

Exploring the Experiences of Adult Mentors in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program

by

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PREFACE

While I conduct this study, I always ask myself why I choose to do research in the social sciences. It is not about finding the beauty of this society and this world, because this world is not beautiful enough in many ways. We should feel far more than guilty, just to think how many poor are starving while rich are laughing, to think how ashamed we should be when people hate the colour on skin but love the colour on clothing, to think how brutally the ongoing wars can take the lives of young children while people living in comfort still make their times wasting, and to think how many people are proud of their cultural hegemony whereas others have been hurt by colonization. I understand that I am not able to change this world alone, but at least I can try to help things that happen around me. Little by little, I believe there are many researchers uniting to find the beauty out of this world.

I am a Chinese newcomer student who travelled across the ocean to this land with great curiosities; I am a novice researcher who learns about Indigenous teachings and philosophies with greater passions; I am a yellow “banana” but I refuse to act like “whites”, because no one is superior than others and no culture is better than other cultures; I am a believer who thinks we are all equal creatures, believes that our identity is our soul, and for the soul, I only have one, I can never pretend to be another and it can never be lost.

In order to respectfully acknowledge the traditions of the lands upon which my research takes place and to deeply respect the fact of the history, I begin this thesis with the University of Manitoba acknowledgement:

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.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the multiple meanings of the experiences of mentoring for adult mentors in the Aboriginal (Indigenous) Youth Mentorship Program for All Nations (Rec and Read). The study used an interpretive qualitative inquiry to investigate the experiences of adult mentors in Rec and Read. The Indigenous and non-Indigenous, male and female participants constituting seven adult mentors all over the age of 18, took part in this case study. I conducted a semi-structured focus group and individual interviews with participants. After transcribing and analyzing the data, the two emerging themes and six sub-themes were shared with participants to seek their feedback. The emerging themes (i.e., key strategies to building an intercultural mentorship program and key outcomes arising from an intercultural mentorship program) inform our understanding of how the Indigenous approaches within Rec and Read are experienced within the circular mentor model. Research findings were generated to inform the research literature on intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring. In order to improve the Rec and Read mentorship program, this thesis provided insight on the experiences of adult mentors in the program and how they understood their experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my advisors, Dr. Joannie Halas and Dr. Jay Johnson. I thank you for your patience and energies you have given to me in all these years. You are the greatest role models for me to look up to. I am all alone struggling in this foreign land, a land that I have no clue how I should live and where I should be heading next, but whenever I feel lost, you are always the first two persons that keep me going. You are like a foreign mother and brother to me to support me to get through the most difficult times of my late twenties. I thank you for everything.

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Also, I would like to thank the seven adult mentor participants: I thank you for the time you have invested in the interviews, thank you for your courage to share your personal experiences and stories which otherwise would remain unheard, and thank you for the positive energies and confidence you have shown to me.

Lastly and most importantly, I would like to thank my parents. Father, I thank you for your greatest courage to fight with your illness that has added suffering to your life. Mother, I thank you for your most generous care for the family when I was far away from home. I thank you for giving me this life and identity in the time of peace, and I thank you for educating me to become kind and gentle. I thank you with all my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
ABSTRACT	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	7
The Strengths-based and Indigenous Approaches to Mentoring	9
Research Rationale	11
Indigenous and Newcomer Populations in Winnipeg	13
The Rec and Read/Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program for All Nations	16
Definition of Terms	26
Indigenous	26
Race	27
Racism	27
Racialized minority	28
Racialized majority	28
Immigrant youth	28
Settlers	29
Newcomer youth	29
Marginalized group	29
Internalized colonization	30
Cultural identity	30
Hegemony	30
Culturally relevant	30
Summary	31
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	32
The Medicine Wheel	32
Social Determinants of Health for Indigenous and Newcomers	35
Postcolonial Theory	37
Culturally Relevant Programs	44
A Sample of Programs Designed for Indigenous and Newcomer Peoples	45
Summary	50
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS	52
Interpretivism	54
Interpretive Case Study	55
Participants	56
Ethical Considerations	59
Conducting Research with Indigenous People	61
Data Collection	63
Data Analysis Process	65
Trustworthiness	65
Limitations and Delimitations	67
Summary	68
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS: AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO MENTORING	70
Key Strategies to Building an Intercultural Mentorship Program	73
An Indigenous-informed, Culturally Affirming Space	74
Mentor-driven Intercultural Relationship Building	78
Mentoring in a Circle	81

Values-informed Leadership	87
Summary: Indigenous Approaches to Mentoring	93
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS: A SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH APPROACH	95
Key Outcomes Arising from an Intercultural Mentorship Program	95
Promoting Intercultural Competency	96
Promoting the Social Determinants of Health	104
Social Exclusion	104
Education	108
Employment	111
Summary: A Social Determinants of Health Approach	114
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	116
Summary of the Findings	117
Rec and Read in Relation to Other Mentorship Programs	128
The Recommendations for Future Research, Policy and Practice	131
Recommendations for Future Research	136
Recommendations for Future Policy	136
Recommendations for Future Practice	137
Limitations of the Study	138
REFERENCES	139
APPENDIX A: INVITATION LETTER	155
APPENDIX B: EMAIL TRANSCRIPT	157
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM	158
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS	163
APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT	165
APPENDIX F: KEY FINDINGS	166

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the city of Winnipeg was labelled as “the most racist city” in Canada by Maclean’s magazine (Macdonald, 2015, para. 8). As the seventh largest city in Canada, Winnipeg has one of the highest populations of Indigenous peoples (Statistics Canada, 2011). Some Indigenous youth live in Winnipeg and some move from the north to urban centres in order to attend higher education (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2001; Carpenter, Rothney, Mousseau, Halas & Forsyth, 2008; Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012; Mendelson, 2008). For Indigenous students from the north, they have to adapt to their urban, mainstream schools (Carpenter et al., 2008). Meanwhile, Canada attracts a high population of newcomer youth from all over the world year after year, and Manitoba is no exception. Upon arrival, like Indigenous youth from the north, many newcomer youth must learn to negotiate a totally different culture and language. Many Indigenous and newcomer youth are facing the issue of transforming their former education and lives to integrate into a new environment, and they may also deal with the problems related with “everyday racism” (Essed, 1991) and social hierarchies that exist not only within society, but also within their classes (e.g., in physical education classes, see Halas, 2011). With a large Indigenous and immigrant population across Manitoba (Statistics Canada, 2012), there are often intercultural tensions in the province. As the largest city, Winnipeg is deeply divided by color-lines; Indigenous people in Winnipeg suffer daily violence and the city does not provide equal opportunities for Indigenous people (Macdonald).

Set within this intercultural dynamic, there are a number of programs designed for youth that help to promote positive intercultural relationships and address the issues of racism in all its forms. One such program is the Rec and Read/Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program for All Nations (Rec and Read). In order to create a safe, healthy and welcoming world for children and youth from diverse backgrounds to play, grow and feel belonging in

their environment in the urban area of Winnipeg, the Rec and Read program provides after-school physical activity, nutrition and education programming for youth to develop as leaders in their community.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experiences of adult mentors in the Rec and Read programs in Winnipeg. This thesis is framed by answering the research question: how do adult mentors from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, both male and female, understand their experiences of the Rec and Read mentorship program? Specifically, I explored four detailed research questions: 1. How do the adult mentors understand their leadership role as a role model in the program? 2. How do the adult mentors understand the mentor program and its purposes, Indigenous philosophy, worldviews and values? 3. What are the intercultural relationships that are developed? 4. What are the benefits of the mentor program? Using interpretive inquiry, I explored in-depth the perspectives of the adult mentors regarding their roles and responsibilities in the program, including their views about the Indigenous philosophy and approaches to mentoring. By exploring in-depth the perspectives of the adult mentors, I searched to gain knowledge that will benefit the mentorship program while also contributing to the research literature regarding intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring.

In order to enhance the inherent strengths of the Rec and Read program and to improve personal strengths of Rec and Read mentors in terms of dealing with their challenges and meeting their needs, this research adopts a strengths-based approach. Also, this research can be seen as a positive result of incorporating a strengths-based concept, because it allows me, as a representative of a marginalized group (i.e., a newcomer in Canadian society), to speak out loud my weak voice and to provide new values and perspectives, underlining the important contributions that individuals from marginalized groups can have. Theoretically, the Medicine Wheel, social determinants of health and postcolonial theory work as key

frameworks to inform my data collection and analysis. In the next section, I introduce the strengths-based and Indigenous approaches to mentoring that Rec and Read uses to underline the strengths and abilities of program mentors.

The Strengths-based and Indigenous Approaches to Mentoring

Different from the deficit model that centres on an individual's deficits and problems, the strengths-based approach focuses on building and enhancing individuals' strengths and abilities (Sue, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2015). A strengths-based approach underlines that the problems one person has should not define who that person is; problems can be resolved through improving one's strengths (Alley, Shardell, Peters, McLean, Dam, Kenny, Fragala, Harris, Kiel, Guralnik, Ferrucci, Kritchevsky, Studenski, Vassileva & Cawthon, 2014). In program settings, the strengths-based approach recognizes the expertise and strengths of the program participants to ensure that everyone can be a contributor in the process of the learning and decision making (Sue et al., 2015). Above all, a strengths-based approach requires a welcoming and safe environment where social inequalities are reduced for individuals so that they can freely engage in and implement their strengths and potentials (Kral, 1995).

According to Halas, McRae, McGavock, Carpenter and Eskicioglu (2017b), Rec and Read emphasizes the empowerment of mentors' leadership and employment skills capacity as opposed to focusing on what problems mentors may have had or how many acts of racism they have encountered. In Rec and Read, the strengths-based approach allows mentors to find their own ways of facing their challenges instead of depending on someone else, and also allows mentors to understand the same potentials and abilities within each individual's cultural and racial differences.

Mentoring can be defined in different ways based on what context it applies. For example, in Canada where this study takes place, there are western approaches and

Indigenous approaches to mentoring, and it is worthy of noting that the Rec and Read program adopts an Indigenous approach to mentoring.

In mainstream western thinking, mentoring refers to a teaching and learning relationship that happens between an experienced individual (i.e., mentor) and a learner who intends to achieve similar experiences, skills and knowledge (Province of Manitoba, 2017). Specifically, there are two main types of mentoring relationships: developmental and instrumental mentoring (Province of Manitoba). Developmental mentoring focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the more experienced and the less experienced individuals over a time period, and this relationship involves leadership, support and friendship from one another in order to achieve a positive and healthy development for both involved. For instance, the Big Brothers Big Sisters program in Winnipeg is based on the relationship of developmental mentoring, which offers school and community-based mentor programs for children and youth. It basically provides an-hour of one on one mentoring by matching one adult with one child in the school or in the community on a weekly basis, and the mentor and mentee work together to achieve a positive relationship (Province of Manitoba). On the other hand, instrumental mentoring emphasizes the specific goals in terms of learning skills, gaining knowledge and acquiring abilities for future employment. The Career Focus program is a great example of instrumental mentoring. The program gives students opportunities to gain work experiences that may later contribute to their career and also helps them with employment transition from their school life (Province of Manitoba). Other than these two types of mentoring relationships, Rec and Read involves a mixed relationship of developmental and instrumental mentoring for children and youth to grow and develop.

Western approaches to mentoring can be defined as individualistic, which usually emphasizes enhancing one individual's hierarchy within the mentoring relationship for the purpose of improving himself or herself (Carr, 2006). Also, a western approach to mentoring

largely benefits the mentors, and values practical success of a mentee much more than focusing on health and wellness of the mentee (Carr).

In contrast, Indigenous approaches to mentoring focuses on creating meaning within mentoring relationships (Daloz & Parks, 2003), and the mentor in the mentoring relationships is more responsible to take account of reciprocity (Lowe, 2005). Moreover, an Indigenous approach to mentoring values participating more than achieving, provides Indigenous worldviews and traditional cultural teachings, and gives opportunities and time for the mentor and the mentee to share their experiences and stories (Pooyak, 2006).

Rec and Read incorporates the Indigenous approaches to mentoring and works on the purpose of learning together or from one another rather than producing a hierarchical environment where the mentor is seen as power to guide the mentee. Also, all the participants in Rec and Read regardless of their age and racial backgrounds are seen as mentors and they all play an important role in the program, therefore, the mentoring relationships within Rec and Read work in a balanced dynamic between all the mentors. Consistent with Indigenous approaches to mentoring, Rec and Read involves the concept of reciprocity to make sure the program benefits everyone involved. In the next section, I introduce my research rationale to highlight the importance of this study.

Research Rationale

The initial motivation of doing this study is from the consideration of my racialised background. As a Chinese newcomer and novice researcher living in Canada, I am interested in conducting a study with people from diverse racial backgrounds and knowing how well a culturally-informed mentorship program benefits us. I believe my experience in Canadian society and in Rec and Read may be similar to the mentors in the Rec and Read program who are from immigrant backgrounds, which may help me better understand their perspectives during the research interviews. Furthermore, as a former adult mentor in an after-school

program for Indigenous youth, my own experience can also inform the analysis of the data in this study.

While Rec and Read has provided over a decade of research-informed mentorship programming within Winnipeg, northern Manitoba and now across Canada (Halas et al., 2017b, p. 2; Eskicioglu, Halas, Senechal, Wood, McKay, Villeneuve, Shen, Dean & McGavock, 2014), researchers have thus far only collected data on children and youth mentors in Rec and Read, and have only involved the perspectives of adult mentors in a limited way. This study can contribute to the research literature as well as Rec and Read and its future development by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of adult mentors. It is noteworthy that the more Rec and Read develops in an informed way the better mentors can benefit in the future.

Additionally, the Rec and Read program is located within a socio-historical context of colonization where western cultures are dominant. Yet, Rec and Read is an Indigenous-focused program and keeps Indigenous teachings and worldviews as a foundation to enhance cultural identity in the program. Therefore, doing research on this program provides unique insights regarding how well Indigenous perspectives are understood and communicated by adult mentors from diverse backgrounds working in the program.

Finally, not only can Rec and Read benefit the health outcomes of Indigenous and newcomer children and youth mentors, but it can also be good for Winnipeg society to a certain extent. Specifically, Rec and Read focuses on Indigenous and newcomer children and youth mentors' four aspects of health and their social determinants of health by providing them after-school physical activity programs and opportunities to better their education and/or employment opportunities. If the health outcomes of young generations from Rec and Read are improved and they acquire a healthy living status, this may contribute to the

stability of Winnipeg society. The next section describes the populations of Indigenous and newcomers in Winnipeg to give a sense of what their status is, including their living context.

Indigenous and Newcomer Populations in Winnipeg

The population of Winnipeg has shown a trend of constant growth, and the annual growth rate is predicted to be about 12,500 people. Also, according to Winnipeg Population (2017, October), it is estimated that the population of Winnipeg in 2020 will be approximately 763,000 and may surpass 1 million by 2033 (see Figure 1).

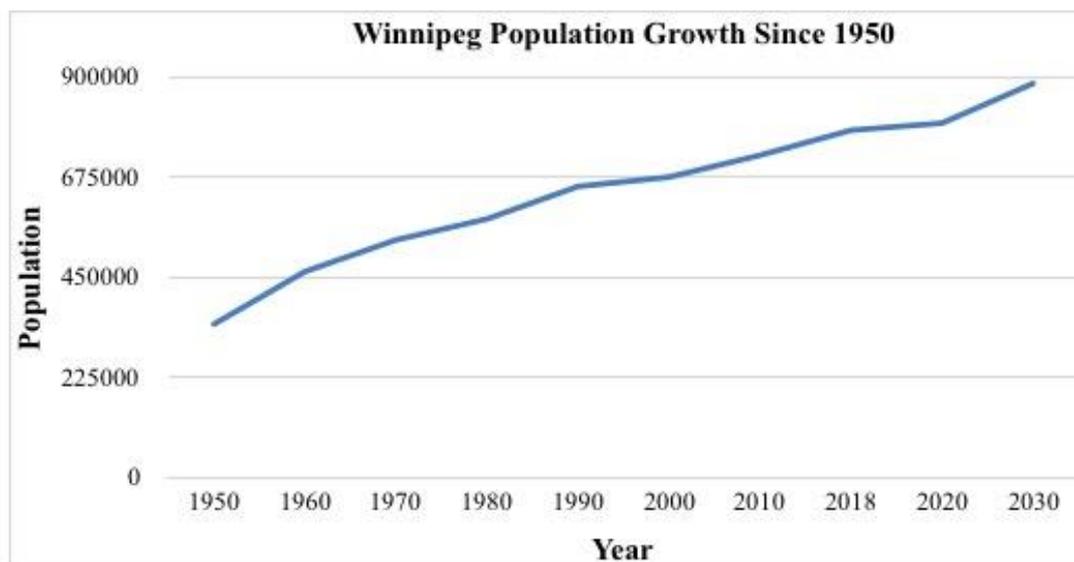


Figure 1: The Population Growth Trend of Winnipeg from 1950 to 2018 and Estimated Population Growth by 2030

Most importantly, Winnipeg has the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada. In 2006, 67,700 people in Winnipeg had identified themselves as Indigenous, representing 9.9 per cent of the total population of Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 2006) (See Figure 2). A total of 78,420 people in Winnipeg reported an Indigenous identity in 2011, making up 11 per cent of the total population of Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 2011). This number continued growing over the next few years, and in 2016, the number of Indigenous people reached 92,810, accounting for 12.2 per cent of the Winnipeg population (Statistics Canada, 2017).

The Indigenous population in Winnipeg grew by approximately 37.1 per cent between 2006 and 2016 (from 67,700 to 92,810). Winnipeg is the birthplace and home of the Métis Nation and it has the largest Métis community in Canada; according to Statistics Canada (2017), there were more than 52,130 Métis living in Winnipeg, making up 55.7 per cent of the city's Indigenous population. The First Nations' population represented 41.8 per cent of the Indigenous population in Winnipeg, while less than 1 per cent identifying themselves as Inuit (Statistics Canada). It is important to note that within this large Indigenous population in Winnipeg, there are only 3,590 people who still identified as speaking an Indigenous language (Statistics Canada), thus, the issue of the loss in Indigenous cultures and traditions is challenging for Indigenous communities in Canadian society.

In every province of Canada, the Indigenous population was generally younger than the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2017). The province of Manitoba had one of the youngest Indigenous populations in Canada; the median age in Manitoba was 21 years. In Winnipeg, there were around 42,905 Indigenous young people under the age of 25, making up almost half (46.2 per cent) of the Indigenous population in Winnipeg in 2016 (Statistics Canada).

Canada has one of the highest immigration rates all over the world, with around 300,000 new arrivals each year (Statistics Canada, 2017). In 2006, Winnipeg had attracted 24,120 newcomers (i.e., recent immigrants) from all around the world and this population represented a diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, making up 3.5 per cent of the total population of Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2011, the newcomers' population of Winnipeg reached to 45,270 people, accounting for 3.9 per cent of the city's population (Statistics Canada, 2011). By 2017, there were 52,460 newcomers coming to Winnipeg, representing 6.9 per cent of the total population of Winnipeg (Statistics Canada, 2017). For a comparison of the Indigenous and newcomer population in Winnipeg, please see Figure 2

below.

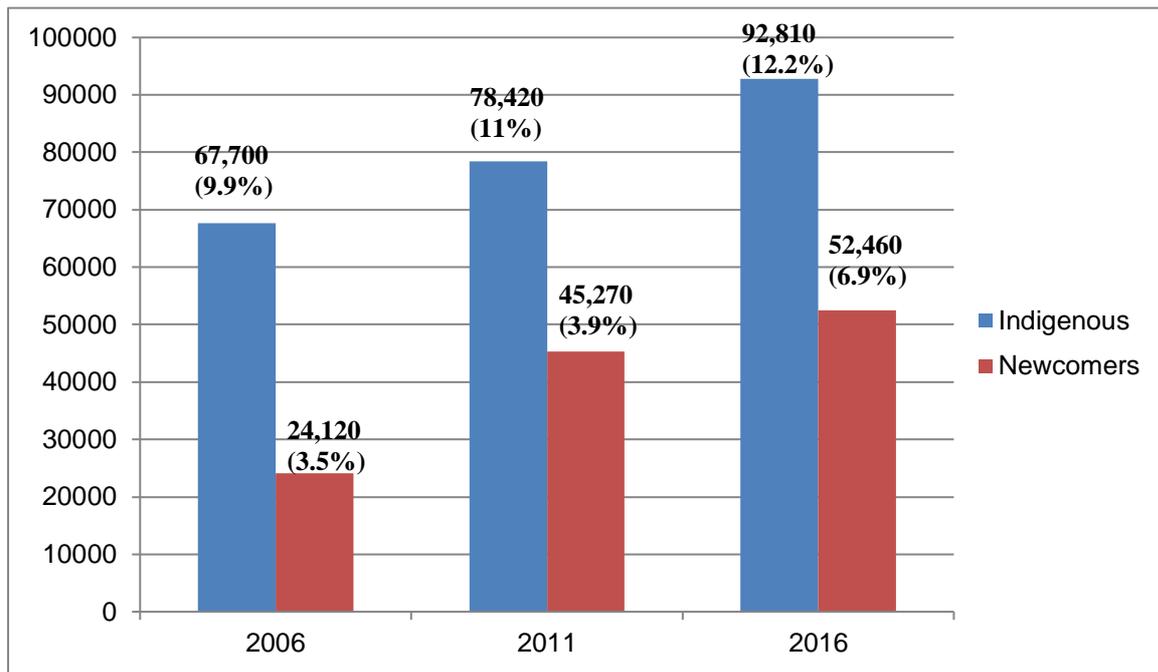


Figure 2: Representation of the Increase in Population for Indigenous and Newcomers in Winnipeg

The newcomers' population is relatively young in Canada. According to the 2016 census, in Canada, one in every five persons is born in a country other than Canada, and 35.2 per cent is under the age of 24 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Although Indigenous and newcomer populations are large in Canada and are growing very fast, they are still seen as marginalized groups because social structures here are formed by western cultures and thinking. In addition, with an increasingly large proportion of the overall population, Indigenous and newcomer people may face challenges related to their integration within schools and communities and have limited resources for accessing jobs. Furthermore, these two populations frequently experience challenges, discrimination and racism in society due to their low social-economic status (Leonard, 1984). Acknowledging these intercultural dynamics, Rec and Read recognizes the notion that children and youth from Indigenous and newcomer populations may find it difficult to claim safe and affirming spaces for them to grow (McRae, 2016; Carpenter et al., 2008). In order to build on the

strengths of these young people, Rec and Read calls for inner city, urban Indigenous children and youth and newcomer students to participate in the program.

Rec and Read encourages Indigenous and newcomer children and youth to strive for post-secondary education, and educates them with employment and career development skills in order for them to get positions in their community, such as recreation leaders and volunteers. Rec and Read also provides culturally-relevant leadership education/training for university and high school students from all racial backgrounds (including white, middle class Canadian students) so that they can respect and work well with Indigenous and newcomer children and youth and help underrepresented children and youth to affirm their cultural identities (McRae, 2016). To provide information about where my research took place, I introduce the Rec and Read program in the next section in terms of its mentors and their roles, the details of how the after-school physical activity programs work, its guiding principles, development, and underlying theories.

The Rec and Read/Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program for All Nations

The Rec and Read program evolved out of a communal, relationship-based research collaboration with Indigenous youth in 2006 that sought a cultural approach to urban Indigenous sport and recreation programming (Carpenter et al., 2008; Carpenter & Halas, 2011; Forsyth, Heine & Halas, 2007; Halas, Carpenter, McRae, McGavock & Eskicioglu, 2017a). By focusing on the contexts of physical activity, education and nutrition, Rec and Read aims to build on the capabilities, energy, and talents of the young participants through after-school programming (Halas et al., 2017a). Rec and Read is designed to support and rely upon the intercultural leadership development of adult mentors (McRae, 2014; Halas et al., 2017b). Adult mentors include university students and community members who are former high school mentors or live in the neighbourhood. The program involves adult allies who assist adult and high school mentors through staff training designed to facilitate their

understanding of the philosophies of Rec and Read and to develop their leadership and relationship building skills. The program is also designed to help youth from diverse backgrounds become leaders in their communities (Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012). In particular, Rec and Read delivers a three credit hour Indigenous spiritual learning course every winter on the diverse populations in a guided practicum to appoint them to work in an existing mentor site (Halas et al., 2017a). In Rec and Read, university and community mentors work with high school youth to develop and deliver after-school physical activity, nutrition and education programs for early year children in their neighbourhood, while also receiving supportive suggestions on program enhancement from mentors (Halas et al., 2017a).

Since 2006, the Rec and Read program has provided after-school programming in over 60 schools and communities, including seven urban Winnipeg and six northern Manitoba mentor sites. Hundreds of Indigenous people and newcomers from diverse backgrounds have participated as early year, high school or university and community mentors at urban and rural school sites (McRae, 2014). Advised by Ojibway Elder Mary Courchene, Rec and Read is also named as the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program *for All Nations* (AYMP). The Rec and Read program has significant meaning for people from diverse backgrounds because this was one of the first culturally relevant programs that gathered Indigenous people and people from other racial backgrounds (e.g. newcomers and white Canadians) together in one group to engage in physical activity, educational and nutritional programming (Halas et al., 2017b).

The Rec and Read mentor team is composed of early year children, high school students, adult mentors and adult allies. In 2016, there were 120 early year mentors, 73 high school mentors and 21 adult mentors participating in the program (McRae, 2016). The early year mentors in Rec and Read are children from diverse cultural backgrounds with abilities,

strengths and needs. The Rec and Read program targets to recruit early year children who can benefit most from participating in the program. Moreover, the Rec and Read program originally focused on recruiting Indigenous students as high school mentors, but the program now welcomes high school students from diverse backgrounds who have interests and passions to work with early years children, and have abilities and the desire to be activity leaders. The Rec and Read program welcomes university students and community members who have an educational background in physical activity or recreation and have experience in working with youth from diverse backgrounds as adult mentors (McRae, 2014).

In this study, adult mentors in the program include university students and community members. Adult allies include the administrative team (i.e., program director and mentor coordinator), but also Elders, teachers, professors and community leaders who support the programs when they are running in the schools. The difference between adult mentors and adult allies is that adult allies/administrative team organize training sessions to guide adult and high school mentors for preparing the after-school programs, whereas adult mentors implement and involve high school mentors in the after-school programs. Also, adult mentors and allies in the program come from diverse backgrounds. They can be Indigenous and non-Indigenous, including immigrants, newcomers, racialized minority and white-Canadians. Please see Figure 3 for a representation of the four groups involved in Rec and Read: early year mentors, high school mentors, adult mentors and adult allies.

