, many of these processes and outcomes are congruent with other research findings. When all the findings from a number of different studies of empowerment in

disadvantaged groups are brought together, the sufficient conditions for empowerment to occur are articulated.

A positive cycle of healing, beginning with the focus on community growth and healing and, in turn, aiding the participants' personal growth may appear backwards in some ways, if persons believe that one must focus on one's own healing and get one's life in order before they can contribute to the greater good. The experiences of these Aboriginal women participants vary but it is clear that, for most, the impetus for change originated in the desire to contribute to the greater good of Aboriginal people. That is, the motivator and catalyst towards empowerment (of both the community and the self) within the participants, was the drive towards improving the community. They made contributions to the community, which often began with small scale changes and, over time, with more successes, the improvements became greater in magnitude. These community encounters and contributions proved healing in and of themselves, for both the participant and the community. Also, the participants' recognition that they could make a difference empowered them and simultaneously aided their own healing. "B"'s observations show this and are congruent with the lessons taught by the world's great religions.

> If you help enough people get what they need, then you - then wonderful things happen to you. And I think it's really true. If you try to help other people and stuff, then your life just seems much more rewarding. You know? And it just amazes me that every time in the past couple of years that I've tried this whole thing, it's like this abundance of things have come my way. And so maybe that's what the big meaning is out there or something. It's to be helping others. And not selflessly, though, totally, I mean, obviously you get

> rewards when you help others. You get this, it's the kind of feeling you get: a warm feeling. And so you just feel wonderful by doing it (B, 25, 966-973).

Another aspect of this is that several participants were spurred to action by what they believed needed to be changed in society without much concern or self-assessment regarding whether or not they might be capable of making a difference. For these Aboriginal women leaders, it was doing the work, surviving and often flourishing and being validated and supported that taught them they could make changes in their world. For example, "G" had little belief in her abilities, early on, yet was so strongly supported and validated by her community members that she became an important leader,

> I was yanked by my hereditary chiefs to work with them. They pulled me on stream and they used to make me do public speaking events. I'd say "no, I'm not the right one".... So they took me aside and said, "you have to learn how to trust in yourself!" That was wonderful! I think that may have been the turning point in terms of me accepting my own abilities, giving me my own confidence. That was the one gift, the time when someone convinced me, look inside yourself because what you want is already inside you (G, 10, 325-336).

Empowerment: Definitional Issues

Introduction

This section examines definitions of the concepts used in the interviews and in this thesis. This thesis focused on empowerment and the majority of this section does as well. However, given the possibility of cross-cultural differences in understanding of interview concepts, and the relatively abstract nature of the interview questions, the research participants were asked to define each concept as

it was introduced. For example, "What does a barrier mean to you?; What does success mean to you?; How would you define control?" Most concepts were defined in a manner consistent with mainstream cultural definitions and were consistent across participants. Empowerment definitions were consistent both with the theory and the Becoming Whole model. This is described thoroughly below. However, two exceptions occurred when asked about the words 'success and control'. The meanings attributed to these terms are discussed briefly.

Success

The term 'success' did not hold the same meaning for the Aboriginal women research participants as it does in mainstream society. A lengthy quotation is provided in the *working from the heart and soul* section, which describes the women's work coming from the intrinsic meaningfulness of it, not how it will be perceived. 'Success' has an implicit tone of competitiveness and this competitiveness is not in keeping with Aboriginal values and ethics. Several of the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals were so uncomfortable with the term 'successful' that the researcher stopped using it in the interviews, so as not to offend. At the proposal stage of this study, the term 'successful' Aboriginal women was used in the title. This was altered after participants expressed discomfort with it.

Control

When asked about control, the participants did not entirely endorse feeling in control. Instead, the term 'control' carried a negative emotional valance. Several

participants approached this topic from a position that 'control' has been equated with someone else trying to 'control' another's behavior. Several participants consciously chose to not be 'controlling'.

> Researcher: What about control? What does the meaning of the word have for you?
> C: It usually has a negative connotation to control. We can use it in different ways. I look at it ....as a stronger person controlling a less strong person. Or a stronger community incurring power over a less powerful people. Like those sort of things. And I am aware of it and I wouldn't want to be a controlling person in any way.

Although the participants tended to express discomfort with both the terms 'success' and 'control', it is noteworthy that these words were used by research participants in other contexts in a manner quite consistent with mainstream understanding. These terms are also present in the interview transcripts and are used by the researcher in this document. The term success, in particular, was still used by the researcher in some cases, after the researcher defined it. In other cases, the researcher and participants occasionally used success in an unconscious manner most often as another word for achievement(s).

Empowerment

This thesis was intended to generate an understanding of the meaning(s), processes, and outcomes of empowerment for Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. The Becoming Whole model was described in the last chapter. It provides an overview of the key elements of the processes and outcomes of empowerment for the research participants. In the interview process, the research

participants were asked questions about their lives as they discussed meaningful topics. The 'Becoming Whole' model was developed from all the interview material. This research also examined the extent to which the concept of empowerment would 'fit' for these women. Assumptions about the meanings of empowerment were not made, nor was a definition of empowerment imposed upon the participants. Thus, a key question of this research was, what meaning does empowerment hold for this group?

In order to ensure that the 'Becoming Whole' model is, in fact, a model of empowerment, it was important to understand how the participants defined empowerment for themselves. This section provides an overview of how the research participants responded to the interview questions regarding empowerment.

Research participants' answers to direct questions about basic meanings were consistent with empowerment themes in general, as discussed in the Introduction and the themes presented in the Becoming Whole model. Although not every participant spoke about every aspect of empowerment or the model, every aspect of the model was brought up by the participants when they were asked directly about empowerment. The one category from the 'Becoming Whole' model with the least direct commentary was 'community connectedness.' This can be explained by the fact that these women simply experience this connection. That is, it is a cultural norm, not a conscious decision or practiced skill.

This section provides an overview of how the participants defined 'empowerment' in the form of two tables. The first (Table 4) provides examples of general empowerment themes from the transcripts. The second (Table 5) provides the categories from the 'Becoming Whole' model and examples from the transcripts when the participants spoke specifically about these themes in relation to empowerment. Most of the quotes are in direct response to interview questions about definitions/meaning of empowerment: (a) Does empowerment hold any meaning for you?; (b) Is there a different word or phrase that would suit this idea for you better?? (c) Would you describe yourself as empowered? (d) If so, what have you found empowering? (e) If not, what would be empowering? There are also three to four quotes when the participant(s) spontaneously (not in direct response to a question regarding empowerment) used the word empowerment to describe their experiences.

Table 4
Participants' Definitions of Empowerment Categorized by Broad Empowerment Themes

Empowerment Category	Participants' Quotes
Over-arching definitions of empowerment	Participant: I think that people have the strength within them to take control of their lives they just need to find the inner strength to do that. Empowerment I think comes from finding that inner strength to do it. So empower come from finding that inner strength you have to take control of your life. I think disempowered people, they think they have no strengths at all. They don't see anything valuable in their person. So they allow all this other stuff to happen to them. I know there is good in all people and everybody has strength no matter how poor they might have been or how bad their life might have been cause they survived all that. So something must have been there. That was their strength. So I guess some people need to be empowered if they are so far in the dark that they can't see a way out.
	Participant: Yeah, empowerment, that's the only way you can take control of your life if by having the ability to know what it is you're grasping and to know what you've got once you've grasped it. Researcher: Empowerment is you taking charge? Participant: Yeah, but it's more than that, I mean I can take control but what do you do after you control it? You're not empowered if all you do is control: it's how do you shape it, what do you do with it? That's empowerment, when you are not defensive when you are not afraid to do with it, a lot of people seek a broad education but they won't share it with anyone because they see them as challenging their authority, or challenging their knowledge.. That's not empowerment, that's a dysfunction.
The paradoxical nature of empowerment	Researcher: The other thing I'm interested in is the idea of empowerment. Participant: What would we be if there was no one there to kind of give us the power or, no, not the power the comfort and the understanding to assume the power because no one can give you power but they can help you to shape it for yourself.. Wonderful..
	Participant: [I describe myself as empowered because] I can go and advocate for those people who can't advocate for themselves

Table 4 (continued)

Empowerment Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: Well, my whole philosophy and how I work with people, and especially my colleagues and also people that work for me, that's what I'm trying to do, Empower them to do their jobs or to be that person, or to give something to the community. That's my whole philosophy. And I let people make mistakes, and I challenge them, I give them projects, or something, and I say, you do this, And figure it out That was my philosophy at (one of her positions) and that was a big risk for me because there were some things that people didn't know how to do and everything was on my shoulders. If a mistake was made, it was my mistake, not theirs. And, I still do that. Try to empower people to do the things on their own, to make their own choices just through discussion. I believe that if you give people the tools and the time, they will be able to do it and then I won't always have to be doing it..And I really really believe that. And I know it works. It's worked for me. Researcher: We are talking about empowerment, is there a different word or phrase that would better suit the idea for you? Does empowerment fit for you? Participant: Yeah, I think it fits because, use words like, when you are a professional and you are delegating responsibilities to people, that's not the same. When you are delegating something - it means you are going to check up on it but when you are empowering people to actually make the decision, you are also having them accept the consequences too. Participant: I think it's really important to empower yourself and for us in here (Aboriginal social service organization) to let the women know that, that they have to empower themselves. And take charge. Because quite often have been beaten down so badly physically and emotionally that they don't feel that at all. That they have power.
Empowerment can be a positive cycle	Researcher: Would you describe yourself as empowered? Participant: Yeah. Because I think that the things that I've had to change in my life, I have changed. When we [children and self] were at our worst, empowering myself so that I would make a change, and get back on track.. And I think it's when you do empower yourself, you make yourself more able to empower yourself. So it's sort of like a vicious circle in a way, where it just does good things. You know?

Table 4 (continued)

Empowerment Category	Participants' Quotes
Empowerment is Dynamic	Participant: I feel pretty empowered: But I think I always have - even as a kid. I always thought that I could do anything - and I did. Wasn't always a good thing! Researcher: Where do you think that comes from, feeling like you could do anything? Participant: My mom, some what. I was the youngest in the group, siblings, family. I think I was given a lot of leeway. I was given more opportunities to do that as a kid, growing up. Researcher: What have you found empowering? What has helped you? Participant: It's like this whole thing of what makes a person turn to violence, or whatever, what changes when we can say that you were successful with a woman in here? And what changes the whole thing from living in a really abusive environment, and finally making that change, maybe it's after many times at a community shelter. And I think it has to do with this whole thing of finally feeling that they can empower themselves. And when they have that, that self esteem, that belief in themselves, then things can change. Life can change. I think that without it, nothing changes. So I think it's really important to empower yourself and for us in here to let the women know that: that they have to empower themselves. And take charge. Because quite often have been beaten down so badly physically and emotionally that they don't feel that at all. That they have power. I guess it's almost like making the call. I mean, there's tons of things out there. There's either obstacles or doors that open, or whatever. And it's being determined enough to realize that sometimes it's one step forward, two steps back. But just continuing on and going forward, and realizing again that it's up to you. I guess the whole thing is just making sure that when you get off track that you realize that. Participant: Empowerment probably means to me: Every body has power. I don't think any body is strong all the time and I don't think any body is weak all the time. I think every body has power within them but they need the right opportunities, the right encouragement to express it and use it

Table 4 (continued)

Empowerment Category	Participants' Quotes
	Researcher: Would you describe yourself as empowered? Participant: Yeah, I describe myself as empowered because I have the ability to do certain things - whether it be in this position - or whatever I may be doing or was doing in the past, um I can speak clearly and I'm not scared like I used to be, Well, I still get scared but I can rise above that and do what I have to do Researcher: What are you scared of? Participant: I don't know, sometimes I still get scared when I go into a group of people and sometimes I get scared when I know I'm going to get in shit and I know I have to say what my guidance tells me to say. So, yeah, I get scared.. I think I told you, sometimes I argue with myself and say, "I'm not going to say this I'm scared to say that" I guess what I'm scared of is what I have to say won't be accepted. I'll get in shit or trouble for what ever

Note. The researcher has dispensed with the transcript location information for two reasons. First, the majority of the quotes came from the last several pages of each transcript, so anyone could easily locate these quotes if necessary. More importantly, some of the information is quite personal and shows each participants' style of speaking. It was intended to provide greater anonymity because these quotes can not be linked to the quotes from the remainder of the document. Thus, it is intended as a further safeguard for the participants confidentiality.

Table 5
Research Participants' Definitions of Empowerment by 'Becoming Whole' Categories

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
Community Connectedness	Participant: I think when you just feel comfortable, when it's a match, you know, like it's not where you are not in conflict all the time..or you are so at the bottom, that you have no voice or you have no opportunities - and I don't mean, necessarily, opportunities for advancement, but just opportunities to feel a part of something. As Aboriginal people, I do believe that we are more community oriented. We are not so individual-oriented. I think sometimes we aren't - in certain situations - but I think for the most part we are - if everything around us is harmonious - then we are empowered to do more: to rise up.
Believing in Destiny/Having Faith	Participant: You can choose the one (path) which is the really well-traveled one, everyone's been down, or you can choose the one that's less-traveled and nobody's been down it but it might be wonderful and remarkable. And I think that makes you feel empowered sometimes, when you take a whole different path, and you follow what is probably meant to be, and all these doors open up. That's what I found about finally getting away from (former line of work) And it was never a really good fit. It never felt good. And then I just thought, you know what? I want to find what I'm supposed to be here for. And when it all started happening, and everything started happening really good, I thought, you know what? There are things that if we open ourselves to it, it comes to you: all the things that are supposed to be in your life. Participant: I do believe that some people are driven to do stuff. And some of us get the opportunity to do it, and that's all there is. It's not like I'm any smarter than any body else. I'm any more anything than anybody else. I've been very fortunate. I have had opportunities presented to me and I've taken those opportunities and some people just never get those opportunities, so I've just been lucky, you know, or it's just the way it was meant to be for me - almost... Researcher: Are you kind of hinting at a destiny kind of thing? Participant: Yeah, a little bit, yeah..

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: And that you're not trying to do things for just selfish reasons, but you think, okay, show me what I'm supposed to be here for. And you open yourself up to it. Then it happens. I think that makes you feel a sense of empowerment.
	Participant: I'm meant to be doing what I'm doing. And if it's the right fit, then all of these things happen.
	Participant: When I faced criticism from my colleagues, three of the old boys club really came after me and they wanted me out and [the details of this are left out due to confidentiality issues.]- On quite a regular basis, something always happens to guide me - or protect me.
Working from the Heart and Soul	Participant: [I aim] To figure out a way to make people care about what they are doing and to instill some sort of.. I use this word: passion because that's how I feel, Everybody that works with me, I try to figure out a way to make them feel passionate about it too, and whether it's by getting angry when you need to or showing you are hurt when you are hurting, so that they can feel that too. That's important. If they don't get a sense of what you are feeling, they are not going to feel it themselves. And they are just going to be robots. You know doing the: *dotting the i's and crossing the t's* but not feeling anything for it. So people I work with: I don't demand that they feel something but I kind of expect it!
	Participant: Practicing honesty and truth and humility and caring: all those things. Trying to practice to bring that into daily living.
	Participant: I'm very cognizant of not wanting my (position) to let me abuse my authority. I've seen it happen in my family's life and there was so much control and power that one individual had - and that wasn't right.
	Participant: When I talk about accountability it's not just money, it's accountable for your position and the power and authority that has been bestowed upon you by the people you serve and because that power is there - and because that power is there, you should consistently be going to those people for their ideas, their input and their support and it's so simple and yet it's so complicated.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: And good things happen so long as, and I firmly believe this,so long as you have the purest of intentions.
Gaining and Sharing Wisdom	Participant: One of the things, and it's in many motivational books, actually, is this whole thing of, if you help enough other people get what they need, then you, then wonderful things happen to you. And I think it's really true. If you try to help other people and stuff, then your life just seems much more rewarding. And it amazes me that every time in the past couple of years that I've tried this whole thing, it's like this abundance of things have come my way. And so maybe that's what the big meaning is out there or something. It's to be helping others. And not selflessly, though, totally, I mean obviously you get rewards when you help others. You get this, it's the kind of feeling you get: a warm feeling. And so you just feel wonderful by doing it. And I mean, it has worked out well for me, financially, Everything has worked. Whereas before, when I was just trying to go for the dollars, it didn't work and now that I'm going for what I think really matters, it's worked out in every way.
	Participant: Helping a person or a group of persons to believe in themselves and think themselves worthy of any thing, I guess that's what empowerment is to me and for First Nations people that was taken away over the course of the last 132 years.
	Participant: Things happen for a reason. That's my belief. OK what am I going to learn from this experience, I always have to look at it that way. So many of our young people don't have that (someone to encourage and validate them)- so I make a point of going into even small groups of youth and always telling them - yes you're important, and yes, you can achieve this - here's my background - if I can do it, man, you guys can do anything - you're young. And just simple things like that can help them along.
	Participant: I think it is living a life as an example. To try to encourage others as much as possible who have started their journey or are on the brink of starting their journey to try to support them. I know my (romantic partner) is at that point too cause we conscientiously try to support individuals that we know. By encouraging in some way.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Researcher: One of the things I am interested in is the idea of empowerment. Does the word empowerment hold any meaning for you? Participant: I think it means everything. I have had so many wonderful work opportunities and there has been so many people who have crossed my path in work related....then someone is off to school and they are getting a degree in social work and they are off and buying their own car for the first time. Things like that, its just to celebrate the accomplishment of women who have had so many barriers. There is a woman who works with native women she says I just want my own car. Just to think to be able to drive, . on the reserve no one had a car but you.... just to dream you could have a car. She said I'm going to learn how to drive. And she did that, got her own car. It was just amazing because she was in control when she was driving that car. She could call the shots, she didn't have to wait for someone to pick her up to go to the store. And she was just so full of pride because she worked and she bought the car and the car only runs as long as she is working and taking care of it. Those are the sort of things I love to celebrate with people. Cause its significant in their world to make those choices and decisions. Participant: Knowing that I'm a role model - I don't take that lightly - and walking the talk - and knowing when you are a role model young people are going to look up to you. Participant: So many of our young people don't have that (someone to encourage and validate them) so I make a point of going into even small groups of youth and always telling them - yes you're important, and yes, you can achieve this - here's my background - if I can do it, man, you guys can do anything - you're young. And just simple things like that can help them along. Participant: Always I get empowered by watching the women (I work with) growing. I am firm, supportive and consistent. I feel sorry for those who have died because they couldn't make those choices because their pain was so deep. Those kind of bother me those and the ones I feel the loss. So empowerment is real and I have witnessed it in different circumstances.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Researcher: When you say, "I can empower people with what I do or what I say" - what kinds of things do you think of? Participant: Basically letting people know that they can believe in themselves: You are a special person despite all the stumbling blocks in your life. If I can do it, you can do it, you can be anywhere you want to be - `shoot for the stars!' I won't belittle them and say, no, you should be a plumber, an electrician and that's all you'll ever amount to. In this day and age you can look at becoming the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, that can be a reality. You can look at becoming the Premier of this province. And, heck, you can look at becoming the Prime Minister of this country. We can achieve that, just by saying those things. Participant: Everything that comes to your life, where you learn a new lesson, you know, part of my obligation now is to turn around and pass that on and I do that all the time. I don't have any problem sharing, there's no possessiveness or territoriality as Aboriginal people, or even as Nations of people, we shouldn't be doing that, but it happens all the time.
Making a Difference	Participant: Pretty much, I have no expectations of people. And when they do something, I'm either surprised, or I'm very appreciative, and I think that's what makes..life, not, the world go around, but that's what makes things happen, because when you don't expect it, then you need to do it yourself or you figure out a way to get it done, and you know, that's been really successful for me in my professional life but also in my marriage. Participant: Just to see people move on and make their lives better, which in turn effects, the lives of children. I think that's the biggest part. Work towards that goal, to the empowerment of other women who have been able to discover their own strengths. Women who say they can't do anything. Then you say what kind of things did you do? Then you do some exploring, they start changing. They start to walk differently and talk differently because they are important to the rest. Participant: [Caring about what you do] Gives you the power to, move forward.. And to force yourself to do things that you don't want to do because it's important. And if you don't do it, then whose going to do it?

