

Abstract

Opikinawasowin is the Cree word for the lifelong process of growing children. Indigenous child rearing practices adopt a holistic approach while being inclusive of the family unit and the community. The tipi is the conceptual framework for this qualitative Indigenous research study. I use the tipi because each pole represents a specific child rearing teaching corresponding to one of four inter-related life stages: child, adolescent, adult and Elder. All teachings related to the tipi help us understand the spiritual aspect of *miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin*. To be eligible for the Tipi Teachings online study, Indigenous participants are over the age of consent and live on Turtle Island. Thesis findings provide a Turtle Island perspective on Indigenous child rearing ways, teachings, philosophies, and practices related to the tipi. Given that Indigenous children are disproportionately overrepresented in the Child Welfare system, this study is imperative for moving forward in times of reconciliation for Indigenous children, families, communities and Nations across Turtle Island. Thus, this research will positively impact families, including my own, and the next seven generations.

Keywords: Indigenous, Turtle Island, child rearing ways, *opikinawasowin*, *nehiyawewin*

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I dedicate this thesis to all the children, *awasisak*, who have been separated from their families;

I value each and every one of you.

For J and J, *kisakitin*.

For my family,

sipihko piyesis blue bird,

mitos nipiya shaking leaves,

sipihko mimikwas blue butterfly,

osawaw mistatim yellow horse,

my community, and all of my relations.

I acknowledge my family, my relatives, and every person I have crossed paths with on this journey we call life. Thank you for your teachings. Thank you to my thesis committee for your patience and support. *Namaste*, the light in me acknowledges the light in you. Ekosi.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Creator of the World and Universe, I pray that your wisdom is present in these works and that the reader may begin to know you. Thank you for calling my Spirit home to Winnipeg, the heart of Turtle Island, and believing in me to do your work. May your love touch all of the multi-disciplinary staff working on the frontlines, with the many families and children in Manitoba. I humbly ask, that you may soften their hearts; Great Spirit fill them with compassion and touch them deeply so they may know your love; Creator your love is unconditional and for all people of this World. As your child, I submit to your will, Creator, and seek you first, in all areas of life. Thank you for providing me with gifts and guiding me on such a fulfilling journey. May I use them in a good way, for the betterment of all humanity, Mother Earth, and all my relations.

Niya (I am)

Tawaw, Aimee Louis *nitisiyakason ekwa Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation, nitohcin*. I am a *Nehiyaw iskwew* (Cree woman) who strives to have balance and wellbeing throughout all aspects of life, *miyo pimatisiwin*. *Nimosom* (my Grandfather), the late Chief Charles Audy established Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation. As the founder of our reserve, he hoped that by possessing land, he might secure a future for his family and the following seven generations. *Nimosom* advocated for a school on the reserve land for *awasisak*, now named Chief Charles Audy Memorial School.

Nipapa (my father), grew up never knowing his father. *Nohkom* (my grandmother) Barbara had 6 children. *Nimama* (my mother), was born in Bristol, England and moved to North America (Turtle Island) when she was 14 years old. She was one of 7 siblings; her mother was British, and her father was Jamaican. My parents met in Leaf Rapids, Manitoba, and I was born 1981. I love my family with all my heart and am thankful for this life.

As a *Nehiyaw iskwew*, mother and auntie, child rearing is a fundamental part of my identity; I position myself within the research from my understanding of Indigenous identity, culture, and overall wellbeing as an urban Indigenous person. Through this physical journey of academia, I have been birthed into my identity and have learned about who I am and where I

come from. I have been privileged to have taken *Nehiyawewin* (Cree language) courses with Dorothy Thunder at the University of Alberta from 2013 to 2014 during the first year of my Graduate work. I've been blessed to have taken a traditional storytelling approach learning *Nehiyawewin* using the Syllabic system with Reuben Quinn at the Centre for Race and Culture in Edmonton from 2012 to 2014. Below is a timeline of my academic journey alongside the spiritual journey of understanding what it means to grow holistically as a *Nehiyaw iskwew*. Through my physical journey of post-secondary education, I have grown significantly. I graduated high school in the West Broadway area of Winnipeg in 2000 and moved out West to Alberta at the age of 22 years old. I pursued post-secondary education and below is a list of my academic journey in Western institutions:

- High School Diploma, Gordon Bell High School, 2000
- Arts and Science Diploma, Mount Royal College, 2007
- Bachelor of Science, University of Alberta, 2009
 - Indigenous Partnership and Governance Certificate, 2009
- Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, University of Alberta, 2009 to 2013 and 2014 to 2016
 - School of Native Studies Master of Arts coursework 2013 to 2014
- Master of Arts Indigenous Governance, University of Winnipeg, 2023
 - Higher Education Teaching Certificate, 2023

Now I to address my spiritual growth. I have always been a light that is drawn to the spirit of Mother Earth and humanity. My given name, *Aimee*, translates to 'beloved' in French. As the oldest child, with seven half siblings, I was born to lead not only my family, but to lead as example for the ones who follow me. My spiritual journey begins in Edmonton, Alberta during my 3rd year of Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of Alberta when I met the Elder Jerry Wood, golden dancing eagle boy, at the then named Aboriginal Student Service Centre. I began the Red Road in 2007 when I began receiving teachings from Elder Jerry Wood and attended my first sweat lodge outside Edmonton in Half Moon Bay. It was then I was recreated

in Mother Earth's womb and I began my healing journey. Below is a summary of my spiritual growth and teachings received since beginning the Red Road:

- Aboriginal Student Services Elders at the University of Alberta 2007 to 2016
- 200 Hour Yoga Teaching Certificate 2010 from Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp
- Cree Spirit name 2011 at the University of Alberta with *pisim awasis*
- Nehiyawewin Syllabics 2012 to 2014 at the Centre for Race and Culture
- Sprit based methodology at the University of Winnipeg from 2017 to 2023
- Springs Church 2018 to present
- My employment at the University of Manitoba 2019 to present

In 2010, I received a 200 Hour Yoga Teaching Certificate from Sivananda Ashram Yoga Camp, Sivananda Headquarters, Val Morin, Quebec, Canada located in the peaceful Laurentian Mountains; at this time, I was able to master the breath-body movement and learned to quiet the mind from thinking through meditation. I received my Cree Spirit name in 2011 at a naming ceremony by Elder and Professor Clifford Cardinal of the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine. For this study, I use a sprit based methodology (Lucchessi, 2019) and Indigenous research paradigm, which I developed in the Master of Arts Indigenous Governance at the University of Winnipeg from 2017 to 2023 for this primary research study. *Miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin* is qualitative Indigenous research study with 11 in depth interviews with knowledge holders across Turtle Island. These academic years were spent resting in Creator and looking inwards. Another significant part of my spiritual journey is when I accepted Jesus Christ as my lord and Saviour in November 2018. I attend Springs Church which has awakened my Spirit and given me the words to speak in this thesis. In 2019, I began my employment at the University of Manitoba where I have generous access to Indigenous ceremonies and teachings from Elders located at *Migizi Agamik*, Bald eagle lodge. I am thankful for this journey, this life, *miyo pimatisiwin*.

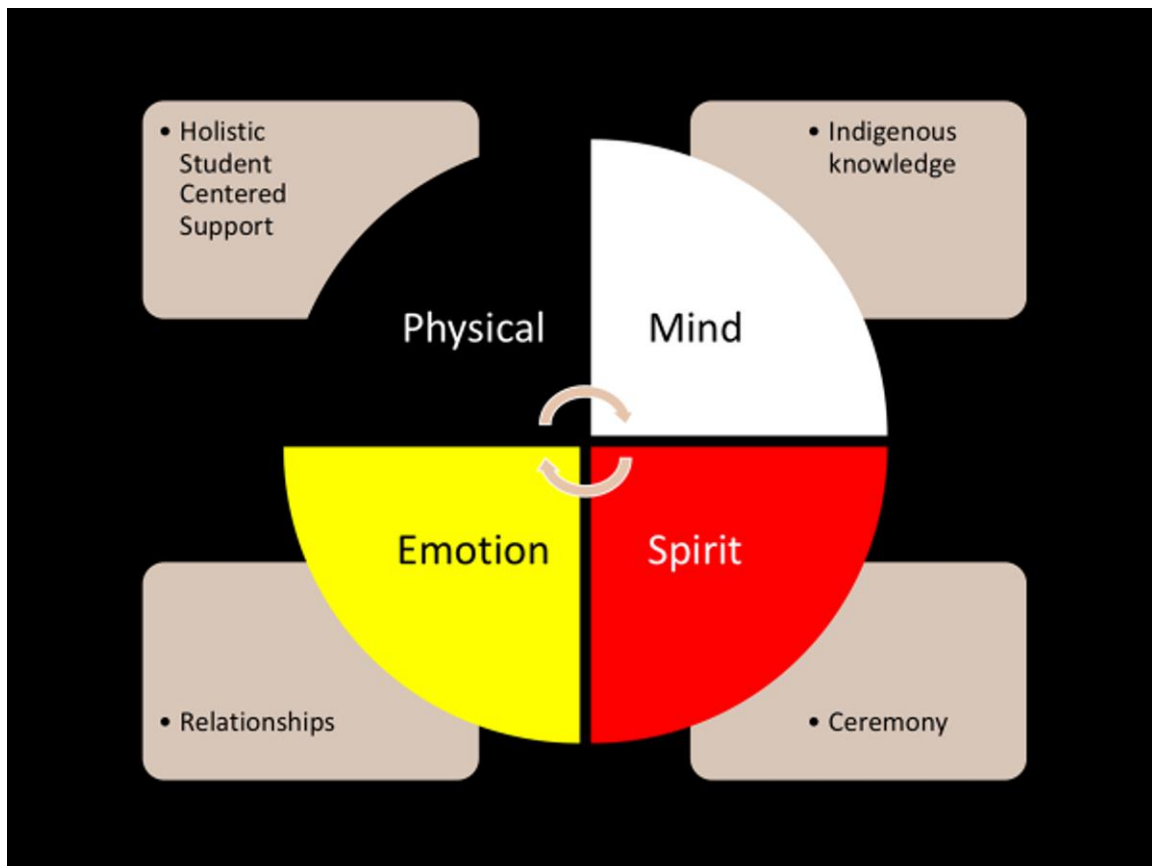
Dualistic Approach

“As Cree people, we were given the gift of being named for the four parts of human beings. *Nehiyawak*, we were called. It means being balanced in the four parts that are found in the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. These four parts for human beings are the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental aspects of the self. We need to try and balance these four parts that were given to us, to function as people.

The fire is in the center of the Medicine Wheel. That is where the meaning of the teachings comes from. For me, this fire is also the self. When you look at the Medicine Wheel, you start from self. And as you look out, you make your circle. This is how the Medicine Wheel represents the life journey of people” (Elder Mary Lee, 2006, p.1).