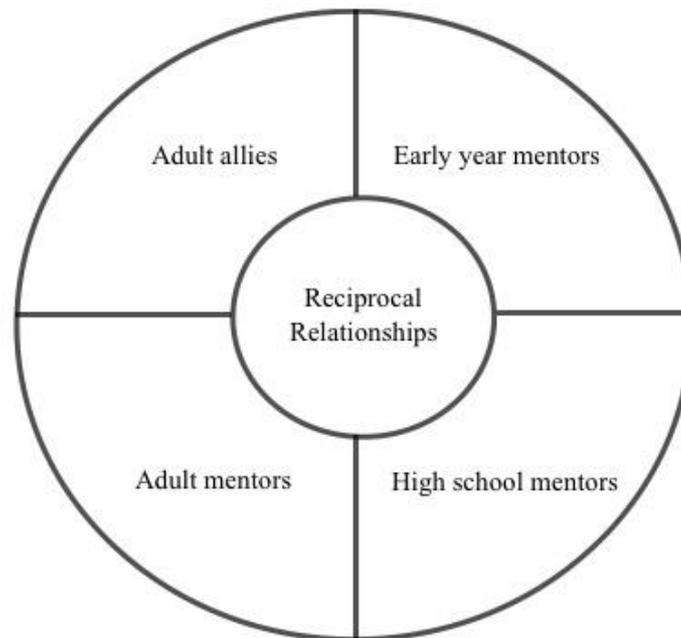


Figure 3: The Composition of Mentors in Rec and Read

The effectiveness of the Rec and Read program is based on the collaborative and reciprocal relationships between all program mentors (Halas et al., 2017b). Within these relationships, all mentors are viewed as learning from each other, whatever their age or place within the circular model. All mentors have their roles and responsibilities for different aspects of the program implementation toward its goals, including its improvement, while also receiving beneficial outcomes from the program (Halas et al.). This study centres on the perspectives of adult mentors as they take responsibility to implement the leadership roles for the development of early year and high school mentors, noting, as mentioned, that they also learn from them through the reciprocal relationships. Furthermore, it is valuable to gather understandings of adult mentors regarding program philosophies and the theoretical basis for ensuring Rec and Read operates in a good way. In addition, it is imperative to learn the experiences of adult mentors, a number of whom were former high school mentors, because some adult mentors from university are stepping into the transition stage of their lives.

Specifically, in order to facilitate adult mentors from university to become positive contributors in the society of Winnipeg, Rec and Read offers them academic credits and teaches employment skills (Halas et al.). Given this study's focus, to see how the program benefits adult mentors is one of the ways to examine the effectiveness of the program.

There are two program phases in Rec and Read. The first one is called the Preparation Phase, which runs from November to January each year; the second one runs from January to March and is named the Implementation Phase (McRae, 2016). During the Preparation Phase, the administrative team (i.e., program director and mentor coordinator) will organize training sessions to get adult and high school mentors together. Training sessions will be held twice a week for 4-5 hours per day, and will involve food. In the sessions, adult mentors will facilitate high school mentors to learn about Indigenous knowledge, teachings and approaches that guide the program and help them with their leadership skills for planning and delivering educational literacy and physical activities for early year mentors.

In the Implementation Phase, high school and adult mentors will work together to run after-school programs for early year mentors at several mentor sites. Usually, after-school programs will be organized twice a week: one day is for planning the program and one day is for facilitating the program for early year mentors. Specifically, each day, the after-school programs last for two hours and start with a healthy snack. On the first day of the week, adult mentors support high school mentors to together plan and organize physical activities, educational games, one on one reading, and to prepare nutritional foods for the early year mentors. During and after the activities, the program provides time for high school and adult mentors to share their voices. On the second day of the week, high school mentors facilitate the program for early year mentors, and all mentors engage in physical activities (e.g. Traditional Aboriginal Games such as Gentle Always Wins and low-organized-games such as Dr. Dodge Ball, etc.), educational games (e.g. twister, memory games, etc.) or one on one

reading. At the end of the program, mentors share their own perspectives and experiences on how the day went and how they feel about the program by engaging in a de-briefing circle (McRae, 2014).

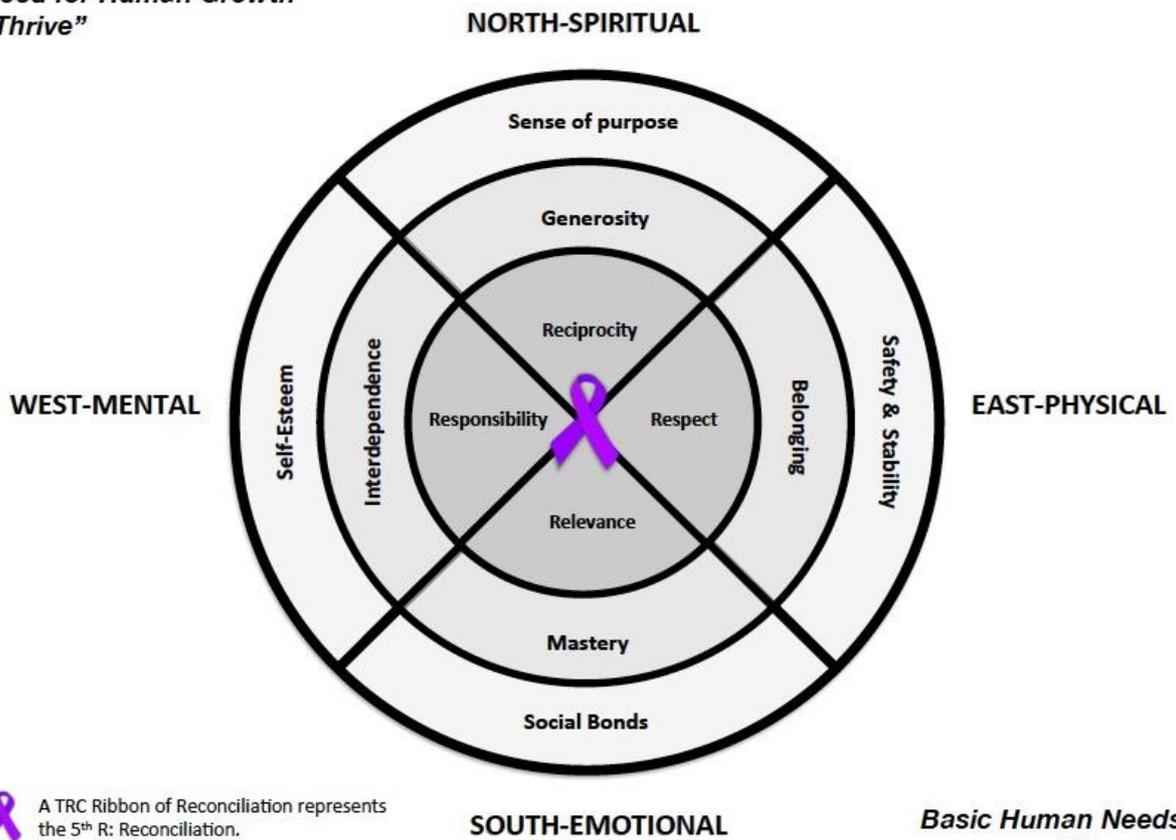
Rec and Read is guided by Indigenous cultural teachings and worldviews, which offers a supportive, wholistic approach for youth from diverse backgrounds to improve their health outcomes and enhance their wholistic understanding of the world and all creation (McRae, 2014). Based on a wholistic approach inspired by the Medicine Wheel (see Figure 4), Rec and Read is informed by three guiding principles: the Circle of Courage® (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002), the Four R's (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) and the adapted version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Halas et al., 2017b), and these three theoretical frameworks are interconnected with each other to guide the program (see Figure 5). Brendtro et al. (2002) emphasized the significant meaning of positive relationships for today's youth, including their relationships within their neighbourhoods, schools and communities. Also, they underlined that children and youth's potential of being a leader are often neglected. Four inter-related aspects of human needs and behaviours, *Belonging*, *Mastery*, *Independence* and *Generosity* work together within a circle to inform the Circle of Courage®. By absorbing the four central values of *Belonging*, *Mastery*, *Independence* and *Generosity*, Rec and Read guides youth to develop their leadership skills in after-school programs, and encourages them to share their strengths, energies, abilities and talents.



The Medicine Wheel

Figure 4: The Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel

*Need for Human Growth
"Thrive"*



 A TRC Ribbon of Reconciliation represents the 5th R: Reconciliation.

*Basic Human Needs
"Survive"*

Figure 5: Rec and Read Theoretical Model (Halas et al., 2017b, p. 11)

The circle starts in the east where the sun begins to rise; children and youth cannot engage themselves into a program or community if they do not have a sense of belonging (Brendtro et al., 2002). When program mentors feel connected and build friendships with each other, trust and respect are established in the program, leading to a sense of belonging (Carpenter & Halas, 2011). In order to accomplish *Belonging* in the program, Rec and Read brings mentors together to plan and deliver physical activities, educational games and healthy foods. Rec and Read also gives time for mentors to share their stories, experiences, and cultural backgrounds in a de-briefing circle (McRae, 2014).

Then, in the south of the circle is *Mastery*, which focuses on individual growth. Youth will become more active and increase their confidence when they feel successful in the program. Rec and Read provides a stress-free space for youth to have some cooperative, low-organized activities and games so that everyone in the program is able to engage, play and strengthen their skills (McRae, 2014). Moving through the circle, the western part is *Independence*. Rec and Read encourages every mentor to have a role and to believe in themselves that they are important in the program. Rec and Read allows youth mentors to make their own decisions and have leadership; youth mentors choose physical activities or games and prepare foods for early year mentors (McRae). Last, in the north is *Generosity*. Youth mentors contribute their time and energy for volunteering within the mentorship program, while Rec and Read offers a safe, welcoming place for youth mentors to develop their skills, make new friends and share their voices (McRae).

Another guiding principle is the Four R's, created by Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt in 1991. *Respect, Relevance, Responsibility* and *Reciprocity* are four concepts of the Four R's and they are articulated to guide the Rec and Read programming (Carpenter & Halas, 2011). Moreover, they are interconnected with *Belonging, Mastery, Independence* and *Generosity* respectively. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) pointed out that Indigenous people

are waiting for a better education, which can respect their identities and origins in ways that are relevant to their worldviews and teachings. This helps them to build a stronger sense of responsibility, and provides them reciprocity when they build relationships with other people. Rec and Read promotes *Respect* by trusting every mentor and establishing trust between all the mentors, and recognizing everything (e.g. knowledge, cultures, traditions, worldviews, etc.) that mentors bring to the program (Carpenter & Halas).

To achieve *Relevance*, the program provides youth-driven low-organized and low-competitive activities for mentors so that everyone can actually engage and be active in the program and can feel connected with each other (Carpenter & Halas, 2011). For accomplishing *Responsibility* in the program, Rec and Read helps all mentors build leadership skills, and then the program empowers all mentors and brings them to work together to plan and conduct each program (Carpenter & Halas). *Reciprocity* is about giving and receiving. While the Rec and Read program benefits all mentors in terms of their wholistic health and wellness, mentors work together to improve the program and make the program a better place to include and help more people from diverse backgrounds (McRae, 2014). In recent years, Rec and Read has invested more attention and research funding on health-related prevention and promotion approaches, including the recent focus on preventing chronic illness such as diabetes (Halas et al., 2017b), particularly for children (Eskicioglu et al., 2014).

The last guiding principle is the adapted version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. By achieving the Circle of Courage® and the Four R's in the program, the basic human needs of the program mentors (i.e., *safety and stability*, *social bonds*, *self-esteem* and *sense of purpose*) can be enhanced respectively (Halas et al., 2017b). To be specific, the program mentors can feel the sense of safety and stability if they feel respected and have sense of belonging in the program; bringing relevance to the mentors' participation and their

individual growth, the program helped mentors establish social bonds within the program; self-esteem of the mentors can be developed when all the mentors recognize their responsibility to take their leadership roles that can contribute to the overall development of the program; the concept of reciprocity and generosity encourages mentors to understand the influences each individual can have and facilitates mentors to set their purpose as building a strong community where individuals can give and receive, share and learn.

Importantly, Rec and Read has placed Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's purple ribbon of reconciliation at the heart of the circle, which represents the fifth R (i.e., *Reconciliation*) and "captures the contemporary reality of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada today and the need to build intercultural understanding throughout all aspects of our work" (Halas et al., 2017b, p. 12).

The Rec and Read mentor program has been expanding since it started in 2006, from only one partner school in the first year and two partner schools in the second year to 12 urban and 4 rural schools in 2012. Over ten years, more than 2,600 people from diverse cultural backgrounds have participated in Rec and Read, including 2,443 mentors from high schools and primary schools and 205 mentors from universities and communities, and the numbers continue to grow (McRae, 2016).

The initial step of building the Rec and Read program was to claim a meeting place and get children and youth participating in the program (Carpenter et al., 2008). However, in the beginning, it was not easy to get students involved as the program was facing challenges to get access to meeting spaces (e.g. physical activity spaces, a kitchen, etc.). As described by the first team of Rec and Read mentors, things went smoothly later when Rec and Read had their first programming day in a multipurpose room (MPR) in an elementary school and a few high school students showed up (Carpenter et al.). Soon, the MPR became the mentors' own space where students had their identity affirmed and they played games with each other.

For those Indigenous youth who had challenges to claim a space in their multi-cultural high schools (see van Ingen & Halas, 2006), this room really became a space for them to recognize their culture and share their stories. Then, the next step for strengthening the program was to add healthy food and physical activities. The Rec and Read program provides food not only for attracting student participation, but also for building closer relationships between mentors. During the snack break, mentors get together around the table and chat about their studies or lives. To ensure youth engagement in the program, Rec and Read organized playful low-competitive activities or games for mentors in the gym. Week after week, those students who were shy or appeared reluctant during their initial visits became regularly involved mentors in the program (Carpenter et al., 2008).

In summary, Rec and Read blends the Indigenous perspectives of the Four R's, the Circle of Courage®, the adapted version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Medicine Wheel to contribute to wholistic health and wellness by giving mentors the opportunities for accessing and gaining knowledge about healthy nutrition, by providing theoretically-based, culturally relevant physical education, sport and recreation activities for mentors to participate in, by educating mentors to develop their literacy, culturally-relevant leadership and career development skills and by supporting mentors to build stronger and meaningful inter-cultural relationships and to affirm their cultural identities within the program (McRae, 2016). In the next section, I clarify key terms used in this study.

Definition of Terms

Indigenous

Indigenous people are the descendants of the original inhabitants of a defined geographical region (e.g. North America); their ancestors were the first group of people who inhabited a country (e.g. Canada, Australia, United States, etc.) before people from other racialized backgrounds arrived. According to the Canadian Constitution, Indigenous people

refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and these three groups of people have different but unique languages, cultures and beliefs (Statistics Canada, 2009). First Nations peoples mean Indigenous people in Canada who are registered under the Indian Act. Inuit refers to Indigenous people who live in the far north of Canada and who are not identified as First Nations people. Métis refers to people who have mixed First Nations and European descent. In this study, Indigenous youth means Indigenous people's descendants who are in the age from 12 to 18 (e.g. middle and high school aged students) and Indigenous adult refers to the participants in this study who are 18 years of age and older.

Race

Race has referred to various meanings over the years, so the meaning of race is mainly determined by historical and social context (James, 1999). In contemporary society, race is fundamentally a socially constructed classification of identity that categorizes people based on their visual differences and geographic origin (James; Helms, 1994; Spickard, 1992). Unfortunately, people sometimes tend to structure race to categorize other people from different racial backgrounds within a hierarchy of social value (Helms; Spickard). Therefore, race can influence the way people identify themselves, the way people interact or socialize with others and the way people place themselves or are placed in the social hierarchies within society, class or workplace (James).

Racism

Typically, racism is the belief in the superiority of one group (e.g., white) and the inferiority of other groups (e.g., Indigenous, non-white peoples, etc.) (James, 1999). Racism also means a set of beliefs, attitudes, policies, practices and actions that are used to subordinate individuals or groups according to their race, and to advocate that one racial category is superior or inferior to others (Durrheim, Hook & Riggs, 2009). Racism happens when an individual or a racialized minority group is typically identified as biologically and

culturally subordinate (James). According to St. Denis and Schick (2003), Canada is not only racist toward Indigenous and racialized minorities, but there is also a belief in the superiority of whites.

Racialized minority

Racialized minority means a group of people, other than Indigenous people, who are different from white people in the color of skin and other physical traits. People from racialized minority groups can be newcomers to Canada, established immigrants and Canadian-born. People from racialized minority groups usually have poor access to the social determinants of health and tend to be subject to racism (Hamilton, 2008; James, 1999).

Racialized majority

Racialized majority refers to a social group that is identified to have the most dominant power in a society or a particular place, and it is not necessary to mean this group has the most members in relation to other groups (Goodfriend, 2010). For example, in Canada, white people are considered to be the racial majority group, even in parts of the country where they are even numerically a minority.

Immigrant youth

Historically in Canada, immigrants mainly referred to white people of European heritage (e.g. British, French, Italian and Spanish, etc.) who moved to Canada mostly from Europe or the United States. These early immigrants are also referred to as 'settlers'. Then, the trend began to change in the 1960s that people from many countries beyond Europe started to immigrate to Canada (Wayland, 1997). In this thesis, immigrant youth means youth aged from 12 to 18 (e.g. middle and high school) who move from their original country to Canada for a wide range of reasons (e.g. following their parents, pursuit of better education, etc.), and they settle in Canada more than five years (Statistics Canada, 2008). Adult immigrants refer to the same group of people who are 18 years of age and older.

Settlers

Settlers refer to people who have entered a continent with the intention of establishing a permanent residence. The continents that settlers migrated to are usually the lands that have been claimed by other groups of people (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). For example, the first settlers in Canada were western colonizers (e.g., French, British, etc.).

Newcomer youth

For this thesis, newcomer youth, aged from 12 to 18, are defined as recent immigrant youth who were born in non-Western countries (e.g. Europe, North America, etc.) and moved to Canada within five years (Statistics Canada, 2007). For instance, according to the 2006 Census, youth who moved to Canada between 2001 and 2006 are defined as recent immigrant youth.

Marginalized group

Marginalization is a concept that can be formed by different circumstances (Leonard, 1984). For example, one country can be marginalized at the global level; and ethnic groups, communities, families or individuals can be marginalized within the dominant social structure. The social status of a marginalized group is confined to the peripheral edge of the society (Leonard). Marginalized groups are challenged to get involved in mainstream economic, political, cultural and social activities (e.g., some marginalized populations were prohibited from voting, such as Indigenous peoples in Canada who weren't allowed to vote until the 1960's) (Leonard). A group of people who are marginalized will have relatively few social resources available to them in terms of their work, educational opportunities, health services and housing, and they may constantly be the target of negative social attitudes (Eldering & Knorth, 1998). In Rec and Read, many of the children, youth and adult mentors may experience marginalization based on these factors.

Internalized colonization

In this thesis, internalized colonization means people may unconsciously and gradually adopt the social practices, culture, education, stereotypes and worldviews from the dominant powers (e.g., western countries) no matter whether he or she is located within or outside the colonized region. For example, people from in-land China living in Canada cannot be defined as within the colonized region but they may also be affected by internalized colonization. As a consequence, social structures, cultural values and beliefs of the dominant countries are established (Hodgson, 2002).

Cultural identity

Cultural identity basically means a sense of belonging and is about how individuals recognize their culture, race and social class within their living context. ‘Who are we? Where are we from?’ are the questions that often get asked when people think about their cultural identities (James, 1999). “In discussing cultural identities, we must always pay attention to context. Questions of identity are always questions about representation.” (Hall as cited in James, 1995, p. 5).

Hegemony

Hegemony refers to a group (i.e. the ruling class) in one society who possesses more power over others in that society and imposes their worldviews on others; and this group dominates other people in that society by influencing their everyday thoughts, behaviours, cultures and beliefs. Most importantly, hegemony works to make people believe and accept that this particular group’s worldviews, cultural norms and values are true and superior to theirs’ (Gramsci, 1992).

Culturally relevant

Culturally relevant is a pedagogy that can be effectively used for teaching students from all racial backgrounds (Diller & Moule, 2005). Also, culturally relevant is used within

cross-cultural or multicultural settings, which enable students from diverse backgrounds to connect teachings with their personal and social cultural context (Scherff & Spector, 2011).

Summary

The Rec and Read program is designed to provide a safe and welcoming culturally relevant program for children and youth from diverse backgrounds to engage in, but there are so many children and youth in this world who are still suffering from Canada's legacy of colonization, and worldwide, from on-going wars and globalization. Along with the challenges faced by Indigenous youth, there are a great number of refugees coming to Canada; as such, there is an on-going need for culturally relevant programs like Rec and Read. Culturally relevant programs help children and youth who are identified as marginalized to live better via more opportunities in Canadian society. This study helps people to understand how the adult mentors navigate the intercultural dynamics of being a role model within a diverse postcolonial cultural context that is informed by Indigenous worldviews, culture and teachings.

In the next chapter, I introduce the Medicine Wheel and how it relates to Rec and Read and this study. Then, I include the social determinants of health, because all of the wholistic health and wellness benefits in the Rec and Read program are strongly connected with the social determinants of health. Also, I describe postcolonial theory in terms of its development, main ideas, and its relationship with the Rec and Read program and this study. Furthermore, I include various culturally relevant programs to compare them with Rec and Read, and to provide an overview of the types of intercultural programming available for Indigenous and newcomer peoples in Winnipeg.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his (her) skin, or his (her) background, or his (her) religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite (Mandela, 1995, p. 384).”

The literature review is divided into four sections. The first section explains the four directions of the Medicine Wheel and describes their relations with Rec and Read to emphasize the importance of this theoretical basis for this study. To better understand how the social determinants of health benefit the Rec and Read program, the second section discusses the social determinants of health by explaining what they are and how they connect with Rec and Read. The third section focuses on explaining postcolonial theory, its development and main ideas, in order to clarify why postcolonial theory fits with this study. The final section introduces examples of different culturally relevant programs that are available to Indigenous and newcomer peoples in Winnipeg, which can provide a vision of how well-established the Rec and Read program is within the cultural landscape of programs for Indigenous and newcomer children and youth.

The Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel is an ancient symbol developed by Indigenous people to demonstrate that all things are in a complex and powerfully interconnected relationship (Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1985; Battiste, 2000). According to Bopp et al. (1985), the Medicine Wheel represents the four directions in a circle: east, south, west, and north; and these four directions can be representative of different ideas and concepts (see Figure 2 above). For instance, each direction in the circle can embody the four aspects of humanity: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual (Battiste; Lane, Bopp, Bopp & Brown, 2003). Lane et al. pointed out that the Medicine Wheel encompasses the wholistic health and wellness of

individuals to keep ones' life in balance and harmony, including the balance of relationships within ourselves and to each other, the universe and other living things. Also, the wholistic health and wellness of an individual is relied on maintaining balance and building relationships between physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health, because an individual's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health are closely interconnected (Bopp et al.). For example, if you have a bad emotion, you may become physically and mentally inactive, so that you are not willing to play and study in school, then you will be more likely to judge your life and be unhappy (McRae, 2014). In Rec and Read, the four aspects of health of the Medicine Wheel work closely together to provide the Indigenous theoretical basis for helping program mentors work towards the process of self-development and self-knowledge.

Not only does physical health refer to your body's health condition at this moment, but also relates to how you treat your body (Lavallée, 2007). Rec and Read carries out practises like healthy eating and low-organized physical activities and games to show a healthy way of treating our bodies (McRae, 2014). Having a healthy lifestyle, nutrition and discipline with your body is a terrific way to relieve your stress and have a good relationship with your life (Lavallée).

Emotional health is connected with an individual's feelings about everything that is around them (Bopp et al., 1985). Each day, people will have different feelings, and feelings about the relationships between you and your family, friends and schools can determine your emotional health day to day. Also, emotional health can be determined by an individuals' feeling of isolation (Lavallée, 2007). Therefore, Rec and Read focuses on developing a sense of belonging within the programs for mentors to alleviate their feeling of isolation (McRae, 2014).

The mental health of one individual can be influenced in two ways: first, what one individual is willing to do; and second, what one individual experiences (Bopp et al., 1985).

Specifically, in the Rec and Read program, mentors' mental health can be influenced positively, if they have a willingness to set a goal in their studies, to learn new knowledge and to make new friends, or they experience a welcoming and encouraging program. Nevertheless, if some mentors (e.g. Indigenous and newcomer youth mentors) experience language barriers, discrimination and racism in their communities or schools, their mental health may be affected negatively (McRae, 2014). Social exclusion can also be one of the challenges that negatively impacts on individuals' mental health, which could lead to the failure for individuals to perform their roles and responsibilities in their community and society (Schwartz et al., 2016). According to Halas et al. (2017b), Rec and Read promotes positive leaders and role models as a source of motivation in the program to guide Indigenous and newcomer mentors to overcome their feelings of being excluded in their society.

Spiritual health has strong connections with cultural identities, beliefs and values (Lavallée, 2007). Having one's different cultural identities, beliefs and values recognized by the mainstream culture (e.g. western culture) in one society is significant for people from diverse backgrounds, because their spiritualities are based on having those cultural beliefs and values; stated otherwise, their cultural identities make them who they are (Bopp et al., 1985). Rec and Read works as a cross-cultural program in order to facilitate mentors to better understand the notion of cultural diversity through their participation, and also to create a culturally relevant space to affirm their cultural identities (McRae, 2014).

The Rec and Read program incorporates physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual components of the Medicine Wheel for mentors to learn about wholistic health and wellness as four aspects of health, which can provide a theoretical framework of traditional Indigenous knowledge and can guide Rec and Read and this study for in-depth understanding of the adult mentors' experiences of Rec and Read within a social-historical context of colonization. In the next section, I first explain what the social determinants of health are, and then I address

their relationship with Indigenous people and newcomers, the Medicine Wheel and the Rec and Read program.

Social Determinants of Health for Indigenous People and Newcomers

People commonly think that our health is affected by genetic factors and unhealthy habits, and tend to believe that if you quit smoking, moderately drink alcohol and do exercise frequently, you can become healthy and have a longer life expectancy. However, these factors are just lifestyle choices and are only small parts of what affect people's health. The principal factors that influence health are social and economic living conditions that people experience every day, and these conditions are also known as the "social determinants of health" (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010, p.7). Social determinants of health are shaped by how people are born, grow, live, work and age in their society and are mostly responsible for making health inequities become transparent within and between countries (Mikkonen & Raphael). Income, education, food, housing, employment, working conditions, early childhood development and social exclusion are some examples of social determinants that are closely connected with each other to influence people's health outcomes. For example, people's diet depends on how much money they can afford to spend on food and how much they can spend may be limited by their income. Also, low income or no income leads to poverty, which denies people access to decent housing, education and other basic life necessities. Education is one major factor that determines income and unemployment. More education generally helps people get a better chance of high-income employment and ensures their job stability. Social exclusion is a result of racism and discrimination, which can prevent people from having access to health services and participating in social activities (Mikkonen & Raphael).

The most essential and underlying determinant of health for Indigenous and newcomers is the devastating and ongoing impact of European colonization (Raphael, 2009).

Since confederation, Indigenous people have been born under the colonial environment (e.g., the formation of the Indian Act of 1876 and the establishment of residential schools) which leads them to live in a low socioeconomic status (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). Specifically, European colonization impacts on Indigenous people's health status in the manner of relocating their traditional lands, enforcing assimilation through suppressing their language and culture, holding racism towards them at individual and institutional levels and overall controlling their lives and destinies (Raphael). Similarly, European colonization affects newcomers' health and life in various ways. Upon newcomers immigrating to Canada, they may have encountered the process of marginalization and experienced many different issues, such as, racial inequality, unstable housing, unemployment status and cultural discrimination. These issues together may contribute to newcomers living in a climate of social exclusion from the mainstream of society (Raphael).