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Researcher: From what you are saying, it's almost as though, the success of what you've been doing is empowering in itself. It's given you the energy or the power? Participant: yeah, the motivation to move. If there's no incentive, why do I do this? I'd be just spinning my wheels. And no one else would do it either. So there are some rewards, for sure. Participant: But the reality is in my family, I survived, two (family members) didn't survive (suicide). I'm not sure why but, obviously, they had something missing in their lives. They had no hope and I see too many of our kids stuck there with that - that no hope. And for me - I want to focus on giving them that hope.. And when I'm in this position, doing public speaking, I can give them hope, So to me that's empowerment. I guess for me too, sometimes I take time out to wonder what the heck I'm doing here and more often than not, it's my (family members) who come to mind. And that's one of the reasons I do what I do is because of those tragedies (family members) suicides, that showed me what I needed to do. That stuff (family suicides and other tragedies) changes you. It does.
Addressing Aboriginal Issues	Participant: There are so many different pieces and they all connect and they are all really important, how are you going to have healthy leaders in the future if you don't break that cycle? And have the healing - and building the self esteem? How are we going to ensure that our future is going to be bright if we don't deal with these pieces first? And that's empowerment, rebuilding of self-esteem. The state of dependency in our community is really bad - and we have to work our way out of that and (in order to) believe all those different things, I need to, as I go along, sort out, and as each day goes by, .how do I - and what do I do? And what people can help me to get there and all those pieces mesh. Participant: They (participants in the Aboriginal women's organization) are 18 today and are starting their journey. (They are learning) There is an outcome that can be positive. It doesn't have to stay like this for the rest of your life. So if I can make a difference and gee maybe by 23 you are kind of on your way, instead of the 25 or 28. I think I would like to do that.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: I guess, for me, right now, the big big piece is working with the [First Nations] youth. Sometimes whether it be individually, with groups, or through my kid(s), and just being upbeat and mobilizing them to believe in themselves - and that you're ok - no matter where you came from and you can make it no matter where you come from. But also understanding that some of them may be weaker than I am. I don't mean that in a negative way.
	Participant: What makes me do what I do? It used to be I wanted to do it for my family, my nieces, nephews, my child(ren), to create a better place for them, It used to be that, it used to be all that. Now it's, I want to make those bastards accountable!! It used to be, when I didn't know any better, these things happen because of individuals, or because of groups, or because of this or when I didn't know that, my passion came from wanting to make change, wanting to make things better for my family and my friends, you know... Now that I know how it works, my passion is to make people do their jobs.
	Participant: I have a vision for our youth and the vision I have is that we will get back what is rightfully ours. Our population is growing faster than any other group in the country and statistics show that. If I can do different things to have our youth healthy, I will do that. I see them (the First Nations youth) in the future taking the lead in how this country is governed and I have great hope in them. So many of them are lawyers, social workers, heck, we even have some of our own doctors. Good honest politicians, that's not common - that's rare. I think our people are going places and they are starting to be empowered again.
Developing Stronger Sense of Self	Participant: I think people feeling valued not in a phoney way but in a real way and being listened to.
	Participant: The support of people...my kid(s)
	Participant: The old people... being surrounded by all the wonderful people.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: People say, 'oh remember when we talked and you said this and I did. Now things are going really well.'It's just getting that back. Or someone will say I am so glad that you're here now, everything will be fine now that you are here, you know when you are involve in some stuff. I like that positive feedback. Getting applause for being known to take tasks and seeing them through.
	Participant: Some of the positive feedback that I have received. It's empowering to me. I think it's the satisfaction of doing a good job is empowering.
	Participant: It is really important to be doing a good job. To hear I was doing a good job. To make a difference.
	Participant: When I doubted myself I had people like my (family member) who said yeah (go for this social role). S/he believed in me. That empowered me. I had people like (person of authority), when I was asked to apply to this position, he/she said, 'well, you know what you do to yourself, you doubt yourself, you do it to you! You don't need to do that. I've seen you at meetings, you've got what it takes, I'm endorsing you.' You feel, hey, you can take on the world, when someone who is your role model - and for me that's what that man has been - says something like that to you, you feel you can do anything. And it just does something to you inside.
	Participant: All the experiences I had. I did, I learned from them and I made the choices that were probably best for me. I didn't turn to drinking, some destructive life style. I kind of just went the other way. OK enough of this and there are people who do chose the destructive life patterns and I am going there is a way out. You want them to know their pain is real. There is a whole bunch of us who has had those experiences. So does my story make a difference for some one else in the world? I would like to have that to share.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: Well, I think that in the position that I'm in and the things that I do, the most empowering things is those little things that you can actually see happen...What's empowering for our little organization ...we [gives a specific outcome regarding what they have been doing]...That's empowering.. Getting evaluations back from (service users) who said... "what a fantastic "(experience)..That sort of thing... That's empowering for them... for me too.. You know, just being recognized as an organization that's not just a big money grab...That's empowering...Especially after every body else got shut down and we're still here. Researcher: Is there a word or a phrase that kind of suits this ideal for you of finding the way in the darkness? Participant: I guess finding value in their self, in their person and who they are. Participant: Well, throughout my life, look at all the people who helped me or made me understand how I could flex...The person who kind of gave me the confidence to kind of know that I knew what I was talking about so that I wouldn't fear public speaking, for example. You know, that person gave me a tool, and gave me the power to do what was already inside me... the grandmothers and grandfathers who stood on the front line and showed me how to be brave...that gave me power... the teachers who taught me how to read and write, that gave me power... my mom and dad who took care of my child(ren) so I could go off and do these things (work), that gave me power. Participant: For me, my (family member) was a very tough person and abusive. I made my peace with him/her.
Learning Aboriginal History, Culture, and Language	Participant: I keep going back to those things, about knowing who I am that's really empowered me in those terms. I could have had all the education in the world and not have known who I was and still not felt empowered. So I think that was a real foundation that I got later in my life. Researcher: That (knowing who you are), too, is that going back to the time you took to find out about some of your history? D: Yeah! That was a phenomenal piece for me.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: It isn't right that we were led to believe that we were over here (makes low motion with hand) compared to other society - or the rest of society... And just those kinds of things I think I started to realize (in role as person of authority). And I guess, in some ways, it (learning about the history of Aboriginal people) really helped to deal with, again, your self esteem. Once you understand that, you think, "I'm ok... our people are ok!" and it's ok for you to do certain things. It's just kind of, again, empowerment within self when you understand those things.
Developing Strategies for Healthy Living	Participant: I started to build the capacity to listen to people. So people are telling me stuff. So what are they seeing in me they wouldn't even tell their best friend? So I would listen and do the counseling thing. And it is just an amazing experience. So I just employed those seeing and listening skills in all the things that I do. Participant: To lead a healthy life and not feel guilty to leave the rest of their family behind. The change has to come somewhere. Participant: In the kitchen therapy at (a native women's center) that is one of the places where people started discovering that (they are important to others and have skills) Someone would say you know I used to make bread. Then someone would say do you think you could show us how? Well, I have never done that before. I would say if you show us how I would clean up the kitchen afterwards. Boy, that would be .....Oh I can just smell it. The next thing you know that person would go OK, I could try. And that person would say I hope you have all the supplies. And the cook would say I think we could arrange that. Next thing you know that person is demonstrating with a bunch of people admiring that person's ability. Then it goes through that whole process and as it is being made everyone's going oh it smells so good. And they are eating it and they go this is wonderful. And that person is glowing; cause they just did a good thing. And it's just to witness all that kind of activity. People started, I could do that maybe I can do something else. So this was sharing of the skills, the feed back, all those things that I have witnessed and all the things that I have done through her. It's just amazing.

Table 5 (continued)

'Becoming Whole' Category	Participants' Quotes
	Participant: I guess being conscious that we have to nurture ourselves and be healthy if we want to help anyone else. And that includes our families, so I see that as a spiritual process too, I know it has helped me and in my relationships it has been wonderful!
Living/embodying Aboriginal Culture	Participant: The impact, not saying this to blame, but I think it's important to understand, especially of residential schools..And what happened to our people - The loss of parenting really killed the self esteem our people had. And it has caused generational impacts. So for me, the process within these is to educate our people - and mainstream - about what happened throughout history - again not to blame - but to gain a better understanding of each other. As well as First Nations people need to get a better understanding of themselves and why the current state of affairs and why the alcohol abuse and why those other abuses are there and we need to focus on networking within the communities to heal. I have ideas of how you can do that but I'm still working on how you get there.

Note. The researcher has dispensed with the transcript location information for two reasons. First, the majority of the quotes came from the last several pages of each transcript, so anyone could easily locate these quotes if necessary. More importantly, some of the information is quite personal and shows each participants' style of speaking. It was intended to provide greater anonymity because these quotes can not be linked to the quotes from the remainder of the document. Thus, it is intended as a further safeguard for the participants confidentiality.

Tables 4 and 5 are mostly self- explanatory because they refer back to themes and categories that were already explained and described earlier in this document. They simply provide the reader with examples of how participants defined empowerment as well as how these definitions can be categorized according to the research literature regarding broad empowerment themes (Table 1) and the 'Becoming Whole' model (Table 2). However, there may be some confusion regarding why certain quotes are included in specific categories. Recall that, in model development, some quotes can fall under more than one category. For example, sometimes information that might be applicable to one category is embedded within a quote listed under another category. At other times a single quote can provide evidence for two categories. For the sake of brevity, quotes are only shown in one category. The reader is also reminded that negative occurrences or instances of a theme or category are considered part of a category because they provide an anchor for the category. For example, in Table 4, the category, *The paradoxical nature of empowerment*, one entry shows the participant saying that she describes herself as empowered because she can advocate for those persons who can not advocate for themselves. Empowerment is not the same as advocacy but holds some similarity. Empowerment interventionists generally purport that empowerment must come from one's self. Interestingly, this research participant does not say she can empower others but she states that she is empowered by advocating for others. This quote is considered an example of the paradoxical nature and complexity of empowerment.

Similarly, in Table 4, under the category, *The dynamic nature of empowerment*, one research participant described herself as having felt empowered since she was a child. This quote illustrates the point made earlier that not all the participants came from powerlessness. All did describe racism and this participant said it was not easy being treated with racism and discrimination. However, she also stated that she has always felt empowered. Again, this participant's experience acts as an anchor for this dynamism, with her overall sense of herself always being empowered.

Regarding the extent to which empowerment is meaningful for participants, one research participant originally stated that she did not like the word empowered because she assumed it implied a dichotomous state. She then defined empowerment in a way that is in keeping with the literature and stated that she viewed herself as empowered.

> Researcher: ....Tell me about not liking that word.
> D: Empowered, it suggests that people are either empowered or disempowered. I think that people have the strength within them to take control of their lives. They just need to find the inner strength to do that. Empowerment I think comes from finding that inner strength to do it. So empower comes from finding that inner strength. You have to take control of your life. I think disempowered people, they think they have no strengths at all. They don't see anything valuable in their person. So they allow all this other stuff to happen to them. I know there is good in all people and everybody has strength no matter how poor they might have been or how bad their life might have been because they survived all that. So something must have been there. That was their strength. So I guess some people need to be empowered if they are so far in the dark that they can't see a way out.
> Researcher...Would you describe yourself as empowered?
> D...If it means that, I would say yes (D, 24, 850-864).

All participants eventually found empowerment to be a meaningful concept. As the tables illustrate, the research participants' definitions of empowerment were in keeping with both the overarching empowerment themes and with the processes and outcomes described in the Becoming Whole model. This section is presented last because in order to understand how each quote fits the category, one must have learned what each 'Becoming Whole' category encompasses.

Finally, regarding definitions, research participants were asked if they had any other term that would better describe or fit the concept of empowerment. One research participant provided a word from her First Nation language. However, it is not given here because it is a relatively small First Nation and the word alone may identify the research participant. The research participant who provided this word understood empowerment first from this word, which she believed had the same meaning. From this, she defined empowerment as 'everything' and gave a very succinct definition of it.

Overall, definitional issues were addressed in this study by specifically asking participants what empowerment means to them at the end of the interview process. The data revealed that these Aboriginal women leaders and professionals define empowerment in ways consistent with theoretical assumptions, with much of the current research with disadvantaged groups, and with the themes that emerged from the interview data. The definitions provided and the themes that emerged confirmed that empowerment held common meanings for this sample.

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The findings from this study of empowerment in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals advance our understanding of empowerment in several ways. This discussion first compares empowerment values with Aboriginal values, as evidenced in this sample. Next, the findings are compared to Zimmerman's (1995, 2000) theoretical model of empowerment. Then they are compared with those empowerment studies discussed in the literature review (Kar, et al., 1999; Kieffer 1984; O'Sullivan, et al., 1984; Shields, 1995). Key empowerment elements in this research are highlighted and discussed within the framework of the broader literature. The chapter concludes with sections on (a) implications for empowerment theory, intervention, and clinical practice, (b) the study's limitations and directions for future research, (c) the researcher's experiences, and (d) in closing, words of wisdom from a few of the participants.

Empowerment Values and Aboriginal Values

Two areas in which empowerment values are consistent with Aboriginal traditional values were demonstrated in this research. First, one of the defining features of empowerment values is a lack of hierarchy and a push for more equitable distribution of power (e.g., Maton & Rappaport, 1984; O'Sullivan, et al.,1984; Zimmerman, 2000). Similarly, the Aboriginal participants did not consider themselves better or less than others and they worked to promote equity for Aboriginal people.

Their attitude was that all persons are equal regardless of status or rank and they sought to treat all persons as equals.

Another empowerment value is to include all relevant persons in any change processes (Zimmerman, 2000). This requires that professionals divest themselves of the 'expert' role and share power and treat persons they work with as collaborators. Consistent with this, the Aboriginal participants described working with others in order to achieve their goals. For the most part, they went into the community with an attitude of, 'what do you/we need?' rather than deciding what was best for community members in a paternalistic fashion. Likewise, many of the participants were trained by 'doing' in a hands-on manner in the community, not in a mainstream institution. That is, their education was based on needs, not on what 'experts' deemed appropriate. This helped to keep them grounded as they conducted their work.

Empowerment Theory and the Becoming Whole Model

This section compares empowerment theory and the Becoming Whole model by level of analysis.

Levels of Analysis: Psychological Empowerment (PE)

Psychological empowerment (PE) is empowerment analyzed at the individual level (Zimmerman, 2000) and was the intended focus of this research. Zimmerman (1995) proposed that PE has three underlying assumptions, as described in the Introduction. The first assumption that PE will take different forms for different people (Rappaport, 1984; Zimmerman, 1990,1995), was shown to be true in this sample. All

of the Aboriginal participants considered themselves to be empowered to varying degrees, yet there were differences in the way this was expressed. For example, whereas one participant took responsibility for the community by forming Aboriginal women's groups, another chose to head a political organization, and yet another gained mainstream education and worked within the Winnipeg School Division. A fourth research participant obtained funding to establish a business that provided skills training for Aboriginal people.

The second underlying assumption is that empowerment is contextually determined (Zimmerman, 1995). This also held true for this sample. The participants demonstrated empowerment within their work environment but many did not feel as empowered in their personal lives. At least two of the participants reported having low self-esteem. This second assumption also asserts that contextual variables such as SES, and working or living arrangements, may shift the form which PE takes. Although none of the women focused on their financial gains as being of primary importance, several mentioned that the freedom that financial success brought them made them happy. That is, their economic status increased as they became leaders, as did their empowerment. This research was unable to determine specifically how, or the extent to which, any given context contributed to the total PE. For example, it is not known the extent to which experiencing PE in one specific context will add to one's overall sense of PE as compared to experiencing PE in another context.

The third assumption is that empowerment is a dynamic variable that increases or decreases over time (Zimmerman, 1995), distinguishing it from a static personality trait. In this sample, changes in the lives of the participants reflect overall gains in empowerment, with some fluctuations. These women came from backgrounds of racism, poverty and, for many, extreme personal trauma. Aboriginal people have a history of being treated poorly in Canada (Kalin & Berry, 1982; Schissel & Witherspoon, 2003; York, 1990) and the participants provided examples from their lives that illustrate their perception that they were seen and treated as 'the dregs of society'. Within that context, at least one participant stated that she always felt empowered. The rest expressed varying degrees of feeling inferior. Yet all participants improved their lives and became powerful and empowered leaders and professionals. They changed their own lives and, in turn, are influencing others in powerful ways.

Generally, the experiences of the Aboriginal women participants fit with Zimmerman's (1995) three underlying assumptions about PE. The comparison of the Becoming Whole model to Zimmerman's (2000) empowerment theory shifts now to examine the fit between the model and the three interrelated components of PE.

Zimmerman (1995, 2000) conceptualized PE as having three dimensions: intrapersonal, interactional, and behavioral. Intrapersonal PE refers to one's thoughts about self (Zimmerman, 1995) and it is this aspect of the model that was the least similar to the Aboriginal participant's experience of empowerment [See Table 6 for a comparison of the main differences.]

Table 6
Main differences between empowerment in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals and Zimmerman's (2000) model of empowerment

Main Differences	Aboriginal women	Zimmerman's model
Self	interdependent based in collectivist culture	connection/interdependence not emphasized based in individualist culture
Motivation	Comes from knowledge about problems and the desire to make changes required in the community	Comes from one's sense of self-efficacy, domain-specific perceived control, motivation to control, and perceived competence
Control	The word Control has negative connotation. Don't feel need to control	Sense of control is critical to empowerment.

The first difference relates to the Becoming Whole model category, *community connectedness*. The Aboriginal women experience their self or define themselves by their connection with their group and their culture. It is as if they feel an interdependence with others. Triandis's (2000) research on cultural differences is relevant to this finding. That is, different cultures are more or less collectivist or individualist in the way members of the culture perceive themselves in relation to others. Triandis observed that most of the traditional cultures in Asia, such as the Japanese, and in Latin America, such as the Brazilians, are collectivist. Western cultures, including North American culture, are more individualistic. Kemmelmeir and colleagues (2003) proposed that this Western individualism stems from their political history, including the American and French revolutions and the influence of liberal ideology. Individual self-determination was the driving ideology and was instrumental in the formation of this approach.

An entire literature exists on these cultural differences (e.g., Kemmelmeir, 2003; Triandis, 2000) and is beyond the scope of the current thesis. However, several of these cultural differences are relevant to the current results. Triandis posited that persons from collectivist cultures are more likely to think of themselves as interdependent with those from their in-group. Individualists, on the other hand, think of themselves as an autonomous unit, independent of the group. The category, *community connectedness* was developed based on the observation that the research participants described themselves in a way that suggested an interdependence on

those from the Aboriginal community. Both Triandis (2000) and Kemmelmeir and colleagues (2003) pointed out that those persons from collectivist societies also place more value on traditional authority figures. This brings to mind quotes from participants G and F and their descriptions of their links with their Elders in the community (see Appendix K if interested in more detail).

Triandis (2000) also posited that collectivist individuals will prioritize the goals of the group over their own. This would account for the observation that the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals were motivated by community improvement goals, often putting them before their personal needs. In-group norms are more likely to shape the behavior of persons from collectivist cultures than their own personal attitudes. This also applies to the Aboriginal women. For example, in the categories regarding living/embodying Aboriginal ways, the participants simply lived the values of their culture, without questioning them.

Triandis (2000) also stated that individuals are shaped by their culture in such a way that those from individualist societies will pay more attention to the processes of individuals. Those from collectivist societies are more likely to pay attention to the group, roles, norms, and duties of the in-group and to intergroup relationships. This observation regarding collectivism seems to apply to the current research participants in terms of them paying attention to their 'duties' to the in-group. That is, the Aboriginal participants took on the responsibility and duties of making a difference in

society without giving much thought to their own individual internal processes, such as whether they actually felt 'capable of performing' these assumed duties.

Triandis' theory (e.g., 2000) differentiated between vertical and horizontal cultures. This refers to whether the culture values hierarchy or equality. The current findings show that Aboriginal culture is not as hierarchal as mainstream culture. Triandis also noted that a distinction can be made between active versus passive cultures. He stated that active cultures are more competitive, action oriented, and there is an emphasis on fulfilling one's self. Passive cultures tend to be more cooperative, emphasize living as an experience and are concerned with getting along with others. By this definition, the Aboriginal culture is more passive than mainstream culture. The focus on getting along with others is reflected in the Aboriginal tradition of allowing every person to have their say at meetings, by use of the talking stick, regardless of how long the meeting lasts. The emphasis is on relationships more than on action and getting things done.