Figure 1:

Medicine Wheel showing my holistic approach to academia



Note: My holistic approach to academia as a teacher and lifelong learner. As a mother, sister, auntie and mentor, it is my responsibility to ensure the students who come after me, including my children, do not experience the same barriers to education that I have experienced.

This Medicine Wheel is unique to my understanding and lived experience at that time on my healing journey. There are many teachings across Turtle Island about the medicine wheel and there are no right or wrong teachings. I created this image for a job interview as an Indigenous education developer and was asked to teach using the medicine wheel. This medicine wheel depicts my approach as both a student and an educator. We can see that there are 4 quadrants which represent the four dimensions, or realms, of humanity the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental. The point I would like to make from Figure 1 is that the physical quadrant and the spiritual quadrant are on a continuum moving from left to right. In Winnipeg, I have seen the Medicine Wheel taught as I have depicted with the 4 colours of humanity, white, red, yellow, and black. These colours also represent the 4 directions, north, east, south, and west.

In the physical realm, I use a student centered approach when advising, tutoring, or teaching; each student is an individual and at the center of my approach: I recognize that each person is created with their own gifts, purpose, and plan. It is important to remember that every student is unique. The concept of an individual's uniqueness is a universal *Truth* I have come to know. The Creator designed each Nation within Creation with unique gifts, a purpose, and a plan. There is a rise of equity, diversity, and inclusion departments and roles within academic, governmental and organizational settings. Therefore, a holistic approach is very relevant and applicable in all settings. Under the mind quadrant, I have listed traditional ways of knowing but another example I use in this medicine wheel teaching is 'decolonizing the mind'. Moving onto the Spirit quadrant, I chose ceremony which can be an individual's personal relationship with the Creator. There is a misbelief that ceremony is only formal cultural event such as a sweat, Sundance, etc. However, I define a ceremony as *any way which glorifies Creator which may be*

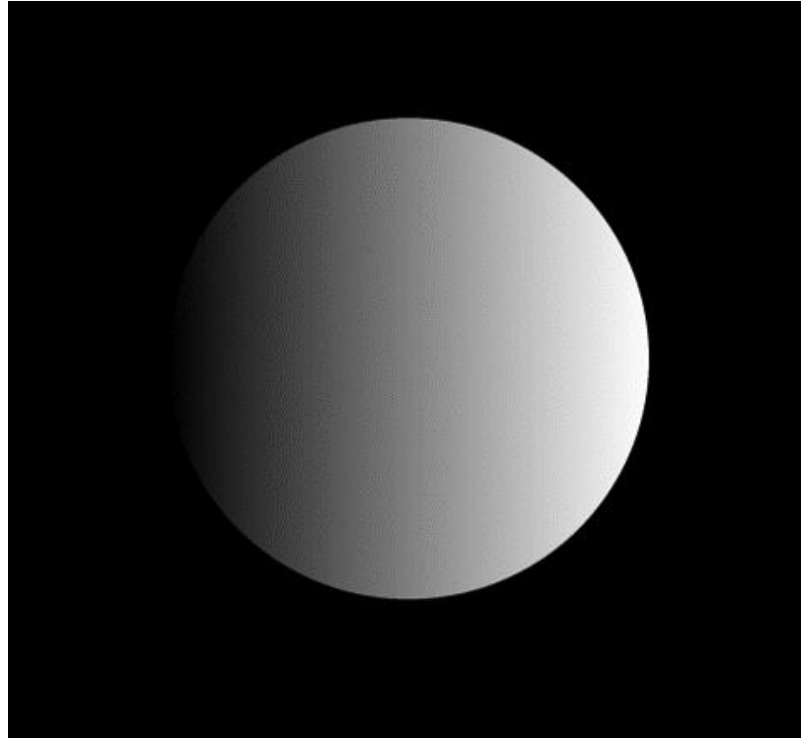
formal or informal. Often, one on one conversations with others, acknowledging their gifts, and sharing in a reciprocal way is also ceremony. The final quadrant is the emotional realm of humans and is habitually overlooked by the biomedical approach to health (Ross, 2014). Behn-Smith (2015) states that “relationship is medicine,” therefore under the emotional quadrant, I put my approach is relationships which is always reciprocal. We need to acknowledge the emotional parts of human beings and recognize that every human has an emotional side that requires nurturing. In my experience, my individual relationship with Creator (vertical relationship) directly influences my emotions, which then in turn influence my horizontal relationships (relationships with others) (Fontaine, 2019).

These works are shaped by my Nehiyaw Worldview and created under the inspiration of *Kichi Manitou*. I use Nehiyawewin because it shows a contrary way of thinking, which one of my spiritual teachers calls lateral thinking (Quinn, 2015). The lateral thought within our Worldview is the foundation of Turtle Island Nations. By adopting a Creationist Lens, we see that all of creation is unique with a purpose, plan, and gifts to glorify our Creator. Life is a miracle, full of awe and wonder, and beyond what we can comprehend with the 5 senses. Below is a visual aid to show that everything within creation has both dark and light aspects. One cannot exist without the other and they are equally balanced. Therefore, we must appreciate the balance between the physical and the spiritual. In Genesis 1:1, it is written that ‘*in the beginning God created the light and dark. It was good*’ (Bible quote). Everything in creation has a dualistic nature that means there are continuums. For example, there is the feminine and masculine, light and dark, and as the Medicine wheel shows there is also a continuum of physical and spiritual. In *Hatha* yoga, Hatha means Sun and Moon. Moreover, in yoga, the life-giving force is *Prana* that is the word for breath, and *Pranayama* that is the control of breath. Hence, I have learned of

another continuum of the movement *Asana* (physical postures) with breath that is the study of yoga. This connection of the breath to the body results in a separation from the mind. When we disconnect from the thoughts in our minds, we can hear the *Truth*.

Figure 2:

The duality of Creation



Note: The dualistic approach acknowledges both the dark and the light equally and is holistic.

Nehiyawak Teachings

I am on a journey to learn Cree teachings since I became a registered Indian through the Indian Act at the age of 22 years old. During the research development phase for the Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance, I found Elder Mary Lee's Cree teachings from the Four Directions Teaching Website. This educational tool uses audio, visuals, and transcription of five Elders Teachings from across Turtle Island:

“The goal for the project was to create an engaging site where people could experience Indigenous knowledge and philosophy and where educators could incorporate the site into their curriculum. FourDirectionsTeachings.com honors oral traditions by creating an environment where visitors are encouraged to listen with intent as each elder/traditional teacher shares a teaching from their perspective on the richness and value of cultural traditions from their nation” (Oppener, 2013).

I chose Elder Mary Lee teachings about the tipi in 2017 to develop the holistic approach to this Indigenous research study. As a Nehiyaw iskwew my thirst for the teachings was evident upon arriving home to Winnipeg in 2016, but Elders and teachings were not readily accessible in my graduate program. I have come to realize that every person we cross paths with is valuable and provides us opportunities for growth. Below is a picture of Elder Mary Lee, along with her biography from the four directions website that is devoted to Turtle Island ways of knowing using one-way technology that can help us keep our languages alive and documented for the next generations.

Picture 1:

Elder Mary Lee



Note: Wanuskewin (2020). Mary Lee Moss Bag teachings. YouTube. retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS6YxBglGwQ> on August 25, 2023

“My English name is Mary Lee. I am from Pelican Lake, in northern Saskatchewan. I have five children, three girls and two boys. Together those children have given me twenty-three grandchildren and four great grandchildren, two boys and two girls.

There are women older than me who are sometimes made to feel that, because they don't have the English language or education, they don't have a right to speak. But those are the powerful ones, the sacred ones, because they were not disrupted in their journey. My mother was one of those women. Her knowledge was pure, uninterrupted by residential school. It wasn't written knowledge; it was a life she lived.

My mother spoke only Cree. From a very early age, she instilled in her children the value of our culture and language. She had two daughters and five sons. All of us speak Cree and have gone to ceremonies like the Sun Dance and the Sweat Lodge since we were little children. She shared with us the teachings and meanings of these ceremonies. And she also shared her teachings with women in the community, because she was given the gift of helping women in their journey to becoming mothers. In English, you would call her a midwife. Many of her teachings to me were about the sacredness of motherhood and how to help women raise healthy children in the world. She retained these teachings because her life was not interrupted by residential school. So she was able to parent differently, with the knowledge that was given to her as a child. That is why I say all of my teachings, everything I know, that it came from her.

Everything my mother learned came from her grandmother, who raised her when both of her parents died. So she learned everything from two generations before her. I am fortunate; because of my great grandmother and mother, I can share the teachings that at one time were known to all Cree women, like the teepee teachings and teachings on the value of women.

So in honor of Cree women everywhere I will share these teachings with you” (Elder Mary Lee, 2006).

Miyo pimatisiwin

The Oxford dictionary defines Indigenous as “originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native.” I use the term Indigenous to refer to the originating tribes in North America, or as I refer to it, Turtle Island. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) defines self-determination as:

“(1) Determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development; and (2) dispose of and benefit from their wealth and natural resources. Under international treaty law, Canada is obligated to respect the First Nations' right of self-determination” (AFN, 2003).

This study uses definition (1) where self-determination is the ability to have autonomy and pursue our own economic, social, and cultural development. Although (2) is also of importance, the writer believes that if we aim for (1) by acknowledging the agreements made during the Treaty negotiations, that the land is our Mother and not to be exploited of her natural resources for economic gain, then (2) follows.

Many allies have been researching the Cree ways of being including the Cree definition of health. “As a medical anthropologist, Naomi Adelson's theoretical interests are founded on a critical study of bodies and health and, more specifically, on the naturalization and medicalization of social and historical inequality. Professor Adelson works primarily with First Nations communities in Canada, and has conducted research in collaboration with the Whapmagoostui Cree of northern Québec since the late 1980s” (York University, 2022). Adelson found that unlike the Western definition of health, the Cree perspective of health has much to do with social relations, land, and cultural identity just as much as has to do with individual physiology (Adelson, 2000). Therefore, the physiological understanding of health is equally significant along with the other components of health the social, land, and identity. Adelson asserts that the essence of being Cree as a distinct cultural group is grounded in oral history and recollections of family and individuals; Cree history is passed down to the subsequent generations in the form of stories and cultural artifacts (Adelson, 2000). Therefore, oral history, creation stories, and storytelling, shape Cree identity, culture, ways of knowing and overall wellbeing.

The significance of Cree ways of being and approaches that will be unique among each community, whether that be geographical, rural or urban. Identity is also key in determining the health and wellbeing of the Indigenous population. “Dr. Alex Wilson is Neyonawak Inniniwak

from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. She is a professor with the Department of Educational Foundations and the Academic Director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan” (University of Saskatchewan, 2022). In “Living well: Aboriginal Women, Cultural Identity and Wellness,” Wilson (2004) states that Indigenous women in Manitoba:

“Presented identities that are inseparable from their family, history, community, place and spirituality, and in the context of their whole lives. They are conscious of the importance of their roles as life givers, care-givers and decision-makers in their immediate families, extended families, communities and Nation. They continue to take on the responsibilities these roles entail even while, with the breakdown of traditional social structures, they have lost many of the strong support system once provided by mothers, grandmothers, partners, families and communities” (p .24).

