Defining and Reclaiming Traditional Indigenous Child Rearing Practices

by

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Abstract

The current study aims to document traditional Indigenous child rearing practices and seek guidance on the reclamation of those practices to inform the development of supportive family programs. Parents have a lasting influence on their children's wellbeing, though not all populations have the same opportunities for raising their children in values and culturally aligned ways. Indigenous families in Canada currently experience intergenerational effects of culturally oppressive policies and discriminatory practices within the social systems. Though traditional Indigenous child rearing practices have been eroded through these colonial acts, resurgence of knowledge and reclamation of these practices hold potential to increase pride in cultural identity resulting in increased well-being of Indigenous families and communities. With a focus on conversational storytelling methods, five qualitative interviews were conducted with traditional Knowledge Keepers in the Manitoba region (Treaty Territories 1, 2, 4, 5). Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis and reflected on through interpretive meaning making. Consistent with these qualitative approaches and Indigenous research methods, the aims of analyses were to develop insights within and across interviews based on my own subjective experience and positionality as an Indigenous mother, in a reflective capacity to how it applies to my life and also in a reflexive capacity of how my beliefs have shaped my views of the interview content. Abbreviated transcripts are provided such that future readers may learn and develop their own unique insights from the wisdom and stories shared by traditional Knowledge Keepers on this topic. Results revealed processes involved in the passing on of teachings which promote family bonding, respect, functioning, and passing down of traditional practices such as infant and child ceremony, examples of cultural child rearing beliefs including the sacredness and centering of the child in the community, and the importance of

intergenerational relationships in the care of children. This study will contribute to a growing understanding within the family psychology and child development literatures about traditional Indigenous cultural content and lay groundwork for the creation of parenting programs for Indigenous families. This study can contribute to all reader's own knowledge about Indigenous world views and practices.

Keywords: Indigenous, child rearing practices, parenting practices, intergenerational relationships, cultural identity, well-being

Defining and Reclaiming Traditional Indigenous Child Rearing Practices

As an Anishinaabe and mixed settler woman, my interest in traditional Indigenous child rearing practices began through raising my own children, living at times on reserve, and in the city. I viewed my own parenting knowledge through the lens of my experiences growing up on a small reserve, being surrounded by and caring for other children of various ages. As I continued to parent and engaged with other Indigenous mothers, through personal and professional experiences, I recognized that we were often attempting to fit our approach to motherhood into a colonial system that was not consistent with cultural values. The approaches and expectations, language, and the size of responsibility were not a match. Despite having had rich experiences caring for children, I felt looked down upon by my peers in the majority culture because of differences in how I parented. My experiences have motivated me to gain insight on how this contrast could have come to be and ways to reduce these negative experiences for other Indigenous parents. With the hope of strengthening Indigenous families and their wellness, I believe it is important to begin by examining Indigenous child rearing and ways to reclaim traditional practices, defined as beliefs, values, expectations, and teachings. Parents are perhaps the single most important influence on a child's development, and critical to a child's understanding of who they are, which can affect intergenerational wellness.

Families provide a critical role in cultivating supportive early environments for their children that are grounded in cultural values and promote lifelong wellness (Dockery, 2020; Whaley, 1993; Zubrick, 2014). The early years are critically important, and parents' roles are foundational in multiple areas of development (Center on the Developing Child, 2007; Franscesconi & Heckman, 2016; Seror, 2022). Parents are responsible for reducing stress and providing nurturing care in areas of emotional, social, cognitive, and language development,

which determine positive future outcomes in all areas of a life (Center on the Developing Child, 2007; Franscesconi & Heckman, 2016; Seror, 2022). Culturally appropriate parenting is particularly essential to establishing cultural identity and its impact on long term well-being (Bornstein, 2012; Pasco, White, Iida, & Seaton, 2021) including for populations living as minorities in oppressive systems. In a review of literature, Whaley (1993) noted that in African American children, cultural identity develops during childhood, informed in part by cognitive development and in part by racial stereotyping. Whaley found that cultural identity impacted self-esteem, which is further tied to psychosocial adjustment and competence in multiple domains. Similarly, in a study in Australia, researchers showed that when parents passed down cultural knowledge about kin relationships and pride in cultural identity, there were positive impacts on children's outcomes, including health, social-emotional wellbeing (Dockery, 2020). In the United States, Hispanic adolescents who experience cultural identity confusion have been shown to have lower psychosocial well-being including lower self-esteem, lower optimism, and higher depressive symptoms (Meca et al., 2017).

I would like to stress that prior to this research, I generally held the colonial view that it was parents within a nuclear family that were responsible for 'parenting' children, however now understand that the term 'child rearing' is a better representative as it includes other important caregivers in a collective caregiving system. To bring children back to the centre of families and communities requires a collective effort beginning with self-determination regarding the reclamation of traditional Indigenous child rearing practices in Canada. Although there has been limited work today on Indigenous child rearing, a culturally based Aboriginal language immersion Kindergarten program in Ontario, was linked to children's positive ethnic self-identity, self-esteem, and self-concept as a learner (Morcom, 2017). This is a small example of

particular cultural importance for Indigenous families in Canada, where Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and culture often built into the structure of Indigenous languages have a positive effect on outcomes. The importance of this issue is reinforced further in the worldviews held by diverse Indigenous populations in Canada. Children are seen as a gift from the Creator (Dorion, 2010) and children's belonging at the centre of family and community have the potential to impact behaviours of the family and the community (Eni & Phillips-Beck, 2013). Reclamation of traditional child rearing has the potential to increase well-being for many Indigenous families and their interconnected communities, restoring and strengthening their stable and nurturing capacities (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996).

Historical Context

Intergenerational teachings of child rearing practices in Indigenous communities within Canada have been harmed by historical and present-day policies of colonization. This includes the Sixties Scoop, inequitable child welfare funding, systemic racism, and residential schools (LaFrance & Collins, 2003). Knowledge of traditional Indigenous child rearing practices have been particularly impacted in Manitoba, where an estimated 14 residential schools were in operation; approximately 80 such schools existed across Canada (TRC, 2015, Honouring).

Historically, specific pathways through which residential schools and the Indian Act impacted Indigenous child rearing in Canada included policies with stated intentions of Indigenous erasure, that is cultural genocide (Amir, 2018). In 1884, the Canadian government, through the Indian Act, began to ban traditional ceremonies including the Potlatch ceremony and the Sundance ceremony, resulting in a significant loss of traditions and cultural practices (University of British Columbia, 2009; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a). Continuing to practice ceremonies could result in confiscation of ceremonial items and/or a jail

sentence. These policies resulted in disruptions of child rearing and the inability for Indigenous People to legally pass down their traditions to their children and future generations. Additionally, children lost the model of child rearing when they went to residential schools as they were forcibly removed from their parents to erase the influence of their culture and identity (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a). The 150,000 Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit children that lived in the residential schools were instead modeled harsh punishment and abusive behaviours (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a).

The removal of Indigenous children to strip away culture continued through government policy from the 1960s to the 1980s with the Sixties Scoop, in which children were removed from their families and taken into foster care or adopted into non-Indigenous families throughout Canada and the United States (Johnston, 1983, as cited in Sinclair, 2007; McKenzie, Varcoe, Browne, & Day, 2016; Sinclair, 2007). The estimated 20,000 Indigenous children would either never see their families again, or they would grow up and seek out their biological families from an ever-urging desire for belonging and identity (Lewis, 2017).

Research on intergenerational trauma notes that the traumatic effects of residential school can create lasting impact on ability to manage subsequent stressors including ongoing trauma and impact their own children via altered child rearing (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009). Bombay et al. (2009) also associate the trauma experienced in residential schools with increased risk of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse disorder. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's report acknowledges that public policy is responsible for the harmed spirits of Aboriginal People that lead to widespread family violence (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Subsequently, the trauma experienced as children continued into their adulthood and impacted their ability to parent due to nation, community, and

personal dysfunction, maintaining the traumatic harms in their own children's lives (Brave Heart, 2003; Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014). The relationship between Indigenous parents and their children continues to be harmed currently through covert and overt racial policies (Maxwell, 2014) such as inadequate access to culturally aligned family support programs, continued racial child welfare policies, and societal failures such as poverty.

Inclusion of Cultural Content

Much research has been focused on the need for cultural programming in different areas of society including early childhood education, mental health programming, and health fields, though less so in parenting programming. For example, many studies have been done on increasing cultural curriculum in early childhood education and school systems. Maher and Buxton (2015) propose that educational systems that do not interface culture are unjust as this can serve to make education systems exclusionary to Indigenous populations. Further, alternately cultured systems can cause harm, as Maher and Buxton (2015) noted that some of the Indigenous Elders in their study were concerned at the decline in children's positive sense of self after they started school and proposed this as reflecting the impact of the Western curriculum. In the health field, Gerlach (2008) suggests that if occupational therapy practices do not incorporate Indigenous perspectives, they risk perpetuating oppressive methods and reducing the efficacy of their practice. Similarly, Cianconi et al. (2019) call for an integration of culture, traditional medicine, and social heritage into psychiatry to better address the health needs and rates of poor access to services for Indigenous populations.

Similarly, the need for cultural programming for child rearing also exists. A Canadian study has shown that, although some goals and beliefs were shared within the two groups, important differences exist between child rearing ideologies in the dominant settler culture and

those of Indigenous parents, including child rearing beliefs, behaviours, and goals for their children (Cheah & Chirkov, 2008). For example, in that study, many Indigenous families identified the importance of having their children learn cultural traditions and desirable behaviours focused on education, learning, and achievement, whereas non-Indigenous families selected social sensitivity characteristics such as kindness and politeness as being desirable in their children. Additionally, the reasons for choosing certain behaviours also differed: Aboriginal mothers selected socialization as a means toward societal expectations (group goals) whereas European mothers selected parent-focused reason (for the comfort of the parent – individual goals). These differences may be significant enough that it would impact an Indigenous parent's engagement and acceptance of a child rearing program that is incongruent with their beliefs and goals.

In Indigenous contexts, children's learning is not considered to be just about acquiring knowledge but acknowledges that learning arises within daily activities and through building relationships with other children, caregivers, Elders, and their community (Ball, 2012). Additionally, Ball stresses that learning to be a parent starts as children are encouraged to take part in basic care for younger siblings and cousins which can also serve as an early way to learn identity. Parenting programs may focus on acquiring knowledge of colonial parenting practices which may often leave out group goals as suggested by Cheah and Chirkov (2008) as being important to Indigenous parents. Moreover, it is unclear the extent to which Western approaches to structured child rearing programs are consistent with traditional Indigenous values regarding communication and the sharing of knowledge or cultural practices.

Moving Forward

Traditional child rearing practices have recently been deemed critical to wellness and present-day reconciliation, as highlighted by the Truth and Reconciliation action plan to mitigate harms for future generations (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015b). This is explicitly stated in the Calls to Action including:

> Call to Action 5: We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families. (p. 320)
>
> Call to Action 19: We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services. (p. 322)

These calls are consistent with the multiagency collaborative Manitoba report in which Katz et al. (2019) outline several actions for addressing health gaps including addressing racism in the health system and incorporating Indigenous determinants of health into mental health systems. Bombay et al. (2009) comment on the potential for intergenerational resilience to intergenerational stressors, suggesting that identification with culture, and the presence of cultural factors, may have a protective effect through cultural interpretation of situations and events. Thus, changes have been encouraged to right the systemic wrongs (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996) and promote intergenerational healing over intergenerational trauma. Until families remain together, practice cultural child rearing, and focus on

intergenerational relationships within families and communities, Indigenous populations will continue to struggle with intergenerational harm. I believe that through reclaiming traditional practices and rebuilding intergenerational relationships within communities, harms can begin to heal, and perpetuating effects of trauma can be replaced with family wellness for all including grandparents, parents, and children and communities.

To date, a key limitation to traditional child rearing reclamation, healing of colonial trauma, and promotion of Indigenous wellbeing is the lack of documented and shareable knowledge about traditional parenting (Cheah & Chirkov, 2008; Muir & Bohr, 2014). Muir and Bohr (2014) note that although there exists a great diversity among and within Indigenous communities, there is little research that documents the child rearing practices of communities, which may be different than the child rearing practices of the dominant culture. These differences suggest a need for research that can preserve, reclaim, and share culturally aligned child rearing knowledge which may strengthen the ongoing work of Indigenous communities in healing from colonization and may inform professional practices for all who are involved in working with Indigenous populations. Importantly, existing evaluations of parenting programs have often excluded Indigenous populations (Day & Francisco, 2013) or not taken the necessary steps to determine engagement and efficacy for Indigenous populations.

Of the small number of programs that are tailored for Indigenous populations, many are adapted models from colonial programs, which are not built with Indigenous worldviews as a foundation but rather take an existing model and modify the content (Richardson, Big Eagle, & Waters, 2022). Additionally, most programs that incorporate cultural content are designed for implementation within a childcare or school setting, without intervention at the parent child relationship level (Maher & Buxton, 2015). An example is the Aboriginal Head Start Program

that is implemented throughout Manitoba (Manitoba Aboriginal Head Start, n.d.) modeled after the original Head Start programming launched in 1965 (National Head Start Association, 2020) and designed as an early childcare program to promote positive learning, health promotion, and incorporating a parental component. Another adapted program in Australia sought to incorporate cultural relevance through the use of an Aboriginal Advisory Group (Grace et al., 2016). The Grace et al. study did not include outcome measures but rather impromptu observations of the parents in their interactions with the children and their engagement of the program materials. Also, though one of the intentions was to make the program culturally appropriate, the list of topics in the parent group session seem to be framed in colonial terms (temperament, setting limits), rather than focused on incorporating Aboriginal ways of knowing and being (Grace, et al., 2016). Another example of a program that was designed for purposes other than specifically promoting cultural child rearing was the Early Childhood Care and Development as Hook and Hub intervention which successfully offered parents post-secondary education as early childhood centre providers with the aim that they provide child care services in their communities (Ball, 2004). While studying feasibility of transforming community organization with child care as the hub, another goal was to be able to nurture "cultural knowledge, identity and pride [through] strengthening parental involvement and parenting skills" (Ball, 2004, p.8). This included documentation of cultural practices that promoted cultural identity and cultural traditions, as well as long term involvement of the graduates of the post-secondary program as childcare providers in their community at a high rate (82.5%) but without specific interventions for the students and their own children.

There are a growing number of child rearing programs which incorporate cultural knowledge as a result of the TRC Calls to Action. One non-profit organization, the First Nations

Family Advocate Office (FNFAO), offers advocacy and programming for families that are involved with the child welfare system (First Nations Family Advocate Office, n.d.). Their programming includes a Traditional Parenting Group including cultural content such as the seven sacred teachings, star blanket teachings, moss bag teachings, a Woman's Wellness Group, and a Men's Red Road to Healing group which are focused on wholistic self-care wellness. It is unclear if there are reports to document the impact of the FNFAO programs.

Traditional Child Rearing Practices

Recent years have seen a resurgence in attention to the importance of traditional Indigenous child rearing (Bang, et al., 2018), which has been amplified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action. One challenge is that each unique Indigenous population may consist of a diverse group of beliefs and practices – with no pan-Indigenous culture or linked child rearing practices. However, there are some commonalities in belief systems (Loppie, 2007). For instance, in many Indigenous communities, family represents much more than the idea of a nuclear family, but rather complex overlapping bonds and relationships within the community through extended intergenerational blood lines, adoptions, deceased ancestors, and clans (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996, Gathering Strength). As such, many of these relationships established a responsibility for raising all children through sharing the responsibility of provision and also managing hardships as they arose. Historically, the family served as the social education system, the justice system, and the political system (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996).

However rare, documentation of varied aspects of traditional Indigenous child rearing practices in research has begun, including beliefs about teenage pregnancy, childrearing teachings, fathering, and clan systems. Some research in recent years has sought to redefine

teenage pregnancy as serving a sense of identity and greater purpose in the community, rather than viewing it only as a failure or deficiency through a colonial lens (Cooke, 2013; Eni, & Phillips-Beck, 2015). Though traditional support systems and teachings may not be prevalent today, there still exists a 'network of care' for Indigenous lone parent families (Quinless, 2013). Traditionally, girls were prepared for their critical role as mothers from a young age by their mothers, grandmothers, and Elders through observation, storytelling, and practice (National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health, 2012). In their report, the National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health (NCCAH) summarizes some critical teachings required for the raising of sacred children including knowledge of family planning and fertility, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical care during pregnancy, birthing knowledge, nurturing babies, child rearing with patience, kindness, lecturing about traditional values, and celebrating life transitions.

Dorion's (2010) qualitative study in Canada, in which she interviewed seven Cree Elders, outlines thirteen comprehensive Cree teachings about childrearing developed into the Opikinawasowin Teachings Wheel model to represent the thirteens moons in a year. Some of these 13 teachings map onto those mentioned in the NCCAH report and some are unique to this model, including but not exclusively, the gift of discipline, the give of laws and nature, the gift of communication, and the gift of Elders. Similarly, researchers White et al. (2006) sought to explore traditional fathering in Dakota communities in the United States. White et al. address the current 'fatherlessness' for Dakota families and put forth seven recommendations for working with fathers and reclaiming 'Akicita' warrior society as the protection of families and greater community, and role modeling of fathers to their children. In 2000, Weechi-it-te-win Family Services in Ontario held a forum with Grandmothers to document ways of raising children the

Anishinaabe way (Weechi-it-te-win & The Fort Frances Governance Team, 2020). Some of the teachings outlined in the report are three of the sacred teachings, a Family Circle model, moss teachings, and developmentally appropriate cultural milestones for ages 4, 5-8, and 9-12. This shows some overlap with other models such as those in the FNFAO programs in Manitoba, which highlights the importance of culturally specific child rearing practices for tribal nations.

One cross-nation commonality that parents can pass to their children may be the overarching concept of knowledge and path of *mino-pimatisiwin* (the good life) as a philosophy or ideal to live a balanced life in spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. Gehl (2017) describes one of the keys to achieving *mino-pimatisiwin* is acquiring identity through meaningful "cultural structures and family relationships" (p.100), such as song and stories which promote spiritual relationships within a clan system. Clan systems can hold and maintain roles, meaning, self and collective responsibility, medicinal knowledge systems, and interdependent connections to all beings and spirits (Gehl, 2017). Additionally, in their report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People stressed that the strongest themes from consultations were the "overwhelming concern for the well-being of children, and the belief that families are at the crux of personal and community healing…and are the central position between individual and community" (1996, p. 9). Thus, family systems are the working group through which individual children, parents, families, and communities can experience healing from the ongoing intergenerational trauma in the hopes of breaking the cycles.

The above examples represent some of the practices that have been recently documented, some formally published with peer-review, and others published for general knowledge on the internet. As documentation and recording of traditional practices are still advancing, it is expected that many more practices exist that have not made it into formal publications.

Current Study

Traditional stories evolve to incorporate new knowledge and situations (University of Alberta, 2020) as representative of ever changing Indigenous Knowledge as they integrated new patterns and relationships of the world into their culture (Sammel, Whatman, & Blue, 2020). Similarly, I am searching for a path to learn, understand, reclaim, and incorporate Indigenous traditions for families living in a society that has changed from the traditional lives of our ancestors due to the passage of time and colonization influences. As recommended by the National Collaboration Centre on Aboriginal Health (2012), it is also necessary to incorporate Aboriginal knowledge and traditions from the specific cultural groups in the area where that knowledge will be reclaimed. Reclaiming traditional Indigenous child rearing practices and disseminating this knowledge to support Indigenous families requires re-creating appropriate cultural social relationships that existed historically, without reinforcing assimilative processes (Maxwell, 2014) to strengthen parent-child relationships and promote intergenerational wellness.

In this study, I have sought guidance from Knowledge Keepers on traditiona Indigneous child rearing within my home province of Manitoba, Canada, on Treaty Territories 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Carleton University (2022) explains that “Elders are acknowledged by their respective communities as an ‘Elder’ through a lifetime of learned teachings and earned respect” and Knowledge Keepers as “people who may not be considered an elder but carry traditional knowledge and expertise in different spiritual and cultural areas.” Currently, I am using these terms as synonymous as I deem both Elders and Knowledge Keepers as holding knowledge and wisdom that is valuable to my study. Through my documentation and interpretation of the Knowledge Keepers stories, I aim to learn and share wisdom about traditional families practices relevant to raising children and consider how these practices may be reclaimed and relevant for

Indigenous families today. Thus, the objectives of my study are to: (1) Examine culturally rooted Indigenous child rearing practices as described by Knowledge Keepers in Manitoba, and (2) Summarize recommendations and guidance by Knowledge Keepers for reclaiming traditional child rearing practices.

Methodology

Researcher Description

The current study will used qualitative methodology. As such, my identity and position as a researcher has direct bearing on the process, analysis, and outcomes. My heritage and experience inform my interactions in this research and interpretation of the interviews. I have Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) heritage from my mother who is from Lake St. Martin First Nation Obushkudayang Nation, Treaty 2 Territory, Manitoba; and I have Scottish, Irish, and English heritage from my late father who was from Gypsumville, Manitoba. I am a mother to four children and grandmother to one grandson. For a long time, I was a single mother and struggled with poverty and cultural identity conflict. I also have experience working closely with families many of whom are of Indigenous heritage, in the Winnipeg area for over a decade as a Families First Home Visitor in the Public Health Program. I must also acknowledge my representation of the Western society as a university researcher, holding myself accountable to both sides of my heritage, and walking within two worlds.

Research Design Overview (Theoretical Approach)

In the current study I use culturally sensitive methods that include opportunities for storytelling and relationship building, to explore traditional child rearing and seek culturally appropriate definitions of child rearing and practices. I chose qualitative methodology, which can align with Indigenous cultural methodologies (Kovach, 2009) for instance through promoting

relationship building and data collection using story telling. Storytelling as a research methodology "provides time and space for the research participant to tell the story that is pertinent to the situation" (Archibald, Lee-Morgan, & De Santolo, 2019, p. 4) and at the same time, as an intervention, creates an opportunity to "understand how traditional and life experience stories can help people live better lives" (p. 4).

I made attempts to ensure I followed the storytelling principles of *respect*, *responsibility*, *reverence*, *reciprocity*, *holism*, *interrelatedness*, and *synergy* (Archibald, 2008) during the interviews. Kovach (2009) stresses that relationship is important because it can reduce community mistrust of research, considering the history of unethical research with Indigenous communities in the past which honor *respect* and *responsiblity*. I will attempt to incorporate Kovach's recommendation to use my own 'inward' knowledge through journaling about the process and meaning making of the data (a practice which aligns well with the western methodology of memo writing in qualitative research methods). Storywork as a research methodology and a data collection procedure involves multiple levels of meaning such as the story itself (text) and the performance which further the interpretation honoring *interrelatedness* and *synergy* (Archibald, 2008). The *holism* principle (Archibald, 2008) is satisfied through my own subjective reflection analysis on the stories as they allow me to apply the multiple levels of meaning to the various areas of my life by using my "heart (emotions), mind (intellect), body (physical actions), and spirit (spirituality)" (Archibald, Lee-Morgan, & De Santolo, 2019, p. 4).

My methods also include incorporating a "two-eyed seeing" approach (Bartlett, 2012; Peltier, 2018) in which both Indigenous ways of knowing and Western research methods are melded, and both are honored. Within honoring Indigenous ways of knowing, it will be important for my research to incorporate concepts of community engagement, capacity building,

empowerment, and self-determination (Jacklin & Kinoshameg, 2008). In their review, Wright et al. (2019) outlined six recommendations for applying two-eyed seeing to research which also incorporate community engagement and self-determination. These six recommendations stress the importance of relationships, mutual benefit, promotion of well-being and healing, involvement of Elders, using a foundation of Indigenous ways of knowing, and deference to Indigenous leadership (Wright et al., 2019). The *reverence* principle of storytelling (Archibald, 2008) can be thought of as the upholding of the sacredness and my deference to the knowledge that the Knowledge Keepers hold and share, requiring silence as they shared, and acceptance of their authority. Honouring Western research methods includes academic research processes including ethics approval, consent, written documentation (transcripts) of the storytelling interviews and this written thesis.

Additionally, I have worked to incorporate an ethical space (Ermine, 2007) in the research process satisfying storytelling principles of *respect, responsibility* and *reverence*. This involves examining biases and differences on both sides of an Indigenous/Western conversation and coming to the space between with the intention of engaging without harm but rather promoting well-being of each side. To accomplish this, I will approach this research with reflexive awareness, holding the intentions of openness, trust, and mutual respect in the relationship building.

One of my steps as a researcher toward two-eyed seeing and an ethical space was the completion of the OCAP®[1] Foundations course through the First Nations Information Governance Centre regarding ownership, control, access, and possession of Indigenous data

[1] *OCAP® is a registered trademark of the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC).*

(First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2019*).* Much of OCAP applies to First Nation communities setting standards and policies when engaging in research as an entity, though there are also important concepts that apply when engaging with Indigenous individuals. OCAP® stresses the importance of informed consent to participate in research and that the research must be of benefit without harm. There are multiple examples of historic harms to First Nation communities from research participation; even today some have yet to be resolved. The current study aims to focus on strength-based approaches to reduce harm, incorporate traditional cultural protocols, and outline all consent procedures thoroughly. Additionally, OCAP focuses on use and access to data which satisfy the storytelling principles of *reciprocity* and *holism* (Archibald, 2008) through the dissemination of my results to Indigenous organizations so they can use these to inform programs that will benefit Indigenous populations. Additional knowledge mobilization processes are available in the discussion section of this document.

With Indigenous research methods, research integrity is determined by those who would have undergone similar processes and experience, of which there is a dearth of Indigenous scholars and literature (Kovach, 2009). Therefore, research integrity in this study is met by readers ability to deem my honesty and openness with the storytelling research process, the interviews, and the data.

Methods

Recruitment Process and Relationship Building

I sought to recruit traditional Knowledge Keepers who are involved in cultural practices and who can provide knowledge regarding child rearing and guidance in reclaiming traditional practices. Recruitment of traditional Knowledge Keepers involved identifying them through community members including Indigenous graduate students and organizations. I contacted five

individuals and 18 organization including the Abinotci Mino-Ayawin (Children's Healing Centre), Circle of Life Thunderbird House, First Nations Family Advocate Office, Indigenous Women's Healing Centre, Ka Ni Kanichihk, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), Manitoba Moon Voices, Migizii Agamik, Native Women's Association of Canada, Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad (Our Relatives House), Neeginan Centre, Project Neechiwam, Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO), Specialized Services for Children and Youth (SSCY), Wahbung Abinoojiag, and West Central Women's Resource Centre.

Recruitment began with the establishment of relationships with the organizations and individuals who could then recommend the Knowledge Keepers who are involved in their communities (see Appendix C and D). I invited 18 traditional Knowledge Keepers to a conversation so they can get to know who I am as a researcher (see Appendix E and F). This relationship building is an important piece of research as the interviewees must also choose me as a researcher (Kovach, 2009). Along with the initial email to introduce myself and invite them to an interview, due to constraints of the pandemic, I offered tobacco to be delivered on agreement to participate rather than in person at the time of request. For three Knowledge Keepers, the relationship building was done through email, for the other two, an in-person visit was done and tobacco passed while maintaining social distancing. Once the Knowledge Keepers felt they could trust in myself and my research, and agree to have their knowledge shared and documented, an interview was scheduled along with the required documentation including consent. I completed interviews with five Knowledge Keepers though the initial goal was to complete 12-15 (further information below). I provided tobacco and conducted qualitative interviews with five traditional Knowledge Keepers. Compensation was provided based on the

rates recommended through the University of Manitoba Indigenous Student Centres policies (see Appendix B) regarding working with Elders (University of Manitoba, 2020). Once the interview was completed, I continued to keep in contact with as many established relationships as possible.

Recruitment Context

Interviews for this project were conducted 2020-2021, at a time when there were many traumatic triggering events for Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This included the COVID-19 pandemic which began in March 2020 and disproportionately affected Indigenous Peoples' health and increased isolation for many living in rural, remote, and northern communities. Furthermore, the discovery of the approximately 215 unmarked graves on the site of the former residential school in Kamloops, British Columbia in May of 2021 (Dickson & Watson, 2021), and the subsequent searches for gravesites on multiple other residential schools across Canada was highly traumatic and necessitated the guidance and support of Knowledge Keepers across Indigenous communities. These events contributed to particular challenges in recruitment of Knowledge Keepers with dedicated time to contribute to this research. Thus, the current study included five interviews rather than 12-15 (which is more typical in western academic qualitative research). Although I had some concern about only including 5 interviews from my western academic training, in consultation with Dr. Jen Leason, a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Maternal Child Wellness, the inclusion of five different nations affirmed the validity and appropriateness of the storytelling method to address child rearing practices (J. Leason, personal communication, 2021).

Participants

I had intended to interview participants of Indigenous ancestry to the Manitoba region including but not exclusively with Ojibwe (Anishinaabe), Cree (Ininewak), Oji-Cree, Dene, and

Dakota heritage. The five Knowledge Keepers who participated in the interviews were Ojibwe (Anishinaabe), Cree (Ininewak), Dakota, Lakota, and Mètis. The inclusion of different nations is crucial to utilize the knowledge gathered to document the traditional practices in the Manitoba region and provide guidance for future program development in this same region.

General Data Collection Procedures

For qualitative reflexivity, prior to each interview, I wrote a memo regarding my feelings, expectations, and possible biases that I was holding and also completed a sage smudge. This process was used to center myself and bring my intentions to an ethical space. To start each interview, I offered a land acknowledgment and offered the participant to use a sage smudge at their location, to allow us to go forward into the interview in a good way. Consent forms were reviewed and explained as necessary. Compensation forms were signed according to the procedures of the University of Manitoba Elder Compensation Protocols (see Appendix B). I wrote memos following each interview noting responses to the interview content for what I learned, my thought on the process of what was going well or not going well, any adaptations that could be made in subsequent interviews, noting areas that could be explored further or with greater depth.

Data Collection

I conducted qualitative interviews with five traditional Knowledge Keepers. See Appendix I for the interview conversation guide. The questions served as prompts as the aim of the interview was to be conversational and allow for storytelling. As such, for most of the interviews, I primarily engaged in listening and my guidance of the conversation was limited. I mainly asked 3 questions, 1. What was it like growing up? 2. What are the traditional child rearing practices that we need to learn again? And 3. How can we reclaim these practices? The

remainder of the interviews were allowed to flow and be guided by what the Knowledge Keepers felt they wanted to share.

Interviews lasted for approximately one hour and three Knowledge Keepers agreed to a second one-hour interview. In consideration of the current COVID pandemic restrictions, all interviews were conducted via Zoom online video platform, taking necessary precautions for confidentiality. All interviews were conducted via and audio recorded using the Zoom Healthcare platform. Alternately, the option was available to conduct interviews over the phone and audio record with a handheld recorder. To promote rigor, interview audio recordings were transcribed verbatim (including utterances) by two transcribers for accuracy, one of whom was the interviewer. Once the interviews were transcribed and before data analysis, the interviewees who requested it, were provided with their transcripts to be able to review and request any changes. Two interviewees requested this but did not provide any amendments. The earlier occurring interviews provided valuable information for modifying the later occurring interviews which helped to increase the ability to reach saturation where most possible themes could be identified. However, reaching saturation was not the goal of this study as there is much diversity in child rearing practices (J. Leason, personal communication, 2021). Most importantly, the interviews were to serve as storytelling process to demonstrate teaching and learning through each interviewee sharing their own stories with the interviewer. All processes of recruitment, interviews, transcription, and analysis were performed concurrently.

Analysis

The analytic process involved transcribing and reviewing the transcripts to ensure my familiarity with the data. I wrote memos about my thoughts as I transcribed and read, noting my thoughts about the interview, any similarities or contrasts to other interviews, and general themes

that arose regarding child rearing or recommendations for reclamation of practices. To fit with storytelling, I edited the transcripts for presentation of the data for reader interpretation by creating abbreviated transcripts which removed extraneous conversation between the interviewer and the Knowledge Keeper but maintains the relevant text of the Knowledge Keepers' stories. Storytelling would normally occur in person; however, it is important to this Indigenous research to be able to share these in written form due to the requirement of academic research, which values permanent documentation. At the same time, the written form is part of the evolution of Indigenous Research and provides benefits of connecting Indigenous researchers.

Interpretive meaning-making

Interpretive and subjective aspects of inductive analysis to create knowledge is valued within traditional systems and fits well within qualitative research (Kovach, 2009). As Kovach notes, it is less about finding a truth than an experience and relation to one's own life. Each reader has the opportunity to read and interpret from their own subjective experience and to take what meaning they need as an individual (Gross, 2014).

First, the stories within the interviews will be presented as much as possible as they are to let them speak for themselves. Each reader has the opportunity to read and interpret from their own subjective experience and to take what meaning they need.

Secondly, I then conducted my own personal reflective analysis informed by Indigenous ways of knowing through interpretive meaning-making (Kovach, 2009) which involves very intimate soul searching to honour the learning that happens in storytelling between an Elder and a layperson. I re-read and re-listened to the interview transcripts and audio while allowing myself to feel what was being said and how it related to my own life experience, to my roles as a mother and researcher, and to my identity as a mixed Indigenous woman.

Reflection of Child Rearing, Reclamation, and Storytelling Content

Thirdly, as an Indigenous qualitative researcher, I also present my own subjective interpretation of the stories in relation to the objectives of the study. Using a descriptive analysis, I identified direct or indirect descriptions of how children were raised traditionally, and how that fit within my own understanding. Normally, a comparisons within the transcripts to identify variations and commonalities of child rearing practices between the different nations of the traditional Knowledge Keepers would be done to honour the understanding that there are no pan-Indigenous practices. There is diversity within and amongst Indigenous Nations. However, with a small sample comparison have not been made

Next, I summarized any recommendation that the Knowledge Keepers may suggest as ways to reclaim traditional child rearing practices within future Indigenous led child rearing programs. Finally, I reflected and summarized any additional sharing that occurred outside of the intended content, recognizing that these stories were meant to be shared, and contribute to interrelatedness.

Results

As part of honouring two-eyed seeing in practice, I am also honouring it with the process of presentation of my research. Previous to the results, the content has been primarily formal academic format. The results follow a more fluid format of reflection and reflexivity as I interpret the experience and content of the interviews. Consistent with interpretive meaning-making and Indigenous story telling principles, the results include a presentation of each interview for the reader so that knowledge may be fully shared and others interpretations may be welcomed, based on each reader's own positionality (see Appendices K, L, M, N, O; Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008). The results also include my own meaning-making from the interviews,

which include my own identity, knowledge, life experiences, and future research aims. Finally, I outline key learnings gathered from the knowledge keepers across: child rearing practices and related cultural practices, recommended process of reclamation, and noteworthy effects of colonization. The presentation of these findings are presented in this order:

1. Presentation of Interviews for Readers Meaning Making
2. Subjective Interpretative Meaning Making
3. Child Rearing Practices
4. Reclaiming Traditional Practices
5. Colonial Effects

Presentation of Interviews for Reader's Meaning Making

The interviews can be read in abbreviated transcripts (see Appendices K to O) which are presented in the order in which they were conducted. It is my intention that each reader will take the time to read the abbreviated transcripts and apply the teaching and knowledge to their own lives in a meaningful way. Each reader may relate to the story in a way that resonates with their own experiences such that each reader learns something different (Archibald, 2008). It is this meaning making that each reader may then carry with them that gives the story or experience sharing its own 'life' (Archibald, 2008). The first interview (Appendix K) is with Elder Robert Green. He is an Anishinaabe man from Shoal Lake, Ontario who currently lives in Manitoba. He is a member of the Midewiwin Society and the Moose Clan. The second interview (Appendix L) is with Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita. He belongs to the Dakota Nation from Sioux Valley and is a member of the Sundance Society. The third interview (Appendix M) is with Elder Pahan Pte San Win who is Lakota, Cree, and Metis from Saskatchewan. Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita and Elder Pahan Pte San Win are married and live in Manitoba. Their interviews were conducted together.

The fourth interview (Appendix N) is with Elder Norman Meade who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He is a Métis Elder from Manigotagan, Manitoba near Hollow Water First Nation and belongs to the Sturgeon Clan. The fifth interview (Appendix O) is with Elder Leslie Spillett who grew up in Wekusko, Manitoba and now resides in Winnipeg. She is Cree on her mother's side and English and Scottish on her father's side. She is a member of the Sundance Society.

Subjective Interpretive Meaning Making

I share my thoughts, feelings, and interpretations in the following narrative with great honor, and respect that each reader may additionally have feelings about what I share. I had a very profound experience while participating in the interviews. Storywork not only contains the knowledge and teachings that are passed from one to another but also enhances interrelatedness between the storyteller and the listener (Archibald, 2008). I felt honoured to be told these stories, to have this knowledge shared with me and feelings of immense connectedness lasted for several days after each interview. As the process unfolded, I realized that I was undergoing a profound cultural healing that was both difficult and necessary, as it forced me to reflect on some of my own trauma.

In choosing to share parts of my own story, I'm aware of my own vulnerability and fearful emotions that comes with such disclosure. At the same time, in order to communicate the interpretations and meaning making, it's both appropriate and necessary to share reflection in an autobiographical manner. This is important both for the reader to understand the interpretation and for me to communicate the healing process that I'm experiencing while doing the work. This work and these stories are ongoing, a process that lives in my head every day and even in my dreams. I'm aware that I'm not always comfortable how intimate my disclosure is however, writing them out can help me have insight, and speaking to my advisor (Dr. Leslie Roos), family,

and friends to talk through things has helped me resolve and accept the heartrending process that is healing. I want to impress that there are healing topics which were too raw to share and thus have incorporated those into my heart rather than writing them here.

I understand that it was not until attending university that I was able to seek out and receive this knowledge and the feeling of belonging and love that comes with it. It has been challenging to walk in the world of academia while also honouring Indigenous knowledge, letting go of my academic side to reflect on the experience and have 'presence' in this work.

Following my interactions and talking with these Knowledge Keepers, I was finally able to gather the courage to speak to another Elder, offer tobacco, and receive my Spirit Name, my Clan, and my Colors. These identity markers have always been desired yet elusive to me. Through my engagement with my research, I came to realized how important receiving these were to my identity. Albeit after all interviews were complete, these identity elements came within my reach. I am *Ozaaw Makwa Kwe* (Golden Bear Woman) from the *Makwa* (Bear) clan, and hold the colors leaf green, red, black, and light golden brown. Each of these have special meaning and are not just titles. As I move through my future research, I understand that my self-identity and self-worth will evolve as I begin to live in *mino-bimaadiziwin* (the good life), incorporating and becoming who I was meant to be.

Elder Robert Green

My first interview was with Elder Robert Green. Considering my nervousness, I felt it was fortunate for me to meet Elder Robert first because we shared laughter which made me feel comfortable during our conversations. The following narrative is what I learned from him.

What I am doing right now is what needs to be done. I first doubted this as it seemed that I was seeking some form of legitimacy as an Indigenous person that grew up without traditional

Indigenous Knowledge. I finally realized that is what we are all searching for, in our lives, some profound connection to another and to find that our lives have meaning and value. It took a long time after these interviews for me to be able to accept that I am important. I think that my lack of self-value stems from colonization, from being a second-class citizen in society through racism, stereotypes, and interactions with others who made me feel less than. I believe now that I am valuable when I think about it, but I know I will need to continue to work on feeling it in my heart.

Elder Robert and I talked about the seven sacred teachings that are taught in elementary schools. These teaching are wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth (Empowering the Spirit, 2022). I had some conflicting thoughts about the seven sacred teachings previously. It is a good thing that they are being shared in many school divisions, yet when I think of sacred, I feel that the use of these teaching as performative is taking that sacredness away. They are being used to show they are working on reconciliation, but where is that represented in how people are being taught, it is being split into multiple uses in a hypocritical way. Maybe this is lack of trust but seeing a medicine wheel rug in a family centre with the seven teachings on the wall, is not living by those values and teachings, it is turning them into decorations. So, it is one thing to get back to those teachings in a sacred way, it is quite another to use them as a way of pretending to honour traditional ways of life. I am concerned that these surface level actions will ultimately be barriers to legitimate cultural reclamation.

Elder Robert engaged in storytelling about his experience and shared that he grew up in a traditional way, then experienced the colonial impact on those traditions. He shared about forced relocation, trauma, misunderstanding of traditional practices by white society, and that institutions tried to destroy the traditional women's systems. These stories were difficult to hear,

and I hoped that he was able to receive some healing from sharing. He also highlighted the influence of alcohol on Indigenous People, and I was able to reflect on how that has impacted my life as well in my childhood and adult relationships. He also talked about residential schools and the foreign education system, from which we need to decolonise. I attended a day school, my mother attended a day school, and my grandmother attended residential school in Elkhorn, Manitoba. These multigenerational traumas affected my life in a direct and intergenerational way. Many of these harms I still hold and have yet to even identify them to eventually be able to do something about them. These are things I cannot yet put into words.