The findings from the current study, when understood within the framework of Triandis' (2000) research suggest that the Aboriginal culture is more strongly collectivist, is less hierarchal and, in Triandis' terms, more 'passive' than the individualist mainstream culture. These differences might explain some of the cultural clashes that occur between the two groups. That is, Triandis (2000) posited that every one is ethnocentric and can't believe that other people do not see things the same way they do. This helps to explain how conflict occurs. If we have

assumptions that others see the world the same way we do, we will not think to communicate how we see the world. Mis-communication based on lack of knowledge may occur and cause conflict. These basic differences in cultural approaches are important and will have some bearing on one's empowerment. Thus, the Becoming Whole model advances our knowledge that the theoretical understanding of intrapersonal PE may not apply to this group.

Zimmerman's intrapersonal empowerment refers to one's self-perception of domain-specific self-efficacy, domain-specific perceived control, motivation to control, and perceived competence (Zimmerman, 2000). These perceptions provide the motivation or enthusiasm to engage in behaviors that will influence desired outcomes (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 589). This suggests that these perceptions are a necessary condition for taking action. For the Aboriginal women leaders, instead, the qualities discussed in the core concepts and a burning desire to 'stop the cycles' of abuse in the Aboriginal community provided the necessary conditions for participation. At the time of the interviews, most of the Aboriginal participants had those qualities that describe intrapersonal empowerment. However, they did not describe themselves as having had those qualities when they began their work and, therefore, it may not have been those qualities which drove the work.

The issue of control is another important area of distinction between Zimmerman's (2000) approach and the current findings. Zimmerman considered a sense of control critical. However, as discussed earlier, the word 'control' had a

negative connotation for the Aboriginal women leaders. The word control was connected with 'controlling' another person, or someone trying to control another. Interestingly, although the research participants responded negatively to the word 'control' when asked about it directly, they also used it in a mainstream manner in other instances. Thus, the word control and its implications must be used with caution and an awareness that it may hold negative connotations for some Aboriginal persons.

The interactional component of PE and aspects of the Becoming Whole model are quite consistent. This aspect of the theory posits that empowered persons must have an understanding about socio-political issues and their community, called critical awareness (Zimmerman, 1995). They must understand causal agents and resource mobilization. They must also develop skills and be able to transfer skills across life domains (Zimmerman, 1995). These were also important to the Becoming Whole model. For example, the Aboriginal participants demonstrated a high level of understanding of their socio-political environment. This knowledge is emphasized in the learning Aboriginal culture, language, and history concept, where the participants gain knowledge of Aboriginal history, culture, and languages. They made use of this critical awareness in the addressing Aboriginal issues concept, which required an awareness of government policies and procedures, in order to change those that were detrimental to Aboriginal persons.

Skill development was another important aspect of the Becoming Whole model. One skill Zimmerman (2000) referred to was learning decision-making. This was an extremely important process for the Aboriginal women. The Aboriginal community, arguably, had deficits in decision making skills as a result of Canadian Federal Government policies such as the reserve and residential school systems. With experience, they managed to improve their decision-making abilities and learned to make more suitable choices.

The Aboriginal participants transferred skills across life domains, for example, when they took knowledge and critical awareness they developed and brought it back into the community. As they learned more about the history of oppression that Aboriginal people have experienced, including the legacy from the reserve and residential school systems, they transferred that knowledge into promoting Aboriginal issues in a knowledgeable and empowered manner.

The behavioral component of PE includes community involvement, organizational participation, and positive coping behaviors (Zimmerman, 1995). The Aboriginal women participants learned to engage in more constructive coping behaviors, including learning balance and developing healthy relations. Thus, this group of Aboriginal women provide evidence for this dimension of PE. They also demonstrated empowered outcomes such as community involvement and participation. Involvement and participation were found to be important as processes and outcomes in the Aboriginal women's empowerment. Participation has been found

by others to increase or enhance empowerment as well (Kar et al., 1999; Kieffer, 1984; Prestby, et al. 1990, Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988) and will be discussed at length later.

In summary, there are many similarities between Zimmerman's (2000) conceptualization of PE and the Becoming Whole Model. However, the current study revealed important differences between the two. The most substantial difference is within the intrapersonal dimension, in terms of one's thoughts about one's self (Zimmerman, 1995). This study showed that the Aboriginal culture is more collectivist (in Triandis, 2000 terms), which means that sense of self is interdependent with the group members. The women were motivated by perceived external needs, not perceived self-efficacy or ability and they did not want to be controlling.

These differences have important ramifications because it is on this intrapersonal dimension, including perceived control and self-efficacy, that mainstream psychology often focuses. There is an assumption that if an individual scores low on measures of these intrapsychic qualitites, they are not capable of taking action in the service of themselves or others. The present results show that the reality is more complex, at least with this group of Aboriginal women. Further, this brings into question the necessity of these intrapsychic qualities as empowerment-relevant for all groups. To some extent, the results show that this aspect of PE was not necessary for the participants to make a difference in the community. By their own account, many of these Aboriginal women leaders and professionals would have scored quite low on

these intrapsychic measures earlier in life, yet they were able to take action and made a difference in the community. Over time, they became highly functioning individuals who have had a tremendous influence on their communities. Thus, if 'empowerment' were defined solely with these measures, as per earlier studies (e.g., Rappaport & Zimmerman, 1988; Rogers, Chamberlin, Ellison, Crean, 1997), the Aboriginal women would have been thought to be lacking in empowerment and, therefore lacking in ability to act. The Aboriginal women participants had different intrapersonal qualities including a sense of responsibility for the health of the community and were motivated by the perceived need in the community. Thus, the theoretical assertions regarding intrapersonal PE appear not to be consistent with this sample of Aboriginal women.

Organizational Empowerment

As described in the Introduction, an organization may be empowering, empowered, or both (Zimmerman, 2000). The Becoming Whole Model did not specifically address empowerment at an organizational level, yet all but one participant worked within an organization. Most headed organizations and described their approach to their work in a manner consistent with the way empowerment theory would expect an empowered organization would run. For example, participants who headed large organizations described their organizations being successful at meeting their goals. Those political organizations whose mandate was to influence government policy, were able to mobilize human resources by notifying interested individuals when an issue arose, so they might participate in public action. There was

also evidence that the organizations run by these women were empowering. For example, one participant said that she worked hard to give her staff the opportunity to make decisions that affected themselves and the organization, and to take responsibility for their decisions if things did not work out.

Community Empowerment

Zimmerman's (2000) community empowerment (CE) focuses on the use of empowerment processes and values within the community. The Becoming Whole Model contains a subprocess entitled healing within the community. This subprocess showed the participants initiating changes in order to heal the community. Zimmerman's community empowerment focuses on improving and the Aboriginal community empowerment focuses on 'healing'. This subtle difference is reminiscent of the difference regarding motivation. Zimmerman's model implies improvement towards a 'successful' community, which may have an implicit tone of competitiveness from the Aboriginal participant's perspective. The Aboriginal leaders and professionals were so uncomfortable with the term 'successful' that the researcher stopped using it both within the document to refer to the research participants and in the interviews, so as not to offend. For these women, changes within the community were based on a need for healing, the necessity to right injustices, and to assist vulnerable people. This has an implicit tone of cooperativeness. When comparing the two, the differences may be best understood in the context of Triandis' (2000) explanation of cultural differences. With regards to

this difference, the collectivist, cooperative approach springs to mind for the Aboriginal women, whereas the individualistic competitive approach is implied in Zimmerman's model. The Aboriginal women were working behind the scenes, without any desire for 'success' or recognition. This idea is a part of the working from the heart and soul core concept, which describes the women's work coming from the intrinsic meaningfulness of it, not how it will be perceived.

It is noteworthy that PE was the intended focus of this research and, with that initial assumption, several early versions of the Becoming Whole Model focused solely on the individual. However, as the data were analyzed, and categories were developed and compared, the researcher realized that this assumption did not match the data. It became fully illuminated when the Aboriginal lay woman who looked at the data noted her perception that the participants' primary motivation was born out of a desire to make a difference in the lives of others. This observation validated the researcher's similar perception that the efforts made within the community were of primary importance.

Regarding community empowerment, Zimmerman (2000) asserted that an empowered community would have certain processes, such as: (a) access to resources; (b) open government structure and (c) tolerance for diversity. By these criteria, the Aboriginal community, when viewed within the larger Canadian context, is highly disempowered. For example, Aboriginal women are members of the only group in Canada who have legislated unequal access to resources. With regards to open

government structure, Aboriginal people are currently fighting for their own voice. For example, land claims issues over sacred lands have been a hotly debated issue for decades within the legal system of Canada (e.g. Cummins & Whiteduck, 1998; Oman, 1998). Further, a low tolerance for diversity is reflected in these participants all being exposed to the pain of racism and discrimination.

The Becoming Whole Model demonstrated that Aboriginal leaders within the Canadian context of intolerance are making changes in the lives of Aboriginal people. The theme that emerged was that the participants' involvement in the community fueled their currently empowered state and was catalyzing healing within the community as well. Evidence for participation as an empowering process has been found in several other studies and is discussed in the next section.

Comparison with Four Key Studies

This section presents comparisons between the current research and those key studies that were discussed and compared in the Introduction (Kar, Pascual & Chickering, 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan, Waugh, & Espeland, 1984; Shields, 1995). Only those empowerment themes that are relevant to at least one of the comparison studies and the current research are discussed, these include (a) participation is empowering, (b) motivating factors (c) 'powerless' people can and do become empowered, (d) changes to one's sense of self can occur, (e) connection to others, (f) learning skills, (g) gaining a reputation, and (h) gaining social support. This section ends with a direct comparison between Shields (1995) and the current results

because they both examined empowerment in women at the individual level of analysis.

Participation is empowering. This was evident in the making a difference concept of the Becoming Whole model, which showed that participation or participatory behaviors were empowering processes and outcomes for the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. That is, the act of participation is empowering and fuels more participation. Results from three (Kar et al., 1999; Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan et al., 1984) of the four comparison studies also show the importance of participation. Kieffer's (1984) participants were empowered by becoming involved in making changes in the community. In Kar et al., one of the selection criteria was that women, often from oppressive socio-political systems, had organized and led social action movements. In the Kar et al. study, participation alone was a key element of empowerment. Similarly, O'Sullivan's Yavapai tribe found both participating and being successful empowering. The Aboriginal women leaders had varying degrees of goal attainment. For example, although several of the Aboriginal leaders were heading rather large organizations at the time of the interviews, a couple were struggling to gain more funding to keep their organization afloat. Despite this difference in outcomes and the extent to which the participants were struggling with funding or the exigencies of their particular situation, the participants reported that they felt empowered.

The finding that participation was a key empowering process in all the studies examined except the Shields (1995) study raised a question regarding, why did Shields results differ? One factor that may be relevant is basic need. The answer may be found in Barker's (1968) ecological perspective on behavior. He asserted that behavior is quite predictable if one is aware of the "behavioral setting." Simply put, Barker's behavior setting has both structural and dynamic characteristics. That is, it refers to both an environment for behavior and specific "*standing patterns of behavior*" (p. 18). Examples include religious worship services and baseball games. In either of these situations, there is a clearly delineated set of behaviors that occur and will occur regardless of the specific individuals involved in the behaviors. Thus, we can recognize a baseball game regardless of who is playing baseball. The behavior setting is one that has essential, consistent, structural, and active attributes. There is generally an optimal number of inhabitants that fit within the setting. One attribute of the behavior setting is its relative stability (Barker). Thus, a decrease in the number of inhabitants of a behavior setting below what is optimal will generally not change the standing pattern of behavior. In this "underpersonned" setting, the inhabitants tend to simply work harder in order to make up for the missing inhabitants. It is this underpersonned aspect of behavior settings that is germane to the current research. Barker stated that compared with optimally personned settings, the following occurs with underpersonned settings "(a) the number of forces acting upon each inhabitant of underpersonned settings is greater because the same forces are distributed among

fewer inhabitants (b) the range of directions of the forces upon each inhabitant is greater because fewer inhabitants mediate the same field of forces" (Barker, p. 166). Thus, the pressure on those persons who inhabit the setting may become great. If only a few persons are missing from the setting, those remaining will (a) be more active within the setting, and (b) will engage in a greater variety of behaviors. Within the Aboriginal community, so many of it's members have taken on the dependency that was imposed upon them by Federal policies, that it could be argued that an underpersonned setting exists. For example, relatively few Aboriginal persons hold professional or leadership positions. For those citizens who were attuned to the need, this underpersonned quality required them to become very active within the setting. This helps to explain why participants struggle with maintaining balance in their lives. The setting required so much of them that they could easily become lost in the requirements of the community. Similarly, the Kar, et al. (1999) and Kieffer (1984) participants all came from communities with great need and someone was required to rise up and fill the need. Too little is known about the Yavapai Indian's process to comment on how their behavior compared to this.

The question of motivating factors is an implicit empowerment theme. The specific goals and methods used to gain empowerment were less critical than that participation was in the service of a meaningful cause. This was implied in the Kar et al. (1999), Kieffer (1984), and O'Sullivan (1984) studies but was not explicitly stated as an essential aspect of participation. However, it is clear that participants in all

these studies responded to the perceived need for change in the community. Thus, participating in less meaningful actions (e.g., having one's nails done) would not be expected to be an empowering process. What made the participation meaningful was the motivation behind it. Kar et al. (1999) proposed that women will be motivated by preventing harm to their children. Similarly, Kieffer (1984) found that his participants were motivated by direct threats to the well being of themselves or their families. For the Yavapai tribe, saving their land was crucial to their well-being. This is consistent with the current finding that many participants said they wanted to make a difference in their community for their family. Kieffer's (1984) description of his participants' experience has a similar flavor to that of the Aboriginal participants. One of his participants said, "My heart and soul, my way of life, everything is here" (p. 18). These words reveal a deep commitment to a cause that is not based on financial gain, or gaining status, but is based on behaving in a manner that is congruent with one's values. This is similar to the attitude expressed in the working from the heart and soul concept of the Becoming Whole model. Thus, in Kar et al., 1999, Kieffer, 1984, O'Sullivan et al., 1984, and the current study, participation was catalyzed by the motivation to address problems or issues. In contrast, Shields (1995) reported findings that were more consistent with Zimmerman's (2000) conceptualization of PE. That is, her participants felt good about themselves, had changed themselves, and from a position of strength, or empowerment, they participated in the community.

A third important theme was the observation that 'powerless' people can and do become empowered. Powerlessness included being members of lower SES groups, (Kieffer, 1984; O'Sullivan et al.,1984; most of Kar et al.'s 1999 groups), being victims of systemic racism (O'Sullivan, et al., 1984), and being women (Kar et al; Shields, 1995). The participants in this study were all women, but Shields's participants differed from the others in that they were generally better educated and did not have to cope with multiple forms of powerlessness. Many of the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals were not only affected by poverty and racism, but also overcame abusive relationships, negligent homes, and a context of hopelessness. In this way, the Aboriginal women are similar to Kar et al.'s participants, O'Sullivan et al.'s Yavapai tribe, and Kieffer's grassroots leaders in that they emerged from victimization to become courageous, strong leaders.

The fourth shared theme was that those who became empowered also experienced changes in their sense of self. Kieffer (1984) reported that his grassroots leaders developed a sense of competence. Kar et al.'s (1999) participants gained an increased sense of well-being, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Though O'Sullivan did not specifically comment on the change in sense of self, the comments by an Elder that "we beat the white man at his own game" suggest that O'Sullivan's participants increased their sense of self-efficacy. Shields (1995) participants articulated an increase in self-acceptance and self-liking. Similarly, the Aboriginal participants developed greater self acceptance as they learned to integrate painful

parts of their past. This personal growth is an important aspect of the healing within the self subprocess.

Another aspect of the change in sense of self theme was Shields (1995) participants' development of trust in terms of self-knowledge. This referred to being truthful, trusting themselves, and taking control of their own lives regardless of others' expectations. The Aboriginal participants were honest and had great integrity but they did not emphasize the self to the same extent as Shields participants. Some of the questions the Aboriginal participants were asked were developed based on Shields' results, yet the Aboriginal participants' emphasis was different. "G" showed this difference in emphasis in her response to "How would you describe your sense of your self?"

> Take me or leave me, you know, this is who I am. I am who I am based on my birth and the mission I received from family as I was growing up. I am who I am based on the experiences that I have gained throughout my life. The people that I've met and I'm confident of who I am. And I try to do what's right and I think, for what ever reason, the good creator put me on this earth. I have a good time. I'm just like any other human. I mean that I'm going through rough times too... but I think on the whole, life is a wonderful thing. And to be able to open yourself up to meeting a number of people from all areas of the world and from all walks of life.. It's a wonderful thing. Creation is a wonderful thing, and we need to take care of it and as the world becomes a faster place to live, it becomes harder to do that so we need to make conscious efforts to be able to take care of ourselves, take care of each other and definitely take care of mother earth (G, 11, 369-381)

This quote because demonstrates how this participant showed self-acceptance and that she seems to understand or experience herself within the context of others. There is much more to her than 'self' alone. That is, in a question regarding her

'sense of self,' she talked about her destiny and the things she has learned through her experiences. She also acknowledged the work that is still required and her connection to other people, to the creator, to creation, to mother earth. She is confident about herself and is making an effort to take care of others and the planet.

Another shared theme is the importance of connection to others. Although connection was an important theme, the way it was manifested differed between groups. Kieffer (1984) observed that his participants felt supported by a mentor, rooted in their community, and felt supported within a community of caring peers. Shields (1995) connectedness theme comprised both interpersonal connection, and intrapersonal connection, that is, a sense of self experienced as integrated, or whole. The Aboriginal participants responded to questions about feeling integrated but this did not spark much enthusiasm. One participant said she felt whole and then switched to talk about not being integrated into mainstream society. Another participant said she usually feels integrated but not every day and that, overall, it's a maturing process. That is, the title of the model, Becoming Whole, is based on changes both within the community and within the individuals. However, the Aboriginal women participants tended to discuss the self primarily in relation to the community. Again, the difference in collectivist versus individualist (Triandis, 2000) cultures would appear germane to this difference. That is, Euro-American and arguably Canadian mainstream society is based on competition and individualism. Aboriginal society is collectivist, traditionally non-competitive and community-oriented.

That is, both Shields' participants and the Aboriginal participants' discussed their connection to others. However, the degree of connection seems more limited in Shields's sample. The Aboriginal women's focus was on their connection to Aboriginal persons, the land, spirituality, Aboriginal ancestors, the languages, the history, culture, and the values, including the valuing of Aboriginal women and their unique roles. Shields' (1995) connectedness theme included learning to feel less responsible for others and take more responsibility for one's self which differed from the Aboriginal women, who took responsibility for making changes in the community. The Aboriginal women leaders demonstrated greater selflessness. However, all but one of the Aboriginal participants also described a desire to gain greater balance with regards to their work and personal lives. It seemed that many of them felt the need to pull back from their work and focus more on their personal lives. Overall, the connectedness themes appear to have differences based on cultural differences as understood within Triandis' (2000) framework.

The sixth empowerment theme is the importance of skill development. In the Kar, et al. study (1999) the women and mothers gained skills, including technical and organizational skills. As they acquired skills, their quality of life and social status also increased and many of them became supervisors, trainers, or managers. Shields (1995) reported that her participants increased their communication and community involvement skills, and learned to identify and validate their own feelings. For the Aboriginal women, skill development was also an important component of their

empowerment experience, as the developing strategies for healthy living concept showed.

A seventh common theme that was apparent in these studies was the finding that participating in a form of social action tended to increase one's reputation in the community. For example, the Kar et al. (1999) and Kieffer's (1984) participants gained a reputation, even in small self-help initiatives and local programs. Similarly, O'Sullivan et al. (1984) state that the Yavapai's success skyrocketed the respect for the tribe outside their immediate area. The Aboriginal women also gained a reputation in the community, as is evidenced by the snowball sampling technique. That is, the Aboriginal participants had been designated as a 'professional or a leader' by a third party.