The indicators of self-determination I choose for the data analysis are (1) cultural continuity/cultural match of governing policies (2) revitalization of the woman’s role within Indigenous social, political, and economic realms and (3) language/transfer of teachings using Creator’s natural laws and mechanism of action. These 3 indicators are foundational in the overall health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples, families, communities and Nations across Turtle Island.

Opikinawasowin

Leah Marie Dorian’s thesis, “Opikinawasowin: the life long process of growing Cree and Metis children,” explores Elders understanding of the Cree concept of child rearing; generations of Cree and Metis people use storytelling to actualize the teachings of opikinawasowin. The concept of opikinawasowin is expressed through Cree and Metis Elders lived experience and by the sharing of traditional teachings (2). Dorian explains:

“The Swampy Cree term for child rearing, opikinawasowin, is used throughout the document since many of the people in this study have historical and family connections to the Cumberland House people, where Swampy Cree is spoken. However, Plains Cree and Michif phrases are also used in this study where possible because many people speak

those languages. Very little research to date has really investigated the meaning of the Cree and Metis philosophical teachings associated with opikinawasowin. The thirteen teachings shared by the Elders in this study are all opikinawasowin teachings and together they form a base of knowledge that we can place into our parenting bundle” (p.2).

Philosophies, teachings, and stories associated with opikinawasowin are foundational in Cree ways of knowing. Furthermore, Dorian explains her methodology, “storytelling is used by Elders to impart core values and beliefs about parenting. Through stories Elders give specific teachings relating to how individuals, families, and communities are expected to practice traditional child rearing” (Dorian, 2010). This Cree philosophical framework is the foundation in Indigenous research, design, and methods that convey specific values and belief systems:

“In Cree worldview children are viewed as a sacred bundle a gift from the spiritual realm. The thirteen Opikinawasowin teachings shared in this study are given with the intention to fill the parenting bundles of the next generation. What follows in this section of the research report are stories and teachings the Elders want parents, community leaders, and their grandchildren to think about in the future. The Elders participating in this study all shared different aspects of these worldview and life cycle teachings for the development of our parenting bundle” (Dorion, 2013, 47-48).

Dorion explains how the family unit and the generations are fundamental in Cree ways of knowing and coming to know. This thesis was one of the few pieces of literature found on traditional child rearing ways in Nehiyawewin.

Another significant article found in the literature was a review article on traditional child rearing. Muir and Bohr explore what constitutes contemporary practice of traditional child rearing methods, likely somewhat altered by colonialism, but are still being widely practiced and transmitted by Indigenous peoples (Muir et al., 2014). The purpose of this review article is to allow professionals understand the cultural differences in child rearing that can be occurring in Indigenous families. Understanding cultural differences allows them to make decisions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child, while tending to the cultural needs not only of the youth,

but their families and communities (Muir et al., 2014). These traditional forms of child rearing include child autonomy, and developmental areas such as spiritual, mental, emotional and physical aspects of self that are of vital importance to Indigenous communities and the transmittance of cultural ways of knowing. Traditional Indigenous child rearing philosophies adopt a holistic approach to child rearing while being inclusive of the family unit and the community (Muir and Bohr, 2014).

Indigenous child rearing and parenting methods are a theatrical production of lip service performances in the form of Manitoba reports and recommendations by Canadian governmental agencies. There is an abundant number of reports in the field of “Indigenous Health” in Manitoba. For instance, the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) published four booklets including Parents as Teachers: A resource booklet for First Nations and Metis parents in Manitoba (2017):

“The first few years of your children’s lives are critical for their learning and development. Caring for children is a shared responsibility in Indigenous communities. Our children are our future. We must think of ourselves as their past. We want our children to look back with fond memories of feeling loved and safe. We can give our children a bright future. We can work toward healthier families in healthier communities. It is very important to expose our children to their First Nations or Metis languages and cultures during their early years. This will set the foundation for who they are, where they come from, where they go in life and where they belong” (4).

The many reports, research, and recommendations about Indigenous health for Indigenous parents is a Grande charade which do not reflect the current practices, policies, and procedures among multidisciplinary health professionals throughout the Province of Manitoba. Their serial reporting mechanisms, multitude of inquiries, calls to action, and recommendations are processes of the Western Paradigm and their “action” to observed “problems”. Reporting is the biomedical way of ensuring the dominant societies’ political, economic, and institutional structures prevail.

There is ample literature, evidence-based findings, and best practices listed in the appendices about child wellbeing and child rearing ways.

Colonized child rearing policies

Contrary to the former, modern colonial policies, such as the Child and Family Services Act, disrupt the child-family bond (Appendix Niso). For decades, First Nation children have been disproportionately overrepresented in Canada's child welfare system (Blackstock, 2010). In 2007, the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society filed a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal regarding on reserve First Nations Child Welfare:

“On January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (Tribunal) issued its decision regarding a complaint filed in February 2007 by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), alleging that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs' (INAC) provision of First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) and implementation of Jordan's Principle is flawed, inequitable and thus discriminatory under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The Tribunal found that the FNCFS Program denied services to many First Nations children and families living on-reserve and resulted in adverse impacts for them because it was based on flawed assumptions about First Nations communities that did not reflect the actual needs of those communities. The Tribunal also found that the FNCFS Program's two main funding mechanisms incentivized removing First Nations' children from their families” (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, 2016).

The 2021 Census calculated 1,807,250 Indigenous people in Canada. Indigenous people account for 5.0% of the total population of Canada, up from 4.9% in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2021).

Manitoba has the highest Indigenous population in Canada at 18.1% (Statistics Canada, 2021). In March 2021, there were 164,289 registered First Nation people in Manitoba (Government of Canada, 2021). 93,840 persons, or 57.1% of the total population, live on reserve (Government of Canada, 2021). Manitoba is second to Ontario in total on-reserve population and in total First Nation population (Government of Canada, 2023). There are 5 First Nations linguistic groups in Manitoba: Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Ojibway-Cree and Dene (Government of Canada, 2021).

There are seven First Nations treaties in the province. Birdtail Sioux, Sioux Valley,

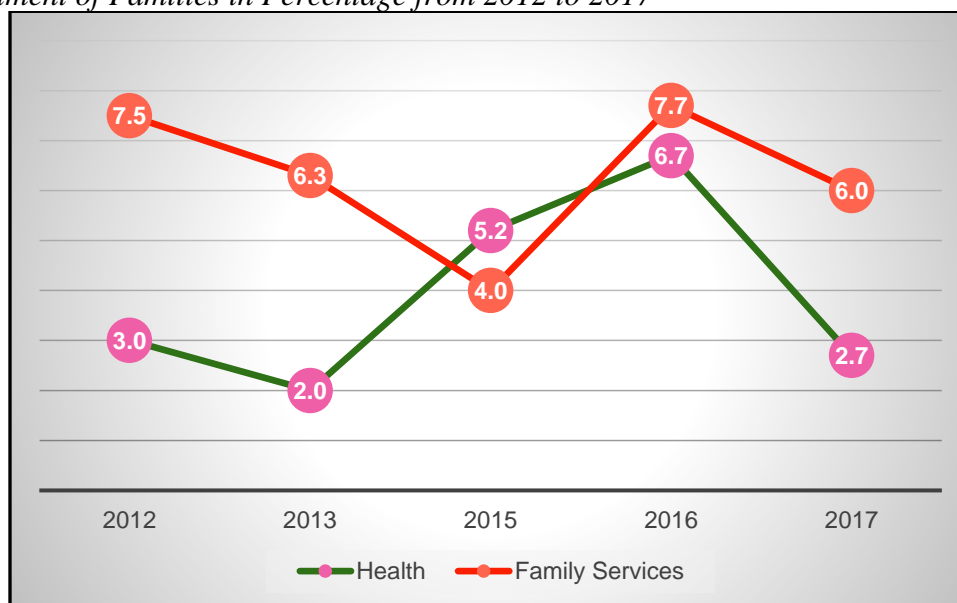
Canupawakpa, Dakota Tipi and Dakota Plains are not signatory to any treaty with Canada (Government of Canada, 2021). There are currently 63 First Nations in Manitoba (Government of Canada, 2021). In 2016, 62% of First Nation people in Manitoba were living in poverty (SCO, 2016). Manitoba First Nations are represented by three active provincial political organizations divided on a North-South basis: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, Southern Chiefs Organization (Government of Canada, 2021).

The Child and Family Services branch of the Manitoba government has been in the public eye regarding the preventable tragedies of Phoenix Sinclair (AMR, 2015) and Tina Fontaine (Office of the Children Advocate, 2019). These Indigenous children had Child welfare involvement and died too young despite serial monitoring by the Manitoba Child welfare system for their short lives (AMR, 2015 and Office of the Children Advocate, 2019). Even more alarming, the Province of Manitoba funded “investigations” to make recommendations of what possible “actions” to take. On November 1st, 2017 Indigenous Services Minister Jane Philpott announced a ‘humanitarian crisis’ in a letter addressed to provincial and territorial stakeholder regarding the alarming rates of First Nations children in care. The statistics showed that of the 11,000 Manitoba children in care, 10,000 were First Nation children and over 4,300 were under the age of 4 (Barrera, 2017). *Anoch* (today), according to the First Nation Family Advocate Office, there are approximately 12,000 Manitoba children in Child and Family services care and over 90% of them are Indigenous (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 2023). Since 2017, not only have the number of First Nation children in care increased by approximately 2000, but the percentage of Indigenous children in care remains the same at over 90%. Based on these statistics, the main risk factor for Manitoba Child and Family Services involvement and subsequent apprehension is having a First Nation status card.

The Province of Manitoba spends more annually surveilling Indigenous families than on the healthcare of Manitobans (Province of Manitoba, 2017) as shown by the Annual Expenditures plotted from the Manitoba Annual Budget from 2012 to 2017 (Graph 1). In 2017, the Department of Families spent 6.0% of the annual expenditures to administer their services compared to the 2.7% annual expenditures for the Department of Health (Manitoba Budget, 2017). Consequently, moving forward I refer to the Department of Families as the child welfare industry (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014, p. 81-82) which has created many jobs for provincial and organizational ministers, deputy's, administrators, Directors, Chief Executive Officer's, Chief Financial Officer's, human resource staff, and support workers (Appendix Peyak). Through perseverance, longsuffering, and love for the people, I was able to extract the statistics from Graph 1 from the Province of Manitoba budgets to showing that the Department of Families is an industry, similar to the healthcare industry.