Elder Robert told me that Creator is taking me in this direction, that Creator knows the gifts I have and the characteristics that I have that will enable me to help people in the long run. I think while the interview happened, it was profound validation for me, and even as I continued to review the transcripts, it hit me again and again, that I had a place, that I belonged, and had a purpose in life along with the understanding that I had been seeking it my whole life.

Throughout our two conversations, I felt a connection to things I have known already as Elder Robert shared thoughts during his interview that fit with my beliefs. This also served to give me a sense of confidence in my own intuition and knowledge. Also, I felt able to accept and be open to ideas that I did not know already that have given me new knowledge or something to think about. I believe that I was able to begin to dissolve my own apprehension about continuing this work. I have underlying feelings of not being valuable or worthy enough to write about these things because I did not grow up in a traditional way. Then experienced the recognition that, I am absolutely the right person to do this work, as a parent, myself, who grew up on a reserve but did not grow up learning about traditional cultural practices. As an adult, I am now seeking cultural knowledge to raise my children and grandchildren and being able to understand how

families may feel when they approach Knowledge Keepers as well. There is a deep shame that comes from not learning my cultural identity that plays a role in preventing me from reclaiming it.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita

I interviewed Grandfather Wanbdi and Elder Pahan together to their preference and they both joined the meeting from home on different computers with Grandfather Wanbdi speaking first. Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita asked to be referred to as a grandfather rather than as an Elder as it aligns with his preference to honour traditional kinship and community language. My anxiety for this interview was quite high as I had met with Grandfather Wanbdi previously to offer tobacco in request for this interview. He asked me a question at that time about preparing to be a grandmother as I had told him my daughter was pregnant. I misunderstood the question and he chuckled at my answer, and although I know that humour is a big part of Indigenous culture, I was a bit embarrassed, because I wanted to make a good impression.

Grandfather Wanbdi shared about his childhood and then later shared about his ideas of reclaiming Indigenous culture. He described growing up happy and safe, which I was comforted by. There were times that I felt like this when growing up, as well, because as children we live in the moment. I'm not sure that Grandfather Wanbdi also thinks about his childhood within differing extremes, but I find that I need to remind myself that the happy times are not invalid just because unhappy times also existed. Grandfather Wanbdi recollected the importance of having a job to do during his childhood. This wasn't necessarily the case for me, but rather chores that came up throughout the days such as washing dishes, peeling potatoes, or hanging our laundry on the clothesline in all seasons. I recently had the chance to reminisce with my sister about these chores and remember them being fun times spent with my siblings.

Many of the subsequent stories that grandfather Wanbdi shared made me reminisce about more happier childhood memories. I remember having many of my relatives come and stay with us for extended periods of time, having a big garden, picking berries like saskatoons, blueberries, chokecherries, and gooseberries, trapping and fishing with my father, living beside the river in a small 3 room house with 12 other family members, and swimming and ice skating on the river. Listening to Grandfather Wanbdi made me realize that I had so many wonderful memories to cherish from my childhood. I have spent a lot of my adult life trying to forget all the harmful things that happened, but I forgot to live in the loving memories as well. I was also reminded of a time during my early adulthood when I made *pemmican* by pounding dried meat in a cloth bag, similar to the story by Grandfather Wanbdi about using stone to pound chokecherries. I feel so fortunate to be reminded of these traditional ways that our ancestors developed for preserving food. We were innovators. From this conversation, I also realized that, as Grandfather Wanbdi said, “love was shown in different ways.” I also was not told I was loved, and so was often unsure if I was loved. I was often told to leave people alone, and felt like an annoyance to others. However, this may be because I was the youngest of my siblings, not necessarily that I wasn’t loved. In my relationships with my family and children now, I do show love in various ways, verbally, but also through acts of service, kindness, and respect.

For Grandfather Wanbdi, Child and Family Services (CFS) did not play a role in the community. When a family needed help, someone would just go and help with the kids. I don’t have memories of CFS either, and my parents didn’t talk about that. I recall that we did foster some children a few times, but my understanding was that they came to stay for a while, like my extended family would.

Grandfather Wanbdi also talked about many traditional societies and ceremonies that I had not heard of specifically the Omaha society, Eagle society, and the Scalp ceremony. I did not begin to learn about my culture until I went to university and participated in a Wolf teaching and sharing circle in my second year. I still remember the feelings I had then of feeling "finally" I know who I am. At this point, I feel encouraged at the vastness of the knowledge that exists and I am motivated to learn and know more.

When talking about his gift from Creator, Grandfather Wanbdi explained that "the spirits talked to me on this side and two on this side, and one on this side." I had heard of spirits speaking to people, but I am not sure if this has happened to me. I have had dreams that have led me to making changes in my life, holding on to or letting go of relationships, and healing from mourning those I have lost after they have visited with me in my dreams. I completely identified when he said, "I went away up in the air." This has happened to me. In sleep and in waking, I have left my body and watched myself from the ceiling. A healer once told me that I am susceptible to such things, and I need to be careful not to go too far, or I won't be able to find my way back. At the time it scared me, but I have recently come to understand that it is a gift that I don't know how to use yet.

Of the teachings I got from Grandfather Wanbdi was, "Go in the bush. And look after your needs that way, your health, health needs." In the last year and a half, my siblings and I have been renovating my late father's home and have been harvesting off the land for some of our needs. I believe that we can better our health through going in the bush, spending time in nature (Ong & Peterson, 2011) and working to meet our needs gives us physical activity. During this research, I have also recognized the importance of space, such that spending time on our land was more conducive to this research in terms of focus, reflection, and healing.

"I am encouraging you or advising you to that most of us have trauma in our life, that we would let this trauma out and not keep it inside any longer because it's going to be an obstacle to, to our learning." Although Grandfather Wanbdi was speaking in the context of supporting university students, I took this learning more personally. Shortly after these interviews, the unmarked graves of the precious children from the residential schools began to be discovered. This brought forth a lot of trauma response to me and many communities. Through grandfather Wanbdi's words, I was able to accept the harm of that trauma, as I had previously often felt I could not mourn, or grieve, or hurt, out of respect for those who were hurt more. I felt unworthy to claim that pain but now can allow myself the collective grief for all of our relatives.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win

Elder Pahan participated in the interview at the same time as Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita but mainly spoke during the second hour of the interview. Much of her story revolved around finding her sense of belonging and sharing what she learned from her parents and working with Indigenous youth.

I identified with a lot of what she spoke of, especially regarding identity and belonging. She said, "We were these two children that belonged to an Indian…so we were always on the outside," when introducing the topic of growing up with her brother, mother, and stepfather. I grew up with an Indigenous mother and a white father so was often on the outside to two different groups. When I was with my white friends, I was an 'Indian', when I was with my Indigenous friends, I was the white girl. As an adult, I recognize that one of the patterns of thinking that I would like to see us move away from is sensitivity to 'otherness', so that we can instead focus on the things that connect us.

Elder Pahan talked about growing up in an impoverished environment and noted the lack of attention from adults. Similarly, to my reflection on my interview with Grandfather Wanbdi, I once again remembered the childhood feeling of being a nuisance and annoyance, despite my good memories. After thinking about the various people I have interacted with in my adult life, my sense is that I am usually an optimistic person, and I would like to focus more on cherishing these happy times.

Elder Pahan shared memories of her mother and the teachings about wildlife especially birds and their behaviours and life cycles. I felt so honoured to be witness to this sharing of joyous memories of her mother which were so pure and loving. I recognized that she also shared both troublesome and loving memories that were in contradiction yet revealed the nature of dichotomy of experiences. Perhaps it was meant to teach me that I do see my childhood as traumatic yet also nurturing. I am learning to accept both sides without the need to define as one or the other.

Elder Pahan shared many learnings from her father who she described as “passionate and interested in everything to do with Mother Earth.” I found this to be an absolutely beautiful sentiment and I am so grateful for her that she had a father that showed her that passion. What I learned from her story of her father and his teachings for her is that we all need to figure out for ourselves what we need, when we are feeling like we don’t belong and to seek out where we do belong, where we feel at home, comfortable, and content. I found her story inspiring which made me wish that I had the energy to do all the things that matter to me. However, I know that we all have different gifts to share and that together, if we all focus on our most passionate things, that we will contribute, collectively. Within Elder Pahan’s story were teachings about Creator intending the wilderness to be pristine, that we need to take the opportunities to share time with

our loved ones before they are gone, and that Creator is looking after us. I was able to reflect on my own relationship with my late father and the great sense of loss I felt for a very long time. Because of her teachings, I was able to recognize I needed to prioritize some time to travel to my father's roots and did find a sense of belonging there too and that my father will always be with me in spirit. Her story of her father represented in the following quote was inspirational.

> "I feel like he's around me everywhere. And then I start having these experiences where, these strange experiences. And I, where I know that my dad actually, he might be buried there, he might be gone in a physical way, but he is there in a, in a sacred way, in a spiritual way, giving to me the love and the belonging and the acknowledgement that I always needed as I was growing up as a little girl."

Elder Pahan described her own learning using the analogy of cleaning up the dishes before cooking, to represent our need to heal in our lives before we can thrive. "We had to become adults, now we have to make up for all the wounding we had and heal that and fix it and fix that before we can start to live our adult life." This is so profound and exactly how I feel about my life, and hopefully in comparison to the children that we are raising that can be strong from the beginning. She also shared that knowing our gifts when we are struggling is difficult, and sometimes we need someone to help us discover them. I am grateful for this sentiment as I described before that I felt I was not important as I did not know my gifts, but now I understand I have some healing to do first.

Elder Pahan also spoke to me directly about my studies and to make sure "you tell them it has to start with healing." For myself, my healing has been a large part of this process. I want to come to my culture with my heart and mind working together. I've had to do a lot of healing while doing this research and it's taken a lot of tears and heartbreak while reflecting on these

interviews. It is much more than I can communicate in this document, but I want my communication of this research to reflect the winding road process. This includes my urges to put the work aside because of how much it hurts, while also knowing I needed to keep coming back to it. This process has been profoundly difficult, as I reflected and learned about the mass graves of lost children buried on the grounds of the residential schools, struggled with my memories doing my Indian Day School application for compensation, reflected on my relationships with my father and mother, revisited my own failures as a mother, and held my new grandson.

Elder Norman Meade

Elder Norman participated in my fourth interview. His teaching revolved around naming children to give a sense of belonging and building relationships with multi-generations. Elder Norman shared how he received his given legal names, his spiritual names, and his loving names by family members. In my reflection, I knew that this was an important part of growing up feeling loved. My middle name was given to me as it is my dad's sisters first name, and it has always felt special to me. I think that if we can continue these naming traditions within our families, it can help children with that sense of belonging, I gave a variation of that same name to three of my children and named my fourth daughter after a special woman that both my husband and I knew. I didn't have my traditional name when I did this interview and it served as a motivation to seek out my name. More than a year later I did receive my spiritual name in the summer of 2022, and I am very proud of my name and feel honoured and want to live up to the teachings of that name.

Elder Norman shared about growing up in a Christian church family and then learning about a traditional way, later in his life. I truly identified with this as this was my upbringing as well. I

grew up on a reserve that was primarily Christian. I went to Sunday School, all funerals were Christian services, and I attended church as an adult. I began to move away from this when I noticed some contradictory behaviour from the leadership at my church in Winnipeg. One Sunday, they quietly came and removed some houseless Indigenous People that were sitting in the row behind me, and they promoted conversion therapy by having a gay man give a testimony of how he was healed from homosexuality by God. I always had difficulty to reconcile what the church did in the residential schools and what they continued to do today. Elder Norman share that he had a hard time to find his spirit in the church but did find it on the land. I feel content for Elder Norman to be able to find a place to reconcile all of the conflict between church and traditional life and be content in his life. We all have to make choices and everyone's choice will be personal. I also felt so blessed to have Elder Norman share the significance of his name of *Makwa* given to him by his grandmother, and how it strengthened his bond with his wife and the work that they did in their lives to help people. Elder Norman shared about his wife's visit with a bear before she passed on. This was absolutely so touching, and I felt like I wanted to cry. He also talked about getting old and not living forever. This has really made me think about what I will leave behind and made me want to cherish the time I have now. I have profound respect for the physical activity that Norman can do at his age. I am not close to that age, but wish I could be this active. His stories have touched me deeply.

Elder Norman also shared about the different families we have and honoring them: our in-law families, our clan families, and our families we acquire from belonging to a community. Elder Norman talked about being an uncle and grandfather to anyone who wanted, and also said he would be my uncle – this gave me such a feeling of love.

Elder Norman discussed a very poignant topic of his thoughts about Indigenous men needing to do more with their children, and how this could prevent the number of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. This is a point of contention for me, I lost a niece to murder by her partner who was Indigenous. I know that hurt people hurt other people, and so his upbringing was not healthy, otherwise he would not have killed my niece. How do we heal from such lateral violence when both men and women are hurting? I don't know what the solution is for all of this trauma, and hopefully we can find that through these interviews and reclaiming our traditional ways. I need to keep hope.

Elder Norman also shared about a few other things in his life. I loved a story of his dog, which also made me think about how fortunate Norman is to have a place where he can be in nature and live amongst many animals. We do have a nature deficit problem, and lack of respect for wildlife in our society, which makes us complacent with ecosystems being destroyed by farmland, oil industry, hydroelectric dams, wildfires, etc. I also felt quite a connection with Norman as he talked about building stairs on a steep riverbank. I grew up right next to a river and remember the steep stairs there as well with such great memories of my childhood being in nature and close to the water. He also talked about the importance of small communities where everyone knows everyone. I grew up in a small community of approximately 125 people and knew everyone. When I moved to the city, I didn't know my neighbours, I didn't have people close by to count on or help me, my family was far away. I was gravely lonely despite being surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people, which greatly impacted my parenting.

As Elder Norman shared stories of his relationship with his children and grandchildren, I also reflected on my own relationships. He prioritises spending time with children, communicating openly, disciplining lovingly, having respectful interactions. I confess that I feel

like I don't spend enough time with my children. I have prioritised my education for the past nine years including working full time for six of those years. I make efforts to see all of my children each week for family supper as they are all adults now. I have to balance spending time with them while doing what I'm passionate about and making a change in the world that is important to me. More recently, I have been able to be a large part of my grandson's life, which is so important to me. He is being cared for by his uncle (my son) and my husband at my home, during the week which is special intergenerational care that I want to continue in my family, just as Elder Norman does in his family. How beautiful is it that he can take his granddaughter shopping and she is so comfortable with him that she can ask him to buy her clothing? Elder Norman has taught his grandchildren things and explained things, which is why they are comfortable asking questions, they know he is going to be open with them. So much of what Elder Norman said about parenting really touched me in my heart. He has such a gentle way about him and a caring that can make others feel so loved and valuable.

Elder Leslie Spillett

My fifth and final interview was with Elder Leslie Spillett. My anxiety approaching this interview was high even though I had already done four other interviews. Despite my eagerness to learn, I carried some fear and avoidance, possibly due to having to acknowledge how I got to this point in my life without knowing much about my Indigenous culture. I also think that this was the most difficult interview emotionally. My previous conversations had already brought me to some difficult realizations about myself, my relationships, and concern for not meeting my own expectations. At the point of this interview, I was feeling vulnerable and so hopeful.

Elder Leslie shared stories of learning to Sundance as an adult and that we are working toward children learning from when they are young and knowing that Sundance was their way. I

recognized that I had a lot of anger about trying to flounder around in my life for 50 years trying to discover my purpose. I feel like I have been trying to heal and find myself for decades. I haven't had my vision or direction yet. Maybe I am waiting, or maybe I have and didn't notice it. What is it even supposed to be like when I am told by spirit or Creator what my direction is? I want to acknowledge how much this process hurt, but also that it was necessary hurt, as I experienced healing throughout this culturally-grounded research.

One of the most profound statements that Elder Leslie made is, "The society being a wallpaper so that it is invisible and unnoticed, that we haven't been given the tools to examine it and the impact it has on our individual lives." As I tried to understand the significance of this and how it relates to my research, I wondered if those who are oppressed are being caught between two extremes of being a victim of society and/or unable to recognize their own autonomy. I believe that many of us humans are unwilling to let go of our desire to be in control of our own life and therefore unable to recognize the barriers that are beyond our control. Then those who have control over the policies that design society may be unwilling to recognize the hand they have in creating these problems, wanting to blame the individual, and unable to accept that others also have autonomy yet wanting to have control to fix others. These concepts are all in contradiction to each other, yet all exist withing the same structures. For example, my blame for myself for being both Indigenous and White and the stereotypical characteristics that came along with that, without reflecting on the fact that I had no hand in choosing my own heritage. I also want to be successful in each world I walk, and blame myself for lack thereof, without acknowledging the barriers that I encounter. I am white passing and went to an Indian Day school where the education quality was poor. When I attended a white high school, I presented with very poor skills and knowledge compared to my peers. I have always and continue to be

very aware that my identity does not match my physical appearance. The expectations that are placed on me by myself and society are incongruent to my life achievements. Even as I write this document, my doubts about my ability and my worthiness to write about this topic are high.

Elder Leslie shared her understanding of sense of agency and collective responsibility. What I have learned is that it's not about pitting them against each other, but rather one sits inside the other. If Creator is providing everything that is needed in a collective sense, through all that is on mother earth and our relations, then personal agency exists within this world for us to do the work to gather and make use of that which is provided. I believe Elder Leslie wanted to make it clear that it's not only about doing for others, and it's not only about leaving others on their own. We can help others, and they also need to do the work to help themselves. Promoting autonomy is something that I have worked to recognize within my own relationships: with my peers, with my husband, with my children, and with the families that I worked with in Families First. Within these personal and work relationships, I give a lot of effort and provide opportunity. I want them to know I care and communicate that they are valuable, but that they also needed to do the work. As a person who always has an urge to be a caregiver, it's difficult to let go, step back, and allow everyone to exercise their own sense of agency. What a powerful teaching for me. Elder Leslie stressed that it's important to recognize "people have been so dispossessed from their own agency" and that we need to not perpetuate that when helping.

Elder Leslie talked about our relationship with our ancestors. We need to mourn and understand and be enraged, but also celebrate and keep trying. I have often made efforts to communicate this to my children and keep it in mind for myself. We are our ancestors hopes and dreams and nothing comes to us for free, not even our education. I want our children and grandchildren to understand that those things have already been paid for with the suffering and

tears of our ancestors, and they have also given us the will to survive and keep going, to live, to honour their sacrifice, and be here. To expand on the topic of education, Elder Leslie stated, “it really bugs me how people navigate through all these barriers and finally so-called succeed in a Western institution, that somehow it was anything less than their own personal genius and brilliance and abilities that brought them there.”

Another statement she made that I feel was important for me and for all of us to hear was, “I don't know where that kind of got set in that there's something wrong with us.” It was so freeing for me to hear, to have acknowledgement and recognition that the sense that there is something wrong with my community and myself as a person came from somewhere else, not that it is an innate truth. To make this teaching even more relevant, she made a statement that seems somewhat basic to me, yet weighty. She said we carry the memory of our ancestors from our DNA. I understand the implication of epigenetics in an academic conceptual sense, yet this hit me in my heart. That it’s possible that I do know how to be a mother innately, that there really is nothing wrong with me, but rather I had difficulty because of my trauma. As an example of feeling my ancestors with me, I have canoed since I was young. Even as an adult, when I get in a canoe and paddle on the water, I feel a sense of ‘rightness,’ that this is exactly where I am meant to be. I also recently visited Ireland and Scotland to visit my father’s ancestors’ roots, such as Hunterston Castle where my name comes from. Again I had a feeling of rightness and belonging.

I absolutely appreciated Elder Leslie’s openness and willingness to share how she continues to challenge her use of language. I began to be more aware of how I speak and that how I think is also influenced by my colonial environment including academia. I also gained such a sense of hope as Elder Leslie predicted that Creator is going to take care of this [the colonial system and

harms] and I later joked with a friend that at the end of my journey I will be cured from colonization.

Child Rearing Practices

The Knowledge Keepers also shared child rearing practices and other important cultural practice that could be subject to reclamation. Although my intention was to document traditional child rearing practices, it is evident that those practices are not able to be separated from the greater cultural beliefs and practices. I present summaries below, organized by each Knowledge Keeper in the order in which the interviews were conducted. This organization is specifically to maintain the storytelling principles and reverence of each Knowledge Keepers shared knowledge. These findings can be further divided into the 'how' and 'what' of child rearing. The 'how' represents the values and beliefs that guide the practices of child rearing which is presented in Table 1, again organized by Knowledge Keeper. The 'what' are the actions and practices of child rearing which are presented in Table 2 which is organized into categories of practices including: traditional governance, intergenerational care, Indigenous language, stories, traditional practices, learning by observing, and ceremony & medicine.

Elder Robert Green

Elder Robert Green emphasized that we pass on our legacy through the education system of a traditional society such as sharing of legends and prophecy stories by Elders as a way of building relationships and passing down knowledge. He elaborated that we can teach about the migration story, the seven prophecies, the seven fires, learnings from animals, and other societal constructs such as the Ojibwe warrior society. He stressed that there is a need to go back to traditional governance systems such as justice, education, and parenting to gradually return to our own systems. Elder Robert talked about having a long history of living with traditional ways

including diet, ceremonies, and gender roles such as women's practices at their moon time which are powerful and sacred. He noted that this is in contrast to how women are treated in today's society. He noted that men also had important responsibility and value to the community. In each community, there was a sharing of responsibility by all to ensure no one was poor, everyone had a sense of belonging, and a connection to family. Part of this was the importance of traditional names being linked to belonging and connection.

When talking about children, Elder Robert explained "That's how much the Creator loves us by bestowing and giving us and lending us his child for us to raise. So, that child then becomes a very sacred, sacred being." Elder Robert explained that each of us has a spirit which is a part of us that remembers things even when we are not conscious. He also explained that the ancestors teach our children, and each child has a gift. Because of the sacredness of a child, they need to be the centre and cared for by all relatives and the community. The feeling of being raised by "all" communicates a feeling of 'love, kindness, caring, compassion" to the child. Elder Robert explained that the concept of being raised by the community is communicated in the meaning of the word for child '*abinoonji'* which is that children are meant to 'stay where they come from'.

The traditional principles of child rearing that Elder Robert listed were birthing practices, life stages, moss bag practices, infant development (visual senses, watching, hearing, listening, taste and smell), cradle board practices, and childhood traditions such as walking out ceremony and rites of passage (vision quest for boys, moon lodge for girls).

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita outlined some important knowledge which begins with communication. He stressed the importance of addressing others by relationship: "Grandpa *uakaa*, Grandma [*kunsi*], *ina* [mother], dad *ate*, *esua* my younger brother, *ciaye* my older

brother.” He also explained that as Indigenous People we need to follow our own ways and to share those practices with family. Grandfather Wanbdi shared stories of his childhood in which he embedded the practices that were important for raising children. One of these was practices was for each child to have a job to do. The children learned by observing their parents and grandparents engaging in their own jobs such getting up early, tending the farm, and caring for horses. He explained that using our heart, our mind, our body, and our spirit to do our work imparted strength and remembering the foundation of those teachings to carry into adulthood. Grandfather Wanbdi expressed the value of work to help occupy our feelings, influence the way we think, the way we do things, and the way we talk.

Elder Wanbdi explained that Indigenous Peoples’ participation in cultural activities helped with everything because the activities hold meaning and value. This includes activities that represent life transitions such as the manhood ceremony and the womanhood ceremony. He stressed the importance of speaking clearly without analogies because the culture is within the language. He acknowledged that children learn language quickly and shared stories of his grandmother and mother singing to unborn children or putting babies in swings and singing lullabies in Dakota language about the real things happening in those moments. "Listen, listen, there's a bird singing. That bird is teaching you, telling you to go to sleep. Listen to the birds.” Elder Wanbdi also talked about supervision of children and allowing children to engage with the world in their own way. “But the freeness of that, the freeing of that young child, let them do, let them learn and do the things that they, be good for them.”

Elder Pahan Pte San Win

Elder Pahan expressed that she used the teaching from her parents with her own grandchildren which involves using their curiosity to teach about and connect them to the natural

world and how to value it and its beauty. She recalled some of the teaching including making Labrador tea, picking medicines, and identifying different plants including using old man's beard to start a fire. All interactions and what we spend time on with children offers the ability to teach about "our impact on that natural world and how we have a responsibility to leave it […] a pristine wilderness the way Creator made it, and the way Creator intended it to be."

Elder Pahan explained that traditional practices are ways to embrace healthy child rearing including wonderful, loving practices such as teachings about pregnancy, use of infant swings, cradle boards, and moss bags. Ceremony and traditional practices are important throughout growing up and come from a place of loving our nations. These practices also include getting traditional names, becoming a woman ceremony, becoming a man ceremony, social events like the Pow wow, the Sundance ceremonies, or other ceremonies important to the nation. Elder Pahan outlined an important experience for receiving a pipe where her late father visited in a dream and explained to her that "a pipe is coming, don't go looking for it, make this kind of a pipe bag, when you have it done, then the pipe will come to you." This type of sharing of her experience demonstrates how culture and protocols can be passed down.

Throughout her career, she also learned that children need a "robust, rich environment that was able to protect them all the time" and to be safe and secure and "not responsible for things that are beyond their abilities." To do this, we cannot expect a mother and a father to raise a child alone but they should rather have a whole group of people who can be counted on to care for the child. Parents require help, especially when experiencing sleepless nights. Elder Pahan stressed that the responsibility for raising children is shared by aunties, cousins, *kuncis* [grandmothers], and uncles for teaching and care. For children, having a group of many adults loving them,

seeing the good in them, encouraging their thriving and success, can create teenagers who are strong and resilient.

Elder Norman Meade

Elder Norman shared about naming practices which include colonial family names, traditional spiritual names, and clan families as creating a sense of connection and belonging to those who came before. This could include being named after kin or other important family members or ancestors and children would have their name chose before they were born. Naming is the beginning of a child's attachment to the language and culture through a naming ceremony.

Each of these types of names carry a different significance and connect a person to their family or their culture. A traditional spirit name carries a connection to your Creator and to your purpose and needs to be honoured by living in a good way representative of the meaning of that name and knowing who you are. He encourages others to take the time to offer tobacco to an Elder to request their traditional names. Clan systems require that marriages do not occur within the same clan. A marriage can mean that a person needs to honour both families' names with respect and this responsibility remains even after becoming widowed. Before dating or getting married, kinship relations also need to be known which requires knowing lineage and your ancestors' relations. This is particularly important in large families that may reside in other communities.

Elder Norman also shared the importance of children being raised by the community as a whole, outside of the nuclear family. This included relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, but also those in surrogate relationships. He explained this as community members outside of biological relationships who would also take on the titles and roles of being mothers, fathers, grandfather, grandmother, aunts, and uncles. He stated, "if your mom wasn't around like

you had six other mothers watching over your shoulder, keeping you, making sure that you were looked after, cared for, and supervised." He explained that this supervision was also a way of discipline because if a child was misbehaving, that information would come back to their parents via the moccasin telegraph. In addition to supervision, this involved basic care such as children being fed by others in their community, if they were hungry. It was "pretty good to be looked after by so many people in your community […] everybody felt safe and taken care of."

Elder Norman also explained the different roles of men and women when raising children. Women cared for health, injuries, dispensed medicine, feeding, and clothing. They also taught the girls on the roles of women. Men spent a lot of time with their boys "being taught how to work, and how to work with others in the community." Men are also responsible for ensuring young men learn to treat women with respect including sisters, mothers, grandmothers, aunts. Elder Norman explained that this learning would carry forward to their adult lives and reduce the desire to hurt their wives.

Elder Norman talked about some of the behaviours that parents can engage in to raise their children successfully. Elder Norman stressed that spending time with children and grandchildren is important and offers the opportunity to acknowledge children's characteristics and uniqueness to help them feel good about themselves. While spending time, a caregiver can promote their relationships with children by showing love, teaching about safety, building trust, doing chores together to teach responsibility, explaining what you are doing and why. Elder Norman noted that when teaching courage, it is important to allow them to still be afraid of things that are dangerous. When teaching respect, Elder Norman recommended to include promoting good ways to talk to Elders and community members and when teaching about honesty, it involves managing dishonesty with understanding and respect. Elder Norman stressed that it is pertinent

not to belittle children or tell them you don't believe them, but to try build confidence by disciplining in a non-threatening, loving way.

Elder Norman related that the best times for teaching children is between 2 and 12 years old as they will fully learn and incorporate those teachings into their lives. He explained that using this early time when they are hungry for knowledge and finding out their interests will help to pass teachings on to them as well as lay the foundation for your relationship. One of the foundations for this relationship are for children to not be afraid to ask for help when they need it. He explained that children can tell how you are feeling. He reminisced and noted that time with children is greater, and time with grandchildren is less as we age, so each visit is precious.

Elder Norman also gave some advice for families to eat meals together, talk about things while eating, and to work through issues together. He said these activities can strengthen the family.

Elder Leslie Spillett

Elder Leslie stated that children are the physical manifestations of our dreams and our visions for the future and that they are a complete human when they join this world. Just as she acknowledged that everyone has a sense of agency over themselves, she explained that children also have this sense of agency, and their first decision is a spiritual one by choosing who will be their parents by the selection of their physical vessel (baby). She also explained that all children come "with a divine gift, sometimes multiple gifts, that can help them fulfil their destiny here in this physical realm." This gift can be their purpose and it is the responsibility of the whole community is to nurture them in a loving, kind, generous way as a child belongs to all of us. She noted that before the child is formed, the eggs are carried by three generations of mothers and

grandmothers. Children are manifestations of our belief system around spirituality and that human beings are vessels for spirits residing on earth.

Elder Leslie explained that there are many ways of child rearing and ways of raising children in a ceremonial way to support their destinies. She described the handling of and ceremony for the placenta after the child is born. The placenta is planted in a sacred place representative of their connection to the land as a physical marker of their connection to this world. This place is also selected specifically for its representation of our hopes and dreams for that child. Elder Leslie explained it is similar to the ceremony for the dried umbilical cord once it falls from the child's belly button. It is introduced and planted in a place that represents asking Creator and spirits to be a helper to that child. Elder Leslie gave the example of putting the dried cord on an ant hill because ants are a communal species, very focused, very industrious, and productive.

Elder Leslie also explained the significance and protocols of spiritual names for babies. Babies are born with a spiritual name, given in a naming ceremony, which comes from the spirit world, so they are known in this world. Their "names are meant to guide them and protect them over their human life form." Other ceremonies specifically for children included the birthing ceremony and the walking out ceremony when children would touch the ground for the first time. Children were also welcome into other ceremonies such as Sundance where they get dressed up as Sundancers and are carried by their mothers into the lodges. "There's a little Sundance chief and a little head woman Sundancer and they dance in the lodge. They're medicine for the dancers, hey, that'll make the dancers feel really strong to finish their Sundance." All of these were age appropriate and helped the child develop, and "understand their place within that family" and community.

Elder Leslie also stressed the importance of children's personal agency as part of traditional child rearing. She explained that there was supervision and protection but also the freedom to learn from interactions and relationships. This is a practice of non-interference where children are not excessively controlled but were allowed a natural education through the skill of observation which follows a natural course of development with a right to fall and even have little accidents. A child's natural curiosity keeps them engaged as they are "natural learning machines." Elder Leslie posed the concept that exploration and observation were teachers as opposed to children making 'mistakes' in a right versus wrong style of binary thinking. Children's innate curiosity and guidance by caregivers that they learn "how to hunt, how to fish, how to trap, how to gather, how to prepare medicines, how to prepare all of your ceremonies." The interactions between caregivers and children through ceremony and teachings also brought family together and communicated the value that nothing is above our children.

Elder Leslie explained women's and men's roles in the community. Women had specific responsibilities, knowledge, ceremonies, connections, and place. This included birthing knowledge, birthing practices and sovereignty over the land and the water. Sovereignty not meaning 'over' but rather 'in a relationship with' in a humble way. The male sovereignty equivalent was air, fire, and medicines.

Elder Leslie also explained some overarching Cree world views. Humans existed in the spiritual realm before existing in physical form such that it's more than a biomedical joining of sperm and egg. She stated that birthing practices were "like the geese caring for their young, it's just instinctual. It's deep. It's embedded in their DNA, but it's in our DNA as well." And in the same view, all people, even non-Indigenous people had traditional knowledge. By extension, the *wahkotowin* (kinship system) teaches that we are related to everything human and non-human

and there are laws that stress the respect for those values. We do not need to romanticize our Indigenous knowledge because there were times when those laws would be broken. There are laws and consequences for disrespecting our other relatives (animals, trees) and Cree laws on disrespecting other humans and a spiritual price that would have to be paid to either yourself or a loved one. She also mentioned following the seven sacred teachings and human laws that she did not specify though recommended reading a book authored by Sylvia McAdam. Indigenous values were based on collective practices rather than individualism and generosity of spirit was part of the culture. People would value caring for everyone in the community rather than trying to acquire material things.

Table 1

Traditional Values and Beliefs of Child Rearing: The How

Knowledge Keeper	Values and Beliefs
Elder Robert Green	Children are sacred beings Children belong at the center of the community We all have a spirit Sense of belonging Connection to family
Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita	Communication Addressing others by relationship Cultural activities hold meaning and value Using heart, mind, body, spirit to do work Work foundations carry to adulthood Work occupies feelings, the way we think, what we do, how we talk The culture is in the language
Elder Pahan Pte San Win	Harness children's curiosity to teach them All interaction offers opportunity to teach Responsibility to the natural world Creator intended the world to be pristine Knowledge comes from dreams Seeing the good in children, encouraging thriving and success
Elder Norman Meade	Belonging comes from connection through names Live up to and honour your names Teachings carry to adult lives Teach when children are hungry for knowledge between 2-12 years old
Elder Leslie Spillett	Children are physical manifestations of our dreams and visions for the future Children have a sense of agency over themselves

Knowledge Keeper	Values and Beliefs
	Children choose who will be their parents Children come with a divine gift to fulfill their physical destiny Purpose of community to nurture children in a loving, kind way A child belongs to all of us The egg that becomes a child is connected by three generations Human beings are vessels for spirits residing on earth Harness children's innate curiosity Value that nothing is above our children Birthing and child rearing is instinctual, built into our DNA Kinship system – we are related to everything Laws and consequences exist for disrespecting our relations Collectivism vs. individualism Generosity of spirit

Table 2

Traditional Child Rearing Practices: The What

Category	Practice
Traditional Governance	Justice Governance Education Governance Child Rearing Governance Marriage Governance Clan Family Systems Warrior Society Seven Sacred Teachings Human Laws (Refers to book by Sylvia McAdams)
Intergenerational Care	Sharing of responsibility to care for everyone (including adults) Children are cared for by all, whole group of people, whole community • Community supervision of children • Community feeding of children • Protection, safety, and security for children Allowing children to be free in the way they engage with the world Wonderful loving practices Robust rich environment for children
Indigenous Language	Singing to unborn and young children in traditional language Singing about things happening in the moment Speaking clearly without analogies
Stories	Migration story Seven Prophecies Seven Fires Animal Teachings
Traditional Practices	Pregnancy practices Birthing practices Moss bag practices Infant development (visual – watching, hearing – listening, taste, smell)

Category	Practice
	Cradle board practices Infant swings Life stages Gender roles • Women's responsibilities – birthing knowledge and practices, health, injuries, medicine, feeding, clothing of children, sovereignty of land, water • Men's responsibilities – teach how to work, teach respect for women, sovereignty of air, fire, medicines Traditional diet Hunting Fishing Trapping Gather & prepare medicine Prepare for ceremony
Learning by Observing	Each child has a job Learning by observing others in their jobs Connect children to the natural world Guidance by caregivers while teaching Spend time with children and grandchildren Acknowledge children's uniqueness and promote self-esteem Show children love, teach safety, build trust, responsibility Explain what you are doing and why Do chores together with children Teach reasonable fear Teach how to talk to Elders Manage dishonesty with understanding and respect Do not belittle children Discipline in a non-threatening loving way Eat meals together and talk Talk through issues together Have a relationship where children are not afraid to ask for help Non-interference: Freedom for children to learn from interactions and relationships
Ceremony & Medicine	Raise children in spiritual ways to reach their destinies Naming practices & ceremonies • Family names (connection to relations) • Spirit names (connection to creator) Childhood Ceremonies • Placenta ceremony • Umbilical cord ceremony • Birthing ceremony • Walking out ceremony Rites of passage • Manhood ceremony: vision quest • Womanhood ceremony & moon lodge

Category	Practice
	Make Labrador tea
	Pick medicine
	Identifying plants
	Using old man's beard to start fire
	Powwow
	Sundance ceremony
	Receiving a pipe

Reclaiming Traditional Practices

One of the questions that I posed to the Knowledge Keepers was to share their thoughts and ideas about how we can reclaim these traditional practices. I present these conversations as summaries of their guidance and recommendations. The findings are also presented in Table 3 following the summaries with integrated organization into the following categories: decolonization, cultural resurgence, and basic needs.

Elder Robert Green

Elder Robert shared that reclamation starts with our own individual decolonization of our minds. This may involve healing ourselves and not depending on white society to heal us. He explained we need to also act collectively and create awareness for the next generations which he envisions as 'creating a bridge from the past to now, from traditional to today's society." Some of his ideas involve a revival amongst women, such as coming together in women's societies to relearn about women's roles, the seven sacred teachings, and supporting young mothers. He also said it would be important to get back to all the different societies that existed, and he does see some resurgence already of traditional practices and use of the old ways. This knowledge could also be shared in schools, and with those who are non-Indigenous. He recommended that talking to Elders and asking them to share stories would be beneficial for passing down knowledge.

When thinking of other existing systems, Elder Robert believes that incorporating therapy for parents and working with the family, as a whole, rather than removing children are key.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita

Grandfather Wanbdi shared that one way for reclamation is to continually tell stories about how we were raised as well as stories of long ago, including songs with teachings embedded. These are ways to teach about ceremonies, medicines, and animals. He also stressed the importance of teaching Indigenous languages to children and how it has the potential to migrate into the whole family. Cultural teaching could also be done through technology. He stressed that cultural activities need to be done every day or on a regular basis with either specific groups (women, young ones, girls, parents), or with the whole community.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win

Elder Pahan shared that stories teach more than just the story, but they also teach values and how to live. She shared stories of working with youth and how it influenced her understanding of reclaiming traditional ways through first healing from trauma. She explained that people are harmed, and when the harm stops, they are able to reach for a new way to live. The intervention allows for change and healing. Her understanding of the intervention is stability through safety and having basic needs met. For children, this means not having to make decisions for taking care of themselves, which allows them to be children again. For parents, it means not being overwhelmed or worrying about how to pay their bills, transportation, buying food, etc. which allows them to be calm inside and more present with their children.

Elder Pahan described having fun while engaging with cultural activities such as beading, regalia making, pow wow dancing, singing traditional songs, and participating in ceremony as critical to healing and reclamation. She also stressed the importance of relationship building through interaction and nurturing potential gifts from Creator to help others feel good about themselves. She describes “a rich environment, learning environment so that they can discover

what's unique and strong and a gift that Creator has put inside of them […] and then, of course, to teach them, well now you have to share it with others. “

Elder Norman Meade

Elder Norman explained that he sees reclamation as involving spending time with Elders to learn traditions and encouraging others to engage in traditional ways such as receiving their traditional names. He noted that when seeking out an Elder, that we understand that some Elders prefer to be called grandfather or grandmother, and that they are identified by the community, not self-identified. He also stressed that Elders need to live up to their roles and not let down their community.

Elder Leslie Spillett

Elder Leslie explained that “we are all complicit in upholding this system – but also must be a part of the act of resistance, too.” We need to reengage as a communal society to care for children following the value that children belong to a collective. She explained an appreciation for the value of relationships and establishing relationships in a family, or collective.

Economic and social supports need to be provided to families, as access to traditional knowledge has become exclusionary, due to requirements of resources such as money and transportation to attend ceremonies. In order for healing and reclamation to take place, human needs like shelter, food, clothing, must be met “without having to beg or feel bad about not having.” This can lead to one member of a family being able to attend ceremony, then bringing more and more family and friends to join, thereby increasing engagement in cultural practices. We can build organizations and support people, but we also need to respect their agency, which may look different for everyone, rather than repeating damages done as in colonial practices.

This sense of agency also means that each person is free to engage with culture in their own way because there is no right or wrong way of having a relationship with creation and spirit.

We can also engage in educating others about all the oppressions that were used as genocidal or forced-assimilation policies, laws, and societal practices in the settler culture. This can help buffer us and help us heal from the internal colonization of "the lies that somehow we were not capable of looking after ourselves." We can also educate others on what our ancestors did towards that resistance and communicate how profound it is that we are still not assimilated. Living a good life may be the ultimate goal of our creation and also an act of resistance as we learn who we are, what we are, and what our culture is. We can acknowledge that our ancestors' strength, everything that was right about them, their love for us, their prayers for us, the knowledge that they left for us, has given us a path towards reclamation. Elder Leslie also explained that when people are successful, that they be awarded the power of that accomplishment, as it was their own abilities that brought that success. Others laying claim on success takes away power and agency.