The final shared theme was that being successful at changing the status quo meant gaining social approval. For example, Kar et al. (1999) proposed that a social action movement for a just cause will gain public approval and improve the strength of the movement. This is relevant because if social support is important to gaining one's socio-political goals, educating mainstream Canadians about the injustices enacted towards Aboriginal people may be worthwhile. That is, as it becomes more broadly understood that changes for Aboriginal people are a 'just cause,' Aboriginal people will gain support from justice-minded Canadians and citizens of the world. This is what occurred for the Yavapai Indians (O'Sullivan et al., 1984), who were able to keep their land, in part, because they gained support from other groups.

Comparisons Among the Three Models

Focus turns now to a comparison among the present model, Becoming Whole, and Kar et al.'s (1999) and Kieffer's (1984) models. Most of the similarities in findings among studies were presented in the last section so this section is brief. With these comparisons, it must be kept in mind that Kar et al.'s model is based on empowerment movements and Kieffer's is based on empowerment in individuals.

Kar et al.'s first stage, motivation and innovation, is similar to the Becoming Whole model because both emphasize motivation. Kieffer's (1984) model examined the empowerment of 'emerging' grassroots leaders. His research participants were similar to the Aboriginal women leaders, in that they had lived in oppressive environments, both socially and economically and differed in that it included men and did not mention ethnicity. Kieffer (1984) advanced a developmental model of socio-political empowerment, with four stages. Kieffer's (1984) participants began with a deep sense of integrity and this was also said of the Yavapai tribe (O'Sullivan et al., 1984). Both groups displayed a united front in the face of the proposed changes and held to their values and priorities. This sense of integrity was also consistent with the Becoming Whole concept of *working from the heart and soul*, which stated that the Aboriginal women participants all demonstrated and lived lives of integrity.

Overall, the Becoming Whole and Kieffer's (1984) models diverge in one major way. Kieffer's model is developmental, with specific linear lock-step stages, whereas the Becoming Whole model is also developmental but has an all-at-onceness to it.

That is, whereas Kieffer's model depicted that the participants became leaders in a linear, step-by-step fashion, the Becoming Whole model was more integrated and the different processes and the core concepts occurred simultaneously, with each influencing the other.

Both Shields (1995) and the Becoming Whole models focused on women. One might, therefore, expect them to be most similar to each other, but there were important differences. First, as part of their way of being in the world, the Aboriginal women have a community connectedness that is more all encompassing and more of a defining feature for Aboriginal people than the connection shown in Shields's sample. The Euro-American women's perceptions of empowerment seemed to reflect their individualistic way of being in the world. These differences appear to be basic cultural differences of the type described by Triandis (2000). That is, that Aboriginal women come from a more collectivist culture. This difference was not predicted prior to the data collection for this project.

Another distinction between Shields' (1995) participants and the Aboriginal participants is that the Aboriginal women are truly leaders in the sense that they have committed themselves to the betterment of others. Shields participants were not recruited on the basis of being leaders or professionals, instead they self-identified as empowered. Their empowerment may reflect more exclusively PE, with less relative organizational or community empowerment. The Aboriginal women's experiences were focused more broadly on others and they were active brokers in organizational

and community empowerment. This, in itself, may explain some of the difference in emphasis, reflected in the comparisons between the two groups.

Related to this is Riger's (1993) criticism that the empowerment approach focuses too much on individualism and, therefore, inherently values those traits typically associated with masculinity. Riger asked why the more traditionally feminine concepts of community and cooperation are not highlighted in community psychology's conception of a world view. She argued that this accentuates psychology's taking as its highest value independence and autonomy over connectedness. It appears that both Shields's (1995) findings and the current findings give empirical credence to Riger's (1993) critique. Empowered women in both studies expressed both agency and connection. The Aboriginal participants in positions of leadership appear to have an even stronger sense of agency than do Shields's sample and are even more actively involved in the community, thus demonstrating an extremely strong sense of community.

Riger's (1993) criticism of empowerment being too 'masculine' seems to be based on a conventional understanding of empowerment than the empowerment theory expressed by Zimmerman (1995; 2000) and empowerment values as expressed by many empowerment researchers (e.g., Katz, 1984; Prilletensky, 1990, 1994; Rappaport, 1981, 1984, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1995; Swift, 1984; Swift & Levin, 1987). These empowerment researchers and theoreticians emphasized the need for change from hierarchal male-dominated approaches. Instead of developing a 'one

size fits all' theoretical approach that is expected to be right for any population, these empowerment theoreticians specifically assume that empowerment will be expressed in different ways by different people, and will be expressed differently in different contexts (Zimmerman, 2000). However, if one equates 'masculine' with control or controlling behavior, then Riger's criticism would certainly be taken up by the Aboriginal women as valid because they do not equate controlling with empowerment. The primary task with empowerment research will continue to be determining the commonalities and differences between groups in the manner in which empowerment is expressed and being cautious to never impose one's own version of empowerment on others.

Implications for Empowerment Theory, Intervention, and Clinical Practice

The results of this study have implications for empowerment theory, intervention, and clinical practice and this section highlights some of these. From the point of view of empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 1995), the intrapersonal aspect of PE , is that one's self-perception of efficacy or domain-specific perceived control, provides the ignition for action. In contrast, within this present sample, it appears that the ignition for action was the motivation to 'stop the cycles of abuse' and to make a difference within the Aboriginal community. Again, the implications may be far-reaching in terms of approaches used to motivate change. Would the interventionist or clinician be best advised to teach Aboriginal people about the injustices or 'the cycles of abuse' rather than to try to increase their domain-specific perceived control?

For interventionists, it is imperative to learn what motivates action for any given population.

Related to the above issue is the cultural difference with regards to the word, 'control'. It is important to be aware of the history of systemic discrimination and how the Canadian Government saw fit to 'control' every aspect of Aboriginal people's lives for generations. Controlling is different from the Aboriginal approach of looking and learning. Therefore, if one wants to work with Aboriginal people, it is necessary to have an awareness of the negative connotations to the word control. Approaches to intervention and clinical practice must keep this view of control in mind in order to be cautious about displaying any behaviors that may appear 'controlling' or 'interfering'. One approach may be to look for existing best practices and to talk to potential intervention participants about what has been successful. This would require respectfully informing people about what has worked in the past in similar communities and then backing off to let them decide what they will do.

The current finding that knowledge about socio-political issues, history, learning language, and developing skills are important to empowerment is consistent with the theoretical understanding of empowerment and with much of the research presented in the literature review. The implication of this finding is that whenever opportunities for acquiring knowledge or skills are provided, it has the potential to be empowering. Thus, simply offering skills-development training may be empowering.

The comparison between empowerment values and Aboriginal values showed that some similarities exist. For example, equality is important from both viewpoints. What this means for interventionists and clinical practitioners is that care must be taken when working with Aboriginal people not to impose an implicit or explicit hierarchy. The findings also show that the Aboriginal women believed in working together to achieve goals. This is also consistent with empowerment values and important to bear in mind when considering work with Aboriginal people.

One current finding with far-reaching implications was that this Aboriginal sample was much more collectivist than mainstream individualist society. When working with Aboriginal individuals or groups it would be important to keep this in mind. For example, if an Aboriginal University student reports that she must go to her home reserve because a crisis has occurred, this is not an excuse to have a holiday. Rather, it is the person taking responsibility in a manner that is consistent with her culture. Another example might be if an interventionist wants to introduce a new project to a group, it would make sense to frame it within the context of moving the community forward, rather than focusing on the success of individuals. Based on this, professionals who provide community-oriented goals for interventions would be more likely to have their ideas accepted. Further, it is important to note that this collectivism is so strong that it came to light in a study intended to examine empowerment at the individual level of analysis. Thus, it is apparent that this community orientation holds influence in many aspects of life for Aboriginal people.

A final implication of this research concerns the differences between Shields's (1995) (almost) all Euro-American women sample and the Aboriginal sample. The present research shows that culture and history are important and that 'all' women's experience of empowerment will be the same. In terms of Shields's (1995) findings, it makes one pause and reflect on how her lone African-American participant's experiences may have differed from the rest of the sample. Again, in terms of intervention, clinical practice, and theoretical understanding, the current study shows that there is much to be learned about different groups' approaches to empowerment. We can not learn about these differences if we simply assume that any given individual or group will see things the same way. Thus, as much as this study may add to the body of knowledge on empowerment, it should not be used as 'the' last word on Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. If one is to work with an Aboriginal woman, or Aboriginal women, one must respectfully seek out information about the individual or group before proceeding.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The current research forwards our knowledge about empowerment in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. However, limitations exist and there is much more research to do on this and related areas.

Although the intention was to gather information from Aboriginal women leaders and professionals so as to learn more about empowerment in this group, the retrospective nature of the study was, in some ways, a limitation. The women spoke

about their lives, for the most part in a very positive way and so the transformational nature of their experiences may have been lost somewhat in the telling. In future research it may be useful to follow, longitudinally, a different group of Aboriginal women, to determine who does well and who does not in order to assess whether any key processes or issues were missed in this study. Somewhat tangentially, while the researcher was collecting and analyzing data, she concurrently worked on a needs assessment report for gang-affiliated females and female family members (Ritchot, 2002). She interviewed 23 young gang-affiliated women for this project. She met very intelligent and strong persons, many of whom were trying to leave gang life. It would be informative to follow a group of young women like these, in order to learn the extent to which they are able to make lasting changes in their lives. Based on the present research, one of the questions the researcher asked the gang-affiliated females was whether they would like to hear about or from Aboriginal women who had difficult beginnings but had become leaders. They responded in an enthusiastic manner. They wanted to hear about Aboriginal women who have done well and to hear about the "good things" that are happening in the Aboriginal community. Young women like these, with the motivation to change their lives, may become part of the next generation of leaders. The observation that the gang-affiliated females were very interested in hearing about Aboriginal women who had 'done well' provides a glance at one of the possible roles of this research in the future. That is, making the results of

this research known to those still struggling may provide both some tips as well as the inspiration to make changes.

Another limitation of the present study was its focus on the individual. At the outset, this focus seemed appropriate because empowerment processes had not been previously studied in Aboriginal women. However, future research may examine empowerment needs more purposively at the organizational and community levels within the Aboriginal communities. How does empowerment at the organizational and community levels of analysis in the Aboriginal community compare with mainstream OE and CE as described by Zimmerman (2000)? Most of the participants in this study were leaders of organizations and in their communities. As they expressed it, an important part of their role was to empower others. The researcher's sense was that their perceptions were valid and that they were positive influences on others. However, it would add to our understanding to examine this issue from employees' point of view. What processes do these leaders engage in that are empowering for those with whom they work? What are the limitations and how might these be addressed? In a similar vein, the current research focused on individuals but future research might examine how individuals in the community work as a team to make improvements. What values do Aboriginal organizations espouse? To what extent is the non-hierarchal value expressed in Aboriginal organizations? What are the factors that contribute to the expression of this value?

Whereas the last paragraph called for research at different levels of analysis, more research at the level of PE would also be helpful. For example, more specifics regarding the interplay of how different contexts affect one's PE would be meaningful. Does one's SES have greater bearing on persons' sense of PE or would decreasing the impact of racism make more of a difference? These are difficult variables to tease apart but it would help to know whether they have different impact on one's PE in order to understand where intervention should be aimed.

One of the key findings of this research was the apparent difference in the perception of the Aboriginal women's self, in relation to others. The Aboriginal women appear to come from a more collectivist, in Triandis' (2000) terms, culture. This has significant bearing on the way they perceive their world and their roles in the community. More research is needed in this area in order to better understand the extent to which cultural differences exist between mainstream Canadian and Aboriginal culture. Learning more about this has the potential to increase communication and understanding between the two cultures.

To some extent, the results from this research endeavor can be seen as a starting point to focus on what is empowering within the Aboriginal community. Methodologically, qualitative research methods are appropriate when the phenomenon of interest has been relatively ignored in the relevant literature (Carpenter, 1999). However, to fully understand any phenomenon, quantitative and qualitative methods work well together. In continuing this research endeavor, it would

be helpful to test this model with different Aboriginal groups, for example Aboriginal students in Native Studies courses, to determine whether the findings are also applicable to them. The phenomenon could also be more broadly understood by applying a quantitative approach. For example, survey questions could be developed from the key themes and larger numbers of Aboriginal people may be asked about their experiences. Similarly, methodology will need to be devised to answer some key questions that remain unanswered from this study. For example, what is the role of risk-taking in the success of leaders? How does the current research results compare with research on resilience (e.g., Sebescen, 2000)? What served as the basis for these women to be moved to action whereas others who perceive the need are not able to come to the aid of their community?

The area of empowerment processes in Aboriginal male leaders and professionals would be a worthwhile research area. Would most of the key elements of empowerment processes that are described in this model apply to Aboriginal males as well? Would Aboriginal males express the same belief in 'women as wealth' and place the same importance on women as the mothers of the next generation as the Aboriginal women participants did?

One potential limitation of this study was that key concepts and terms were not formally defined for the participants. Instead, participants were asked the meanings for each of the terms introduced. This was done intentionally because the researcher did not wish to, nor appear to, impose definitions (and possibly values) on the

participants. This was intended to be isomorphic with the empowerment framework and respectful from a cultural perspective. The researcher intended to learn about the research participants' experiences and to record and categorize them. Actions were taken to determine the extent to which empowerment was meaningful to the participants and whether their viewpoints were consistent with the empowerment framework. Indeed, the research participants personal definitions of empowerment were very consistent with both the theoretical definition of empowerment, many of the processes put forward by other research, and the categories developed for the Becoming Whole Model. However, this open approach to the participants defining their own terms may be seen as a limitation if the researcher were overly invested in the research participants providing definitions that are consistent with others'. [In this case, the researcher was open to the possible discovery that the participants did not find empowerment a useful construct and would have then discussed that finding as an important addition to the literature on empowerment and Aboriginal women leaders and professionals.]

The current research examined empowerment in Aboriginal women who had achieved either a leadership or professional position in society. It was intended to partially offset the innumerable studies on negative symptoms within the Aboriginal population, such as drug and alcohol abuse. The research questions were, 'what is empowering?' and 'what helped to bring these Aboriginal women from relative powerlessness to becoming more empowered?' In choosing women who had reached

such high levels of accomplishment, however, critics might argue that the sample suffers from an 'elite bias.' The potential for the elite bias could be addressed if Aboriginal professionals were studied who were not leaders. For example, Aboriginal lawyers who are not the head of the firm, or Aboriginal social workers, not the heads of social service agencies. Would there be any difference in these groups? Would their motivation to achieve still come from the drive to make a difference in the world?

If the elite bias is a problem with this research, the question becomes, will the lessons learned from this research apply to more 'ordinary' Aboriginal women? The researcher believes that the processes and core concepts articulated in the model can be used when working with any Aboriginal woman. This can be done through discussions about how these initially-ordinary people managed to make a difference by working towards positive changes in the community. For example, it was extremely beneficial to the participants to have learned more about Aboriginal history and culture. It helped them understand how Aboriginal people were forced to become so dependent. It helped them to understand how parenting skills became lost in the residential school legacy. Much of Aboriginal history is still unknown to both mainstream and Aboriginal culture. This is only one aspect of the model but an argument can be made that the model can be used as a teaching tool to show that Aboriginal women can and have managed to come from very difficult beginnings to become courageous, wise, giving leaders. This information may provide others with a

sense of hope and encouragement for their personal futures, the future of their families, and the future of the community.

Overall, this research examined empowerment processes in Aboriginal women leaders and professionals. The sample comprised a group of nine highly motivated, deeply courageous, inspirational women. They are extraordinary persons from any perspective. Although this research left many questions unanswered, searching for answers to those questions has the potential to be a profoundly moving and rewarding experience.

Reflection and Reflexivity

In qualitative methodology, it is customary for researchers to provide a brief description of their personal experience. Both a personal account and any 'lessons' that may have been learned from their experience. This is difficult for me because this experience was almost overwhelming. I felt a sense of sadness, anger and outrage as I learned more about the history and loss of culture of Aboriginal people in Canada. I also felt deeply touched and moved by the stories the Aboriginal women leaders and professionals shared with me. At times we shared tears as they told me about their losses and tragic experiences. More often, we laughed out loud at some ironic or funny experience. Many of the painful experiences the participants described seemed to be made bearable by applying humor. With a couple of these powerful women, I felt terrified and intimidated. Terrified about not being 'worthy' enough, or Aboriginal enough, and therefore, of being rejected. Intimidated by the knowledge,

courage, honesty and integrity that these women seemed to live on a moment-to-moment basis. Mostly, I felt a profound sense of honour at having been allowed a glimpse into their lives in such a meaningful way. I will carry these women's words and voices with me always.

This research has influenced my own identity and the way I see myself. As a Métis researcher, I identified with the participants as they shared the pain, hurt, and humiliation of being Aboriginal, of feeling 'less than' in this overtly and covertly racist country we call Canada. As a qualitative researcher, I felt it necessary to distance myself enough to always be conscious that it was the participants stories that were to be told, not mine. As a Métis woman, it is because of my experience with this research that I feel myself to be both more proudly Aboriginal, and more humbly so, than I could have imagined.

Regarding lessons for any one who wants to take on a project of this nature, I would ask you to consider your reasons. Do you want to do this because you want to grow as a person by learning from, and with, Aboriginal people, in collaboration, if they chose to let you into their lives? Or do you want to 'help' these poor, oppressed dregs of society to become more like you? If your answer has more to do with the latter than the former, get another project and perhaps you'll keep from being harmful to others. As was discussed in this thesis, these Aboriginal women have been treated as if they were, and many believed themselves to be, 'other' and 'inferior' as they were growing up. If one intends to work with Aboriginal people and has these attitudes, then they

will do a bad job and be told to leave, at best. At worst, they will be allowed to remain and will perpetuate these attitudes and myths about Aboriginal people.

It is my belief that these women permitted me to do this research because of who I am as a person. That I am Métis was an important part of being allowed in but I think that each participant knew that I genuinely wanted to hear their words and honor their stories. In training to be a clinical psychologist, we are taught 'core conditions' that are essential in a successful therapeutic relationship. Different theoreticians support different combinations of these (e.g. Martin, 1983) but those that I have focused on in my training are (a) unconditional positive regard, (b) genuineness, (c) respect, and (d) empathy. In order to genuinely respect, empathize, and care about others, one must be able to identify with them to a degree, otherwise the 'other' is foreign and, to many, foreign is inferior. I never saw my meetings with the participants as a means to an end. As I labored at this project, I had in mind that it was more important to be respectful to the words and experiences of these women than to attain a degree. Once the model was validated and I knew I was on the right track, it seemed most respectful to do both.

In closing, the most important advice that I would give to anyone who wishes to do this sort of research is to look into your heart. If you find that you have an attitude of genuine respect and a yearning to learn some of the staggering knowledge that many Aboriginal people can teach, go ahead and give it a try. If you do, read lots of books on the subject, get a good committee, and find a mentor!

In Closing: Words of Wisdom

I wish to leave the reader with words of wisdom from the Aboriginal research participants. Participants responded to the question, "If you were to give advice to a younger person, a teenage girl, for example, wanting to be a professional or a leader, what would you tell her?"

> Don't expect or demand to be a leader! A good example is even if you're elected to a leadership position doesn't mean you're a leader. A true leader gives something of themselves and doesn't expect anything back, including accolades.... I really believe that people have to give something. I'm not talking monetary, I'm talking, have some passion for something (A, 8, 308-315).