Graph 1:

Manitoba Annual Expenditures for the Department of Healthcare versus the Department of Families in Percentage from 2012 to 2017

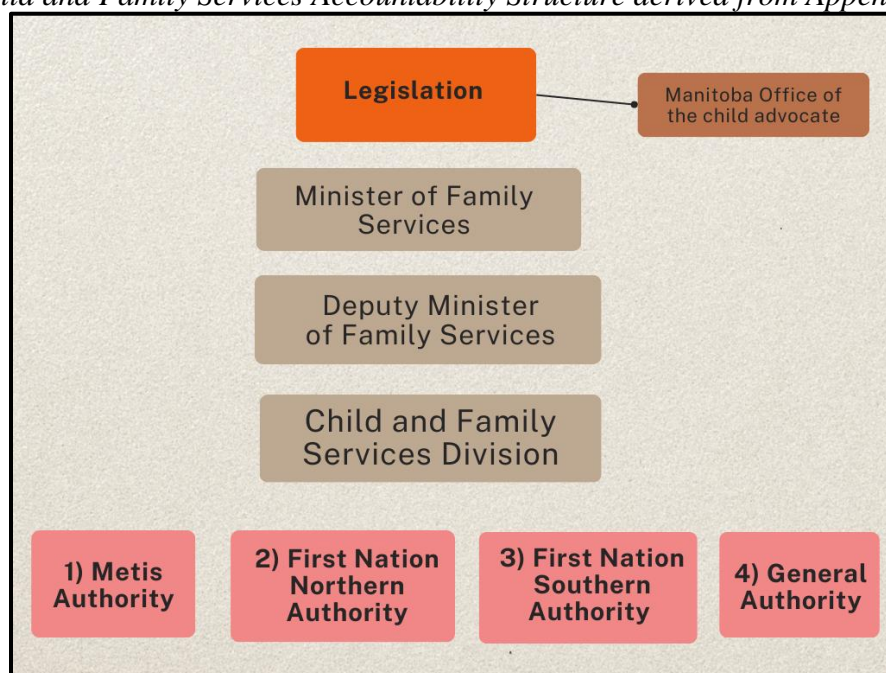


Note: Most years the Department of Families expenditures exceeded the Department of Health expenditures.

The industrialization of the child welfare industry is evident the tens of thousands of jobs created to “help” the apprehended children in the form of “foster homes” and “places of safety” (Province of Manitoba, 2017). In 2017, of the 10,714 children in care 90.8% are placed in “home like settings” such as foster homes. There were 7,352 foster homes, 2,381 places of safety, 628 in “group home”, 220 in other care and 133 in Independent living (Province of Manitoba, 2017). There are decades of Manitoba Provincial Budgets proving that the child welfare industry is assimilatory. The amount of Provincial and Federal dollars used annually for the administration of Child “Protective” Services is astounding. This Child Welfare industry directly and negatively affects Indigenous families residing in Manitoba. No organizational rearrangement can address the root of this crisis, the mechanism of action; the prolonged unnecessary removal of Indigenous children from their parents.

Chart 1:

Manitoba Child and Family Services Accountability Structure derived from Appendix Peyak



Note: 4 Authorities, 3 for Indigenous peoples and 1 for “general.”

Each Authority has financial accountability and power over the care of children who have been apprehended and taken into “care”. From the Appendix Peyak we see that in 2015 the 1) Metis authority housed 2 Agencies, the 2) First Nation Northern Authority housed 7 Agencies, the 3) First Nation southern authority housed 10 offices and the 4) “General Authority” housed 4 agencies. In 2015, the Province of Manitoba had 17 agencies for Manitoba First Nation families and 2 agencies designated to the Metis families (Appendix Peyak). 17 agencies specifically industrialized for one race of people, Indigenous Turtle Islanders. Keep in mind that each Agency may have multiple sub offices to enforce child apprehension procedures, policies, and practices. For example, lets zoom in on the 2) First Nation Northern Authority.

Chart 2:

Zoomed into 2. First Nation Northern Authority



Note: 7 Agencies, some with multiple offices such as Awasis Agency who had 10 sub offices in 2015 as shown in Appendix Peyak

It is essential to understand that each agency may have several sub offices to “serve” Indigenous communities. In Chapter 6 we dive into b) Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency and its organizational configuration.

In 2008, the Prime Minister Steven Harper, recognized and acknowledged that the residential school system was a policy to assimilate First Nations children (Apology of Residential Schools’ Act). Today, the Child and Family Services Act has not been deemed assimilatory. Given that Indigenous children are disproportionately overrepresented in the Child Welfare system, this study is imperative in moving forward in the era of reconciliation for Indigenous children, families, communities, and Nations across Turtle Island. Provincial policies are lacking self-determination principles in child rearing and are designed without consideration of the realities of the First Nation families they impact (Blackstock, 2010).

Surveillance of Manitoba Indigenous Families

Charts 1 and 2 show that the Department of Families have created an entire industry of offices and administration based on peoples by race, such as Metis and Cree, by reserve of many, if not all, 63 Manitoba First Nation communities, as well as by overarching geographical location. For example, the Northern and Southern First Nation authorities have over 17 First Nation agencies combined with multiple sub offices. The overall strategy of the Province of Manitoba creates employment opportunities while surveilling the multitude of Indigenous families in Manitoba. The objective of these agencies is to report, document, and create a database of people based on their identity, race, and/or Nation. Seriality is a social construct that takes the form of labels which are either imposed onto persons or voluntarily adopted by them (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2023). As per the Manitoba Accountability Chart (2015) in Appendix Peyak, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) is shown as an

outside independent “advocate.” However, this layered bureaucracy is not managed or staffed by Indigenous workers, but rather, by settlers and new Canadians symbolically capitalizing on Indigenous families through further unneeded surveillance, documenting, and reporting. Likewise, Federal Funds allocated to “Indigenous Departments” further stratifying Indigenous Canadians. For instance, the First Nation Family Advocate Office (FNFAO) also surveil, document, and report. This conclusion is evident because the percentage of Indigenous Children in care is the same today despite their cultural programming, ‘interventions,’ practices, and recommendations. Seriality is used in the Western Paradigm to divide, conquer and control; the term seriality was first described by J.P Sartre:

“For Sartre, there are two fundamental kinds of social reality: a positive one in which an active group constitutes the common field; and a negative one in which individuals are effectively separated from each other (even though they appear united) ... relations are typified by what Sartre calls seriality, like a number, or a worker in a factory who is allocated to a place within a given system that is indifferent to the individual... These collective objects keep serial individuals apart from one another under the pretext of unifying them... Society produces in us serial behaviour, serial feelings, serial thoughts, and “passive activity” (Sartre 1960a [1976: 266]), where events and history are conceived as external occurrences that befall us, and we feel compelled by the force of circumstance, or “monstrous forces” as Sartre puts it” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2023).

Using Sartre’s explanation, the current social reality has the dominant Western paradigm as the active/positive group and Indigenous peoples are the negative group in which individuals are separate from one another. Seriality is evident in both Federal and Provincial Acts, policies, legislation, and procedures; this approach proliferates inequality, inequity, and division. The societal impacts of serial behaviours are evident in Manitoba. Attending the University of Winnipeg since 2017 and living in downtown Winnipeg since 2016, I have seen the disparities first hand in the form of homelessness, poverty, and addictions among countless of my brothers

and sisters. In “Counting Deficiencies: How Numbers Harm and Reproduce Negative: Racialized Stereotypes of First Nations,” Anderson and Zaika (2021) assert that

“The colonial state obsession with ‘counting Indians’ and assigning their value with numbers is part of the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples in North America. The state—a site of structural power and dominance—frequently calculates disparities that reinforce the racist ideology that Indigenous peoples are culturally and morally deficient; low income, low educational attainment, and high unemployment rates are common statistics that reinforce stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples” (p.24)

After 150 years of the numbered Treaties not being upheld, the dominant biomedical and Western systems continue to oppress and assimilate the original inhabitants of Turtle Island. As long as we, the people, this land, our mother, are dictated by Acts, legislation and policy, we continue to be assimilated. No affirmations of “inherent rights”, acknowledgements of First Nation “self-determination,” no amount of apologies, no matter how many reports are compiled or research studies are conducted, we always get the same result when Indigenous Turtle Islanders conform to the dominant paradigm, that way of life, whether that be willingly or unwillingly. A critical example are the countless newborn babies being apprehended daily in hospitals across Manitoba (Puxley, 2015) despite the billions of dollars spent from both Federal and Provincial funds for “culturally appropriate services” administered by the Department of Families, FNFAO and MACY for decades.

Death by 1000 paper cuts

Manitoba Provincial policies lead to the death of Indigenous peoples by thousands upon thousands of paper cuts. In 2021, there was a total of 237,185 Indigenous populations in 2021 with a +6.2% growth rate over 5 years and the average age was approximately 30 years old (Statistics Canada, 2021). The Indigenous population in Manitoba is vastly growing and the average age of child bearing age. This means the political choices by the Province of Manitoba inevitably affect the future generations of Manitoba Indigenous peoples. Moreover, over

30.4% of the 237,185, approximately one third of Indigenous Manitobans, are under the age of 15 years old, making Indigenous children a growing and prominent group who is at risk for CFS involvement based on current Manitoba legislation and policies.

Table 1:

2021 Census showing the growth of Indigenous Manitobans over 5 years

	<u>First Nation People</u>	<u>Metis</u>	<u>Inuk</u>
Population Count	134, 890	96,725	725
5-year change	+3.4%	+8.2%	+19.8%
Average age	28.0	33.8	30.4

Table 2:

2021 Census showing the numbers of Manitoba Indigenous population

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2021</u>
Indigenous Identity	223,310	237,185
% under 15	31.2%	30.4%
% 65 and over	5.6%	7.0%

14.4% of Indigenous people in Manitoba reported knowledge of Indigenous languages, which highlights the growing needs of language, culture and ways of knowing among Manitoba Indigenous communities, families and youth. When our gaze is focused on the disparities of Indigenous peoples' and not the strengths, we get more disparities. When we flip our gaze to the gifts of the people such as cultural and traditional teachings, we get more of those.

Unfortunately, the dominant paradigm does not allow our gaze to shift because our voice is always under their Constitution, legislation and policies.

Case Study Peyak: Tina Fontaine

“A Place Where it Feels Like Home: The Story of Tina Fontaine by Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth – March 2019” is more lip service reports done to make the Western

practitioners in Manitoba feel better about their failed systems and institutions and further deny the harm they inflict on Indigenous Manitobans. These reports are continued surveillance and monitoring on Manitoba First Nation children, families, and communities. They inflict harm by repeating historical mistakes and have a ‘should have,’ ‘would have’ tone which has expired in the year 2023. Upon a discourse analysis of the Manitoba Child and Youth “Advocate’s” findings, we a clear example of benevolent colonial rhetoric in the first finding in the report:

“1. The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth recommends that Manitoba Education and Training ensure its recently established Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education review the measurement of and *response to absenteeism* across Manitoba. It is further recommended that the Commission review the use of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, with the goal of developing a province-wide strategy to limit, reduce, and phase-out exclusionary practices, except in situations of imminent safety risk to students and staff. This review and strategy *should provide* evidence informed practices that are in line with the *best interests* of the child and respect the right to education for children and youth” (p.55).