Elder Leslie also outlined acceptance and understanding as part of the Indigenous worldview of welcoming two-spirit people and fighting against homophobia as another system of oppression. Similarly, she noted that there should be no judgment of good or bad towards our relatives who have accepted a Christian way of life as she understands it as their way of surviving genocide.

One of Elder Leslie's ideas for reclamation involves a more organized and inclusive practice possibly forming an Indigenous Freedom School similar to those which exist as an Afrocentric education for children in other urban centres. It is her vision that this can model the way ceremony is conducted with parents and children learning together with a curriculum and space

that honours the way ceremony often occurs in an unscripted, natural way. When ceremonies are happening, life is often integrated within the ceremony as part of the whole learning experience. It happens in a complex way with "praying and dancing and laughing, and visiting, and eating" all at the same time.

Table 3
Reclaiming Traditional Practices

Category	Reclamation Action
Decolonization	Decolonize our minds
	Education of oppression in genocidal/forced assimilation
	Educate about our ancestors' acts of resistance
	Removing binary thinking of right or wrong ways
	Recognize we are complicit in holding up the system
	We must be part of the resistance
	Buffer ourselves from internal colonization
	Celebrate not being fully assimilated
	Acknowledge our ancestors' strength
	Learn that our ancestors have given us a path to reclamation
	People are awarded the power of their own accomplishments
	Welcoming and celebrating two spirit people
	Fight against homophobia
	Respecting agency to engage in cultural activities
	Our Christian relatives have their own sense of agency without judgment
Cultural Resurgence	Create awareness for next generations
	Revival amongst women's societies
	Teaching seven sacred teachings
	Revival of all traditional societies
	Share with those who are non-Indigenous
	Talking to Elders to share stories to pass knowledge
	Telling stories which teach values
	Tell stories about how we were raised
	Tell stories of long ago
	Songs with teachings embedded
	Teach about ceremonies, medicines, animals
	Teaching Indigenous language to whole families
	Engage in cultural activities on a daily basis
	Having fun engaging in culture
	Beading
	Regalia making
	Powwow dancing
	Singing traditional songs

Category	Reclamation Action
	Participating in ceremony
	Relationship building for nurturing gifts from creator
	Creating a rich learning environment to teach
	Expectation for them to share their gift with others
	Receive traditional names
	Elders live up to roles and responsibility to the community
	Establishing relationships in a collective
	Live a good life
	Learn who we are, what we are, and what our culture is
	Encouraging families to increase participation in ceremony by bringing family members
	Spending time with Elders
	Share knowledge in existing schools
	Formation of an Indigenous Freedom School that models ceremony with families learning together
	Integrating ceremony into life
	Teach through technology
Basic Needs	Basic needs met – adequate food, shelter, clothing
	Supporting young mothers
	Communal care for children
	Economic supports for families
	Social supports for families
	Therapy for parents
	Working with the whole family
	Not removing children from families
	Healing from trauma, by first stopping harm
	Safety
	Children not making decisions to take care of themselves
	Parents not being overwhelmed or worrying about money
	Improve access to participate in ceremony – economic and transportation

Colonial Effects

Each of the Knowledge Keepers shared additional information about colonization which was not specifically asked during the interviews. I want to honour their sharing of these stories and am presenting summaries below. I see this information as not only causes of our loss of traditional ways, but also barriers to reclaiming them.

Elder Robert Green

Elder Robert explained that children were previously at the centre of the community and now have been completely removed including in a physical sense by being placed in foster care. He stressed that the nuclear family was forced into our way of life which eroded the traditional child rearing ways of the whole community raising a child. He relayed that the parenting practices and governance policies that exist today are foreign. He explained that colonization has put us to sleep and made us unaware of our traditional ways. Because of this, he elaborated that addictions have become a way of dealing with trauma and bringing back traditional ways can wake us up and also reduce the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita

Grandfather Wanbdi shared that the "pain and the anger from the residential school" carried on into his army life. He stated that the Indian Act and white mans laws are not right for us and have prevented us from practicing our own laws and traditions. Our people's kindness and desire to listen was taken advantage of by the *wasicu* (non-Indigenous, white) which has led to the loss of our culture and language. Along with that loss, we have also been told that our rights as Indigenous People hinge on our language, as Elder Wanbdi recalled Pierre Elliot Trudeau stating that we do not deserve rights if we do not speak our languages. Grandfather Wanbdi recalls, "I told them, the rights that we have doesn't come from you or anyone, it comes from up there [gesturing]."

He also shared that some of the traditions that were taken away were growing and developing in the traditional way such as telling the truth as there was no need to lie, and already knowing about trust, honour, generosity, and humility. Only because of residential school did we have to be specifically taught about those words. Also, the concept of 'healing' was a result of trauma

from the residential schools. He believes we have drifted off from traditional ways of teaching as pieces of paper with words are now more valuable than talking.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win

Elder Pahan shared about her father's passion to become political to fight for the earth as a natural place. She cherished the teaching about the earth and the sacredness of it which has since been lost to colonization. She shared that she engaged in alcohol and drug use because of traumas of rejection, abandonment, lack of belonging, and not being loved. She acknowledges that drastic negative effects come from intergenerational trauma and not having a sense of belonging when we are surrounded by those who do not look like us.

Elder Pahan reflected on her work at the Manitoba Youth Centre (MYC) and that epidemic of Indigenous children in care in Manitoba. She also made a link between those who had been in care being the same children that later were living at the MYC. As part of the ongoing intergenerational trauma effects from colonial policies, she stressed that our children are in crisis, they are abusing drugs and alcohol, people are abusing them, they harm themselves and each other. She explained that they have been traumatized and the natural response to that is their poor mental health and substance abuse. She highlighted that our children have come to this crisis because their parents, families, and communities are also in crisis and do not have the capacity to provide supervision and care. Due to this, Elder Pahan explained that it looks like Indigenous People do not care, but they do love their children. "If that parent is struggling with substance abuse or if there's violence, poverty, then those adults are doing their best. Just they're just trying to survive." This leaves children in a vulnerable position and susceptible to harm, but not for lack of love.

As a response to some communities following Christian beliefs, Elder Pahan emphasized that we have learned to judge them, and this puts our ability to love our own nations at risk. Instead of saying there's something wrong with our nation, she proclaimed that we need to reject the binary thinking of a right way so we can continue to love each other. Elder Pahan explained that she believes that settlers came across the ocean as they were escaping their harmful ways of life but then brought it and imposed it on us.

The residential schools taught us behaviours that we now use on each other as we engage in lateral violence. Our task then is to heal on the inside keeping in mind that we cannot "give to the community when you're struggling to keep your head above water."

Elder Norman Meade

One of the differences that Elder Norman sees as a primary change due to colonization is that children had always been taken care of and were not taken by someone else. "If a family could not look after, or died, someone else from the community, or a relative would step in and take care of that child, children never left the community." He stressed that the children who are in foster care are a commodity. Also, our traditional laws are no longer followed but now we have police officers or peace officers in our communities.

Elder Leslie Spillett

Elder Leslie shared that we must be careful not to repeat colonial harms when attempting to help our people even if we have good intent. She recognized that colonizers have also undergone trauma and need to heal as well, otherwise they would not have engaged in colonialism in the first place. She sees colonizers as being unable to "think about themselves in any way less than having control and power over people." This is evident in the organization of the economy and the need for Indigenous People to be poor and in need of whitening. The colonial system is the

cause, but Indigenous People are being taught to think that we have cause our own problems. Part of the harm of colonization includes the experience of being removed from our traditional knowledge. Elder Leslie reflected on her mother's parenting being influenced both by traditions and the Catholic church, which also included the binary thinking of good and bad as absolutes, like heaven and hell. Elder Leslie stresses that colonization was brutal and has caused our communities to be disconnected and without a sense of belonging to a people. We are living and raising our children in a colonial world where the oppression is so invisible and normalized that it becomes difficult to fight against or even recognize its impact on our daily lives.

Elder Leslie also communicated hope: colonization was not complete in extinguishing our traditions, because there is evidence of Indigenous People coming together. She sees that colonization was manifested right into the minutia of interpersonal relationships and in the overarching devaluation of human beings. Europeans forced women and children to become property of men and destroyed the traditional partnership between men and women. Elder Leslie does not see a value of matriarch over patriarchy but rather, honoring a partnership.

Elder Leslie also talked about our justice system and child welfare system being broken. One of the difficulties in healing and living a good life is that the murder and genocide have not stopped. Instead they are still happening, and we continue to mourn and experience trauma including the discovery of Indigenous babies in graves. The harms are perpetuated by foster care and group homes which use Indigenous children as a business with peripheral programs that are supposed to help but only funnel them into jails or death. The severing of the link of children and families is so damaging, and often uses poverty as a tool against Indigenous families. They also use our traditional practices of non-interference as evidence of neglect and abandonment, blaming failures on families rather than examining the colonial structures. As a result, we have

lost the ability to give our children that natural freedom of discovery and learning to think for themselves. Instead our children are growing up in colonial society and are lacking the internal resources and instead are developing anxiety and an inability to function.

Within western institutions, “if you become a social worker or doctor, somehow people have it thinking in their heads that it was because of something that we did for them, not about what they, somehow they take your, still take your power.” We have to recognize that our successes are even more meaningful because of the colonial barriers. As a part of seeking success in these institutions, we also have to undergo a disconnection to the components in life that are important such as family, children, care of others, which were traditional ways of life. Now we are scrambling trying to achieve material things instead of building relationships. “The more you kind of seek for those material comforts and the more tenuous your relationships are with people that you're supposed to love” and “the less are we're able to treat each other as human beings.” Elder Leslie amplified that we have lost humanity as we have even compartmentalized ourselves away from caring about our homeless relatives as though “we're not collectively responsible because we're so cut off from one another.”

Elder Leslie also commented on how colonization has affected our child rearing. “Western child rearing is super, super oppressive, super oppressive. It's one of the most, biggest forms of oppression, then we don't even, it's a normal. We don't see it as oppression.” Along with recognizing women’s relationships with men as oppressive, she said we must also do the same for children to stop denying their sense of agency at school, home, and in all realms. She elaborated that this includes gendering them from before birth and to return to principles of non-interference to honour their agency and stop “adulting on them all the time”.

As part of Indigenous methodologies, I recognize that the qualitative method used in this research is quite subjective to me. There are themes that exist in the interview transcripts which I have not mentioned, because as part of the storywork process, I elaborated on the personally meaningful topics. I continue to welcome reading the transcripts (Appendices K to O) as part of each readers own personal journey.

Discussion

In this research, I have sought a qualitative method that would honour and demonstrate alignment with Indigenous storytelling tradition by which knowledge is transferred between generations through stories and relationships. Through these methods, the research also became a personal learning and healing journey for me, as I shared my own intimate reflections on the interviews. I recognize that this thesis is not typical for western master's research, which would predominantly involve more structured data collection and analytic designs. However, I believe that this work is aligned with the increasing recognition of the importance of respecting and upholding Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing as valid research methods. Honouring these practices is consistent with the Canadian Psychological Association's response to the TRC (Canadian Psychological Association, 2018). It is also consistent with guidance I received from Dr. Jen Leason (personal communication, 2021), Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Maternal Child Wellness. Within my goals for this research, I sought to document knowledge about traditional child rearing practices and recommendations from Knowledge Keepers on how we can reclaim those practices in our communities. Conceptualizing and leading this work as an Indigenous person is in alignment with principles of self-determination (Jacklin & Kinoshameg, 2008; Wright, 2019). Such work is meaningful and integral for cultural reclamation while also managing a two-eyed seeing approach (Bartlett, 2012; Peltier, 2018) to

conducting the work from within a western academic training program and aligned with program requirements.

Consistent with the storytelling methods, the Knowledge Keepers in the interviews were also welcomed to share any experiences. This primarily brought out stories, teachings, and perspectives about colonization's reach into the fabric of society and its effects on Indigenous People. I understand the sharing of these stories from Knowledge Keepers to be an integral part of respectful relationship building and engagement (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009). I received a previous teaching from an Elder that what was said was needed to be said at that time and place (D. Kennedy, personal communication, June 2017).

Indigenous Epistemologies

While conducting academic research with Indigenous People, about Indigenous People, it was critical to balance the western university system with traditional ways of knowing and being. Not only does this research meet overarching academic and traditional purposes, but it also demonstrates the potential for cultural reclamation to be a valuable source of intervention for Indigenous communities. Beyond incorporating culturally grounded interventions into existing health practices, it is important to recognize that Indigenous practices on their own promote health and well-being (Yamane & Helm, 2022). I feel it is important to include the process of honouring Indigenous research methods as part of those cultural practices. The shared knowledge and traditional processes for storytelling are clearly so important and so rarely incorporated into the field psychology or mental health as taught by western academies of power today. In the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA's) response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC), it was acknowledged that Indigenous students may risk their traditional ways of knowing by attending western institutional programs and training in

western academic methods (Canadian Psychological Association, 2018). It is possible that some of the official responses may be merely ‘Indigenizing’ organizations (Pitawanakwat & Pedri-Spade, 2022) and my work is a conscious effort to take on research from a lens of self-determination and use traditional research methods (in relationship building, conversations, reflection, language use) as a direct effort towards culturally-grounded research. I can attest that attempts to decolonize my way of thinking and reclaim my own Indigeneity while be encompassed by academic work has not allowed me to have a smooth path. Instead, I have often questioned my capacity and ability to walk in both worlds with the recognition that the path may also circle around at different levels of engagement (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2002) and demonstrates the difficulties that many Indigenous relatives may also face coming to cultural work and academia.

Interpretive Meaning Making

As Shawn Wilson states, I have the “responsibility for putting the story in relational context that makes sense” (Wilson, 2002) for me. As a reader, you are also responsible for this, to take your own learning from these stories and apply them to yourself. One particularly poignant finding is that establishing intergenerational relationships, sharing stories and listening to stories can engage reflection and opens a door for healing (Kovach, 2009). I know feeling heard by the Elders was healing for me and suspect that sharing was healing for them as well, but did not specifically ask.

I believe my main healing occurred around my own feelings of this work. I was nervous when doing all of the interviews, because I know this to be important work and was also humbled by awareness of my lack of traditional knowledge. Over time, I moved from feeling unsure if I was worthy to feeling that I could complete this work and would honour the

Knowledge Keepers' stories and sharing, because this work is what I was meant to do. I also experienced a sense of belonging by having some common childhood experiences with the Knowledge Keepers. A realization for me was that many of the stories and teaching shared by the Knowledge Keepers were things that I already knew or felt were important. This helped me believe that I am the right person to do this work, that what comes from it is uniquely mine and also my responsibility to share with others.

I want to acknowledge that this journey and healing has not been smooth. Healing is difficult and can be traumatic. The interviews occurred during the pandemic and coincided with the discovery of unmarked graves at residential schools across Canada. The analysis occurred during a time of writing a narrative for my application for government compensation for attending a day school. These events have each triggered trauma from the intergenerational harms that exist in relationships with my own extended family and are exacerbated by existing inequalities in well-being in Indigenous populations. My understanding of research as ceremony (Wilson, 2008) and culture is medicine (Bassett, Tsosie, & Nannauck, 2012) has been strengthened in an experiential way which circles back to the purpose of this research. While conducting the analysis and writing portion of this work, I also sought healing through place and space, doing a large portion of this work outside of the city on the land, surrounded by nature and medicines.

I have so much to learn and am looking forward to future opportunities to learn from Knowledge Keepers, continue my healing journey, and share with others. I recognize that the beliefs and conclusions I draw today may not be where I am in the future, as Anishinaabe beliefs involve an evolution of ourselves as we live, experience, and age while navigating the medicine wheel of life (D. Kennedy, personal communication, June 2017).

Child Rearing Practices

The way I envision the child rearing practices discussed by the Knowledge Keepers in the interviews can be organized into the ‘what’ and the ‘how’. Although I am separating them into these two main categories for this research, in reality the ‘what’ and ‘how’ were enmeshed and not mutually exclusive, as values were also communicated by how they were taught. Before this however, are the broader systems that organize society which the Knowledge Keepers termed governance, which included laws that determined processes of justice, education, parenting, marriage, and clan systems.

The ‘how’ involves the ways children were raised traditionally. One of the main themes in the interviews was intergenerational or multigenerational care for children which was crucial for providing robust supervision. This involved the organization of society to ensure the responsibility of caring for the children were shared, as they were the center of the community (Dorion, 2010; Gerlach, 2008; White, Godfrey, & Moccasin, 2006). Relationships were of utmost importance and family and community members were addressed by that relationship. Children were taught through observing others and nature as relationships and time spent together opened the opportunities for teaching. Children were welcome to participate in all activities in the community and witness ceremony which also communicated community and family values. Another important theme was the concept of children’s sense of agency. They were given the opportunity for natural learning via the ability to make their own mistakes and learn from them.

The ’what’ of child rearing practices involved participating in ceremonies and what children needed to learn. Children’s lives on earth began with naming and birthing ceremonies, and continued through their childhood with walking out ceremonies, becoming a man or woman

ceremonies, and participation in ceremonies of the varied societies such as Sundance or Midewiwin. These were ways to promote a child's gift and give a sense of belonging and teach about loving our nations and non-human relations. The Knowledge Keepers also mentioned specific techniques such as the use of moss bags and cradle boards, the latter of which was related to child development. Often children would have a job or role to fulfill in the community as they were learning the roles of men and women. It was also stressed that children and families learn Indigenous languages.

Thus, within the overarching governance systems, there exists 'what' and 'how' systems of child rearing that are both represented within intergenerational care, observational learning, ceremony and medicine, traditional practices, stories, and language.

Reclaiming Traditional Practices

The Knowledge Keepers provided ideas and recommendations for how we can reclaim practices to raise our children in traditional ways. A primary theme was education about colonial harms. Healing for Indigenous People in Canada requires an understanding about genocide, oppression, assimilation, and colonization. This knowledge can catalyze the decolonization of our minds and resistance to colonial systems which are barriers to reclamation of our culture.

Along with education, practical strategies for cultural resurgence involve sharing culture in schools and through technology, telling stories and teaching songs, relearning language, and engaging in cultural ceremony. Many of these can be accomplished through re-engagement as a communal society through revival of women's societies, seeking out and spending time with Elders, and possibly through the formation of an Indigenous Freedom school. An example of a this is the Akwesasne Freedom School whose goals are to educate children in the Mohawk language and to teach ceremony and culture (National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous

Education, 2020). Of similar format with the mission of "preserving the past, embracing the future" is the Ojibwe Bugonaygeshig School (Bugonaygeshig, 2022) in Bena, Minnesota which incorporate cultural practices such as tobacco offering, drumming, and language learning. The Knowledge Keepers stressed that such education needs to be done in ways that also maintained Indigenous cultural values, specifically respecting every individual's agency for re-engaging with culture, and reducing economic burdens on parents. I feel that broader scale programs at generational and community levels may be necessary to produce the changes that the Knowledge Keepers envisioned. These would be sincere and increase authentic engagement rather than performative as Seven Sacred teachings being displayed as decorations on a wall or a medicine wheel carpet in a classroom. I acknowledge that the integrity of traditional knowledge is sacred and it's necessary to have Knowledge Keeper involvement and relationship be the vehicle for Indigenous values and teachings to be embodied and incorporated into our communities.

Researchers have shown how community-created programs can increase Indigenous identity, belonging, and wellness against colonialist harms for Indigenous children (Sun et al., 2022). Apart from increasing wellness, there is potential for it to percolate into physical health systems as well. The Knowledge Keepers' emphasis on culture as a form of healing is in line with recognition from the Canadian Psychological Association that Indigenous healing methods should be considered valid forms of treatment and investing in the cultivation of Indigenous culture may contribute to mental wellness for Indigenous Peoples (Canadian Psychological Association, 2018).

The final crucial teaching from the Knowledge Keepers was the importance of meeting basic needs for Indigenous families. It is difficult to fight again biology when it comes to intergenerational trauma and ongoing stressors (Bombay et al., 2009) as the knowledge keepers

emphasized that healing must come first, and in order for that to happen – our Indigenous relatives need basic physical care such as food, shelter, and safety and to be supported communally. Elder Robert Green also suggested that meeting these basic needs includes healing from trauma through existing therapy modalities.

Thus, the primary categories for reclaiming traditional practices fall into the three categories of decolonization, cultural resurgence, and meeting basic needs.

Colonial Effects

In relation to the current study, the effects of colonization on family systems was a major theme discussed by the Knowledge Keepers. Colonization forced nuclear family structure upon Indigenous children, depriving so many of the experience of having a community of caregivers (Blackstock, 2004). Children continue to be removed into foster care creating ongoing trauma and lack of awareness of traditional ways. As Elder Leslie Spillett stressed, one of the greatest tragedies is that while families love their children, they may not have the capacity to provide care because of their trauma responses and poverty. She also highlighted that colonization has produced oppressive relationships with children by taking away their sense of agency, which impacts their ability to learn from the world. As a related point, Grandfather Wanbdi related that teaching is no longer about relationship and storytelling but reading it on paper and the altered ratio of teacher to children in the western education system. A move towards relationships would be beneficial yet he also identified that using technology can also be helpful in teaching language.

The Knowledge Keepers relayed that historical and ongoing colonial trauma has led to a lack of sense of belonging, and addictions as a means to cope, which can have lifelong effects which is also evidenced by work by Bombay et al. (2009) . The loss of culture and language

through colonial policies (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a) means many Indigenous People experience a cultural identity crisis compounded by intergenerational trauma and colonial policies resulting in abuse of substances and lateral violence (Bombay et al., 2009). For many, rather living a flourishing life in *mino-pimatisiwin*, we need to put effort into healing and learning about the sacred teaching, which were previously traditionally built into society.

The Knowledge Keepers also talked about how beliefs and ways of understanding the world have been impacted through colonization. One common theme is that colonization emphasized binary thinking of right and wrong rather than the nuances of autonomous being. Dinsmore and Pugh (2021) outline that autonomy for children is a paradox such that some areas of decreased autonomy increases children's health in terms of safety, yet results in declines in mental health. Thus, a further examination of automony related to culture would be pertinent to understanding autonomy in Indigenous contexts.

Since the oppressions of colonization continue in the existing colonial structures via ongoing traumas such as unmarked graves, Child and Families Services involvement, justice system involvement, and poverty, many Indigenous children grow up with the belief that we are innately wrong or bad. Elder Leslie Spillett concluded that this can lead children to blame themselves for their problems instead of recognizing how colonization has created an environment for us to languish. Colonization has also destroyed beliefs about our rights, that Indigenous rights are dependent on government rather than as given by spirit and Creator. The Knowledge Keepers also specified that colonization has also resulted in a loss in belief that nature and the earth are sacred and we have lost our sense of stewardship to act with responsibility to protect it from destruction. Additionally, oppressive relationships between men and women, and even other humans are now a norm as compared to partnerships and equality

between the genders. As some of the Knowledge Keepers mentioned, the tragic consequences, such as the multitude of cases of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) are often a result of colonial, gendered, and racialized violence (Chartrand & Foshay, 2022).

As I listened and then re-read through these tragic stories and sharing about colonization, I began to understand that these harms fall into three categories. Some are harmful on an individual level such as lack of a sense of belonging, some are on a relational level such as children living away from parents, and some are on a systemic level, such as the Indian Act laws. As acts of resistance, I feel that reclamation of our traditional child rearing practices will also need to address each of these categories of harms.

Strengths and Limitations

As fitting with qualitative research, sample sizes are generally smaller than in quantitative studies. In this research, the sample size was smaller than typical qualitative studies. This sample size of five interviews was appropriate as I was not seeking to find consensus but rather to generate knowledge and understanding of child rearing. However, a strength of this is that the inclusion of five nations provides a great variation in stories and practices which allowed for rich interpretation, content, learning, and meaning. Due to my own experiences of caregiving needs, re-traumatization from the pandemic and discovery of residential school graves, and social isolation requirements, it was challenging for me to maintain relationships with the Knowledge Keepers, as would be prescribed in Indigenous research. I have committed to continuing contact as the Knowledge Keepers have all requested copies of this thesis, and following the interviews, also committed to ongoing support for my future research.

Mutual benefit through this research applies to the greater Indigenous community through the benefits of enhancing programming and informing grass roots programs that are created and led by Indigenous People for Indigenous People. An additional benefit includes those that might arise for the Knowledge Keepers as a result of sharing their stories. These would be personal benefits that might come from contributing to reclaiming traditional practices for future generations, reliving positive experiences they have had from their childhood, and reinforcing the work they are currently doing in the community.

Knowledge Mobilization and Future Research

From the western academic lens, this study will be submitted to journals and conferences specializing in Indigenous well-being and family psychology. From a community lens, I will share my findings with Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous organizations through public facing publications and presentations. I will connect with the 18 organizations I contacted during my recruitment to offer either in person or virtual presentations to summarize my findings. It is my intent to share the stories and teachings with others who may benefits from the knowledge and share with others to cultivate community and Indigenous family wellness.

My next step will involve sharing the results in working groups with Indigenous organizations, involved traditional Knowledge Keepers, and stakeholders with the goal of informing the development of future child rearing programs. Additionally, in future studies, I will utilize community research methods to conduct focus groups with families recruited through community organizations and community consultation. The goal will be to promote self-determination and assess current child rearing strategies, parental sense of competence, and explore views on future parent programs. My long-term goal is for the knowledge generated to increase family well-being, connection to community, and child rearing capacities so that parents

can care for the children they love so much and reduce the number of Indigenous children in foster care. In reflecting on the stories shared by the Knowledge Keepers, I believe this study has great potential for informing the development of a future program that could supporting families to connect with culture, build a support system, and cultivate confidence in child rearing capacities.

I acknowledge how powerful it can be to engage in this work and that it can also be retraumatizing and incredibly difficult. I hold the Knowledge Keepers recommendations that everyone has agency to come to this work on their own time and readiness. Much of this work is non-linear, rather a circular process (Wilson, 2002), that requires revisiting with incremental learning.

Conclusion

This research is in alignment with beliefs that Indigenous methodologies are critical to producing written work that promotes Indigenous ways of being and knowing. My own healing journey through speaking with Knowledge Keepers as a part of this research reflects a larger goal to ultimately help other Indigenous children, families, and communities also experience reclamation and healing. These works being envisioned and completed by Indigenous researchers also honour self-governance and literature that can be utilized in culturally meaningful ways to honour Indigenous perspectives on wellness and healing. Indigenous produced content can catalyze cultural reclamation for Indigenous children, families, and communities. The cultural child rearing ‘whats’ and ‘hows’ along with the guidance and recommendations have the potential to cultivate support for future generations through healing and re-connecting to rich inter-generational cultural knowledge.

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Appendix A
Traditional Indigenous Child Rearing Practices Consent Form

Principal Investigator
Sandra Hunter
Department of Psychology
190 Dysart Road
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Faculty Supervisor/Co-Investigator:
Dr. Leslie E. Roos
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About this study:

This research is conducted at the University of Manitoba by master's student in Clinical Psychology, Sandra Hunter, and Clinical Psychologist Candidate Dr. Leslie E. Roos. We are interested in understanding traditional Indigenous parenting practices from interviews with Knowledge Keepers in the community, using the Zoom Healthcare platform. Through this, we are seeking to promote self-determination for intergenerational needs in future parenting programming.

Compensation:

All Knowledge Keepers will receive a total of $200 monetary compensation for participating in the interviews of the study. The funds will be distributed electronically.
In keeping with University protocol for engaging Elders in research, an additional form which will request Elder participants' address and social insurance number (see attached form) will be provided. This form will be submitted to the appropriate department at the University of Manitoba by the researcher.

Confidentiality:

Please note that your privacy preferences will be taken seriously by researchers. Should you wish to not have your name attached to comments made throughout conversations, we will respect those wishes.

How will your confidentiality be protected?

First, you do not have to answer any question that you don't feel comfortable answering. Also, on Zoom, you will be asked to refrain from using names or characteristics that might lead to identifying persons other than yourself. Should you refer to anyone by name, the name will be omitted in the transcripts to protect identity. Additionally, the meeting recordings will be stored on a secure server. Finally, only the
Principal Investigator, co-investigator and trusted research assistants will have access to the data. Data
collected will be deleted and/or destroyed one year after compilation for publication (by March 30th, 2022).

Exceptions to Confidentiality

Please note that there are some exceptions to the confidentiality of this consent form. Current Manitoba law states that a report must be made if there is disclosure about a child who is suspected to be at risk of harm. While there will be no specific questions during the interviews that directly ask about anyone's history with abuse nor of any knowledge of current child abuse, there may be a desire to discuss concerns with child rearing. To avoid abuse disclosure, we will direct all conversations around resiliency and healthy parenting practices and plan to move away from topics pertaining to child safety risks. However, should you volunteer information that leads us to suspect that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse, we will ask you additional questions to clarify the risk and current safety of the child. Depending on what we learn, we may be obligated to contact a child welfare agency and will try to include you in this process. We will also take precautions to determine your safety, the safety of your child or others if we hear that you or your child plans to hurt him/herself or someone else. This may mean notifying relevant authorities to seek help.
Participants will be provided with a list of resources to consult including those relevant to child welfare, crisis services, and mental health resources.

Expected Impacts:

This project will impact academia through its mobilization of traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Ways of Being related to parenting practices. It will impact community through the process of knowledge sharing and collaborative, autonomous research practices with culturally aligned methodology. Additionally, we expect that this work will impact generations to come through the transmission of culturally safe and relevant parenting practices.

Results Dissemination:

It is expected that presentations will be made by Ms. Hunter at individual community agencies alongside accessible pamphlets which will serve as an initial strategy. Results will also be submitted to peer reviewed academic journals as publications. Ms. Hunter will also submit results to conferences as posters or presentations.

Potential Risks:
Risks to you as a participant include potentially emotionally distressing conversation topics such as intergenerational trauma and colonial harms both past and current. It could be emotionally

draining to discuss hardships with parenting and possible feelings from loss of cultural identity. It could also lead to salience of the cultural harms that have occurred. In anticipation of these instances of distress, we will provide all participants with a list of mental health and crisis services available in the province.

Potential Benefits:

Benefits for the participants include feeling a sense of community through providing knowledge and guidance for the promotion of traditional practices. Also, this project is a demonstration to academics and the wider public of how to work in western spaces as Indigenous People, while retaining cultural practices and values. Further, participants will be credited for their support and input in this process through acknowledgments in publications and conferences.

Consent and Withdrawal Processes:

Your [*emailed/mailed/hand delivered*] consent to participate indicates that you have understood the information provided and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. While you may choose to withdraw from the research should you so desire, you cannot withdraw after March 2021, as data will at that point be compiled and in the process of finalization.

[for emailed consent only]
Consent to Participate: Please respond to the email in which this consent form was sent. Please respond with **one** of the following responses:

1) "I, (name) consent to participate in the Traditional First Nations Child rearing Practices Project"

2) "I (name) decline to participate in the Traditional First Nations Child rearing Practices Project."

Anonymity: If you do wish to participate, please **also respond** with **one** of the following two statements:

1) I wish to remain anonymous in any comments made during meetings which could be used in publications of this work (i.e. I *do not* want my name attached to my feedback).

2) I do not wish to remain anonymous in any comments made during meetings which could be used in publications of this work (i.e. I want my name attached to my feedback).

Summary: A summary of this research can be emailed once it is complete, approximately 2 years following completion of interviews. Please also respond with one of the following two statements:

1) I wish to receive a summary of this research once it is complete.

2) I do not wish to receive a summary of this research once it is complete.

We will also confirm your consent at the beginning of the interview.

Transcript Review: would you like to receive a copy of your transcript to review after the interview? You will be able to provide feedback and request changes to clarify any information contained in the transcript. Please also respond with one of the following two statements:

1) Yes, I would like to review the transcript of my interview.

2) No, I do not want to review the transcript of my interview.

[end emailed consent section]

[for mailed or hand delivered consent only]

Consent to Participate: **Please check off one** of the following responses:

☐ I consent to participate in the Traditional Indigenous Child rearing Practices Project

☐ I decline to participate in the Traditional Indigenous Child rearing Practices Project

Anonymity: If you wish to participate, please **also check off one** of the following two statements:

☐ I wish to remain anonymous in any comments made during interviews which could be used in publications of this work (i.e. I do not want my name attached to my comments).

☐ I do not wish to remain anonymous in any comments made during interviews which could be used in publications of this work (i.e. I want my name attached to my comments).

Participant Signature_____ Date_____

Summary: A summary of this research can be sent out once it is complete approximately 2 years following completion of interviews. Please also check off one of the following two statements:

☐ I wish to receive a summary of this research once it is complete.

☐ I do not wish to receive a summary of this research once it is complete.

Please provide your email or mailing address for this summary:

Email _____

Mailing address: _____

Please return the consent in the self-addressed envelope or call Sandra at 204-998-5371 for pick up.
We will also confirm your consent at the beginning of the interview.

Transcript Review: would you like to receive a copy of your transcript to review after the interview? You will be able to provide feedback and request changes to clarify any information contained in the transcript.

☐ Yes, I would like to review the transcript of my interview.

☐ No, I do not want to review the transcript of my interview.

[end mailed or hand delivered consent section]

If you have any questions:

If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca.

If you have any general questions or concerns, please contact Sandra Hunter by telephone at {redacted} or by email at hunters2@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix B
Non-Employment Payment to Elders Under $5,000

A PDF copy of this form is available at https://umanitoba.ca/student/indigenous/media/Non-employment-payment-to-Elders-under-5000.pdf

Appendix C
Email to Organizations

Dear [organization/individual],

I am a master's student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Manitoba. I am an Anishinaabe mother and I am currently working on research that will involve interviews with traditional Knowledge Keepers to learn about traditional First Nations child rearing practices and recommendations for ways that we can continue to reclaim these practices. I have included an attachment to this email with a summary of my project.

I am interested in collaborating with multiple Indigenous organizations or individuals to seek out Knowledge Keepers within your communities that I can interview and also to provide a summary of my research findings.

I would be grateful if you would be able to speak to Knowledge Keepers that might be interested in my project and provide them with my contact information. Alternately, if they wish to learn more, you can forward their contact information to me and I will contact them to give them more information on my project while following traditional cultural protocols, including providing tobacco when inviting them to participate and having a conversation about who I am so they can make a decision on their participation.

Thank you for considering this request. Please reply via email and I will follow up with you via either email or phone call based on your preference.

Miigwech,
Sandra Hunter
Masters Student in Clinical Psychology
University of Manitoba
hunters2@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix D
Sandra Hunter – Research Project on Traditional Child rearing Practices - Summary

Background:

- This research will satisfy requirements for my Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Psychology
- I am doing this project with the aid of my Advisor Dr. Leslie Roos, Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba, and in Partnership with the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, specifically with Rhonda Campbell

Purpose of Research

- I am interested in building relationships and interviewing 12-15 Traditional Knowledge Keepers from Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene Nations
- The main goal is to record and document any pre-colonial child rearing practices
- I would also like to understand how we can reclaim these practices

Impacts:

- I hope this work will help contribute to the creation of child rearing programs which are built on a foundation of cultural knowledge
- The benefits may contribute to reducing the number of children in foster care

Methods:

- A consent form with greater detail on the research will be provided and discussed prior to the interviews
- Interviews may last approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded. It is also possible that we may do more than one interview.
- The interviews will likely be done over video conferencing using the Zoom Healthcare platform or by telephone because of pandemic health concerns.
- Compensation: I will provide a monetary honorarium for the sharing of their knowledge. However, this will require that a form be filled out including their social insurance number as per University of Manitoba protocols to acknowledge the value of their wisdom.
- Confidentiality: Audio files and transcripts will remain confidential in password protected files. However, Knowledge Keepers may choose to have their comments associated with their name in any publications that arise from this work.

Sandra Hunter
Masters Student in Clinical Psychology
University of Manitoba
hunters2@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix E
Email to Participants

Dear [participant],

I am a Masters' student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Manitoba. I am an Anishinaabe mother and I am currently working on research that will involve interviews with Traditional Knowledge Keepers to learn about traditional First Nations child rearing practices and recommendations for ways that we can continue to reclaim these practices. I am interested in building relationships and interviewing Knowledge Keepers about traditional child rearing practices. I am attaching a document with a summary of my research for your information.

If you choose to participate:

- You will be asked to participate in an interview and share your knowledge about traditional child rearing practices
- Interviews may last approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded, we may do more than one interview
- Interviews will be done over video conferencing or by telephone because of pandemic health concerns
- Compensation: I will provide a monetary honorarium for the sharing of your knowledge. However, this will require that a form be filled out including your social insurance number as per University of Manitoba protocols to acknowledge the value of your wisdom.
- You have the right to change your mind about your participation at any point including before, during or after the interview.

I would be grateful if you would be willing to speak with me more so that I can provide more information on my project and invite you to participate. We can talk about who I am so you can make a decision on participating in my research.

Thank you for considering this request. Please reply via email or call me at my phone number below if you are interested in learning more and we can talk further.

Miigwech
Sandra Hunter
Masters Student in Clinical Psychology
University of Manitoba
hunters2@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix F
Phone Script to Invite Participants

Hello [participant],

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me today. I got your contact information from [name of organization or person]. How are you doing today? How have you been managing through the pandemic?
I would like to offer you tobacco as I request your participation in my research. What is the best way for me to get this tobacco to you? [mail, contactless delivery].
I understand this is difficult to do over the phone, it would have been nice to meet in person. University of Manitoba ethical research protocols state that this is still not an appropriate practice during these uncertain times. I hope to eventually be able to meet you and thank you in person for sharing your time with me.

I want to give you a little bit of information on who I am:
I am a master's student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Manitoba. I am an Anishinaabe mother and I am currently working on research that will involve interviews with Traditional Knowledge Keepers to learn about traditional First Nations child rearing practices and recommendations for ways that we can continue to reclaim these practices. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask?

I would like to give you more information on my research, do you have time to talk now?

- This research will satisfy requirements for my Master of Arts Degree in Clinical Psychology
- I am doing this project with the aid of my Advisor Dr. Leslie Roos, Associate Professor at the University of Manitoba, and in Partnership with the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, specifically with Rhonda Campbell
- The main goal is to record and document any pre-colonial child rearing practices
- I would also like to understand how we can reclaim these practices
- I hope this work will help contribute to the creation of child rearing programs which are built on a foundation of cultural knowledge
- The benefits may contribute to reducing the number of children in foster care
- Interviews may last approximately 1 hour and will be audio recorded. It is possible that we may do more than one interview
- Interviews will be done over video conferencing or by telephone because of pandemic health concerns.
- I will provide a monetary honorarium for the sharing of your knowledge. However, this will require that a form be filled out including your social insurance number as per University of Manitoba protocols to acknowledge the value of your wisdom.
- I will provide a consent form with all important information before the interview. I could provide this through email, mail, or contactless delivery.
- You have the right to change your mind about your participation at any point including before, during or after the interview.

Do you have any questions at this point?

Are you interested in participating in an interview?

- [If they agree] I would like to schedule an interview with you. What days and times work best for you? I will [mail, contactless deliver] the tobacco in the next couple of days. I will also give you the consent form to read before the interview by [email, mail, contactless delivery]
- [If they disagree] Thank you for your taking time to talk to me today and considering my request.