> When you see a spade, you call it a spade - don't ever sidestep it - and when certain things come your way that may be contentious - and even if you know they are going to get you in trouble - you'll know within yourself what's right and what's wrong and do the right thing and don't be fearful. The most important thing is to believe in yourself and shoot for the stars! You can be what ever you want to be - It doesn't matter what kind of background you come from (K, 30, 1190-1195)

> What would I tell them? Good God, I don't know...It's a hard question for me because I didn't aspire to be (current role) when I grew up... I didn't even aspire to be (current role) when I got into the business...It just sort of happened..I'd see some thing I'd say, I can do that... I'd apply for it and then I had to figure it out, right? It's not like there is any kind of school course you can take on doing this. It's sort of an accumulation of experience and having good friends to help you - who you can phone and say, "oh shit man, I need help with this and how would you see that - and how might you see that - and sort of checking..and you keep going...What would I tell them? Take care of your self. Know who you are...Develop computer skills (which I don't have). It's about relationships.... It's not about Indian, White, Metis.. I mean, I love as many non-Aboriginal people as I do... well, maybe not quite ...But it's not about that - it's about getting to know who you are and staying true to that and that's really it...And not listening to people... you have to be a little bit thick skinned...And not personalizing stuff.... Have some fun! In any horrible situation, you walk away later and you can really find something funny...

Maintain that sense of humour! Because if non-Aboriginal people, as a community, had to go through some of the things that Aboriginal people: families, individuals have had to go through... They would have died... They would probably have cracked up...but we just keep on laughing... we just keep on going, eh, in spite of it? Yeah, so, that would be it.... (L, 17, 650-674).

Number one, get an education, that would be important. Number two, probably, and I don't know if it's in this order, would be to remember her worth. That she's as worthy as anyone else is. And can meet anyone and do anything, and be an equal to anyone.... And all of the beauty in the world means absolutely nothing if there's no heart or compassion involved. And that you have to use your brains. You can't just rely on your looks. Because they do wither. And, so I think the whole thing, you know, of not being so focused on the external but looking deeper inside of people (B, 12-13, 475-489).

Believe in yourself, believe that you have the ability. So often when we get fearful we spend so much time looking around to see who is keeping us down and in the end we are the only ones who have to make the final decision! (G, 10, 347-349)

You cannot do it by yourself you need to have a dream. Mine was to have a better life for myself and my child[ren], better than what I had. So that sustained me through all things I did. (C, 1, 3-5).

I would probably tell her to make sure she knew who she was: who her family is, and who her community is. To know that really well. It doesn't matter if her family is living in another place detached from them but she should know that and a little bit of the history of her people and how they came to be where they are. I think she'll get a lot of strength from that. (D, 8, 286-289).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
The Reserve System and Residential School System in Canada: A Brief Overview

Negative aspects of the reserve system are discussed at some length in this appendix but it is important to note that most Aboriginal people would not want their reserves dissolved because that is where they grew up and feel 'at home'. Reserves are little pockets in which the culture and language are familiar and known. Aboriginal people from the same home reserves will often understand each other in terms of their shared history. York (1990) reported that Aboriginal people feel like foreigners when they come to the cities because mainstream people do not understand what the reserves are like. Although this review of the reserves focuses on the negatives, these are generalizations and there is a large range of experiences on the reserves currently, including some very positive initiatives (Schissel and Wotherspoon, 2003).

The Indian Act of 1876 is the Canadian legislation that gave the Federal government power over the Indian Nations (York, 1990). The Act was amended since then but those powers still exist today. According to the National Indian Brotherhood, (1996) the reserve system had two distinct purposes. First, it was intended to protect the Indians and their lands. Second, it was intended to control, assimilate, and civilize the Indians. As this overview will show, 'protection' of the Indians was less emphasized than assimilation and control. The Indian Act was enforced on the reserves by Indian Agents from almost the time of its inception until the 1960s. These federal employees had enormous powers (York, 1990). Indians had to obtain special permits in order to carry out many of their day-to-day activities. For example, on the Prairies, in order to sell crops or cattle, or to purchase farm implements, Indians required a permit from the Indian Agent. Thus, as York (1990) put it, if an Indian 'annoyed' the Agent, they could be denied a permit. Regarding this situation, Cree Chief Edward Ahenakew wrote, "It is most wretchedly humbling to many a worthy fellow to have to go, with assumed indifference, to ask or beg for a permit to sell one load of hay that he has cut himself, on his own reserve, with his own horses and implements" (as cited in York, 1990, p. 60). One former Indian Agent reported, "Here I was a young kid in his early twenties and I was absolutely astounded at the power I had over the life of these people" (York, 1990, p.60).

The Indian Agents had the power to prosecute Indians and preside over Band Council meetings (York, 1990). Even movement was overseen by the Indian Agent, as Indians required a pass to leave the reserve. Indian Agents could also suppress all native spiritual ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance. York reported that some Indian Agents operated like dictators. By the late 1960s, the Indian Agents were gone but

their powers were transferred to the Indian Affairs Department, which controls the flow of money and decisions regarding how to spend it. A large portion of it was spent on social assistance cheques, not on creating jobs, nor on community or economic development. In 1981, a federal discussion paper acknowledged that more money should be spent on economic self-sufficiency.

York (1990) contends that the reserves were created to remove the Indians from the path of white settlement and to assimilate them by transforming them into farmers. However, most of the reserves were either too small or not appropriate for farming or, in other parts of the country, they were inappropriate in other ways. For example, one band of Micmac Indians, the Membertou in Nova Scotia, had always been a maritime people who fished and canoed for their livelihood. When their land was expropriated, they were moved from their home reserve to land that had no water access. Elders from the community explained to the Exchequer court that the psychological and economic implications of this move would be devastating but they were ignored. Bernie Frances of the Membertou said, "The feeling of being close to the water was taken away from the people. It's like being chained" (York, 1990, p. 64).

Regarding the amount of land assigned to reserves, York (1990) reported that only 0.2% of Canada was set aside for reserve land. Proportionately, reserves in the United States are 20 times larger. Canadian reserves take up 1/5 of the land reserved for National Parks, and the total reserve land is equal to the amount taken up by airports and military bases. These small pockets of land do not actually belong to the Aboriginal people. According to the wording of the Act, Her Majesty, the Queen of England has legal title and the land is controlled by the Federal Government. Under section 35 of the Indian Act, the Federal Government has the right to transfer land without the consent of the inhabitants, as was done to the Membertou.

In the early 1940s the government of Nova Scotia decided to move all the Micmac Indians in the province to three reserves in order to keep them together, away from the white people (York, 1990). York reported that, as one white mother put it, Micmac women were 'temptations' to their sons (York, 1990). York reported that the government agreed to move all the Indians when they became convinced that this 'centralization' would save them money. After some discussion, the government forced the Micmacs onto two existing reserves (not three) and once people were evacuated from their homes, the vacated homes were burned to the ground. The chief, Ben Christmas, predicted, quite accurately according to York, that the move would lead to an increase in drink and lawlessness. York reports that the government went ahead despite protests, and that the Indian Agent J. A. MacLean, said that any opposition came from 'left-wingers' and that centralization could make a 'decent chap' of the Micmac, and that "If properly 'developed,' the Micmacs would be 'one of the greatest tourist attractions this province has to offer," (York, 1990, p. 66).

By 1957, the government said that centralization had not been successful and offered the Micmacs the opportunity to return to their old reserves 'at their own expense' (York, 1990). Those two reserves are still highly overcrowded. A parliamentary committee that investigated the Nova Scotia reserves stated that Eskasoni could provide a reasonable standard of living for 20 families. York reported that in 1990 there were more than 2,000 residents living there. Similarly, the Shubenacadie could reasonably accommodate 90 and 900 lived there. York (1990) reported that suicide rates and alcoholism at both reserves are high. In 1980, one study found that death by cirrhosis of the liver was 14 times the national average. Social conditions were "a breeding ground for alcohol and drugs" according to Dan Christmas of the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (York, 1990, p. 68). They believed that the high level of welfare dependence was a direct result of centralization. However, these social ills are found in reserves across the country (York). Violence is also high. For example, Aboriginal people are four times more likely to be murdered than the national average. York (1990) reported that the death rate from violence and accidents among Canadian Indians is higher than rates in the Third World.

Aboriginal people living on the reserves have substandard living conditions and serious overcrowding. In 1985 a study found that 18% of reserve houses are occupied by two or more families (York, 1990). According to the rule of thumb that a house is overcrowded if there is more than 1 person per room, 36% of all reserve houses are overcrowded. By comparison, only 2% of the Canadian population as a whole lives in overcrowded conditions. Not only are the reserve houses overcrowded but only 11% of houses are in top or good condition and 47% of reserve houses are in need of repair. One third of homes have no running water and many reserve inhabitants collect water from a river. Outhouses are common and more than one half of reserve homes in Canada have no central heating. Instead, they are often heated with cooking or wood stoves, often made from empty barrels. This type of heating is a major cause of respiratory illness (York, 1990). [Recall information from StatsCan regarding top three causes of infant mortality included respiratory illnesses] Both the method of heating and the material used to build the homes make many of them 'firetraps.' Most reserves do not have proper fire prevention techniques. For example, in the province of Manitoba only 16 of 60 bands have proper equipment to fight fires. As a result, fire deaths on reserves are six times greater than the national average (York, 1990).

Poor housing and sanitation has resulted in many Aboriginal people having poor health (York, 1990). For example, on reserves such maladies as gastroenteritis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis can be deadly. York pointed out that the current poor state of health is very different from what was common in the mid 18th Century. In 1767, the Indians were said to be quite robust. However, by 1905 a physician in Northern Ontario reported that the Indians were below average in size and weight and their physiques were relatively underdeveloped (York, 1990). Although certainly not

all Aboriginal people are below average and underdeveloped, these observations demonstrate that Aboriginal people have not 'thrived' in this country.

York (1990) stated that with the dependency fostered on the reserves and the high rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, sniffing, and violence, mental health has been almost entirely neglected. Sickness and violence are symptoms of the larger problems of poverty and economic underdevelopment. As York puts in, "The Indian Act, with its restrictions on native autonomy, and the reserve system, with its patchwork of tiny reserves on infertile land, have locked Indians into a cycle of unemployment, overcrowding, poor health, and dependence on welfare" (York, 1990, p. 79).

Just as the reserve system served to foster dependency and many other ills, the residential schools system was also detrimental to the well being of Aboriginal persons (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). It was implemented as a Federal Government policy intended to 'assimilate and acculturate' Aboriginal children into mainstream Eurocentric Canada (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Increasingly, evidence from those who were 'kept' in residential schools shows how inhuman attitudes towards the children were (e.g., Knockwood, 1992). They were treated as 'inferiors' with little ability (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003) and were not allowed to speak their own languages (Blondin, 1999; Cassidy, et al., 1995; Miller, 1991, 1996). Aboriginal people were considered savages (Smith, 1999), incapable of taking care of their own affairs (Cassidy, et al., 1995).

As more details are becoming known about the residential school experience, it is becoming clear that many Aboriginal people see the residential school system as one of the key reasons for the high rates of suicide, alcoholism, and abuse in the Aboriginal community (e.g., York, 1990). Although the residential school system has left a negative legacy, some First Nations leaders had heartily endorsed the idea of their children being educated in the 'White Man's ways.' For example, Shingwauk Home was completed and opened because Chief Augustine Shingwauk reportedly had a vision in 1872 that he would see a 'big teaching wigwam' established so that children in his area could be taught such things as reading, writing, farming, building, and making clothing (Miller, 1996). In time, this became one of the residential schools. And although it had optimistic beginnings, many abuses occurred there before it was finally closed in 1971 (Miller, 1996).

At the Shingwauk School 1991 reunion Aboriginal persons who had once lived there came together in 'healing circles' to share some of their experiences (Miller, 1996). They described the rigidity and the harshness of the schools and recalled being forced to attend and that the staff would attack and belittle their culture. They were given inadequate food, excessive chores, and were beaten. These residential school survivors felt the school had failed to teach them how to be capable citizens when they left the school. What happened to many persons who attended residential schools was that felt they no longer belonged to any community when they returned to

their home reserves. They were no longer able to communicate well with their parents because they could no longer speak their home language, after being beaten for many years when they did. They also took on some of the dominant culture's belief system so they no longer shared the same cultural beliefs as their families. Thus, when they would come home, they would criticize their family's culture and values and were, in turn, rejected. However, they never really 'belonged' in the residential schools, nor were they genuinely accepted into the dominant society. Knockwood (1992), a residential school survivor, described her experiences. Following is an excerpt from this experience.

> I remember those horrifying years as if it were yesterday. There was one nun, Sister Gilberta, she always passed out the punishment. Every day, she would take me into the bathroom and lock the door. She would then proceed to beat me thirty times on each hand, three times a day, with a strap. She would count to thirty, out loud, each time she hit me. It's an awful way to learn to count to 30. My older sister, Grace, learned to count to 50.
>
> I never understood why I had to get those beatings, but at the age of 37, I realize it had to be because I spoke my language. To this day, I can't speak my language very well. But I do understand when I am spoken to in Micmac.
>
> Why was our language and culture such a threat that it had to be taken away from us with such a vengeance?
>
> To be taught your language with respect and kindness by your people, then to have the White Man pull it from your heart with meanness and torture. Some people wonder why we are so tough, because we had to, we had no choice.
>
> I have polio and it affected my bladder and as a child, I wet my pants a lot. I received beatings for that too.
>
> Once I was thrown across the floor by Sister Gilberta. At the age of six, it seemed far away. I bounced of the wall at the other end of the dorm. I was sore on one side of my body for a few days (Knockwood, 1992, p. 81).

Schissel and Wotherspoon report that many of the residential school students were not only beaten but that punishments were often of a sexualized nature. The following is a description from Helen Cote's M.A. Thesis (cited in Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003).

> As we approached the school I became more excited, talking as loudly as I could. The priest turned me over to a nun, who took me upstairs to the infirmary and took my clothes off. She went to fill a bath tub with water. She was very rough, told me to shut up and called me a dirty, filthy, little Indian. My family had never told me to shut up. When I was first told to shut up, it shocked me. Where did she get all these terrible words from? She was pulling my hair, and kept telling me to shut up and to stand still. I fought back. Nobody was

> going to treat me like dirt. When I protested that she was hurting my head by pulling my long hair, she became more angry and pulled my hair harder. I jumped up to leave, but she knocked me down in the tub. I could never have guessed in a million years what she would do next. She began to scrub me up and down my body, separated my legs and began poking her fingers in my vagina. I was shocked and I protested more by jumping out of the tub and yelling. She slapped my in the face and pulled my hair harder, calling me a dirty little savage. 'We have to clean you inside and out.' She held me down under water several times while she continued to beat me. She almost drown me. I am sure she would have if I had continued to resist her (p. 52).

Miller (1996) said that at the Shingwauk School reunion, many of the ex-'students' of the residential schools described how, once they left the school, they 'wasted' many years "in alcohol, drugs, and violence before they managed to put their lives together, confront the pain that had been driving them to harm themselves, and get on with the business of living" (Miller, 1996, p. 8). Tragically, thousands who did not attend the reunion had not been able to overcome their pain and self destruction.

Appendix B

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism rests on three basic premises (Blumer, 1969). First, humans behave towards things based on the meanings which they have ascribed to them. Things in this context refer to objects from the physical world (such as tables and flowers), to other persons (such as a father or a doctor), or other categories of persons (for example, friends or enemies). Blumer also includes institutions (such as schools and governments), guiding ideals, (for example, freedom and honesty), or situations which are encountered in everyday life.

The second basic premise of symbolic interactionism is that the meaning placed on things emanates or emerges from one's social interaction with others (Blumer, 1969). This position contrasts the two other dominant views of meaning. First, "realism," the traditional position in philosophy, posits that meaning radiates from the thing. From this point of view there is no process involved in the making of meaning. What is, simply, is (a cow is a cow; a desk is a desk) and the viewer recognizes the meaning inherent in the thing. The second dominant view approaches meaning as "a psychical accretion brought to the thing by the person for whom the thing has meaning" (p.4). This psychical accretion is thought to be an expression of constituent elements of the meaning maker's psyche, or mind. These elements include ideas, sensations, memories, motives, attitudes, and feelings. The meaning is "the expression of the given psychological elements that are brought into play in connection with the perception of the thing" (p. 4). Symbolic interactionism differs from these dominant views in that meaning is derived from the process of the actor interacting with other persons in relation to the thing. The meanings of things are, thus, social products.

The third premise is that "these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Blumer sees this use of meanings as occurring through a 'process of interpretation' as an important defining characteristic of symbolic interactionism. This process has two steps. First, actors indicate to themselves those things which have meaning. This requires that the person engage in communication with self. Second, the communication with self must be interpreted by self. "The actor selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in the light of the situation in which he is placed and the direction of his action" (p. 5). From the symbolic interactionism perspective, interpretation is a formative process and is not the mere application of previously held meanings. "Meanings play their part in action through a process of self interaction" (p. 5).

From Blumer's (1969) perspective, few would argue with the first premise, that persons act towards things based on the meanings they have for them, yet this basic meaning is generally ignored or downplayed in any analysis of human behavior. Symbolic interactionism considers the meanings "central in their own right" (p. 3). Meaning, from this perspective, does not emanate simply from the intrinsic characteristics of the thing, as "realism" would have it. Nor, Blumer asserts, does meaning emanate from the constituent psychological elements found within the person. Instead, meaning arises from "the process of interaction between people. The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing" (p. 4).

Blumer (1969) describes two types of interaction, non-symbolic and symbolic. Non-symbolic interaction refers to reflexive behaviors, for example, a sneeze, or a boxer putting his arm up to block a punch. Symbolic interaction, on the other hand, involves interpretation of the action. For example, if the same boxer were to perceive an oncoming blow as a ploy intended to trap him, he would be engaging in symbolic interaction (because an interpretation is being made). Thus, symbolic interaction requires that an interpretive process occur in the interaction. As mentioned, symbolic interactionism posits that meaning is a social product, a creation based on the interactions between persons. In order to articulate this position, Blumer provides the example of a hold up. First, the robber commands the victim to put his or her hands up. In this action, the robber intends three separate and related things, "(a) an indication of what the victim is to do; (b) an indication of what the robber plans to do, that is, relieve the victim of his money; and (c) an indication of the joint act being formed, in this case a hold up" (p. 9). Blumer points out that if there is a problem with communication on any of these lines of meaning, the interaction is problematic. If the interaction is ineffective, then the formation of the joint action, the hold up, will be blocked. Symbolic interactionism highlights the importance of action and recognizes that the social interaction that occurs between actors is crucial in terms of meaning making. "Social interaction is a process that forms human conduct instead of being merely a means or a setting for the expression or release of human conduct" (Blumer, 1969, p. 8).

Appendix C

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis

Psychologists are accustomed to quantitative research methods. These are conducted in an orderly linear fashion. In contrast, and somewhat disorienting for psychologists accustomed to quantitative methods, grounded theory has different approaches to such issues as sample size, data collection, and analyses (Carpenter, 1999a; Stern & Pyles, 1986).

In grounded theory, the broad research question provides a general expectation of the characteristics required of the sample but sample size is not predetermined (Carpenter, 1999). Instead, in grounded theory, data is collected until theoretical saturation has been reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation is said to have occurred once the relationships are reasonably verified, conceptual categories are rich and integrated, categorical gaps are filled in, and no new categories are emerging from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That is, when adding new data no longer brings new information or insights, saturation has occurred. Conversely, when a theory has been generated which seems scant and thin, this will often reflect that data collection was halted prematurely, before saturation had occurred. Because saturation determines the sample size, it can not be determined in advance of the study.

In grounded theory data may be collected from documents, formal or structured interviews, observations, or any combination of these (Carpenter, 1999a). As data are collected and generated, the act of coding the data begins. This coding occurs at three basic levels. First, Level I is the open coding. For example, in this thesis, the data were collected through a semi-structured interview format and these interviews were transcribed. (Specifics regarding data collection are discussed further in the method section). Two and a half inch margins are created on the right-hand side of the page so that codes were easily inserted as the transcripts were examined line by line (Carpenter, 1999a). Level I codes are also known as substantive codes because "they codify the substance of the data and often use the words participants themselves have used" (Carpenter, 1999a, p. 110). At this level, as many categories as possible are assigned, with the intention of later comparing them with each other. Some data may be coded with more than one code (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This initially resulted in a large number of seemingly meaningless unrelated codes.

In Level II coding, the constant comparative method is begun and is continued throughout the process (Carpenter, 1999a). This method required that each piece of information that was generated from the data is compared with each other piece (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). New data are compared with already collected and

identified data, and clusters or categories are assigned based on these comparisons and fit (Streubert, 1999). The data are thus "put back together in new ways" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). This level of coding is also called axial coding and the goal is to delineate categories and the conditions that give rise to them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). "Deciding on specific categories is facilitated by questioning what each Level I code might indicate and then comparing each Level I code with all other Level I codes" (Carpenter, 1999a, p. 110). This process helped the researcher to begin to determine the appropriate category for each Level I code.