This report is confirmation of the failure and misuse of Provincial funds to create an entire economy on the surveillance of Manitoba children, families and community. The “Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth – March 2019” report has a detailed list of the primary sources used for their “investigation” and I question to how many decades of surveilling Manitoba First Nations must continue? How many more reports must be published pointing out the “problems”, “issues” and disparities among my people? Please see the list of Primary sources in the investigation of Tina Fontaine providing evidence of a failed system of reporting and documenting with zero preventative interventions:

“Child Welfare Files Reviewed:

Agency 1 (Historical CFS agency of record)

Tina’s father Protection file

Tina’s mother Child in care file

Protection file

Tina Fontaine Child in care file

Agency 2*Tina's father Protection file*

*Tina's father Fontaine's protection file was requested for review, however, Agency 2 was unable to locate the file.

Tina Fontaine Child in care file

Agency 3

Tina Fontaine Child in care file

Agency 5*Tina's grandma Voluntary Family Services file*

Other Tina Fontaine Short-term addiction detox centre

Youth Shelter 1

Youth Shelter 2

Southern First Nations Network of Care Child and Family Services Authority

StreetReach Program

Child and Family Services Application

Education Files Reviewed:

Tina Fontaine School division cumulative record

Victim Services Files Reviewed:

Tina Fontaine victim services record

Interviews (One or more interviews with the following):

Executive director, Youth shelter

Chief and Council

Sagkeeng First Nation

Tina's grandma and grandpa

School principal and school social worker

Agency 1Agency 2Agency 3Agency 4Agency 5

Former manager, StreetReach

Winnipeg Police Services

Family members/cousins

Other Sources of Information:

Office of the Chief Medical Examiner – Autopsy and report of the medical examiner
 Former Manager
 StreetReach
 Health Sciences Centre
 Medical Records
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police
 Sagkeeng Chief and Council
 Winnipeg Police Services” (MACY, 2019, p.111)

Essentially the Manitoba “Advocate” for Children and Youth (MACY) works closely with Manitoba Child and Welfare agencies and are not independent of one another. Despite the lip service facade on the MACY website <https://manitobaadvocate.ca/who-we-are/>, their purpose is to surveil, document and report on preventable tragedies they observe and documenting. More disturbing is that both Tina’s Mother and Father also had “CFS protection files” at one or more Agencies as well as her Grandmother according to the MACY investigation in 2019. Backing up to the birth of Tina Fontaine, I wonder why she was ever apprehended? Life in the system is not living at all, it is being in a never-ending cycle of harm, dislocation and disconnection.

Case Study Niso: Brian Sinclair

There are many examples of racial bias in Manitoba. The Health Science Centre is where racial bias proliferates. Mary Jane Logan McCallum, Josée Lavoie, Christa Big Canoe, and Annette Browne are members of the Brian Sinclair Working Group and they had an intention “to understand how systemic racism impacts Indigenous people in health care institutions” and provide a Western historical approach of the Brian Sinclair tragedy (Logan McCallum et al., 2021). Systemic racism impacts Indigenous peoples, families, communities and Nations across Turtle Island and proliferates in Western institutions such as the healthcare, judicial, and child welfare system. According to McCallum et al., “Racism in Canada is historically rooted but also continuing practice of claiming and organizing Indigenous land and people” (McCallum, M.

J. L., & Perry, A., 2018, p 15). For instance, stories of child welfare, more specifically child apprehension and removal, are a critical part of Indigenous peoples' lived experience in Canada for almost two centuries. Canada's residential school system began in the 1830's with the opening of Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario in 1831 (Galt Museum, 2021). The last Residential School was closed in 1996, but the mechanism of child removal was engrained in practices and procedures:

“As residential schooling declined in the years following the Second World War, practices of child removal into state care for fostering and adoption increased. What became known as the 60s scoop actually began earlier and lasted longer. By the 1970's, 60 percent of the children in care in Manitoba were Indigenous. Brian Sinclair and his brothers were some of those children.” (McCallem et al., 2018)

Brian Sinclair was a non-status First Nation and was invisible to the Health Science Centre staff because of his appearance. Furthermore, Act after Act, legislation after legislation, policies and procedures continues to have negative impacts on Indigenous Manitobans. In the Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba (1999) “The History of our First 100 years,” we see that the Manitoba Children's Aid Society was formed in 1899 under the guise of protecting awasisak:

The Western Sun: Thursday, Jan. 12, 1899

“Children's Aid Society. A local organization started in Brandon yesterday. Yesterday afternoon there was a goodly attendance of those interested in the Children's Aid Society, although the meeting was called at very short notice. Inspector S.S. Ross was appointed chairman and G.W. Wilson, secretary of the meeting. The chairman called upon Mr. Sifton, Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent children to explain the aims of the Society. He referred to the old idea of maintaining children after they had got past reform and the newer idea of protecting the children from the evil influence of neglect and so preventing them from becoming criminals. The results of the latter system have been very favorable in Ontario and in the States and the Manitoba government has adopted legislation under which Children's Aid Societies might be formed. The Winnipeg Society has done very effective work and if thought advisable, a similar Society might be formed in Brandon. After a number of questions had been satisfactorily answered, it was moved by Reverend C.C. McLaurin and seconded by Rev. Macadam Harding that the meeting proceed to organize the Children's Aid Society of Brandon. This motion was carried unanimously and all present were enrolled as members. The bylaws of the Winnipeg Society were then adopted and a committee composed of Rev. Harding and Mr. McLaurin was appointed to nominate nine directors. The following were elected:

Madams Harrison, Nation, Murray, Kavanaugh and Messrs Wilson, Coleman, Darrach, Irwin and Finlay.” (p.1)

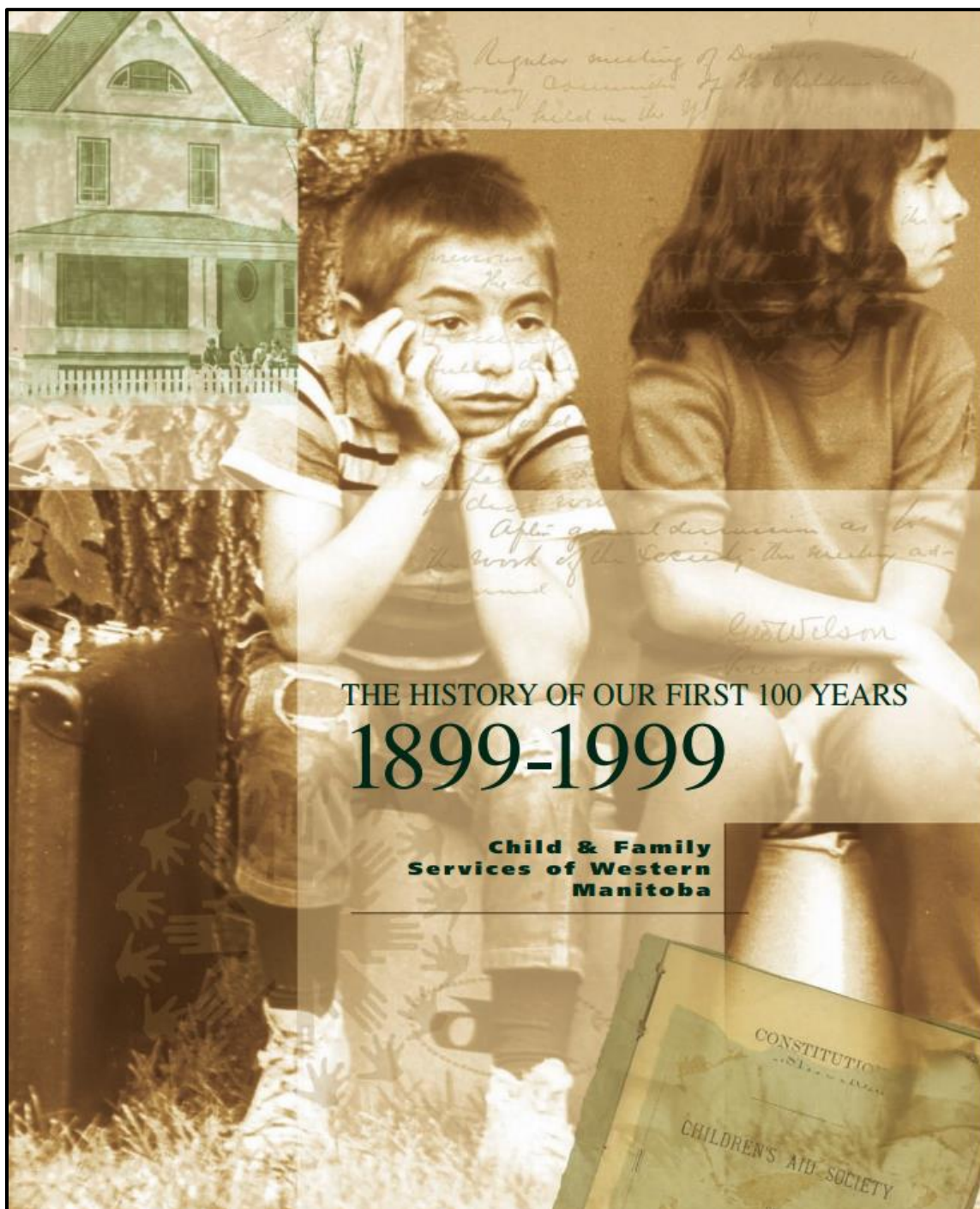
The Child welfare system was created with an “idea of protecting the children from the evil influence of neglect and preventing them from becoming criminals” (1). This was the intention set at the creation of the Children’s Aid Society of Brandon which serviced only within the city of Brandon. The Children’s Aid Society of Winnipeg, which was incorporated in August 1898, served “neglected children” in the rest of the area (1). “At the first meeting of the board of the Children’s Aid Society of Brandon, G. D. Wilson was elected president. An advisory committee of 20 men and women were selected and a temporary foster home committee was appointed. The board moved quickly to apply for incorporation.” (1) An article in the Western Sun on March 30, 1899 stated:

“The Brandon Children’s Aid Society is applying for incorporation — the Children’s Aid movement has already had a good effect in Brandon in keeping children off the street and acting both as a warning and as assistance to parents in their guidance of children”. Incorporation, November 10, 1899. The official date of incorporation was Nov. 10, 1899.” (p.1)

According to the Government of Canada, Federal incorporation offers many benefits, including the right to use your name across Canada, limited liability, lower corporate tax rates, better access to capital and grants (2016). Based on the intention of the Children’s Aid Society at creation, children that should be “kept off the street,” however over the generations we see the negative outcomes of this ideology; homelessness, poverty, addictions, increased rates of crime and physical violence among our brothers and sisters and their generations that are lost in this system for over a century. The child welfare industry has been alive and thriving for almost 125 years. Below the cover of “The History of our First 100 years” is pictured showing how the dominant paradigm boasts using their white saviour voices:

Picture 2:

The history of our 100 years 1899 to 1999



Note: The front cover of the book. A photo containing the Children's Aid Society Constitution. Throughout the book contains photos of Indigenous children as depicted here.
<http://cfswestern.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/cfs-history-book.pdf>

Proliferation of Racial Bias and Racial Profiling

Tina Fontaine and Brian Sinclair are case studies which prove Institutional bias against Manitoba First Nation children, individuals, families and communities. Bias can be broken down into implicit and explicit bias, racial bias, and unconscious bias as noted throughout the literature (University of Calgary, 2022 and Dettlaff et al., 2020) and is at the core of procedures and policies in Manitoba. An example is the Health Science Centre (HSC) as a “healthcare” institution:

“Putting emphasis on Sinclair as an individual and on the organization of the HSC ER gestures to but ultimately avoids reckoning with the fact that Sinclair's life was lost because he received no care in the very place he was told to expect it, that he was allowed to sicken and die over a 34-hour period in plain view of staff and patients. Brian Sinclair died because the hospital failed to care for him, and because he lived in a world that was carefully calibrated to produce Indigenous suffering and then both rationalize and be indifferent to it. This is what this is but one example of a structure of indifference that is both pervasive and deadly” (McCallum, M. J. L., & Perry, A., 2018, p 127).