Appendix G
Helpful Resources

CRISIS SERVICES

WRHA Mobile Crisis Service Phone 204-940-1781

Crisis Response Centre (24/7) Phone: (204) 940-9781 Address: 817 Bannatyne Ave, Winnipeg, MB

Klinic Crisis Line (24/7) Phone: (204) 786-8686 or Toll Free 1-888-322-3019

Manitoba Suicide Prevention & Support Line (24/7) Phone Toll free 1-877-435-7170
Website: reasonstolive.ca

Addictions Foundation of Manitoba Phone: (204) 944-6200 or Toll free 1-888-322-3019

Winnipeg Emergency Services Operator 911

Willow Place Crisis Shelter for Women Phone: 204-615-0311

Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin - Offers shelter, support and counselling to women who are suffering from intimate partner abuse. Phone: 204-987-2780 or 1-800-362-3344

Men's Resource Centre - Emergency Shelter for Men Phone: 204-415-6797 ext. 200.
After business hours call: The Provincial Domestic Abuse Line at 1-877-977-0777

Indian Residential School 24 Hour Crisis Line Phone: 1-866-925-4419

Inuit & First Nations Hope for Wellness Line Phone: 1-855-242-3310 available in Inuktitut, Cree, Ojibway, English, and French. Online chat support at https://www.hopeforwellness.ca

WEBSITES with clickable links

- National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Project Semicolon
- Hashtag Hope
- The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ Youth)
- Kids Help Phone
- Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP)
- Canadian Association for Addictions & Mental Health (across Canada)
- Life Voice safety planning resources
- TWLOHA (To Write Love On Her Arms)
- Jack Project
- How to kill yourself (a 'what to do instead' website.)
- Good2Talk
- Canadian Mental Health Association (across Canada)
- Befrienders Worldwide

COUNSELLING RESOURCES
Aurora Family Therapy Centre 204-786-9251

Family Dynamics 204-947-1401

The Couples Counselling Project 204-474-6711
Hours Monday and Tuesday 5 pm - 9 pm · 485 Selkirk Avenue · couples@umanitoba.ca

Centre Renaissance Centre 204-256-6750

Aulneau Renewal Centre 204-987-7090

New Directions Child rearing Centre - A service to support families with small children, birth to 12 years of age. 204-786-7051 · 717 Portage Avenue

FREE DOWNLOADABLE APPS with clickable links

Mood Tools app (Includes safety planning diary. Helpful for those living with depression and/or thinking about suicide and how to stay safe.)
Calm app (Mindfulness app rated "#1 app for sleep and meditations".)
Super Better app (A resilience builder. This app motivates users through simple games that have achievable goals. The tools learned can be applied to life when the going gets tough.)
7 Seven app (Mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health are all connected and interconnected. Which is why we've included this app which helps you move your body using 7-minute workouts. You don't need any special equipment. Just a wall, chair, and your body.)

CFS RELATED SUPPORT:
Manitoba's designated intake agencies provide 24/7 emergency, referral and response services throughout the province for child protection concerns or for parents in need of support for their children.
In Winnipeg: All Nations Coordinated Response 24 hours contact 204-944-4200
Province-wide: intake and emergency after-hours contact: 1-866-345-9241
Designated Intake Agencies available at website:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/dia_intake.html

OTHER SUPPORTS: That may be helpful

- Elders & traditional healers
- Health Directors
- Nurses station
- Mental health workers
- A trusted friend
- Educational supports such as a teacher, child and youth worker, social worker, guidance counsellor, etc.
- Social workers
- Mental Health Therapist

Appendix H
Traditional First Nations Child rearing Practices - Oath of Confidentiality

As a research assistant for this project, I will have access to confidential information. I agree to the following terms:

- Understand that all information I see and hear as part of this research is confidential.
- Will not discuss any information related to participants, interviews, or transcripts with those not on the research team.
- Will keep all information secure while I am using it. I will keep all audio and transcript files in the RedCap locked account and will delete from the drive and trash of my computer when not using it.
- Will report any breaches to the PI with detailed information.

RA Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____

PI Name_____

PI Signature_____

Date_____

Appendix I
Interview Conversation Guide

Welcome the participant to the interview and share appreciation for taking the time to speak with me. Recite a land acknowledgement for the region we are in. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration (University of Manitoba, 2019). Invite the Knowledge Keeper to smudge if they feel necessary.

Before starting, invite the Knowledge Keeper to share any information through stories that they feel comfortable sharing.

Prompts may be used to encourage the use of storytelling (Adapted from Potts, 2004).

1.Who is involved?
2.What led up to the events described?
3.What is the setting?
4.What was said and done?
5.Any reactions and feelings that they may have had?

Sample Questions to be used as a guide:

1. Tell me about traditional beliefs about children and their place in the world.
2. How did communities come to have this knowledge? How did it become reduced?
3. How were children raised before colonization? How has this changed?
4. In a traditional way, what makes a good parent?
5. What are the important things Indigenous families need to teach their children?
What might be some contrasts or similarities to how children are being raised in this today's society?
6. What are some thoughts you have on getting back to these traditional ways?
    How can it impact how our people are managing?
7. How do you see these practices being reclaimed in current society?
    In urban and rural settings?
8. What guidance would you give for reclaiming these ways of child rearing?
Is there a way you could see some of these incorporated into a child rearing program?
What are some barriers you see to reclaiming these practices?
What ways could they be designed, organized, or offered?

Probes may be used to encourage response, some examples include:

- Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you explain what that means?
- Can you give me an example?

Appendix J
Child Abuse Reporting Protocols

During the interviews, it is possible that the participant will disclose that a child is at risk of imminent harm or has experienced abuse that is unreported. In determining if a child is in need of protection, reference will be made to the Government of Manitoba Publication: *Reporting of Child Protection and Child Abuse Handbook and Protocols for Manitoba Service Providers* (see excerpt below), available at
https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/pubs/handbook_child_protection_and_child_abuse.pdf

The following steps will be undertaken:

1. The interviewer will consult with the Supervising Co-Investigator Dr. Leslie Roos immediately regarding the disclosure.
2. The interviewer will complete the Child Protection Reporting Form (page 2 of this document) Sections A and B.
3. Dr. Leslie Roos will consult with other Clinical Psychologist colleagues if necessary, to discuss reporting and related concerns.
4. After consult, Dr. Roos will report back to the interviewer who will complete Sections C, D, and E of the Child Protection Form with the decision on whether a report needs to be made.
5. If it is deemed that a report must be made, the interviewer will make the report, either with or without the participant, to Child and Family Services.
6. Once the report has been made, Interviewer will complete Section F of the Child Protection Form.
7. The interviewer will report back to Dr. Leslie Roos once the report has been made.

Excerpt from *Reporting of Child Protection and Child Abuse Handbook and Protocols for Manitoba Service Provider*s, pages 15-16.
A child is in need of protection when she/he:
(a) is without adequate care, supervision or control
(b) is in the care, custody, control, or charge of a person
(i) who is unable or unwilling to provide adequate care, supervision or control of the child, or
(ii) whose conduct endangers or might endanger thel ife, health or emotional well-being of the child, or
(iii) who neglects or refuses to provide or obtain proper medical or other remedial care or treatment necessary for the health or well-being
of the child or who refuses to permit such care or treatment to be provided to the child when the care or treatment is recommended by a duly qualified medical practitioner
(c) is abused or is in danger of being abused, including where the child is likely to suffer harm or injury due to child pornography
(d) is beyond the control of a person who has the care, custody, control or charge of the child
(e) is likely to suffer harm or injury due to the behaviour, condition, domestic environment or associations of the child or of a person having care, custody, control or charge of the child
(f) is subjected to aggression or sexual harassment that endangers the life, health, or emotional well-being of the child

(g) is being under the age of 12years, left unattended and without reasonable provision being made for the supervision and safety of the child; or
(h) is the subject or is about to become the subject of an unlawful adoption under The Adoption Act, or of a sale under section 84.

Child Protection Reporting Form

A child endangerment query will be conducted when a participant voluntarily discloses child endangerment (abuse or neglect), or if there is any other evidence suggesting endangerment. This form is to be completed by the research team member who was present for the relevant disclosure.

A. Identifying Information

Date: _____

Form completed by: _____

Who and/or what was the source of this information of endangerment/endangerment:

B. What happened? Please describe (in the space below) as best as you can the following things:
any observations of physical injury or the parents or child's recount of endangerment; the "***Who, What,*** and ***When***" details of the incident.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

C. Check all that apply concerning the outcome of the assessment (your descriptions above should support the items checked):

☐ The relevant information does not meet the threshold for suspected endangerment

☐ The relevant information meets the threshold of suspected endangerment, and it was determined appropriate to notify child and family services **with** the participant present.

- ☐ Information meets the threshold of suspected endangerment and it was determined appropriate to notify child and family services **without** the participant present.

D. What actions are requested be taken upon approval by Dr. Roos?

- ☐ No additional action required
- ☐ Participant will report with Dr. Roos or Interviewer to Child and Family Services
- ☐ Drs. Roos or Interviewer will report to Child and Family Services

E. Who to Contact:

- ☐ In Winnipeg: Child and Family All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ANCR) 1-204-944-4200
- ☐ Province Wide Intake: Child and Family Services 1-866-345-9241
- ☐ Winnipeg Police Non-Emergency Line (204) 986-6222

Be sure to make the report **within 24 hours** of obtaining this information. Include the child's name, mother's name, family address, name of the abuser, and the evidence of abuse that supports your claim.

F. To be completed by interviewer after the report or any other steps have been taken:

Provide a brief summary of the events surrounding the incident and a summary of the additional steps (if any) that have been taken since this document was first completed. (i.e., Indicate and describe if the abuse has been reported to Child and Family Services or the police. If possible, indicate the caseworker, officer, and/or agency overseeing the report.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix K
Elder Robert Green Abbreviated Transcript

Interview 1

Elder Robert Green: And there was an island um where I grew up on, where I was born, and um, very close to the company reserve, it's a jointly owned land and by my community and Shoal Lake Forty. We both owned that land. And across the way there, there was a little, there was an island where, where we lived, where I was born, and our community was isolated for a very long time. There was no roads. We had no hydro. The only kind of communication that we had was, I remember growing up at that time was, was radio. And my grandfather had this old radio and this big, big block of batteries that, that hooked up to the, to the, to the radio. And we used to listen to that. But I grew up in that community. For a very long time, probably up to about six or seven years old when I went to school, that my spirit name, my traditional name is *Niizhogaabow*, which means two standing man. And all the old people and all the Elders that I remember growing up always called me by that name. They never called me [name] or [name] or anything like that. Everybody in both communities knew me by that name and that's all they remembered. And I remember my first day at school at uh, the day school was there doing a roll call. And uh somebody and the teacher mentioned [name]. Is he here? Then I didn't say anything because I didn't know. And a teacher comes up to me and then points at me and said, you're, you're [name] and said, oh, okay I didn't know that [chuckle]. So, my community and the other community was very isolated. So, we were we were we didn't have any hydro. We didn't have any roads come in until the late 60s and 70s. But our uh our people went to residential school. My parents went to residential school and my grandmother went to residential school. It was right on the close to the reserve, that first residential school that was built there, close to the reserve, close to our land. And that's where my grandmother went to school there. And her sisters, my grandmothers, except for my grandfather, on my dad's side, he didn't go to school there because by the time he came to school, the, the school was too full, was full already. So, he wasn't educated like, like the way my grandmothers were. Speak very good English, but he always, we used to translate for him. I remember translating for him when we went to town to Kenora. So, he didn't know very much English. And my grandfather and my grandmother on my mom's side went to that school. So they were, they were very well educated. So, I grew up in that, in that community. It was a traditional community. We still practised our uh our way of life. We lived off the lake. My community was very much hunters and gatherers and fishing. Trapping and all of that. And I grew up with that. I grew up eating moose, deer, fish, ducks, beavers, muskrat, and all of that. That's, that's how I grew up. And Wild Rice was the, one of the main staples that I grew up on. And in summertime, we had berries and strawberries, raspberries and those were dried up. Dried and, dried um so they, they kept, they kept long. They freeze without freezing them. And so was, so was the meats were dried and smoked and all of that. So, so we didn't need to preserve them. So, they kept throughout the whole winter. So, I grew up in that kind of environment. And I remember a lot of the Elders, the old people when they grew up, in that, in that traditional way, we still did our religion ceremonies powwows and those kinds of ceremonies. But some of the societies that we used to have also disappeared because of

residential schools, and because of colonization and encroachment of the white people into our, into our traditional territories and lands and resources. And one of the things that happened in the early nineteen hundreds, nineteen twelve, was that the City of Winnipeg built a water intake system in there and forcibly removed our peoples from that because we lived together. Even though we're two separate communities on that land that the City of Winnipeg, and they uh, they forced our, my ancestors, my parents, my great grandparents. Were forcibly removed from that so that the City of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba, can use that land for water. But they had a lot of other sources of water they could have used. But this one was, was to um, to damage our, my ancestors and this carried on to the other generations, right to my generation, of what was done there. They bulldozed the, the cemeteries, the burial grounds and all of that. So, it was devastating. To my people so that they suffered that trauma and that. And that um and the effects of that went through each generation after that. So that's why we have the problems back since as far back as I can remember, of alcoholism and drug addictions. And still and we're still slowly recovering from that. So that's kind of community that I grew up in that a lot of the stories and teachings that have been passed on to us, and my uh. So, there's two left, my uncle and my auntie are the only ones left. My auntie is on my mother's side and my uncles on, was married to the sister of my dad. So, they're the only ones left that we can call the Elders, the rest have passed away, passed on. Both of my parents have passed on and there's only four of us left in my family me and my two, uh three sisters. They're much younger than I am because I'm the oldest in my family. So that, and we lost two brothers, the youngest brother was murdered in Winnipeg on July 1st in the year two thousand. Yes, so that uh Canada day doesn't mean anything to me. Because of that. We were already here before that.

Elder Robert Green: So, I've learned all the stories and my uh, and just like any other Anishinaabe in Manitoba and Ontario, our ancestors go back thousands of years. Uh I know that when they do ancestry research, a lot of the non-Indigenous people say that the white people say that my family goes back hundreds of years. But I've done some research on that, all of the Anishinaabe people, the Ojibwe Nation goes back thousands of years. Probably to about five ten thousand years that we can go back to and the Ojibwe nation at one time lived on the east coast of Canada. What's now Quebec and Nova Scotia and all of that, the entire nation lived on that. And somewhere between zero, that's the calendar of the white man, somewhere between there and before that, these prophets came to them, to the nation and told them that they must migrate inland because there's something that was coming that may destroy the entire nation and they want these to survive. So, by the time our ancestors left to the time that they got to Thunder Bay. Time they left until the time they got to Thunder Bay. It took 500 years just to get there. And it took another two or three hundred years to get to where our ancestors came to. Your, your family lives in Lake St. Martin, so. And that's where your ancestors moved to from there, from all the way from the east coast of Quebec and some of them even went to, went down to the Rocky Mountains and that. We have a long history. We have a long legacy of our lands and our resources. Incidentally, it wasn't an easy, an easy migration. Because some of the nation went down the south side of the Great Lakes and some went on the north side of the Great Lakes, and they have to fight them and battle their way through because there was already First Nations living there. So, our nation, because they are according to the stories that I came across, that the

Ojibwe Warriors were the most fierce, fiercest warriors that the other nations have ever known, even the Iroquois and the Dakota Nations, that that we were the most fierce, fierce battles with them, with all of those nations. And if it wasn't for the, for the warriors and their men and women and their leadership, we would never be here. We would never have gotten to where we are now because of that. Because they were so focused and adamant on following that vision that was given to them. Because it came from the Creator, through the seven prophets. And it's called seven fires and seven prophecies. And um. During the Battle of 1812, the Ojibwe Nation sided with the British in that war. And the Ojibwe Nation taught the British soldiers how to fight. They taught them all about guerilla warfare. Uh, how to fight the close quarter combat fighting with knives and spears and all of that, they tell them all of that. And that's only in the history of the War of 1812. The British won that war. If it wasn't for the for the Ojibwe Nation and the other nations that sided with the British, then the British could have lost that war easily. And now that's where the uh, that's where the army, because it was the British army that that learned all of these lessons and all the skills and the fighting skills of the Ojibwe Nation that we now know them today as uh the Navy SEALs, special ops and all of them. That's where that came from. So, it was the Ojibway warrior that taught the British army how to fight. So, there's many, many stories about that, about what we've taught the white people. How to live and how to survive on these lands and that. So, if it wasn't for our ancestors, we would, we would never be here, we would never gotten to be here where we live on these, on these lands. And so, we pushed the, all of those tribes southwards and westwards. As our, as our nation came to the came west, westward. They pushed the Dakota, the Lakota, the Cree, and the Dene. The lands that we're on now used to belong to the Dakota Nation, the Lakota and the Akota, the Crees and the Dene. But we pushed them our ancestors pushed them further west, north, and all of that and south too, as well. So, they had to fight their way here. So that they had to be the best warriors that ever, that ever lived on the face of the Earth. And they were the most feared warriors by other, by other nations because of their, because of their tenacity, because of their fighting skills. And where their fighting skills came from, was from their hunting skills, trapping skills. That's where their fighting skills, and as a warrior they had to learn to be, how to, they learned from hunting, fishing, and trapping. They learned that from the fighting skills from the animals. So, that's our legacy and we need to to pass that on to our children and grandchildren about who we are, who we really are. Not, not the white man's interpretation of who we, of who they think we are, when we're much more than that. So, we have a long history that goes back thousands of years, not hundreds of years. That's the way Canada is. Canada's only, what, a hundred and fifty-three years old or something like that?

Elder Robert Green: Absolutely. That was the most memorable. Um growing up before alcohol came into the community. Because I remember hearing the Elders calling, calling my name, calling me by my name. They were so kind, and they were so loving and so compassionate that they took care of us. It didn't matter which family that we belong to. They took care of us and watched carefully as we played around. And uh, on the reserve. And their, they told us the teachings and stories and all of that, that short time that I spent with them. So that. My community was grounded in those traditional principles of child rearing. We weren't just raised by my parents, we were raised by my aunties, my uncles, my grandparents and the other. And the

other um, relatives as well, to the Elders and the old people, the grandfathers, and the grandmothers, and they took part in that, too. So, it took the entire community to raise us and our generation at that time. And it was very, was the most probably the most wonderful feeling there was to be embraced and surrounded by love, kindness, caring, compassion, plus the wisdom and the teachings and the knowledge and the intelligence of our people that was so prevalent at that time that I was growing up. But it almost disappeared because of alcohol and drug addictions and violence. And that that came after that. That that almost destroyed our people, not only just the epidemics that almost destroyed our people and also the one that we have to battle with alcoholism, drug addiction that was most uh took away a lot of our, a lot, a lot of, of the lives of our people from our communities. It's such a tragic legacy and that part in that very short years, that that alcohol was introduced into our communities. So, here's what like I said. I was born on the reserve. I was born in the community. And here's what happened. OK. When I came into this world, my, one of my grandmother's oldest sister was a midwife. And that's same with the other sisters, of my grandmother. They were all midwives. The older sister especially was recognised the midwife. So, when I was born and when I came into this world, I was welcomed by them. My, my grandmothers, they welcomed me into this world. They washed me and took care of me and took care of the placenta and the cord and all of that. And incidentally, I just found out that recently that you're supposed to allow that, that umbilical cord to stay with the child for about at least half an hour after they were born. Because that umbilical cord still has fluid flowing into the, into the child. So, when they cut it shortly and just shortly after born, that that fluid doesn't go there because it contains antibiotics from the mother to the child. They allow that to stay like that until they knew we got all the nutrients and all of those, all of those protective antibiotics in our system. And then that's when they cut it. They cut all of that. So there and uh, so there's various stages in life. That that was that has, that was handed down and recorded in the memories of our ancestors about traditional parenting. And um midwives are only a part of it, start of it. And uh right away, I was put in what they call a moss bag. Bottled up in that moss bag because um, they knew. The midwives and the grandmothers and the grandfathers knew that the baby have to be wrapped and swaddled in that bag for at least six months to continue that feeling of being inside the womb. Being inside that weightless water liquid environment. So, the, so the body and the mind, the heart and the spirit had to adjust to the physical world coming from a world of liquid and water and weightlessness. To come into that world, of into the physical world. So, that baby was wrapped in that, in that moss bag for that reason. And the only sensory um environment that the baby experience at that time is through visual senses, watching, hearing, listening, taste and smell. Without the use of the hands and the feet. Because they found that, found out that when the baby's not in that way, it's not wrapped in that way, that the hands and the legs are a distraction to the mind of the child. They don't think properly, they don't process information properly because the hands and the feet are distracting. They want to touch things and help them to do these things. So that baby is wrapped in that, in that moss bag for, for about six months. And the baby is, goes from a transition. From, from a weightless liquid water world to a physical world. It has very slow transition of this, of that child to come into this physical world. And after that, then, then the baby is put in the, is put in the cradle board. And that cradle board does a lot of, it has many, many benefits to the child. It not only straightens the legs and the arms because of the child's legs when they're newborn, they're kind of um, bow-legged. So,

they put something in between the legs and that, and it straightens the legs out, the knees and the thighs and all of that. And they still use the moss as the, as the, as the diaper for the child. And the, even the arms are straightened out. So, after a while, the child begins to squirm and try to get out. [moving around]. All right. So, you can visualise that. And, and it's, what it does, it not only straightens out the legs, then the arms and the back and all of that, the spine, all the bones and all of that in the body. But it also strengthens the muscles of the baby, the body. Gets more muscles out of that, because it, the baby is trying to get out of that, it's from that restraint of being tied in that, in that place. So, it does that. In the meantime, the child is watching, listening, hearing, tasting, without, without the distractions of the legs and the arms. Right. So, they knew, our grandfathers and grandmothers and our ancestors knew that the mind have to be developed first, first and foremost, for the physical body is developed and it's also developed at the same time as the mind. They begin to see the world around them hear, taste and smell all the things that that physical world has to offer. First and foremost, and that's when they begin to hear the language during that time. They, they recognised their mom, the mother. They recognised the father. If there's any siblings, they recognise them. So, it's all about facial recognition. And through that through that recognition, they begin to know their place in this world, who their mother is, who their dad is, who their siblings are, who the grandparents are, and the other relatives, because they all want to come and see the baby, right? And teach them things. So, they learned the language. They learned the world around them. Being in that uh, in that, in that cradle board for at least two years. They're in that cradle, cradle board for at least two years. Then after a while, maybe a year after they, they just leave the arms out. They're still tied up to, up to below the armpits. So, the baby can grab things. That's how they begin to, to use their arms and their hands. So, the baby is not allowed to touch the ground at any time before, before two years. So, as you can see through, through that practise of that and the moss bag, and the cradle board, they develop the mind of the child first. Their feelings and their emotions and all of those things that we can experience without being distracted by the, by your, your hands and your arms and your legs and their toes and your feet. So, the developing of the mind and the brain and the intelligence of the, of the child was first and foremost. So, that they could learn the language, they could hear the language, so they can hear, and taste food. And all of that smell when they're outside, they could smell the flowers, the trees, the rain and all of that. That develops the senses even more. So, it creates a capacity for the brain and the mind to develop first. So that was the, that was the, what they wanted to, for the child to learn first. So, during that time, from the time they're newborn to the time they begin to walk or talk. The ancestors and the spirits come and teach the child. Teach them gifts, their abilities, their, their what their talents, teach them about things, about the medicines and the planets, the plants. And also, they teach them about the universe, the sun, the stars, the moon and all of that, they come and teach them about, about our planet, about the weather. And then after, after the child begins to ah, to talk, then those spirits leave. They don't come and visit anymore because they could teach them all that they can within, within that two years' time. Time span of what they need to learn, what they, what, what abilities that they have, what gifts that they have. It all comes from there, from our ancestors and the spirits that um. That, that are around us. By the time that the child then is allowed to walk and touch the earth. Then they begin to walk. Or some, some of our cultures had what they called for, the girls and for the boys too as well, was that they did a walking, walking out ceremony. They

had a ceremony for that. They also have naming ceremonies for the child. And they also knew who their clan was and what those, and that's a part of our, of our identity of who we are, is, is also part of the clan. Our clans tell us who we are, where we come from, and who are we related to. So that's a very important teaching to the child as they begin to grow, grow up. And throughout up to about seven years, the parents, the grandparents, the aunties, the uncles teach, teach the child as much as they could. And each one of those times they, they have what they call the rites of passage. And as the child develops, as it grows and then there's a ceremonies done for that. So, by the time they were seven years old, the boys were taken out to go do fasting, to go and fast, a vision quest. That's the same with the girls, too. They did that to them as well. And some boys, they usually just left them on an island and leave them there. And my dad used to talk about when they used to go out on the traplines. Each family had their own trapline, their own area, where they could hunt and trap um and spend that time there in the springtime to the beginning of summer, then they would come back into the community. They would teach that child how to take care of itself. They would teach him how to cook, how to, how to look after itself, where to get water and things like that. And when the parents knew that the child was um, um was ready. Learned all of that, to take care of herself or himself. That, that nothing would happen to the child. So, they would leave. They would leave that child. And of course, that child begins to go through all kinds of emotions, loneliness, fear. And all of those emotions that we all have, and they did that for a reason. So that something, or somebody, or some spirit, or some ancestor would come and teach that child some more of what they need to learn. So, my dad said that when he was telling me about that when, when we do that today, the uh the CFS agencies will get to come and uh [laughter] take the child away [laughter]. Called uh, child abuse right [laughter]. Yes, child abandonment, and all of that. [laughter] So that, all of that they need to learn. Yes, total misunderstanding, why our, our people did those things to the children. So, every year or every level of the child, there was a rites of passage. They would then do the, the vision quest, by the time they were seven years old, and the fasting. Then they would keep an eye on those on their children as they're growing up. So, for the girl when they have their first period. Their first cycle, their first, their first moon cycle, the mom, the mother would call the aunties, the grandmother's. And they would build a moon lodge for the girl. And they would put that that young girl into the, into the lodge and stay there for about four, four days or seven days or things like that. And they would feed that, that young girl fruits. And then they wouldn't feed any kind of meats or anything like that because that, that young girl is kind of like fasting in a way. The help in, helping her, her cycle, her cycle work for her body and the grandmothers and the aunties come in and do teachings. For the, for the young girl to explain to them why, why this was happening to her and what she should do. And I remember my grandmother having her own set of dishes, she'd have a spoon, knife and fork, a bowl, a plate, cups, and she'll bundle that all up in the bundle and she'll bring it out once a month. And use that. And she would cook her own food because as a woman is going through her, her cycle, her moon time, they were very much aware of the power and the energy of the woman at that time. And they would harm or injure or contaminate, especially the boys or the men in that family. And they didn't want to do that. So, they kept their utensils and their dishes, and the bowls and their cups separate. And they're bringing them out once a month, to do that, to the length of their cycle. And they would do their, do their moon time and um, so that, that young girl now has become a woman. She's no longer a

girl. She's now become a woman. The grandmothers, the aunties to teach her about become how to, how to be a woman, how to carry herself and how to look after, after herself. And how to especially when they're on their moon time not to step over, over anybody, or clothes, or anything that's on the floor. My, my auntie talk about that. Explain to the young girls that if you see things on the floor, you don't step over them, you just push them aside, and you make sure your path is clear. And you don't want to, to leave your energy on those things that you step over. So, it is very important to, for the young girls, for the young woman to know that. Teach them about that. How to eat certain foods at a certain time and to take care of herself to look after herself in that way, so that so that her energy at that certain time of the of the moon doesn't hurt or harm or injure anybody because she's a very powerful entity. A woman is a very sacred and very powerful entity. So, with the boys, that's the same thing, almost the same thing as the rites of passage for the young girl, they, they wait until the, the boy their voice changes. It now becomes deepened, a deeper, a deeper voice. So, that and the, the grandfathers, the uncles come and provide those teachings for them. So now that that boy is no longer a boy, is now becoming, become a man. They take him out hunting, fishing, trapping and all of that. How to be a provider. How to provide those raw materials and resources and bring them into the community and bring them into the home. So the way I grew up in that community, is that the house, (...) Or the lodge belong to the women. Anything and everything inside, inside the house, inside the home, inside the lodge belong to the woman. That was her, her domain inside the, inside the lodge. Outside of that. Outside of the house, the physical house, the physical objects was the domain of the men. Outside of that, because they're the ones that do the hunting, the trapping, the gathering and the fishing and all of that, they bring in all the raw materials into the into the home. And it's the women and the young girls turned that into foods, goods, and the materials that that's needed for the community. So, they do all of that. Each, each part of the, of the community has its own has its own responsibility. What to provide, how to be a provider in the community. And out of that the women um had status. Much higher than the men. And through her workmanship of, of how she designed clothes, how she made clothes, how she did beading and how she made clothes and all of that, that's what gave her status. How good she was, as well as her cooking and her ability to look after the children, teach the children and all of that. So, the woman, the women collectively were responsible for food distribution, childcare, looking after the Elders, the old people, to make sure that everybody had food. And if nobody, nobody was, was what we call poor, everybody had something. Everybody was equal. Nobody was more richer than, than the other. If somebody didn't have any food, a family would come and bring food. If they didn't have clothes or blankets, the women gave them clothes and blankets and provide all of that. So, each family was independent. They were, they didn't depend on the systems that we depend now on welfare. CFS, health care and all of that. They did all of that. And part of the education system, the traditional system of education was, was uh, came from the Elders, and the old people. They taught them about legends and stories and everything that they need to know. One of my teachers is still alive and he's my Elder, he's still alive. And he was telling me that when he was a little boy, he remembers his grandfather telling him stories. And that, and as they begin telling stories, then he would fall asleep. Next, he said, the next morning I wake up and my grandfather is still talking. Talking, telling us the stories. Then one day he asked his grandfather. I fell asleep while you were talking and telling us these stories. And then then

his grandfather said, yeah, I know, but I still kept talking and telling you these stories. Then he asks his grandfather, how am I going to remember that when I didn't hear that. Then he, then his grandfather said, your spirit heard everything. Your spirit is the one that's going to remember all of that. And now my teacher, my Elder says now I still remember that. I remember the whole story, even though I didn't hear that, but my spirit tells me that [laughter]. Yes, yes, yes [laughter]. Our, our brain is still active while, even though while we're sleeping. Our mind is still active while we're still sleeping, because that's why we dream. We connect with the other dimensions of why we dream like that. So, our minds and our, and our brain are still active even though our physical self is sleeping.

Elder Robert Green: Yes um, I remember my, my auntie used to be invited to go to the schools and provide these traditional parenting teachings. What she had was, was these dolls, these little dolls you know that. And she had somebody make these cradle boards, those boards, the cradle and she had somebody make those, she had about six or seven of those. And then she would also have moss bags with that, and she would take them to the schools and show them to the boys and the girls that she was teaching them about that. So, what she did was she created awareness and consciousness about what we should think about, how we can raise our, our children. And these, and these ones that are coming into the world. So, she created that. And for me, that's what I'm, I been always working on, is to create that awareness and that consciousness and to, to, to start waking people up. Because what happened to our people is through colonization is that our spirits have been put to sleep. So, when we create, create awareness and consciousness, these people that are still sleeping are, start to wake up, begin to wake up slowly. And they begin to see things that they had never seen before. Whether it's through alcohol or drug addictions, they overcome that and they now sober and clean and maybe some of them have jobs and they look after themselves in a good way. That good way is dressing properly and having good hygiene and all of those things that come with looking after ourselves. And I know when I'm asked to come and talk and provide these teachings that's what I talk about. So, I create that, that bridge from, from where I grew up, that traditional and the community of, of what was left then to the things that we have now. So, I create that, that bridge, that gap, and close that gap and providing teachings and, and create that understanding and awareness, consciousness. Everybody, it doesn't matter who it is, it's everybody needs to know that because it's all, we, we all have to try and get along to, with one another. All the seven sacred teachings come, come with that.

Interview 2

Elder Robert Green: OK. One of the words that I remembered and that I totally forgot about, about that one when we first had the interview. And it's in, it's in our language and it's totally describes the, the practises and the parenting methods of our, of our ancestors. OK. And the word is "*ombigii'owsowin*". *Ombigii'owsowin*. And there's a story of farmers *ombigii'owso*. *Ombigi'owso* is describing the parent. How do you raise their child, how, what kind of parenting did they, did they get, when they, were when they were children? When they were babies. OK, so that describes *ombigii'owsowin* as the way in which children are raised in the community by the parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, all of that. And each...child is placed at the centre of the

community. This is the important part that we've lost because of colonization is that the children are no longer in the centre of our communities. They come outside of the framework, some in some cases the children are not even seen or to be part of the community because of the way colonization has affected us and the way nuclear family has been and forced on us. Nuclear family concept is foreign to us. And yet we have to we were, because of colonization we were forced to, to adopt that, to adopt that concept. All of these concepts about parenting that we see nowadays, it's not ours. It's completely foreign to our communities. And yet we see that in our communities. When you go and visit some of these communities that are, that are very poor in their, in their economic development and the way the governance structure is set up. The children are no longer at the centre of our communities. They're outside, and in some cases they're not even existent and seen to be part of that because they are now in foster homes. They are now in foster care. Yeah. So that concept of *ombigii'owsowin* is no longer in existent in our communities until, until we begin to decolonise our, our minds and then put that into action. How do we do that?

Elder Robert Green: And we can do that by visiting Elders, the Elder, the Elderly, the old people and get them to talk about that, how they were raised, how they seen child rearing practises back in the day when they were growing up. And a lot of those concepts are still embedded in our Elders. All we have to do is just kind of ask them these questions that we need to learn to know about ourselves, about our communities. So that word describes it. *Ombigii'owso*, the way in which a child is raised, the way that the baby is brought forward into the world, and all of the support systems that that help the mother and the father bring up the children. Raise these children, proper parenting concepts. And the, the teachings, some of them that we have lost and now are coming back, fortunately because of our decolonization efforts in our communities and ourselves too. That, a lot of them are coming back. And parents, new parents, the younger parents are stunned to learn that from, from their parents, from their Elders. And the children are now starting to find their place in the community. They're starting to find they're back to being the centre in the community. And that's the very important concept that we have almost lost, is that a child needs to be put back into the centre of the community. And that's the first and foremost that we need to take, take care of those children. It doesn't matter really whether we're their grandparents, whether we're uncles, aunts or cousins, we all have the responsibility to take care of that child. And it comes from a very important word of that, of our responsibility to that, in our word, Anishinaabe word for the child, is "*Abinoonjii*". And when they look at that word, "*Abin*" means to stay, "*onjii*" is where you come from. And when you put that together is “to stay where you belong, stay where you come from.” That's the teaching from the, from the Creator. Giving a gift of a child to the parents and the parents devote their time to raising that child to the best of their abilities. With love, kindness, compassion, respect, truth, humility, and all of those seven sacred teachings are part of that in raising that child, *abinonjii*. So, the Creator said to the parents when they first got the child and said, I will lend you my child for you to raise with the seven sacred teachings. But, Creator said, but I can call my child any time I want to, for whatever reason that is only known to me. And when I do that, when I take my child back, do not be angry with me. Do not be, be enraged by that, because I took my child. Just to find that comfort, I wanted my child back, very close to the Creator and, and lovingly, and

in unconditional love beside the Creator. And that purpose of that is only known to the Creator. We don't know that. A child dies unexpectedly, and parents are naturally grieving. They grieve for so many days or however long that is. And that, and that grieving process is part of our experience of living in this, in this world, in this physical world. So that *abinoonjii* is here with us in our physical world to stay where it belongs, is in the family, is in the community until such time that the Creator calls them back.

Elder Robert Green: And that that identity also comes from the parents and the grandparents that have been passed down through generations. That we have, we need to have a sense of belonging. We need to have a sense of, to be heard, to be believed, to be seen, and to be taken care of. Those are the needs of the child, that we need to, to relook again at those concepts and how to apply those to today's, today's society. And we need to bring them into terms that we can understand that. And our young, young parents need to understand that is a greatest gift that parents can receive is through the child. Because the love of the Creator is unconditional and they give, the Creator gives those, his, his or her child to the parents. That's how much the Creator loves us by bestowing and giving us and lending us his child for us to raise. So, that child then becomes a very sacred, sacred being. When we look at that, how to look at it carefully, we need to love it, and have compassion for it and to take care of it in the good, in the good manner, to have respect for it and to be able to trust that, to trust your feelings and how to care, to look after them. Plus, to be able to have all the support from the family in the community knowing that you're not alone, knowing that you can have people to depend on when you're unable to take care of it for a while. And many years ago, I heard that one of my Elders and one of my teachers say that what we need to do is work with the family together, the family together. We cannot remove the child from the family and expect everything to be all right with the parents. We need to work with the parents, the mother and the father to provide counselling and provide therapy for them so that so that they can begin to understand their responsibility of looking after that child. So, the support systems of counselling and therapy that we have in our communities need to, to provide that to the parents so that they can overcome their, their addictions and, and all of those things that are in the way. They need to, to look after their themselves first. And then they can begin to look after their child or their children in the home. And in the good way. And a lot of us have been recovering for the past 20 or 30 years or so. And we begin to see that. And one of the things that personally, that when, when I first had my, my son when he was born, I made a promise to myself. And to my, to my young son and to the Creator that I'm not going to raise you. I'm not going to look after you the way I was looked after I was, I was in my, in my teenage years, I, I've seen and witnessed a lot of violence in the community because of alcohol, of alcoholism. And that's what I meant. I didn't want to I didn't want to raise them in that way. And then my daughter came along. My youngest boy came along, and I did the same thing. And they even though it was hard for me to believe in the hold them, to even cuddle them the way you the way you cuddle a baby in your arms, that was very hard. But I tried. I did do it. I did do it. And I hold them and held them. And I felt after a while it felt so good. It felt wonderful after that, after I overcame that, that feeling of not being capable of doing that. So now. Um, most of my children, I could say, is that they're, they're, what's the word here I'm looking for? It's ah...they're coping with addictions very well. Very, very well and most of

the most of the, the community members of at their age are doing just as well too. Yes, there may be a couple of, one or two or three that are still battling their addictions because of the intergenerational impact of colonization in their communities, because of that. It'll take a little while longer for our community to completely resolve itself and that, of the effects of colonization in the communities. And I know our leadership, our governance structure, which again is based on a foreign, foreign ideas and concepts, but they're still managing to, to carry on with the responsibility of governance systems in the community. And we need to look back at the traditional judicial systems. Same with parenting. And we're doing that, so all of that, the, the effects and the impacts on the community need to be looked after, need to be looked at and how we can resolve each of those areas, whether it's governance, economic development, cultural, spiritual and, and all of those things. Education is very important aspect of that. So, those are those things I was talking about governance, education, cultural, spiritual, economic development, all of that. All of those impact the child and the community. Because it, it impacts the, the families as well, too, and all of that. So, we need to do something about that, about returning to our own systems gradually. And part of that, too, is the important part of that is decolonization. First, we have to do it ourselves, on ourselves. To declutter our minds, our brains and all of those things that we've been brainwashed with, to a foreign education system because of the residential schools, because of foster care systems and the, the Sixties Scoop and all of that, the impacts of all of that. We have to look at that.

Elder Robert Green: And one of the things that I wanted to share with you, and I forgot about that is about the Cradle Board, *Tikanagan*. *Tikanagan*, is that it's made out of Cedar, the board, the board itself, where that the child lays. It's made out of cedar. And I found out through my uncle's teachings and stories is that the reason why they, they selected Cedar, among other ones, is that the cedar provides a calming, soothing effects on the baby. So, when that baby is in that, is in that *Tikanagan*, then it soothes that the whole entire being of the child. The mind, heart, body, spirit of the child, it soothes that, and the frame of that, the one that sticks out, the covering of that goes on top of the *Tikanagan* it's made out of a white ash, and you could form that, that once it's soaked in water or heated in water, it can bend it in any way, shape or form that you want to. And that white ash is, was selected because of its strength. To give that child that strength and resilience for whatever confronts the child, be always, be resilient and strong, in heart, mind, body, spirit. So that's what I remembered about that *tikanagan*. Yeah, and that. That white ash, it becomes very when it's when it's heated up or soaked in water it becomes very flexible, but after it dries, it becomes rigid and it's strong after that. So, the baby is given it's formed a spiritually, strength and resilience. So, whatever confronts the child as they're growing up will be part of that. Will get that. It will be resilient, it will be strong, it will be very brave and courageous and all of those things that are part of our, of our seven sacred teachings.

Elder Robert Green: Yes, and part of that, a revival needs to take place amongst the women. Is that we have a lot of traditional societies within our communities and men's societies, warrior societies, women societies, grandmothers' societies, singing societies and drumming societies and all of that. We had all of that. And to begin to answer that question, women such as yourself need to come together with other women to form, to form a circle, to form some kind of support

system or mechanism for these young mothers and children so that. They won't feel isolated, so someone, someone needs to take that initiative from the, from the urban centre and such as Winnipeg, and they can come together and to begin those discussions about that amongst the grandmothers, the mothers and whether they're traditional or not. But they need to be heard. Everybody needs to be heard to, to be able to discuss all of those things about what impacts these young mothers that are living by themselves, mostly by themselves and in the city of Winnipeg, how can they, can be reached out to and how can they reach out and, and how can they find supports. And that's that that needs to be done, and I totally support that. And I've been supporting all these women's initiatives as much as I can. Not so much as I'm able to, because the women need to take their rightful place in the communities and also in the community of Winnipeg. That part has been almost destroyed by, by colonization. By both federal and provincial governments. That part is almost, is almost destroyed, almost, but not completely. Because we're still here. And [laughter] so the woman needs to develop some kind of a support system, some kind of a support mechanism, some kind of a society that is based on the seven sacred teachings to begin to help out these young mothers, these young families, these young parents that are struggling, that are coping as much as they can with raising their children and women in the community, in the communities, and whether it's in the city or in the reserve that need to take their rightful place and supported by men.