Social determinants of health are closely related with the Medicine Wheel that works as the theoretical basis for the Rec and Read program. To be specific, the four aspects of health (i.e. physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health) that the Medicine Wheel focuses on can all be affected by the social determinants (e.g. income, education, employment, housing, etc.). By focusing on the importance of social determinants of health for Indigenous and newcomer youth, the Rec and Read program offers a social determinants approach to an after-school physical activity program. Beyond the wholistic benefits of being active (i.e. having students develop a sense of *belonging*, *mastery*, *independence* and *generosity*), Rec and Read also offers participants opportunities to acquire educational credits, develop employment skills, gain knowledge about healthy child development and enhance social support networks in order to address the social determinants of health for all mentors in the program (McRae, 2016). In the next section, I explain postcolonial theory by connecting the impacts of colonization with the Rec and Read program, the mentors in the program and the

mentors' social determinants of health. Also, for the sake of better understanding the cultural and social backgrounds of Rec and Read mentors, I discuss the development and main ideas of postcolonial theory, and then expand on the intercultural and socio-historical context that the young people in Winnipeg/Rec and Read experience through the lens of postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a critical thought and a movement in relation to culture, politics and literacy in the beginning of the twentieth century, which explores the historical experiences and relationships between oppressed individuals or nations (e.g., many parts of the east, Africa) and dominant powers (e.g., the western world) (Childs & Williams, 1997). These relationships were all shaped by imperial conquests and were not equal relationships (Childs & Williams). Moreover, postcolonial theory focuses on the effects of western imperialism on non-western regions (such as Asia, Africa, North and South America) after the end of colonial ruling, and on what happens to people during and after colonization. Postcolonial theory considers how colonized nations are now facing the issue of identity crisis; "who are we?" is the question that always challenges people who have experienced colonization (Childs & Williams). Specifically, despite these geographic areas becoming independent in terms of their state sovereignty, the status of colonization still prevails through the ways of well-established cultural hegemony. Therefore, the basic principle behind postcolonial theory is that subjugated people will attempt to gain or subvert cultural hegemony (Childs & Williams).

Rec and Read works as a culturally affirming program to gather youth who are from oppressed cultural backgrounds (e.g. Indigenous youth as well as young people who arrive as immigrants or refugees) together to affirm their cultural identity and values by empowering them in terms of leading the program, sharing their stories and teaching each other. For this

study, both Indigenous and newcomer peoples are seen as marginalized groups because they are not from Canada's dominant cultures (i.e. western cultures) (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988). In order to help Indigenous and newcomer children and youth gain power, have their voices and affirm their cultural identity within society and in schools that are dominated by western cultures, Rec and Read insists to utilize Indigenous teachings and worldviews to claim spaces for them and seeks to strengthen cultural identity in the program (McRae, 2014). Therefore, the experience of university and community mentors in the Rec and Read program is significant because not only is this program formed by diverse populations but also is less dominated by western cultures and values.

It is essential to note that postcolonial theory is not only relevant to researchers studying and working with Indigenous populations but also the forces of colonization have brought global impacts and many of us have direct and indirect experiences of colonization which we bring with us from other parts of the world. On this basis, it can be argued that newcomers from the regions which had experienced colonization or not, all experienced internalized colonization (Browne et al, 2005).

After long periods of colonization, Indigenous people were forced to learn western cultures and western languages via Indian residential schools (Childs & Williams, 1997). As a consequence, western cultures and languages dominated their own languages after generations. Also, Indigenous people now are still treated badly within society, even in the academic research process (Wilson, 2008). For example, there has been a tradition of western scholars who go into Indigenous communities to do research whenever they want and leave without any explanation, because Indigenous people were excluded from the research process (Wilson).

In addition to Indigenous and newcomers/immigrants, racialized white Canadians are also impacted by colonization because they have benefitted by the colonial project. In

Canada, a legacy of colonization is the perceived superiority of western, European heritage, culture and worldviews. This means that students with white racialized identities will experience their schools and communities differently than those who are positioned less favourably within the social hierarchies. Also, people who are identified as a racialized minority may face many issues, including lack of opportunities for education and employment, limited resources on housing and unable to afford healthy nutrition, which are directly related with their social determinants of health leading them to a low social-economic living status.

Rec and Read is situated in a postcolonial context whereby all adult mentors, whatever their social location, are impacted by internalized colonization. Adult mentors who are white Canadians are in the more privileged position and may view the “other” in ways that are different than how the Indigenous and newcomer adult mentors may see the world (Said, 1978). Rec and Read tries to disrupt western hegemony by being an Indigenous-focused program, versus a more westernized approach to after-school programming and keeps Indigenous worldviews and teachings as a foundation to offer youth from different backgrounds a culturally diverse space to be recognized and healthy (McRae, 2014). In this study, I learned how Rec and Read influences adult mentors from diverse backgrounds (i.e., Indigenous, non-Indigenous) and how they understand their intercultural relationships within the program, as well as their roles as intercultural leaders for young people who are mostly Indigenous and/or from immigrant or newcomer backgrounds.

Postcolonial theory works as a theoretical framework in this thesis to emphasize that the experiences of program mentors are important and unique, and are located within a socio-historical context of colonization that affirmed the identities of European heritage, white peoples, while oppressing the identities of Indigenous and other immigrant and newcomer populations.

There are three notable theorists in postcolonial thought: Edward Said, who coined the term “Orientalism” (Said, 1978); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who was famous for defining terms such as subaltern; and Homi K. Bhabha, known for his discussion of cultural hybridity and mimicry. Focusing on the landmark works of these three prominent theorists, I attempted to scrutinize the areas where their perspectives diverge and converge on postcolonial theory.

Edward Said was considered the father of postcolonial theory, and was the first theorist to point out how the western world held a biased perspective towards the east for a long period of time (Said, 1978). He pushed forward this idea of postcolonialism with his book “*Orientalism*”. *Orientalism* speaks about the representation of eastern cultures in western thought (Childs & Williams, 1997). Said noted that the term “orient” is a western construction, and it is designed to distance and dominate eastern cultures. Said also expressed that whenever western researchers study the east, they treat themselves in the position of the main subject but put the east as the “other” (Said).

In the book “*Orientalism*”, Said (1978) pointed out that, “the Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe’s greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other” (p. 1). The significant and crucial terms in his words are “images” and “other”; the “images” refers to western writers, artists, thinkers and politicians who created many images of the east, and brought the images back from the east to the west for the west to study. The “other” means the Orient and the people who live in the east are the “other”, they are different and separate from the west and westerners (Said). In the Rec and Read program, adult mentors from different racial backgrounds may view the “other” differently, which raises a question, ‘does the program interrupt notions of white superiority while affirming the identities of Indigenous and racialized minorities?’

Said (1978) further argues that knowledge leads to power. In the period of colonization, western knowledge about the east led to western control over the east. He also suggested that representation leads to power; the west represents the east in so many ways, all of them adding up to create a version of the east as a barbaric, cruel place, while the west is a normal civilized place. Therefore, knowledge and representation are important tools that the west used for dominating the east (and eventually North America). Rec and Read encourages mentors to re-examine the western dominant power by bringing diverse cultures, relations and practices into the program, and empowers mentors with knowledge about Indigenous teachings, intercultural education, theoretically-based and culturally relevant leadership skills (McRae, 2016). Rec and Read purposefully changes the image of Indigenous and newcomer youth to be seen as leaders (versus “gangsters” or “school drop-outs”).

Gayatri Spivak (1988) defined the term “subaltern” in her essay “*Can the Subaltern speak?*” to mean any social or racial group or anyone that is marginalized because they are in any way outside of the hegemonic power structure of a colonized area, but it does not necessarily mean someone who has been colonized. The word hegemonic implies a manner of ruling in which the upper class manipulates the culture into adopting upper class principles as the social norm. She further pointed out that in order for the subaltern to exercise power, or to speak, they must in some way adopt hegemonic performances of the western cultures (Spivak). The term “speak” in her essay means whether the lowest and weakest members of society can express their concerns when entering into dialogue with those who have power. Also, if they do speak or communicate their concerns, will they be heard or not?

Spivak (1988) argued in the end of her essay that the subaltern cannot speak because of the way society is structured, and there is the demand for intellectuals or people who have power to speak for them in society. In contemporary society, many researchers, both white and non-white, have started to put their interests and time into intercultural studies, and this

may be a beneficial pathway toward addressing long time social inequality. As an example of the subaltern speaking, by 2010, Métis mentors in Rec and Read had already accomplished two master theses that communicate Indigenous perspectives (i.e., “*Physical educators as allies for Aboriginal youth*” written by Champagne in 2006 and “*Rec & Read: Stories of an Aboriginal Youth Mentor Program*” written by Carpenter in 2009), and produced Rec and Read reports for new students to study (McRae, 2016).

Spivak and Said both talked about the role of representation in maintaining colonial control, and believed that every representation within a colonial context is misrepresentation (Childs & Williams, 1997). By creating intercultural dialogue and educational activities in each day’s programming, Rec and Read helps mentors build intercultural relationships between each other. Through this way, mentors from different racial and social backgrounds are able to question their former perceptions (e.g., their positive and negative perceptions regarding people from diverse backgrounds may come from the society, such as the influence of social media, parents, etc.) towards each other and realize that these perceptions may be wrong (McRae, 2016).

In the book “*The Location of Culture*”, Homi Bhabha (1994) talked about the ways that subjugated colonial subjects subvert hegemony. In other words, he speaks of the ways that colonized people undermined the power structures that are oppressing them, and he identified two ways: mimicry and hybridization.

Mimicry happens when subjugated people adopt the cultural values and practices of the ruling class in order to gain power (Bhabha, 1994). For example, Indigenous people in Canada opened up casinos, which can be seen as a type of mimicry, because they are mimicking the greed and desire in gambling that western cultures brought into the society, and subverting it by utilizing that greed and desire to gain monetary power. Bhabha further explained that mimicry is the effect of doubling that takes place when one culture dominates

another; some of those who are dominated will attempt to mimic those who are in the dominant culture, and members of the dominant culture will encourage mimicry among those who are dominated. He also pointed out that mimicry is a strong push for minorities to assimilate to the majority culture. He argued that mimicry challenges dominant culture, for instance, a Chinese person can learn English as well as someone who is British; the dominant culture can be seen as a performance, it is not something you were born with so much, but something you learn, you do and you act out, and that is why mimicry has its place to exist.

Mimicry can be well connected with Edward Said's theory that recognizes how knowledge leads to power, because mimicry can be seen as a process that subjugated people use to learn the knowledge about the dominant cultures and worldviews to empower themselves. Mimicry can also be interpreted as anti-oppression when people from marginalized groups speak for themselves in order to subvert their representations in society.

Hybridization is when subjugated people merge their culture with that of the ruling class, for undermining power or authority: it is often subversive (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha explained that the western powers do not simply dominate the countries which are at the developing level, they encourage mimicry of western cultures, and in the process, hybridity develops. He expressed that hybridity takes the colonized away from his or her own culture and identity, shaping the people who are neither themselves nor their colonizers/oppressors, therefore, they become people who are in between (Bhabha).

There are many mentors in Rec and Read whose social identities are suitable for the theory of hybridization, because these mentors were born and educated in Canada but not white-Canadians in descent (e.g., Indigenous people and young generations of settlers) (McRae, 2016). The process of self-identification is very complex, and for youth from diverse backgrounds in Manitoba, is set within a postcolonial cultural context, which privileges some (e.g., white Canadians) while marginalizing others (e.g., Indigenous,

newcomer/immigrants, racialized minorities). By adopting a strengths-based approach, Rec and Read seeks to affirm the cultural identities of marginalized youth who face much discrimination and racism in society. By positioning them as leaders and role models within their schools and communities, high school and university mentors are encouraged to use their strengths and talents to benefit the program and the children who participate in the activities. This study helped explain how the adult mentors support the high school mentors in their role as leaders for children, and whether their behaviours and attitudes can be informed by self-reflection and how they understand their intercultural relationships. In the next section, I introduce other culturally relevant programs available in Winnipeg that help people from diverse backgrounds and focus on comparing them with Rec and Read in terms of their goals, and/or focus. I do so to inform the landscape of youth servicing agencies within which Rec and Read is situated.

Culturally Relevant Programs

Various studies showed that while some white Canadian youth could easily make new friends, many Indigenous and newcomer youth may find it is more difficult to make new friends from other cultural backgrounds (e.g. with Indigenous, white Canadian and newcomer youth from other countries) and they may try to seek programs or activities to help them develop friendships (O'Driscoll, Banting, Borkoles, Eime & Polman, 2013). Youth programs therefore are really important for supporting Indigenous and newcomer youth when adapting their lives to their intercultural environment, and for youth who were born in Canada to adapt to other cultures. Anderson-Butcher and Conroy (2002) also noted that effective youth programs can help youth reduce their problem behaviors (e.g., academic failure, gang involvement, early pregnancy, etc.) and improve their social competence (e.g., enhanced self-esteem, interpersonal skills, etc.). Christens and Dolan (2011) explained that programs for youth provide a place to gather young people together to discuss their most pressing

difficulties and problems in their schools or communities, attempt to conduct research on these problems and give out possible solutions for them, and follow through with social action to create community-level change.

A Sample of Programs Designed for Indigenous and Newcomer Peoples

The Host program was designed to help newcomers better integrate into Canadian society. Anisef et al. (2005) described that through participating in the Host program, newcomers will access help to address the stress of transforming to a new environment by matching volunteers who are very familiar with Canadian cultures and social norms; Anisef et al. further explained that volunteers in the Host program can provide moral support for newcomers and help them practice English or French. Meanwhile, through supporting newcomers in the program, the volunteers also can learn about diverse cultures. In this mutual way, the Host program is able to build a strong knowledge link that can benefit the immigrants. Similarly, one of the goals of Rec and Read is also to facilitate newcomer children and youth to settle down in their new environment by providing a sense of belonging within the after-school physical activity programs for them.

Indigenous Awareness Workshops Program guides newcomer youth into the traditional land of Indigenous peoples, and provides newcomer youth the opportunity to learn about Indigenous histories and cultures; for newcomer youth to understand the struggles of Indigenous peoples, this program tells major historical events in Indigenous history (e.g., the residential schools) (Gyepi-Garbrah, 2010). Of note, Rec and Read also offers some cultural programming for all participants, but less information about Indigenous history is shared.

The Winnipeg Youth Peacebuilding Gathering program is a summer camping event that only runs for one week; each year, this program organizes Indigenous, newcomer youth and other participants (e.g. white Canadians) together to communicate with each other and discuss their own perspectives on cultural diversity, discrimination and racism; moreover,

this program encourages participants to socialize and celebrate using their own cultures and religions (Gyepi-Garbrah). Gyepi-Garbrah noted that this program advocates equal rights between people from diverse backgrounds and provides the opportunities to share and learn from each other's stories; all the participants in this program can experience the different cultural practices and spiritual beliefs, which helps diverse groups (e.g., Indigenous, newcomers and white Canadians) to better understand the cultural differences and encourages them to respect the different worldviews from each other. Unlike the Winnipeg Youth Peacebuilding Gathering program, Rec and Read encourages relationship building between mentors in more informal ways.

An Indigenous program model is supported by the Canada World Youth (CWY) Program (Canada World Youth, 2014). According to the program description of CWY's website, by absorbing the theories of experiential and transformative learning and the experiences of adult education, CWY's educational method facilitates self-directed learning and encourages young people to participate in all stages of the process. Like Rec and Read, the Indigenous Program model is also a strengths-based program which focuses on Indigenous knowledge and culture, and partnerships with Indigenous communities is the central part for designing and delivering the program.

One of the purposes of Rec and Read is to support and rely upon the intercultural leadership development of program mentors. Similarly, the CanU program also works as a leadership development program that gathers children living in challenging situations in Winnipeg's inner city together with University of Manitoba students who work as program leaders (CanU, 2016). CanU holds sport, nutrition and educational programming once a week at the University of Manitoba. There are five important components shaping the CanU program: mentorship, hope and confidence, literacy, nutrition, and sport. Firstly, CanU achieves mentorship by providing positive role models to help young children. Secondly,

CanU creates a trustworthy environment to help children believe in themselves and others so that they will have confidence to set their future goals. Thirdly, the program provides opportunities for children to get one-on-one academic help for their literacy development. Fourthly, the program educates children with nutrition knowledge and health living skills. Lastly, CanU provides physical activities to facilitate children to develop their team work skills and increase their abilities in building social networks (CanU).

United Against Racism (UAR) is a program that helps Indigenous and newcomer peoples to resolve the issues related with racism and oppression at the community level within the inner city of Winnipeg (Gyepi-Garbrah, 2010), which is also the focus of the Rec and Read program. Gyepi-Garbrah described that the UAR program is in cooperation with organizations that aim to help newcomers' settlement or other community-based organizations for assisting Indigenous and newcomers to build intercultural relationships.

The Anti-racism Training Program recruits and educates Indigenous and newcomer youth based on the issues of anti-racism, with a focus on the meaning of racism and the fact that newcomers and Indigenous peoples are still oppressed through racism in societies or schools (Gyepi-Garbrah, 2010). Gyepi-Garbrah noted that in order to be facilitators in anti-racism workshops, youth mentors are trained in the program for their leadership and public speaking skills, and are also assigned to do outreach programs to discuss combating racism in schools and workplaces. Rec and Read also provides leadership training for mentors, but it is more designed to train mentors for leading physical activities, working with early year children and employment preparation. Conversations about racism may emerge in more informal ways, as mentors interact with each other in the program.

The Indigenous Youth Internship Program provides Indigenous youth at local high schools the opportunities of employment that are rarely available for them (Province of Manitoba, 2015). There are four objectives behind this program; first of all, this program

provides the opportunities for Indigenous youth in Winnipeg to explore careers in the labour market of Manitoba; secondly, this program focuses on educating and encouraging Indigenous youth to stay and complete their education in schools; thirdly, this program seeks to help Indigenous students set occupational plans and make them feel confident by enhancing their self-knowledge; finally, this program can encourage and improve diversity within the workplaces through sending more and more Indigenous youth students to work (Province of Manitoba). It is important to note that the goal of this program matches up with one of the educational goals of Rec and Read that also relates to the social determinant of health (i.e., employment).

Career Trek is a program based on early intervention for children and youth, which provides programming to help them strengthen their abilities of problem solving and decision-making, and to give them support for their career paths (Career Trek, 2016; Sutherland, Levine, Carter & Cole, 2008). Career Trek runs eight programs across the province of Manitoba, and five programs are located in Winnipeg (Career Trek). Participants in the Career Trek program are comprised of rural, urban, and suburban, Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, and newcomer children and youth (Sutherland et al., 2008). Basically, Career Trek provides opportunity for participants to get hands-on experiences about their career paths through visiting post-secondary institutions and training programs across Manitoba (Career Trek). Specifically, the goal of the Career Trek program is to facilitate children and youth to become adaptable, well-educated and community-minded citizens through educating them with well-structured programming (Career Trek). To this end, the Career Trek program focuses on making learning more relevant to children in school, highlighting early-childhood education, making school and community members get connected and reducing cultural barriers for children and youth from diverse backgrounds (Sutherland et al.). Lastly, Career Trek's programming sticks with 4Rs, which are *Respect* yourself, *Respect* others, *Respect* the

environment and take *Responsibility* for your actions (Career Trek). Unlike Rec and Read, Career Trek largely focuses on career development for children and youth.

The We Belong program was organized by Physical & Health Education Canada (PHE Canada, 2015, April) to provide after-school physical activities that offer a focus on building strengths and aspirations for newcomer youth. Similar to Rec and Read, We Belong focuses on improving the leadership skills of physical educators and physical activity program leaders in order to deliver quality physical activity programming for newcomer youth in Canada (PHE Canada). According to PHE Canada, the benefits of the after-school physical activities that the We Belong program offers for newcomer youth include creating the sense of belonging in the program and their new community, helping them learn about Canadian society and build relationships with new friends from diverse racial backgrounds, improving their health and wellness, breaking their language barriers and recognizing their cultural identity. Noticeably, Rec and Read and We Belong both promote a strengths-based approach (e.g., building on mentors' strengths), versus a deficit-based approach (e.g., to keep kids out of trouble, keep them healthy) (McRae, 2016; PHE Canada).

Indigenous and newcomer youth may face many health risks due to their limited participation in sports and physical activities (O'Driscoll et al., 2013). Hence, physical education and after-school physical activity programs become necessary for Indigenous and newcomer youth to stay healthy and active. Halas et al. (2012) pointed out that physically active lifestyles can be developed by improving youth's knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding health and physical literacy, which can all benefit from an excellent physical education program (PHE Canada, 2009).

Looking at the sport context, Johnson (2011) and Nuwer (1999) stated that in order to run programs well, programs need to constantly attract new members to attend, while at the same time, all programs need to create a sense of belonging in their environment for new

members to keep them staying. For Indigenous and newcomer youth, physical education class is just like a small organization or society, in which they may face racism and discrimination, or even become alienated. Halas (2002) also noted the alienation of young people in physical education classes is evident in too many programs.

It is true that a number of students may regard physical education as their favourite subject, but those who have had the negative experiences in physical education classes may face the higher possibility of disengaging from the activities. Therefore, an outstanding physical education program becomes the place where marginalized Indigenous and newcomer youth can participate and do physical activities, both during class and after school, with fewer worries of being discriminated or against alienated. Culturally relevant physical education programs can also promote a healthier development for marginalized youth through programs such as Rec and Read (Halas et al., 2012). Halas (2002) summarized that different from a traditional program, an excellent physical education program is able to provide a reclaiming environment for marginalized youth and create positive connections with their school environment.

Through comparing with various intercultural programs, it is noticeable that Rec and Read is indeed a well-developed program for people from diverse backgrounds because Rec and Read includes many features that other programs combine to have. But there may still be some improvements that Rec and Read can identify; for example, providing more information about Indigenous history as we are living in the land of Indigenous peoples, and focusing more in-depth on immigrants and newcomers not only because their populations in Winnipeg are growing large and fast but they also tend to become the majority of mentors at some Rec and Read sites. This study identifies areas of improvement that can inform the on-going delivery of the mentorship programs while also informing our understanding of how to

develop intercultural after-school physical activity programs for all young people from diverse backgrounds.

Summary

This literature review has presented the Medicine Wheel, social determinants of health and the postcolonial cultural context of Indigenous and newcomer peoples within a dominant white settlers' society. It has also made the comparison between Rec and Read and other culturally relevant programs for youth in Winnipeg. Moreover, it has provided critical insights to contrast the western and Indigenous approaches to mentoring. In the next chapter, I describe the research approaches and design that were used to achieve the purpose of this study. Also, the inter-connectedness of the three theoretical frameworks that I have discussed informed my data collection and analysis and helped me better interpret the themes arising from the research interviews.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

For this study, I used qualitative interpretive research as my research methods for various reasons. Basically, qualitative interpretive research intends to explore a given research question from a rich description of a particular populations' experience in order to obtain the information about their values, behaviours and beliefs (Henderson, 2006). The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experience of adult mentors in the Rec and Read programs in Winnipeg, including their values, behaviours and beliefs about their role in the program.

To be specific, qualitative interpretive research is a strategy that is used for collecting, organizing and interpreting data systematically in natural settings (Henderson, 2006). It is often related with "how" and "why" research questions, so that the researcher is able to obtain an in-depth understanding of educational processes and practices of phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2002). In this study, I explored the experiences of adult mentors in Rec and Read by focusing on the research question: how do adult mentors from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, both male and female, understand their experiences of the Rec and Read mentorship program? Specifically, I explored four detailed research questions: 1. How do the adult mentors understand their leadership role as a role model in the program? 2. How do the adult mentors understand the mentor program and its purposes, Indigenous philosophy, worldviews and values? 3. What are the intercultural relationships that are developed? 4. What are the benefits of the mentor program?

Furthermore, qualitative interpretive research is a form of inquiry in which words work as data to help researchers to understand participants' interpretations of their experiences and the meaning participants give to their experiences (Merriam, 1998). For this current study, I explored in-depth perspectives of the adult mentors and their lived experiences within a program setting in order to gain knowledge that benefits the mentorship

program while also contributing to the research literature regarding intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring.

It is also important to note that qualitative research methods focus on the role of the researcher working as an active participant in the study, so that the interpretation of the researcher stays closely with their own backgrounds, experiences, living contexts, and previous understandings (Creswell, 2005). Therefore, I (i.e., the researcher of this study) am the key instrument in data collection and analysis, and interpretation of the data is informed by my own experiences as a newcomer graduate student who participated in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program (i.e., I participated in Rec and Read as a university/adult mentor). Specifically, in my first year of graduate studies, I helped Rec and Read to run an after-school physical activity program at the Maples Collegiate site. But, this was a different role than the typical mentor program, since it was only organizing drop-in physical activities for Indigenous youth and not the typical after-school program where high school youth work together with early year children. Basically, I went there to build relationships with Indigenous youth mentors by doing physical activities and communicating with them.

It was a great opportunity for me, as a researcher, to experience and understand an after-school physical activity program for Indigenous youth, because I knew nothing about Indigenous people and culturally relevant programs before I touched ground with graduate studies. After this first-hand experience, I have begun to develop a picture of how Indigenous youth in Rec and Read interact with immigrants like me and how they feel about after-school physical activity programs. This experience helped me as I wish to understand the experience of the adult mentors. All in all, qualitative research is shaped by both the researcher and those who are participating (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interpretive case study is used in this study to describe and explain the experiences and perceptions of the adult mentors in the Rec and Read program.

A qualitative research approach is most suitable for this study because it gives a better understanding of the lived experiences of the participants (i.e., adult mentors) within a particular program (i.e., Rec and Read). This study gives adult mentors the opportunity to provide rich, in-depth and detailed accounts of their experiences, which can enhance the adult mentors' own understandings of how they work with children and youth mentors to facilitate the program to be a more culturally affirming program within an intercultural setting.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is a qualitative philosophical theory formed through the development of social science, and it typically involves interviews in a designed research (Walsham, 1995). To be specific, in this study, I, as the researcher, created semi-structured interview questions for the human subject (i.e., adult mentor participants), and then collected and analyzed the responses. Also, interpretivism involves observation from the researcher of the study, and the researcher uses observation to interpret the responses gained from human subject (Walsham). By using interviews and observation in a study, interpretivism can help measure participants' behaviours and emotions, and the relationship between the researcher and human subject is usually interactive, cooperative and participative (Elster, 2007).

The foundation of interpretivism is based on idealism, which proposes that individuals' understandings of society and the world are from their subjective interpretation instead of the passive perceptions (Lin, 1998). In qualitative research, interpretivism is effective to offer information on what is unique and deviant in the research, what participants think, what issues they are facing and how they deal with those issues, and the nature of reality that interpretivism emphasizes on is socially-constructed (Walsham, 1995).

Interpretivism suits for this study, as it can provide in-depth data for the research related to cross-cultural studies and leadership development within programs or organizations (Lin, 1998), and both of these characteristics can well describe the Rec and Read program in this

study. In the next section, I discuss interpretive case study in terms of its definition, characteristics and main components for this study.

Interpretive Case Study

Case study is one of the most frequently used qualitative research methodologies (Braun & Clarke, 2013). In general, researchers use case study as a strategy of inquiry to explore in-depth an event, program, problem, activity, process, a single person or several people (Stake, 1995). Stake also describes how the boundaries of the cases usually refer to time, space and/or activity, which means the cases are happening within a certain period of time or a geographical location. In this study, I conducted a single instrumental case study of a particular program (i.e., the Rec and Read program), and I set the “boundaries” for this study as the urban adult mentors from the Rec and Read program in Winnipeg. The phenomenon under exploration is the experiences and perspectives of being adult mentors in the Rec and Read program. Case study requires multiple sources of data (e.g., data collected from interviews, observations, documents, etc.) to provide an in-depth understanding of the case (Yin, 2009). For this study, I collected data through semi-structured focus group and individual interviews and the reflection of my own observations during the interviews. These were informed by my analysis of the Rec and Read program materials.