Despite the many reports, inquiries, news articles, research papers, and evidence, these assumptions continue today under the dominant Western paradigm. For example, Dr. Marcia Anderson, Executive Director of Indigenous academic affairs at Ongomiizwin, the Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing in University of Manitoba’s Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, has declared that “community governance is essential for Manitoba’s race-based health data.” In the article from February, it was reported “Manitobans will soon be asked to voluntarily declare their race, ethnicity or Indigenous identity when they receive care at hospitals. The province is the first in Canada to collect this data from patients when they access care. The purpose of amassing and analyzing the data is to address inequities in health care” (University of Manitoba News, 2023). Unfortunately, these methods do not yield the answer to research question about inequities in healthcare because the process of collection race based data relies on racial profiling

of Manitoba patients. Based on my lived experience attending hospitals in Winnipeg this year, staff did not ask if we would like to disclose our heritage based on our appearance. According to

Dr. Marcia Anderson:

“The only reason to collect racial, ethnic and Indigenous identifiers in data is so that we can measure... how systemic racism is happening in health care, intervene, and then check to make sure that our interventions are actually making a difference,” said Anderson, who is also vice-dean Indigenous health, social justice and anti-racism of the Rady Faculty” (2023).

Racial profiling occurs when we look at a patient and make conclusions. Not every patient is asked to disclose their ethnicity, therefore the results are not be precise nor provide an accurate data sample. Notably, patients cannot answer the research question of inequity in healthcare therefore the research design is flawed. Only the multi-disciplinary practitioners can answer the research question of inequity in healthcare by looking inwards at their own biases. The evidence is in the statistics, numbers, and case studies of racial inequities, such as Brian Sinclair.

Systematic racism in Manitoba directed by and informed by practitioners, not patient’s. Race based ideologies and profiling continue to segregate and harm Manitoba First Nations. The province, institution, and healthcare provider are the reason for the inequity, not the patients. The research using archaic methods of racial profiling is more unneeded, unrequested data to surveil, observe, and report flawed findings about minorities and Indigenous peoples’ in Manitoba.

In 2020, researchers from the University of Calgary conducted a meaningful study on diversity, harassment and discrimination in health care. At that time, data on the diversity of Alberta’s physicians was limited and the purpose was to understand the identities and experiences of physicians working in Alberta (2022). The Alberta Physician Diversity Census reported that 70% of Canadian Physicians are white, 2% of Canadian physicians were black and less than 1% of Canadian physicians were Indigenous (2022). All practicing Alberta physician

were invited to participate in the survey in September 2022. The study sample was over 1,000 physicians. The inclusion criteria involved all Alberta physicians, not merely a certain race of people, therefore this study did not follow the race based procedures currently practiced in Manitoba. Nonetheless, this study yielded profound findings in the field of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The research questions included:

- 1) Who? – What are the demographics of Alberta Physicians? Who is represented in the medical workforce and who is missing?
- 2) Where? – Are there representation gaps in rural or urban settings? In academia? In leadership?
- 3) How? – How do physician’s experience work? Do experiences differ between groups?

The research team released the key findings of the study in 2022:

- i. Indigenous physicians are underrepresented relative to their proportions among Alberta’s general public.
- ii. One in 12 Alberta physicians indicated they felt cold towards Indigenous people.
- iii. Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) physicians hold fewer leadership positions and are less often compensated for their leadership work than white physicians.

“The research team made several recommendations based on the data collected, including adopting evidence-based strategies to reduce homogeneity in leadership and disparities in promotion, updating current registration data to reflect the true diversity of the physician workforce, providing training for leaders on accepting reports of harassment and acknowledging the presence of interpersonal, anti-Indigenous bias among Alberta physicians. Take a few moments to review the research report in full, which has also been shared with leadership at CPSA, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Health. Please be advised, some may find the comments submitted via the survey offensive and upsetting.” (College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta, 2022) <https://cpsa.ca/news/diversity-in-health-care/>

Manitoba researchers and health professionals must look inwards to understand the root of the disparities among Indigenous peoples. Their race based policies and procedures cause division, harm, and further discrimination onto the Other.

Purpose and objectives

Provincial policies are absent of self determination principles in child rearing and more importantly, are designed without considering the realities of the First Nation families they impact (Blackstock, 2010). The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), the First Nations Family Advocate Office (FNFAO) Report and Recommendations in 2014, “Bringing Our Children Home” demonstrates that Manitoba has failed in its Child and Family Services legislation design, policies, and implementation especially in terms of cultural safety awareness and meeting the diverse cultural and linguistic needs of Manitoba First Nations. It is suggested that by incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into prevention strategies would improve health outcomes for First Nation children and families at risk for intervention (AMC, 2014). However historically speaking, reports and recommendations are shelved by the dominant paradigm.

The purpose of this Qualitative Indigenous Research Study is to gather invaluable teachings, insights, and philosophies on child rearing in relation to the tipi teachings from knowledge holders over the age of consent who reside on Turtle Island (North America). Colonized child rearing practices are those that are designed, externally imposed, and enforced by the State whereas, traditional child rearing is based on Indigenous child rearing philosophies such as the Nehiyawak Tipi Teachings. The objective of this Indigenous Research Study is to empower Indigenous Turtle Islanders with traditional ways of knowing by:

- 1) Bring together evidence-based literature connecting the Indigenous right to self-determination with the right to determine one’s own family structure and child rearing practices.

- 2) Demonstrate the use of an Indigenous Research Paradigm and dualistic approach to create recommendations that inform culturally relevant and inclusive practices in child rearing.
- 3) Interview a gender diverse sample to gain narratives on how the Tipi Teachings can promote healing among Indigenous communities across Turtle Island.

Thesis findings provide a Turtle Island perspective on Indigenous child rearing teachings, philosophies, and practices associated with the tipi. Given that Indigenous children are disproportionately overrepresented in the Child Welfare system, this research is imperative in moving forward in times of reconciliation for Indigenous children, families, communities and Nations across Turtle Island.

Significance of research

- I. The literature on child wellbeing in North America is not representative of the populations involved as few studies include Indigenous parents, despite the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and families in the US and Canadian Systems (Landers, 2018).
- II. Despite apprehension being a central event in the child welfare system, there is a small amount of research documenting the impact this has on child wellbeing (Landers, 2018). This study adds scholarly understanding of child rearing teachings, philosophies and practices associated with the tipi from self-identified Indigenous adults. It generates new empirical insights on how colonial legislations, policies, and procedures continue to harm Indigenous children and families.

- III. Muir and Bohr (2014) conclude that comprehensive studies of Indigenous child rearing are needed to accurately inform decisions made by professionals in the area of Child and Welfare Services. Once professionals understand the cultural differences in child rearing, they should be better equipped to make decisions to ensure the “safety” and “wellbeing” of the child, and to tend to the cultural needs of not only the youth, but also their families, communities, and Nations (Muir and Bohr, 2014).

Summary of Chapters

- 1) Background: Colonized child rearing versus Opikinawasowin
- 2) Spirit is life: Nehiyawewin philosophical framework, Wholistic theoretical framework and the creation of a dualistic approach to inform the holistic
- 3) Sacred Bundle Methodology: Tipi as conceptual framework and use of an Indigenous Research Paradigm
- 4) Indigenous ways of knowing: Indigenous Science, the Circle of Life, and Creator’s Formula (Genealogy)
- 5) We are all Treaty people: Treaties, Land and symptoms of a sick Mother
- 6) Red Masks, Colonial Minds & Colonial Hearts: Child “wellbeing” via multi-disciplinary systemic failures versus miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin
- 7) Results: The Turtle Island Perspective as a Wholistic approach and assessment to health, wellbeing and healing