Elder Robert Green: Traditionally, in the *Anishinaabe*, the *Ojibwe* tradition, the women were the ones that that selected and choose our leaders, our leadership, they're the ones that selected the chiefs, the leaders. And they are they're the ones to that disposed of the of the chiefs and leaders if they didn't do their job properly. And they're the ones that, the women look after food distribution, childcare, any kind of wealth that comes into the community and whether it's raw, raw materials or, or trade items and it goes directly to the women and then they distribute that within the community. Any kind of funding or financial systems that come into the community, that the women need to take care of that. And that's what they used to do. They look after the food distribution. They took care of the land. The women traditionally were the farmers. The men cleared the land. The woman where the farmers, because our teachings tell us that the women and Mother Earth are the one and the same, they bring forth life the same way and in the same manner as Mother Earth and in the way the mothers bring forth life into this world. We need to look at those, we need to begin those discussions about that. The women were very, very a very powerful influence on the communities and the government systems. Institutions tried to destroy that. But it didn't work, so we began to recover and look at those systems, but what were the traditional systems, and the women especially need to take their rightful place back into the communities and in the community of Winnipeg as well, too. There's many, many women that that are that are forging communities or groups or, or societies, I could call it that are working in different areas and in the city of Winnipeg somehow, somewhere they need to all come together and we can talk about those things to begin that. That a rightful relationship needs to take place with all the systems and institutions in the city of Winnipeg. Or in the province of Manitoba. We all have the same dilemma facing us, and yet we're trying to battle it, to, to work on it individually, but if we come together collectively, we can we can do much more, much more effective job in reclaiming our, our nationhood, reclaiming our children, especially back into the

communities so that we can take care of our own, take care of our own people without interference of, of governance structures that are not ours and institutions that are not ours. And so, to reclaim all of our traditional systems and that's, that's what we need to do. And individually we need to start decolonising our minds, to declutter the, the brainwashing that we've been getting through the, the education systems and through the media. Toward the systems of the of television, media, and all of those things that we need to try and limit that as much as possible. You know that that's so, so thinking about the community raising a child. But then colonization making it a nuclear family. But now, because of the trauma, it's not even a nuclear family anymore. Most of the time, it's not even a mother and father together raising a child, and that father is also so important.

Elder Robert Green: Yes, we're, it's, it's, it's happening slowly. It's happening slowly, and that's part of the process that the Creator has set out for us. It's the colonization did not happen overnight. So, so decolonization is not going to happen overnight. It's going to take time for that to happen. And I'm very hopeful, too, that, that it's going to, I'm going to be able to see that in my own lifetime, that these women coming together and supported by men. It's happening slowly. It's happening within our, within our homes in the city of Winnipeg or in the rural areas. And I've had many, many discussions with, with Elders that I've gotten to know these past 15 years that I've been living in in Manitoba and that there is a lot of work being done. There is a lot of ceremonies being done about that. And I was very fortunate enough to take part in a ceremony on Monday. That a lot of items that were collected by the Inquiry of the missing and murdered indigenous women and children, by the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, that they transferred over to the to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, most of those gifts and the items that were given to them during their travels across Canada. And I was very fortunate of that. And also, that there was Elders that came and supported that, both men and women that came to that. So, we did we did some singing some songs and, and honouring the women. So that's, that's in the way that what I meant by supporting women. I did my part. We did our part as men and young men to do to sing those songs in support of the women and bring them to, to stand up. What we're doing is getting to stand up and to be proud of who they are. And it's happening and it's happening slowly. And that. The majority of those ones that were, were there at that gathering and ceremony were women. Both that worked in a staff, the, the CEO and of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was there also. And she's a woman. That's, that's a really good thing. That's a really good step forward in the right direction by, when she was hired as a CEO because there's many, many changes that need to happen within that institution itself, and it's happening. But going forward and in some cases for me, I'm very impatient that these things are not happening fast enough for me [laughter]. I want them right away. [laughter]. Yes, and it happens one individual at a time.

Elder Robert Green: So, when you become that when you get that degree of a clinical psychologist, you'll be able to work from that. From the bases of our, of our traditional teachings. And those things have been down, handed down to us from our ancestors for thousands of years. And you'll begin to work that as one individual at a time. And, and I see that happening. I see that I used to have this contract with Sandy Lake First Nation, and that's a very poverty-stricken

community. And I, in spite of that, I've seen a lot of these young women that are mothers changing their life, turning their life around, they, they've become sober using less drugs or staying away from drugs or completely come clean, now they're sober, and now some of them are losing weight and they're managing their own different lifestyle based on the on what the community offers and in terms of their teachings. A lot of the Elders and old people are still alive in that community. And so, I can describe that in some of those young women that I've gotten to know of starting to wake up. That's the thing that we need to understand, that our people need to wake up first. They need to be waken up first. Because of the effects of colonization for these past hundred years or so, that that it put a lot of our people to sleep, our spirits to sleep. Now we're beginning to, starting to wake up. And we need to recognise that. Once these people start to wake up and we can help them and you can help them too as well with your counselling and therapy and all of those teachings that you are learning and you'll have your own way of, of helping them. It's not going to be based on the structure of what the, what the Canadian idea of psychology is. And it's going to be based on our Anishinaabe psychology. More loving and reaching out to these individuals. You'll have and you'll learn your ways of counselling them to provide therapy to them. So, it's going to be not based on what the Canadian definition of psychology is going to be. So, you will be able to develop your own, your own style of helping them. And that's why the, the Creator, is kind of taking you in that, in that direction, because the Creator knows what gifts you have, what, what abilities you have, what characteristics you have. So, this this job that you have that you have will be able to help our peoples in the long run. So, our people need to start waking up. And we're doing that with the counselling and therapy, with ceremonies and songs and singing and all of that coming together as the circles of women and men and children as well too. So, I'm very hopeful in that way. Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

Elder Robert Green: And it's, my dad always said that it's only us that are going to be able to help our people. Not the white people. Not their institutions. Our Anishinaabe People are the ones that are that are going to heal ourselves. We don't expect any kind of help or healing from that from the white societies and all of that that have been so dominant and oppressive and suppressing our ways of helping each other. So, we need to do that ourselves. And it's happening. And it's happening already since, have been happening for the past maybe 40, 50 years or so. And it's and it's taken time, takes time. So. Yes, yes, it is. It's gathering strength, getting more and more powerful, as the days and weeks go on.

Appendix L
Elder Wanbdi Wakita Abbreviated Transcript

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: I'm trying to be little so I can remember what to say. I need to go right back. OK, I'll start, I'll start. I said this yesterday that when I was growing up, I was happy. I was safe. And each one of us. All my siblings, my brothers, and sisters, we all had a job to do. No matter how small, it just had to be done, because we are, we were born on the farm and we had the support, very lucky to have the support of my mom and dad, my brothers and sisters and my grandpa. To listen to what they have to say. I didn't understand those things. Just ah, why we had to do this and what you know, how is it going to turn out? What, what is the reason for Grandpa telling me to get up early every morning? What was that? And I didn't realize that until I was a little bit older, how I put those, those teachings in order for myself. Growing up, I grew up on a farm and it started off watching my grandfather and my dad getting up early in the morning, going out the door. And so, we started doing that, my brothers and I, we started doing that too, go out the door, feed the horses and the cows before we eat. And then we came in and ate, ate afterwards. Of course, years later, find out that the horses are special. Not only in raising them the five ways that we were told. But they were sacred and that we need to know about the sacredness that we are going through. So. Yeah, we had lots of relatives that dropped by. We, two or three different times we had our relatives come and live with us because they didn't, I don't think they had a place to live. My cousin Archie and those my, my cousin, my other cousin. They came to live with us for a period of time and then after a while they would go. Find their own place, I guess, I don't know. Growing up with my brothers and sisters, it was good. We had, we shared things, we done things together. The things that we were told to do, we didn't understand that until later. But, you know, we were I would say I had a good mother who raised me up. I really appreciated that; you know. And my grandpa, a man of few words, but when he spoke there is meaning behind that, whatever it is that he told us. Eat a muskrat in the spring, when they first come out, when do they come out, I know it's in the spring, is it early spring or is it spring or late spring? Well, my job is to find out why I needed to learn that. So, it was my upbringing was about learning. And putting into action some of those words that my mom and my dad and my siblings and my grandpa, what they were saying and how, how would I put them into action. Of course, it was just a regular thing I was told. This is what you do, and this is how you do it. And those are regular things, it's not a miracle, it's not a show, those are real things that we are learning about. And why are we learning about that? What is the reason for that? We've got to understand that. You know. It might seem, you know, when I was growing up to be a little older. It might seem like a bit crazy talking to a horse. You know, but it was real. The horses are sacred, and it was based on a true story of how our horses were given to us and the songs that were attached to it and the prayers and medicines, everything. Was connected, and these were the ones that I didn't understand until later. Why we had to do that.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Just yesterday, I remembered a song I never heard that song for a long, long time. And my community, I was, I was lucky enough to go to the ceremonies and stuff and to listen to these ceremony, ceremonial songs and prayers that were made. So, that, that now I'm understanding that was a strong foundation that was built for me while I was growing up, you know, it wasn't it wasn't like every day my mom is not going to come to me and say, I

love you, my son. It was never like that. It was always shown. Love was shown in different ways. You know, they, they. You know, my mom raised us up, she made clothes for us. She fed us good, she talked to us real, never seen my mom drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes. None of that. And it was really good to, to, for us to see everybody had a big garden and we worked at that garden. The odd time we went picking saskatoons and chokecherries and raspberries and gooseberries, all those kinds of things. And my mom would know when to go and pick those. And she would say, OK, come on, bring your, bring your pails and all of us, we would go out in the bush and pick those currents along the creek. And when it came to saskatoons, I ate a lot of saskatoons [laughing]. My little pickings was pretty slim, but it was whatever it is that, you know, we brought home. And we always seem to have it at the right time, have the different kinds of food. And that's what my grandfather said, eat according to the seasons, and that was another good teaching. I know a lots of stories about that. My grandfather and my dad somehow, I don't know where it came from, but they went to town and they bought a cow, a jersey cow. The best milk and cream ever. One pail in the morning and one pail in the evening, and we had to learn how to milk that cow. And we also had uh, my dad brought a separator so we would pour that milk. You had to cool it off real quick, you know, so. We would go put that pail of milk in the separator and turn it. There is a crank on it [buzzing sound] it goes and then it spins around, and the milk comes out one spot and one spout and the other spout, the cream comes out.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And we put these in little cream cans. Honey, honey cream cans and they have a solid lid on them. And then we would get the rope and then we would put them down into the well where it's cold. And when we needed milk, which was every day and when we needed cream, which was every day. We would get that. And so. It was that's, that's what we had learned. How do you do that? The saskatoons ah, she would put them in jars. She would cook them and put them in jars. Or she would mush them up, cook them and mush them up and we would have I don't know what it's called, but it sure tasted good.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And, and the chokecherries, she had a big stone. I don't know where she got that. And another stone to pound the chokecherries, seed and all. She would wash the chokecherries and put a handful or two into this stone and pound them. And when she pounded all the chokecherries, she put them into little cookie-like shapes and then put them on top of the rack that she had outside and they would dry by the sun, but she had this cloth, cloth over the over that so things, that it doesn't get dirty, or the flies don't get at it. And in a couple of months, they would be stored in a, looks like a pillowcase, but it was the bag, the cotton bag from the flour we used to get. We used to get hundred-pound flour bags, 100-pound flour. And when the flour is all gone, we, my mom would wash that. And that's what she would use to store those chokecherries.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: In the wintertime. Yeah, in the wintertime. Real cold day, she would take a few of these. And. Shaped like a cookie, those chokecherries, and they were dry and hard, she would put them in the pot and cook it. And it was really nice, and she would add some things to it. I don't know what it was. Maybe honey or flour or something. But it sure tasted good. That was how we were living. The cream, she made butter with that cream. We drank milk. She used it in her baking. All kinds of things, and in those days, there wasn't much

chemicals or poison in the food system. And those things were really good. And my grandfather and my dad would go hunting. They were both good shots. They would bring home meat and ducks and geese and. And us little guys, we would go down to the river and do some fishing, bring home. I caught a great big fish one time. Oh, boy, that was a big fish.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And I remember exactly that day, it snowed in the morning. And this was in June, I think it was when the seeds were just coming up. I think it was I don't know. It was already the seeding was done and it snowed, but it didn't stay. The next day disappeared by noon. And I was down by the river, and I was bringing this big fish home. And it was almost like dragging on the ground, kind of. So, my mom was really happy she was. Of course, we had fresh fish, she know how to cook fish, she know how to take the bones out. I saw. Other times our cousins would come over our cousin in one family. They were all boys, and we would run everywhere when we were small. We ran and ran. Oh, boy. I don't know why people must have thought we were crazy, but we ran everywhere. And we would go down to the river and we would play down there, we would swim down there. There was no lifeguard there, we learned how to swim. And. A little later on, when we were a little bit bigger, maybe 12 years old, my cousins and I, they were some of them were a little bit older than me. We'd bring lard, the frying pan, down by the river and when we finished, we caught some fish. We would cut them up and fry them up right there. So good, that was good.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: That's fresh fish. And, you know. The ceremonies that we, I witnessed, Omaha Society ceremony. And my grandma's eagle society ceremony. The women had a scalp dance society. They, they were every once in a while, they would carry on and I would go in with, I don't know why, I would be there. I don't know who would be with me. I have no idea. I can't remember that far, but I would be seeing these things going on. And also, too the band, our band had a farm as well as our farm, and we all took turns looking after the cows. We let them out early in the morning. Somebody would get on his horse and go to the, to the yard and let out the cows and drive them to the pasture where, there's no pastures, no fences, nothing. They would take these cows over to a valley or a place where there's lots of grass. And we would watch them, and they would eat and eat and then go to the river and drink water and then come back and eat some more. And then we would, we would drive them home at night and lock them up again. That's, each, of a few of us took those kinds of turns. And I remember the big threshing machine that agency had and. All the farmers helped one another. At threshing time, they would go and do one farm and they would have it done in a day or two and then move on to the next. And my job that when my when it's my dad and my grandpa turn, the farmers would come with their horses and their wagons and their… my job was to shovel the grain, boy that was a hard job, one right after the other one trailer will be done, another trailer would come in and I'd be shoveling away. I was just young, maybe eight years old, ten years old. But that's the kind of work that I had done. And I really. The biggest part is the eating part, boy everybody enjoyed eating. And, you know, we, for us that was fun. So, it seemed like lots of people came and they helped all the farmers helped one another in another farm. I didn't go only my dad and my grandpa went, not, not us we stayed behind. My sisters would help my mom cook, and boy, they put out great big meals, oh boy those guys ate lots. And. And we'd always make prayer before we ate. That was another thing that I remembered. And we'd have lots of water on hand

for those workers when they came. Every springtime and in early spring. In February. And sometimes it's really not spring yet, in February, it's cold. And my dad would say, Okay, boys, let's go cut some wood. So, we would take the sleigh and the horses, a team of horses and. And we only used axe. My dad would sharpen up a couple axes and he'd do the cutting us boys would be hauling the wood and loading it up onto the sleigh. We'd have one load in the morning, we'd have lunch, then go out and get another load in the afternoon and in the evening time, there's chores to do. When we're done, we'd unload everything. Twenty-six cords is what we would cut. And that was, that will take us right through the whole year. Just be a little bit of wood left. And that would be in February, and there's a pile of wood there waiting for us in May. Or late May at the end of May, and then the big saw came, we had a tractor that cut. That ran a big belt with big circular saw a great big saw. We would sharpen the teeth of that saw and hook it up to the belt and start the tractor. And you can really hear the whirring of that big, big saw blade, oh boy, it made a lot of noise. And three or four people would come. Two to handle the wood, one to cut the wood. And one to throw the wood when it's cut. So that was a big operation that was quite a deal. We cut 26 cords of wood, will just throw it in a pile. And then in July, we would split, me and my brother would split all the wood and pile them up. And then they would season all summer and fall time, I think October, we started using that wood again. So those are ways. We raise chickens and we used to have fresh chicken for lunch, sometimes those, you know, we ate good, but we also ate accordingly, we didn't overdo things with our eating.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: I don't remember anybody saying that they're going to go on a diet. I don't know anybody that way. And also, don't know about child and family services. When somebody needed help, they just go and help with the kids. There was no, no, nothing institutions, nothing like that. I used to hear my mom and my grandpa making prayers. My dad hardly made prayers. You know, he had this PTSD shellshock stuff, when he went into the Second World War, and he never said much. We just don't know what's going to happen with him, you know, from day to day. He was he was mixed up. He was psychological damage from the war. He didn't get hurt otherwise, never got shot or anything like that, he had these big, big artillery. The shells were like 50 pounds, and he would put them in there. And there was a team Royal Canadian horse artillery, I think it's called or Royal Canadian Artillery, one of those two. And I remember I remember them coming back, I was a stranger because when he left, I was born. And so he didn't recognize me when he came back. You know, so when I was young, I remember us running. Different places with our cousins, and then I found an old steel wheel. It was about. 18 inches high, it's got handles on each side. It used to be a wheelbarrow all steel, it was pretty heavy. Silly me, I would just grab this thing and go running all over the place, with this steel wheel. It was heavy. And that's the way I used that wheel. I don't know where it went to. And we used to go to the Air Force dump, there was an Air Force close by, and we would go down there every once in a while and pick up some really good stuff that the Air Force used to throw away. Woolen clothes, for instance, wool clothes, wool jacket, wool pants. Sheepskin boots, sheepskin hat. I got one of those. I wore that for a long time. I had sheepskin boots. And oh, boy, I found a brand-new pair of goalie skates when I was young, and I went there with my friend and his dad. Come on, let's go, hitched up the horses and away we went. That's quite a long ride. That's about 15, 18 miles away. And we would bring back a whole bunch of goodies,

oh boy. I found these pair of goalie skates. I was really happy. The only thing that was wrong with the goalie skates is one of those eyelets. It was broken.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And it was a brand-new pair, boy I was happy. I was just a young boy, maybe three or four. I was just happy, and it's a good thing it wasn't a great big pair of skates. It was a smaller size. I remember that. And I was telling my brother that my cousin I said, look, I said, I'm going to put these on. I'm going to skate right away. I said, and sure enough, I was just happy I laced it up and I put them on, took them down to the river and I put them on. I got up and I started skating right away. I was just young, you know. And we carve sticks, ash, ash wood sticks, hockey sticks. Our puck was ah, we had from that same ash tree we would cut them into little discs or pucks, and we would use that. And, you know, I'm really certain that some of our boys. Would have made NHL really easily. I can name four people that would have made NHL really easy. They would skate and they were fast, and they know how to handle the puck. And they were big, and they were strong. You know, they would've made. I remember that story when my two uncles, Archie and Wallace. They, the scout from, from Boston Bruins came and they asked them to go and play a tryout with the Boston Bruins and they never went. We're not going to go they said. And they were good skaters. There were they were pretty big boys, too. They knew how, they knew how to play hockey, but they never left. They wouldn't go. So, it was a sport to us hockey. But they were good players.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Yeah, we, I was born, all of us were born at home with midwives. All of us. And also, too I was born in the log house, a little, those logs weren't very big, they were only like about five inches wide diameter, maybe six inches in diameter, those log houses. And it's just one room. And my mom would make mattresses out of straw through the big threshing machine, would blow out the straw, and she would gather those and put straw in them, she'll sew them up big mattresses. And she'd put them alongside the walls and for us to sleep in. So. My mom and dad had one, the girls had one, us two boys, we had one and my grandpa had one, so. And at night, we went to bed early too, come to think of it, that's, that's early. Today, we go to bed maybe 10 o'clock, 10:30, maybe sometimes. But in those days, we got up early, we went to bed early. And we would be sleeping, I'm pretty sure nine o'clock we would be sleeping. But before we went to sleep, we used to talk. What have, what happened today, where did you go, who did you go with all those kinds. And they'll be telling stories about what they done. And there was lots of stories about turkeys, horses, wagons. They would be telling stories all, and the last one was my grandpa. And by the time most of us, Grandpa was speaking, most of us by the time, we would be sleeping already. So, we missed some of Grandpa's talk. But he, he didn't really say too much, but he always said a few words. And so, you know that I was I was saying that a couple of days ago, I said that's called a sharing circle. We had sharing circles when we were young. I said, we knew how to talk. As soon as the three older sisters left, the talking stopped. They went to residential school. And that was a big. My dad said two things, my dad said, you kids have to go to school if you don't go to school, the RCMP's going to put me in jail, he said. What a thing to say to World War Two veteran. That's not even the RCMP's job. You know, so and my mom said it was really quiet when you kids left. She said, oh, I could tell she was not, she didn't know what she needed to do. But even with us kids away. There are still lots of work to be done, and I remember my mom making knittings,

wool socks and caps and mitts, and scarves. And put them in a box and she would send them to the Red Cross. I still remember, I was just young then, but I still remember that, you know. So, I'm my mom build the house during World War Two. She got this carpenter named Dixon, to come in and build a house for her, again one room with a little kitchen addition. Oh, boy, it was built really nice and solid, and my grandpa built his own house too. My dad built his own house too. And me too. I seen that so I built my own house, too.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: So but in the olden days, it was different.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Yeah, I just wanted to share one more word about growing up in a log house, those people used to go down to the go up to river, about 80 miles in that valley. And near Miniota cut those poles, those, tall wood to make log house on our reserve, so they'd go up there with the horse and an axe and cut all day. Then they lace up the trees in the water and they'll float all the way down to Sioux Valley and we would pick them up. The boys would pick them up and take them to build log houses. So that was a way because we didn't have that kind of wood in, near our, near our reserve. We had to go way up, different place.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: In my young life, I've seen lots of things, I wasn't scared of these things that I seen fire, fireballs in the air, little men whistles in my ear, I know which way the whistle comes from. I know the spirits talked to me on this side and two on this side, and one on this side they come and talk to me. But I was not scared, I I didn't know what they were. I would just kind of, kind of, I never said anything to anybody. I told my mom about, about the fireballs that I seen up in the air. But the whole community knew about those little people. *Weweda* they'd call them. One of my cousins got really sick one day when we when we seen one down by the river. And we never thought anything about it until much later. We know now, to, to when they appeared that we would feed them, that we would give them something, we would leave them something on the ground so that little people can have it, you know. So those are the things that we learned later on, but we went through that in our young life and. Those things were sacred, and when I got older, oh, boy, lots of things happened to me. I went up in the air six times and they all different times. One even at the university, one in my house, one at the Sundance, all different places, I went away up in the air. Those are just preparations to what I witnessed, what I what I was seeing in my community. What those little people, why they came, why the fireballs, why those black spots, why the whistles, why the spirits keep talking? But, you know, I didn't know I didn't know about these. But I never, hardly ever talk about those things. But, you know, I really started to miss them when I went into the Army. They, they didn't come. They never talked to me nothing. And I thought they were gone for sure forever. But when I came back to Canada. They came back again, and I was really happy. So, so that's how my, my living was. And I when I told that story, one of my. One of those people that I knew said oh, that's, those are miracle things. I said no those aren't miracles. Those are regular things. That's what my grandpa said, *hena ija wakan*, they are holy too he said. They let you see them because there's something coming up. You know, he was quiet, but he was telling me these things they're holy too. He would say, I guess he was talking to me about being holy, which is what the names that we get. A holy man or *wicasta wakan*, medicine man, they're all different you know, they're not all the same. Just like the doctors and psychologists and pharmacists, they're all different too.

Now, we have names for them. The ones Creator gave jobs to. So, Creator prepared me, now that I think of it in my old age, Creator prepared me right when I was young, right through till. It was just me and my volunteering to go to Peace Keeping that kind of war held them off like I never heard anything from them. I was getting I was getting so worried, actually, when I was in the army, I was getting so worried. I wanted to go to church. And I did when I was in the army, way over there in a different country, I went to church. And I didn't know what kind of church this was. And we don't have a church at home right now. Never had one for a long time. But anyway, I went in a church at 10:00 o'clock when, I was there at nine o'clock an hour early [laughs]. I really wanted to go to church, so but it was open at 10:00. So 10:00 o'clock came I went inside. I was shy because I don't know what's going on. All I want to do is to go make prayers, to ask for the spirits to come back that's all I wanted. But when I got in there, it was a French church, so I didn't understand a word. [laughing]. And also, I don't know, about halfway or towards the end the minister the father I guess the priest started speaking Latin. So, I was really lost. But I done whatever those people do. I was watching them whatever they were doing. I done this, they would kneel, they would go like this somehow [gesturing] I don't know what was going on, but. All I wanted to do was just to make prayers so, so that was those are. The preparations, too, for Creator to give me a job one month after I came home, this old man, my, my grade professor my great teacher. He came to me. He hardly went to school. He never went to school either. My grandfather never went to school, but they were telling me things like, you have two brains. My grandfather would say, you have two brains because you need to learn from what is right and you need to learn from what is wrong. And when my teacher came, he said, they want you over here. I was thinking who in the heck wants me, I'm just a drunk, I'm drinking and fighting all the time. Just come back from the army. Jump in, he said, if I'm going over there now, if you want a ride jump in. Well, I'm crazy anyways, so I just jumped in, away we went. We went to this nearby community, and he didn't say anything, he just got out when we got there, he got out, he went and joined the singers, and they were singing. I didn't know what to do. I'm just sitting there. I knew, I knew that little old lady who was running that Sundance, Mrs. Sinclair, she was a nice lady. So, I think maybe that might be it.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Yeah, you know. We tell continually tell stories of our young days. Mom had a swing, and she had a string attached to that swing, so she'll put the youngest one in the swing and give him a bottle on the way away. You know that. And yet our mum was we were all born at home and my mum also breastfed us. And yet I seen the younger ones, my two younger brothers, they had bottles to drink. But they drank from that jersey cow, milk from there. And so, and she had this it's like, I don't know what you call that swing, that you put, but anyway, it was blankets folded together and there's two strings there and they put you in there and then they put you to bed and then you fall asleep that way, swinging back and forth. So, you know, so that's one way is to continually tell stories and it's mainly stories about us. How we were raised, and my mom truly loved us. She paid attention to us. She hardly went anywhere. And things changed a little bit when the car, when we, my dad bought a car, and we started to go to things together and. But she was always kind my, my mom was always kind and loving she showed it, and that's, you know, that's really. Nobody, I don't hear no swear words. My dad smoked one cigarette only in the evening never in the daytime. I picked that up, too. I wasn't a good smoke. I didn't smoke until I was much later. Twenty-eight, I think I was when I started

smoking. And then I quit a little while later, I, I didn't I didn't like the taste of that, and I quit just like that. But the pain and the anger from the residential school that carried on into my army life. That pain was still there. That anger was still there, the way we were talked to, the way we were treated. All of those. It was taken away by an alcohol. I thought that's the way to deal with it. And I know that that's not the way to deal with it, because when you wake up the next morning. Those thoughts are always still inside of my head, and so I, I learned how to stop that. In the meantime, those *wasicu* were things, you know the white man ways of doing things. You've got to do this, and you have to do it this way, and here are the laws the man-made laws that all of those were just strange to us. I don't know anything about that. But I know some Dakota laws. But the disruption the, the obstacles was the *wasicu* laws, the white man laws which prevented us from practicing our, our own. That's, that's what the Indian Act done. They told us lots of things that was not true. Even today, the Indian Act is not, it's not the right thing for us. We're the only ones in the world that has an Indian Act and we're not even Indians.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: We're not even Indians we're [indistinguishable]. But that's how those old people were, they were kind, when the *wasicu* spoke, they listened. And they agreed with what, what they said. And some of that stuff is still carrying on today, you know, that some of the people would rather listen to a white person than listen to their own culture, you know? That's how we lost our culture. Some of us lost our language. I'm just lucky that we would continue to keep our culture as much as we can because that's the basis of our living and we share that. We've been sharing that way for a long time. I'm beginning to see a little bit of our relatives. Don't, don't call us by our name. Call us by our relation, Grandpa *uakaa*, Grandma [*kunsi*], *ina* [mother], dad *ate*, *esua* my younger brother, *ciaye* my older brother. It's like that, and some people are starting to write Dakota words now, which is kind of a good sign. It's not quite there yet, but. We with this technology, we're able to reach a lot of people the way that our Dakota culture is and the willingness to share that because we want our people to be Dakota too. You know, just like instead of drinking alcohol or doing drugs, we don't we don't want our people to go through that. We continue, we start to, have a good heart, you know, to be kind. Just like what my mom. And my grandpa. My grandma they, they were kind people, they were good people, and I really appreciated that. You know with turmoil that's caused by different institutions for us indigenous people. It was not very good. And we, we turned out not very good. We're not. You know, we you know, we don't we didn't reach our potential yet to be full Dakota people, we're half and half, half English and half Dakota. So, we really need to get back to full dakotah as much as we can. No more, no more doing what other people do. We have to follow our own our own way, and we have to share that with our family, you know? That's. And we have to use our heart, our mind, our body, and our spirit. We never think of those things, we just think, oh. I don't feel good today or I, I'm sick today. You know, we, we have to figure out things. In our own way. These other ways of taking, the doctors are really good at giving us pills. All kinds of stuff. Pretty soon you've got a whole pharmacy in our house and that's no good for us. And we're trying to convince people to try your best to look after yourself so that you don't have to take any pills which are no good for us. Go in the bush. And look after your needs that way, your health, health needs. So, so, that's kind of the way that we are encouraging and sharing with our people the way that we lived. There's lots of organizations now like the murdered and missing women organization, Child and Family Services Organization, the jail, even the

provincial schools. They're there, they're there to do some part, in trying to look after us. But our teaching is always been you're a human being. If you want to, to be specific, you're Dakota, make sure you do things in a Dakota way. You know, the *wasicu* they look at us as not being Dakota, in fact, I heard Trudeau saying that a long time ago, the old man Trudeau, if you don't speak a language, if you do things in English, then why would we give you rights in Indigenous rights he said. And I told them, the rights that we have doesn't come from you or anyone, it comes from up there [gesturing]. Yeah, and I'm trying to share that with people too so the people can get down to business. the *wasicu* is telling us that we don't need to listen to that because we have our own way of dealing with things. And it's good. We don't need to minimize it or we don't need to do half measures, we want to do complete and full measures of our way of living. So.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Yeah, yeah, I did. You know, I wanted to say a couple of more things regarding growing up. You know, the mothers. They're, they are, the ones that looked after the children. That's what it seems like. And the men they're out there different. Doing different things, hunting stuff. Also, too when the kids play, the kids play with girls only and the boys play with boys only, that's, that's the way it was. And when they have a gathering. The woman the mother looks after the kids and, and there she's, very attentive to the kids in this gathering, the community gathering. She, she wants to be respectful to the activities that is going on. And she would be telling the kids, "Sh, be quiet. Don't do that." That's the way. And some of them literally take, take that, because their mom said that lots of times and they grew up not wanting to say things. But the freeness of that, the freeing of that young child, let them do, let them learn and do the things that they, be good for them. You know, so the other thing is the kids are really smart. You know, but we have these I still talk about that a little bit, learning new words, I'm not talking about our language. I'm talking about the *wasicu* words like a new word, chair, for instance, or table, we didn't have that when we were growing up because the old people used sitting down on the floor and eating or out in the grass eating, cooking outside all of those kind of things. So, they had to learn new words like the telephone and television. We never had those things before. So those are the new words that they had to, to think about. And some of them were scared to say those things because they would laugh at each other, and they would say different things. How much o'clock? You know. One, my cousin said and my other cousin he say somebody whistle that's two, somebody whistle two times, you know, but he didn't you know, but we would be laughing at those kinds of things, watching people so.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: My *kunsi*, my, my grandma would be when she's looking after a young, the child, baby, and they go to bed early, maybe seven or eight o'clock trying to put them to bed, and my *kunsi* is sitting outside with that young baby trying to put that baby to sleep. And she, she sings a lullaby. And the lullaby is real things that are happening like right now while they're outside. And she, she would sing in Dakota, "Listen, listen, there's a bird singing. That bird is teaching you, telling you to go to sleep. Listen to the birds" all singing in Dakota. That's what she would be singing. And what we grew up with, the things that they told us, what the kids are learning in the *wasicu* world, and it's, it's pretty crazy. Hush, hush. We all fall down. That's a very bad, bad, bad thing to teach kids. Well, it's a good thing that a lot of them didn't understand what the meaning of that.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: You know, so, so, we that those are obstacles that prevented us from, from growing regular way. You know, there was no need for a young child to go on healing or to tell to tell a lie, for instance. Those are just regular things. You're expected to tell the truth. And that's how the way we were taught to, to always tell the truth, things that are happening in the regular way. So, there was no lies. I never, never come across somebody who always lies. Not it's not like that.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And so healing. There was no need for healing. Like I said before, there was no diet people took because they always ate good. Always done, they're happy they were doing, you know, they're always doing something. It meant, it has a meaning to their work and their understanding that. So, healing came later when we started to go into trauma like the residential school, all those kinds of things. And the experience and the participation and cultural activities also helped us with our, with our, with everything really. Cultural activities they have meaning. And I'm reminded again about the need to go from boy to manhood ceremony to grow to womanhood ceremony.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: They're, they're missing all of that. And so. So, it's not. My, my grandfather said it's not the truth we're looking for. Those are just regular things, you know, so. So, those are pretty important things that we learned when we were young. So learning is good. And what we're what we're being asked to do is to, to expand.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: To experience regular things the way they needed to be according to the culture. Everybody has that role. Growing and developing without having to think about, you know, today they're talking about truth, trust, honour, generosity, humility, all those words. Those are, those are just regular things that our people grew up with. And so that teaching didn't have to come in until much later when in my young life, that's when things started to appear that we, we needed to think about those words and stop telling lies because of all the things that went on, like the residential school and all of those kinds of things going to a *wasicu* school. You know, those are things that took us away from staying in the, in our culture. It was it was in the road. And I say to I say to the students at the university today, I say, you know, we all experienced trauma. Coming to this university, that's, that's a different community, that's another community that you're leaving your own community. Coming to a university community, it's different. So, I am encouraging you or advising you to that most of us have trauma in our life, that we would let this trauma out and not keep it inside any longer because it's going to be an obstacle to, to our learning, to memorizing that takes place at the university rather than learning. So that's, that's kind of the way that I'm encouraging these young students to, to think about doing. It's not their fault that they had to go through trauma. There's chaos in the community. There's all different kinds of things that are going on. And they had to go through some kind of an obstacle, something. You know, that they didn't have to go through. They shouldn't have had to go through this trauma, but they did and it was learned from another place brought into the community.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: One last thing I wanted to share. I always knew my grandfather; he was a tall man. He hardly had any words. He always wore moccasins, never seen him wear any shoes. And in the coldest part of January, usually the first week or second week in January, he, he would pick up his little bag and he had a small little shotgun. I think I forget what it was called. 10-40 or something like that it was called, that little shotgun. Anyway, when he picked up his shotgun in his little bag, I knew I knew what he was going to do. And so, I would and most of the time he would say *hiyu*, come, come with me. Away we would go, we'd walk towards the river and on the other side of the river, there's lots of trees. And he'll be walking around up in the trees and, and we would see pheasants frozen up in the trees. Some of them are hanging upside down. Some of them are frozen up straight up. He would, he had a stick with a hook on it and he would pull those down and put frozen pheasants in the bag and we would bring home five or six of them. The pheasants need help from the farmers in the wintertime. They'll go into the straw. But if there was no, no help, you know, they would freeze when it got too cold like it was minus 40 or something like that in those days. And they would freeze. That's what he would pick up and, and bring them home. And he'd give them to my mum. My mum would leave those birds by the stove for a couple of days until they thawed out. And then he would put them in hot water and pick up, pluck all the feathers and he would put them in the oven. And boy, those birds sure tasted good.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: So those are the teachings that we went through when we were young. It helped us to be stronger in our growing up. It helped us to, to remember that foundation. The work that we used to do. It helped us with our, occupy our feelings, the way we think, the way we do things, the way we talked, instead of talking nonsense. We talk straight about those things.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: And then when we learned about the *wasicu* language, you say well you hit the nail right on the head, I don't even know what that means. That's what the *wasicus* are teaching us. What the heck is going on? What's the matter with you? Can't you talk straight you know. The English word, the English is a silly language in the first place, you know? And so when we talk in our Dakota ways, we talk straight. You know, even though there's humour, we still are able to talk straight. And that's why we're doing podcasts right now with straight talk Dakota language so that people will learn, will learn how to say the words, you know. So.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: Those are some of the things that. And right now we know that people are, our people are wanting to, to slang the language, to shorten it, to move away from the real meaning where it doesn't mean anything after that, after a while these young people are speaking. Boy, I don't know what they're saying [laughing] because it has no meaning, so we're trying to get back to the regular. That's, language is culture.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: So right now, our grandsons they're singing pow wow. But in that pow wow, there's some words to that song and they don't, even though they say it, they don't know what it means. So how are they supposed to grow and develop you know so singing away.... The mother would be sitting quietly and singing some songs even before the baby was born. And, and when the baby is born, they can pick up words and songs just really quickly. And

you have to be real consistent. You have to be steady on doing that kind of work because the kids are ahead of us.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: At home we started to teach the Dakota language to the to the students. All of a sudden, the students learned a few words and they're taking it home to their parents. What does this mean mom? The parents would say, “I don't know?” So, then we learned that we had to take the parents to give them that teaching with the Dakota parents too.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: So now with all of this technology people are learning more and more about culture, their own way of living. Starting with human being living. And then later on, as they learn more, they can be specific to, to Dakota language. And the young kids are listening to that you know. It seems like they're not listening. You know, I learned maybe five, six, maybe even 10 years ago, that the young kids are not listening to old people like me, they don't pay attention anymore. So, I started to write things on paper. I would write them, and I would hand them out. And you know, these young kids, they believe that piece of paper more than me. You know, that's how far we've gone, we've drifted off.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: On a different road and we need to come back over here. When you do that, the kids are really, really looking for something. So that means when we're growing up, these cultural activities, we need to have more and more things regular basis, like every, every day of the week. Something should be going on in our community by women, whether it's for the young ones, it's for the youth or whoever, you know, for boys or girls, for mom and dad, that's what needs to. And that's not, it's not there. So that's how far we've moved away from our doing, looking after our way of living. It's serious business.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: You know, know this is there's true stories of long ago with the songs that are attached to it. And the ceremonies and the medicine that's attached to those long-ago true stories, the animals that are attached to it, the wind that are to those are they're still we still have those.

Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita: It's mainly directed to our Dakota, you know, people, but I'm noticing that even *wasicus* are interested in those, so if there's any time that you're interested maybe when the Covid kind of calms down a little bit to come here and sit outside there and they can listen to these stories and the songs

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: Because those those stories teach. More than just the story, they teach values.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: They teach how to live.