According to Yin (2009), there are five essential components of a case study research design. The first component of case study research design relates to the research questions. Yin stated that the “how” and “why” forms of questions work best for qualitative case study research. The second component is to define the purpose of study. The unit of analysis is the third component of the case study research design. The unit of analysis is the major entity that the researcher is analyzing in the study, and it is closely connected with the research questions developed by the researcher. In this study, the unit of analysis is the adult mentors from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds in the Rec and Read program in

Winnipeg. The fourth component of the case study research design is connecting data with the purpose of the study. The connection will happen after the process of data collection and when themes emerge from data. The researcher can try to match patterns that are apparent in the data with the purpose of the case study as data is analyzed. Therefore, the themes that emerged in this study work as answers to the research questions. The last component is the criteria for interpreting research findings. For this study, I describe the research findings by connecting with theoretical frameworks in order to provide recommendations for future research in the Rec and Read program and to inform the research literature on intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring.

In addition, case study is appropriate for a research when participants have unique or interesting stories to share (Merriam, 1988). In this present study, adult mentors in Rec and Read shared their unique stories during the focus group and individual interviews, and as Crotty (1998) noted, different individuals explained and understood meaning in different ways, even when they were experiencing the same program or event. Moreover, case study provides a more complete picture of what adult mentors are experiencing in the Rec and Read program and how they construct the meaning of their experiences.

Participants

For this study, it is essential to include adult mentor participants from various social and racial backgrounds in order to achieve a thick and rich description of intercultural mentoring for the case (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative research methods I chose to use included: purposive sampling, snowball sampling, semi-structured focus group interview, and, based on participant's availability, individual and email interviews. In the end, seven adult mentors from the Rec and Read program agreed to participate in my research interviews. Adult mentor participants were the age of 18 and over. Ideally, I was looking to involve equal numbers of adult mentor participants from Indigenous backgrounds, racialized

minority backgrounds (i.e., people of colour) and racialized majority backgrounds (i.e., people who identify as white) in one focus group interview. The entire pool of participants were 18-21 adult mentors mainly from seven urban Winnipeg mentor sites. An invitation letter (see Appendix A) was given to the participants.

It is essential to identify appropriate participants in the process of one's study in order to gain adequate and informative data to fully analyze research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A suitable participant should be the one who has the experience that the study needs, has the time for interviews, has the ability to give reflections and feedback, and most importantly has an open-heart to participate in the research and is willing to share their experiences with others (Morse & Field, 1995). Purposive sampling is selected in this research for participant selection, because purposive sampling aims to involve participants who can provide 'information-rich' data (Patton, 2002, p. 230) for researchers to analyze and intends to generate an in-depth understanding of the research questions (Braun & Clarke).

Within qualitative research, sample size can be determined by the researchers' purpose of inquiry, what information will be useful and have credibility for the research, and what can be collected within the required time and resources (Patton, 2002). Additionally, Wolcott (1994) pointed out that a large sample size may have a negative effect on a qualitative research project as the data collected from each participant could be inadequate and lack depth. The sample size for this study is relatively small as the intended design is to explore and understand in-depth the meanings of participants' experiences within the Rec and Read program. Snowball sampling is another sampling approach this study used in the process of participant selection by asking selected participants to recommend potential participants to the research (Patton). For recruiting appropriate participants in this study, I contacted the administrative team (i.e., Heather McRae and Jhonaleen Ponce) of Rec and Read by email after I received my ethics approval from the research ethics board, to ask their

permission and help to contact the adult mentors. Also, I asked the administrative team if they could help me send recruitment information (Appendix A) to the adult mentors via their Facebook page and/or their emails, and attempted to get information from them about the best ways to contact adult mentors for this study.

However, my recruitment process was not as easy as I expected, as no mentors contacted me within the first week after the administrative team sent out my recruitment information. After the administrative team resent the recruitment information in the following week, two adult mentors finally contacted me via email and stated their interests. When I waited for another week and no more mentors emailed me, I decided to conduct a snowball sampling method and contacted an adult ally from Rec and Read to help introduce potential mentor participants for this research. After a two-month recruitment process, I finally had seven mentor participants who were willing to participate in my research interviews. Then I contacted all seven mentor participants through their emails to send them the brief description about my research study (Appendix B), and to check their availability for setting up the date for the focus group interview. There were two recruitment stages in this research. Initially, I invited six adult mentor participants to attend in one focus group interview, but after I realized there was no participant from the racialized majority background, I decided to invite a former adult mentor who identified as white to participate. After the initial recruitment stage, there were five adult mentor participants with Indigenous backgrounds, one participant from a racialized minority background and one participant from a racialized majority background. However, one adult mentor participant changed her mind and withdrew from this research at the last minute before the focus group interview and left no reasons. I could not ask for any explanation from this potential participant, as the nature of this focus group interview is completely voluntary and no one was under any obligation to explain their actions, and I also did not want to over-pressure any participants.

Therefore, I had to conduct my second stage of recruitment for maintaining the richness of the data. At this point, in order to have cultural diversity for the data, I invited one former adult mentor who identified as from a racialized minority background into an individual interview as the focus group interview had already taken place. It is also important to note that two of the participants from the initial stage of recruitment were not able to be physically present in the focus group interview because they were out of town. Given the option, these participants chose to respond to the interview questions through emailing. As a result, there were only four participants attending in the focus group interview, two participants responded to the interview questions via email interview, and one participant participated in an individual interview. Also, as gender may be a factor that can affect the perceptions of participants in the focus group interview, both male and female adult mentor participants were invited and the goal of equal representation (i.e., two male and two female) in the focus group interview was achieved.

Ethical Considerations

In order to ensure the participants' privacy, rights and well-being, I made ethical considerations through each step of this research. First of all, I applied to get my research approval from the University of Manitoba's Education and Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). Before contacting and recruiting participants into my research, I contacted the director and coordinator of the Rec and Read program who had already stated their support for the study through my on-going relationship with the program.

The focus group interview was held in a private room in a location that was perceived to be neutral and comfortable by participants. The location approved by adult mentor participants was the Inner City Social Work Program building located at 485 Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg. Before and during the focus group interview, I informed adult mentor participants that this study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics

Board, and participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves reading all the permission forms related to the study, arranging their availability to participate in interviews, and involves sharing their experiences regarding their roles and responsibilities in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program, including their views about the Indigenous philosophy and approaches to mentoring (see informed consent form, Appendix C). Participants can withdraw from the research or stop their participation within the research interview at any point if they feel uncomfortable to share their experiences; their answers supplied prior to the point of withdrawal would only be used if they provided permission to do so. Participants were allowed to request that the audio recording of the research interview be stopped at any point by verbally indicating their decisions.

Completed audio transcripts were securely stored on my laptop to which only I had access. All data will be destroyed or deleted, along with any field notes, two years after the completion of the study. The results of the data analysis will be published in my master's thesis and could potentially be presented at academic conferences and used in academic journal articles. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms (fake names) were used throughout the data analysis and reporting of results. All identifying features (e.g., stories about children and youth mentors, teaching staff or school characteristics) were excluded or changed in the reporting of the results so as to protect anonymity. Also, participants were asked to sign a confidentiality statement form for the focus group interview (see Appendix E). The use of pseudonyms was expected to encourage more honest responses if participants had any concerns about the mentor programs that they wished to express. Participants also had the option to receive a written summary of the results of the study when it is completed. I promised to keep all identities of participants confidential; that is, I did not share this knowledge with other students, researchers, etc. I also did not share who has been recruited or asked to participate in this study. Also, what is shared in the focus group stays in the focus

group. Approval to use the Rec and Read/Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program for All Nations (Rec and Read) name throughout this study was granted by the program's administrative team (i.e., Heather McRae and Jhonaleen Ponce).

Conducting Research with Indigenous People

When we conduct research with Indigenous people or communities, the initial step begins by identifying ourselves: who we are, where we are from, who our ancestors are. This identification can help researchers to establish trust within an Indigenous context, and allows Indigenous people to identify the worldview from which they speak (Absolon & Willett, 2005). Research processes and results are important for researchers to think critically in an Indigenous research project. The centre of Indigenous research must be the interests, experiences and knowledge of Indigenous people (Rigney, 1999).

Indigenous people need to protect their traditional knowledge, practices, culture and the information resulting from research when a research study occurs in their communities. Therefore, when conducting a research study within Indigenous contexts, researchers must make sure the research and research methods have been approved by Indigenous participants in the research; researchers must respect the diversity and unique nature that individuals bring to the research; researchers must understand the principles of reciprocity and responsibility and understand Indigenous worldviews and practices they bring from their communities to the research; researchers must guarantee Indigenous participants feel safe and have their confidentiality during and after the research; researchers must offer a non-intrusive environment during the research interviews and be open to absorb all that is said; researchers must be non-judgemental to reflect on what Indigenous participants share in the research interviews; researchers must have responsibility to collect data with fidelity from the interviews and have ability to analyze data logically and truthfully; researchers must be aware

of the relationships between Indigenous participants within the research and bring their own perspectives into the research (Atkinson, 2001; Wilson, 2008).

Other than these guidelines for conducting research with Indigenous people or communities, researchers must follow the principles of OCAP™. Specifically, the principles of *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession* (OCAP™) mean that Indigenous people or communities own their information and are able to use their information; ownership also means that they can negotiate agreements with the researchers. Indigenous people or communities have the rights to hold and regain control of their cultural knowledge, information, data and lives, also, they can control all the processes from the beginning to the end within a research project that can impact them or their communities, which includes control of the resources of data and how data is collected and analyzed. Indigenous people or communities must have the access to their information and data no matter where it is being stored or who is holding it, which can be achieved through standardized protocols. Indigenous people or communities have the possession of their information and can protect and assert the ownership of their information. It is noticeable that when ownership and possession of the information is held by two parties and when mistrust appears between the owner and possessor, there is a high risk that the information or data will be misused (First Nations Centre, 2007).

OCAP™ enables Indigenous people to have self-determination on why, how and by whom information or data is collected, analyzed, used or shared, and allows Indigenous people to make decisions on all research concerning their communities. Adhering to OCAP™ principles within an Indigenous research context not only can facilitate the research process, but also can help researchers think wholistically in the research (First Nations Centre). This study follows the spirit of OCAP™.

Data Collection

Focus group is an interview method to collect qualitative data, which brings multiple participants with certain characteristics in group discussions to generate narrative data around a research topic (Wilkinson, 2004). Focus groups can provide a less threatening and supportive environment for research participants, which will be helpful for participants to talk in-depth about their personal stories, perceptions, ideas and thoughts. Compared to individual interviews, focus groups are more about sharing, comparing and are able to elicit a multiplicity of views and understandings within a group context (Wilkinson, 1998). Moreover, the sense of belonging of the participants should help them feel safe to share their information within a group setting (Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996). In addition, the interactions in a group can facilitate more useful responses from participants and can generate more valuable data for the research (Morgan, 1988).

As mentioned, this study used semi-structured interviews with seven adult mentor participants, including four participants in one focus group interview, one participant in an individual interview and two participants for the two email interviews. The focus group interview was the main research method for the data collection, and the individual and email interviews served as supplemental methods when two participants were not able to physically attend the focus group. The email interview format is an effective supplemental interview method that can be used in the situations when face to face interviews are challenging for the researcher to conduct or for the participants to access (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Also, the individual interview was conducted after focus group and email interviews as another supplemental method to enrich the data of this research. It is important to note that the focus group interview lasted for two hours and food was provided before, during and after the interview. At the beginning of the focus group interview, I went over the informed consent form (see Appendix C) with the participants. To be specific, I reminded adult mentor

participants of the purpose of this study, interview procedures, their right to withdraw from this study at any time, and protection of confidentiality (Appendix E). I asked adult mentor participants if they had any questions in relation to this study or interview procedures. I also provided my information and located myself in this study to gain participant's trust and to establish rapport (Patton, 2002).

During the focus group and individual interviews, I made field notes which helped me to track key points of the interview in order to benefit me for later analysis, and enabled me to highlight the important ideas or views. I also recorded all the conversations on three digital recorders under participants' permissions to ensure accurate transcription (Merriam, 1998).

In this study, the interview guide (see Appendix D) included open-ended questions, consisting of the opening, transition and key questions, designed to encourage participants to answer questions openly and freely (Esterberg, 2002), which enabled me, as the researcher, to get richer information. In the opening questions, I asked adult mentors' background information, such as their living status and cultural background. For example, I included the question like can you tell me what is your nationality or cultural background? For transition questions, I focused on their perspectives on the Rec and Read program, and I asked questions about how they feel about Rec and Read. The examples of questions I asked were: what made you want to become a mentor in Rec and Read? And why do you think: a) Indigenous youth want to join in Rec and Read? b) recent immigrants might want to join in Rec and Read as it was first built for/by Indigenous youth in 2006? In the end, the key questions were formed by the purpose of this study. Specifically, I focused on the adult mentors' perceptions of their experiences of both Rec and Read as a program and of their participation in it. For instance, I asked questions like what do you think are the strengths and challenges of Rec and Read? Or how do you feel when you work with mentors from diverse backgrounds?

Data Analysis Process

Qualitative data analysis is a creative process of making meaning (Creswell, 2009; Esterberg, 2002). In this study, data analysis tells the story of the experiences of adult mentor participants in the Rec and Read program and how they understand their experiences. I started data analysis with organizing and preparing the data, and I reviewed audio tapes from the focus group interviews and transcribed the audio tapes word by word in order to make word document transcripts (Creswell). In the second step, I read over the transcript and attempted to get the overall meaning from the words, sentences and ideas that adult mentor participants expressed (Creswell; Esterberg). In the third step, I started the coding process as part of a detailed data analysis. I first segmented sentences from the transcript into categories based on their similarities, and then I labeled categories with different terms according to their meanings (Creswell). In the next step, I made descriptions of those labelled categories and generated codes from descriptions in order to generalize themes (Creswell). During the process of analysis, I also read all my field notes and made comments in my thesis notebook to reflect my own observations and thoughts. I also read and reviewed Rec and Read program materials (e.g., the mentor training documents) to help clarify and/or inform the analysis.

For this cross-cultural interview, the participants may have their own way to express themselves or stories that can reflect their attitudes and thoughts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this case, I picked out the special words, sentences or expressions that participants use often, because I needed to get the meaning and implications behind those expressions.

Trustworthiness

To consider the ownership and empowerment of the interview findings and also to establish the credibility and quality of my data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013), member checking about research findings with participants was recommended in this thesis, as member checking is a primarily used research method to address credibility and therefore to

ensure trustworthiness between researcher and participants (Merriam, 1998). To be specific, when I transcribed the research interviews from the audio tapes, I emailed individual participants to ask for clarification whenever I felt uncertain and unclear about the responses that they had shared in order to ensure transcripts accuracy (Patton, 2002). I also reviewed each transcript while listening again to the audio tapes. The interviews were transcribed only by myself (i.e., principal investigator). After the findings were interpreted, I emailed adult mentor participants the summary of the findings to ensure my written findings captured the main ideas that they wished to express and to seek their approval and feedback on the themes arising from the analysis (see Appendix F), before I submitted my thesis for defence. Reviewing the summary of the findings took approximately 30 minutes of participants' time. Also, I sent the written chapters four and five to the participants who were interested in reading them. Of note, adult mentor participants who responded to me shared very positive feedback that their main perspectives were accurately expressed.

In addition, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), peer debriefing is another qualitative research method to ensure the trustworthiness of the entire data collection and analysis process, which usually involves the researcher to work collectively with other professionals who hold valuable perspectives to the study. In this research, peer debriefing was given by my two advisors, who examined my interview transcripts, the emergent themes and the summary of the findings to help me ensure trustworthiness throughout my research design. It is worth noting that peer debriefing from my advisors also enhanced my understanding on the data collected and improved my interpretation for the analysis of the data.

For this study, the analysis of the data was informed by relevant theory, such as the social determinants of health, postcolonial theory and Medicine Wheel teachings as well as Rec and Read program materials (e.g. mentor manual). Specifically, which theory I used and

how I used it depended upon how the themes emerged. Moreover, my own experience as a newcomer graduate student living and studying in Winnipeg also informed my analysis of the data.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were four limitations to this study regarding to the research methodology and methods. First of all, the case study I conducted in this research has its limitation, which is the lack of multiple focus group interviews over time. Secondly, the adult mentors all have participated in the Rec and Read program, but they might experience the program differently as there are multiple sites for programming. Each site has different features so that adult mentors participants who do not participate in all sites may express various perspectives on their experiences. Therefore, the results may not be suitably applied to every context. The third limitation to this study is from the data collection process. As the information gained during the research interviews mainly depended on the participants, the nature of the information therefore was limited to their own perspectives and lived experiences which they were willing to share. Lastly, there were limitations of having three types of interviews in this research. The uncertainty for the availabilities of research participants is a challenge in conducting focus group interview within qualitative studies (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig, 2007). It can be frustrating for the researcher and the data collection process when participants confirm their attendance at the beginning but change their minds or schedule when the time and location of the focus group has been settled (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008). For this current study, the alteration of the focus group interview due to the unavailability of some participants led to the result of having three different types of interviews, which might negatively affect the research findings as the data gathered from different interviews might lack uniformity and consistency (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Also, the limitation for conducting email interviews was that the researcher was not flexible to prompt the responses to the

interview questions through interactions with the participants (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). However, the email interview can also be a great supplemental method if the participants are willing to invest their time and energy to respond the interview questions, and to interact with the researcher via emailing whenever they have questions. Most importantly, having three types of interviews can be rather time-consuming, because the researcher has to focus on planning different interviews with different participants.

Delimitation means the ways to narrow the study in scope (Creswell, 2003). This interpretive case study limits participants to the adult mentors (i.e., university and community mentors) in Rec and Read because this group is more likely to give rich information about program delivery and the characteristics of what works well than children and youth mentors in the program. Also, my original thought on recruiting participants was only to recruit the adult mentors who have participated in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program within the last three years. The reason for this delimitation was that these mentors might still be connected with the Rec and Read program and available to participate and they might also be more familiar with current programming. However, after the recruitment process, I found that four of the selected adult mentor participants were in Rec and Read more than three years. Although these four participants did not fit the original recruitment criteria, I still selected them for participating because this difference in the length of attending Rec and Read could provide either contrasting or very similar answers to the other three participants who were in the program within the last three years, which could give me the understanding of how well Rec and Read can benefit mentors or be improved over time.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology and methods, and described the detailed process of data collection and data analysis for facilitating the next steps in this study. Overall, the theoretical perspectives, methodology, and methods introduced in chapters 1 to 3

provided insights on how to interpret the experiences of the adult mentor participants in the Rec and Read program. In chapter 4 and 5, I present and discuss the findings of this research as two main themes and six sub-themes, and I also introduce a new theoretical model created from the analysis of findings. In chapter 6, I draw conclusions based on the examination of study results and make recommendations for further research, policy and practice.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS: AN INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO MENTORING

Chapters four and five introduce the research findings through the analysis of the information gathered. The analysis begins by introducing the seven adult participants in terms of their characteristics and demographic information. Informed by the theoretical frameworks presented in chapters one and two, the analysis of data has been organized into two main themes as well as six sub-themes designed to present the perspectives of adult mentors regarding their experiences within the program. These theoretical frameworks include the Medicine Wheel, the social determinants of health, and postcolonial theory, as well as new literature related to cultural competence and Indigenous approaches to mentoring. The data analysis focuses on examining whether the analysis of the emergent themes answered the research questions and achieved the research purpose of enhancing our understanding of how the adult mentors experience and interpret the Indigenous teachings within the mentorship program. The analysis of the data in this chapter is based on one main theme: key strategies to building an intercultural mentorship program, and its four sub-themes that illustrate the Indigenous approaches to mentoring that have emerged in this study: an Indigenous-informed, culturally affirming space; mentor-driven intercultural relationship building; mentoring in a circle; and values-informed leadership.

Rec and Read relies upon the development of program mentors and their dedication to providing unique perspectives on enhancing the effectiveness of the programming (Halas et al., 2017b; McRae, 2016). In this developing process, while Rec and Read has offered a number of strengths and benefits for its participants, it is inevitable that there are also challenges that can affect the effective operation of the program. Also, although the strengths and the benefits of the program outweigh the challenges, I still mention the challenges discussed by adult mentor participants throughout the analysis of the findings in both

chapters four and five as it is essential to establish ways to examine how issues can be improved upon and/or averted in order to enhance the effectiveness of the mentorship program.

The seven research participants represented diverse cultural and racial backgrounds. It is important to note that the engagement of these individuals was on a voluntary basis, which was essential in ensuring honesty in the responses, thus contributing to the quality of the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2013). One characteristic of this study is that the participants did not all participate in the format of the focus group interview, because two of them were not able to be physically present in the focus group. Through communicating with them based on their convenience and schedule I invited them to respond to the interview questions via email, thus enabling them to still participate in this research. Also, as initially there were only four participants in the focus group, I later conducted one more individual interview in order to enrich my collection of the data. The additional interview and individual emails added to the breadth and depth of the focus group interview data collected. Gender parity was a goal in selecting the participants; of the seven participants, four were female and three were male. The focus group interview achieved gender parity as there were two males and two females who took part. It is also important to note that the interviews in this research achieved cultural diversity to fulfill the research design; overall, there were four participants from Indigenous backgrounds, two from racialized-minority backgrounds (one who identified as a second generation Canadian and one who was a newcomer), and one from a racialized-majority background who identified as white.

The four individuals who identified as Indigenous had diverse cultural backgrounds and entry points into Rec and Read. Jason, an Indigenous mentor, who currently works with youth as a senior program manager in a local school division, had been with the mentorship program the longest among the seven adult mentor participants, as he had been introduced to

the program when he was a high school student. Upon graduation, he was hired by Rec and Read as an adult community mentor, and has volunteered or worked in the program for seven years. Growing up in Winnipeg, Jason's childhood was difficult, as he moved from school to school and family to foster family after the death of his father. Today, he enjoys working with youth from diverse backgrounds and tries to volunteer much of his time and energy when he is not working.

Another Indigenous adult mentor participant, Rianna, was born and raised in Winnipeg, and she did not know much about her cultural background when she was young. She began to connect more with being Indigenous as she became a grown-up. When she was younger, her cultural background did not matter to her until she began to be treated differently as a result of her Indigenous background. This is where she realized that she was Indigenous and has since been learning about her identity, particularly through social interactions with other people. She started working with youth when she herself was young and began volunteering at youth camps when she was around 15. Rianna had been hired as a university mentor with Rec and Read for two years, and has continued to learn about her culture and identity while assisting the young ones. Kima is also a full time Indigenous student in university. She lives alone in Winnipeg and has a family in a town outside of Winnipeg, and she has worked in Rec and Read for about two years. The fourth Indigenous participant is Tasha, who is from a northern Indigenous community. Tasha moved to Winnipeg with her family when she was about 11 years old and, at the time of the interview, had engaged in the program for one year as a university mentor. While all four identified as Indigenous, their life trajectories and home communities were all very different, and which is a reminder of the cultural diversity within Indigenous populations (van Ingen & Halas, 2006).

As mentioned, the study also involved three non-Indigenous mentors; two who identify as a racialized minority and one who identifies as white. Nelson is a Kenyan citizen,

and he has just completed his degree in university. He began working with Rec and Read in 2012 during his first year as an international student, and he lives alone in Canada because his family still lives in their home country. Jasmit is a Masters student in university. She works part-time as an assistant program coordinator at a non-profit sports organization in Manitoba where she helps children and youth to develop their physical literacy. Jasmit was a former university mentor in Rec and Read and worked there for approximately two years. She was born and raised in northern Manitoba where she lived for 18 years. Her parents came to Canada about four decades ago from India, therefore she identifies herself as a second generation Canadian. Smith is 25 years old and a former university mentor in Rec and Read for six years who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Currently, he is teaching English in Asia. Smith is from a middle-class family, grew up in Winnipeg and has Ukrainian heritage. Together, the seven mentors are positioned well to provide diverse perspectives on their experiences as adult mentors in Rec and Read. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss one main theme: key strategies to building an intercultural mentorship program. I introduce the adult mentor's perspectives regarding how Rec and Read works, which includes the four sub-themes: an Indigenous-informed, culturally affirming space; mentor-driven intercultural relationship building; mentoring in a circle; and values-informed leadership. These key strategies make Rec and Read a unique intercultural mentorship program.

Key Strategies to Building an Intercultural Mentorship Program

The city of Winnipeg was identified as having the largest Indigenous population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Meanwhile, Winnipeg was also labeled as the most racist city in Canada (Macdonald, 2015). Thus, the city of Winnipeg is responsible for ensuring and enhancing the health and wellness outcomes of marginalized groups such as Indigenous and other racialized minority youth through community-based programs that aim at addressing their social challenges (Payne, 2015). Set within this context and acknowledging the

racialized divisions within Winnipeg, it is all the more important that research is undertaken to enhance our understanding of intercultural relationship building among youth. By incorporating Indigenous philosophies and teachings as the foundation of the program (Halas et al., 2017a), Rec and Read appears to provide a culturally affirming space where young people from diverse backgrounds build relationships and experience different cultures in an environment that is different from the dominant western, white culture.

An Indigenous-informed, Culturally Affirming Space

Rec and Read is open to people from all racial and social backgrounds and incorporates intercultural dialogue through educational activities in each day's programming; intercultural relationships between program mentors are established by purposefully creating this particular space of cultural diversity (McRae, 2016). Kima confirmed this statement by mentioning that Rec and Read was initially built for the Indigenous population, but evolved to be "*welcoming to other individuals*". According to Kima, the program is "*wonderful and inclusive*"; other mentors described it as a "*fun*" and affirming space for everyone who attends.

That Rec and Read invites cultural diversity aligns well with traditional Indigenous teachings that everything and everyone is interconnected (Halas et al., 2017b). "*In the Indigenous worldview*", Rianna explained, "*if you are black, yellow, red, white, we're all one nation*". She added that the program "*helps you learn about people, and every conception of other cultures, and it helps you learn that we're not much different from each other*", a point also mentioned by others:

I guess our mentorship program helps big time because we're working together to become multicultural, and learning stuff about each other and break down the walls and helping each other. (Jason)

Speaking about negative stereotyping of Indigenous peoples, Jason added that he was frustrated to “*get labeled as different names*” while Nelson also mentioned that Indigenous youth “*have a hard life to tackle with*” and as such, affirming Indigenous ways within the program is important. Jasmit, to this regard, pointed out that Rec and Read is an “*Indigenous-based*” program in terms of incorporating “*Indigenous theoretical frameworks*”, which allows “*connectivity*” to be built between the program and Indigenous population, as she noted:

We’ve taken a theory that is Indigenous-based in order to reach the Indigenous population, and that allows for connectivity to happen, instead of basing a program that’s not even applicable to its community or its population. (Jasmit)

Jasmit affirmed that Rec and Read is really an intercultural platform where “*cultural relevance*” is created for the mentors from all races to be included.

All adult mentor participants confirmed that Rec and Read intends to help the mentors to be included in society by “*breaking down the walls of stereotypes*”. As Jason further stated: “*I think [Rec and Read] really breaks down walls. It can bring us together. And I’ve heard, like, oh, I thought Indigenous were all bad and stuff, just some stereotypes*”. Smith pointed out that the “*cultural differences*” are affirmed for mentors to make the program be inclusive. Rianna also thought Rec and Read is “*incorporating all nations into this program. It gives us a chance to break those stereotypes that we hold against each other and gives us a chance to look at each other not by our backgrounds, but as human*”, which is an important element and quality that Kima found “*to be lacking in many schools in general*”.