Level III coding, or selective coding, is similar to axial coding but is more abstract. At this level, core questions are asked, "What is going on in the data? What is the relationship of the data to the study?" (Carpenter, 1999a). In this final step, core categories are selected and these are related, systematically, to the other categories. The relationships between variables are validated by checking and cross checking and the categories which need further development and refinement are ascertained (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Variables are validated and cross checked in a circular way with the researcher always returning to the data (Carpenter, 1995) to verify the extent to which the core categories fit. Those that do not have enough supportive data are deleted or combined with other categories with similar themes. Qualitative researchers will generally have a second person examine the raw data and confirm or cross validate the categories.

Throughout the process, data analysis directs data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is referred to as discriminate sampling (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasize the importance of sampling with the aim of building the frame within which the concepts apply and do not apply. That is, the categories are delineated by what does and does not fit into them. Data collection should be undertaken with the emphasis on categories becoming more fully integrated and developed with each addition. "*This control over similarities and differences is vital* [italics in original] for discovering categories, and for developing and relating their theoretical properties, all necessary for the further development of an emergent theory" (p. 55). Data sampling, during Level III becomes more directed, with the aim of verifying relationships between categories and filling in any holes in the existing categories.

Throughout the analytic process, grounded theorists must constantly compare each piece of information with each other piece, as mentioned. This formally begins during Level II coding, but in reality begins from the start of the project. The following is considered the defining rule for the constant comparative method, "*while coding an incident for a category, compare it with the previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category* [italics in original]" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 106). As the constant comparative process continues, and researchers become immersed in the data, they often find that connections are made, and insights, and hunches occur. In order to keep track of these connections, and to aid

in the ultimate theory development and report writing, memo writing is required. "The second rule of the constant comparative method is: *stop coding and record a memo on your ideas* [italics in original]" (p. 107). The grounded theorist writes down hunches, insights, thoughts, and questions about the data as they spring up.

Rigor in Qualitative research

Psychologists have little exposure to qualitative research. To many, the idea may seem interesting or appealing but little is known about the details. Concerns are often raised about whether qualitative research is true science. For example, some have argued that it lacks the objectivity necessary to be useful. As Berg (2001) points out, "*science* [italics in original] is defined as a specific and systematic way of discovering and understanding how social realities arise, operate, and impact on individuals and organizations of individuals" (p. 10). He points out that empirical has come to be equated with quantitative and this is erroneous. Another criticism aimed at qualitative research is that it is not rigorous. Part of the problem is that there is a tendency to evaluate qualitative research with quantitative criteria for rigor (Sandelowski, 1986). In order to address issues of rigor in the current study, this section provides a framework for understanding basic concepts of rigor in qualitative research as compared with those in quantitative research. The headings for this section and much of the information contained herein were based on Sandelowski (1986).

Truth: credibility not internal validity. Internal validity in quantitative research examines basic issues of truth (Sandelowski, 1986). For example, does this research instrument actually measure what it is intended to measure? Were we getting at the intended variables or were we looking at some artifact of the procedure? One of the criticisms of quantitative methods is that operationally defining your phenomenon in advance only demonstrates that your research measures what you have defined as the phenomenon, it does not guarantee the truth value of the definition itself.

In qualitative research truth resides in the discovery of human experiences and phenomena as they were lived, in their 'life worlds' as Berg (2001) puts it. Truth is measured by credibility. "A qualitative study is credible when it presents such faithful descriptions or interpretations of a human experience that the people having that experience would immediately recognize it ... As their own" (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 30). Further Sandelowski stated that the research is considered credible when other people, can recognize the experience when they encounter it after having only read about it. The truth value of the research is threatened in qualitative research when the investigator-participant relationship becomes so close that it is difficult for the researcher to keep track of one's own feelings as separate form those of the participant. Sandelowski reported that credibility is enhanced when researchers

actively track their own responses and behavior as researchers in relation to the experiences and behavior of the participants. Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend member checks to increase credibility. This requires researchers to go back to the participants at some point in the process to check on the categories, interpretations or hypotheses generated from the data.

Applicability: fittingness not external validity. External validity refers to the extent to which quantitative research is generalizable to the external world (Sandelowski, 1986). Such issues as having a representative sample play a role in external validity. To some extent one of the cornerstones of quantitative research conducted in the laboratory is greater control over the variables. Greater control in the laboratory, however, tends to decrease the extent to which one can generalize outside of the laboratory.

Qualitative research is not conducted in laboratories. Interestingly, though generalizability is not sought in qualitative research, there were fewer threats to external validity than in quantitative research because phenomena tend to be studied in their natural setting (Sandelowski, 1986). As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, samples in qualitative research were chosen based on their lived experience. In qualitative research, one concern is known as the 'elite bias.' This refers to the tendency for qualitative samples to be drawn from those who were well spoken, and higher profile persons.

In qualitative research, the researcher seeks representativeness of the data (Sandelowski, 1986). That is, the researcher samples from a broad range of experience within the phenomenon of interest. The 'holistic fallacy' is another potential threat to qualitative rigor. It occurs when the data look more patterned and regular then they were. The researcher's conclusions were based on parts of the data, rather than considering all the data. Fittingness is the qualitative answer to applicability. It requires that the study findings "'fit' or has meaning for others in similar situations outside the study situation (Sandelowski, 1986; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999) . Another word for this is transferability (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Fittingness or transferability requires that the findings were firmly based on those life-worlds of the participants studied. The findings must reflect both typical and atypical units.

Consistency: auditability not reliability. Reliability in quantitative research examines whether or not the research is stable or consistent (Sandelowski, 1986). A reliable test is one that yields similar results every time. That is, it must be repeatable. Reliability is considered a necessary antecedent to validity. That is, if two people see the same thing, or if you can get the same results twice, then the thing studied must be true or valid.

Qualitative research takes a very different approach (Sandelowski, 1986). The underlying assumption is that what is unique is valid and of interest in its own right. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research often aims to understand those phenomena which were not knowable through the senses. The current phenomenon is a case in point. The research question is in regard to the held meaning of a phenomenon known in the literature as empowerment. It is not possible to know another's meanings without the other indicating same.

Auditability is the criterion of rigor related to consistency in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 1986). It requires that researchers keep track of all the methods and conclusions that were made in the process of conducting research (Sandelowski, 1986; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). This is done in an audit journal. Auditability allows a second researcher (or researchers) to come after the first and follow those methods and conclusions. Decisions made along the way which brought about the study conclusions were made clear. The second researcher ought to be able to "arrive at the same or comparable but not contradictory conclusions given the researcher's data, perspective, and situation" (Sandelowski, p. 33).

Neutrality: Confirmability not objectivity. Neutrality refers to a lack of researcher bias in the research process affecting the study results (Sandelowski, p. 34). Objectivity is one of the criteria for a rigorous quantitative study. It is achieved when validity, and reliability were achieved. Part of objectivity is the belief that distance must be maintained so that researcher's biases will not creep into the process and findings. This objectivity is achieved through careful control of protocol, instrumentation, and theory.

Qualitative inquiry takes the view that "scientific objectivity itself is a socially constructed phenomenon that produces the illusions of objectivity" (Sandelowski, 1986, p. 34). Qualitative research values subjectivity and the subjective reality of the study participants. Subjectivity is a necessary ingredient of the relationship between interviewer and participant because that engagement brings about truth. This makes for a complex process but the qualitative researcher believes that the benefits outweigh the difficulties. Neutrality is said to be achieved in qualitative research refers to the findings, not to the researcher's stance. In qualitative research, neutrality is achieved when consistency, truth value, and applicability were achieved (Sandelowski, 1986).

Appendix D

Phone Script for Prospective Participant

Hi, my name is Kathryn Ritchot. I am a Metis student at the University of Manitoba and as part of my research, I am interviewing Aboriginal women who have become either a professional or a leader in the community.

_____ (insert name of person who recommended the prospective participant) recommended that I call you because she/he believes that you would be a good person to talk to about yourself and your work.

I am calling to ask if you would consider meeting with me so that I might be able to tell you more about what I am doing.
It would also give you an opportunity to get to know me a little better in order to decide whether you would be willing to let me interview you.
If we meet and you realize that you are not interested in meeting further, I will not pressure you in any way.
If you already know that you are not interested, I will ask you to take my number in case you change your mind.
I will **not** call you again unless you call me.
What do you think? Would you be willing to meet with me to learn more about my research?

<u>If hesitant but not a definite no:</u>

Perhaps you would you like to talk to _____ (name of person who recommended the prospective participant) about me and call me back if you are interested?

<u>If yes,</u> the researcher will set up a time and will proceed with the interview process.

<u>If no,</u> the researcher will offer to give the prospective candidate her number - but if prospective participant is clearly not interested, the researcher will sincerely thank the person for her time and terminate the call.

The researcher will **not** use any pressure in an attempt to attain research participants.

Appendix E

Interview Guide

This interview guide/script was intended to act as a 'guide' as the name suggests. The researcher was open to the research participants leading the researcher into (an)other related area(s). An open- ended question was provided at the end. This was intended to give the participant a chance to discuss anything that seemed relevant but was not discussed.

Although specifics regarding the person's background were asked, the information was not used in the transcripts. They were asked in order to get to know the participants better, and to give them a chance to begin to feel more comfortable with the researcher.

1) I wonder if you could tell me a little about what you do as a _____ (fill in with professional or leadership role).

2) What did you do before you became a _____ (role)?

3) I am very interested in knowing about how you came to be a _____ (role). Could you spend a few moments telling me about that process?
[If P says they can not think of anything - or responds, "I don't know" - some people say they wanted to be a _____ since they were a kid when they would see TV shows. Others might say, "My mother was a _____ and that just seemed like what I should do".... how did you decide? There are no right or wrong answers here. I just really want to know more about you!

4) Could you tell me a bit about where are you from?

How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Do you have a partner?
Do you have any children?
What was your life like when you were growing up?

5) I wonder if you could think about how you see yourself "culturally"?

5) Could you spend a few moments talking about some of your joys?
How do you define the term, "joys"?
What makes you most happy in your life?

What gives you energy?

6) Most people who become professionals, find that, looking back, they have had barriers or obstacles along the way.

How do you define the term, obstacles or barriers? What do these terms mean to you?

What kinds of barriers did you find yourself up against in your becoming a _?

- How did you overcome these barriers?
- What do you think had the most positive effect on you?

7) Could you tell me a little about the sorrows you have had along your journey? First, what does the term, "sorrows" mean to you?

8) As an Aboriginal woman, what has it been like to have become a _____ (role)?

9) How has your success been received by your family?

How do you define the term family? Who is included in this category?

What about your community? Who is your community?

How has your community received your success?

10) What is your sense of yourself in terms of your community?

- is it different than it would have been if you had not become a _____?

11) Is there anything that sticks out that really helped you along the way?

12) If you were to give advice to a younger person, a teenage girl, for example, wanting to be a _____ (specific role), what would you tell her??

13) How would you describe your sense of your self? Has this changed over time or remained relatively stable?

[Probes: do you feel integrated, whole, or do you feel fragmented?]

14) What about self- acceptance or self - rejection? What meaning do these terms have for you?

How would you describe yourself in relation to these? Has this feeling changed over time?

15) What about the choices you currently make? What meaning does this term have for you? Are you happy or unhappy with the choices you make? Can you talk about this a little?

16) What about control? What meaning does this term have for you? Do you feel in or out of control? Can you talk about this a little?
Does this fluctuate, depending on the situation - or is it quite constant?

17) Communication: What does this mean to you? How would you describe your ability to communicate? Could you describe whether it has changed over time, and in what way? If it is unclear whether this is better or worse, ask.

Empowerment

One of the things I am interested in is the idea of empowerment.

Does empowerment hold any meaning for you?

Is there a different word or phrase that would suit this idea for you better??

Would you describe yourself as empowered?

If so, what have you found empowering?
If not, what would be empowering? Can you think of anything?

Final question

We have talked about many things in our time together and I wonder if there is anything else that you would like to tell me... perhaps a lesson which you have learned which you would like to share with me... or, perhaps, how you have come to know what you know about things... Is there anything else?

Snowball sampling

I have really appreciated all that you have told me.
I am wondering if you could think of anyone else who is both Aboriginal and a professional or leader, who might be willing to talk about how they came to be a professional or a leader.
If P gives a contact, ask: Would it be ok if I tell_____ that you recommended that I call her?

If this is ok with you, I will need you to fill out an informed consent form. I'll let you see the form and then you can decide.

Appendix F

Informed Consent for Snowball Sampling

I _____ (current participant or other interested party) acknowledge that I have recommended to Kathryn Ritchot that she (Kathryn) contact _____ (would be participant) for the purposes of acting as a potential participant in Kathryn Ritchot's research on empowerment. I recommend this person because to the best of my knowledge she has relevant life experience that she may be interested in sharing with Kathryn Ritchot.

It is my understanding that Kathryn Ritchot will approach _____ (would be participant) in a friendly non-coercive manner. Kathryn will explain to the potential participant that I, _____, (current participant or other interested party) recommended her (would-be participant). Kathryn will explain that she is interested in interviewing the potential participant about how she came to be a professional or leader in the community. If the potential participant is not interested, Kathryn will thank her for her time. Kathryn will give the potential participant her phone number in case she changes her mind. Kathryn will not contact the would-be participant again unless would-be participant has changed her mind and called Kathryn to let her know same.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix G

Participant Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the processes involved in Aboriginal women achieving either professional (e.g., nurse, doctor, administrator, business woman, teacher) or leadership (elder, chief, politician, school board trustee) positions.
It is being conducted by Kathryn F. M. Ritchot, a doctoral student at the University of Manitoba.
Research results will be based on information from all persons interviewed (between 8 and 12 persons) and will be used for Kathryn Ritchot's Ph. D. Thesis. Results may also be published. This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board and is supervised by Dr. Bruce Tefft, Ph.D., C. Psych.

Participation in this study will involve a series of audio-taped interviews with the researcher. The interviews will take between 45 and75 minutes. It is expected that the participant will meet with the researcher between two and four times (generally 3) Interviews will focus around general topics initially, including the researcher asking about where the participant is from, a little about their family, what the individual does in their job, what they did before they came to be in the profession they are in. Personal, identifying information regarding specifics about where the person is from, family size, etc., will not be used as data. This information is gathered to help the researcher get to know the participant better.

Participants will also be asked about how they came to be in the role they are in. Also, research participants will be asked to describe some of their joys and sorrows. The women will also be asked to talk about the obstacles they have met and how they overcame them on their journey. Finally, the women will be asked about how they would account for their success and whether they see themselves as successful.

The interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed.
In order to ensure confidentiality, when transcribed, ***all identifying information will be removed from the transcription.***
The location in which the interview will occur will be determined by you, the participant, either at your place of work, in your home, or at the University of Manitoba, for example.

Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you may withdraw from the study at any time, without any sort of penalty. In order to withdraw, please

tell the researcher you wish to stop. You may also choose to end a given interview and continue at another time, if circumstances necessitate this.

The interview will be ***kept confidential*** and several measures will be taken to ensure this:

1. Identifying information will be removed from the transcripts. Once this is done, participants' identities will be unknown.
2. The participant's name will not appear in any of the data. Each person's data will be assigned a code number/name. Only Kathryn Ritchot and the project supervisor, Bruce Tefft will have access to this information.
3. Audio tapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet until the end of the study. (They will be kept for the duration of the study in case the researcher needs to refer back to them.)

All audio tapes will be erased upon completion of the study.

4. Persons involved in the study who have access to the data [Kathryn Ritchot, Bruce Tefft, and a paid transcriber (the researcher is currently attempting to get funding for this purpose - if no funding is obtained the transcriber will be the researcher)] will sign a confidentiality contract which states that all information regarding the identities of the persons will be kept confidential.

Research results will be based on information from all persons interviewed.

There are no known risks involved in this research. It is intended that the participants focus on their strengths, and the mechanisms that they used to feel more strong and to have gotten to where they are. This may result in slight feelings of discomfort in those women unaccustomed to talking about their strengths, but this is expected to be fleeting in nature, if it occurs. The interview is expected to be very positive for most participants. The study will result in no direct benefits to participants.

However, the results may help psychologists better understand both the struggles, and what has been helpful, in Aboriginal women achieving leadership or professional positions. By identifying the key struggles and the helping mechanisms, therapeutic and preventive measures, based on the experiences of real people living real lives, may eventually be developed to assist others.

If I have any questions or concerns regarding this study, I can direct them to Kathryn Ritchot, either at the Department of Psychology (phone: 474-XXXX) or at her home. Questions or concerns may also be directed to Kathryn's research advisor, Dr. Bruce Tefft. (Phone: 474-XXXX), Department of Psychology at the University of Manitoba. Finally, concerns or complaints may be directed to the Human Ethics Secretariat of the University of Manitoba.

Research Participant Signature_____

Date _____

Appendix H

Confidentiality Contract

This study will explore what it means for Aboriginal women to hold either a leadership or professional position. Participants will be interviewed regarding these and related topics. The data will consist of audio-taped interviews which will be transcribed for coding and analysis purposes. All participants in this study have been guaranteed confidentiality with respect to their identity or any identifying information that may exist in these interviews. As one of the persons who has access to the raw data, I am aware that it is imperative that confidentiality be maintained.

As a person with access to this confidential data, I agree that I will not reveal the identity of the participants to any person either now or in the future, who is not either the researcher, or the researcher's adviser.

_____

Name (Please print)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

Kathryn F. M. Ritchot, Witness

Appendix I

Request for Copy of Transcript

I am interested in seeing a copy of my transcribed interview. I would like Kathryn Ritchot to mail a copy of this to me shortly after it has been transcribed. I will be able to comment on the transcript for accuracy and to provide additional information.

____ yes, I would like the transcript mailed to me.

____ no, I would not like the transcript mailed to me.

Preliminary findings

I would be willing to look at the preliminary findings from this report and discuss my impressions with Kathryn Ritchot. I understand that Kathryn is interested in knowing whether her findings adequately reflect the experience of the participants (as a whole).

____ yes, I would like Kathryn to contact me when the preliminary findings are ready so that I may see them and discuss them with Kathryn. I may decline at the time of the phone call (or letter) if I am no longer interested.

____ no, I would not like Kathryn to contact me regarding the preliminary findings.

I have read and understood the above, and I agree to participate in this project.

Name (Please print)_____

Signature_____ Date_____

Researcher_____ Date_____

Again, concerns or complaints about this research, may be directed to either Kathryn Ritchot (phone)
Bruce Tefft, Ph.D., C. Psych, (phone)
or the
Human Ethics Secretariat
University of Manitoba
(phone)

Appendix J
Ethical Approval (Obtained When Project was Approved)

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Office of the President

Office of Research Services
244 Engineering Building
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5V6
Canada
Telephone (204) 474-8418
Fax (204) 261-0325

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

27 November 2001

TO: **Kathryn Ritchot** (Adviser B. Tefft)
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Don Stewart, Acting Chair**
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: **Protocol #P2001:066**
"Analysis of Successful Aboriginal Women's Experience of Empowerment using Grounded Theory"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Appendix K

The *community connectedness* category: A brief example of category development and saturation

This appendix explicates a stage in the development of the category, *community connectedness*, in order to provide the reader with an exemplar of category development to demonstrate what was involved in this process. This example demonstrates one step of how the researcher used greater abstraction in order to bring together similar elements to form a category. It provides an example of what is meant by 'saturation' because it is clear from this example that the category was developed with data from many sources. There is such a large volume of data that not all the data points which comprised each category were included in this example. Rather, only one data point per category for each participant who contributed to that category is provided. That is, although often a participant provided more than one "information bit" to a sub-category, only one is provided for this appendix. Similarly, only a smattering of theoretical memos is included in this appendix, in order to demonstrate how these were used. Note that not every research participant provided data for every sub-category. However, when the sub-categories are brought together, every participant provided data for an aspect of the whole category. For example, whereas one person may have highlighted her connection to the spiritual, another highlighted her connection to the land or nature. A section called *Bringing the information together: Developing Community Connectedness* begins on page 14. For now, the focus is on the individual data that comprised this category.