Appendix M
Elder Pahan Pte San Win Abbreviated Transcript

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: [Speaking Dakota]. So, my name is Grace Swan Buffalo woman. It's a name that I received in a ceremony, it's not the name that my parents gave me when I was born. And speaking of parents, I sent you a photo of Wanbdi's mother and his grandfather and I. I've been looking at them because they're right here beside me on the wall, our ancestors and as he's telling you, the stories of them. So, I'm going to tell you some of my stories. And first of all, I want to show you. I've been looking at him, too. This is my dad, Tapwe. And he is right here watching over everything that I'm talking about. I had a very different upbringing than my husband. I was born to my parents. Both of them having been born and raised in Saskatchewan. My dad came from Wood, the Wood Mountain area, my mother, one grandmother, Lakota, the other Cree, and then Metis. My mother, her generation and her parents were Indigenous People who passed. So, they were mixed blood who were able to pass. So, for them, they did not they were hiding who they were. So those were my, my parents. And my, both my parents moved away and, and moved to the city. And that's significant so my brother and I were born there, and they, they didn't stay together. And that was a very huge, huge loss for me and my brother, because once my dad left and my, my mother found a new partner, he was he was what we call *wasicu*. So, he was not, was a non-indigenous person. So, my brother and I grew up with him and mostly his family. And for them, we were these two children that belonged to an Indian. And we so we were always on the outside. And when they would have family gatherings, there would be. You know, her husband and then other adults in that were related to him and their children and we would be there, but my brother and I, we always were on the outside. And of course, we didn't know why. We didn't understand what that was. So, it was it was an experience of my family was, my family experience was like I was in a place with people that I didn't know and who didn't claim me. So that if that was it was an impoverished, impoverished environment in many and all ways and particularly in the way of having attention from adults and having role models and love from, from people who from adults who could reflect back to me the good things inside of me. And so, my dad was not in my life every day, but he was in my life, and he was the kind of dad that when we were small, his idea of spending time with us was he would, he would pick us up and then we would go somewhere. I guess we went to where he was living. And then the fun activities are let's go outside. And so, we'd go outside and then we'd all get on our on our bellies and we look for insects. And we'd, we'd be looking to see what kinds of things were on the earth, on Mother Earth, because my dad was passionate and interested in everything to do with Mother Earth. And so, then when we would find an insect, let's say we'd find a little dead insect where we would bring that inside the house, he'd pull out a microscope and he, we would look at it and then he'd talk about the different parts of the body and then we draw it. And then later he'd give me this drawing and it would have all the parts of the body labelled so that I would know what they're really called. That's the kind of dad that I had. And so those are my experiences of being a little kid is, those are just, that's just the natural way of my dad. Whatever he is passionate about and what he's drawn to, he drew us into that. He drew us into that. And my mother was very much like that too. I, even though she couldn't claim her own identity, indigenous identity, her connection to the land had a big influence on me. So, she is the kind of person who she knew everything. She's a, she knows everything that's happening in our, in our

yard. She knows where the and where the birds are, who's building a nest, who's fighting with each other. Like when I would come home, she'd be like she would tell me all the gossip of the bird nation in our area. And I actually, that had a huge influence on me. And I do that too now. Know, we feed birds, we make water for them. We when our when our *takozas* come, when our grandchildren come, we look at them, we get binoculars, we look at them, we tell them the names, we want, you know, we encourage them to be part of this natural world and to value it. And of course, children are naturally like that. You know, they are curious. And, and so it's easy to pull them in, you know, when they're small. So, that I want them to have that forever. I want them to know, no matter where they are, what they're doing, that they're connected to that natural world that is so beautiful. And, and so, we do, we do things. I found a little toy, it's a Robin, but it knows how to make a real Robin song. So, I bring that home so that I can say, well, listen, you hear that? And then when we see the robin nesting in our tree, then we can say, OK, well, you can hear him now you know who he is. And our little our little *takoza*, she's six now. She's going to be seven in the summer so she, "*Kunci,* is the robin in that tree?" And it's like, well, not yet. I don't know if it's going to make a nest this year because last year, we were studying that. I got that from my mother. I got that from my father, that connection to the natural world. And when I got older, my, my quality time with my dad, by then he had moved away from the city. And so he worked, actually moved up north. He didn't move back home to where he, like our home territory. He actually moved up north. And I think he did that because when he got there, he felt at home in the in the north. Half more than half the population are Indigenous, the Dene, the Cree. And so, it's a very different environment being the majority and for people in the north even today. They are, many are unilingual, they have their language, they know how they call them bush skills. So, when my dad was there, and that's maybe 40 years ago now, when he went there and people were still knew how to be on the land, and I think that was that was what my dad needed. And so, when I when I would go and visit him, of course, you know, where we would spend our time, we, we would, we would take a tent and he would sleep in the back of his little truck, he had a cap on there, and we would just go on the land and, and he would he would teach me the things that were important to him. And, and so, this is this kind of a forest, there's these kind of trees in here. This many years ago, you can see there was a forest fire. And you can tell that because of the size of these trees and the size of those trees, you know, and use this kind of old man's beard, it's called use this to start the fire. And then we'd start the fire. We make Labrador tea. So, he'd pick these medicines from the land and, and make that tea. So, we'd go hiking through the bush and then we'd find one of his favourite spots and we'd make a little fire and then we'd make tea. But along the way, oh, this is a lady's slipper orchid. Oh. And he would photograph it that was the other thing that he did [laughing]. He would photograph it and then he'd say, oh, look at this grass. This is horse grass. It's a very old, old grass. It's like a like the dinosaur era. That's how old this grass is. And he showed me how it can come apart in little pieces different than the grass that we have here in the prairie. And so those are the kinds of things that he would he was I mean, I was young then. I wasn't really saying, oh, dad, go teach me about everything, let's going on in the bush and teach me all these things. You know, that's not what I was interested in. And, but I was interested in having quality time with him. And that was his comfort place, that was where he was the most himself. Yet I remember all those things now, don't I? Now that I'm old enough to value the things that he was teaching me about how our

connection to that natural world and also our impact on that natural world and how we have a responsibility to leave it, you know, not to damage it. You know, if he could see the tar sands, you know, if we went there today, he would just be devastated.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: They were talking about doing a dam, building a dam in the north, and so he, he spent I don't know how you do this kind of a thing, but he made a map like he, he didn't go to university. I don't know how he knows how to do this because I can't even imagine how you do it. But he made a map of the area and what he wanted to do was he wanted to be able to bring this to court. So, when they started to talk about whether or not they could build this dam, he could show them all the area, all the natural areas that would be flooded when they do this and how much habitat would be destroyed. That's, and he finished that before he passed away. He wanted to fight for the earth to have the right to be a natural place. And he in that way, he was political. He had the skill to be a photographer so he would focus his lens on things to influence people, the beauty of that natural world. And I think that's also why he loved being in the North is it's untouched. They don't, they don't grow crops there. It's just the way it always has been. Nobody has gone there and destroyed that. And so, he, he loved that. Being able to be in a pristine wilderness the way Creator made it, and the way Creator intended it to be. And then we have to fit into that. And that's what he was telling me. And when he was, he was a photojournalist. So, he would take these pictures to tell a story. And they were at that time was the Mackenzie gas pipeline. They were what was his name, Judge Berger. The Berger Inquiries was going all over the north to ask them whether they wanted a pipeline. It was going to bring lots of jobs, but it was going to destroy. And my dad was following that with his photojournalism. And he I remember like I was 13, he was telling me all this. He was teaching me about the earth. He was teaching me about the sacredness and the value of it. But he was also teaching me about how us adults have this, we can have such a profound negative impact on that natural world and that we don't have the right to do that. And you know, Sandra, 30 years later, after my dad passed away, we moved to the north. Wanbdi and I both moved there and I.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: I, well, I'll tell you this part of the story first. So, when I was a young woman, my dad had heart disease and he died at 50. And that's hard. It's hard when you love your dad, and you have a close relationship. It's hard when you feel like you haven't had enough time with him because you haven't got to grow up the way you wanted with him. Well, and so there were so many reasons why that was hard for me. And I if I thought at the time I thought, now, I'll never get to have the relationship I want with him. Now I'll never get to have the dad that I want. It's lost and my opportunity is lost now when I'm finally old enough to be able to have that relationship with him he was gone and. And so. I had a rough I had a rough time growing up. I didn't go to residential school like Wanbdi. And I am so grateful for that, but I when I had drug and alcohol abuse, I had being abandoned, I had a horrible sense of being rejected and not being loved and totally not belonging. And that this sense that I'm waiting for my dad always to come back, because then I'll be with somebody who I look like, who I am like and where I belong. So that, you know, that was so profound, had such a profound impact on me. But then later in my life, when I, Creator orchestrated things so that I accept the position to go to live in the north, just like my dad. So now I go up there. But when I get there. People see me and they say, you're Tapwe's daughter and, and so, oh, I think I even have a picture of him right here.

So, Angus and Angus Beaulieu, soon as he sees me, he says, you're Tapwe's daughter. He says, oh, my gosh, he said, Tapwe and I were such good friends. He plays the fiddle left-handed, my dad.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: Angus plays right-handed, so when they when they were. When he was alive, they would get on stage and they would play fiddle like that, like a, like mirrors of each other, you know, champion fiddle players. And so, Angus says, “I want to adopt you. Dorothy and I are going to adopt you as our daughter.” And what I found was, I found a community that was my dad's community where I could belong, and where I had relatives and where I had people who right away instantly because, because of who my dad is and people know him and they love him, and what he did for the north, I mean, they gave scholarships after him and buildings after him and programs after him. So, when I come, then the door is opened and I find the place where I belong. Yeah. And then the other thing I find is that they say, oh, you know, let me tell you a story about your dad. And they tell me this long story. And now I starting to get to know my dad from other people's eyes from in a different way stories I don't know about, you know, different aspects of him that I didn't see. And it's, I feel like he's around me everywhere. And then I start having these experiences where, these strange experiences. And I, where I know that my dad actually, he might be buried there, he might be gone in a physical way, but he is there in a, in a sacred way, in a spiritual way, giving to me the love and the belonging and the acknowledgement that I always needed as I was growing up as a little girl. He's giving it to me from that other side. And the some of the some of the parallels and the, the experience are so amazing. So, one day I go to my office, I'm trained in social work and I had a private practice up there. And I had my office was at the back of the radio station. You know, little communities, things are weird. So, I have this wonderful office at the, the very back of the radio stations. And so, one day I go into my office and here's a bag sitting on the door handle to go into my office. And so, I open it up and it's a photo of my dad that I've never seen before. And it's there's just a card in there that says when I was looking through our old photos, I found this and I thought that you would, you would value it, which, of course, I totally did. And there were many things like that that happened when I was in the north that taught me, even though I felt that I missed so much of my dad while he was here in this physical world, he's been a great dad from over there. He's guided me to opportunities and experiences that were written on my heart that I didn't tell anybody about. And he's taken me and groomed me for the for the work that was going to be coming later in life for me. He's come to me in dreams and told me things and in visions a pipe is coming, don't go looking for it, make this kind of a pipe bag when you have it done, then the pipe will come to you. And many other things and, you know, Sandra 30 years after my dad was working on, telling the story of the Mackenzie gas pipeline, I was doing some radio for the in the North because I worked in the, had the office there, so every you know, it's funny in the small communities like "Pahan, can you come and help us out for the request show?" And next thing you know, oh this audio host didn't come in, do you think you could play some songs? They train me on the radio. [laughing] And so then I'm then I'm doing a newscast once a day, you know. And then. And then. And then they need someone to go to Inuvik to cover the Mackenzie Gas Project, which has been revised 30 years later. They're looking at it whether or not it should go ahead again. And now I'm sitting there 30 years later broadcasting to the whole of the north, talking about this Mackenzie gas project. And I'm like, dad, like, oh, my

gosh. Like, how did you make this happen? How is that possible? You know? So, this, that, that's one of the most profound lessons of my life. And Sandra, I went into social work, so I have worked with foster children. I've worked with parents of foster children. I've worked with traumatized women. I've worked with men at Stony Mountain Prison, and I've worked with youth at the Manitoba Youth Centre. So, I do feel like I at this point in twenty-seven years later, twenty seven years of working with people, I do feel like I learned something about exactly what you are studying. We want some healthy practices for our children so that they can grow up strong. And a lot of what I learned is from what not to do. And I would love to share that with you if that would be useful for your purposes.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: I think my biggest teachers have been the youth that go to the Manitoba Youth Centre. And what they taught me was. It goes like this that the, the children that end up at the Manitoba Youth Centre are children that ended up in care. Ninety five percent of children in care are indigenous in Manitoba. Well, they I don't know if that's the stat as of this moment, but when I was working at the centre, it was. And also. Ninety five percent of the children in custody are Indigenous. They're the same kids, they really are the same kids. And when children come into the youth centre, they are they are in crisis. They are, have come from abusing drugs and alcohol. They have come from people abusing them. And they are unstable in every way, including they harm themselves and they harm each other. And, and, of course, people have been harming them. And I have been working with trauma all these years. And so, I know what trauma looks like. I know how to support people who've gone through trauma. I know how to support people who want to heal from trauma. And when I first went to the youth centre, I wondered, I knew that the kids would have been kids who've been traumatized. And so, the behaviours that I saw when they're coming in, this was what I expected, acting out, you know, lots and lots of self-harm, poor self-esteem, not knowing how to get along with each other, depression, substance abuse and all many of those things. And I, I guess for most of my career, my understanding because of my social work training and what I have been offering people all these years is that someone gets harmed, they at some point that harm stops, then they take a step, and they want something different and then someone supports them with an intervention. And then that intervention helps to make some kind of a change and that person starts to go on a healing. So, this is the this is the process in my mind that I've been using all those years. And when I got to the youth centre, there was a lot of kids there, maybe a hundred and fifty when, something like that when I first got there. And what I noticed was that kids would they at first when kids came into custody, all those things were true. But after a certain after time, in time, they started to stabilize. They started to stabilize and the self-injury and the harm to others and those all those indicators of trauma. They started to not be in crisis. And I found that very fascinating and I thought, well, there's no intervention that's happening here. I'm not doing healing with them. I'm not supporting them around some healing like I'm not doing I'm not providing an intervention in that traditional sense or in the Western traditional sense. I'm not doing it. And they have lots of supports for kids, they have a psychologist there and things like that, but they're not doing that kind of work with them either. They're, they're just, you know, they're there to support them in that what's happening in the moment, not what's happening, what's happened to them in the past, the trauma that they went through. But still those kids stabilized. And you know what else? They went back into being kids. So, these are kids who are

in gangs, you know, who are running away consistently, who are fending for themselves, you know, who are engaged in all kinds of crime and violence. But once after they stabilized, all of a sudden, they're acting like children again. So. They have the structure is all these different buildings. In each building is like a different house. Only, only those kids lived there, and they're separate from the kids in the next house, and they keep them separated because it keeps peace. And so now it's this one house, let's say House A, it's their turn to have some time outside in this in this main area that's, and it's secure. They can't go anywhere except outside in this area and nobody else is there. So, they have to wait till everybody else is gone. Then they open up the door. And you know what those boys do? They run full blast all the way around the courtyard. You know, when you got the best athletes they're just like the wind, then you got the other ones and then you have the little [gestures] at the back, you know, running as best they can. And they're just smiling ear to ear, you know, because. They are kids now and then when they're finished running all the way around, they stop and then they play basketball, and they do these or baseball, or whatever it is for that day. So, I asked myself what happened? How did this happen that we were, that somehow bringing kids to this place, kids were able to stabilize?

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: And this is what I come up with my, this is what I understand. When kids come into custody, the first thing that happens is that they lose, that they lose their ability to make their own decisions. It's taken away from them and they become safe from themselves and safe from others, because that's what all those staff, officers their job is to keep kids safe. And so they have all these things in place, process protocols in place, that they that they will not allow kids to harm each other or themselves. And it's, it's you know vigorous. So that's the first thing that happens is kids are safe, kids become safe. And kids cannot of course, they can't use, use drugs or alcohol, but they also don't have any responsibilities all of a sudden. They don't have to worry about how they're going to fend for themselves. They don't have to worry about where they're going to get their food. They don't have to worry about where they're going to sleep. They don't have to worry about whether someone's going to sexually exploit them. They don't have to worry about that other gang bullying them when they're walking down the street. All those things are taken away. And when they are and we are able to provide a safe environment for kids, even without an intervention, they stabilize.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: And then I went two more steps. Of course, I heard all the stories. I heard all the stories of what their child raising was like, and this is what I come to understand. Is that, in our communities, we love our children. We totally love our children. There's no doubt about that. Our people love our children and want the best for them. And yet when a, when parents are overwhelmed, they are, have the capacity to provide a certain amount of supervision.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: And that supervision means that they, those children fend for themselves at a very young age. So, if that parent is struggling with substance abuse or if there's violence, poverty, then those adults are doing their best. Just they're just trying to survive. So, when those children go out to play, nobody has eyes on them. No, it's a break for parents. And so maybe the older children are supposed to look after the younger ones, those kinds of things, and or maybe that that child wants to go sleep over at such and such a place. And if that parent doesn't have all the resources and capacity as parents who are really healthy and well, they're

going to say, OK, and that's going to be a little break for them. Parents who have more capacity, who are not just trying to survive, but are actually thriving, might say, no, I don't want you to go over there. I don't know those people. I haven't talked to them yet. I, I want you to sleep here tonight and those kind of little decisions piled on top of each other. You know, year after year as children grow, puts children in the place of having to make decisions at very young ages, decisions that they are not able to make well. Because I found the children that came to me, by the time they're teenagers, they've been making decisions for themselves since they were before they were in the double digits, and they've been responsible for other children. And that's where those traumas came from, they came from they came from a lack of vigorous supervision and care. You know, Child Welfare would call that neglect. But neglect makes it sound like it's a blaming. And I don't think we can blame our families for struggling to survive. And when our families are drug or drug involved or gang involved and they're having children or criminal involved or all those different kinds of things, or when they are coming with all their own traumas. That robust being able to provide really robust supervision and love and a safe environment is not provided, and that's where children are exposed to the potential for abuse and exploitation and trauma. And I guess over time, working all the children that I worked with and all the adults that had children inside of them that I worked with, they all needed the same thing, Sandra. They all needed the same exact same thing. And that was that they needed robust, rich environment that was able to protect them all the time, not just some of the time, all the time. A place where kids can be safe and secure, where they're not responsible for things that are beyond their abilities, they're not responsible for other kids. They're not responsible to make their own food or to keep themselves safe or to know what is to be able to foresee what might end up in a in a serious injury, because adults are there providing that. Every one single person that I've ever worked with needed that. And the traumas they had in childhood came because they didn't have that. They didn't have that. And I used to think that, well I'll say it this way, I understand, and I believe that these traditional practices that you're searching for are ways for us to embrace healthy parenting, for sure. And they include wonderful, loving practices like what Wanbdi talked about, the, the swings that, our cradle boards, our moss bags, our teachings around how even before a baby is born, how do we teach mothers to, to be pregnant? And what how do they look after their children even before they're born and the things that they need to do? It's about not expecting a mother and a father to raise a child, which is just that's insane. It's impossible. It has to be a whole group of people who are, you can always count on them. You don't have to be exhausted because you can't get any sleep because you're up all night. You have people that can help you. You have your aunties and your cousins and the *kuncis*, the grandmothers, the I that that. And also, uncles, you know, who will teach them and care about them. So that that responsibility is shared, though. And then as they get older, to have opportunities to go through ceremony or to, to have a becoming a woman ceremony and becoming a man ceremony to be able to get their names, you know, all those to be able to be part of social events like the Pow Wow or the ceremony, the Sundance ceremonies or the other ceremonies that we have. And I talk about those because these traditional practices come from a place of loving our nation. So, and what I have noticed when I worked with communities that had a strong Christian belief, and there's nothing wrong with that, there's nothing wrong in knowing that Jesus Christ is a holy man, there's nothing wrong with that. But when it's at the expense of saying that there's

something wrong with our nation, then how could we love ourselves? So, it's like we have to give up one because this is the right way and that that perpetuates that lack of love for our own nation and who we are. And these traditional practices are saying our ways are good and in fact, I know Wanbdi would agree with me, our ways are better, traditional ways are better. Know the way, the way of life that was brought to us from settlers who came across the ocean was something they were trying to get away from. You know, they were trying to get away from that and did, but they brought it here, you know, I heard Wanbdi say that years ago and I thought, that's exactly right. But then and then imposed it on us.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: So our way, we know for a human being development to thrive. Our ways are better, they're, they're more they're healthier for community. And, and this is the big and. Even our traditional ways, without that healing on the inside, I still see communities fighting with each other, lateral violence, you know. Mean. You know, just the same behaviours that we saw in residential school are in our communities, even when they're practicing all these traditional practices. So, so, what you're studying and what you're going to talk about, what you're going to teach people about these traditional practices, you make sure you tell them it has to start with healing. The healing has to be it has to go together. Because we could practice all these things, and I think there are some families that are and maybe even communities that are, but their children are not being, not healthier, becoming healthier adults if there's still lateral violence and, you know, harming each other and angry rage, you know, those kinds of things. The children are, they're resilient, but they're fragile, they're, they hurt. By the harshness of the world, and we have to protect them from that, and if we could just get them to go to adulthood 18 with them, with this robust protection and a rich environment with lots of love. And I say that because my, my and my environment that I was raised in was impoverished. You know, I know that you have to have a group of adults around you who love you. It can't just be one person and who wouldn't want to. Like a person who has health, who is thriving, wants to be with children and offer stuff to them. You know, we love children, we love being around children. We can't wait till our grandchildren come here and the things we can share with them, we want to share that. There's people in the community who are ready. You know, you have to you have to invite them into circles in places where they can share that, where they can share that and give that to create that community for children. When parents are healthy, when parents are supported, when parents don't have to be overwhelmed, wondering how am I going to pay their rent, how am I going to pay this bill? How am I going to get there? I don't have any money for bus, car, cab. No, I don't know how to feed my child. Like, when you take all that away, you know, and give them people what they need, all of a sudden, they can be calm in the inside.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: That and, and so I've been watching for that. I've been watching for families that give that to their children. I've been watching for that. And I notice that I haven't seen a lot of them, but I the ones that I have seen that where the parents were in, in a stronger place. And were able to provide protection and a robust learning and loving environment for the children to grow up by the time they become teenagers, they're strong. Know, they're strong, they're resilient, and they, they're not like us, where we had to become adults, now we have to make up for all the wounding we had and heal that and fix it and fix that before we can start to live our adult life. Those are ready. They're ready to just step into their adult life and then to go

and contribute to the community. And to me, that's the goal of what we I don't feel like I have done it in my career, my almost 30 years of working with people. I don't feel like I have made that difference to help our people move to where we're able to raise our children to that adulthood with that robust health. But I know we can I know we can, it even if it starts with a small group. And the young people are so incredible these days.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: Indigenous, Indigenous People who are going to university, who are learning, know about it, are learning about it, or know about ceremonies and wanting to incorporate that. You know those families are having, their couples are having children now, you know. Those are the ones that will make the difference for that next generation. Yeah, I'm really glad you're doing this work because I feel like at this point in my career, I want somebody else to take that take that part that I seen it over and over with hundreds of people that I worked with. That was what they all needed and what I needed and like what Wanbdi, like we needed that. Maybe you too. We needed that. And without it, it's like we're starting in a deficit. We can say, OK, well, we can still go on a healing, we can still thrive. But first of all, we got to clean up the mess.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: Know, it's like in the morning, I like to be able to have the kitchen cleaned so I could just start cooking or when I get back from the weekend, I don't want to clean up the dishes before I have to start. That's my life cleaning up the dishes before I can start to thrive. And I think that's a lot. That's a lot of us. But those kids get that from the youth centre gave me tremendous hope because, those kids at the youth centre, when I saw how much change could happen. How much change could happen for them by just giving them what they always needed, which was safety, security and a whole bunch of adults there to look after their every need and to take away those responsibilities, including decision making. That they are not good at and before they're ready for it. And what I what I my philosophy of working with the youth. I was so lucky because they said we haven't had a *Kunci*, a *Kookum* here before, so you can you make this role what you think it should be. So I went around and talked to all the staff and I talked to the kids and asked them, what do you think that you need from a grandmother? And what I heard was they didn't want me standing up in front of them, telling them, giving them a bunch of teachings. That's not what they, I think that's what people were doing, trying to tell them like kind of lecture, give them oh these are teachings that you need to learn. They didn't want that. So I had to ask myself, what do children, these young, young adults, they are 13 to 19. What do they need from a grandmother based on what they went through? And I decided what they needed was they needed someone to love them, to see the good in them and be able to reflect that back to them and to be able to have a place where they could come, where they could thrive and where they could be successful. So, what I did was I started to teach them or offer them opportunities to learn about things that are fun because I like having fun, too. So, we did beading, we did regalia making. We learned pow wow dancing, they learned traditional songs, we had ceremony. And, what I would do is I would work with small groups and I would try to get to know them. And so that I could, I could see what might be a potential gift that they have inside of them. And then if I could see that, then I would nurture that and, and support that to bring it out, because each of them has to feel good about themselves. They have to have a reason. And those gifts are inside of them. They just, because they've been just trying to survive all their

life, they haven't had a chance to discover them and then to practice them enough to get good at it, to be able to say to the community, look, this is what I'm good at.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: So that was my job. And that's a great job by the way. That is the most fun job. And, you know, Sandra, those kids like some of them the first time. I teach them to how to bead a medallion, the first time they bead a medallion. It's like perfect. And I think. Who taught you this? How long you been doing? I never did it before. Like, oh, my gosh, all of us have to practice and practice. And here you are. Your first one is perfect. And they were like that, you know, they were like that sewing, design. Oh, we did a mural, some incredible artists, dancers, singers. You know, they mostly they didn't know they had that inside of them. And see, I grew up as a by the time I was an adult, I didn't know what was inside of me as my gifts either. So, I knew about that, that you, you need someone to help you to discover them. And you got to try a whole bunch of things because you might be rotten at six different things. But the seventh thing, you're the master of the world. So, if you keep allowing, giving a rich environment, learning environment so that they can discover what's unique and strong and a gift that Creator has put inside of them, then they get to be you know, they get to be the person in the community who's good at that. And then, of course, to teach them, well now you have to share it with others.

Elder Pahan Pte San Win: Know, if when you develop it and you become a master, an expert at it, now it's your turn to help somebody else who's, who's trying to discover that inside themselves too. And, and then that puts them in that, then they're part of the community. I have an important role in this community. I'm a person who's good at this and I help other people. You know, or we made a 12, 12 outfits, fancy shawl outfits, 12, we made 12 of them. And that wasn't for themselves, they were making them for someone to dance at the pow wow that year. Know, and I wanted it to be like that because I wanted them to learn about giving to the community. Which I thought was a very powerful teaching, and you can only give to the community when. Stop it, you're distracting me and you're, you're, do you have a meeting? I don't think so. You can only give to the community when you have something inside to give, you can't give to the community when you're struggling to keep your head above water. So, so, that has to do with self-esteem. That has to do with feeling good about who you are.

Appendix N
Elder Norman Meade Abbreviated Transcript

Interview 1

Elder Norman Meade: Because I'm named after my two uncles and that's pretty common. When you talk about traditional parenting and stuff, you know, you're often carrying the name of somebody that came before you like, in my case, it's my two uncles and they're both long gone now. But uh I understand when I do my research, family research that these two uncles of mine, were kind of anchors in their families and died relatively young because there was no place to, no doctor to go and see if you got sick. And that they both died, one on my mom's side of the family, Norman, and one on my dad's side of the family, which is Franklin. And so, you know, that was often how children, boys, or girls they were named after aunts or uncles. And I think about that. I carry that name uh it's kind of special to my heart. But I'm named after my two uncles. Not named after my dad my oldest brother is named after my dad. And is was often the oldest brother, like the oldest son or the youngest boy in the family, the youngest son that that carried their father's name. In my family, it was my older brother that carried my dad's name. And I was the second oldest of the and the boys, of the boys, and so I carried my uncle's names, so that's pretty, pretty important.

Elder Norman Meade: A big part of my life and a big part of everyone's life, if you carry a name, not just your family, name Meade like I like to use my other name and I can't use that because of identity reasons. uh I can't use my Favel name, which is my mom's side of the family. Like if I could hyphenate, that and say well I'm Meade Favel or Favel Meade uh because there's lots of relatives in Saskatchewan, and in Ontario that I know I'm related to, but I don't I don't know them. And so, I'm uh I ah but I'm proud of both of my family, my family names.

Elder Norman Meade: [Introduces granddaughter who is spending the day with him].

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, it's a very important part of your sense of belonging, of uh like in our community, which is a Metis settlement, the family names and we still talk about that back home, like there were certain family names of maybe eight or 10 family names that were were you know more common names in the community. Right. And if you weren't like I Meade, you were a [name] or a [name] or, uh you know, a different family from a different family. Right. And so, your family name was pretty was pretty important.

Elder Norman Meade: As well as your given names, you know, your first names.

Elder Norman Meade: Well, I think it's through identity, like when you talk about family name, what family do you come from? you know, like I sit with students and when I ask them what family do you come from, if you're from Grand Rapids or somewhere else, like, you know, what family do you come from? And they tell me what, who their family is. And I can connect because I've been around the world, and I can connect the family names. And I and I say you have to be proud of your family name, like you know you carry a good name, [name], or whatever your name might be, or [name] and you in your case, I'm not sure that's a married name or maiden name, but that name is carries, it's a strong identity of who you are. And your children should know that name and they should be proud of that name because you had lots of ancestors

that came before, carried that name and they were good people. If you've been given another name, like a traditional name, for example, I have a traditional name that was given to me in a sweat lodge, and I'm proud of that name too. But that's my name that was given to me by an Elder, a traditional Elder. And I and I'm proud of that that name. You know, my full name, Norman Franklin Meade, I'm proud of that because it does carry my family ties, right?

Elder Norman Meade: Like I say I'd like to be able to add Favel because my mom's side of the family. But I for identity reasons, you can't, you could change your name, I guess. But we don't often do that. Right. But as long as we know that I am a fam, I'm a I'm a member of that family as well as a family or like from my name, Meade you know. But I'm also proud of the Favel name as well.

Elder Norman Meade: They've [children and grandchildren] worked on that. Each of them um the girls, more of the girls than the boys. I find that the girls are more into that and more interested in that, and that's good ah the boys well, they're busy with other things. Right. And they they're not so, so interested in getting their traditional names in the lodge. They've been to the lodge. And I know that they talked about it. But just to make time to go and do it to get it done.

Elder Norman Meade: It's something that there they just haven't really taken the time. I've got two ah, well one is 17 and one is twenty two. I think that's their ages of the grand grandsons. And one is my great grandson who is only six, and he's got his name because his dad, his grandpa I mean on that side of the family is, is a traditional lodge teacher, operator, conductor. You know, so he made sure his grandson got his name early like.

Elder Norman Meade: It means it means a lot like my wife when she was here, she like that like we grew up as Christian people. I mean, as church people. And uh we both got interested and got to know a fair bit about our traditional ways later on in life. But I know she, too, was always interested in her work, that that the women and the men, as many as she could get interested to get their traditional names. And of course, we were proud of our granddaughters that made an effort to get their names.

Elder Norman Meade: I always tell young men more young men than young women, I mean that I when I sit with young men, I always try to get them to understand that the spiritual part of our life is, you know, finding a way that you connect spiritually with Creator. However, that happens, you know, like you go to the lodge, and you find a sense of spirit there for us as that grew up as Christian, you go to church, and you find maybe a spirit there. But I always tell the story that I didn't find my spirit so much in the church. We grew up as Catholic and my mom was, always you know, she was a devout Catholic, she would make us go to church on Sundays and that. And um but I had a hard time to find my spirit there. Like I found my spirit on the land, I found my spirit when I go out in the bushwalking, hunting, whatever I was doing. And that's where the that's where I kind of connected with my spirit. So, I said, you know, there's got to be a way of connecting to the spirit that that's more traditional. Hunters, gatherers, fishermen and so on, they seem to be very spiritual people. You know, people that farm, like agricultural people, they're very spiritual because they work great with the land and the animals. And, you know, everything has that strong spirit connection. Right. And so, your name that you might get in the

lodge. You maybe can't identify on government papers, records and birth certificates, marriage records and so on. You can't use that name, but you can still carry that name as a spiritual um you know, to give you that spiritual connection that you so need, you know, that uh you that that is the spirit name and Elders give it to you. And it's important, you know, that a grandmother or a grandfather gives you that name, that they see something in you that reminds them of who you are, you know. And so, I think that that's really important for young people to know that, you know, grandma sees something special in me or grandpa she's something special in me and, you know, and might attach a name to it. I mean, it's a kind of unofficial name, but it's still somebody sees something in you that is really important, a quality that is really important.

Elder Norman Meade: You see, this is where a lot of times that young people, unless they unless they practice, do like practice what some of their traditional way that they might miss out on that opportunity of getting a traditional name and live their whole life without knowing who they are, that spiritual aspect of it, because it's the name that's given to you in ceremony that really brings you closer to Creator, brings you into the spiritual realm of who you are. The other names given to you are more for identity purposes, but they also carry a family significance, like in my case, Norman Franklin, that carries and of course Meade you know finishes off my full name.

Elder Norman Meade: And so it's kind of unfortunate in some ways that our mothers, you know(...) the grandmothers and so on the female side of our families. That that they didn't, you know, that they couldn't have been carrying their names. I know for my wife [name], when she passed away here, what are we going to put on her on her headstone? And I said, well, you know, her name has got to go on there like she was a Meade, but she was a Meade ‘cause she married me. But I said we got to put her other name on because that's the name that she really like was her mom and her dad's name right, [name]. So, she put we put [name] on under as the grave marker so that she liked she really cherished that that name. And so that was uh why we put it on. So, it’s your identity you know of who you are.

Elder Norman Meade: We have more turtle lodges, we have more people, more people that who can run lodges like in our First Nations and even in the Metis villages where we can go back to the to some of the traditional way of life and through them ceremonies, those ceremonies that we can give them their name. We you know, they come and they show that interest. And I want to I want to get my traditional name. Well, there's a place that you can do that. Let's go to Turtle Lodge for your name where a lot of people do get their name in our area and there's other places, but I think our communities need to we just need to keep working at uh, you know, having more traditional ways, means of encouraging young people to get that that traditional name you know.

Elder Norman Meade: You'll be proud of it. If you if you get it, you earn it then it's yours. It'll be you'll be proud of it.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, I think I think community has a big part to play. You know, when we talk about this, it takes a community to raise a child naming the naming ceremony, was, is very much part of that first the first part of that is the naming ceremony. You know, we used to do it all the time and now we've kind of let that go now and, you know, people say, well, we'll

name our child even before the child is born this is to name the name that will be given to this child. But um I guess that was a good practice in some ways but it was um the community wasn't really part of it, you know, the mom or the dad or, you know, like pick the name that they wanted to name their boy or girl or whatever and their child and so I think that it was kind of nicer if when the community's involved in naming a child, you know, helping to name the child, however you know were getting grandmothers together, maybe some mothers together or fathers, too, and saying, you know, we want to have a, we want to name our child and uh we want the community come together and help us with that you know. Whether that's the name that they're going to carry. Like Norman, say for example that might be it, or maybe that would be a different name, the one I have right now. But I think the community naming is really important, you know.

Elder Norman Meade: Because it takes to a community to raise a child. In name, identity is really the most important one of the most important first steps in that. It also has a kind of an attachment to the language, you know, like my grandmother named me Makwa when she gave me a name when I was just a little boy, she named me Makwa and I still carry that name today, that isn't the name I'm talking about when I say it was given to me in a lodge but it was the name that my grandmother gave me Makwa.

Elder Norman Meade: And my son, who is uh you know, he's of course older now, but he's he was *Makoons* when he was born. He was a little bear. Right. and I was *Makwa*, big bear and he was Little Bear.

Elder Norman Meade: And uh she seen something in me that she always thought that I was a protector of sorts, to help to protect people and speaking for people and so on. She seen me as that kind of a person and then she gave me that nickname, we call it a nickname, but she gave me that name Makwa and a lot of people back home, not lots, but some of them are still carrying it and people that are the same age as me they still call me Makwa.

Elder Norman Meade: I felt that was always was something that I wanted to do to live up to that name *Makwa*. Uh on my wife's headstone just as a point of interest uh(...) We put a bear on one corner of the stone and her picture on the other side and they asked why we would put a bear on there, and I said, well, you know what for one reason, she lived with me for over 50 years so I'm kind of with her even though she's there. Right. and the other reason is that when they, when they associated her and I as a couple, they seen us as people who would protect together other people, like we would work together in family counseling or, or marriage counseling, and that we would work at that in a way to keep people together, protect families and so on. And that's what we did. But our names was very much an important part of that. And it just was interesting that a bear came to visit her the week before she passed away last July, bear walks up to the house in Manigotagan and she said I wasn't up yet and I always get up earlier in the morning than she did. But that morning I didn't get up as early as she did. She got up at six o'clock in the morning and looked out the window and a bear walks up the driveway and comes and looks at her right in front of our window and then she said had you got up an hour sooner. We had a visitor this morning oh who came to visit you. She said a Makwa (...) and that was a week before she passed and said, well, you know I guess the bear came to take her home kind of thing.

Elder Norman Meade: But she had a name, too, like her name was also given to her like uh she was [name], but everybody knew her as [name] but she was [name] and she asked her mother, who, who am I named after, like, is it that [name] in the Bible? And her mom said, no, you're named after the one who delivered you. So there again, there's a connection of you know midwifery. You know, you're named after the one who delivered you if you're a woman, a girl, you're named after the [name], the one who brought you into this world.

Elder Norman Meade: And, you know, so I think I would say that is pretty awesome too you know you're named after the one who brought you into the world.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah It was meant to be, yeah otherwise yeah it was just meant to be the way it was, you know, that something was it was gonna happen and a bear was kind of the name that we both kind of worked with and over the over the years, we've been together. And there, you know, she gets a visit by a makwa (...)but I think it was meant to be

Elder Norman Meade: I mean, the other thing with names that we talk about, names like there's other reasons that we when we get old, you know, we know we we're not going to live forever right and at some point, one of us is going to be left alone(...) very likely just through age. Right. And so the forefathers, the ones that walked before me and I remember my brother in laws and my some of my uncles have lost their wives and had to live by themselves for a few years, you know, and from that I learned as well and again, it's carrying that family name like, you know, they had to do it. So, I'm going to have to do it, too. Yeah, I miss her very much. But you know what? The other men other women have lost their spouses after that many years or more than that even. And they had to go on with life and so that name that's been given to me, like her name, Barker, my name Meade, you know, like we have to live out I have to live out for the rest of my life. The strength of those names, because I'm carrying when I married her, I was asked and accepted into that family.

Elder Norman Meade: And when they accepted me into that family, I must carry that name as well as my own name, [name], as well as my name Meade right?

Elder Norman Meade: Because we also accepted her into my family, and she carried the name Meade and carried that name proudly too and so I have to do the same thing. So, it's not just a one way street, it's a two way street. Right. When we think of it, I'm carrying two names now. I mean, I'm carrying the [name] name because I married into the [name] family and I was accepted fully in that family. And I say that proudly and at the same time, we accepted her into our family the Meade family. And we accepted her in a very proud kind of way. So, you know, there's pride involved right.

Elder Norman Meade: People don't think about that but when we do when we do uh when we were doing marriage counseling and I still do it today, I know I sit down and say to young you know couples that are thinking of getting married, don't forget that you're going to carry two names now you're going to carry the name of the family you're joining and you're going to carry your name. So whatever name you have, you have a [name] name and you marry somebody else, you know, with a different name, you're going to carry both names your associated with now,

any of you ought to be proud of your you know when you're married into a family that you're proud and live up to that expectation because they accept you into their family.

Elder Norman Meade: It's really important stuff I mean I've had a lot of people say that's not really important yeah, it's important(...) that's really important to carry that name

Elder Norman Meade: My mother-in-law was my second mother my grandmother was my first second mother and then after a while it was my mother-in-law who became my second mother kind of, I'd go to their house and I was treated like her son, right?

Elder Norman Meade: And so I should live up to that, you know, that she accepts me as her son in law, but kind of as her son and so I should live up to that and have the highest degree of respect for her as a as a mother-in-law. She is my wife's mother, and I always thought that was really important, and she carries that name, that I should you know, I should be doing my best to it and acknowledge and honor that name as best I can wherever I go.

Elder Norman Meade: Like the clan system in a way, like you talk about the clan system, you know, like it's kind of like the clan system where we say, well, I'm, I belong to the Sturgeon Clan, and I do that the that's the clan I belong to.

Elder Norman Meade: But I also belong to the [name] clan. I mean, you want to talk to a [name] in our area that say that Norman's not part of our family. They will say Norman is part of our family. We accepted him into our family when he married [name] and you won't hear anybody saying in a like that [name], you know, wasn't a part of the Meade family, she was part of the Meade family and every one of us in the Meade family accepted her in that family and it's a large family. So, it's not just kind of mom and dad accepting your mother-in-law and father-in-law. It's the whole Meade family that's accept you into their family.

Elder Norman Meade: It's a pretty big family in many cases that we have big families, and that's where the name you know the, those names that we carry uh you know [name] big family all over the north. You know, you're proud of that name. You're proud of that that [name] family.

Elder Norman Meade: You're proud of the [name] because they they're a strong family name.

Elder Norman Meade: So that's pretty important stuff when we name when we carry like a when we're traditional parenting and that the parents like that when their children live up to the name number one they like that, they really appreciate that and know that you're living up to the name, if I was to go around and badmouth somebody and say, well, I'm not a part of that family, that [name] family or, you know, if I was to go around and badmouth that name, I would not be doing right. I'd be very disrespectful, and I shouldn't be doing that.

Elder Norman Meade: I never, never had done that. So, you know, that's just the way it is that we were we were raised that traditional parenting naming is very important.

Elder Norman Meade: Well, I mean, the clan system, which we didn't use, we didn't know about it until later in life, right but like when I was, and again, I go back to, you know, like, so

what is this clan system about? Well, it's you know, you've been given a name like I'm of the Sturgeon Clan, so I usually take the father's clan.

Elder Norman Meade: And so uh when you belong to a clan like you can't marry within that clan. When we talk about marriage, you're not to marry another one from the Sturgeon clan, right? And that's one thing that you have to know what clan you belong to. And that's important for many reasons uh you know that you are um, you have a family, an extended family, if you will, in the clan system.

Elder Norman Meade: It doesn't have anything to do with if you're a Meade or a [name] or a [name] or anything like that. It's nothing to do with last name, family names right.

Elder Norman Meade: And so in a in a community sense, like we were talking of, you know, a lot of times those names, the community, you have names that are outstanding, names like [name], for example, maybe where you are from [name] from Hollow Water, Meade's from Manigotagan that kind of thing, you know, all you have to do is say your last name and oh yeah your from Manigotagan or you're from there. Yeah, Yeah You know, they relate the name to the community, right?

Elder Norman Meade: Biologically, I mean, when you talk about, you know, like when I do weddings, for example, I make sure that if and sometimes you have people that are relatives, but so long as they're not closely related, you know, and I ask you know that's not your first cousin or second cousin, you know, I mean, you got a different name, but you're not biologically related. "No No, were not" because I have to know that if I'm going to marry you and it's going to be legal, I want to know that, you know, I can't marry you if you're if you're cousins or closely related right.