It [Rec and Read] provides a basis to respectfully explore and learn about different cultures for all those involved. Even if the focus is primarily on First Nations’ ways of knowing and perspectives, the cultural learning is a strong catalyst for those of other cultures to want to share aspects of their own heritage and background as well. (Smith)

As mentors get to know each other over time, social bonds develop. As the only white participant who holds a western worldview that differs from other participants, Smith still appreciated that the affirmation of Indigenous cultural teachings within the mentorship program helped create a respectful space, reinforcing what Rianna and Jason had said earlier about the program helping to “*break down the walls*” and “*differences*” between each other:

Working with mentors from backgrounds that differ from my own is great. The differences over time made me feel a new version of familiarity in a way. I was working with people who had grown up with completely different experiences to my own, yet we were comfortable in our differences and could share them with each other. (Smith)

Smith advised that the strong intercultural relationships cannot be built in a short period of time; it requires interactions between people on a regular basis. He explained that doing cultural activities weekly, such as traditional Indigenous games, can prompt the formation of intercultural relations. When people of different backgrounds are exposed to each other on a regular basis, Smith added, it can be the foundation to establish genuine relationships. Nelson agreed, adding that when you learn from each other’s good ideas, it can be “*a long-lasting solution for the differences.*”

The cultural diversity in Rec and Read allows different cultures and knowledges to be shared in the program with younger high school and early years mentors who are also from diverse populations (McRae, 2016). Jasmit explained that this cultural exposure over time is the foundation for developing “*very real and meaningful*” relationships in the program, as mentors can eventually find similarities and build relations between one another when cultural diversity is presented in the program. Jasmit stated:

...By having so many different types of people be mentors [in Rec and Read], there is [a] mentor for every child, every child can see themselves in a mentor, so they go in

to the gym, and they are not comfortable being in the gym, there is probably a mentor who also isn't comfortable being in the gym, and they connect on that level.

(Jasmit)

Jasmit's comments remind us that diversity extends beyond culture, to also include diversity of interests and abilities.

A “newcomer” to Canada, Nelson clearly saw that Rec and Read incorporates the concept of cultural diversity as a means to educate its mentors to have diverse and unique perspectives for viewing other cultures, which is particularly important given the dominance of white, western culture within Canada. Nelson argued that the Four R's, including *Relevance, Respect, Responsibility, and Reciprocity* are what make the Rec and Read program operate effectively as an Indigenous-based program. Smith observed that one of the strengths of Rec and Read is its mentors' “*commitment to the philosophy of the program*”. He further explained that Rec and Read incorporates Indigenous philosophy and worldviews through “*the implementation of Traditional Aboriginal Games*”, which, in return, helps the program “*to maintain the focus on Indigenous values and knowledge*” and helps to value intercultural “*significance*”. Nelson cautioned that it is important for Rec and Read to incorporate cultural diversity in the program without altering the basic purpose of the Indigenous-focused program.

Basically, by inviting new immigrants to come is trying to educate kids and people to view culture in different perspectives. So, it's a good thing, but it depends on the way of integrating. If we invite them and try to change them, there would be no purpose, and if we invite them and try to maintain the values that program has been offering, then it's a good thing to do. (Nelson)

Here, Smith agreed that Indigenous-based theoretical frameworks are included in the program to “*give it [Rec and Read] a clear direction to follow, and maintain the focus on*

what the program is committed to: fostering values of leadership within North End communities”.

A few others discussed the process of building intercultural relationships between newcomer and Indigenous students, two “*so-called marginalized groups*”, according to Jasmit. She noted that the program works because it provides a “*platform for people to talk and be in spaces together and learn from each other.*” Or, as Smith suggested when speaking of breaking down the cultural barriers between Indigenous and newcomer youth: “*The simple act of playing volleyball or dog soldier together can have students interact with each other in ways they may not otherwise.*” Smith believed that intercultural relationship building happened within the “*safe environment*” that is offered by the program. He further noted that relationships do not only happen between program “*peers*”, they are “*made between the older and younger*” generations in the program through the “*positive avenues such as sport and education*”. Similarly, Nelson shared a personal story of how he found his first and best friend, Jason, when they both participated in a national coaching certification workshop. Through his cross-cultural relationship with Jason, he has come to understand the differences and difficulties each one of them can have in common as young people with Indigenous and newcomer backgrounds.

Mentor-driven Intercultural Relationship Building

Rec and Read also relies upon its mentors to create their own strategies for relationship building across age groups and cultures. According to Lamba, Sudore, Buckholz, Radwany and Wolfe (2018), for relationship building in a program setting, it is important to let every participant in the group control the way interactions happen. The mentors appeared to share this perspective. For example, Jasmit offered her relationship building strategy as letting young mentors “*take control of the trajectory of the relationship*”. She noted:

I don't come on super strong, like, 'hey, who are you, where are you from'? I let them-choose how they want to have conversations, and I ask them very simple and basic questions to begin with, like, 'how is it going, how is school today, what did you do and learn'? and from there, I let kids open up to me, and every kid is different, sometimes you have very quiet kids, and sometimes you have very loud kids, and I let them take control of how they want that relationship to develop and I let them take rains on that. (Jasmit)

Rianna shared a similar strategy that she intends to be affable to the young mentors by reading with them together. Both Kima and Jason agreed with this strategy and added that building “*common interests*” and setting similar goals can also be a good way to promote intercultural relationships.

We're just striving for the same thing, we have the same goals, and ambitions to be the best that we can be. (Jason)

On the other hand, Rianna thought the adult mentors should take responsibility to get young mentors effectively interacting with one another, but it is sometimes hard due to the differences in their personalities: “*...some of us are outgoing, and some of us are fun, silly personalities. Some of us are like, more pride, and timid. But we happily bring that to the table to kind of making it as a whole, so how can we collaborate our gifts, or our strengths with each other to make the program more open for the youth to be the best leaders that we can be...*” To avert this challenge, some adult mentor participants mentioned that adult mentors need to have patience, energy, and leadership skills for guiding the young ones.

However, Smith argued that there should not be a specific strategy in relationship building. He pointed out:

I realized that having a plan on how you intend to build relationships can be a hindrance if given too much thought. (Smith)

Therefore, Smith suggested that having an “*attitude of acceptance*” and having no “*expectations*” on who the other mentors are and how they interact might be the best way for promoting intercultural relationship building. Smith, to this point, also suggested that every mentor should have the willingness to “*spend time and put effort*” for the program in order to generate “*genuine relationships*”:

To simply spend time and put effort into having fun doing an activity or game with these youth can give you all the foundation you need upon which to establish a genuine relationship. (Smith)

Similarly, Jasmit shared her relationship building strategy of having a “*welcoming*” attitude to “*embrace*” our cultural diversity. According to Jasmit:

The youth are thrown into a world of self-identity issues that constantly struggling in the line of western-eyes culture and their own culture. I think that Rec and Read makes a place where you can come and you are welcome for your culture and what you bring, and you don't feel that you have to figure out that balance, it is more like welcoming, like, 'yes, come, share where you are from, share your traditions, your family, values and those things, and let's try to build upon that, and embrace that diversity, rather than the constant struggle that you face'. (Jasmit)

Jasmit's statement confirmed the philosophy of Rec and Read which was specifically designed to offer a cross-cultural space for mentors to experience the cultural diversity and differences where cultural relevance is also included for mentors to affirm their unique cultural identities while they build their intercultural relationships with one another. The program philosophy appears to encourage cultural diversity as mentors share aspects of their own identity and build relations together.

Having said that, there are also intercultural challenges. Racism can be bidirectional in our society (Williams & Mohammed, 2013), and it does not necessarily mean that

discrimination is only from western colonizers towards the racially oppressed. As an example, Smith mentioned his experience in witnessing an action of racism where there was a young Indigenous participant (early years mentor) verbally insulting an early years newcomer participant while doing physical activities.

When working for Rec and Read I witnessed a young First Nations girl use a racial slur towards a newcomer boy when playing a game of TAG. This was my first year with the program and the first week of working with elementary students. The teacher representative got involved and took control of the situation. Both students remained in the program. (Smith)

Smith saw this type of negative interaction as “*almost inevitable*”, particularly when children and youth are first exposed to and learning about cultural differences. He attributed the program’s “*inherent quality of being a fun experience*” as the reason that the two students remained interested in the program and felt welcome. Noting that that the negative interactions were lateral, as they happened between two members of racially marginalized groups on the first day of the program, one can hope that over time, by getting to know the younger students and creating an affirming space, everyone would feel more accepted. Having a teacher present who stepped in to help when needed was also an asset.

When it comes to developing intercultural relationships, the diversity of approaches seems to match the diversity of mentors. There appears to be no “*one size fits all*” in approaches to relationship building, and the adult mentors indeed had their different approaches and strategies for building their intercultural relationships that contribute, for the most part, to creating the culturally affirming space.

Mentoring in a Circle

According to Carr (2006), the western approach to mentoring focuses on the hierarchical relationships between mentor and mentee, and it is usually the role of the older

and more knowledgeable mentor to guide and direct the younger and less experienced mentee based on the established objectives between them. Carr also noted that western approaches to mentoring generally benefit the mentor more than the mentee, because the focus is more on the practical achievement of the mentee as the mentor helps the program reach its objectives. The adult mentors described that Indigenous approaches to mentoring challenges these assertions. In particular, they noted that both mentors and mentees can benefit from working together. While there are aspects of hierarchical mentoring where the mentee benefits from her or his relationship with the older, more experienced mentor (e.g., Smith pointed out that the “*top priorities*” and “*focus*” of Rec and Read targets on benefiting the mentee and especially on the young ones), the adult mentors described how the benefits of the mentoring relationships are often experienced by both the mentees and the mentors. When viewed as mentoring within a circle, Rec and Read can be seen as adopting an Indigenous approach that values the experience of everyone’s participation within the mentoring relationships (Pooyak, 2006).

Recalling that there are four types of mentor participants in the program (i.e., adult allies, adult mentors, high school mentors and early years children mentors, see figure 3, page 20), the adult mentors shared important perspectives about how they see their role and responsibilities across the different age groups. Tasha thought that it should be her responsibility as an adult mentor to guide and teach high school students to become mentors so that they can go on teaching the early year children. She noted:

I tell people that I am a mentor. I tell them that I teach high school students to become mentors for elementary students. (Tasha)

Kima pointed out that the Rec and Read administrative staff are the “*role models*” for adult mentors to follow, and adult mentors are leaders for high school mentors to learn from, so that they can then lead the early year mentors. To this point, Nelson challenged the statement

on mentoring from Carr and argued on Tasha and Kima's opinions that there is no mentee in Rec and Read at all; all the participants are mentors in this program and all the mentors cooperate together to mentor one another. He also noted that as an adult mentor from university, his role in this mentoring relationship is transferring what he has learned in university to those younger mentors:

We are all mentors, like, university mentors translate what they got from university to other mentors and collaborate with high school mentors at the same time, and trying to work with the elementary school kids. (Nelson)

Jasmit affirmed that everyone in this program can be the mentor, and the constant mentoring process is happening between all the mentors in Rec and Read:

They [more experienced mentors] were mentors, we were all mentors, people that I worked with really helped me to figure out how I can teach the kids, like the games in the gym, like literacy stuff and different games, and eventually it just became a space you would come to and you would like to hang out. (Jasmit)

Jasmit further referred to an Indigenous approach to mentoring as a “*beautiful part of Rec and Read*”, which allows these mentoring relationships to “*trickle down*” between different mentors, and this knowledge of mentoring “*passes down from generation to generation*”. She added that Rec and Read will only succeed when this “*idea of mentoring*” works in the circle, the circle where young mentors engage in and learn from older mentors to gain confidence and leadership skills, and then the young mentors turn around in this circle to take important roles and responsibilities to lead the next generation of young mentors. Jasmit stated:

It [Rec and Read] is such an incredible program, it is really developed so nicely in terms of allowing this idea of mentorship to trickle down from adult mentors to youth mentors, and have that sort of pass on between each peer of mentors. The way that the things are set up, and just help things run really smoothly, and passing down

skills and knowledge from generation to generation, I know a lot of people said they were little ones in Rec and Read and now they are mentors, it's like you have these high school mentors when you first start with them, and they might be really shy, or intimidated to try things, but you go through this program and you help them as a university mentor, you try to give them skills, to help them be able to run; the program succeeds when the little ones come in. (Jasmit)

Here, Jasmit confirmed Lowe's (2005) and Daloz and Parks' (2003) assertions that Indigenous approaches to mentoring includes the concept of reciprocity in the mentoring relationship. She said:

I want to give them choices and options, provide them a platform to be autonomous, and the decisions that we make in that space, so Rec and Read was really built on reciprocity, a reciprocal relationship, as much as kids learn from me, I want to learn from them too. (Jasmit)

Jasmit further stated that reciprocity “*that's occurring within your [mentoring] relationship*” is always based on “*constant balance amongst everyone*” in the program. This mentoring relationship is not about “*this one person in charge*”, yet the mentors “*constantly transfer knowledge from one another*” so that they learn from each other, as she explained. Since all the participants are seen as mentors in Rec and Read, all the mentors regardless of their age should take responsibility to help create this reciprocal mentoring relationship within the program.

Jason agreed with Jasmit's ideas and stated that mentoring works in a circular relationship in Rec and Read. He noted that adult mentors show the right direction to high school mentors for them to “*build confidence*” and to be “*leaders*” for the early year mentors, and this relationship goes on in “*one big circle*”, but all the mentors learn from and teach each other, and there is no hierarchical relationship in Rec and Read. Tasha also thought the

program is “*not like a classroom setting*”, instead, the mentors cooperate “*in a circle*” where mentors can “*see each other and catch each other’s energy*” in that circle. Jasmit further added that the mentoring process in each day’s programming also “*ends*” in a circle of “*debriefing*”. She explained:

I think that was huge ending, every program would always end with a debrief, because we got a very limited number of participants, so it was very easy to get us to all sit down and end with the debrief, ‘like, what was good today, what do you want to do next time’. (Jasmit)

Jason concluded that this is the “*circle*” where you “*give*” and you “*receive*”, you “*learn*” and you “*share*”.

[In] The circle, we are learning, and we are teaching, nobody’s above anybody. It’s just like one big circle of learning, or giving, or receiving, or all sharing. (Jason)

The circle reinforces the point that everyone is on the same level, even though their roles, responsibilities and lessons to be learned may be different.

The profound impact of mentoring is based on enhancing the program participants’ competencies and skills that they can apply in their daily program activities (Lau, Ford, Lieshout, Saperson, McConnell & McCabe, 2016), which can in turn reinforce the knowledge and awareness of the program mentors regarding their professionalism and capabilities (Nanda, 2015). Jasmit and Tasha both affirmed this and described how peer mentoring (within their adult mentor teams) allowed them to learn a lot from other more “*experienced*” mentors in the beginning when they had no idea what it meant to run the program and mentor the young ones:

I was so nervous because I’ve never worked with kids, and I’ve never organized programs, and I was like how it is going to be, and what if kids don’t like me, and I

was lucky enough to be put on the team with some very experienced people, and they kind of mentored me in a way. (Jasmit)

Tasha added: *“I was nervous and I wasn’t sure because I missed the first couple of meetings, and when I asked my co-workers what I was supposed to be doing, they told me that you just keep them company.”* In this case, peer-to-peer mentoring was essential.

Respect for other participants in terms of their identities, worldviews and traditions can help prompt a reciprocal relationship within a program (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Jasmit confirmed this statement and also thought that the *“reciprocal relationship”* in mentoring can be achieved through mutual *“respect”* between mentors. She explained that Rec and Read allows mutual respect to happen by gathering all mentors together in *“one play field”* to grow, to learn and to share different perspectives. Nelson, to this regard, further stated that the theoretical models and Indigenous cultural teachings that are the foundation of the program taught the mentors the concept of *“respect and being respected”*. Reciprocity within the circle was key to mentoring, as others noted.

I think I just really understand it as being a very reciprocal type of relationships that are built through respect for one another, not the style of dictatorship or the style like this is the person in charge, and these are the people who listen, but rather we are all coming together whether you are a university mentor or high school mentor, or the child mentor, we are kind of all coming together on the same play field, and just learning from each other, growing with each other, and taking different ideas from one another. (Jasmit)

Smith agreed, pointing out that the concept of mentoring in Rec and Read is *“two-fold”*, which has a close relationship with leadership. He explained that the relationship between mentoring and leadership is that the mentors learn leadership skills as the way *“to be*

mentored”, and the mentors share their experiences or guide others to learn as the way “*to be a mentor*”:

I believe the mentorship of the program is two-fold. It is both an opportunity to learn skills relating to leadership, that is, to be mentored. And also is a platform about which to share your own knowledge and experiences to the larger group, so, to be a mentor. I think the program does very well to navigate these two senses of mentorship. (Smith)

Mentoring in a circle allows adult mentors to continually generate good leaders and role models through modelling leadership skills for the young mentors who will later become the contributors within this circular mentoring relationship. Consequently, leadership emerges as a key competency that all mentors develop.

Values-informed Leadership

As Zaleznik (1977) stated, effective leadership involves program leaders to exercise their powers to influence the perceptions and actions of the program participants. Building on the theme of mentoring in a circle, Jasmit challenged this statement and noted that power has a totally different interpretation in Rec and Read, which is not an “*authoritative sense of power*”. She explained that she had been taught in one Rec and Read training session that power and leadership in the program are not linked to authority, rather, the program focuses on the abilities and skills mentors have to perform their leadership role so as to help young mentors unlock their passion and courage to be the future leader.

You have power when you are in this position to work with kids, and kids look up to you like you are a superhero, and that was one of the video [about power] that they showed at one training. How much kids look up to you and want to be like you, and how important it is to make sure that you use that power responsibly, and in a way it can really impact on the kids that you work with. (Jasmit)

Similarly, Nelson also stated that the leader with a “*vertical leadership*” style is called a “*boss*”, and the mentors have to understand the differences between a “*leader*” and a “*boss*” in order to produce effective leadership in Rec and Read. He added that the good leader in Rec and Read can be seen as a “*guider*”, who listens to the weak “*voices*”, shares knowledge and experiences with others, and helps generate a circle relationship within the program interactions, as both Nelson and Jason observed.

As a good leader, you don't need to feel like you're a leader, you [should] feel like you're a guider, you and others do the same thing together, they won't feel they do things without you and they also feel they have the voices too, and you share things together, without the vertical leadership, and be in a circle, knowing the differences between boss and leader. (Nelson)

We always have one person standing up, and that's the leader, we're all looking at that person, where the energy goes, and I guess in the circle, we all take turns, we are all leaders. It's a more balanced approach. (Jason)

Jason also stated that he has learned the Indigenous-based approach beautifully balanced the relationships between mentors, and he found that none of the mentors is the leader, or every mentor can be seen as the leader. Stated otherwise, everybody has leadership potential and everyone is encouraged to develop their own, over time and when they feel ready. In this regard, Smith pointed out that maybe because of his feeling of privilege as being white or his family background as being educators, he took too much control when leading the young ones, which would undermine one of the program objectives as Jason mentioned that everyone is equal within this learning platform.

It takes time and support for young people's confidence and competence to grow, and to this point, Smith spoke of how leadership development needs adult mentors to have enough patience. Smith shared that you need to be patient when you lead the program, as

there are always mentors who are less motivated to come to the program and keep “*citing the same excuses*” every time, therefore, patience is very important to tackle each situation when mentors are absent. He noted that you also need to have a patient mind to think they will finally come back, and when they do, you should patiently accept them for who they are and patiently wait for how wonderful they have the ability to become one day. Smith further concluded that the genuine impact of leadership development cannot be created “*overnight*”; rather, it requires a great amount of energy and patience from the mentors to be invested in for a long term. It is through this long term commitment to having patience, sustainable leadership can be fostered.

I understand Rec and Read to be centred on incremental growth and intrinsic youth leadership. The program is built on establishing strong leaders that are actually from the communities in which the program operates. The program does an excellent job at understanding that genuine impact does not happen in an overnight, bombastic way. The patience the program shows with its mentors is a testament to the commitment to establishing a lasting legacy of leadership in these communities.

(Smith)

However, according to Smith, patience advocated in Rec and Read can be misinterpreted even by mentors themselves. Smith pointed that the progress being made can sometimes be difficult to identify, yet that does not mean there is no progress:

The major challenge of the program, I feel, is that there are times where this patience can be misinterpreted by others (and even the mentors themselves) as a kind of stasis. It can sometimes appear as though little progress, if any, is being made. It is always important to use these times of apparent stasis to reassess your program. To reflect on what is working, and how things are better. In doing this act of review I have always found that there is a quite a lot of progress that has gone unnoticed. (Smith)

He argued that in order to find out the progress that “*has gone unnoticed*”, it is important for mentors to constantly reflect on the program while examining what aspects are working and what are not. Smith also noted that at times it was hard to get young mentors coming to the after-school activities and blamed himself for failing at attracting the mentors in the beginning.

Patience and a non-judgmental approach helped Nelson; reflecting on his early days in the program, he pointed out that the most challenging part for him in the beginning was his “*lack of courage*” to perform his leadership role in terms of introducing what Rec and Read is about to younger students at the seven program sites. Not unlike the high school mentors who can be uncertain and shy at first, he was grateful that Rec and Read still offered him opportunities to allow him to try his best, as he explained:

First week I was nervous and excited, but the most challenging part was that university mentors like me had to go to several schools to introduce the Rec and Read program and try to make the kids join to the group. It was kind of tricky for me, but it did give me the opportunities to try my best, because I’m kinda’ lack of courage. (Nelson)

Similarly, as a white mentor, Smith was not so sure about himself on his first day of working with the early year mentors, and he argued that he could feel the strong feeling of not being entirely ready to perform his leadership skills and achieve his leadership role for the young mentors.

I felt a sense that I was not ready, that I would not be able to fulfill the role that was expected of me. I felt that I would not be able to relate to any of the students that attended. (Smith)

While it may be difficult to know whether the mentors are ready or not, it is important that Rec and Read provides an environment where judgement has no place to exist (McRae,

2016). With a communal approach to mentoring, individual mentors are given time to grow and develop their leadership competencies according to their own timelines and sense of comfort.

As with its focus on developing leadership strengths over time, Rec and Read welcomes all sorts of leadership styles and skills to the program with an aim to create beneficial influences for its mentors (Halas et al., 2017b). This approach aligns with Bass (1990) who says that leadership involves all participants having an influence through the process of interaction. In addition to patience, each of the mentors had different approaches that they found to be successful. A key approach communicated by a few mentors was to be authentic. Or, as Jason said, in speaking about responsible leadership, you need to walk the talk.

Don't talk about it, be about it. Live the life you preach, and if you tell people don't do drugs, or alcohol, and then you go home on the weekend and you do drugs or alcohol, that's not right. I guess, be the standard... (Jason)

Rianna, to this point, highlighted the importance of building trust with the early year mentors, and she noted that gaining trust from the young mentors is the way to let them feel open to you so that they can “lean on” you or tell you their personal experiences or stories. Rianna further stated that she is willing to show her “mistakes” to the young mentors, because these “mistakes” can be the real lesson for either young ones or herself to learn from.

I'm kind of people that they can lean on, or confide in. Understanding that I am human, and I do make mistakes, but those mistakes are there for me to learn from.

(Rianna)

Jasmit affirmed Rianna's opinion and added that being yourself and being real to the young mentors you work with is actually teaching a lesson for them, a lesson that teaches them to accept their true identities and encourages them to grow from their mistakes, to laugh from

their joys, to cry from their sadness, and to live like this is the last day of their lives. She stated:

I've never considered myself as a role model, I just really try to be my authentic self when I'm around kids, so they can feel that they can do that as well, and not to be afraid to be who you are, I think there also is the level of professionalism that you have to have when you work with kids, but I just really try to be authentic, and to be a real person to them, a person who makes mistakes, a person who can laugh at herself, a person who can have fun, and sometimes a person who might be sad one day, but that's ok because everyone experiences sad days. (Jasmit)

The effective leadership can be promoted when the leaders of today are generous to show their “*authentic self*” to younger generations of future leaders.

There were other forms of authenticity demonstrated by the mentors. Jason and Smith, for instance, introduced their leadership styles and skills as being someone “*silly*” when working with the young mentors, and Smith thought it is an effective way to encourage the young ones to be “*comfortable*” in the group interactions and to allow the mutual “*trust*” can be promoted. Tasha discussed her unique leadership skill as a “*stand-back*” strategy. She noted that she preferred to let the young mentors develop and learn by themselves instead of telling and teaching them. Smith, to this point, explained that providing a platform for them to be the leaders for one another in the “*relationship building*” can sometimes generate more unexpected outcomes than just leading them, as this strategy may stimulate their potential talents and abilities when they have to be responsible for their actions.

The other mentors also spoke of the need to be empathetic and understanding as a first step to fulfill their leadership role and achieve the quality of being patient. Nelson pointed out that being understanding means you have the ears to listen to others and you have the mind to think for others.

I am understandable, I listen to people and try to fit in their shoes, and try to think what I could do at others' situations. (Nelson)

Rianna also noted that if you can understand other young mentors, you will not hold judgement towards them anymore as you were once what they are now: “*Don't talk about it, be about it, no judgment, and they tell me these things that they're doing, and I'm like, 'Well, it's not good,' but I've been in their shoes, and I know how it is, and I can understand where they're coming from*”. Jason shared the same feeling as Rianna, and he added that understanding the young ones is the gateway for him to be involved with them “*on the kids' level*” and to equip him with all the patience to listen to their voices:

I can get on the kid's level like a fun way where they're attached to that, and want to get them involved while nobody wants to listen to them. (Jason)

As Rost (1993) noted, the way to exercise effective leadership in a program setting involves the process of relationship building, in which the leaders and the participants work collectively to achieve their common purpose. Smith, along with others, confirmed this assertion by observing that the best leadership skill in Rec and Read was the “*ability to build relationships*” with mentors from diverse racial backgrounds and different age brackets. All the adult mentors made strong connections with the high school and the early year mentors, as they set relationship building as the first goal to achieve when in their leadership role. Then they relied upon personal values-based approaches such as using patience, authenticity, empathy and non-judgmental understanding to inform how they built relationships and encouraged the leadership of the other mentors.

Summary: Indigenous Approaches to Mentoring

Based on the analysis of the four sub-themes generated from the research interviews, it can be concluded that the adult mentors do indeed experience and understand Rec and Read as providing an Indigenous cultural approach to mentoring. First, Rec and Read includes

Indigenous philosophies, theories, worldviews and values to create a culturally affirming space for its mentors to affirm their cultural identity and to subvert the cultural hegemony of western culture in their society. Second, Rec and Read gives the mentors an opportunity to allow them to have their own mentor-driven approaches and unique strategies regarding building intercultural relationships with other mentors in the program. Third, Rec and Read incorporates Indigenous approaches to mentoring to allow all the mentors in the program to learn from each other in a circular relationship where no one is superior or inferior than others and learning is reciprocal. Finally, using values-informed approaches to leadership development, Rec and Read produces positive role models for the young mentors to learn their own leadership skills in the program so that they can become the role models for the future generations.