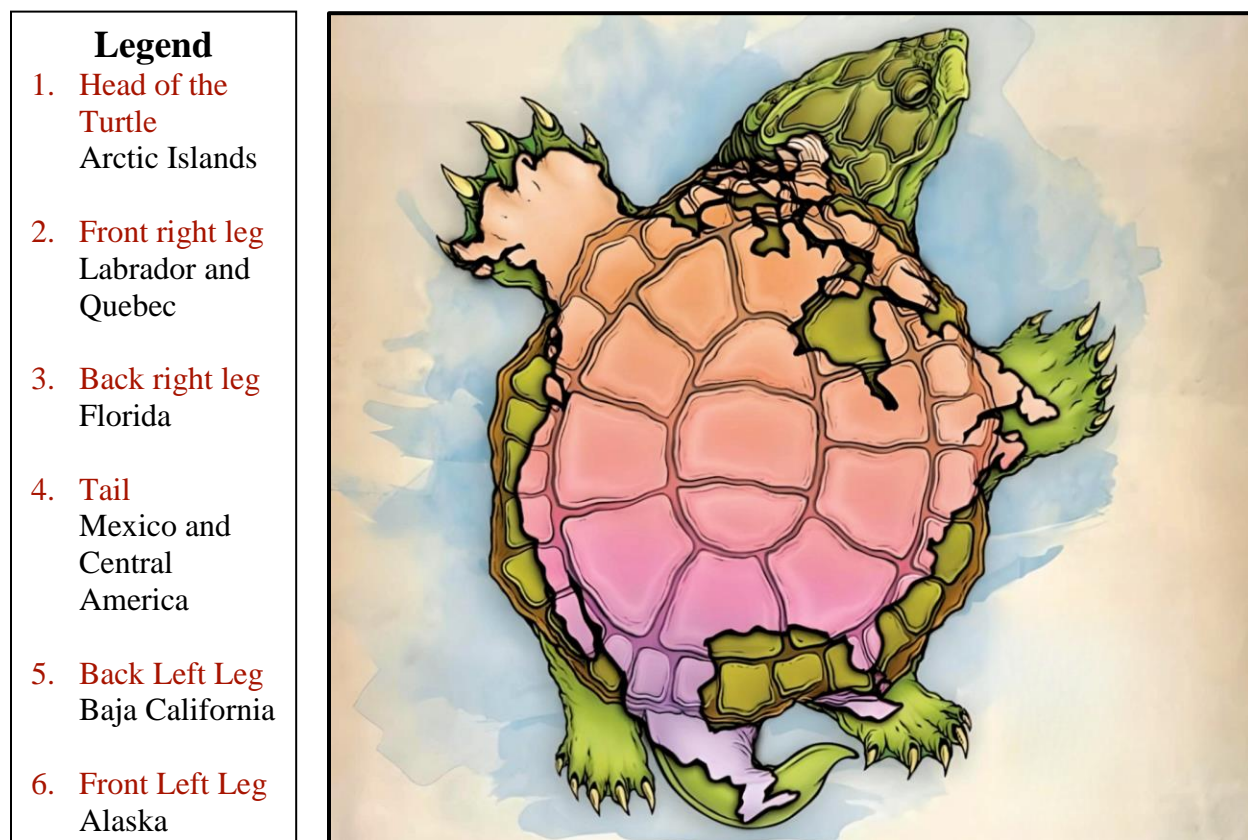
Chapter 2: Spirit is Life

Dear Creator, help me to speak in a good way; help me to speak only wisdoms from you lord and let the reader know your love is unconditional. Let each person know they are a child of creation and how all you desire is a relationship with us. Let your love fill the hearts of the reader and so they may know your plan; so that all people may be loved as they are perfect creations of you, and that they may choose righteousness, joy, peace and happiness. All my relations.

Spirit is life, without spirit we are not alive; we are empty, looking, searching and seeking to fill a void that is unsatiated by the physical world. Creator made each individual with their own purpose plan and gifts. Generally speaking, we can say that the Nations of Turtle Island are creationists who use oral storytelling to pass on teachings, belief systems and core identity to the following generations. Pollock defines creationism as the rejection of evolution in favor of supernatural design (Pollock, 2003). Only the Creator knows our purpose, plan and gifts and we must be guided by the Spirit within.

Turtle Island

“I began to fly in my dreams one Spring. I remember being able to fly at will in my dreams so high I am out of the Earth’s atmosphere. There is only lightness, none of the problems in the World can phase me in my dreams, travelling. When I am up in the air with the Creator there is joy, peace and understanding. I have the Turtle Island perspective and see the beauty of our Mother Earth. Creator has asked me to share with you what I see. I look down at Turtle Island, and her vastness. When I see the whole body of the Turtle, I see that all problems are like grains of sand. They are so small, smaller than a grain of sand. In the Heart of the Turtle, there is a large spiculated malignancy, a darkness, a cancer which has infected the Heart of the Turtle and is growing exponentially, spreading outwards and spreading its sickness... Metastasizing... This black mass, this cancer, this darkness cannot be stopped by the forces of humanity. This malignancy is in the city of Winnipeg, where the cancer continues to grow, spread and proliferate... This cancer is the race based policies and procedures imposed and enforced by the dominant Western paradigm” (Seven star woman, 2019).

Map 1:*The Body of the Turtle*

Note: Indigenous Reflections (2023). The Legend of Turtle Island. Retrieved from <https://indigenousreflections.ca/products/nip-19>

7 linguistic groups of Turtle Island

Niya Nehiyaw iskwew who began my journey on the Red Road in 2007. I received my spirit name, *tehpakohp acakos iskwew* in 2011 by Elders at the University of Alberta and have since been committed to living *miyo pimatsiwin*, a good life. Upon receiving my Nehiyaw name my professor *pisim awasis* Dr. Clifford Cardinal shared with me the meaning of my name. My name is “7 Star Woman” which is the story of Creation. He said when he heard this story long ago when he was just a child but he remembered it took 3 days. It went something like this:

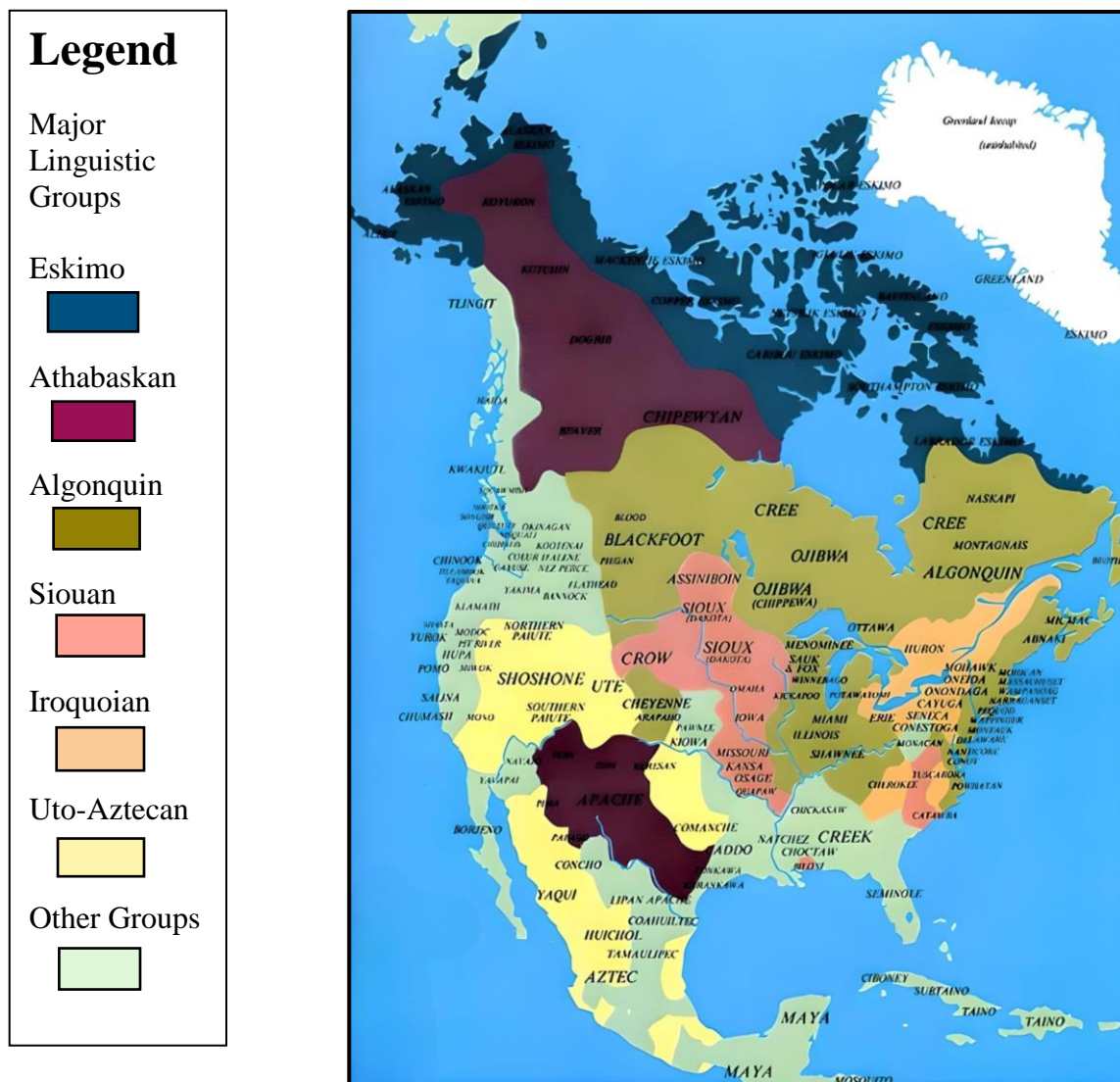
“The North star was in the sky with her 7 brothers and sisters. The big dipper has 7 stars representing the North star and her seven siblings. One day the North Star came down to

Mother Earth, Turtle Island, and fell in love with a mortal. She stayed on Turtle Island and eventually had seven children. Those 7 children moved across Turtle Island and eventually formed the seven linguistic groups on Turtle Island. Each child represents one of the 7 linguistic groups of Turtle Island” (2012).

The Elder who told him the story was no longer here in the physical realm, and in all his years Clifford never met another Elder who told that story about the Big Dipper. Clifford advised me I must seek out the teachings in this story and then I must live my life by those teachings.

Map 2:

Turtle Island Linguistic Groups



Note: Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/visakanv/status/1005778603756347392/photo/1>

If we zoom out far enough from ourselves, we can see the full body of the Turtle, and 7 linguistic groups that make up the body of the Turtle. I encourage member of each Nation to look up their linguistic group and identify with that part of the Turtle. When Creator made Turtle Island Nations and gave us specific instructions to care for the land there was intention, planning and a glorious vision. When we zoom out of our physical bodies, far up enough that we can see Turtle Island, only then is the enormity of Nehiyaw language, culture, traditions, and overall ways of knowing realized. This thought is imperative to understand the significance of the Turtle Island perspective in Chapter 7.

Cree language continuum

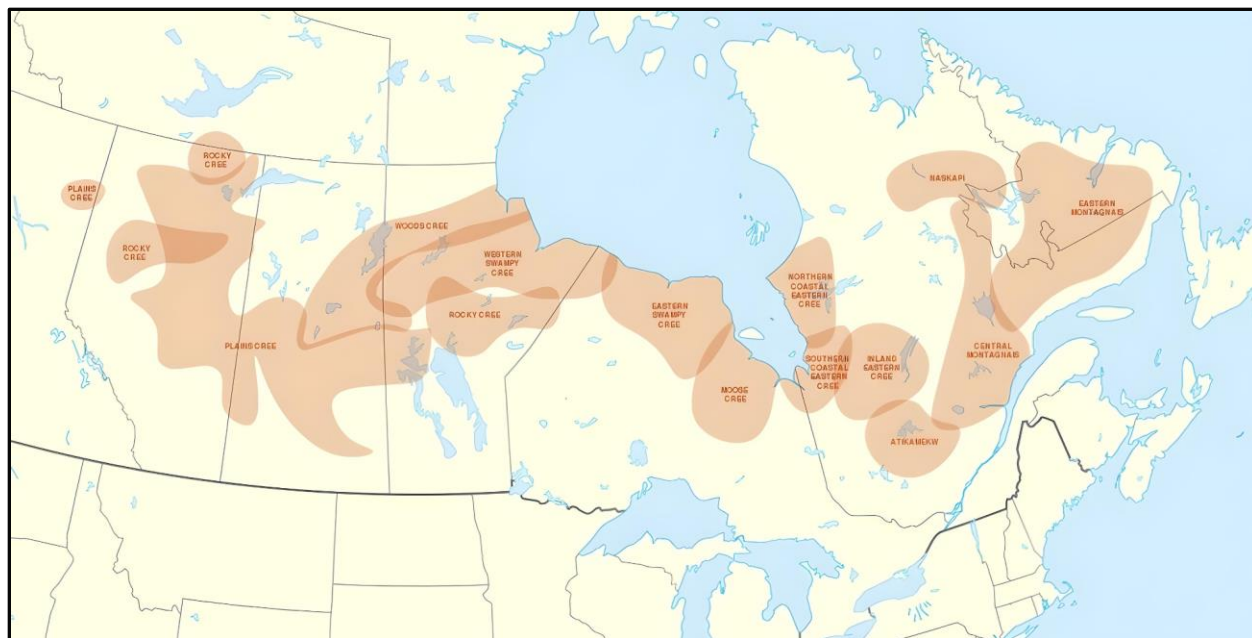
Because of the vastness of the Cree language, there are some major differences in the languages across community and dialect which creates a continuum:

“One thing that’s not well known about the Cree language is that it really isn’t just one language or even one family of dialects. It’s really a whole continuum of languages. And that makes things confusing. For linguists, the test of whether something is a dialect or a language is whether speakers can understand each other. On the western side, generally, speakers of Swampy and Woodlands and Plains and even Moose Cree can understand each other pretty well. And in ordinary conversation they will likely identify their language as “Cree”.