Elder Norman Meade: But if you're a Clan and I say, are you what clan are you from? And they tell me and know and so your wife to be or husband to be is from a different clan yeah well, that's good. that's fine. But, you know, there's those questions that sometimes we as people that do weddings and that we need to ask those kinds of questions. I remember a lot of them, not lots of them but sometimes occasionally ministers would come in and do weddings and they wouldn't ask any questions they just come on in and marry a couple and I know in one instance back home, they married first cousins and uh their dads were brothers and, you know, people the old people in the community said that should never be.

Elder Norman Meade: The minister should have asked, you know. He doesn't know that there they got two different last names and he doesn't know the families. So, he should ask questions, you know, so, naming again, and parenting. Like the old people didn't like that. If you if you were marrying your cousin, but they didn't say anything, and the minister didn't ask and so there you do the ceremony and you just married relatives.

Elder Norman Meade: My grandson, when he was playing hockey, he was playing for Peguis and he'd go down there and I say, you better be careful man when you go down there and play hockey, you're going to meet some girls. There's a lot of nice-looking girls down in Peguis and you're a hockey player and you're going to meet them and you're going to maybe date them I

said, you've got a lot of relatives down there. You find out from somebody first [laughing] and he said I don't know why you tell me that. I said I said, well, I told you that I, just to kind of warn you that you have lots of relatives in Fisher River and Peguis and so you know, you have to be careful who you're dating when you when you're out like that.

Elder Norman Meade: I mean, it might not be in the same community, but you know you're gonna get to know, you know, women, girls or whatever and to just be careful that you don't get too serious.

Elder Norman Meade: It's Uh you know, naming is something like traditional parenting or naming and, you know, that's a really a really a key part of our of our upbringing and our community, you know, how we associate with each other even a way after in life, like you, you meet somebody from your home community and they might even be a relative and a lot of times you say holy man yeah they are a relative they're a cousin, you know, we have a lot of cousins around.

Elder Norman Meade: What they do is they like in our family, we're pretty fortunate because, like I know lots of traditional teachers and Elders that are you know traditional and so but if you don't know anyone, it's good to ask, you know, like who can I go to for like, I want to get my I want to get a traditional name for my child and who should and how should I go about it. Well, yeah, you probably ask a few questions, a few people and you're going to come up with. Oh yeah. That one is a good person to talk to. Might be a grandmother or a grandfather that runs sweat lodges or whatever and knows all about the naming ceremonies. Right.

Elder Norman Meade: And you approach them with tobacco and say, you know what, can you help my child or myself, you know, get my traditional name? I mean, that's what I done with [name], the friend of ours and a family now of ours, 'cause his son, married my granddaughter. And so they I asked [name] for my if he could you know give me my name. And he did you know, I had to go to a few sweats, and I went to some ceremonies, and he did. And I was old already when I when I wanted to get my traditional name given to me.

Elder Norman Meade: For a young person, it's the same in the same way sometimes they need a little bit of coaching on it, like my grand girls they wanted coaching on it, of course we were able to coach them and tell them this is what you should do, but you have to make an effort and you've got to be serious about it. Like, you know, you've got to kind of convince your child, let's say, you know, like my granddaughter, for example, she was a teenager when she wanted to get her traditional name. I said, well, you know what? Me, I'll go with you, but we'll go to we'll go to a sweat together a few sweats. You, you, I want you to show that you're interested, and you say you're interested. So, let's get it done. And she did. And I was really, really happy for her that she reached out and wanted for her traditional name.

Elder Norman Meade: Well, if you if you ask enough questions, there's enough people that usually that know you've got to spend some time with Elders eh.

Elder Norman Meade: Like most of the time Elders know what you know, what clan your family belonged to.

Elder Norman Meade: You know your dad, or your grandfather you know most of the time they know that ah what ah you know what those clans who belong to who, you know

Elder Norman Meade: The more time you spend with Elders, the more knowledge you get about everything but about naming and that, you know, and even like traditional parenting what was it like back then? Well, back then, communities raised children like we never had children be adopted out, like never, never adopted out a child from our area. I can't remember until way more recently that we have children adopted out to being taken care of by somebody else. We never had to do that before. I mean, if a mom died when she was young or whatever, you know, other moms stepped in and kept the, kept the children. I mean, it didn't have to be sometimes it was uncle and aunt, sometimes it was grandparents, sometimes it was just another family, a close, close family relative. I mean, not even a relative, but somebody in the community that were interested in taking a child you know taking a child in and the children were never adopted out, that we never, never had children leave our community. Never.

Elder Norman Meade: Oh its way too common now it become uh it become a commodity now, like where the children, the 80 percent, 70 percent high rate of kids in care, you know, yeah so parenting long ago was that the traditional parenting meant that you were you were uh you were you were a part of the community, that was it, like I said, you know, when we were growing up as children and Manigotagan, we had one biological mother the same as everybody does, one biological father. We always we all knew our fathers back then like now you say well who was the father? well I'm not sure or I don't know. But back then, you knew who the father was and who the mother was. But even like if your mom wasn't around like you had six other mothers watching over your shoulder, keeping you making sure that you were looked after, cared for and supervised.

Elder Norman Meade: You didn't have one. We had one biological mother, but you had, you know traditional parenting back then was that you had other mothers watching over you or other fathers watching over you.

Elder Norman Meade: That's why I tell, I try to work with young boys now, especially the young boys. Young girls too if I need to. But the young, the young, the young boys, I try to tell them, you know what, I can serve as your grandpa I'm not your biological grandpa, but I can serve as a grandpa, a grandfather if you if you don't mind. But I'm going to treat you like my grandson. I'm going to tell you the same thing that I the way I teach my grandson. I'll be talking to you in that same way.

Elder Norman Meade: They usually say it's OK. I haven't had anybody tell me no [inaudible] but they're usually pretty, you know, they're usually open to that.

Elder Norman Meade: I got lots of nieces and nephews and a lot of times they come and call me uncle. I said, am I your uncle? Yeah, you are Oh I said, OK, well that's fine. I'm just asking because I don't know who you are because you're, you know, you're young. And they'll walk up and they'll call me uncle and you know I say, well, I don't mind even if I'm not your biological

uncle, I can be your uncle, I should be your uncle, you that's what I should be doing you know. I should be treating you as my, as my nephew or my niece.

Elder Norman Meade: That's the one thing about our indigenous way of life is that we were you know, it doesn't matter the biological stuff is important. But when they recognize you as Uncle Norman or as Grandpa Norman or however, they recognize you, that's fine with me. I like that I'm gonna have a good relationship with you, yeah

Elder Norman Meade: And that's the important part of it, is that that relationship, you know, that there is a relationship already there and there its already acknowledged both ways, both from the niece or the nephew and from the uncle. Right.

Elder Norman Meade: And you just have to live up to your, you know, your new niece or new nephew. If I'm going to be your uncle, I'm going to treat you like you are my nephew.

Elder Norman Meade: I tell the young people that, you know, if you want to call me grandpa or uncle or whatever, you know, I don't I don't mind it at all.

Elder Norman Meade: You know, a lot of people say it seems kind of funny to call you uncle when you're not really my uncle. I say well you know it takes a little bit of getting used to I mean you know.

Elder Norman Meade: But I want to be your grandpa or grandfather, as we say, like instead of saying Elder, I know some Elders don't like to be called Elders. Well, I was given that Elder title by my community. I was I was brought into a circle of people and quite a few people and by somebody else and introduced me as their new Elder. I didn't even know what an Elder was back then, you know, what am I to do? And he says, well, you maybe don't know this, but you are already on your well on your way to be an Elder. So, they accepted me as their Elder.

Elder Norman Meade: And I said, well, I have to live up to this title now as an Elder, I can't let them down. I mean, I'm letting my community down if I, if I, if I let anybody down. It's the same thing that being an uncle or a grandfather, I can't let you down because ah if I'm seen to be your grandfather or uncle. I can't let you down.

Elder Norman Meade: When you know when I think about like getting old. you know like, I I'll be seventy-seven in a couple of months and uh, and you know, we're as old as we feel like sometimes, I work too hard and my daughter tells me, she reminds me Dad don't work too hard. You know, my wife used to do that too. Don't work too hard.

Elder Norman Meade: Your getting old I said yeah, I know. But you know what my body tells me when I've had enough. She said she told me that just on Saturday, she knew I was working hard and uh we were at Managotagan, she always comes with me, my daughter. And she was with me Saturday. And so, we I had a hard workday Saturday. And I said, oh, I'm tired. I said, I got to go to bed early I said, I'm not even, I can't even watch watching the hockey game.

Elder Norman Meade: And she said uh I told you, she said you overdid it today. You're out in the sun and heat all day and your I said Yeah, well I've I put in my good day's work that for sure I should be tired.

Elder Norman Meade: I have more to share, one of the things that I really, really like to share when we're talking about traditional parenting or the bringing up of children, you know our men have to do more for their boys our men have to do more for their boys. What do I mean by that? We've got to spend more time with our, with our boys and for me it's me with my grandsons. I got to spend more time with them.

Elder Norman Meade: When they're young because, you know, they're part of my family. They're part of me. And I have to teach them what I want them to know and so to do that I have to spend more time with them. If our traditional parenting could come back the way it used to be. You know, we spent lots of time with our fathers as boys. I mean, our father had so, like things that he would teach us how to work and how to work safely, how to work with other people in our community, he was our teacher in that way, Mom took take care of us health for health reasons, you got a cut on your hand or your leg or something. Mom took care of that she always had seemed to have the medicine that could, never seen a doctor you never had to see a doctor. But, you know, she always knew what to what to get to heal us right.

Elder Norman Meade: So mom had the kind of the home care stuff to take care of us, to feed us clothe us and stuff like that. But my dad was the one who taught us boys. My mom taught us. My mom taught the girls. We had sisters, three of them, and she taught the girls how to be young women and how to cook and all of this she taught them everything like that and that she wanted them to know. Right?

Elder Norman Meade: But uh I mean, there's lots to talk about we wouldn't have so much of this ah missing and murdered Aboriginal you know Indigenous girls and women, if if our men were to do their part and do it well.

Elder Norman Meade: If we were to bring back some traditional teaching, we wouldn't have we wouldn't have as many of our women going missing in that if our men ah knew their responsibilities.

Elder Norman Meade: Young men should know their what their how they're to treat their sisters and their mothers and grandmothers and their wives eventually that's what, what I that's the traditional parenting way.

Elder Norman Meade: Lots to talk about.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, well, especially when you're talking about something like such a broad area of what is what is traditional, like we never even went into the family you know like what who is a family. Well, mom, dad and children are the family and grandparents, too. I mean, you know, we always had our grandfathers, um not so much your grandfathers, but our grandmothers they were around all the time.

Elder Norman Meade: You had this family you know that and then beyond that, it becomes extended family. It becomes uncles and aunts and cousins and so on, right?

Interview 2

Elder Norman Meade: Yah, sometimes my mind skips a little bit of a beat there, or something there just like my heart, I guess. That when you get old, you your mind slows down, like your body slows down and you can't do the things that you'd like to do as quick as you'd like. And but it comes but it just doesn't it doesn't it doesn't work the same way when you get old. I used to always run when I was a child, when I was a young man, a young kid. My, this old man used to tell me back home there, he'd say, "[name]. why are you running all the time? Like, it's like trying to catch the wind. You're never going to catch the wind," he says, you know. And I used to think about that when he would ask me, "Why are you why are you running all the time?" he says. "You'll never catch it. Whatever you're going after." Well, I just like running, I guess. And I used to run everywhere I went. I'd run to the store and run home and run for water and yah know just all kinds of I was always I was always running.

Elder Norman Meade: And he was one old man that recognized, kind of acknowledged my wanting to get it done fast or, "What are you trying to catch? He'll never catch the wind," he says. [laughter] So.

Elder Norman Meade: I was always kind of that way as a child and even as a young man I was, I was always wanting to get things done now. Get it done. You know, start it, get it done, get it over with, get it out the way kind of thing, and I don't know why I was I was like that, but I was always kind of like that. Let's not leave it. Let's get it done. What you can do today, get it done today. Don't leave it till tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself, but today will get it done today.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, right on. I get up early, sometimes I get up too early, like this morning, I got up, I sort of get up when I wake up. Like I wake up at five thirty, six o'clock. I get up my daughter when I'm out in the country. My daughter, she gets up later than I do. And because she comes with me sometimes, I think I told you that she rides with me, comes with me up to Manigotagan and I get up earlier there that I do in the city and like I get up and when the sun's coming up and I pass five thirty or whatever time it comes up, I usually am up and around and getting something done. She said, "Why do you get up so early?" My wife used to ask me that too. "Why do you get up so early?" Well, I just like getting up early. I like getting up with the sun and I'm still like, I mean, I'm like that and my wife used to always say, "Oh, you should sleep a little bit more. Your eyes are getting baggy and you look old," And I says, "Well, I'm getting old." And she told me you should try and sleep a little more. My daughter doesn't question me as much about those things. She just said, "Oh, OK." I said, well, I went out like last Saturday. I was out there, but she wasn't with me. Last Saturday, my daughter she stayed at home in Winnipeg here. And me and my dog went. We go looking for animals and eagles and stuff when we're out there. Saturday morning, we went out early in the morning just at daybreak, and we seen a moose, a moose across the road in front of us. My dog kind of kind of went crazy because he started barking and wanting to get out of the truck and go after a little bit big for you.

Elder Norman Meade: He, he, he barks when he see something like when he's in the truck and he give me a start, eh?

Elder Norman Meade: Because I forgot that he was in the back seat and I'm driving, and this moose crosses the road right in front of us and I was driving slowly and there's no other traffic around. So, all of a sudden, my dog is watching right, and he sits up in the backseat and he barks right in my ear. So, it scared me to death. There's a loud bark right in my right, in my ear, right near my ear, so, yeah, but it's good to have a dog.

Elder Norman Meade: He alerts me to a lot of things like when we go, not in the truck, we were in the truck that day, but when we go quadding or we go walking, he alerts me, letting me know that there's ah there's animals around or whatever, another dog or fox like he chased a fox the other day into the bush. But I didn't want him to go too far into the bush because he's a city dog and he would get lost in the bush. Of course, he'd smell his way back, I guess, but he chased this fox into the bush. And of course, a fox is very quick. You'd never catch the fox not in not in the dense bush that way he would never catch him. So I wasn't worried that he would get into a fight and get bitten up by the fox. But I didn't want him to follow the fox too far into the bush because if the fox just keeps going and the dog would keep chasing him, but he didn't chase him too far, he listened to me. I called him and he came back and the fox disappeared, so. There was that was interesting.

Elder Norman Meade: Well, I'm active. I like getting, I like getting work done in the morning.

Elder Norman Meade: You know, and then having it done as soon as I can. I like building the stuff there and building stairs down the bank is pretty steep. The bank is pretty steep there, the steep from down to the river. And I had to build a fairly long staircase and I was working at that. And that's why I was getting up early and going and working on it nice and cool in the morning. It's a nice time to get the work done. So, my daughter said, "Oh, you did all this already this morning?" "Yeah," I said, "I've been doing this for the last three hours." And when she got there, she cooked breakfast. I had to cook my own on last weekend because she wasn't there with me. So, I had to cook my own breakfast. I had to take a break and go and cook breakfast for myself.

Elder Norman Meade: I get a little bit shaky if I don't eat like when I'm supposed to be eating, I guess because of my age and that I get a little shaky.

Elder Norman Meade: So I had to go in and cook up a breakfast for myself that that Sunday morning, I guess it was when I went out Friday and I came back Monday so it was a long weekend.

Elder Norman Meade: Yah, I got lots done! No, no, it wasn't it didn't rain much out there at all, a little bit, but not very much.

Elder Norman Meade: I did it, eaves troughing, I did some planting of flowers. I did that finishing off my staircase, fairly long one. I did all of that. And I kind of tire myself out though. I when the days over, I try to stay up and watch the hockey games. And when I'm there, there's

nothing else to do in the evenings. So, but I was falling asleep there watching the hockey game, as exciting as they were. And so, I guess I tired myself out.

Elder Norman Meade: Your body gets when you get old, you get a little tired quicker. Yeah.

Elder Norman Meade: Family is for us, is extended family.

Elder Norman Meade: But I, like the nucleus family, like you know, the children, the mom and dad. And that's kind of your nucleus and family. But the extended family in our Indigenous community is really important too, like extended meaning. You know, grandparents would be there, uncles and aunts would be there, cousins would be there, and you know, in the extended family. And that it even extends beyond that. The next circle is your neighbors, your more distant relatives, your community people, you know. It extends beyond your extended family. And so, and like I was saying that phrase, it takes a community to raise a child. That's really where that comes from, that it takes a community to raise a child. And it does, you know. Like when you're an isolated community, anything that happens in your community or in your family, people are going to hear about it. They're going to know about it. And you're part of the community and the community is part of you. You know, people know if you do something wrong, you know, word gets out.

Elder Norman Meade: Even before the social media, it was, you know, word gets out like just by moccasin telegraph people would say, you know, word gets around.

Elder Norman Meade: So that the community when you think of protecting your people or you want to kind of look after they the things that children get into when they, even though they know they're not supposed to be doing those things. It's good when the community can kind of police itself. Because the extended family, uncles and aunts or neighbors, you know, the older population of your community, you know how to how to deal with children doing things that they know they're not supposed to be doing, getting into trouble. And that's the way our communities, our communities used to look after all these things. They never had to have police, peace officers or police officers walking around the community. We never seen a person walk around. The only person that wore a uniform when I, what I can remember is sometimes the chief would wear his outfit like they called it the, wear his, you know, his chief suit or clothes for certain events and ceremonies. But you never seen a person walk around in with a uniform, with a gun hanging on their side and stuff like that. You didn't need that because, you know, everybody was taken care of. Everything was taken care of by the community. You know the old people, if the mom seen you or the grandmother seeing you walking in or doing something, I mean, as she walked around, she'd make sure that she spoke to you, scolded you even though she wasn't your grandmother, but you respected her as your grandmother.

Elder Norman Meade: Back then, it wasn't like that [*parents not wanting others to scold their children*]. If Mrs. Bulette seen Norman doing something and she spoke to me. It would get back to my mother and my mother would thank her for, you know, for looking after that and making sure that I was being a good boy. And so then, if you got scolded, you got scolded by the parents. Not so much by the grandmother who was taking care of you when you were not when your family wasn't around, or you were out in the community. And so, it was a kind of a good way.

Elder Norman Meade: I like that, like you have six mothers watching over you. Like I said, not one mother. You had six mothers watching over you, sometimes ten mothers watching over you.

Elder Norman Meade: So and that was that was pretty, pretty good to be looked after by so many people in your community. Like you couldn't do much wrong and you couldn't get yourself in too much danger or risk because either a dad or a mom would be watching over what you were doing, whether it was working or playing or whatever it might be, yah know? I like I like that way.

Elder Norman Meade: Somebody was there to take care of your needs, yeah, for sure. Even as far as feeding you if somebody you knew that you were, you hadn't gone home for a while. You might be getting hungry. They would make sure that if they called their kids in to come and come and eat, now, they would, you would be invited to go and eat with that that family. That was good. I like that.

Elder Norman Meade: Good neighbors. And good community, I mean, everybody felt safe, you felt like you were going to be taken care of no matter where you were, yah know? Like as long as you were in the community, right?

Elder Norman Meade: Yep. Yeah, and a lot of that good neighbor stuff, like we were just talking about that in my meeting before. Something that I'm working at, working at with some other people, like what makes a good neighbor, who is a good neighbor? Well, it's somebody that kind of knows a little bit about what you're doing, but not in detail, but like, for example, playing or working together, talking, eating, sharing, that kind of stuff. It's good to have neighbors that are concerned about the one next door. A good neighbor is a good person to have, you know, and I think in the city or even in small communities like that, it's good to know your neighbor is kind of watching over your house if you're not there kind of thing. Right. Or watching over your children, if you've got to leave for a while and your children maybe have to be by themselves for a while, it's good that the neighbor is there, kind of keeping an eye on what's going on next door. I think that's a good neighbor approach, and I like that.

Elder Norman Meade: Small communities are easier in many ways because they're smaller. The everybody knows everybody. City urban living is different because, you, sometimes you can live in a neighborhood for a year or even longer and you don't know who is living next door to you, you know, and you don't make an effort to get to know them. And they don't make an effort to get to know you. Sometimes they don't want to get to know you. And so, you kind of leave it like that, eh?

Elder Norman Meade: I know we lived in some neighborhoods where we didn't know our neighbor next door where I live now. I know my neighbors on on four sides of me. So, I mean, it's, is kind of good because if I'm not there, not here. I mean that then they're kind of they're kind of looking, watching what's going on around my place.

Elder Norman Meade: A good parent spends time with you, with their children. That's one thing that's really missing in our society today, is that parents are not spending enough time with

their, with their children. I see it all the time, and I and I feel like the more time you can spend, we call it quality time, the more quality time you can spend with your child. Like, for example, my grandchild, my grandchildren, the little ones, I'm talking about the ones who are seven, six and three. Two of them are my great grandchildren. And they like to be around because I give them attention. I spend time with them. When I'm doing something, they're doing something with like they're with me. My granddaughter is seven years old, and she's never driven a quad before. And so, when she was with me on, her dad and her came out on Sunday and I was going to stay over till Monday and I did, but they stayed out there until Monday. And she stayed. She didn't want to come home with her dad because I was going to be staying there and doing some work around the yard. And she wanted to drive my quad. And so, I was teaching her how to safely run the quad and hauling stuff around the yard. We hauled some lumber, and we hauled some sand, and we did those things together. Oh, she was just, she didn't even want to come home. She said I want to stay here. I said, well, you can't, I got to go back, but I like it. Just quality time with your grandchildren and or with your child. You've got to spend time with them.

Elder Norman Meade: They like to be with you, but you've got to show them love. You got to love them and watch over them and keep them, you know, and just treat them like they're little adults. I mean, they are little people. They're like you treat them like that, you know. There's boundaries. You have to set some boundaries like I don't want you to go too fast and I'm going to sit behind you. You're going to control the throttle on the quad and you're going to steer it. But I want you to, like, not go too fast and don't, you know, don't take too many chances. So that's what I, I, I like for them to do or hurt you.

Elder Norman Meade: That's for sure. Yep. No, I think that's really important. I know I've been involved with all of my grandchildren, every single one of them I've been involved with teaching them how to drive, defensive driving as well as safety driving. And they really like that. And when I'm, now when I ride with them, they got their license now except one. She's got to get her license yet. But the other ones, when I ride with them and I tell them, you know, remember what I told you when you were learning how to drive. Now you can drive. Don't go too fast and watch what the other drivers are doing because the other drivers around you, the other vehicles around you, and you've got to be defensive driving, as called defensive driving. You've got to watch what other people are doing around you and watch for bikers like that. People that are riding bikes and pedestrians make sure because they're hard to see sometimes and they can be in front of you in an instant. So, you know, I tell them make sure that you watch what's going on the sides of you. So, they, they learned well, they know what I'm talking about because I was part of their, part of their teaching.

Elder Norman Meade: And quality time. They get to know you. I get to know them. The trust relationship.

Elder Norman Meade: Like right now, there's so many things that we can do with our children, like, for example, if I'm doing any kind of carpentry work or doing any kind of work, that is not too heavy. I involve my little ones, you know, they I give them a little hammer. I'm using the bigger hammer. They use a small hammer. And, you know, I, you know, just be careful. Here's how you do it, you know. And my little grandson and my grandsons, my little great grandson, he's six years old and he just loves that when I teach him how to hammer a nail. And he thinks

that's great, you know, to be around me when I'm doing something that's not like that's not too dangerous at university and or planting seeds like they like watching plants grow. Like we put always put plants in here at the house and I get them over and I tell them, you know, tell their mom and dad, you know, send them over for a couple hours and we're going to put some plants in the ground and tell them to wear proper shoes, runners, whatever. And, you know, I got gloves for them here. We can if we need to wear gloves, you know, we but I want them to get their hands dirty, too. I don't want them just to try and keep their hands clean, get your hands dirty, because that's part of planting. And you've got to get used to those things. It's quality time and doing something that's meaningful with them and for them, you know, they like watching plants grow. We put we start right from putting seeds in. And then sometimes we of course, we go and get transplants, too. And they like that instant result.

Elder Norman Meade: The Plant. But they also like to watch them grow from seeds like this is how far you put them in the ground, and you water them and you watch. Now they're starting to come up out of the earth, you know, and pretty soon they're going to have a nice flower on them too. And that's yours. And this one's mine, know?

Elder Norman Meade: And so they really, really like that. They really appreciate that. And love that, too.

Elder Norman Meade: If I’m cleaning up inside. I get them doing things that I'm doing like sweeping the floor or cleaning, doing dishes and stuff like that, you know, I tell them, no, you come and help and get involved and I'll be with you. But being with them like don't like, no as they're growing up and you know, they can do it by themselves. But if they're young, you've got to it gives you time to spend with them. Right. And doing something like washing dishes, you know, put your dishes away. If you're if you're one that likes to, you don't mind drying dishes, or you can leave them like you put hot water on them and then kind of get the soap off of them in and just be in there for a while and then a couple hours you can put them away. So, they like all those things. Yeah, even cooking is something else that, you know, I like to involve my children or my grandkids now in doing those things around the house, right down to cooking or shopping, even like I take my granddaughter shopping whenever she's here. Her and I went shopping day before yesterday and she was here and then evening, and I said, we got to go and get some food. I said, so we went to Walmart and, you know, and she's walking with me and I'm telling her, you know, this is what we need. And I got my list with me, and she just carries the list and reads off what we got. And she likes that. She's seven.

Elder Norman Meade: She always picks up things that she wants to, not on the list [laughter].

Elder Norman Meade: And I tell her, I said, well, you know, pick out something that you like she said Dada can I get a like a top, a blouse, or a sweater or something. Yeah, I could pick out something that you like there and you can get one thing, you know, that you need. So, she picks out the color she wants, the size she wants and I said that but that's all you're going to get today is that one sweater or blouse, whatever it is that you need, you know? And so, it teaches them responsibility. It teaches them how to take care of things, you know, in the best way.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah. When you go to the checkout, like that little girl, like the little seven-year-old. She's my youngest granddaughter, so she likes to be involved in every step of the way. Right? So when we go to the checkout, you know, I tell her, you know, you put that stuff there and like, we go through the self-checkout usually. So, she knows what the self-checkout, how to do it and oh they learn very fast. And I said this, you know, all this stuff that we want to keep cool, like, say, ice cream or meat or frozen stuff, you put it in one bag because it'll keep cool right till we get home. And then the other box of cereal that it doesn't matter. You can put them in one bag and then we separate them like that. Right. And that's all part of teaching them responsibility and how to do things in the best way.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah. Communication is a big thing. You know, when we think about communicating with our young ones, children, or grandchildren, you know, it opens the conversation. You don't have to look for something to talk about. You have something to talk about. I'm showing you teaching you how to do how to do things right. And then so that's the conversation piece in itself is how to do things. And I know they they're easy children like my grandkids are. They're easy to communicate with because they ask questions. You know, why are we doing things this way, you know, and I like that because, you know that if they open up the communication, that they're going to be able to communicate with other Elders or I mean other old people or adults as they grow up, you know, they grow up. I went into the bank the other day and I left my little girl. I said, lock the door. I said in the car, I got to run into the bank here. So, I seen this lady standing next to me in the bank and she kept looking at me and I kind of glanced over at her and I kind of knew her from somewhere, but I didn't know from where. And then when I came out, my little granddaughter there, she says, you know who I seen, I said who? I seen my old teacher. She said she seen you in the bank [laughter]. So, I said, you know, sometimes it goes beyond just like the grandchild. And I mean, my grandchild and me. Like this lady standing next to me there, next, the next teller there, she kind of knew me from because she was a teacher of my granddaughter at some point in one school. I don't know where, but and I kind of recognized her. She was Aboriginal lady. And I kind of make note of it that somebody that one of us. And so that was kind of kind of good. But she said yeah, I seen my old teacher, Dada. She talked to me, I was glad for that.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, and that's what it's about, acceptable, and approachable and, you know, things that interest me, may not interest her right away depending on the age and everything, but there's some things that are interesting, interesting to them. And we have to find what those interesting. What is it that interest my grandchild or my child? And you work on that. You build on that, right? Yeah. So, something is interesting to them, like whether it's, whether shopping or doing something together or just laughing and talking, sometimes we get real stupid and crazy and talk about, you know, telling jokes and whatever. And, you know, they like that too to laugh like and sometimes we just laugh like I look at her and she looking at me and we just we just laugh right then. So, it's kind of it's a good, good way of getting along or spending quality time with your, with your child.

Elder Norman Meade: And I like to teach them honesty. I like to teach them how to be honest, but you've got to be careful with some things like it's good to, like courage for one, you want to teach them if you have a fear of something. How do I deal with my fear? How do I build courage, you know? Because but you have to be careful with some of those teachings because

some of it is you don't want to be too open and talk to anybody and everybody. Like children are different, like some kids they just won't talk to strangers. But my little granddaughter, the one I'm talking about here, she'll talk to anybody right now. I got to kind of tell her, you know what? You've got to be careful in talking to strangers, my girl. You got to you don't know who they are that maybe you shouldn't be so open and approaching them and talking to them, right, a stranger, you're going to be careful.

Elder Norman Meade: And so she knows what I'm what I'm talking about, you know. And so, I kind of like to work around respect and of course, love and trust, you know, that those kinds of values. Communicating, or effective communication takes into consideration all of those things. Safety like the question of safety, no matter what we're doing, if we're canoeing or just walking or biking or whatever we may be doing, the safety factor is really important. And so, there's a lot of things that we can values that we can put on our into our relationships, build them in, you know, because that's what they want to know. You want them to not be too, like too afraid to go in and ask for help if they need it. You know, like I always say, you know, if you really need help, you're got something that that's happening. Who do I ask for, for help? Well, you know what? If you see an older woman or even a younger woman there and you're a young girl, you know, maybe approach that one, that's one's likely going to know and come and help you. If you're a young boy and something happens, you know, again, you can ask maybe the guy, a man who is near you or a woman who is near you, you know, they're going to know when you're when you need help. You know, it's very, very seldom like, that you're going to ask the wrong person. Most people that have children know that if a child is in need. And so don't let fear get in the way that I can't ask a stranger for to let them know that something is I'm in need of something. Right, right. So, you have to careful. But you have to not be afraid and say, well, I should have I could have asked, you know, that one next to me. And, you know, sometimes you just need to take a little bit of risk. Don't stretch it too much, but take a little bit of risk, there's always some risk involved in whatever you do.

Elder Norman Meade: And to be truthful, I always tell my grandkids, I want you to look me in the eye. And I want you to tell me if you're telling the truth. And you can't look me in the eye and when you're then I don't think you're telling me the truth, you know, sometimes they got to laugh, Dada, I'm telling you the truth. This is really what happened. OK, I'm believing you, but you've got to convince me that it really happened because kids are like us. Sometimes they'll you know, they'll kind of, you know, stretch it a little bit. I mean, to, if to make it more. I guess they think it's you know, it's more exciting if they if something happens. Right. And they're telling a good story, it's good to let them tell you their story. Let them tell you the story the way. And then you question their story if you if you want to or you think, well, this is a good time to ask, to question, the child.

Elder Norman Meade: And so, you have to pick your time, you got to be watchful and listen good and ask the questions at the right time to build confidence. That's how you build confidence in a child. You don't you don't make them feel, you don't belittle them, you and you give them encouragement in and that to build confidence, they need to be encouraged. Yeah.

Elder Norman Meade: Yep. Tell their story, let them tell their story.

Elder Norman Meade: You never tell a child I don't believe you. Tell your story. And then after they, are done now my girl telling your story? Or my boy, are you finished now? Yeah, that's what happened. OK, I got to ask you some questions about what you said and then you in a good way, you asked them, get into a little deeper about like what you said, you know, to clarify it, something that they might have said. And so, I think that's a good way because the communication lines are open already. Right. You don't want to close it. You want to keep it open. And so you ask them in a in a kind way, in a good way, a non-threatening way of really is what you told me. This is what I believe you told me, you know, is that how it happened?

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, well, you know, discipline is something where if you think it's time to discipline your child in the best way possible.

Elder Norman Meade: It starts out with a question. Your question, something that you kind of don't believe or you doubt.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah. And if you find out that there is something that kind of doesn't fit well or doesn't sit well with you, you go the next step of trying to kind of clarify or or determine if that is, is what happened. And then you try to help the child make the correction or make the honest, give you the honest answer in a non-threatening kind of way. Like you don't have to threaten a child. They're pretty honest little people, you know, and they'll you'll get it out of them. And in the honest way, if you if you take your time and spend that time with them and question them in a non-threatening kind of way, a non-threatening voice. You know like yelling at children, there's no need to yell at children. I mean, they know and understand. They feel your feeling right, like I don't even have to tell them how I'm feeling, like my granddaughter will say Dada are you kind of feeling down today, are you feeling sad today or whatever? Yeah, I am how did you know? Well, I just know because they feel what you're feeling, right. Children are smart that way. They pick up what you're feeling. Even your pets know when mom or when my owner is feeling kind of down, eh? I mean, they pick up your, it's they sense that that your emotion, you know. So, it's good to when they know that you're feeling you're not feeling right. You're not feeling good about something to discipline them in a good way, a loving way. There's disciplining and a loving way and there's disciplining in a hurtful way. Like a way in a way that we shouldn't, we shouldn't use the threats or dislike or punishment. You know, we don't have to punish children to make them listen or hear us, you know. Punishing ways drives a wedge between in our relationship with our kids. We don't we don't punish them. Now we show them respect and we, you know you're likely going to get a lot more out of it if you show them respectful, if you show respect rather than disrespect or trust rather than distrust, you know? Yeah. It is a lot better chance you're going to be able to communicate with your kids more openly. They're going to they're going to tell you more than they've ever told you before that if you trust them and love them in and through kindness, you know.

Elder Norman Meade: And once you lay that foundation, I call it a foundation, because that's really what it is. It's a foundation of relationship that you want to be ongoing when they grow up to be teenagers like my teenage son will drop in here. He dropped in just the other night, and he still carries that well he's 17, he's going to be 18 in a couple of weeks. And he still carries that respect that he had for me when he was seven and eight. And he's going to be 17, 18 in a couple of weeks. And he still has that because he learned it early in life. You know, he'll come and hug

me before he leaves and he'll shake hands when he comes in because, you know, as I say, I appreciate him, and I love him for that because he puts his arm around me, and both of my grandsons do that. And one is twenty-three or twenty-two. And, you know, just like when they were little boys, you know, they come and they, they hug you and they shake hands with you like man-to-man kind of handshakes, you know. And I said well, that's respect right.

Elder Norman Meade: It goes right into their adult life and tell them you know I want you to treat your sister and your mom, your grandmother, with respect you know, OK? Why? Because someday you're going to have a wife and you're going to treat your wife the way that you treat your sister, so treat your sisters with respect. Someday you'll treat your wife with respect.

Elder Norman Meade: And that's what I want them to know and understand that. So, the teaching carries on right into their adult life.

Elder Norman Meade: If we helped young men to know how to treat their sisters, their mothers and their grandmothers and their aunts, you know, the relatives, female relatives that are in their family. If we taught them the right way, they wouldn't hurt, they wouldn't have the desire to hurt their wife or their girlfriend or somebody else, like in their in their adult life, unless something terribly goes wrong in their life where they get into other external things like drugs and alcohol too much, then that changes a person's way too. But the teaching is going to be good. You can get a lot more out of teaching in a respectful way and a good way. Than not taking the time to build that foundation, a good foundation made out of those things like love and trust, respect they all they all help to glue your, to hold your foundation together. You know that everything else that happens in your life, it'll always it'll always come back to the things that I've learned when I was a young, young boy. For women, to be as a young as a young girl, you learn those things and you'll always carry those strengths with you. One guy told me that, he worked with adults a lot, he work with training for adults. He said if you teach a child well, between two years old and 12 years old, they'll carry that those teaching the rest of their life. And I really believe that.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, boys have to learn. Males, males, boys, men have to learn those roles of women, you know, and in the best way possible and the best way the best time is to when they're when they're young and hungry for knowledge. The brain can take it in. They'll never let it go. Once they're taught those good qualities, it will always be something they'll carry throughout their life. Yeah. And it helps in every relationship, like not only with their own immediate family, but with their own family. When they grow up and have their own children, they'll have that'll be passed on to their children and their grandchildren. You know.

Elder Norman Meade: Well, yeah, like, I think we talked about there's a lot of things, but when we when we think about how much time do we have to spend with our grant, with our children or with our grandchildren, we have lots of time to spend with our children if we're if we've got a healthy family like a mom and a dad and the children or the grandparents and maybe uncles and aunts, the extended family, we've got we've got time to spend with those ones. But we don't, might not have a very long time to spend with our grandchildren or in my case, my great grandchildren, because, you know, you get old and you don't see them as often because they are grandchildren, not. And or great grandchildren, in my instance here. But so, you don't have quite the same time to spend with them. So, you've got to make use of every visit you've got to make

use of every minute of your time spent with them. You know, that's making the best use of your time, right, with your children or grandchildren. Mm hmm. Yeah, and I think that that's why when I'm when I talk to people about marriage and that, like they say, what was the hardest time in you in your marriage? What was the hardest time of your marriage? Well, when I was away from my family, that was the hardest time. When the father has to leave his family to go away and work somewhere, which I had to do. That was hard for my wife, and it was hard for my kids to see Dad having to go away somewhere and not come home for two or three weeks or more at a time. That was hard for them. You know, dad has to be involved in the life of the family. The husband marries his wife to be with her, not to be separate from her. And I always say, like, it's if you're going to have to move somewhere for work. And maybe look at going to a place where you can both go like, say, maybe a mining town or something like where you can go to work and come home in the evening, you know, where you have a job, but you go home and you go to work and come home, you know. It's better for your wife and it's better for you and it's better for your kids to see you that way. You know, they see you going to work and coming home. That's the thing. If I go away and stay in a camp, I make good money. But the kids never see me that I'm away from them and they don't see me going and coming to work. What good does it do? you know? And so sometimes you're letting your family down by not being there. You think, well, I'm making good money and I'm feeding them. Yeah, but that's not everything. And the lives of of a family or the needs of a family, the most important thing for a family to be healthy and strong is to be there with them, to be a family where dad, they can see dad, they can see mom. You know, that's how our family was. We didn't, like we always had our mother at home. She was always there. We go home from school, and she'd be there. We had to do the chores and all that was a healthy lifestyle we lived. You know. We seen our dad, too, and we liked it when he was working in the mill because we'd see him going and coming. Right. But when he had to go to the Bush camps, we wouldn't see him for a week or two at a time, sometimes longer and or trapping. He'd be gone for maybe two or three weeks, and we wouldn't see him. And you know you lose a lot of time with your dad when he's away working.

Elder Norman Meade: Very important. Makes healthy families.

Elder Norman Meade: And working through things together, like, you know, when we work through things together, my wife and I, we always kind of try to, we had our own private lives like, you know, she had her own stuff that she would do. And I had my own thing that I would be doing. But there's a lot of things in married life that you share. You don't live separate and independent lives fully, completely kind of thing, as if you were a single person. Right. You have to share your life because that's what marriage is about. About that relationship of keeping your family together as mom and dad and with your children, you work out things together. As a family, we eat together like we used to never have a meal unless we sat down with mom and dad at the kitchen table and, you know, eat together, talked about things that families talk about, you know, how the day went and what we did and all these things. Right. And that was building family strength in our in our family relationships.

Elder Norman Meade: Yeah, yeah, because that's what families are made up of, like family is not just me or you or one. It's not just it's not just it's not family is the usually the mom and dad and the children. Right. And that's the kind of the nucleus of your family. But if it is just me like, well, it wouldn't matter if I'm with somebody or not like say I mean, one of my children. But

when I'm with one of my children, like my daughter, for example, when I'm with her, I want to have a good relationship with her, even though she's old now and she's got her own life. But I still want to see her as my daughter that I, I've raised and taught and everything. And I want to see the good fruit of my teaching, results. So that's what I like to see if it's there and it is there. And that makes me feel good as a dad.

Elder Norman Meade: And it's my grandchildren makes me feel good when my sons come and my grandsons come and give me a hug and shake my hand, like, give me that real good handshake, a man handshake we call it. I like that. My granddaughter is the same way. I like that when they can come and give me a hug, if they want me, when I see them, no matter where it is, they all, they all do it. I mean they all show me their love and respect in that way.