Perhaps Jason says it best when he explains that he always wanted to be someone he could look up to; when he was younger, he had someone who was so kind to him that he wanted to be kind for someone else in return. Through reciprocal relationships and strengths-based approaches to intercultural, multi-age mentoring, the adult mentors are demonstrating that young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow, they are indeed, leaders today (Brendtro et al., 2002). With an enhanced understanding of how the mentorship program works, in the next chapter, I discuss how the mentorship programs benefit participants, according to the adult mentors.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS: A SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH APPROACH

This chapter centres on analyzing another main theme: key outcomes arising from an intercultural mentorship program and its two sub-themes (i.e., promoting intercultural competency and promoting social determinants of health), based on the experiences of the seven adult mentor participants and their interpretations of the benefits that Rec and Read offers for their wholistic health and wellness. Advised by the three theoretical frameworks from chapter two of this thesis (i.e., the Medicine Wheel, social determinants of health and postcolonial theory) and the literature on intercultural competency, the analysis of the findings focuses on examining how the program promotes health and wellness for its participants, through intercultural competency and the social determinants of health (SDOH) related to social exclusion, education and employment. While Rec and Read focuses on healthy behaviours related to physical activity and nutrition (i.e., focusing on the body), the findings illustrate how acquiring intercultural competencies and experiencing social inclusion, educational growth and employment benefits contributes to wholistic health, influencing the mind, heart and spirit in interconnected ways.

Key Outcomes Arising from an Intercultural Mentorship Program

According to Public Health Agency of Canada and Pan-Canadian Public Health Network (2018), Canadians are identified as one of the healthiest populations around the world. Here, the term ‘Canadians’ does not refer to every individual who lives in society, as the living status of different groups of individuals in Canada are not equal; for example, some Canadians (e.g., members of the middle class, racialized white majority) are living healthier than others (e.g., Indigenous peoples and racialized minorities) because of experiencing social, economic and political differences. Health inequalities cause people from marginalized groups to live with a lower socioeconomic status that largely impedes them

from enjoying their rights to live equally in Canadian society in terms of access to the same education, employment and other important opportunities as middle class, white Canadians. On this basis, all seven adult mentor participants identified the benefits that Rec and Read can provide in order to tackle health inequalities and to improve the wholistic health and wellness of marginalized groups.

Promoting Intercultural Competency

Developing intercultural competency is important in a multicultural society like Canada, where there is a history of colonization, racism, white supremacy, and especially when still living in a postcolonial era, the on-going hegemony of cultures of whiteness (Childs & Williams, 1997). Beyond gaining knowledge of different cultural practices, worldviews and skills to interact effectively across cultural differences, cultural competency involves understanding one's own worldviews, attitudes and a willingness to question one's own preconceptions (Ellis, Carlson, Carlson & Psyd, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2012). McRae (2016) suggests that the intercultural relationship building in Rec and Read can facilitate mentors from diverse cultural backgrounds to rethink and reevaluate their former perceptions towards people from other backgrounds, especially those negative perceptions or stereotypes they hold towards one another or themselves that may come from the influence of their family, environment and/or social media. The conversations with adult mentors appeared to confirm that Rec and Read helps mentors address negative stereotypes, a key intercultural competency. In doing so, a healthier space is created for Indigenous participants, many of whom experience everyday racism (Essed, 1991), as well as non-Indigenous participants, many of whom develop an appreciation of Indigenous culture and the skills to work interculturally with young people from all backgrounds.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors spoke about the negative perceptions and "*stigma*" often communicated about Indigenous and other racialized minorities. Speaking

about his understanding of how some people are targeted negatively more than others, Jason said:

... we got a lot of people come in with the misconception that all Indigenous are, like, bums on the street drinking alcohol making crimes. Usually we hear about, like, Indigenous people make crime, or black on black crime. You never hear about white on white crime, and yellow on yellow, right? It's like sort of the same. I think people struggle with that. (Jason)

Notably, the non-Indigenous mentors were particularly aware of their own thinking before and after their time in the program. As a university mentor and racialized minority, Jasmit expressed her appreciation for how much she learned by working with children and youth, and especially Indigenous youth, in Rec and Read. Despite growing up around Indigenous peoples in the north, she acknowledged that she had been “*very ignorant and mis-educated about Indigenous people. So, having an opportunity to work with Rec and Read really educated me to understand our First Nations, and our diverse populations that exist in Manitoba.*” She further explained:

I came from a very ignorant mindset of being born in the north of Manitoba, now being educated on colonization, cultural genocide that has occurred within this population, so then becoming a part of this program, everything we were trying to do in terms of having a wholistic version of physical education, that's Indigenous, and think wholistically is a very Indigenous-based world-view. (Jasmit)

Jasmit's knowledge of Indigenous ways was an important outcome for her in terms of improving her cultural competency.

Jasmit referred to the Indigenous teachings she experienced in Rec and Read as a “*really great learning experience*” that changed her both personally and professionally. Smith, the only mentor who identified as white, also appreciated what Rec and Read taught

him about Indigenous perspectives: “*As a white person, Rec and Read is to thank for nearly all of my knowledge of First Nations culture and ways of knowing.*” Like Jasmit, he recognized that being exposed to Indigenous teachings while building intercultural relationships was personally transformative.

Nelson described his preconceptions prior to arriving in Canada from Africa. He spoke of how little he knew about Indigenous and Canadian society, and that he had been taught back home that all Canadians are white; he described how he felt culturally incompetent in his new country. When he first arrived, he found it challenging because he noted: “*I couldn’t distinguish who is Indigenous, and some people would feel offended when I ask them ‘are you white?’; but how can I even tell, because I am an outsider.*” As he learned about Indigenous culture and perspectives, he quickly saw similarities with his own culture; western culture, however, was much different.

So when I first came here, I didn’t expect there is Indigenous community, because I think here is a white society, and when I learn and value Indigenous culture, I think it is pretty similar with our African culture, but it can be interpreted in different ways, but it is kind of same to me, but I can distinguish the western culture because it is totally different from ours. (Nelson)

As such, Rec and Read helped him to develop his cultural competency by learning about and through Indigenous ways, while also developing an appreciation for the similarities and differences between his own culture, Indigenous culture and western culture.

However, Smith cautioned that cultural competency does not happen for everyone, and not right away. He argued that a challenge Rec and Read might have is that the program is mainly based on the willingness of the mentors, and some university mentors are not willing to accept the cultural differences in the very beginning, which could lead to a

negative influence for the “*group dynamics*” and unhealthy development for some isolated mentors regarding their intercultural competency:

...removal of university mentors from their comfort zones and putting them in a scenario where they must be understanding and willing to learn and accept other cultures from their own, ...however, as mentors may not be willing initially to do so, and this can cause a strain in the group dynamics or even reinforce some prejudices that people may have. (Smith)

Tasha agreed that the program indeed depends on “*how open*” the mentors are willing to be, and she added that “*sometimes people come in with the preconceptions about how Indigenous peoples are*”, which can be very frustrating for the Indigenous mentors in the program. This is an on-going challenge as university students, many from non-Indigenous, mostly white middle class backgrounds, take a three credit hour guided practicum course each winter where they are assigned to work with an existing mentor site (Halas et al., 2017a). As mentioned above, this puts pressure on the Indigenous participants when the mentors do not question their initial preconceptions. It is a reminder that the intercultural competency development most likely happens more for the non-Indigenous mentors; while Indigenous (and racialized minority) mentors are forced to deal with the negative preconceptions that others might hold, the non-Indigenous mentors, particularly those from the hegemonic white majority, do not face similar burdens on a daily basis as they are not perceived as “the other”. The white mentors who are in the more privileged position may view Indigenous and immigrant mentors as “the other”, and may hold a different worldview than them (Said, 1978).

Reinforcing the different positionality and thus, different experiences of the mentors, Kima identified one personal challenge for her in Rec and Read as being “*too emotional*” when she related the personal stories of other mentors with hers; her own experience as a

member of an oppressed group provided her with an inherent empathy toward the younger Indigenous mentors. Smith, on the other hand, stated his inability to understand some “*personal experiences*” and stories of mentors from diverse cultural and social backgrounds other than his own. Having been raised by western cultures, his exposure to cultural diversity within the mentorship program allowed him to enhance his intercultural competencies in ways that were not as emotionally connected as his Indigenous peers, which can be viewed as a privilege the Indigenous mentors did not have. Yet, his willingness to learn and understand how cultural differences impact people differently was evident in his comments.

Reflecting the key arguments of postcolonial theory, Jasmit cautioned that it is usually newcomers and Indigenous people who try to accommodate and assimilate to the dominant western culture in order to feel comfortable in these often unequal spaces, where they do not feel they belong and where cultural diversity is not affirmed. Jason also made reference to this reality, noting that both Indigenous youth and newcomers face similar challenges because they are both “*outcast*”: “*They’re both judged straight away*”, Jason observed, “*it’s like living in a Eurocentric place and if you’re not white here, you’re not the good one.*” While Eurocentric perceptions did not seem to be promoted in the mentorship program, how the program was experienced was definitely relatable to one’s social location within the unequal power relations, as noted in the example above between Kima and Smith. Even with the best intentions, the inequities of inclusion are still a dynamic within the program. With the aim of promoting mentors’ intercultural competency, the mentorship program tries the best to challenge and transform the negative societal perceptions from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors.

Interestingly, Jason was very comfortable and excited about the cultural diversity in Rec and Read from the beginning; he argued that he comes to the program to embrace the intercultural space where he can build friendships with people from all races. Rianna was

equally positive, and also noted the opportunities that the program offers in terms of breaking down stereotypes that cross all boundaries.

I think it's awesome. I think it's good that way, we're incorporating all nations into this program. It gives us a chance to break those stereotypes that we hold against each other and gives us a chance to look at each other not by our backgrounds, but as human. (Rianna)

As Indigenous mentors, they had already developed an appreciation for diversity and looked forward to being in a multicultural environment. Rianna was excited that the affirmation of Indigenous and other non-western identities in the program allowed all mentors to release the burdens of negative stereotyping and the socially-constructed divisions that keep them from seeing each other's humanity.

By contrast, when Smith first engaged in the program as one of the few white mentors, he was extremely worried about his lack of knowledge and experience with cultural diversity, even though he mentioned that *"I was not very concerned about any rumours or reputations that circulate around Winnipeg about the schools or youth in the north end, [I was] being lucky enough to have grown up in a family who taught me not to believe in such racially charged stereotypes about the area"*. However, he still had the feeling of *"caginess"* when he attended the program activities or staff training in the very beginning, which he believed was to be expected when a group of *"strangers to each other"* are required to participate in team building activities. Over time, Smith's ability to understand, communicate and interact effectively with individuals across different cultures illustrated his growing cultural competency (Ellis, Carlson, Carlson & Psyd, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2012).

It seems that the intercultural mentoring strategies described in chapter four changed the perceptions of program mentors regarding cultural diversity, and therefore promoted intercultural competency for the mentors. After building relationships in the program, Jason

further confirmed and added to his preconception that cultural diversity allows mentors to share and enjoy the cultural differences and similarities of one another. On the other hand, Smith challenged his former preconception on cultural diversity upon the formation of his intercultural relations within Rec and Read. To this end, he credited both the facilitators and mentors for allowing him to leave the program feeling profoundly affected and with new friends. Nelson also affirmed that building intercultural relationships allow him to understand “*what to do and what not*” in an intercultural space of cultural differences. He further explained that through this process of relationship building, “*different attitudes and behaviours*” became evident for others to think about and understand. Therefore, to accept and respect all these differences is the key to creating an intercultural space for intercultural competency to safely develop. When considered from a Medicine Wheel perspective (Bopp et al., 1985), having a positive sense of identity can be seen as contributing to spiritual wellness, and there are further examples of how one’s cultural identities were affirmed in the program.

Influenced by the intercultural relationship building in Rec and Read, Jasmit pointed out that cultural diversity in our communities is essential to the positive growth of the young generations, and she stated that:

Obviously we [Rec and Read] are not sitting them [young generations] in the class, and teaching them about cultures, they get to engage in culture and diversity in a very fun and organic way, so when they grow up, like 25, they might start to think and realize the way they were exposed to race, I think that would allow them to take a more social justice approach to their life as well when they get older, but I think right now kids just like ‘yea, my friends are Chinese, my friends are black, Indian’, and that’s just how it was, I grew up with different kids all the time, and I think that’s how it should be. (Jasmit)

On this basis, to be a “*well-rounded person*” in this cross-cultural environment, people need to embrace cultural diversity. The different languages and different foods that people eat are part of the identities that people carry with them to the program.

To experience personal growth, you need to be exposed to people from completely different backgrounds in order to be a well-rounded person [in this society], so working with people from diverse backgrounds is great, that’s such an awesome space to be where different languages can be spoken, people from different places, people eat different kinds of food, experience culture differently, and you can learn from each other, I think that’s really cool. (Jasmit)

Jason added that the program helped “*big time*” by incorporating “*multiculturalism*” for the mentors to not consider themselves “*as any kind of background*” but just “*as a human being*”. Here, Jason appreciated that the program improved his intercultural competency in order for him to understand that people regardless of their backgrounds should have consciousness of being treated equally not only in this program but also in any form of society.

Overall, it seems that a strength of the mentorship program is that the intercultural competencies of the program mentors can be developed over time, providing an important learning outcome, whether by changing one’s negative perceptions about another social group, enhancing one’s confidence to interact socially with others who come from different backgrounds, or simply acquiring skills to build long-lasting intercultural friendships that are experienced in the program. Considering from a Medicine Wheel perspective (Bopp et al., 1985), the affirmation of identities, especially Indigenous and other non-western identities, can also be seen as contributing to spiritual wellness. Feeling good about who you are in a postcolonial society, particularly for oppressed groups, is imperative to healthy living; the mentors intercultural competencies help create a space that can be considered spiritually

healthy. Additionally, by developing intercultural competency, key social determinants of health can be strengthened, which I discuss in the next section.

Promoting the Social Determinants of Health

According to Mikkonen and Raphael (2010), individuals' health outcomes can be largely affected by their socioeconomic status and living surroundings that they experience daily in society, and these status and conditions are known as the social determinants of health. Aboriginal status, disability, early life, education, employment and working conditions, food insecurity, health services, gender, housing, income and income distribution, race, social exclusion, social safety net, and unemployment and job security are 14 identified social determinants that can impact on the overall health and wellness of Canadians. Importantly, as Raphael (2009) noted, the social determinants of health impact the health outcomes of individuals way more than the effects of personal behaviours such as healthy eating and physical activities. Based on the perspectives of adult mentors, it appears that Rec and Read positively influences a number of the social determinants of health for participants, and in particular the determinants of social exclusion, education and employment.

Social Exclusion

As Raphael (2009) stated, the social exclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., Indigenous and immigrants populations) is a result of European colonization. To accomplish social inclusion for these marginalized groups is by affirming their cultural identities which can be seen as a process of attempting to subvert cultural hegemony in the postcolonial location (Childs & Williams, 1997). For both Indigenous and newcomer adult mentors, the program offered them opportunities to feel a part of a larger team while also experiencing that they belong and are accepted for who they are. Tasha, to this point, agreed that:

Immigrants and people from up north like how I was, can bring a community and help each other find the way around. (Tasha)

Jason added that Rec and Read helps mentors socially connect with people from diverse backgrounds, and he thought through this way, people from marginalized groups can “*prove*” themselves: “*Socially helps you connect with other people, you are not alone in this world, trying to get a bite, and prove yourselves*”. Also, Jason appreciated that the program helps mentors to “*get together*” to build an intercultural “*team*” where the understanding that people are all equal human beings are shared in this team:

... We all have our own weaknesses. But together, we're going to be stronger, and we're going to cover each other's weaknesses, and just be a strong unit. I guess together, we have no weaknesses, and we only have strengths, and I guess practicing that would be a good thing. (Jason)

He also observed that the team approach to mentoring allows communal strengths to emerge, allowing the program to succeed.

Tasha and Jason are grateful that Rec and Read took them away from difficult family situations and helped them to get involved with their community in a positive way. Tasha felt constrained by her family role of babysitter and wanted to do more with her life in this society, while Jason appreciated that Rec and Read helped him to have a sense of social inclusion in and through the program, and he noted that Rec and Read is a place where he can “*step back from thinking too much*”, and especially from thoughts of his family issues. Nelson also stated that he did not feel that he is “*considered as refugee*” in Rec and Read; instead, he feels everyone in the program is willing to share and participate together, and that is what social inclusion should be like.

When I came in, I didn't know anyone, and learning new stuff, so the only way I can do that in this new society was to get involved with other people. For me I can say, being a mentor elevates me from this kind of stress and create an atmosphere for me

to share and learn to open and deal with people, most important thing was sharing with people, mentoring kids and we don't hide nothing. (Nelson)

Nelson thought that Rec and Read is the best way for him in the beginning to get involved into his new multicultural society. Experiencing language barriers, discrimination and racism in people's living environment can be devastating for their overall health and wellness. Adult mentor participants noted that they have found meaningful ways to challenge these negative issues related to social exclusion. Jasmit pointed out that Rec and Read offers a multicultural space for mentors to speak their "different languages". Nelson also stated that he can "release stress and tension" in the program by doing physical activities.

According to Said (1978) and Spivak (1988), representation of one's cultural identity leads to power. However, western culture is in the dominant position and represents so much for the east that the western culture can hold colonial control over the east and Indigenous populations by using misrepresentations and/or ignoring cultural identities other than those approved by the dominant western culture. Jasmit confirmed this assertion with her statement: "I think there is a lot of mis-representation that is created around Indigenous people". She noted that these misrepresentations and "false narratives" can be subverted through achieving cultural exposure in our society:

I think as somebody who's non-Indigenous and somebody who's in the faculty that is predominantly white people, I think their exposures to work in an Indigenous-based program with an Indigenous population in majority as participants, can maybe eliminate these false narratives that are created and maybe provide a bit more of in-depth understanding of Indigenous culture and people and have those conversations, and I think that the lack of conversations and lack of exposure are the reason why there are so much racial tensions and why so problematic. (Jasmit)

Jasmit, to this point, stated that Rec and Read truly offers this intercultural space to have cultural diversity working together to create a positive chemistry between one another in order to make all the mentors feel the sense of social inclusion. In this process, she further noted, a brand-new space is created by these multicultural populations, where one can feel comfortable being and seeing themselves within the program:

I think that Rec and Read provides a safer space, a safer space that welcoming these kids in but also saying this space is yours, as opposed to being another way around most of the time, where Indigenous youth are walking into a space that may not feel like theirs', but Rec and Read is their space, and informed by Indigenous teachings and philosophy, so I think that is one of reasons that Indigenous youth will gravitate towards joining that space, and I think that is very necessary thing as opposed to constantly making people change their worldviews to assimilate our environment. No, let's give you an environment that is based on your worldviews, that is surrounding what you want to do and how you feel things, and let's provide that space for kids, and Indigenous kids and youth specifically. (Jasmit)

As an example of an intercultural space that did not feel as welcoming, a challenge that I observed happened during my time working at one of the mentor site schools that offered a different type of physical activity drop-in program (i.e., in addition to the typical Rec and Read after-school programming). When I first arrived in Canada, I worked with other university mentors to run an evening drop-in program for Indigenous youth. I found that the interactions in this intercultural space between Indigenous and immigrant mentors to be minimal when compared to the regular after-school mentorship programming. The Indigenous mentor and high school students appeared to be quite active within their own racialized groups and there was little social interaction between myself and the Indigenous youth. Here, my experience showed that social inclusion and intercultural relationship

building between newcomers and Indigenous youth does not easily happen; like Rec and Read, it should be based on a very safe and welcoming environment that allows cultural diversity to develop.

How people experience their surroundings impacts their health (Bopp et al., 1985), and the inclusive recreational environment provided adult and high school mentors an opportunity to feel less stressed. Jason and Smith both agreed that “*we play arts and board games, and basically having a fun time*”, and the mentors can have “*a fun experience*” and feel “*intrinsically enjoyable*”. Nelson also affirmed that “*we go to the program to apply our feelings by doing things together*”. Jason further concluded that Rec and Read “*reenergizes*” the mentors to be stronger to overcome their stresses in their daily life: “*I think emotionally, reenergizing you, gets you going again, you come out feeling good, and just ready to tackle the week, get other stuff done, because if you lifted this weight off your shoulders, all the stuff you've been doing, and just refreshing*”. Also, adult mentors confirmed that offering healthy eating and physical activities are fundamental assets for Rec and Read to improve physical health of the mentors and promote active interactions (e.g., conversations) between mentors during healthy eating and physical activities within the program (McRae, 2014). These observations are consistent with the findings of earlier studies that highlighted the safe, fun and stress-free spaces that the mentorship program offers for high school mentors (Carpenter et al., 2008; Carpenter & Halas, 2011). Wholistically, mind, body, heart and spirit were impacted, this time via stress release and experiencing positive emotions through participation in the activities.

Education

Education is one of the major determinants that not only can determine people's access to better living conditions but also it is closely related with people's employment (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). A goal of Rec and Read is to provide mentors with educational

training in order to allow them to have better opportunities for gaining meaningful employment leading to stable occupations. Adult mentor participants identified how Rec and Read does improve their lives and educates them for their later employment through focusing on the mentors' professional development, which includes providing the mentors chances to get academic credits and employment skills (Halas et al., 2017b). While the program purposefully addresses the social determinants of health via education and employment training in particular, how well the program achieves these outcomes has not been evaluated. In the responses of the adult mentors regarding their experiences, it seems that the program is indeed producing important outcomes that can positively enhance one's health and wellness.

A number of mentors spoke about how the program helped them develop in transformative ways. Speaking of her difficult childhood experiences, Tasha noted that she was a “*bad person*” when she was younger, however, Rec and Read equipped her with “*skills*” and transformed her to become so “*useful*” that she wanted to help younger mentors in the program with their education. Rianna felt that Rec and Read made her become better and more “*confident*”. For example, she noted the difference between her first and second year as a mentor, which she described as “*totally different experiences*”:

My first year, I was very, very shy and timid. It's been so long since I worked with kids, so I didn't know what to expect and I knew it was going to be fun, but it's just like, not knowing. But I need to know. Then the second year was like we had a big group of kids. It was nice, and I could feel, like, a change, like, from the first year to the second year. I was a lot more confident and more aware of what I was doing.

(Rianna)

She further added that this positive transformation made her “*remember who I am*”, which means that she has more courage to face her true identity as being an Indigenous woman in society. Also, Rianna stated that she can feel her “*spirit is reconnected*” in Rec and Read, as

the program helps her reclaim aspects of her own cultural identity, which she is forced to “forget” within the colonizing system of the university. In order to escape poverty, she explains, many who are marginalized must forget themselves within the colonial aspects of the university.

My spirit is like reconnected, because you forget who you are. In this system that kind of like meant to colonize us in university, but it's our only way out of our poverty. (Rianna)

As a university mentor working in the program, being a mentor helped her negotiate the challenges of studying within the colonial university system.

Smith also spoke of being transformed during the after-school programming, suggesting that the program helped him to grow up:

It was my first experience working in a field that I have now worked in for over five years, and it was the first such experience to bring me out of my comfort zone of being a teenager to being someone with qualities of leadership. (Smith)

Smith’s example aligned with others who affirmed that Rec and Read achieves its educational purpose of integrating leadership skills for the mentors.

Jason further argued that the mentors’ living status can be promoted through learning and striving to be your best; he spoke of the value of literacy that is promoted in the program:

Also literacy, you want to read, you want to get them learning. I guess learning is the big thing, learning literacy, learning social, learning just every aspect in this.

Understanding that there's going to be someone there for you who's going to be your role model, and just help you to be the best person that you can be. (Jason)

As literacy is an important aspect that helps promote educational achievement (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010), it is imperative to evaluate how literacy is implemented in the mentorship program. Jasmit pointed out that it is challenging for her to “incorporate the literacy” for the

young mentors, because young mentors are active and keen to play games other than sitting there to-read. She described how some mentor sites were more suited to reading, and in other cases, it was important to strategize ways to read, which illustrated the commitment to education that is experienced in the program.

I've been fortunate enough to actually work with Rec and Read, doing trainings where we do physical literacy and literacy games together, so how can we get into the gym, and still play and do the recreation part but combine read as we do it, so that's always a challenge for us, and some spaces have libraries, so it was really easy to just like partner up, and be book buddies for last 20 mins, but some spaces don't, so you have to really figure out what games can we play that aren't boring but we still get kids reading and working on literacy. (Jasmit)

Jasmit stated that the adult mentors have to find ways to incorporate literacy into physical activities and games in order to allow children to learn while still having fun experiences. By doing so, the older mentors are showing the younger ones that education matters.

Whether by promoting literacy through the educational activities like reading or active games, developing one's confidence and competence as leaders in the program, or gaining a stronger sense of one's own Indigenous identity within a western university system, the mentors appreciated the learning outcomes that they acquired in the program. Considering from a wholistic approach guided by an Indigenous traditional teaching (i.e., the Medicine Wheel), adult mentors identified that their wholistic health and wellness outcomes (i.e., related to body, mind, heart and spirit) are the valuable contributions for promoting their social determinants of health.

Employment

As mentioned, employment has close relationships with education when examining one's health condition; according to Mikkonen and Raphael (2010), individuals who have

poor health because of their poor experience in education are most likely to also have poor employment, which, in other words, means that once the mentorship program has benefited its mentors for their education, there must be some positive influence to benefit their later employment. To this regard, Jasmit pointed out Rec and Read gave her a chance to work with kids in order to experience her dream job beforehand, noting that:

I really wanted to work with kids. I was in university and I didn't have a lot of experiences working with kids, and I thought it doesn't make sense, because what if I hate working with kids. So I was like let me get some experience to find out if this is the right path for me, career-wise. (Jasmit)

She further mentioned that other than herself, Rec and Read aims to create the working environment for physical educators: “*Rec and Read provides that opportunity for a lot of physical educators in our faculty to go and work with the organization that's Indigenous-based, and it gives that platform for students who might become future gym teachers*”. It is important to mention that no matter what difficulties that Jasmit encountered at the very beginning when she joined the program, she just kept participating and realized that she actually loves Rec and Read and loves “*what this program stands for*”.

That small little opportunity and that casual job that I had got me into the door at Sport Manitoba, the person who interviewed me at Sport Manitoba saw that I was working at Rec and Read, and my interview turned into a conversation with somebody that I was able to network with because of my affiliation with Rec and Read, and to this day, I still talk about Rec and Read anytime I gave a speech or anything because it was important to help me network and build myself up professionally as well. Rec and Read was an incredible opportunity that opened up so many doors for me professionally. (Jasmit)

Jasmit is grateful for the opportunity the program provided for her in terms of getting her a job and improving her professional opportunities.

Regarding professional development, Kima and Smith stated that the mentors can have great “*experience for their resume*” to add to their “*later employment*”. Jason affirmed this notion that Rec and Read intends to improve the employment chances of the marginalized groups by offering educational training for them to be able to be eligible for jobs, such as CPR, first aid, coaching and non-violent crisis intervention. Speaking to the job-related training, he explained that the skills can also help him in terms of being a responsible citizen:

Probably the first I remember is the CPR, and the statistics of what CPR and first aid are and you don't have to help anybody, but once you do, you're there and you're responsible and you take over. That's one thing I've learned from them. (Jason)

Nelson also mentioned that there are also educational “*seminars*” for the mentors to attend.

Rec and Read is funded, in part, by the City of Winnipeg, who seeks to hire high school mentors to work in summer recreation programs. Jason was someone who began as a high school mentor, and like the other mentors, he appreciated that he gained not only a meaningful, stable job for eight years, but also the many friendships that came with his community work:

It helps me get my city of Winnipeg job that I kept for eight years, and I think we still have here in the city of Winnipeg where they sent representatives to our program, and just talk about opportunities with the city over the summer. I did one summer, I stayed on, and I just stayed for like, eight years, that helps me get in with 'Turtle Island', which is like a recreation community centre over here down the street. I think I've built long-life friendships from that, and I still go visit the kids all the time, we go play baseball on the Sundays, and we've built the community there within that

organization that came from the Rec and Read mentorship program. I thank you for that. (Jason)

Nelson appreciated that *“it is important that [we are] not just working as an employee but also work together as a group, trying to share, trying to translate your goal, and trying to learn from others”*. Both Jason and Nelson thought that working in Rec and Read is not only an opportunity to be educated for their employment positions, but also it is a platform for them to build intercultural relationships and to be included in the society, therefore, allowing them to approach a better socioeconomic status.