This example shows the categories as they stood at an iteration of the model in July of 2002. At that point in model development there were approximately 90 categories that were eventually brought together to become the current model (with 10 discreet categories). Shortly after this iteration, the categories were brought together as sub-categories into what eventually became the current category, *community connectedness*.

To remind the reader of the whole analytic process. After transcriptions were completed, they were read line by line and as each line of interview data was read, discreet "bits of information" were given codes. Initially, codes were often used that came from the words of the participants. Soon, the interviews were broken down coded information bits and then the information bits were brought together based on a relationship with each other. That is, those that seemed to go together were brought together.

Regarding this specific example, the category *community connectedness* was called self-in-relation because at this stage of category development it was clear that the research participants talked about themselves in-relation to their culture, the Aboriginal community, their family, etc. The following is a sample of the coded interviews that made up each category and a few of theoretical memos are provided in order to demonstrate a sample of the insights, observations, and hunches into the data that were used throughout the analytic process.

The Foundation: Self-in-relation

I. Culture

B: I wasn't raised in the Aboriginal culture so, all of it is a learning experience for me. We have staff that are both ways. So I learn an awful lot from them. I can't say that I'd be traditional or follow the traditional practices because I was raised as a Christian. I respect the whole idea of the Aboriginal culture which is based on respecting everything. Every living creature and every even non-living creature, like rocks, and stuff like that. I like that philosophy.

Memo: respect for everything - living/nonliving... taking every creature into account = Aboriginal way.

Researcher: How do you see yourself, culturally?
A: I see myself as a First Nations woman.

C: I come from a Métis family. I come from a very strong Métis culture. I don't have a lot of history about my (parent). S/he wouldn't have been called Métis - s/he would have been called half-breed. That's how they termed it then. We didn't really belong in town. We were just kind of - I don't know what the word is...So that is my background. Although the majority of us not wanting to be either (Métis or Indian), we just wanted to be normal. So we grew up with a very strong culture - a very strong independence. When you are Métis, you are on your own because even though you have Indian blood, you don't belong on the reserve. You don't have rights to certain kind of supports that are there. You are either really needy - or you become independent. So I found we were always independent.

Memo: real sense of independence because Métis. Defined self by what she is not.

D: Culturally, we had no formal cultural teachings from my parents but some of the things they did - we didn't always understand why they did it... and I've come to understand why - since I started my journey and understood some of the teachings..so it was through my connection with people outside of my home community that I

became more aware of a whole new cultural world of what it meant to be who I am. I think that is the thing that gave me the most strength. I knew who I was when I left (reserve) but I did even more by the time I was 30. And I had confidence then too. That's what gave me confidence: I had an education, I knew who I was, I knew my history, I knew my people.

E: I treat culture very much as an individual choice and I have to here (at work) because sometimes I get (program participants) that come in and they are very traditional and very spiritual and they expect everybody else to be. And I just will not let that happen because not all of us are. As a matter of, I tried it out a couple of times and it just went sour, I mean people left the room. So is has to be handled very sensitively. So I do not teach culture here. I always tell the program participants that they bring the culture in the room on an individual basis, if they want to share it that's great, if they don't and that's fine too. And so that's how I treat it in my life. I respect it. I respect where people are coming from....
Researcher: And for yourself, you're not that attached to it?
E: Not really, I respect it, and I understand it but I'm very practical and what makes sense, that's what I do. If it makes sense for the community for the people, that's what I do. I'm not monetary driven. That doesn't work. I've seen that and tried it, and it doesn't work. So, culturally, I highly respect, I highly regard (but) I don't incorporate very much of that in my life. Yet, I guess I do because that's the way I think. I think grass roots, I think community.

> Memo: not attached to culture but live it...culture = think grassroots, think community.

F: I don't care what culture you come from, blood memory is stronger than people want to even imagine. There's things that I have known that I know....But I don't know where that knowledge came from. It was so nice to hear somebody else (who she'd just mentioned) know it. So there's blood learning that you have.

> Memo: blood memory means that people from the same culture know the same things. There is a connection to each other based on culture.

G: I come from a more intact (society) in terms of our culture and our traditional system than other nations across the country, for example. Our societal structures are still in place. I come from a matrilineal society where women are valued because the strength of our house group, as it were, depends on women and the birth of children.

K: With the traditional and cultural stuff, I have a lot more to learn and for me the first key pieces are those seven teachings and trying to work hard on those traits within myself, like the humility, courage, honesty and that's just a few of them.

L: I very much identify with being Aboriginal. I identify with, I guess legally, political definition, whichever you choose. I guess I would be Métis. Growing up, we didn't consider ourselves Métis, we considered ourselves Indian. Although we are not Status. Métis is a word that I never even heard until I was... maybe even in University for all I can remember. It was not a word that we heard. Although my grandmother spoke (lists 5 languages), she went up to Grade 11 in Residential school. She was a good student, or something so they let her hang around a little longer.

Memo: Métis means Indian - no one knew about being 'Métis'

II. Family

A: I feel good when my family is doing well because they're... It's such a struggle for everybody...So when something good happens, I really feel good and I like to celebrate that..

Memo: hard to have family struggling. Successes are worth celebrating.

B: My child(ren) bring joy. Mind you, the teen years are a lot more trying than the younger years were, but they do bring a lot of joy into my life.

C: From our family, we garnered all the strong work ethics and stronger independence. But along with that went a lot of the bad things. The alcohol, violence, and there is a lot of pain and a lot of heart ache... And of the (#) children in my family, I am probably the most stable: Alcoholism, gambling addictions, abusive relationships are rampant. So it is really difficult to acknowledge that in your own family. And I really feel helpless. So I tried a long time to fix my family. I can't do it. It took me a long time to realize that. It took a long time in therapy to realize that too. As a result of that now - I'm really distant now from all my family except one member.

Memo: C defines herself in terms of her family of origin. Sees self as different from others. Felt helpless because family is doing so poorly, felt she had to distance herself from them (too painful?)

Note: The comment in parenthesis shows the researcher's thoughts about the meaning of the quote. It is framed with a question mark because the researcher does not assume that she is correct or accurate, simply wondering about this. Sometimes this sort of question to one's self turns out to be meaningful and sometimes it does not.

Researcher: What makes you the most happy in your life?

D: My greatest joy is being blessed with a family of my own....Being with my family; doing things together as a family, like going for dinner; doing some recreational things

together; going on a holiday; having supper together, daily; having time when we can actually be all together and talk.

E: That (an accomplishment she'd just talked about) was so wonderful, you know, and this is with no coaching, no family encouragement, no nothing. I often think, can you imagine what I could've done if I'd had (type of accomplishment) lessons and all that stuff?

Memo: felt real sense of accomplishment because was able to fulfil a dream despite no support from family.

F: And my family has a lot of medicine. I come from a matriarch and my mother is the oldest daughter....the oldest daughter. And I don't know how far that goes back. I understand it goes back a little bit. And I'm the oldest daughter. So the place that I have in my family is also significant. There isn't very much about me that isn't significant...in the context of what I do...not in the context of being important. But in the context of what my work is. It has...the different things...aspects of them have great significance

Memo: place in family is significant (differentiates significant from important.)

G: The nation of my people is (gives name). We are structured under four clans and within each of those clans you have house groups and house groups are based on your relationship to a common female ancestor. So, a house group could be from anywhere between 25 members to over 300 members. I come from a very large house group.

K: I used to take things out on my children, my poor children and I've learned not to do that anymore either. There's a better way of doing it. I guess that's one of the things I learned from (doing the same kind of work as a family member did before her) - why my (family member) was violent. S/he took frustrations out on us. S/he held a position of authority in the community for (# of) years. I can see now how s/he got frustrated. That's where I see myself. (Family member) turned to alcohol to deal with the issues. I suppose I could have went that route but I chose not to I chose not to - I chose to do things differently because of the way he/she treated us when we were growing up and I just chose to do things differently because I know it hurts to be on the receiving end (of violence) and how much more you have to deal with and sort out as an adult because of those kinds of garbage things that happened as you're growing up (eg. violence, sexual abuse) and I don't want my children or any body's children to have to sort out all those leaky pieces when they get to be my age or younger - like in their 20's.

L: L: Probably my biggest joys in life were having my child(ren). That was really the highpoint, seeing (child(ren). That was just amazing, it was just a miracle. And seeing

my grandchildren, and watching my kids and watching my grand kids. Watching them, you can see...it's a neat position to be in, in life...I knew my great granny...I didn't know my father's side of the family but I knew my great granny, I knew my granny, I knew my mom. To see the traits in them... it just cracks me up. My (child(ren) don't recognize it but, the flare up of the temper, or something. Sometimes I say, "Yes (first and last name)" because that was my mom's name and she had a bad temper. She could just flare like that (snaps fingers), eh? And so that's probably the most joy.

Memo: strong connection to the generations: prior and new generations

III. Organization

A: Well my whole philosophy and how I work with people, and especially my colleagues and also people that work for me... I'm trying to empower them to do their jobs or to give something to the community. That's my whole philosophy. And I let people make mistakes, and I challenge them, I give them projects and I say, you do this and figure it out.That was my philosophy at (one of her positions) and that was a big risk for me because there were some things that people didn't know how to do. Everything was on my shoulders, if a mistake was made, it was my mistake, not theirs. And, I still do that....When you are empowering people to actually make the decision, you are also having them accept the consequences too.

Memo: within organization it is important to give something to the community

B: Meeting someone whose life has been impacted by (organization's) services or by what we've done brings a lot of joy.

Memo: helping others brings joy!

C: I see my self as a strong Aboriginal women. I don't see myself as Métis or any other special group. Around the time that I started working at (Aboriginal org), we had women from all different regions, different languages, different experiences but there was something we all had in common, there was a really strong bond. We have a strong under standing what it's like to grow up to be Aboriginal - especially if you're visually Aboriginal: you experience racism, you experience discrimination. (In that Aboriginal org) we adopted ways that honored all of the women coming through there. We placed great value on who they were. We stressed responsibilities about the care of our children. Or else - if we don't do that our generations are going to experience continuing problems or we are just going to be wiped away...Because you can see things deteriorating.

Memo: C said earlier that she saw self as different because Métis when growing up, this has changed over time? not a 'special interest group'.
Identifies a bond that occurs when experience racism.
Children are important. Bringing up children is important to future generations.

E: And the other thing (joy) is on a work-related basis, you know, I love what I do. I love my job. I get up in the morning and I just can hardly wait to get here. So, I think, people always say to me, you know, you work too hard, you're always there. And you know what, I can't think of a better place to be.

Memo: work also brings joy... Important to work. (influences the community?)

Researcher: I wonder if you could tell me a little bit about what you do as a (role).
F: I doubt it. That isn't a question that has anything to do with a little bit. Well, I'll start by saying that what I do as (role) has a context because it's a context that is different from what other (persons holding similar role) might do in their (contexts). And it has a context as an inner city (work role) as opposed to other folks who are not in inner city. So it's layers deep, the difference.

G: A lot of people would know that when you work for an Aboriginal Organization, you don't have a specific job description. You go in and if things need to get done, the people who other people view as having the best possible chance of succeeding are usually the ones that are cast to do that and that's basically how you get your education.

K: So with the inception of the Indian Act, our people were segregated to reserves. They had to see an Indian Agent before they could leave. They couldn't even sell a cow if they were starving: They had to get permission from the Indian Agent first. They couldn't vote. Up until 1987, First Nations women, if you married a non-First Nations man, you lost your rights. Whereas if a non-First Nations woman married a treaty status man, they became status. That didn't change until 1987. This is the stuff I do right now with public education with the hopes of getting the understanding of mainstream Canadians. Anyway, I learned all this stuff and then realized that ok, this is where they are today, through no fault of their own and this is what I've got to do to get them out of it. I realized - I have to focus on the youth. I'll focus on these ones and start to work on empowering them, helping them build self esteem, making changes in the next generation. With public education right now, I've done a lot of work in that. I have a friend of mine who works at the (organization) who was a former (role), s/he's developing a package for me to take when I speak.

L: I think some of the work I've been able to do in the community. We came to work at (place of work) and the (building was unsafe) (talks about this job and the poor conditions in some detail). I would wake up with night sweats. I was just terrified that there would be a fire and if there had ever been a fire, it would have just gone up like a match, I'm sure. The conditions were terrible. We were doing the best we could but it was terrible. So we worked tirelessly for about 2 ½ years and raised enough money to build a new place: That was a real sense of joy.

IV. The Aboriginal Community

Researcher: Can you tell me a little about the sorrows that you have had a long the way?
A: Uh... yeah... there's a lot of things that are hurtful... Being a visible target group, or a target member...People say and do things that are really hurtful... You know, just that example about people calling Aboriginal people... you know, the dregs of society... and that all we do is... we're a money drain... or, you know, so that sort of thing, you know... so that's really hurtful..
When you see kids sniffing on TV. The whole country sees the worst of Aboriginal people... that's hard. And you want to just.. At times... think.. It's so... why am I doing this, why don't I just go on and do what I want to do and forget about doing this... you know...go get a job... keep working at the bank and making my hundred grand, you know, and that's really... that can get you down... and you feel really.. Because it hurts.. Just seeing your people at their worst... when you know...that's not how it is...

Memo: pain from being a member of visible 'target' group known as dregs of society.

B: The women that I've met through this job and through this community have been incredible. Like I'm just in awe of how wonderful they are.

Memo: 'this community' = Aboriginal community, without having to say so.

C: We had (Aboriginal) women from all different regions, different languages, different experiences but there was something we all had in common, there was a really strong bond. We have a strong under standing what it's like to grow up to be Aboriginal - especially if you're visually Aboriginal: you experience racism, you experience discrimination.

D: So that was important for me to understand: What happened to our people? Why don't we have the language in our community, what led to that? And I didn't know that before. Then I found out and I know. Any body can bring that up - and I can discuss it with anybody.

Memo: Our people. For D, understanding herself meant understanding what happened to all Aboriginal people and how did her language leave her home reserve.

E: I think grass roots, I think community. [end of quote, above, on culture]

F: And she raised us as Métis children because we weren't treaty. And became very, very involved in the M.M.F. – Manitoba Metis Federation. And I didn't spend a whole lot of time on the reserve. As an adolescent and as a teenager I resented that. But I also resented going there because they called us white city kids. And here they called us Indian trash. So it was a place of not belonging to either place. My mother knew

enough that there was about seven or eight old ladies that she always had me around. And she made sure they came around the friendship centre. She included them as part and parcel of what went on in the friendship centre. And there was lots of things that my mother has done over the years, that until I picked up my bundle, didn't realize that were traditional things. Because she never said, "this is what being an Indian is - She just lived life. That's life.

> Memo: early on, felt she did not belong but her mother provided a group of women who gave her a community. Learned about the traditional ways by experiences, not directly told about them.

G: It's a conscious decision if you set your goals in life... who am I to talk about goals? I don't know if I ever had any goals. I think my life was just there and I just took it and I just walked the path that was there for me but I know that in this day and age, I know things are becoming more structured. And I don't know if that's a good or bad thing. Technology has caught up with us and we can't ignore it anymore. So set out and do whatever it is that you want to do. Know that in our community of Aboriginal people there are people around that you can seek out to assist you in any way that you need to be assisted because we have multi-talented people, a diverse array of people with multiple talents...whether they are technical or totally traditional, it's there and to go after it.

> Memo: G believes that any given Aboriginal person will help another Aboriginal person who asks for help and that there are many resources within the Aboriginal community that can be called upon

Researcher: How do you define the term, family?
K: I think of my kids, my sibs, my parents, my uncles, my aunts and relatives. One of the things for me when I began (working in this role), I was told I am no longer my own person, the people own you and the reserve becomes your family. I guess I took that literally.

> Memo: a question about family brings up a response about 'the people own you and the reserve becomes your family' (huge responsibility).

Researcher: So you don't have a definition for obstacles or barriers?
L: Oh, there's lots of obstacles and barriers. I refuse to let them be an obstacle or a barrier.
Researcher: What kind of barriers did you find yourself up against in getting to be where you are?
L: Well the Aboriginal community is, and that's where I really choose to be, even though I've tried other stuff - I also prefer to be (geographic location), and in service organizations kind of stuff not political. I did a little stint doing (job) cause I have to try... and see what's over there. So what are the obstacles and barriers that I ran up?

Well, not in this organization... Other people's mistrust. I think other people have been hurt a lot in life, especially in the Aboriginal community and sometimes that leads - they've been abused - that leads to mistrust. So just trying to build that trust. That's been a major obstacle, I think.

Memo: L sees problems with trust in the Aboriginal community and prefers to work within it.

V. The Land/Nature

B: The other thing that makes me really happy is just needing to be out in nature. Whiffing fresh air and watching water or something like that, where you can just totally feel peaceful and calm and happy.

Memo: nature brings peaceful, calm, happy feelings.

C: We adopted practices of gathering medicines for our own use in ceremonies. We adopted the practice of attending sweat lodges for personal group healing. We adopted the practice of recognizing the changes of seasons and we also recognized our association with the land.

Memo: 'our association with the land' sense of real connection to the land

D: Cause I went to school in (town) with (Aboriginal) people who had their language - who very much practiced and who very much had traditional life styles and we did not have that much traditional (exposure) growing up. My father was a (occupation) so he did a mixture of things. We had an awareness of berry picking and gathering as part of how we lived.

Memo: 'an awareness of berry picking and gathering as part of how we lived' does this imply something about identity? Implies a 'gathering' non-technical (simple?) lifestyle.

E: In the north, the Aboriginal community... get their direction... they are very much attached to is the land. So, my uncle, it never occurred to me until a couple of years ago... he would just disappear. He would just go off into the Bush and it was nothing to hear people say he's just out in the Bush and it never dawned on me, what did they do in the Bush? But that was the relationship... if stress was there, there was a connection to the land..it's the water, it's the grass it's the trees, it's the wilderness.

Memo: this quote in response to question about culture. E tries to articulate the differences in spirituality between North and South. There is a spiritual element to the attachment to the land.

F: I am nothing. I am nothing. Yet somehow they've asked me to share some things (knowledge/wisdom) If I think about the people who taught me, in the context of those people, I am nothing compared to those old people. Because some of those

people never went to school. They were never affected by residential schools. They were never affected by public schools. Some people really...some of these old people really knew the truth. They knew how to sit and listen to the wind. When they listen to the wind they could hear... They were able to sit for long hours and read the sky.

Memo: self as not important. The Elders 'knew the truth' from the wind they could 'read the sky' shows a reverence for the Elders and their connection to the land and nature.

Researcher: You said you're courageous, how did you develop courage?
G: The old people, I saw them when they put on their blankets and there's a big freaking logging truck coming down the road and your standing in the middle of the road with your button blanket, you know, where as I just want to run away, I just want to grab the grandmother and, come on, it's like... and they can stand there...Where else are you going to learn courage if not from that? To see my ma working all her life bringing up all her kids. Going through the physical stresses. Keeping things from us to protect us...Strength like that... My dad... oh, god...I mean, I'm nothing compared to these people... the radical ones, man... they grew up on the land..so it was a lot dearer to them than even to me... because I'm still one generation removed from that total connection to the land.

Memo: Self as not important. The old ones had courage, strength, connection to the land.

<u>VI: The spiritual</u>
Researcher: Do you see yourself as being quite imbedded in the culture? Do you feel as though you understand the traditions and the culture?
A: Yeah, I don't promote culture but I practice it on my own. That's who I am, that's just what I do... My view is that you can't separate the two in our culture, the whole medicine wheel, you can't separate them.

Memo: who I am = medicine wheel

B: I respect the whole idea of the aboriginal culture which is based on respecting everything. Every living creature and every even non-living creature, like rocks, and stuff like that. So, I like that philosophy.

Memo: everything has spirit

C: And we had Elders come in (to an early organization) and it was around the time that it was a little bit safer for Elders to begin to share more openly about some of the background, because for a long time they couldn't - there was a lot more secrecy around ceremony and practices. But in the early 70's , they were more involved with the groups. They began to hold more circles, more sharing times, more trying to

understand... more story telling too. Great, great times to be involved in that learning process. I, too, adopted that way of thinking, which I carry through to today.