Appendix O
Elder Leslie Spillett Abbreviated Transcript

Interview 1

Elder Leslie Spillett: Oh, very good. Good to hear that because, oh man, so much needs to change there in terms of understanding mental health issues in a different way than what's currently kind of the norm or the whatever it is.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And that's kind of a, you know, kind of underlying that is the really the failed policy of Western governments, because know Families First might have had, you know, a good intent.

Elder Leslie Spillett: But like all of them have good intent, but they so don't understand. They become the kind of the repeaters of the colonial project.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And instead of investing in Indigenous communities, they just invest in their own selves, you know what I mean?

Elder Leslie Spillett: I know you did. But when you say that people just get so offended.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So the behaviour, that residential school behaviour, so that's what I always think about, like, you know, people are kind of, not to say that, you know, we as a collective don't have lots of work to do in all kinds of ways, but what about the work of the colonizer? Like what kind of, what do they have to do to heal from their trauma that had caused this this genocide in the first place? You know like, they don't think that, they think that they can continue on by a new trick, you know, like Families First, whatever. A new, a new shape, a new product, and oh that's going to be the solution eh. You know, there they have to be so in power, it's their, they cannot think about themselves in any way less than having control and power over people.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah, so.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Well, it's their job, say. It's been embedded into their, into their psychology. Deep. But it's also embedded into their economies. Because they need us, I always say they need us to be poor and sorrowful and in need of whitening. Yeah.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And there's a complicity in all of us as well, because we have to, I mean, in terms of our complicity, I think about that so often is my own complicity in in, you know, in this whole upholding, this whole system, all these systems of oppression, because we're all kind of a part of it in some way or form but, but also, we have to be conscious of the act of living, act of resistance in some way as well. And to me, that always felt like living an active resistance was to be as well as I could be, and to have as a well family as I could have. But in but for lots of

families, you know, that the whole structure of the system is the problem, hey. But they're told that they are the problem. Not anything to do with, you know what the systems contribute, so it's just the perfect crime, I call it.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So. [pause] So, first of all I acknowledge you and your work, Sandra, and I do acknowledge all of that, all of that medicine, that good medicine that you bring, because I believe also that you, what you talk about that's we know. We know. We know it's embedded in our in our DNA. So, all of those things that were good, and are good is there not just the pain and the trauma, although that might serve us as well, that might also serve in a way. So, you know, I think that it's, you know, I don't, you know, I think that there's a um- a, not a problem, but a, a what we can't romanticize things, you know, because I think that's also kind of a bit of a stereotype around the romanticization of Indigenous People. So, you know, they, I think that so and I am not a, you know, I'm not a historian and I'm not a, I don't carry any of that except that, I think that in you know, in generationally, I'm more removed from traditional knowledge than my mother was and my grandmother was, you know, it goes back because of the impact of colonization has been so profound, hey? It's been really deeply profound, profound. So, I know in being a child, a daughter of a woman who was less removed from tradition than I am. I, I can share my experiences, not only the I'm not going to talk about the harmful, harmful experiences because I was raised by a woman that struggled with alcohol and identity, really deep issues with identity. And. And that's all packed in, so I look at, looking at it from my, from my space now if as to quote to quote a Dakota Elder, you know, from my, you know what, he looked back on from his high hill of old age because I'm going to be 70, so we're on a hill of old age. I like that kind of metaphor. Looking back on that from that high hill of old age that my mom's parenting styles were influenced by tradition, but also influenced by sadly the Catholic Church, because by the time I came along, you know, that um that ideology, Christian ideology, was really deeply embraced, and I think that's partly where that shame comes from. I'll just, I always keep a picture of my grandmother and my mother, it's a bit of a blur, on my desk just to remind me.

Elder Leslie Spillett: To remind me of, you know, that you know, we know that in a biomedical kind of sense that she carried me, that grandmother carried me and my mother and me are carrying my grandchildren. So those eggs are carried by three generations of grandmothers and parents. And I think that, I think that one of the biggest impact, well, I mean, so how do you, how do you rate what the biggest impact of colonization was? You know, I don't know. I don't know. I just found the whole thing was a brute- a brutality, the whole colonial project was a brutality, but you know the kind of the binary thinking of good and bad, you know, that there is it's so inherent in Christian ideology is you're going to heaven or hell, you know, you're good or you're bad, you're, you're sacred or you're evil. There's something that is in that. In that umm, thinking in that world view, and it extends right to the present hey, where you get these notions that people are absolute this, or absolute that. That umm.

Elder Leslie Spillett: That, so that's why I don't really want to romanticize, you know, the past all that much, is because I think we were, we had laws for our people that if you broke those laws, those human laws. So, there's natural law. There's, there was human law. So, if we didn't

break those laws, we wouldn't have had those laws. So, we know we can, we know, like, for example, [*apastawin* – spelling?] or for Anishinaabe [*onjone* - spelling], we know that people broke moral, ethical kind of laws, but there was an accountability built into those you know, those practices. And we know also that if we disrespected non-human life, there was laws for that we, so there's two sets of law, one for human life, one for a disrespecting our other relatives. So, we know that. So, that's why it's not, it's harmful, I think, to kind of think about the past in terms of paradise.

Elder Leslie Spillett: You know, there is you have to really look at the world views of people. And places and all of the things that are inherent in that, the values and the and those laws and practices and there were communal societies, you know, there were there was not so that the communal society was based in in a in a in a value of community care. So, if parents could not raise children or they died for some reason, there, something happened to them, those children were never without a sense of belonging. So, it wasn't necessarily only a sense of belonging to mom and dad; it was a sense of belonging to a collective. So that is, that was kind of broken. That was that circle of care was broken through things like the residential school before that, the day schools before that, just the introduction of Christianity and those kinds of things. And then in more recent times, sixties scoop and child welfare and all of those things that came with it. And so, the umm. So now, rather than, and so you can see how messed up this, the world that we live in is where everybody is out -well, not everybody but there are individual and collective practices are more based in individualism and like get, you know, take care of my own little, small world. And to heck with everybody else.

Elder Leslie Spillett: No, I think that that is not complete. That wasn't completely extinguished by the colonial project, because you see all kinds of examples of indigenous People and communities coming together, like just in the in the past day or so with all of that collective outpouring of grief and sadness, sorrow, heartbreak in into the into the part of a genocide which has been kind of verified, although known for a long time.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And it's also manifested in ways, in the small ways of interpersonal relationships. And that's why the relationship building relationships are so, are still really still very much. And I think kind of people are beginning to understand more the, an appreciation for the value of relationships and establishing relationships. And. So it wasn't completely, you know, destroyed, that those values are still somewhat inherent. Maybe that is that memory. But there still is such a huge chunk of our people that they have, that are disconnected, that don't have that feeling of belonging to a people just because of all of the things that have passed. And umm.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So when I think of raising children, you know, we're raising children in a colonial world hey? And a lot of you know, I think it's really important and I think that a lot of people do because the most oppressed people, you know, they understand, I think, the impact of the oppression, but they may not really fully understand the, because it's so well hidden, they really they just don't understand the machinery of it, the mechanics of it, like how the state sets up the machinery of it. So that, so that becomes kind of invisible, that becomes normalized, I say

like it's wallpaper. And we don't really, we've not given the tools to really effectively, really examine it and its impact on our individual lives. And so, in a pre-contact world, I think that umm that human beings were valued. In, to a greater extent than they are in the world that we, that was imposed on us because and you can see that in so many ways, like, you know, first of all, when Europeans got here, women were property of men, hey? Women and children were the property of men and umm. And so that patriarchy, that system didn't, in many parts of North America, I don't know what it's like in other parts of North America, but there was more of a partnership society that was taking place.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Now, some people want to talk about matriarchy, but I don't like the matriarchy as opposed to patriarchy. I don't think that you replace women with men in a matriarchy. I read this really good article recently about what matriarchy is. Maybe I'll share that with you because I can find it and share that with you. I thought that was brilliant because it doesn't, because it was more of a horizontal, umm, you know, a horizontal value of human beings within a family or within a collective. And of course, that was very interfered with also by the church and the state, of course. And so, I think that women umm women always had our own knowledges and our own ceremonies and our own ways of understanding our roles, our responsibilities, our umm, our connections, our place. And I don’t think that was something that was underneath the men, you know what I mean. It was it was not a; it was not a patriarchy. But those things would have included birthing knowledge and birthing practices.

Elder Leslie Spillett: But I think even before that, there's a really, an understanding that is that is that goes back to a kind of a belief system. That our that around spirit and how spirituality works and how we as human beings, are vessels, if you wish for those spirits that want to come to the Earth. And that's why my daughter was talking about, you know, we know those. We know that before humans are born in physical form, they exist in the spiritual realm. And so, it connects the physical, the physical world with that spiritual world. It's not just a biomedical kind of thinking that, you know, that we made sperm and voila, that there's a spiritual a spiritual relationship that embodies that whole birthing and parenting experience. And we don't we don't start there with in now, you know, birth workers are starting to begin to talk about that, those kinds of connections. And so, in a world where, you know, everybody, you know, all it kind of it it's all kind of you know, I see the geese are having their babies and those guys are going to protect those babies. And the mom, there's a there's two geese there that are doing that. So, it's just instinctual. It's deep. It's embedded in their DNA, but it's in our DNA as well that our, what our jobs are. In terms of protecting those human, those babies that come in human form, those spirits that come in human form. And they're the future, whether we understand it consciously in terms of, you know, I'm going to think about this or whether we just do. That we have babies as human beings, and that is because we want, we have. And those babies also have agency.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So the first, those spirits have agency. That if they choose this this vessel, they have agency. That's their first act of agency to choose the parents that they're coming, that they're coming to be with. And so. Where was that going with that? Sometimes I get caught up in my thoughts. So that is that is so. But the other thing is that it wasn't the responsibility. So, that

children are our hopes and dreams that we will continue, that our families will continue, that our nations will continue. And they are the physical manifestations of our dreams and our visions for the future. And it's not just, it's not only, it wasn't only the responsibility of parents and grandparents to raise healthy children, it was the responsibility of all of the community. That's why, you know, in the current, in current, I bet you most of the families, Families First families were poor families, either on social assistance or struggling with very low-income jobs. I bet. Is-am I right?

Elder Leslie Spillett: Right. Yes. There you go. Yeah. And so that those kinds of things, and I believe that all people had traditional knowledge of, Indigenous people weren't the only people that had traditional knowledge. But that was that they're even further back to their, from their traditional knowledge than we are because we've been recently colonized. Well, if you know 250 years as recent but in human history, it's pretty recent.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And so that is where a child, in order to be healthy, has to be a part of a healthy community in in my in my way of thinking. That and a healthy community is one, I mean, that's the what the markers of that could be so many things, but it's not necessarily just economic wealth. But it is all of those things, those identity things, those being able for people to have the knowledge and the and then act on that knowledge to really nurture and support and love and all of those things that we do as parents. But extend that way broader than our own immediate family. That to, you know, to really act, to really act in a loving, kind, generous, supportive way to all children. That they are all, they belong to all of us. And that makes us responsible for all children in the collective. So that that is that is that this society is not able to do that in a meaning, and they do that through things like, I mean, programs, you know what I mean? But in a way, if we really value the role of parents, we would build in economic and social supports for all people, all families. And so there would be no, no wondering where our families could access traditional knowledge because it would be there.

Elder Leslie Spillett: There would be, that wouldn't take place. There would be places for them. I always used to say you have to kind of be a middle-class Indigenous person in order to be a ceremonial person because it requires resources to get places, to bring things. And most for most people, it's kind of out of out of their reach.

Interview 2

Elder Leslie Spillett: No, you know, he only got charged with manslaughter. Like, I don't know how. You know, this that justice system... is so um broken, so, yeah. Anyway, that's just. But, you know the, I've seen murderers walk out of jail like I was in the room when that guy that killed Tina Fontaine walked out of jail. I was there. It was like, horrible. I can't even remember what his name is. Just kind of a scruffy white fella. Stanley. Not Stanley, that was Colton. Anyway...

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah, and you know like the thing is, like, you know, like the so-called discovery of Indigenous babies. You know, the thing is like if it was something that stopped at some point, then there may be some optimism that we have a chance to experience a good life, but it hasn't stopped, so you know that so many, you know, every single day you see babies kind of disappearing. It might be different because they're now in the foster care system and they're in those group homes and in those places where it's still kind of the same kind of paradigm that Indigenous people cannot look at, well, then they're not supported to, and they're not, yeah, they don't have, they're not supported to really, truly look after families, you know. And it's never for lack of love or for lack of wanting to do the right thing or the best thing for children. It's just that... It's, you know, the...all of it all together is it's just it's just too overwhelming burden and barriers.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So. So last week I was starting to talk a little bit about- and I always think about this. And I was thinking about it this morning, how children always have agency and so the kind of the and their first their first act of agency is to choose that spirit in a spiritual way to choose the vessel, the people that they're going to be born to. And so, I think that practice, you know, in a precolonial society, that value of children understanding they're uh, they're, that they are complete, you know, complete human, they're completely human when they come into this world was something that was really understood. And, you know, and then the job of the community was to nurture so that lots of lots of people think people babies are born kind of as a blank slate, kind of bringing nothing with them. But ,you know, from, I think from an Indigenous world view, that we, that there is a real understanding that that they all come with a lot of you know, they come with a purpose. They're here for a purpose. But that agency, they're here for a purpose. They're here for a they have they're destined to be here. And they all come with a divine gift, sometimes multiple gifts. But everybody, every human spirit has a divine gift, something that. That they can you know, that they can nurture and that will be their, that can help them fulfil their destiny here in this physical realm. And so the idea that um, that they come into this world in that way, it's not, there's a lot of like ways of parenting and ways of looking after children through, in a ceremonial way. So when I think about some of the things that that we've done as a family, when our children are born, we first of all take the placenta and we have a ceremony that that we plant that that placenta in a in a in a space or in on the land that that we are that our hopes and dreams are such that that child will always be connected to that place that they're that they're from that so that there is a physical marker in this in this world, in this on this land that our children are planted here in a way like they belong to the land. It just reinforces that that that connection, that spiritual connection of place. And that their, also their little bellybuttons, the little cord that comes off after it dries up, that my understanding that that ceremony was always about introducing that that dried up tissue to also to a place where you could express and ask the Creator, ask that the spirits that that little ceremony, that little bellybutton ceremony will help that be a helper to that child. And so, like, if you want that child to be industrious, if you want, you know, it depends on your teachings and on your what your hopes and dreams are for that child. So, if you want that child, for example, to be industrious, you might put that bellybutton on an ant hill so that ants are communal species. They're very productive. They're very focused. So that would be a- or you might hang it on a tree, or you

might place it in uh. So that there are you know, it depends. It's very like, you know, there's not like as opposed to a church ritual, our ceremonies are very directed by people's own spirits and people's own direction and energies. It is when we did when we did Isabella's bellybutton ceremony because her grandma had passed just before she or she was always already pregnant with Isabella when her *Kookum* on her on her dad's side passed. And so, her name was um, she had a Thunderbird name, and so as a protector of Isabella, her mom and dad had a um, had a ceremony at the place where at the Petroforms. Have you been to the Petroforms in the Whiteshell?

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah, it's incredible. I mean, it is one of many sites. And many sites, this is the most accessible because it's the most accessible it's kinda been the most disturbed. But if you go there, there's a place with a Thunderbird. It's a Petroform of Thunderbird spirit. So that's where we had, we put her belly button. And we wanted that connection between her *Kookum* and the Thunderbirds and Isabella's Spirit. She has a spiritual name. The other thing is all babies are born with a spiritual name. So, my baby, we, I got my spiritual name as an adult. My children got theirs as toddlers and my grandchildren had them before they came because - and this is how interesting this all works is that is that they that they come, those names come from the spirit world and they're, that's how they are known here. And so, the Elder, Sundance Chief, our Sundance Chief brought those names through ceremony before because the spirits told that, told him that they'd be coming. So, they both have very powerful names. And the names are also meant to guide them and protect them over their human life form. And so, everything in the ceremonies was kind of all about supporting these children, not kind of, not kind of determining their destiny for them, but supporting their destiny. And so and so um.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So, in a traditional child rearing practices, children had incredible amount of agency, personal agency. And they were not they were treated, I mean that there was a, there was certain, there was always a degree of protection and oversight. But they were really allowed to, um, uh, really kind of learn from their relationships that they had. So, their relationship with the Earth, their relationship with other human beings. And they were not directed. They were not told what to do every second of their lives. People call that practice. It even extends to human beings. But what I think it is, it really honours their agency. It really honours children's agency and really everybody's agency, this practice of non-interference. So that observation, observation over - this was kind of a natural education that they learned the skill of observation that sometimes we, in this other learning, uh, way we don't, we have to be taught to be observant rather than really following a natural course of development in a way. And then the other thing around the kind of binary thinking of the right way and the wrong way that kind of didn't come into play like this kind of binary thinking is not our way of thinking.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And the children. And so that the idea of mistakes is was not really something that was a was a real thing because exploration, observation and exploration and then just doing something because children are really natural learning machines. That's their, we are constructed, and children are constructed to be extremely curious, extremely interested in their natural, in their natural state and completely, um, I don't know, really engaged. You know, if you

watch, if you watch a child. And they're not, and they don't have the same kind of fear. We teach them fear. We teach them to do that, although that they can learn from things that may, may be. You know, like I'm going to use an example, I was, and some families are very protective of their children, but there is this kind of this practice of non-interference that still kind of is present.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And so I was at a ceremony one time, and we were just sitting there waiting for the ceremony, people to come and whatnot, and we always kind of gather and visit. So, this was just a couple of years ago, my friend, she was from, she's from God's Lake Narrows. And her little, and her daughter was there, and their little grandson was there. He might have been maybe about two. He was just like walking and there was lots of people. And there's a door and kids love doors, and they love to kind of open the door, and play with the door, and play with the knob. And there was lots of people coming in back and forth. So, me, I was looking at that little guy thinking, oh, my God, someone's going to open the door, like an adult and knock him down or he's going to put his fingers in the door and he's gonna get hurt. And so, I was looking at that, but his mom and his *Kookum* was sitting right there, and I was watching this little guy. And finally, I said, name her name. Did you know that your little grandson is going to get hurt? And she said, well, he won't do that again. [Laughing].

Elder Leslie Spillett: If you get hurt, his hand in the door, he wasn't going to do that again. So, that was kind of an example to me. Not that they didn't love him or care about him, but that was the practice of an ongoing practice of non-interference that they have a right to fall, to learn, to even have little accidents. If it was in the spirit of them, them learning how to not to do things. So, I think that was very, umm, very, very misunderstood. And I think it's still misunderstood by the mainstream, especially social workers, hospital workers. Because I remember when I was working at the Health Sciences Centre back in the day that a lot of the nurses would say, 'but they don't even care about their children.... they're just running around and like climbing on the TV. They're going to get hurt'. And so, they mistook it as neglect and not and not caring, but really that they didn't, they didn't understand that other value of respecting that child, their children's agency, by not, you know, completely, you know, completely, adulting on them all the time. And even if you see too, the children who are you know, you know that there is a lot of children that have so much anxiety, you know, raised by Western people, you know, they are, they're the kind of helicopter parents or the parents of kids that don't, that can think for themselves unless they're told what to do, how to do it, when to do it. All of those things, they can't really function. And so that they have a lot of anxiety because they don't have that kind of confidence or that kind of knowledge or that kind of resource, internal resource to be able to really kind of determine how to be, in a way. So, there's tremendous amount of anxiety among non....

Elder Leslie Spillett: And then the other thing is, is that to fill in their time with being told what to do, like dancing, music, but not to say that those are bad things. But they don't have time to be natural. They don't have time to be in uh, I don't know, in uh. - And to me that the best part of my growing up in the north was that I think that um, kind of freedom, that real complete freedom

that we experienced. And I know that if the social workers had come around at the time, probably all of the children would have been scooped up. Because we were natural, we were - and this is the way it was for a lot of our people and that's why a lot of children did get scooped up and taken away because they, what the, to the social worker looking at it from their - and that's all they could look at it from because they thought they were right all the time, of course. Looking at it from their cultural viewpoint, they saw neglect, abandonment, people not being, children not being cared for, taken care of, not being taught anything. So, they didn't really understand that that what was going on. Lots of children were taken and then also imposing a value that you had to have certain physical things in order to properly raise children. So, the poverty became also a tool used against Indigenous people for removing children from families.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And I think that kind of still goes on to this day. I don't, I don't think that, I don't think that there's been a real shift in, you know - I know that sometimes and then the other thing is, is that. Yeah, that I know, like it's interesting that for some people. I don't know, I think that the paradigm still is that, that non-Indigenous people can't look after children. I think that's still kind of set, ingrained in the whole child welfare system. And rather than resourcing and supporting families, their... tool is to remove children, and that really does sever that link in some ways, sometimes it's um it's so damaging to everything, to take, remove children from families. But, you know, the children there's eighteen thousand children in child welfare and, eighteen thousand! And most of them are Indigenous children, and they're mostly destined for jails or death. And that's a tragedy of this, that we keep doing things over and over and over again, thinking that things are you know, that they, they're doing the right thing. And, you know, obviously things are not getting better. So, it's kind of a, it's just another tool of colonization, really, too. And it didn't seem to me they don't have the consequences. Like, there's no consequences for their failure. In fact, they just blame it on the families. They blame it on communities, for the failure. So that's kind of uh.. anyways.

Elder Leslie Spillett: [laughing] It's a business. Even the harms that come from that, that is also a business. So, if children are harmed in that, then there's a whole peripheral bunch of programs that now that the harm has been done, that are supposed to correct the harm. But of course, it doesn't, hey, because the harm of not belonging, because every human being has a need to belong, to know where they come from. Who they are, um, what they're, what they're. Yeah. Who they are, or their identity. Everyone needs to have a sense of belonging in order to develop and to fulfil that destiny that they have. So, it's like a real tragedy. And it's like so that's why I said like if the if the murder and genocide just happened. You know, a hundred years ago or even 10 years ago, and then things changed, but it just carries on and it's so, so, so horrible, horrendous.

Elder Leslie Spillett: How do we get back there.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So that's what I, that's what I think, you know, and I told my children and this is, and I know this may be sounding kind of sometimes I think it just sounds kind of I don't know. Like I do believe that people have to uh. Not people have to, like people, we have to

support people's agency, because that's the other fallacy, I think, is that we as anybody can do anything. I mean, we can help ourselves. We can. We can help. We can help. You know, we can help. We can pray, we can support, we can build organizations. We can do those things but really, you know, it's the people we need to honour everyone's own- like we can't do what what's done, what was done in order to repair what the damage was. So, it's like. I think just by be, by living, you know, and I know this might sound like it always sounds so in the in the hugeness of the oppression. Well, first of all, I think we can help by naming all the oppressions we can, and we can really understand for us. I don't care about non-Indigenous people, although they should they need to understand this as well. They need to understand the history of -the big history of Canada. How the everything, Canada's policies, laws, practices and cultures, like all included settler culture, was used as a tool of either genocide, extermination, or assimilation. So, I think that people, really I think that this is kind of a, you know, when we, because we've internalized a lot of those lies that somehow we were not capable of looking after ourselves somehow. I, like I don't know where that kind of got set in that there's something wrong with us. So that we can't, I think we have to really expose, really name, really help, really support, give, build our support and also to give people what our ancestors did towards that resistance. Like, how do we still have, even in the enormity of the state's oppression, how we are still not assimilated. That's an act of resistance -how we are wanting to know about who we are, what we are, what our culture is, how we're reclaiming that. So, I think that's a huge, that's huge to celebrate that.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And then, and to acknowledge that our, that our ancestors strength brought us to our physical, not their weakness, not everything that was wrong with them brought us here, but everything that was right about them, their love for us, their, the power of their prayers for us, their knowledge that they left that little, that little or big somehow that place to walk back from and to share, in sharing that and just sharing. So, I see this as, not that that this is um, like is not, is a cause for celebration, like to definitely to mourn and to understand, that fills you with a lot of rage and anger and that's OK. But also, to understand that the power of us and the power and how we've also tried, need to, we, how we've been colonized internally. Like what that looks like, what are our original instructions as human beings by Creator and start to reclaim that and start to reclaim that in a way that understands that we live in this other world now, hey? Somehow, we live in two worlds. So, I think that through that, that those things are, are really, um, so, yeah, so to respect people's agency and to amplify their own, their power, their internal power, because even a lot of the things, like if you become a social worker or doctor, somehow people have it thinking in their heads that it was because of something that we did for them, not about what they, somehow they take your, still take your power. Oh, are we good whatever X University or high school we are graduating all these students. But really the strength of those people to be able to succeed in a very colonial world, even if they were colonized as well, hey? To really to understand that, that we that we should not strip people's power away from them by claiming that we have had anything to do with it. That's why sometimes social programs are a little bit, you know, I see a lot of people kind of patting themselves on the back about how good they are. Really that centers something else, rather than centering that in a human being where they been, people have been so dispossessed from their own agency, their own power and control, and to give that, to rightfully, to not do that anymore, not to, to resist that. Not to. Yeah,

I hate anybody that thinks that- not hate, may be a strong word - but you know, I just really, it really bugs me how people navigate through all these barriers and finally so-called succeed in a Western institution, that somehow it was anything less than their own personal genius and brilliance and abilities that brought them there. I really don't think so, because if you can think about the multitude of the barriers that that were lined up against people.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So. So, what do you take, how do you, what takes us out of this? You know, like for me and I can only speak for me because I don't know if ultimately, if the ultimate goal of our creation, I think it really is to try to be the best person you can be. To live as healthily and respectfully with all of creation as you can, as you can be. That would think that we've been thinking that, you know what, and this is what I think the bigger culture is beginning to understand; that and I, you know, I don't get the, you know, I think that everybody has a right to get their human needs met like shelter, food, clothing, without having to beg or feel bad about not having, not having. And also, to be able to be, to have the agency and the support from family, from community to fulfil their destiny, whatever that is. It looks different. It's not. You know, it's not, um. And you know, it's not like we've been kind of divorced from, from what what's real in some ways, like people, you know, people in order to get this Western education, this Western job that sometimes the family suffers, you know, that we leave our kids to the, to the care of others, I mean, it's all kind of compartmentalized and we don't spend time, you know, that everybody is, um kind of scrambling. Or has been, seems to me like scrambling to achieve something that's material and or driven by something else. But not tending to the, to what's, um, you know, not tending to building relationships with uh, I don't know, it's kind of seems to me, and I think people are really lost. I think there's a lot of not just Indigenous People, you know, I think that, you know, the more you kind of seek for those material comforts and the more tenuous your relationships are with people that you're supposed to love, hey? It just seems to me to be a contradiction.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And then, we can't you know, the less are we're able to treat each other as human beings, hey? So, that and then structurally how that looks like our people who are poor, people who are, that don't have homes despite either extreme heat or extreme cold, that somehow we're divorced from all of that! We've separated all of that from, in our heads, that somehow not our fault hey, not our problem, that somehow we're not collectively responsible because we're so cut off from one another. So, it's like to me that it's a, we've lost humanity. We've - in order for those comforts and those whatever achieving statuses here and there, we've disconnected ourselves from, really, not only from the natural world, but also from our own humanity. I just think that that's where this other culture has brought us.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yes. Because in the end, you know, it's like we're not going to take, you know, can't take it with us. You know, it's yeah, it's like you know, yeah, it's like what it is, that's what I think that that traditional life and that understanding is still, you know, I see that in community care that I see that that's still going on when, you know, unfortunately, all these horrible things happen to people like, you know, people - the community does come together, in vigils and supporting people. So, I think that, I think that that's still kind of exists in a way that

there's a lot of sharing and a lot of supporting people in the community like personal support. But it's really that generosity, that generosity of spirit was very much part of like, you know, that the whole culture was not about everything that you could acquire, but to make sure that everybody in the community had enough. I think that was a value that was because you didn't hoard everything. And then your community, your community starving wasn't the way it is, but that's the way it is now. But I think that there's still enough of that that exists, that people are trying to, even the poorest people try to help the poorest of people. So, I think that there's a lot of things that continue to exist, and I don't know that.

Elder Leslie Spillett: So in terms of parenting, like um, to me like I think that lots of people have been cut off partly, mostly through Christianity, to those little, those little ceremonies. And it wasn't just an act. There was all of those little ceremonies from a birthing ceremony to the placenta and the belly button and the touch the earth and all of those, you know, the snowshoe that all of those things that help, that were age appropriate and helped a child develop, to understand their place within that family, your community. And so that grounded them. It gave them confidence. It gave them skill. It gave them and that real solid foundation of connections and love. All of those things, you know, knowledges and competencies that they learned how to, how to hunt, how to fish, how to trap, how to gather, how to prepare medicines, how to prepare all of your ceremonies, all of that can also teach and brings family together. So that one of the things that I've noticed in ceremonies is that one person will go back to the ceremony way of life, like a Sundance. I've seen this at Sundance, they go alone and then next year they might bring, there might be somebody that comes with them. At the end of the four years that family comes back together to, and that's Sydney, you can actually talk about her because I've seen them. I seen Sydney go to the tree and I don't know if she was even with her mom at that time. I know that. And then another year she came, her grandma was there. Her dad was there. Her brother was there. So, kind of like brought that family back. So that's how I see the ceremonies, pulling people back to the connection with one another. And because of love, because that love is really eternal and it's our first medicine. And so, I think that ceremonies are really, really important. But how do you, how do you? You know this is what I was always trying to do at Ka Ni Kanichihk is to, you know, like uh- I always try to take people to the ceremonies like you can't, you can teach, but you have to, you know, it's like similar to that. Like the you know, it's like I taught when I talk to the medical students, it's like talking about the Sundance and learning about the Sundance is like, you know, theory -theorizing, you know, internal medicine and never having the opportunity to actually look at what what's going on. Like using clinical skills. You have to actually do it. You so, you know, in my, you know, when I started Sundancing, like, I brought my children back to this. I went alone. I went to this, my first Sundance on my own, and then I brought my children and then I brought community members. I brought youth, lots of youth. They kind of drove me crazy, but I did bring them anyways. I brang relatives, I brang them. And I would not say, well, this is the only lodge people can dance at or the only thing, the best thing. I don't think that we hierarch, we do that kind of thing.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And I learned too, is that everybody has a beautiful way of understanding their relationship with creation and one is not the right way or the wrong way- Again that kind of

binary thinking. So that, you know, people find their way to the, to what speaks to their spirit, that's agency again, hey, that's respecting people's agency, you can open up the door to the lodge, but people need to walk through it. And so, you know, I don't know. I've sat in sweat lodges with people that have been, that have actually lived live very close to the street, like a street life. And were scared of the inside of uh, of a sweat lodge. But they lived in a very dangerous place which was completely comfortable with their norm and their comfort and. And, you know, I mean the people, again, you know, to respect people's agency to be able to follow through. Yeah, I think ceremony is where, what will bring us back to our own centers, our own families. You know, I love that, that I love all of our Sundance's no matter which dance. And I love how children, you know, our Sundance chief said, you know, there's sometimes we put objects even like the pipe and those things above our children, but nothing is above our children. Like, children can do whatever they want to do. And there's a children's ceremony, a Sundance where they get dressed up as Sundancers and they go into the lodge, and they have their little Sundance crowns on even the babies they get carried in by their moms. There's a little Sundance chief and a little head woman Sundancer and they dance in the lodge. They're medicine for the dancers, hey, that'll make the dancers feel really strong to finish their Sundance. And it's just a way of, again, showing that um- I mean, observing, but also like helping them to, they're going to be Sundancers, you know those little ones are going to when they have their vision or when they have their direction to go into the lodge, they're going to know what it's all about. It's not going to be like me. I was like terrified. I had no idea what I was doing, and I had to learn it as an adult. So, the more we can do that, I think the better. And to be respectful of all of our family, like, that's another thing around this whole idea around our, you know, homophobia and really adopting that, that's another form of oppression. And how our, we, don't we, we've been. We've also, within our own communities, marginalized two-spirit people. So, it's really understanding. It's just really, really reclaiming and helping people to learn again, learn through their own ways of learning and respecting that. But also, to make opportunities for people to be connected to that, that beautiful way of life that we still have. It's just uh, yeah.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And I think that, you know, I think that, like, I tried to make that door at Ka Ni Kanichihk hey? I tried to be that door and um, and um. But it needs to be done on a much more organized and inclusive way you know, in more, more... You know, like it needs to be done on a much more organized way. Yeah, yeah. I don't know how that looks. Like one of the things that I always thought was really would be very cool to do this, to have an Indigenous Freedom School here. Like a freedom school is an African kind of way of looking at an Afrocentric education for children coming out of Toronto and other places in the US. But we can have our own like call it something else, but a way for - because, you know, like in a way the Western world kind of segregate and separates and divides things. So, the children are here. The adults are here. The - but it's ceremony, everybody's together. I mean, kids are doing their thing and adults are doing their thing. And sometimes children, like, are just left a little bit and need to be, the parents need to be reminded, you know, take care of your children. But, but it's um, is to have a freedom school that parents and children can learn together and to can be together to be and have a curriculum and a um, and a space which is really, really important to be able to go through those you know those kind of like just to become ‘Indians’ again, you know, for lack of

a better word [laughter]. To kind of like be in a sacred way with one another to sometimes, you know, do their thing separately, but lots of times do things together in a natural kind of unscripted kind of way. The way I see ceremonies operate and ceremonies are going on, like a ceremony is going on. But lots of things are happening, like life is it's normalized. It's not just, OK, now we're doing this and then we're going to do this. It's so integrated as a part of a whole learning experience.

Elder Leslie Spillett: It's like, you know, rather than school, it's like its very kind of one dimensional, really, maybe two dimensional, but a ceremony is multiple dimensions. Huge.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And praying and dancing and laughing, and visiting, and eating. Like it's like so complex.

Elder Leslie Spillett: It's like it's totally different hey? So how do you do this freedom school that we would be able to kind of recreate that and then connect people back to a ceremony family if they wanted? I always try to be very cautious and careful around our relatives that have adopted Christianity you know, to be gentle and to be open and loving and kind to all of us. Because you know what I understand that no matter where we are in their lives, what we did, what we did to survive this genocide, so if we did it by X or Y, it's all the same. And it's not one is not good, although Western world would frame it as what's good and bad like adopting Christianity and doing this is a good or being an academic and joining the middle class, bourgeoisie kind of that's good. But if people live on the street, that's bad. You know, that's not good [laughing] you know what I mean? So that is like whatever! It's like we've been so, you know, judged and labelled and, you know, all of those things by oppression and yeah, I don't know what I was trying to say there.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Most of them have been, like most people I know, like or come out of systems that were supposed to be, that were supposed to be the ones that would save us. Yeah.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Someday there'll be a big reckoning and Creator is going to take care of this.

Elder Leslie Spillett: You know there's, there's you know there is, There's Sylvia McAdam. Do you know her?

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah, Sylvia. I love Sylvia. So, that, she they have you know, she talks a lot, a lot about those human laws that we have. I think even knowing what our human laws are. Like, what are they, what are, what were those human laws and how practical are they today? And really, just looking at. Because I don't think it's missing, I think it's there. I think what you have has always been there, that desire. To help our community, help ourselves, to help our community, to be a part, to be that good community person, so just, you know, there's a book called. What's her book? Oh, my goodness. You have to you have to Google Sylvia's book.

Elder Leslie Spillett: About three laws, they're all there. They're not. And then even the seven the so-called seven sacred teachings, those are Anishinaabe laws. They're central too. That's how we do it. It's not like. You know, sometimes I think, and I do this myself, and I think it's got to be so complicated and so complex and so hasn't been done yet, but that's what held us together. I love those Cree laws; there's a lot of them. There's about 16 of them. Or and the Anishinaabe laws, I think there are more than the seven ones as well. Like, I know that in the, so, for an example, in the Cree law is that is if you harm another human, there's a spiritual price to pay for that. [Speaking Cree]. You might not experience it yourself, but some someone you love down the line is going to be harmed so that understanding, if you do harm to another human being your loved one will pay for it. So, I mean, if my loved one would pay for something I did, I would think twice about doing something that's not, that's not an offence, an offence, a human offence. And for and if, for harming animals the same way, if you, it's another law that you can't harm animals. If you harm animals, there's something that's going to happen to you. And then it also talks about the kinship system, the *wahkotowin*. The kinship system about how we're related to every, everything that's human and non-human. And so that there are all of these things that are already there. I think that we can just figure out. I think the idea then is, to figuring out how it applies in the social and the cultural conditions we now find ourselves in. And make it accessible. How those things apply to how we rear, we parent children to our understanding of parenting children, understanding what it means to be a family, understanding those things, hey, I think it's all there. Yeah.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah Google Sylvia. She's got a book.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And it's not oppressive. It's not like hierarchical, it's not patriarchal patriarchical. It's so beautiful. I love her stuff and, you know, like it puts the, I love it to is that it, it centers children. But it also holds women and women's knowledge in a way that is fully like she says, that Cree women have sovereignty over the land and the water. We need to think about that. Our sovereignty extends to the land in the water. That's huge, you know. And so, it also, so if you think of land, water and then that, that that that male kind of equivalent of the um, air, and the the fire, all of those, all of those medicines we co-, and you know it and talk about sovereignty is it's in, it's in a humble way. It's not in a way that is over anything. So, it's kind of like sometimes it's hard to talk in the English because then that's all I have. But to convey an Indigenous world view. Because when it talks about when you talk about the women's space in Cree law, and you say we have sovereignty "over", it's a, describes it in a way that that rather than in relationship with.

Elder Leslie Spillett: In responsibility too. Yeah.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And that's the other thing about children. Western child rearing is super, super oppressive, super oppressive. It's one of the most, biggest forms of oppression, then we don't even, it's a normal. We don't see it as oppression. Like we've at least begun to see that women relationship with men is oppressive. But with children complete, they complete, their agency is completely denied over and over and over again in every space that they engage in, in

schools, in the home, in any realm that they engage in, their oppression is everywhere. It's complete, comprehensive. And people don't see that they see that as normal, natural, that, in fact, that we're responsible. But it's, but it's not. Children are super oppressed.

Elder Leslie Spillett: We gender them right away even before they get out of the womb. We're gendering them right there. Where they- am I having a boy, am I having a girl who knows? Because they don't. They haven't. They come into a world that they don't have the agency to decide what they are, you know what I mean? We're beginning to find out, the fallacy of all of that as well, but. But it's yeah, so it's like super, like it's super, it's such a profound oppression of children.

Elder Leslie Spillett: [Laughing]. That's exactly right. Totally.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yeah, totally.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Respecting their sovereignty.

Elder Leslie Spillett: You know. Do you know, another person maybe I give you to talk to and I'll do, I'll follow up with this today is um, what's her name, the partner of Colby Tootoosis. She has a blog, and you'll love that blog, um...Andrea, Andrea... Shoot. I always consult with my, you will love her. Andrea. Because they are parenting their child. And their children. There are people that are actually doing this, parenting children in a non-oppressive way. So let me let me, I'm going to send you some resources.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Andrea Landdry. L-A-N-D-D-R-Y Andrea.

Elder Leslie Spillett: I grew up in the community called Wekusko, which was between The Pas and Thompson. It was Mile 81, it was called. But before that, I grew up on an island in Wekusko. My dad was a fisher, my mom was a, you know, she stayed at home. My mom was incredible. You know, if I only kind of honoured that as we only learn things after things shift, eh?

Elder Leslie Spillett: She was so talented in terms of being able to live on the land. I could not survive on the land. You put me out there for four days, I'm, like, dying to get out, you know, like if I'm on a fast or something.

Elder Leslie Spillett: But, man, my mom was incredible. So, we kind of grew up in the bush in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of everywhere, in the middle of the universe. Because, you know where we are is always the middle of the universe.

Elder Leslie Spillett: I almost said I grew up in the middle of nowhere, but it was somewhere because that's how we are. So always kind of like that's hard work, always trying to reflect on your language and how you're presenting things. So, I totally get, yeah, I'm constantly, and in my head around checking my own self and how I've come to, you know, how I kind of

spontaneously look at things in a way, and then trying to step back and say, well, where does, where is this coming from? Like how does this fit.

Elder Leslie Spillett: I am [Cree], mmhmm.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Both, no. Both, oh sorry. My dad was a complete settler.

Elder Leslie Spillett: Yes. I'm mostly Irish and English extraction.

Elder Leslie Spillett: And that's my, that's where the Spillett comes from because I remember Tasha like years ago, she looked it up because English derived names are always, have some form of connection to an occupation.

Elder Leslie Spillett: She said, you know it was spelled different but in old English it was we were the are my ancestors on that side were the splitters of lumber that built the ships. So, she said, oh my God, she says our ancestors made the ships that came here. [Both laughing] We do, 'cause even all of that, if I believe which I do, is that we carry the memory of our ancestors from our DNA, from where we come from, we have this kind of duality. It's already programmed into our DNA, our epigenetics or however we want to say that. Like, so that's mine as well as, that settlor kind of thing is mine as well as my Cree ancestry. So, I can't deny that.