There was another social determinant of health that adult mentors appreciated: food security, which refers to the healthy eating component that Rec and Read can offer to its mentors. Rianna pointed out that providing the concept of nutritional eating in the program can help people to alleviate the issue of *“diabetes”*, *“... which is such a big issue in communities”*. In particular, she stated that the program *“is beneficial, because it gives us chance to eat healthy, because not all of us can afford to”*. It is true that some people in our society are limited in their efforts to allay their hunger while others have more substantial means for pursuing on healthier eating (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). While it is good that Rec and Read provides access to healthy food for mentors who struggle in this way, the focus on developing employment competencies and accessing job opportunities provides a more sustainable, long term strategy for addressing food and income security. From a wholistic health perspective, having meaningful employment opportunities appears to be one of the most important determinants of health.

Summary: A Social Determinants of Health Approach

Rec and Read provides profound benefits for the mentors in terms of promoting their intercultural competency and some of the key elements related to the realm of social determinants of health. Rec and Read brings cultural diversity and embraces cultural

differences in the program in order to help the mentors from all races to build their intercultural relationships and develop their intercultural competencies to tackle the challenges they may encounter in their community and society. Some adult mentors also identified that peer mentoring helped them develop their intercultural competencies in terms of leading the program and mentoring others. Also, the benefits of Rec and Read according to the experience of adult mentor participants can be used to not only encourage people to engage in the program but also to recognize the positive outcomes related to the social determinants of health approach. This approach, as Smith suggested, may be a good model for other programs to follow. As young people are not just being active and having fun, they are also learning new skills in a socially inclusive, stress-free space that will help their future employment and contribute to a positive sense of self and identity. Based on the review of culturally relevant programming in chapter two, this social determinants of health approach to after-school wholistic health and wellness programming is what makes Rec and Read unique.

In the next chapter, I discuss the results and conclude this research by examining how the findings arising from the data collection and analysis addressed the research questions of this study and provide the future recommendations for research, policy and practice. Also, a new theoretical model generated from the analysis of research findings in this study is introduced in the next chapter to illustrate what has been learned about how the program works (i.e., the strategies discussed in chapter 4) and how it benefits (i.e., the impact on intercultural competencies and the social determinants of health, presented in this chapter).

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter summarizes the analysis of the research findings discussed in chapters four and five. Advised by the research literature and also through the analysis of how adult mentors understood and interpreted their overall experiences in Rec and Read, this chapter discusses how well the analysis of the two themes and its six sub-themes answered the four detailed research questions regarding adult mentors' understanding of Indigenous philosophies, values and worldviews as well as on their understanding of their leadership role and responsibilities as role models in Rec and Read. Insights also emerged regarding how adult mentors develop intercultural relationships in Rec and Read, and on the benefits that Rec and Read has provided for its participants. Also, this chapter centres on examining how well the analysis of the research findings achieved the purpose of informing our understanding of how the adult mentors interpreted Indigenous knowledge and teachings in the program. Recommendations for the future research, policy and practice are provided based on the key findings. Of note, as a former adult mentor who supervised an after-school physical activity program and who also identifies as from a racialized minority group in Canada, the discussion and future recommendations are also based on my own reflections and interpretation of the research data from the perspective of a Chinese newcomer.

Seven adult mentor participants have provided very unique and diverse perspectives that contribute to the research findings in this study; it is important to consider how they are from diverse backgrounds culturally and socially. Importantly, the interview responses from Nelson and Jasmit who were identified as a newcomer and immigrant respectively, and from Smith who identified as white, provided comparative research findings to the other four Indigenous participants. The findings illustrated both similar and contrasting perspectives that can highlight the importance of Indigenous ways and contribute to the research literature regarding Indigenous approaches to mentoring. Based on the research data, the seven adult

mentor participants firstly offered four key strategies to represent how Rec and Read works to build an intercultural mentorship program that enhances our understanding of Indigenous approaches to mentoring. These were an Indigenous-informed, culturally affirming space; mentor-driven intercultural relationship building; mentoring in a circle; and values-informed leadership. Secondly, they discussed two key outcomes to emphasize how Rec and Read benefits its participants through development of intercultural competencies and the social determinants of health related to social inclusion, education and employment.

In the section to follow, I summarize these key themes and how they address my research questions while also indicating how they inform the scholarly literature. Regarding adult mentors' understanding of Indigenous philosophies, values and worldviews as well as on their understanding of their leadership role and responsibilities as role models in Rec and Read, the discussion to follow illustrates how the program's Indigenous approaches is what makes it a unique leadership program.

Summary of the Findings

How the Program Works: An Indigenous-informed, Culturally Affirming Space

Adult mentors appreciated the Indigenous knowledge and teachings and believed that the program created a culturally affirming space for people from diverse backgrounds. Specifically, the adult mentors agreed that in order to achieve its purpose, Rec and Read encourages its mentors to be exposed to cultural diversity by offering mentors a shared platform where Indigenous-based physical activities and games, training and seminars are involved on a regular basis in order to establish intercultural dialogue between program participants. While targeting the development of intercultural relationships, the adult mentors understood that Rec and Read also focuses on incorporating Indigenous knowledge and teachings to accomplish the program's mission of fostering leadership development. The adult mentors appreciated that the philosophy, worldviews and values of the program are

based on Indigenous knowledge and teachings. As Rianna said, “*In the Indigenous worldview, if you are black, yellow, red, white, we're all one nation*”. They thought Indigenous knowledge and cultural teachings allow the different cultures that participants brought into the program to be affirmed, thus breaking down the barriers of cultural differences in the program. In addition, adult mentors described how Indigenous theoretical frameworks (e.g., four R’s, the Circle of Courage, the Medicine Wheel, etc.) in Rec and Read can help connect people from all races together to undermine the stereotypes that mentors may bring to the program. Importantly, they thought Indigenous philosophies, worldviews and values are incorporated in the program through the implementation of Indigenous traditional games and activities and over time, and they thought it is a good way to encourage interactions between mentors and to generate diverse and genuine perspectives for mentors when viewing other cultures. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that having the room for cultural diversity and involving Indigenous ways are the key for Rec and Read creating this culturally affirming space.

According to adult mentors, Rec and Read has helped mentors to develop their unique and positive intercultural relationships in this culturally affirming space. To be specific, Rec and Read motivates the mentors to find similarities across differences in cultures, interests and abilities so that the positive intercultural relationships can be developed.

Mentor-driven Intercultural Relationship Building

Other than what the program has done for developing intercultural relationships, Rec and Read relies upon its mentors to create their own strategies for relationship building across age groups and cultures. Adult mentors agreed on the idea that how an intercultural relationship is built in the program is based on how the individual and group interactions happen, in an unplanned way, between all the program participants. Therefore, adult mentors intend to help young mentors to create positive interactions with others in the program. For

example, adult mentors allow young, less experienced mentors to take control and/or be the main subject in the relationships, and also adult mentors open up to young mentors and share their similar interests and goals with the younger ones. Importantly, as a white and an immigrant mentor, Smith and Jasmit identified the importance of being accepting of cultural diversity in intercultural relationship building. Adult mentors concluded that their approaches towards creating positive interactions between program participants can help participants develop positive intercultural relationships in which mentors accept the genuine identities of every other mentor and also are willing to invest time and energy for others. Also, this positive intercultural relationship is one of the foundations making Rec and Read a culturally affirming space.

Mentoring in a Circle

Adult mentors understood their leadership role in Rec and Read as two parts: mentoring in a circle and values-informed leadership. Advised by Indigenous approaches to mentoring, adult mentors believed that mentoring helps develop a circular relationship in which all the program participants are seen as mentors and have reciprocal relationships. Here, adult mentors explained that in the mentorship program, because of the Indigenous teachings and approaches, everyone can be considered as a mentor in the mentoring relationships; everyone learns from one another, and the benefits are indeed reciprocal. Also, adult mentors concurred that all mentors' perspectives on their role in the mentoring relationships are important to inform the Indigenous approach to mentoring working in a circle where four types of mentors can cooperate together to mentor each other. On this basis, the circle of mentoring, according to adult mentors, operates between mentors and across generations, helping mentors to find balance with others in the program; responsibilities are shared among mentors, and mutual respect helps to build reciprocal mentoring relationships.

Adult mentors appreciated that the circle of mentoring ends with a debriefing circle where mentors share, give, learn and catch each other's energy.

Adult mentors realized that to be able to take a leadership role requires two processes, the process of learning (e.g., to learn leadership skills and to be mentored) and the process of giving (i.e., to take a leadership role and to mentor others). They understood that in order to be a good role model in the program, they ought to go through the process of learning and giving, in which they mentor each other to enhance their leadership skills. They can later use this developed competency (e.g., leadership) to mentor the younger ones in order to continue the circle of mentoring. Insights from the adult mentors suggests that over time, mentoring evolves from a strategy into a relationship; the reciprocal, peer mentoring relationships in a circle is valued by program participants.

Values-informed Leadership

Adult mentors appreciated how the values-informed leadership disrupts the typically authoritative power relations between program mentors, where vertical leadership is not valued and development of their own leadership skills are focused upon. Similar with the idea that there is no mentee in the mentoring relationship, adult mentors noted that there is no 'one' leader and/or everyone is leader in the shifting leadership relationships. Here, as a white mentor, Smith worried that having privilege and/or stereotypes might negatively affect his leadership relationships with younger mentors; he reminded himself of the need to let go of the lead, so that others can be leaders. Adult mentors interpreted that the process of leadership development requires patience, a non-judgemental approach and empathy from not only more experienced mentors but also from the less experienced young mentors who have the potential to be the future leaders, and also requires mentors to create their own leadership styles and skills while interacting with one another. Furthermore, adult mentors argued that it is important to be real to who you are and to your true identity; this is the best way to

generate trust for your relationship building with other mentors when you are valued to be in the position of a leadership role. Stated simply, leadership develops when young people are encouraged to be themselves, by mentors, who are confident to be themselves, mistakes and all. More importantly, leadership development is the process where mentors' competencies in terms of leadership skills (e.g., their ability to build relationships) and personal strengths (e.g., as they gain courage and confidence) can be promoted over time within their community and society.

How the Program Helps: Promoting Intercultural Competency

Based on the research results, adult mentors discussed two key benefits that the mentorship program developed for its mentors, which can be both summarized within the domain of the social determinants of health approach. The findings suggest that intercultural competency can be interpreted as an additional social determinant of health. Intercultural competency gives an individual the knowledge, skills and awareness to interact, including through future employment in a multicultural society, which enables one's success in the world by expanding the types of work one can do and the types of social relations where one might feel included. According to their experiences in the program, it is evident that the intercultural competencies of adult mentors have been promoted. Specifically, by adopting Indigenous teachings and ways of knowing, some adult mentors believed that their intercultural competencies were developed by gaining personally transformative benefits. Also, adult mentors stated that Indigenous knowledge and worldviews helped mentors develop their intercultural competency to understand cultural similarities and differences (as well as similarities and differences in ones' attitudes and behaviours), and to build intercultural relationships through social interactions with others. Importantly, adult mentors cautioned that intercultural competency development in the program requires participants' willingness to accept cultural diversity; and later, they justified that the strategies informed

by Indigenous approaches to mentoring have improved mentors' intercultural competency in terms of recognizing the importance of cultural diversity.

Some adult mentors, however, argued that Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors experience the benefits differently, because of the negative stereotypes and misconceptions that some non-Indigenous mentors may hold towards Indigenous mentors. The findings suggest that some Indigenous mentors enter the program already embracing diversity (demonstrating intercultural competency) while non-Indigenous mentors may need to develop their intercultural competencies more than the Indigenous mentors. Indeed, the affirmation of Indigenous ways was perceived as beneficial for all participants, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, but, in different ways. It appears that the different outcomes depend on one's social location; for the Indigenous mentors, it is important to affirm their cultural identities, particularly in light of anti-Indigenous racism and the negative perspectives that they encounter as Indigenous peoples. Given Indian Residential Schools and colonization, it is important for Indigenous mentors to have their Indigenous identity affirmed in the mentorship program so they can feel good about themselves emotionally and spiritually; and for non-Indigenous mentors, it is important that their negative stereotypes and preconceptions are challenged and that they learn about Indigenous knowledge and teachings and develop intercultural competencies by learning about a new culture.

Therefore, non-Indigenous adult mentors appreciated that their intercultural competencies were improved over time by gaining knowledge and skills to work interculturally and for some, to challenge and/or disrupt their preconceptions and/or negative stereotypes; all mentors affirmed diverse cultural identities. Notably, Indigenous teachings influenced me as a Chinese researcher and a former adult mentor by improving my intercultural competencies, including giving me the knowledge to understand the importance of cultural diversity. The result also showed that the wholistic health and wellness (e.g.,

physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health) of the program mentors can be promoted based on the improvement of their intercultural competency.

Promoting Social Determinants of Health

As adult mentors stated, the mentorship program has benefitted them with their social inclusion, education and employment, which are all closely related with social determinants of health that can also impact on their wholistic health and wellness.

Adult mentors concurred that to challenge social exclusion requires the program to affirm cultural diversity and involve intercultural dialogue for the mentors. Adult mentors appreciated that Rec and Read has become a transitional platform for people from northern communities (e.g., Tasha is from up north) and from other parts of the world to learn, transform by building supportive social networks in order to adapt to their new environment and to feel included within their community and society. One adult mentor Nelson, in particular, identified that this transitional platform developed his cultural competency as a newcomer with the ability to distinguish cultural differences, given he felt he had a lack of cultural competency and thought all Canadians were white when he initially came to Canada. Adult mentors noted that Rec and Read helps mentors feel socially included by allowing them to build an intercultural team with strengths. Also, adult mentors pointed out that Rec and Read affirms the cultural identities of program mentors by disrupting the negative images of Indigenous and immigrant populations who are often misrepresented by society, and strengthens their position in the school by offering them roles (e.g., a leadership role) other than what may be more limited roles they are only able to adopt based on their social and racial backgrounds.

For example, while Tasha and Jason felt social inclusion by having a new role in their school and/or community that was distinct from their stereotypical role as an Indigenous person in the community, Nelson appreciated that Rec and Read viewed his cultural identity

as equal to others. By affirming Indigenous teachings that in turn, affirm cultural diversity, adult mentors believed that Rec and Read challenges social exclusion in Canadian society by undermining the misrepresentations and/or negative representations that many who occupy the position of the western colonizer have towards the “other” (i.e., Indigenous and immigrant populations). While challenging the authority of whiteness, adult mentors stated that Rec and Read also benefits people from the dominant western culture to gain awareness and knowledge on how devastating social exclusion can impact on the lives of young generations who share a totally different and marginalized heritage. Adult mentors concurred that to challenge social exclusion requires the program to incorporate cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue for the mentors. The results found that in this postcolonial era, the programs shows a promising way for Indigenous knowledge and teachings to be incorporated in this multicultural society. The affirmation of cultural identities within a socially inclusive group contributes to emotional and spiritual health, key components of wholistic wellness. The fun and enjoyment experienced in the games and physical activities combatted feelings of stress, also contributing to the mentor’s health and wellness.

Adult mentors identified that Indigenous approaches helped them transform personally through their learning in the program, by promoting literacy and through educational achievements. To be specific, one mentor Tasha, who was from up north and experienced a difficult early childhood, discussed how she felt she had positively transformed to be “*a better person*” who started to value education more and was committed to being “*useful*” in helping the younger mentors. Also, other adult mentors described that by being educated in the program that disrupts the western colonial university system, they have become more confident to accept their cultural identity; e.g., Rianna is now more confident to be an Indigenous woman in society. As mentioned, producing effective leadership skills for the mentors benefits their intercultural competency. Adult mentors identified that learning

leadership skills helps produce good role models to take on the leadership roles. Some adult mentors also believed that the mentors' education can be promoted in the program by incorporating literacy through educational activities like reading. Jason affirmed the focus on learning, stating "... *literacy, you want to read, you want to get them learning. I guess learning is the big thing, learning literacy, learning social, learning just every aspect in this*". Educationally, the adult mentors spoke of the different learning outcomes they took away from the program, many personally transformative, that also contributed to a healthier mind, body, heart and spirit.

The results suggested that the educational benefits that the program mentors gained are essential for developing their later occupational determinant of health. Adult mentors appreciated that Rec and Read creates a working environment for mentors to have educational training and work experience to focus on their professional development for later employment in the cross-cultural workplace and society. Also, adult mentors concurred that Rec and Read equips mentors with employment skills so that they are capable of performing and fulfilling their responsibilities and roles both inside and outside the program. Specifically, adult mentors concluded that their employment skills were typically enhanced by educational training and seminars that Rec and Read offered to them. Through their working experience related to the mentorship program, adult mentors identified that not only did Rec and Read provide employment benefits to them but also added to their social networks and social inclusion was promoted in this learning and working process towards achieving their occupational determinant of health.

It is important to mention that a few adult mentors also discussed another social determinants of health (i.e., food security) which contributes to their health outcomes. Stated briefly, Rec and Read involves healthy eating to target health-related issues (e.g., diabetes prevention, see Eskicioglu et al, 2014) that affect people living in Canadian society,

especially people from the marginalized groups who cannot afford a nutritious diet and have limited access to social resources. However, based on the results, it can be concluded that helping mentors with employment gives the mentors more profound benefits that extend beyond just offering them healthy eating in the program. Being employed helps improve food security: as an old Chinese saying goes, teaching me to fish is better than giving me one.

By addressing some key social determinants of health, the results illustrate how Rec and Read provides wholistic benefits related to promoting mentors' physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and wellness advised by the Medicine Wheel. The mentors experience a more wholistic environment that affects their everyday living experience by enhancing their social determinants of health. Social inclusion and intercultural competency contributed to the fun, playful space which helps reduce stress and provides enjoyment for the participants. Education and employment outcomes helped the mentors to grow in personally meaningful ways.

To sum up, the seven adult mentor participants (i.e., four Indigenous backgrounds, two immigrants and one white, including four females and three males) have overall enjoyed their experience working with the Rec and Read mentorship program, and they understood the program as having four key strategies towards building a culturally affirming space and two key outcomes for benefitting the program participants.

Finally, the research results are interconnected to propose a new theoretical model that incorporates the key findings from the research related to the four strategies used to promote the social determinants of health (see Figure 6). While this circle provides an additional interpretation to enhance our understanding of Rec and Read, it is also a model for other intercultural mentorship programs to refer to and improve upon. This new model illustrates how Indigenous approaches to mentoring works as a basis to guide the mentorship program and its four types of mentors (i.e., early years, high school, adults and adult allies) to

collectively create strategies (i.e., an Indigenous-informed culturally affirming space, mentor-driven intercultural relationship building, mentoring in a circle and values-informed leadership) to building up an intercultural mentorship program for all nations, which allowed the mentorship program to benefit its mentors based on a social determinants of health approach.

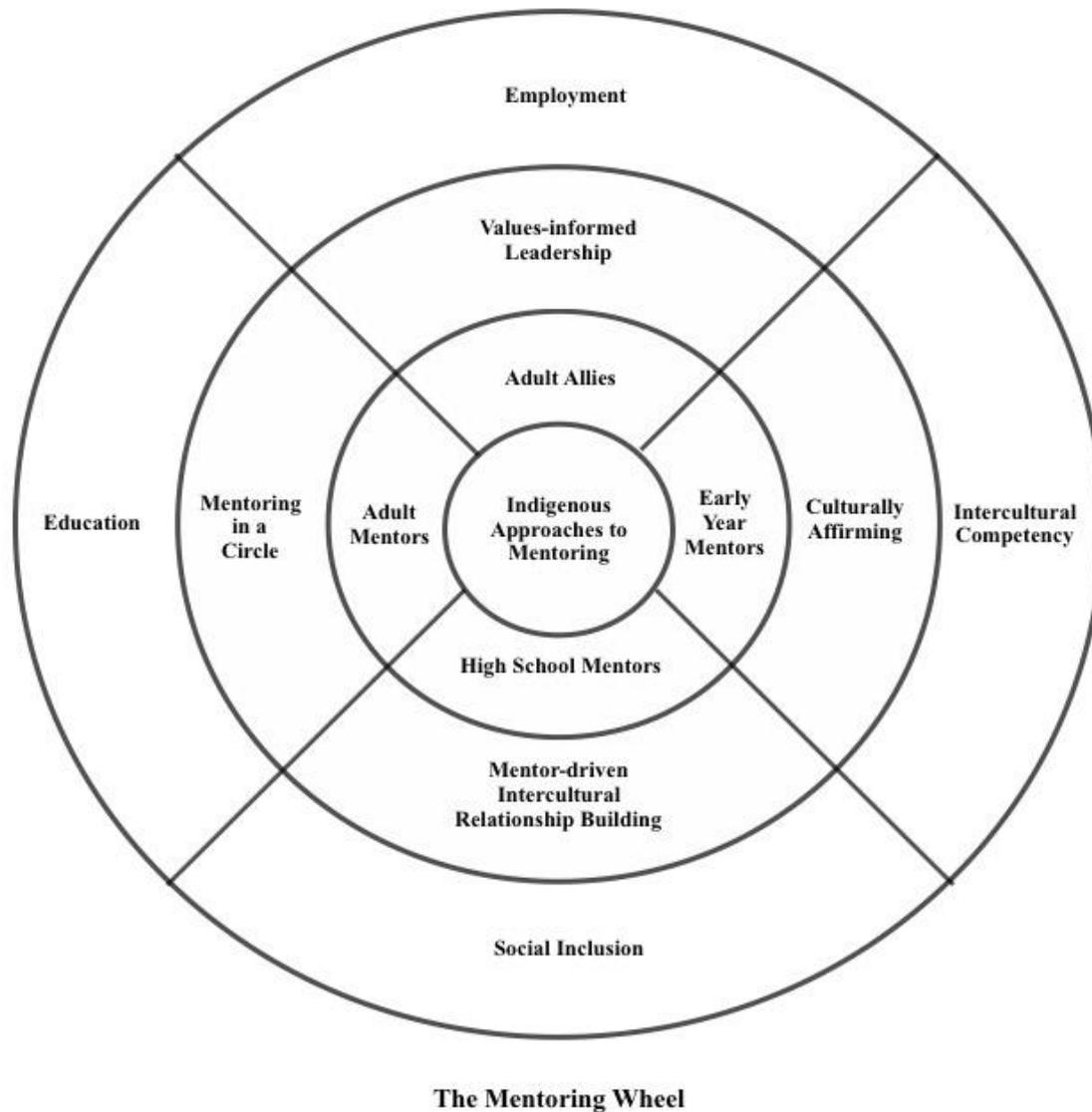


Figure 6: The Mentoring Wheel

It is also important to mention that not only did the Indigenous approaches to mentoring and the social determinants of health shape the strategies and outcomes in Rec and Read, but also they will continue to shape how an intercultural mentorship program may

operate in this multicultural society with ever-increasing population of Indigenous and newcomers. As Jasmit pointed out, the beautiful thing about Rec and Read is that it not only benefits for Indigenous and immigrant populations who are the main targets of the program, it is also beneficial for people from other backgrounds (e.g., white mentors) to “*gain awareness and knowledge*” and to enjoy all the benefits that the program can offer. As the only white participant in the interview, Smith stated: “*Its [Rec and Read] effects on me cannot be quantified or qualified for I find it hard to imagine how different I would be without the experiences I have had with the program*”. Smith concluded that Rec and Read is a role model for other after-school programs to learn “*how programming for youth achievement should be run*”. The positive impact that Rec and Read has on mentors is a blueprint for greater social inclusivity, widening the mainstream to include the marginalized.

Rec and Read in Relation to Other Mentorship Programs

The research design of this study allowed a strengths-based approach which established safe places to lessen the colonial dynamics already internalized by all participants. It also lessened pressures to mimic western-based cultures for approval and permitted the participants to reflect honestly and deeply on their experiences. It is important to mention that my status as a newcomer lessened such social pressures even more. The interview methods (e.g., focus group) in this research provided an appropriate tool in order to reinforce the key value of reciprocity that stands at the centre of Rec and Read and marginalized groups. As Rec and Read disrupts the western hegemony through adopting Indigenous worldviews, this research also seeks a different way than the western-based pragmatic outcomes that encourage assimilation of Indigenous peoples to western values and practices.

Postcolonial theory has given a theoretical basis to express the experience of those from racialized-minority backgrounds, even when those cultures have numeric strengths over

the mainstream cultures. Perhaps Canada's "residential schools" represent the most visible instance of the institutionalization of colonial dynamics to the detriment of Indigenous peoples (Macdonald, 2014). As all participants are mentors in Rec and Read, this structure lessens the colonial hierarchical dynamics. The adult mentors also spoke of the transformation that they experienced as they shifted to understand themselves as people who could contribute to society, not through mimicry, but through their own strengths. The Medicine Wheel helps explain the relationship between the inclusive multicultural space that reinforces Indigenous cultures and the beneficial outcomes in the social determinants of health.

The intercultural settings in this research disrupted western, one-way mentoring approaches; Indigenous approaches to mentoring that focuses on reciprocal learning relationships was recognized and appreciated by adult mentors. While the western worldviews consider mentoring as a strategy (Iain Bright, 2005), Rec and Read allows the formation of leaders within intercultural relationships by creating their own strategies in ways that honours, affirms, and empowers Indigenous cultures and identities. Thus, it can be concluded that Rec and Read has successfully transformed mentoring from a strategy for material success into a meaningful relationship, where all cultural identities are affirmed in meaningful ways.

As an Indigenous-based program where mentoring occurs in a circle, Rec and Read offers a non-western, non-dictatorial approach to leadership development. By focusing on the strengths that each individual mentor brings to the circle, young generations from marginalized groups are encouraged to develop their strengths over time within their community and society. The research findings provided in this study correlate strongly with other studies that have investigated the impact of Indigenous-based mentoring programs. Crooks, Exner-Cortens, Burn, Lapointe and Chiodo (2017) have conducted a two years

longitudinal study of the impact of culturally-relevant school-based mentoring program on Indigenous youth. Comparing to research findings in this study, their longitudinal study also showed how participants in the mentoring program developed their communication skills and intercultural competencies.

The mentoring programs provide an institutional nexus to counter what Mackay (2002) refers to as official multicultural policies designed to emphasize the nationalistic benefits of multiculturalism; contrary to superficial multiculturalism, the mentoring programs created meaningful friendships between members of different cultural groups. The mentoring programs allow genuine relationships to form rather than westernized bureaucratic coercion with its political blowback (e.g., anti-immigrant discrimination).

The adult mentors in Rec and Read participate in the overall positive dynamics also found in other mentorship programs. King, Vidourek, Davis and McClellan (2002) found that mentored students had deeper connectedness with their peer, school and family. Weybright, Trauntvein and Deen (2017) also found that adult-youth interactions within supportive relationships provide positive outcomes for the development of the youth. The qualitative data express the primary experience of the participants. The wider set of studies shows how and explains why mentorship programs contribute to positive social and health benefits. Similarly, in Rec and Read, the focus on intercultural relationships provides social inclusion, particularly for young people who may feel discriminated against and excluded within society.

Canada participates in the colonial structures of the British Empire, much like Australia and New Zealand. The contextual relevance of studies in Australia and New Zealand to the colonial dynamics in Canada become intelligible in light of this shared historical background. The focus on Indigenous perspectives that the adult mentors found so valuable about Rec and Read provides a crucial component to the success of the program.