Memo: had to hide the traditional ceremonies until quite recently

Researcher: I wonder if there is anything else that you would like to tell me? Any lesson that you have learned along the way, anything that you have found helpful?
D: I think developing a consciousness about the value of spirituality. That's been really important for me along the way. I started to renew my relationship with the creator when I was in my late 20s early 30s and it leads me to a place where I am very comfortable now.

E: My girlfriend from Sioux Valley is very traditional and we get along just fabulous. I respect her belief and understanding. It has helped her through some very trying times. But I also know people, friends of mine, who are not traditional. They were raised, like I was, with a fiddle and a guitar. And that's about as spiritual as you can get.

Memo: spiritual = playing/hearing fiddle and guitar

F: It's a lonesome feeling. It's a very lonesome feeling. Various people who I have the good fortune to know are gone. I realize how much responsibility has been placed on me... It's a lonesome feeling. It's a very lonesome feeling. There's people who I have the good fortune to know and hear their sound, and turning (age) I realized how much responsibility had been placed on my shoulders....I know things now... But if I was drunk and goofed up, I wouldn't be getting those...that clarity. That wouldn't happen. I wouldn't realize that my father came to visit me on Friday night. He had an old guitar...

Memo: visits from the deceased. Those in next realm still have an important influence.

G: Joy is something that makes you feel good, something - I mean, a massage makes me feel good, but - I guess joy has more to do with what makes me feel good spiritually, what makes me feel good in my soul. Maybe that's what joy is.

Memo: Joy = spirit, soul

K: I really believe that guidance is there and a lot of the time, for me, when I'm chicken to go deal with something, I'll say my little prayer. Sometimes I'll even ask the creator, send my *spirit guide* down to guide me. I believe s/he's usually there and works for that higher power to help me along.

Memo: messages from a deceased person who comes and visits as a spirit guide and aids participant in hard times.

Note: the participant told researcher who the spirit guide is (was) at a different point in the interview.

L: There were a number of things that happened in a very short period of time. A very good friend of mine had died and my (family member) died very quick. And probably a lot of stuff, as a kid, that I don't even remember. So the bottom fell out of this relationship and it was really hurtful for me. I was really attached to this person. I had this vision of us growing old together and all that sort of stuff. I was sad and all that. At the same time, I had been carrying that other stuff and never really grieved and I think that was the last pin. Like the straw that broke the camel's back. I was incapacitated by it. I did a lot of crying.. I think it helped me spiritually, I think it helped me regain my faith in a lot of things. So I think I got a lot of gains out of it.

Memo: spirituality = healthy soul = letting go of painful experiences

VII: Mainstream (note that when participants talked about mainstream it was generally as a contrast point)

A: Usually I don't waste my time: I made a commitment to myself, I'm not going to bother trying to educate mainstream anymore, I'm going to spend all my time educating Aboriginal people.

Memo: mainstream = not worth the time

B: Researcher: Can you tell me more about dealing from your heart? I haven't heard anyone say that yet.

B: We (B and colleagues) thought we would go and take a look at what they (a mainstream organization with similar goal and objectives) had, sort of compare. Anyway, their whole way of dealing with clients is totally different. The management staff are all in the basement. Clients have some services on the main floor, and then they have their rooms on the third floor. And when I talked to the executive director about how do you find dealing with the clients and stuff, she said, "oh well, I don't deal with people." She said, "that's not my job." And everything that they do is so different. When I looked at our bottom line as far as what we spend and what they spend, all of our budget is directed towards our clients. All of theirs was directed towards their staff. And, it just shocked me to see the total difference. I mean there's no sort of warmth and putting yourself in the other person's shoes. I would think that part of the difference between the two agencies would be that almost all of my staff have lived the life of what they're speaking. Whereas in [the other place], and I have nothing against academics, but all of them have read the books and learned from the books and have never lived it so it puts you in a totally different perspective. I would choose my staff over theirs. And I would choose our way. I mean every person who comes in here feels like they're part of sort of a family, and that they can phone at any

point or whatever. And that's why I have an open door policy with little kids and with clients coming in. Because I feel...they're going through enough stuff. You know. And all of us are equal, so why would I be on a different floor, or somewhere inaccessible to them? It's a totally different way. It's similar to when I worked in government, where they felt that if you're an executive director, you only deal with executive directors. If you're a policy analyst, you only deal with policy analysts. As if there is some sort of hierarchy that really means something. And my heart goes out to the women and children that come through here. And I just think that to think that I'm any better or anything would be silly. And I think, like my staff are the types that will go up to a woman and give them a big hug and everything. I would bet that probably at [the other (mainstream) organization] the staff would never do that. That concerns me because I think sometimes, especially with the kids, that's what they need the most. If they can get some physical...something physical without any strings. You know, without them having to be sexually molested. And I imagine the whole thing is people coming from experience, and maybe that's where Aboriginal people have it above others - is that they've lived a lot of life experiences.

Memo: mainstream organization - not dealing from their hearts. Hierarchy important in mainstream org.

D: I still try to bring a balance to my work, working 80% of the time with Aboriginal groups and 20% of my time working with Mainstream. I feel it's important to me to demonstrate that I can work with all people and not ghettoize myself as just somebody who works with Aboriginal people so my work history reflects that idea.

Memo: prefers to work with Aboriginal people but does not want to pigeon hole self so works 'with Mainstream' 20% of time, gives her a balance.

F: You have a right to credibility with God, as long as you're living your life good. That's not necessarily so in the mainstream Eurocentric world. That ability is not something that's sort of handed to you. God does that. He'll just hand it to you cause it's your right, as long as you're doing good stuff. Not necessarily so in the Eurocentric patriarchal view.

Memo: mainstream = Eurocentric, patriarchal = different from Aboriginal

G: The shots are basically called by white corporate Canada and if they say that in order for you to go do this Research Project you need a B. Sc or an M Sc, or whatever. Yet those people with degrees, who do they come and talk to? People like myself because we have the knowledge, the experience, and the ability to be able to do that.

Memo: Aboriginal people have knowledge, experience... white corporate Canada have degrees: different approaches.

K: And sometimes the other barriers are the lack of understanding from mainstream society when it comes to First Nations people and being tarred with the same brush. A good example is with this accountability process. Government says "all the chiefs are..." and that's not the case. So those create stumbling blocks.

Memo: mainstream people don't understand, they label all Aboriginal persons as the same.

L: (On Aboriginal organizations versus mainstream organizations) We're more integrated or something. It's not so foreign. Like, I'm doing this because it is my job: Your home and your job, the line is not so definite, it's kind of the same. Like, I (made a difficult personal change) and (many people) helped me do this big thing. So, there's no definite [boundaries].

Memo: Aboriginal people not as compartmentalized as mainstream

Bringing the information together: Developing *Community Connectedness*

The preceding examples of quotes with a few memos demonstrate how important it is to examine all the data. That is, individual memos and datum will not necessarily bring you to your final conclusions. It is the data as a whole that brings one to the conclusions reached. Not every piece of data has to fit into the themes (Glaser, 1978, 1992). Instead, what is important is to allow the themes to emerge. In this research, a combination of the Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and the Glaser (1978; 1992) approaches to data analysis were used. For the initial steps, the coding followed the procedures recommended by Strauss and Corbin (esp., 1990). However, Glaser emphasizes allowing the themes and categories to 'emerge' rather than forcing them. He asserted that those who are willing to do grounded theory must be able to tolerate confusion (Glaser, 1998). In 1992, Glaser clearly differentiated his approach as 'emergence' and said that Strauss's approach was 'forcing'. In this study, the researcher worked towards tolerating confusion (and there was much of it) and allowing the concepts and general themes and ideas in the data to emerge. Along the way there were times when there was some sense of forcing ideas but the results of that never quite fit, and were abandoned. The categories that eventually emerged had a, 'that's it' feeling. The model validation process was an important step in reassuring the researcher that the model and the categories within it were not forced or made up but really reflected the participants' experiences. Throughout the process the researcher returned to the data again and again and, with time, it seemed that understanding came. Rose and Webb (1998) outlined this process of constantly comparing the data with each other and that, with time and patience, the truth regarding the data becomes known. This is how the analytic process seemed to work for the current researcher.

As mentioned above, the quotes and memos presented in this appendix are shown as they were in July of 2001, before the sub-categories were brought together as the current category. It was shortly after the development of this stage that the researcher, by reading and rereading all these categories and codes, came to see that the underlying theme was a sense of connection-to-other. This connection seemed beyond what is found in mainstream Canadian culture. Participant G's description of being connected to all Aboriginal people around the world was an important piece of data that helped to pull the category together as a feeling of being connected with others. There is a real sense from the data that participants' defined their self in connection-to-other, whether it be aspects of culture, the community, spirituality, or the land, as though these are almost aspects of 'self'. Also, the not-connected-to-mainstream was important as it helped to delineate this connection as in-group specific.

The grounded theory process requires that you delineate what fits within a category and that there will be instances that are negative. That is, there is an expectation that there will be specific instances when the 'rule' is not followed, when the theme is proved not true. These negative cases help to delimit the category. Notice that not all of the quotes above show the same strong connection. One negative piece of information does not make a category not fit, it simply acts as a negative case of the category.

Following, the *community connectedness* category, itself, is reproduced from the results section and little notes (in boxes) have been added to further highlight the whole process of category development.

Community connectedness. This concept refers to the Aboriginal sense of community. Aboriginal culture tends to be much more communal than mainstream culture, which emphasizes individuality. Community connectedness is integral to the model because it is the participants' connection to the community that drives them to act on its behalf. This concept includes recognizing, feeling, and expressing one's sense of self as interconnected with one's family, organization, the Aboriginal community, spiritual aspects of self, the land, nature, and culture. Participants demonstrated their connectedness in many ways.

Note: in this one paragraph the researcher has attempted to sum up the sense of being connected to each other. The sentence "this concept includes recognizing, feeling, and expressing..." shows that participants demonstrate the connection on different levels and in many ways. This sense of connection within the Aboriginal community is also shown by contrasting with the mainstream culture. Further, this paragraph provides a brief mention that this connectedness is important to the model as a whole. Thus, this paragraph shows both the properties of the category (connection to land, Aboriginal people, spirituality, nature, culture, etc. - not mainstream) and its relationship to other categories, including the core category of becoming whole (Glaser, 1992). This is not stated explicitly, as such, but is implied in the phrase, "it is the participants' connection to the community that drives them to act on its behalf". The core process of this model is healing or becoming whole. All the processes and categories within the model are centered around this action. Similarly, this category is in keeping with that basic assumption.

> First Nations issues are going to be my priority for the rest of my life. I know that. I know who I am, where I come from and all that" (K, 28, 1137-1148).

Many participants discussed their connection to the land and/or nature. For example, "E" describes this connection, through her uncle's experience.

> In the north, the Aboriginal community are very much attached to the land. So my uncle would just disappear. He would just go off into the bush and it was nothing to hear people say he's just out in the bush... And it never dawned on me, what did they do in the bush? But that was the relationship, if stress was ever there, there was a connection to the land. It's the water, it's the grass, it's the trees, it's the wilderness. (E, 6, 239-245).

Spiritual connection is an important aspect of this connectedness as well, as one of the participants pointed out in the model validation process. For many of the participants, spirituality is a core part of the feeling of connection. The participants varied in terms of whether they expressed their spirituality through their connection to the land, in traditional approaches such as ceremonies like daily smudging, or other means, such as Christianity. One of the participants said that when she is in difficulty, she asks the Creator for guidance and is sent a spirit guide, who helps her and guides her work. 'F' discussed her traditional approach to expressing her spirituality and the importance of that in her work.

> For the last four years I have danced in the (specific) Lodge. The people who hired me asked me to ensure that the ceremonies are never again taken away

> from the children. And that's the only place I know where God's truth is not interpreted by man. God's truth is interpreted by the spirits at the Sundance pole and nobody can mess with that (F, 2, 60-65).

Another aspect of this connection is expressed in the participants' connection to culture. 'A', for example, feels her cultural connection is a very personal aspect of her life.

> I don't promote culture but I practice it on my own. That's who I am, that's just what I do. I don't even promote it to my children or my partner.... my view is that you can't separate the two in our culture, the whole medicine wheel, you can't separate them. I wouldn't accept anybody speaking about their religion all the time or trying to promote it, so I don't do that either (A, 1, 5-11).

Further, this sense of community included connection to those persons who have gone before. As one participant pointed out, the phrase "all of my relations",often used to start traditional prayers, refers to the ancestors: The grandmothers and grandfathers who have already passed into the Spirit World.

Note: there was no specific sub-category on this topic. However, during the model validation process and, after, when re-examining the data, it was clear that this is an important aspect of this connection.

Each participant's feeling of inclusiveness regarding Aboriginal community varied. For example, both 'K' and 'L' stated that they had agreed to be interviewed based primarily on the fact that the researcher is a Métis person and, therefore, they were willing to help her. However, 'K' also reported that her political work focuses solely on making changes for First Nations persons. 'G,' another First Nations woman, when asked initially, defined her community as primarily her extended family and First Nation. When asked, "do you see your community, as well, as the whole Aboriginal people?," her answer was more inclusive and, as was quoted earlier, included Indigenous persons around the world.

Note: These later paragraphs provide further evidence for this connection.
Note: Up to this point, it is easy to see that the narrative about the category provided in the text has come from analyzing and integrating the data from the interviews. [recall that not all the data were included in this appendix] General statements are made in the text based on an overall sense of the data. Negative cases are not necessarily mentioned. The researcher reported the data slightly more tentatively or expressed the information as being varied or mixed when more than one person expressed a point of view that varied from the general point. However, general points are made based on a large quantity of data. Back to the section on *community connectedness...*

Feeling connected to and within the Aboriginal community may be related to a developmental stage or it may be an indicator of the degree of healing that has taken place within the individual. That is, as was described in the earlier discussion of racism and other sources of powerlessness, several participants voiced a feeling of belonging nowhere. "K," for example, quoted earlier, said that she felt she did not fit anywhere when she was in high school. Yet, as an adult, she has a strong sense of her community and takes her responsibility for being a leader and role model very seriously.

Related to this, in a discussion with "G" regarding how Aboriginal people have a reputation for not supporting each other, "G" postulated that this most likely occurs in unhealthy communities.

> Researcher: In some communities, when Aboriginal women, women especially, get successful, [I have heard that)] there is a sense of, "well who do you think you are?" Do you think there is truth to that?
>
> G: Oh, absolutely! And you probably experience it a lot more when you come into a really unhealthy community. That's what it is. It's the whole freaking thing about colonization that I just feel, you know... It gets me angry! (G, 8, 258-263)

Analytic note: This quote shows both a negative instance of the community connection [that some may be rejected (ie. not connected) for behaving a certain way] and a possible reason for it. That is, when G is asked about this, she explains that this rejecting attitude stems from the influence of the colonizing culture. This suggests that connection is a 'normal' part of Aboriginal culture and when this is not present it is (may be) due to the influence of mainstream culture.

Further notes about the analytic process

It is noteworthy, as well, after reading this appendix, that some quotes provide evidence for multiple theoretical assertions. This applies both within the category and outside it. For example, when an Aboriginal person's way of expressing their spiritual selves is traditional, there is considerable overlap between spirituality and cultural elements. In terms of the content for one quote providing evidence for more than one category, the example from B in the mainstream sub-category of this appendix provides an example of a participant talking about 'dealing from her heart'. This quote could also be applicable to the working from the heart and soul category. If the reader has read the Results section of this thesis, it will be evident that many of these quotes could also be used as evidence for other categories. That is, this appendix shows the richness of the quotes and why one quote can be used as data for more than one category.

Tangential note: There are relatively few comments provided regarding connection to one's organization. The researcher had originally anticipated that a category might emerge regarding connection to organization because Zimmerman's (1995, 2000) theoretical model posited an organizational level of analysis. The current results showed that although the majority of participants did make mention of a connection to their organizations, the data were too sparse to merit a sub-process of it's own, such as the healing within the community and healing within the self sub-processes.

Final note: This concludes this appendix on the analytic process. The intention was to provide a brief exemplar of the process. As was stated earlier, numerous iterations of the model occurred and many hours of analysis went into the development of each category in the model.

Appendix L
Letter Sent to Research Participant with Transcript

Date, 2002
Hi 'participant',
Here is a copy of the transcript of the interview I conducted with you on 'dates'. I have given you a code name, 'letter of alphabet' . I believe I have edited out all the identifying information so that no one would be able to track this interview back to you. If you look it over and there is anything that seems that it might identify you, please let me know and I will delete it. Or if there is something that appears to be not quite what you meant, or if there is anything that you would like me to add... please let me know and I will change it.

If I don't hear from you about changes, I will go ahead and use the transcript as it stands.

Thank you again so very much for all your help with this.
Here I added a little piece about my thoughts on the interviews, basically thanking the research participant on a personal level for the wisdom she shared.

It is my intention to have the preliminary findings done by May 1, 2002. These things invariably take longer than one would expect, however, so I'm not sure when they will be ready.
I will drop off a copy as soon as they are.

Call me if you have any questions or concern or you can email me.

Again, thank you!

Kathryn Ritchot

Appendix M

Letter to Research Participants Regarding Taking so Long
to Get back to Them with Preliminary Results

October 14, 2002

Dear [research participant's name],

Hi, I am writing this letter to you and all the other women who helped me with my research by conducting interviews with me. I hoped/expected to have preliminary findings to all participants in my research by the beginning of May, 2002 but I was pretty off in my estimate. I am writing to you now because I was afraid that it might seem disrespectful that I had expected to have information back to people by a certain date and have not come through, yet.

I have collected almost 30 hours of interviews on tape and spent many more hours transcribing them and reading each interview over many times in order to try to understand the common themes that all (or most) of the women I spoke with talked about. I also, simultaneously, worked towards not making generalizations that do not fit. It has been an incredible experience for me. I must admit for a time I felt incapable of doing justice to the words of the women who I spoke with and trying to pull it all together. In this process, it has helped me to remember the lessons that I learned from all of you... If one works from her heart, uses integrity and honesty... And believes in the work...things will generally be for the best.

I am also writing because many of you gave me names of others who I could contact to participate in this study and I realized I should probably let you know what is going on with that. In the process of doing this research I received over 50 names. As I believe I explained to most of the women who gave me names, I quite actively sought out more names then the number of people I would be able to interview. I did this in part because I thought that many women who I asked would be too busy to be able to help me with this process - and, therefore, I would receive many rejections. Another reason I wanted to have more names than the number of women I intended to interview was because I thought this was a way to protect the confidentiality of the women I interviewed. That is, the more names I have the less likely that people reading the final document would be to assume that because a story or some piece of information sounded familiar, it would be a person who was known to them. As I gathered more names, I realized how this large number of women who were recommended to me reflects the wealth that exists in the Aboriginal community, in terms of the women. Many mainstream people would never imagine that there would

be such a huge number of Aboriginal women who could be called upon who would fit the description of, "someone who is either a professional, or a leader in the community." More recently, other women have offered to give me names and I have not even taken them because I am getting close to the end of data collection.

In sum, I want you to know that I am working away and I genuinely had no idea how long this process would take. I almost have the first draft of the preliminary findings. Interestingly, I wrote a draft of this letter in June, July, and August but have not sent it because I kept believing that I would have something soon.... I am sending you this letter now because I still do not know when the draft will be ready but I want you to know that I will be calling each of you when I have a draft completed. I will send a draft to each person who requested it and to see if you might have time to talk to me about my work. Naturally, I will completely understand if you do not have time to give me any feedback. In the meantime, I continue to do my utmost to treat the gift of your words and your stories with honor and respect. I do not take this task lightly.

Take care... I think of each of you as I work... I re-live our time together over and over when I hear the tapes and read the transcripts, I feel very honored that you were able to give me so much of your time in order to tell me a little about your self and your life.

Please contact me if there is anything you are wondering about with regards to my project or anything else you'd like to talk to me about.

Kathryn (Ritchot)

(at home or email)

p.s.: I am currently working full time as a psychology intern at U of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Centre. This is a one year term contract (kind of like residency for med school - clinical psychology students are required to do a full-time year of psychotherapy).