Youth mentoring in New Zealand discovered that if mentoring programs missed the mark on cultural appropriateness, a negative association arose with participation in the program (Farruggia, Bullen, Solomon, Collins & Dunphy, 2011). Also, one program in Australia that focuses on linking university students with refugee or immigrant students who are new to the university setting and helping them adapt their lives in the western-dominated environment found that working on disrupting negative stereotypes between students from diverse racial backgrounds is fundamental for the success of the program (Vickers, McCarthy & Zammit, 2017).

The Indigenous cultural perspective that provides the relational focus of Rec and Read is similar to other Indigenous approaches where the format provides the primary matrix for its positive outcomes (Keller, 2010). Haswell, Blignault, Fitzpatrick and Pulver (2013) indicate many of the same dynamics for successful work with Indigenous youth that the participants in this study expressed. To be specific, they found that effective programs address “upstream” issues like employment and education rather than immediate issues; effective programs build on strengths, rather than deficits, which affirms the Indigenous ways of teachings; effective programs provide, as in the Medicine Wheel, a wholistic approach to the development of youth and adults; effective programs provide contextually appropriate material within cultural appropriate means; most importantly, the perspective of Indigenous people remains central in successful programs. The perspective helps, not only Indigenous people, but also racialized-majorities who develop deeper understandings of racialized-minorities as they develop their own intercultural competencies.

The Recommendations for Future Research, Policy and Practice

Rec and Read has provided a strong affirmation of Indigenous ways of teachings and cultural identities, and its implication and application outside to other intercultural mentorship programs and/or other environments is important to be identified. Having said

that, there are still some challenges associated with Rec and Read, and these challenges may be minor for current programming in Rec and Read, but it may, however, hamper the future development of Rec and Read at some point, or could be considered as major challenges for other intercultural mentorship programs. The main challenge is the infrastructure of the city itself. According to Public Health Agency of Canada and Pan-Canadian Public Health Network (2018), social inequalities will continue to damage Canadian society, if education, income, employment and social services are unevenly distributed. Given Winnipeg's multicultural landscape, much work needs to be done to not only maximize the benefits from Rec and Read to the surrounding urban landscape, but continue to build on those strengths. Therefore, it is the role and responsibility of intercultural mentorship programs to create culturally affirming spaces for people from marginalized groups to affirm their cultural identities and the research results suggested that intercultural after-school programs should adopt Indigenous ways of teachings and knowledge as a policy to achieve it.

Building a successful intercultural mentorship program in a landscape where racism is a major issue requires social resources and the commitment of the participants, including budgets and time commitments. Indeed, according to few adult mentors, the "*budget*" for Rec and Read is limited and Rec and Read is not a profitable program; costs include food and renting gyms while the mentors join for free. In particular, they worried that as more mentors come to the program, the budget for expanding the program may eventually be a challenge. Also, the location where Rec and Read conducts its after-school programming may be far and therefore challenging for some program participants to travel to, as the university is located far from the mentor sites, but it showed the commitment that participants gave to the program in terms of their time and energy.

Racism in Winnipeg, and broadened to Canada as a whole, is structural and systemic, in which economic, political, geographical, social, and cultural forms of colonization

continue to impact on Winnipeg society (Kroeker, 2017). As a result, Indigenous students have little desire to attend a university or to leave their home-based communities because their status as racialized-minority will become more apparent (Gore, Patfield, Holmes, Smith, Lloyd, Gruppetta, Weaver & Fray, 2017). Based on this context, it is not practical to expect instant success. Indeed, as the mentors have noted, progress is often achieved in incremental steps, and patience can be misunderstood as no progress at all. Therefore, mentors should constantly reflect and share their insights, fostering circles of growth between mentors. A practical measure to achieve this is the implementation of the Sharing Circle.

Given these limitations, however, Rec and Read's model of promoting interculturalism through a strengths-based approach is also applicable to other contexts. Winnipeg's status as an ethnically-diverse city is an intrinsic benefit to elevate the strengths of inclusion and Indigenous perspectives. According to Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker and Garcea (2013), the ubiquitous racial landscape affords multiple occasions for cross-cultural studies. Several studies have noted that continuing racism in Winnipeg is institutionalized in terms of media (Harding, 2009), housing (Walker, 2006), food services and dining (Cidro, Adekunle, Peters & Martens, 2015), and among encounters with law enforcement (Willoughby & Nellis, 2016).

A successful intercultural mentorship program in Winnipeg will create greater opportunities for positive interaction on a systematic basis. According to the findings, discrimination is often embedded in a dominant culture, in which minority communities must assimilate or be stigmatized. This form of discrimination can occur in multiple environment beyond Rec and Read's academic reach. For example, according to one study on community-based sports programs in Winnipeg, public recreation centres traditionally remain one area for marginalized Indigenous youth in terms of their access to physical fitness resources, and their own internal colonization as they are encouraged to partake only in western-structured

sports (Forsyth & Heine, 2008). While Rec and Read currently coordinates with the Traditional Aboriginal Games to promote Indigenous physical activities and sports, other after-school physical activity programs should follow this practice to affirm Indigenous ways in society. Rec and Read focuses on daily positive enforcement of Indigenous practices, beliefs, customs, and culture, and it broadens Indigenous cultural awareness into everyday practices, for example, mentors play Indigenous traditional games, such as “Screaming Eagle”, not only during the after-school programming or Traditional Aboriginal Games, but as a part of their outside life.

Concurrently, Rec and Read should also consider enhancing its training program so that mentors are not only more aware of customs and rituals between ethnic groups, but also more understanding of the psychology that governs people’s attitudes and behaviours. By doing this, intercultural mentorship programs, like Rec and Read, could build on the capacity of Indigenous ways to positively influence the creation of culturally affirming spaces and help to disrupt cultures of whiteness, where western worldviews, hierarchies and social relations are less equitable and affirming of difference. According to Fryberg, Covarrubias and Burack (2018), colonization’s legacy has left a profound impact on the mental health of Indigenous peoples. The emotional impact of land loss, cultural deprivation and destruction, and centuries of racism has led to higher risks of depression, suicide, substance abuse, and general notions of inferiority among minority populations. The influx of immigrants and assorted newcomers can further add to a general disorientation as they struggle to mimic the dominate white culture. Indeed, as adult mentors mentioned, Indigenous mentors are sometimes more emotional, particularly when relating to the difficult lives of the younger mentors in ways that Smith, a white mentor, might not. While this can be an added burden for Indigenous mentors in contrast with non-Indigenous mentors in the program, it also taps into the larger historical legacy of colonialization and the ways that post-colonialization plays out

in Winnipeg. It is important for Smith to develop his intercultural competency to recognize the cultural differences and for all mentors to achieve this awareness. Mentorship programs like Rec and Read should very purposefully embed the learning practice of intercultural competency for its mentors into the training sessions.

By paying more attention to the mentors when they are exposed to the cultural diversity for the first time, Rec and Read can be more attuned to the psychological needs and feelings of mentors. Given that mentors are from diverse racial and social backgrounds, it is important that all mentors continue to be open about their experiences, share their feelings and anxieties, and foster a collective intellectual and emotional effervescence in which they can understand and appreciate each other's differences.

Given the increasing rates of immigration into Winnipeg, the risks of marginalization of newcomers and the escalation of racism are becoming greater. Scholars have noted that inner city schools in Winnipeg traditionally deemphasized Indigenous peoples and practices. Silver and Mallett (2002) note that schools lack Indigenous administrators, teachers, and curriculum and this can lead to discrimination against Indigenous participants. The lack of cultural representation no doubt impacts students' psychological feelings, fostering a sense of inferiority. Such inferiority is magnified in terms of larger public policy, in which Indigenous people are denied public services, healthcare, and housing (Snyder, Wilson & Whitford, 2015; Iwasaki, Bartlett & O'Neil, 2005). Even though Rec and Read does not legislate policy, by promoting Indigenous ways, awareness and acceptance, the program encourages mentors and the larger public to incorporate Indigenous worldviews and cultures into their own perspectives. Over time, this awareness might instigate a chain reaction leading to fairer public policies. Simply by generating awareness of and appreciation for Indigenous ways, Rec and Read can help to promote positive changes in Winnipeg's governance practices for after-school and community based programs. By gaining intercultural competencies in terms

of understanding Indigenous ways and cultural diversity, participants who take part in programs that promote intercultural competencies will be more aware of the ways that colonization has shaped Winnipeg and the ways that post-colonialization continues to impact the institutional and structural foundations where people live in.

By encouraging positive interactions within cultural diversity, intercultural mentorship programs, like Rec and Read, have the opportunity to transform Winnipeg into a culturally affirming environment where culture is less a mimicry in service to the dominant cultural groups, but a genuine, pragmatic celebration of multiculturalism with each culture contributing to make up a greater whole. This is what Indigenous approaches to mentoring seems to have produced. In the following section, I identify key recommendations for research, policy and practice.

Recommendations for Future Research:

Jasmit advocated that it is important to encourage non-Indigenous populations “*to be critically aware and conscious of how our First Nations live in this world*”, as it is a great avenue for people from all races to learn valuable worldviews in order to compare with their own. Future research should focus on the intercultural dynamic between mentors from different social locations and how Indigenous approaches can strengthen the intercultural relationships between members of diverse groups, including high school mentors.

Recommendations for Future Policy:

When planning for after-school, intercultural mentorship programming, policy should:

- Consider the incorporation of Indigenous worldviews, teachings and practices within mainstream physical activity and recreational programming.
- Within intercultural teams, recognize that Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors may experience their leadership roles differently, based on their social locations in

society (e.g., as a member of an oppressed group versus as a member of a more privileged group). As some participants mentioned, life experiences can help some mentors to relate to the difficult lives of the younger mentors in ways that other mentors from more privileged groups may not. Therefore, when planning the program, different approaches to the practice of intercultural competency for mentors should be considered and developed within the training sessions.

- Recognize that a culturally affirming space for diverse cultures should incorporate the practice of hiring adult mentors from different cultural backgrounds, as this enriches the experience.
- Consider incorporating the social determinants of health into its programming.
- Governments should consider funding successful intercultural programs.

Recommendations for Future Practice:

Intercultural mentorship programs should:

- Continue to strengthen the training related to building intercultural relationships and competencies.
- Continue to strengthen the Indigenous knowledge and worldviews that help mentors with intercultural competency to understand cultural differences, as well as differences in ones' attitudes and behaviours.
- Misconceptions and misunderstandings or an inability to understand others due to preconceived notions of cultural difference might negatively influence how mentors build relationships across cultural groups. To lessen this impact, let mentors introduce their own culture and history to each other – this may enhance the creation of an affirming cultural space.

- Pay more attention to the mentors when they are exposed to the cultural diversity for the first time and how to build these relationships for all participants.
- Jasmit suggested that the adult mentors have to find ways to incorporate literacy into physical activities and games in order to allow children to learn while still having fun experiences. By doing so, the older mentors are showing the younger ones that education matters.
- Patience can be misunderstood as no progress being made; constantly reflect and use sharing circles to share perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

A number of limitations were mentioned in chapter three and one is worth re-stating. While the seven research participants shared rich, mostly positive impressions of the mentor programs, other participants might have different experiences and thus, different perspectives. As the research data gained are based on the perspectives of adult mentors, the meaningfulness of the data is limited to the contextual experiences of adult mentor participants, and the findings may not apply to different contexts within and beyond the mentorship programs. Also, the contrast between the Indigenous and western cultures in a mixed racial and cultural group who share differing values and customs is complex; the findings I put forward might be interpreted differently by other researchers. Having said that, I have tried very hard to provide a meaningful analysis of the mentors' experiences and am encouraged by their initial responses to the findings that I have shared.

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APPENDIX A: INVITATION LETTER

Invitation Letter

Research Project Title: Exploring the experience of adult mentors in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Guanpeng (Edwin) Zhou

Email: zhoug34@myumanitoba.ca

Thesis co-advisors:

Dr. Joannie Halas

Dr. jay johnson

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation at the University of Manitoba. I am inviting you to participate in a research project that involves reflection on your past experiences in the Rec and Read program. I am interested in learning about the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds in relation to the Rec and Read Mentorship Program and the Indigenous approaches it uses to enhance wholistic health and wellness.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experience of adult mentors in the Rec and Read program in Winnipeg. This thesis will be framed by answering the research question: how do adult mentors from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, both male and female, understand their experiences of the Rec and Read mentorship program?

Specifically, I will explore four detailed research questions: 1. How the adult mentors understand their leadership role as a role model in the program? 2. How the adult mentors understand the mentor program and its purposes, Indigenous philosophy, worldviews and values? 3. What are the intercultural relationships that are developed? 4. What are the benefits of the mentor program? Using interpretive inquiry, you will be asked to share your experiences regarding your roles and responsibilities in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program, including your views about the Indigenous philosophy and approaches to mentoring. By exploring in-depth your perspectives, I hope to gain knowledge that will benefit the mentorship program while also contributing to the research literature regarding intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring.

To be a participant in this study you need to be a university or community mentor in the Rec and Read program. Participation is completely voluntary and there is no obligation on your part to say yes nor are there any penalties if you say no.

If you choose to participate in this research project, you will be invited to attend one focus group interview depending upon your availability. The focus group interview will last for 1-2 hours and food will be provided before, during and after the interview. Also, reviewing the summary of the findings will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. This study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board.

If you are interested in being a participant of this study, please contact Guanpeng (Edwin) Zhou by email: zhoug34@myumanitoba.ca

Your interest is highly appreciated!

Guanpeng (Edwin) Zhou



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APPENDIX B: EMAIL TRANSCRIPT

Email Transcript

Dear Rec and Red mentors,

Thank you for being interested in this research project.

I share more detailed information about participation in my focus group interview in the attached informed consent form.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves reading the documents and arranging your availability to attend one focus group interview with other participants. You will also be asked to review the transcript of the interview and emergent themes that arise during data analysis. In the focus group interview, questions will be semi-structured and invite you to share your experiences in conversational style. The focus group interview will involve food, and give time, voice and ears to everyone's story. During the focus group interview, I will record the conversations on digital recorders, with your permission to ensure accurate transcription. Tapes will be transcribed verbatim (word for word) after the interview. After I interpret the findings, I will send the summary of the findings to you via email to seek your approval and feedback on the themes. This will take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Your sincerely,

Guanpeng (Edwin) Zhou



APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: Exploring the experience of adult mentors in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Guanpeng (Edwin) Zhou

Email: zhoug34@myumanitoba.ca

Thesis co-advisors:

Dr. Joannie Halas

Dr. jay johnson

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am a graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation at the University of Manitoba. I am interested in learning about the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds in relation to the Rec and Read Mentorship Program and the Indigenous approaches to enhance wholistic health and wellness of participants.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the experience of adult mentors in the Rec and Read programs in Winnipeg. This thesis will be framed by answering the research question: how do adult mentors from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, both male and female, understand their experiences of the Rec and Read mentorship program?

Specifically, I will explore four detailed research questions: 1. How the adult mentors understand their leadership role as a role model in the program? 2. How the adult mentors understand the mentor program and its purposes, Indigenous philosophy, worldviews and values? 3. What are the intercultural relationships that are developed? 4. What are the benefits of the mentor program? Using interpretive inquiry, you will be asked to share your experiences regarding your roles and responsibilities in the Rec and Read Mentorship Program, including your views about the Indigenous philosophy and approaches to mentoring. By exploring in-depth your perspectives, I hope to gain knowledge that will

benefit the mentorship program while also contributing to the research literature regarding intercultural leadership development and Indigenous approaches to mentoring.

Participation is completely voluntary and there is no obligation on your part to say yes nor are there any penalties if you say no.

How can I participate?

To be a participant in this study you need to be a university or community mentor in the Rec and Read program.

What am I being asked to do?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves reading this document and arranging your availability to attend one focus group interview with other participants. You will also be asked to review the summary of the findings that arise from the data collection and analysis. In the focus group interview, questions will be semi-structured and invite you to share your experiences in conversational style. The interview can help to give rise to stories. The focus group will involve food, and give time, voice and ears to everyone's story. This type of method helps in honouring a participant's story and allows participants to share as much of their experiences as they wish. I will conduct one focus group interview depending upon your availability. The focus group interview will last for 1-2 hours and food will be provided before, during and after the interview. During the focus group interview, I will make field notes which will help me to track key points of the interview in order to benefit me for later analysis, and will enable me to highlight the important ideas or views. Also, I will record the conversations on digital recorders, with your permission to ensure accurate transcription. Tapes will be transcribed verbatim (word for word) after the interview. After I interpret the findings, I will send the summary of the findings to you via email to seek your approval and feedback on the themes. This will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. The results of the analysis will be published in my master's thesis and could potentially be presented at academic conferences and used in academic journal articles. Your identity will not be included in any form of dissemination.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study or stop your participation within the focus group at any point. Your answers supplied prior to the point of withdrawal will only be used if you provide permission to do so. You can request the audio recording of the focus group interview be stopped at any point by verbally indicating your decision.

Will anyone know what I said?

To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used throughout the data analysis and reporting of results. Any identifying features will be excluded or changed in the reporting of the results. Also, participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement form for the focus group interview (see APPENDIX E).

Steps to achieve anonymity and confidentiality include:

1. Storing data at the university, in a locked cabinet for 2 year;
2. Informed consent documents will be stored separately from transcript data, locked in a filing cabinet at the university. By July 2019, the audio files, electronic transcription files, hand-written notes, contact information and printed transcripts will be destroyed; audio files will be permanently deleted, the computer storing the transcribed interviews will be reformatted, and the hand-written notes, contact information and printed documents will be shredded. If you would like to receive a copy of the final results, it will be sent to you at the email or mailing address you provide. I have taken a pledge of confidentiality related to the project and will not discuss your answers with anyone other than my master's thesis supervisors, Dr. Joannie Halas & Dr. jay johnson. Only the researcher, Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin) will know your identity; the supervisory committee will only see the pseudonym. In the thesis and possible presentations/publications, a pseudonym will be used.

Consenting to Participate

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study my participation will require one focus group interview, 1-2 hours for the focus group interview, and 30 minutes to review a summary of the findings. I understand that my interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed by the study researcher, Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin).

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence by informing Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin) of my decision. I recognize that if I feel uncomfortable with a question I can skip that question and choose to remain in the study or withdraw from the study completely. If I choose to withdraw from the study at any point, I understand any data associated with my participation will be immediately destroyed (electronically deleted and paper shredded) and will not be used in the study.

I understand that I will be asked to read the summary of the findings as a method of member checking. This process will allow me the opportunity to change any information, or remove information that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand my name and all identifying features will be kept confidential and will not appear in any written or verbal report, document or presentation that could result from the study.

I understand the data for this project will be destroyed 2 years following the completion of research, which will be July 2019.

If I opt to contact Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin) about participating in the study, I will review this Informed Consent Form fully and state my consent verbally at the time of the focus group. I will keep this Informed Consent Form for my records. I know that I will have the opportunity to ask questions about this form before the interview begins.

Risks and Benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research project. Participants will be asked to voluntarily participate. There are no immediate benefits to the participants in this research project. However, participants may feel a sense of agency and autonomy as they provide insight into their experiences, and as such, help to improve the Rec and Read program and our understanding of intercultural leadership.

Signature Section

Researcher:

Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin)

Supervisors:

Dr. Joannie Halas

Dr. Jay Johnson

Acceptance of the Conditions and Consent

Participant Full Name: _____

My telephone is: _____

My E-mail address is: _____

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the

above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at (204)-474-7122 or email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

_____ Participant's Signature

_____ Date

_____ Researcher's Signature

_____ Date

If at any time you have questions about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Guanpeng Zhou (Edwin), Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management (MA. Degree Program)

Email: zhoug34@myumanitoba.ca



APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

Interview Guide Questions

I. Opening Questions

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself: (let participants respond, but prompt them with sample questions, if needed: e.g., are you working or going to school? can you introduce a bit about your family and your community? Can you tell me what is your nationality or cultural background? What are your plans for the future?)
2. How long have you been a mentor in Rec and Read?

II. Transition Questions

1. When you are talking about Rec and Read, how do you describe the program?
2. When did you first hear about Rec and Read?
3. What made you want to become a mentor?
4. Have you participated in staff training? If yes, how many have you attended and what did you learn?
5. What were you expecting on your very first day? What were your preconceptions?
6. Tell me about your first weeks in the program (as an adult mentor): what was it like? How did you feel?
7. Why do you think that: a) Indigenous youth want to join in Rec and Read? b) recent immigrants might want to join in Rec and Read as it was first built for/by Indigenous youth in 2006?
8. Large populations of Indigenous youth and recent immigrant youth can experience challenges in Canadian society. Are you concerned about this issue, and if yes, how does Rec and Read address these challenges?

III. Key Questions

a. Questions about Leadership and Being a Role Model

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. What are the characteristics of a good role model?
3. What are your strengths and challenges as a role model?
4. Are there any areas you would like to improve upon?

b. Questions about How the Program Works

1. How do you understand the philosophy of Rec and Read?
2. What do you think are the strengths and challenges of Rec and Read?
3. What are the benefits of the theoretical framework that the program is based on?

4. What have you learned about Indigenous worldviews and values in the program? What did you know about Indigenous worldviews and values beforehand?
5. How do Indigenous worldviews and values inform the program? Can you also provide me examples?

c. Questions about How the Program Benefits

1. What are the ways that being a mentor has helped you in your life? (Please think holistically, such as body, mind, heart and spirit)
2. What are the benefits of the program for the community and for the early year and high school mentors?
3. How did the program help you with your education/employment and your social networks?
4. What are the program benefits for others we haven't mentioned?

d. Questions about Inter-cultural Relationships

1. How do you feel when you work with mentors from diverse backgrounds?
2. What strategies do you use to build relationships with the high school youth and the early year children? Can you give examples?
3. How does the program influence your intercultural competencies and critical awareness? (Optional follow-up question: Does the program reinforce feelings of superiority or inferiority for different groups?)
4. What are the intercultural strengths and challenges of Rec and Read?
5. Have you ever experienced or been a witness to discrimination and racism? Can you explain? How does Rec and Read influence how youth engage interculturally?
6. How might Rec and Read improve the overall experience of intercultural relationships between Indigenous and non-indigenous mentors?



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APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Confidentiality Statement for Researcher

I, _____ (full name), will promise to keep all identities of participants confidential; that is I will not share this knowledge with other students, researchers, etc. I also will not share who has been recruited or asked to participate in this study.

_____ Signature

_____ Date

Confidentiality Statement for the Focus Group

Your identity will be known to other focus group participants and I cannot guarantee that others in this group will respect the confidentiality of the group. I hereby would like to ask you to sign below to indicate that you will keep all comments made during the focus group confidential and not discuss what happened during the interview outside the focus group:

- a. I agree with the pseudonym that researcher provides to me.
- b. I have reviewed the information in this letter and have had any questions about the study answered to my satisfaction.
- c. I am agreeing to have the focus group audio-recorded.
- d. I agree to maintain confidentiality of information shared in the focus group.
- e. I have received a copy of this information letter.
- f. I agree to participate in the research study.

_____ Signature

_____ Date



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APPENDIX F: KEY FINDINGS

Adult Experience of the Rec and Read Mentorship Programs: An Interpretive Study Key Findings

Main theme 1: Key Strategies to Building an Intercultural Mentorship Program (How the program works):

Sub-theme 1: An Indigenous-informed, Culturally Affirming Space

Adult mentors understood the purposes of the program as creating a culturally affirming space, and interpreted the philosophy, worldviews and values of Rec and Read as Indigenous-informed. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that having room for cultural diversity and involving Indigenous ways are the key for Rec and Read creating this culturally affirming space.

Sub-theme 2: Mentor-driven Intercultural Relationship Building

According to adult mentors, Rec and Read has helped mentors to develop their unique and positive intercultural relationships in this culturally affirming space. Other than what the program has done for developing intercultural relationships, the mentors also provided their own strategies for mentor-driven intercultural relationship building. This positive intercultural relationship is one of the foundations making Rec and Read a culturally affirming space.

Sub-theme 3: Mentoring in a Circle

Advised by Indigenous approaches to mentoring, adult mentors believed that mentoring helps develop a circular relationship in which all the program participants can benefit. The insights of the adult mentors suggest that Rec and Read develops mentoring from a strategy into a relationship, and values reciprocal mentoring relationships and peer mentoring relationships in a circle for program participants.

Sub-theme 4: Values-informed leadership

Adult mentors realized that to be able to take a leadership role requires two processes, the process of learning (e.g., to learn leadership skills and to be mentored) and the process of giving (i.e., to take a leadership role and to mentor others). Adult mentors explained how the leadership in Rec and Read disrupts the typically authoritative power relations between program mentors, where vertical leadership is not valued and development of their own leadership skills are focused upon.

Main theme 2: Key Outcomes Arising from an Intercultural Mentorship Program (How the program benefits its participants):

Sub-theme 1: Promoting Intercultural Competency

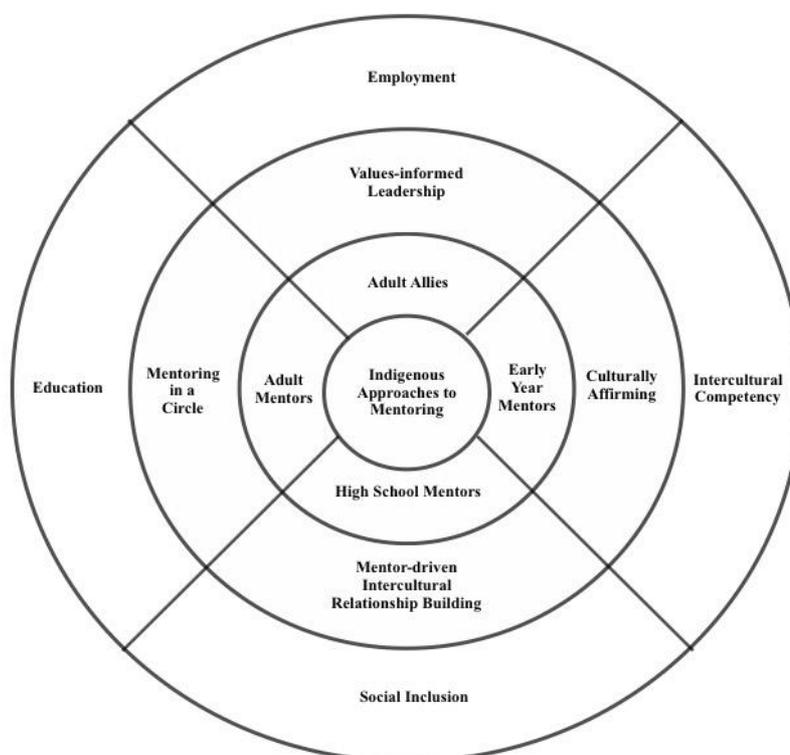
Adult mentors appreciated that their intercultural competencies were improved by addressing negative stereotypes (e.g., through developing their ability to build intercultural relationships), disrupting misconceptions (e.g., sharing Indigenous knowledge and wholistic worldviews that were seen as beneficial), and affirming cultural identities (e.g., the diversity of language and food is valued) in the program.

Sub-theme 2: Promoting Social Determinants of Health

As adult mentors stated, the mentorship program has benefitted them in terms of developing intercultural competencies, as well as social inclusion, education and employment. These are all closely related with social determinants of health that can impact on their wholistic health and wellness.

The Mentoring Wheel:

The research results are interconnected to propose a new theoretical model that incorporates the key findings from the research related to the Indigenous approach and key strategies used to promote the social determinants of health:



The Mentoring Wheel