Similarly, on the East side (dividing roughly at the Ontario/Quebec border) – the story is really about the same. So if you ask speakers of Northern and Southern “East Cree” (which is also called Innu), or speakers of Attikamekw and Naskapi what language they speak, they will also, in ordinary conversation, most often refer to their language as “Cree”.

But the group in the East and the group in the West are different enough that they can’t understand each other. And this is why linguists consider them to be different languages, even though they might all be referred simply as “Cree”.” (Cree Literacy, 2017)

It is essential to understand Cree is a language continuum spanning a large part of the Turtle’s body as shown in Map 2. Map 3 depicts the various types of Cree that is spoken based on geographical location.

Map 3:*Cree Language Continuum*

Note: From Right to Left, Top to Bottom - Plains Cree, Rocky Cree, Plains Cree, Woods Cree, Rocky Cree, Eastern Swampy Cree, Moose Cree, Northern Coastal Eastern Cree, Southern Coastal Eastern Cree, Inland Eastern Cree, Atikamekw, Naskapi, Central Montagnais, Eastern Montagnais

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Cree_map.svg retrieved August 23, 2023

History of the Cree Language

“Cree (ᑭᑦᑲᑦ, nehiyawewin) is a dialect continuum belonging to the Algonquian language family in Canada, spoken from Labrador to British Columbia. It is the most spoken Canadian Indigenous language with 117k+ speakers.”
 (<https://4chanint.fandom.com/wiki/Cree>)

I had the honour of studying Nehiyawewin syllabic system with Reuben Quinn from 2012 to 2014. I remember my girls in bucket car seats with me in the evening class twice a week in Edmonton, Alberta. Reuben’s teachings have been planted into the tablet of my Heart, my spirit and shape my Worldview as Nehiyaw iskwew. I didn’t know the significance back then, as I was

on the *eskwasis* (new child position) on the circle in the East direction (Figure 12, Chapter 4).

Below are transcripts of “Reuben Quinn July 21, 2015” syllabics teachings which was hosted by:

The Amiskwacy History Series on YouTube:

“I greet you all and I honor each and every one of you and your lives, your holistic lives. I honor that and that you are here. The old people would say that from the time of that zepto second before the Big Bang theory 13.7 billion years ago or so, there was a zepto second and all of us were considered in the thought of that Divinity, that we would be here at 650pm, and we would all be here in this room... it was thought of those billions of years ago. And so, there’s a lot of things that go along with the Worldview that Turtle Islanders have, specifically what I can talk to is about Nehiyaw Life. When there was acknowledgement of the peoples, the first people that came down the St Lawrence River, I think that’s the one anyways I am not too good with my geography, they came upon some Nehiyaw people like myself, my language group, and they came in these big wooden boats. And we called these people with the hairy faces and the wooden boats, *mistikosiweenok*, the wooden boat people. And when they were greeted by the Turtle Islanders they went like this “aaaahhhoooo” collectively and the French, the wooden boat people said “le cree” so that’s one of the ways we came to be known as “Cree”.

I don’t call myself a Cree. I don’t call myself Indigenous, First Nations, Indian, Chuckwagon burner, prairie *n word* or any of those things. I call myself Nehiyaw. That’s the name I know myself as. It’s an honor when someone calls me by what I am, Nehiyaw. I understand that part of this process might have to do with reconciliation and part of that process towards reconciliation is honouring me in the way, and the rest of the Turtle Islanders, in the way that we know each other. For instance, the people down South there are known as *niitsitapi* and most people know them as Blackfoot or Blackfeet. The ones up North there they call them Dog ribs, slavey, beaver, Chippewan and they call themselves *Dene*. There’s a group by Calgary, outside of Calgary and they call themselves *tsuut’ina* but most people call them Sarcee. Part of that reconciliation process is getting to understand ourselves as the names that we know ourselves as.

As far as pedagogy is concerned, before we get started here. Take your dominant hand and touch your non dominant knee. Right hand to left knee for most. For the left-handed person take your left hand to your right knee. What that will do is, it’s a simple little exercise that works on the brain. The magic is in the way the brain works in that there is synapse that happen in brain, and how we have been taught through the ages. How we have been taught is a certain way and that thinking has to do with having learned a linear concept which is from A to Z, for instance, it goes from left to right, and there’s 26 symbols there, 26 letters, or alphabets, or syllabics, whatever you want to call them, that go from left to right and that’s linear in concept. The methodology that we’ve used through Western Pedagogy is an algorithmic methodology.

The other thing we have had to do in far as training the brain is concerned, is learned through rote. So, there’s a couple of things. What I am going to be discussing is a quite

different paradigm from that mode of instruction. The methodology is heuristic, the learning is organic, and the system requires, rather than linear thinking, we do lateral thinking. It's a bit of a different system as far as that's concerned.

When we were put into residential schools a lot of our system of language. We started out I am told by people who have done research that there were approximately 600000 words in the Nehiyaw language prior to contact. The Nehiyaw people go from the Rocky Mountains across Canada, into what's now the United States, all the way down to the East coast; there were a group of people there that were driven to extinction and their language system is gone. As far as their dialect is concerned they called them *pehyak teegenok*, when you anglicize *pehyatuk*, Beatuk, those people were driven to extinction. Then you go down there, the Nehiyaw language went down the Eastern seaboard into Florida. There's a big river down there that we call *missi sipih* and when you anglicize it comes out Mississippi. The Nehiyaw language, it's not farfetched to say that the number 600,000 words is quite realistic if you contrast it to the English language which started out 10,000 years ago with 10,000 words. It has now gone to almost 1 million words. For instance, 10,000 years ago there was no word for acrimony for instance. Pseudonym didn't exist back then. The English language has built up because of an expansion. The Nehiyaw language has gone down because of its contraction and because of the people being put on small tracts of lands quite euphemistically referred to as reservations. These people could not leave their collective reservations without the expressed written permission of an Indian Agent who was usually a white man. You can see how the language would then have dwindled down because there is no way for it, except within its own confines, to continue to grow.

Theory 1 - The written language

A couple of the histories that I want to talk about is that there is one historical perspective of the Nehiyaw Language. That is a man by the name of James Evans created our writing system so that he could interpret the Bible into our language, the Nehiyaw language and that was 200 years ago.

Theory 2

The other popular belief is that a man by the name of *mistanaskwew* had a vision about what I call the Spirit Markers and was able to develop our writing system for the Nehiyaw people.

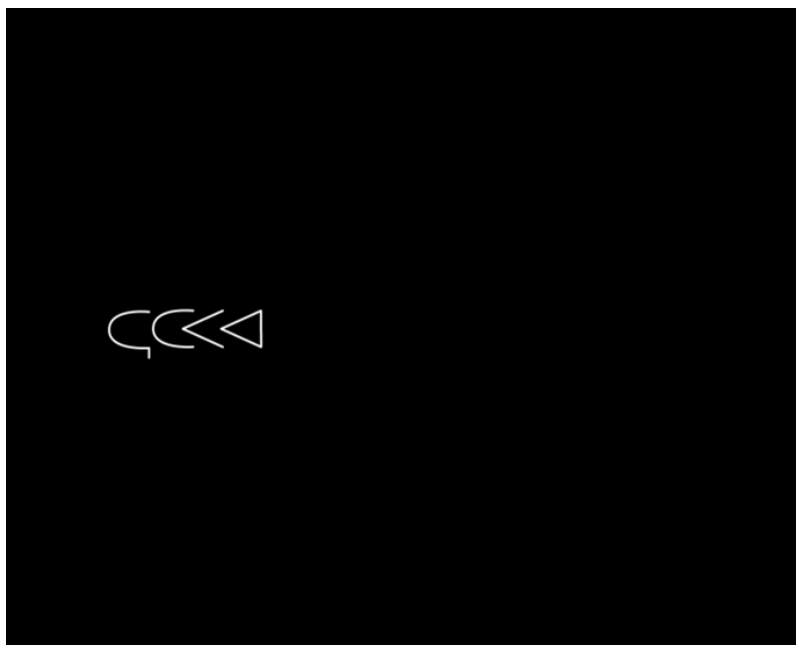
Theory 3

There is another one, that this ◁ was found written on stone, on a rock, this ◁ Spirit Marker and it was carbon dated to 10000 years. When a people are conquered, we cannot write our own history. This one here says that our writing system is minimally 10000 years.

When we were allowed our language back in 1951, there was a legislation that allowed us to be able to use our language, although it wasn't made public. We were allowed to do our own services, as far as our religious processes were concerned that was known in public. I remember in 1963, I was 4 years old and I remember sneaking off to a Sundance

with my family. I was 4 years old, I remember that's exactly what it felt like, we were sneaking because the Catholics on the reservation still had quite the stranglehold on our psyche. And there was still the mentality that these people could hold favor for certain people in their court. Although by then it was largely nonexistent. The mentality of the people on the whole was still that there was this group of white people that had power over the people on the reservations.

In 1971, where I come from in the St Paul area there's a school there called the Blue Quills Indian Residential school. The priests and nuns that had been running the school, left a year earlier. We were given the opportunity to then bring back our own educators. When these people came and taught us, they taught us a system that was completely different than what we had been learning. Completely different in many ways. One of the ways, is that the articulation required to make some of the sounds in the Nehiyaw language is completely different from any European language irrespective of diphthongs.



When we learned about this \triangleleft , we learned about directions. That's the first one \triangleleft .

When we go A to Z, A is 1 and Z is 26, H is 8, so on and so forth. *There is an order to everything much like the system we are learning here.*

We have 4 vowel sounds: \triangleleft (a), \triangle (i), \triangleright (o), and ∇ (e)

This is the first one \triangleleft makes the 'a' sound and it goes off into the East direction. What this says is \triangleleft (a), \triangleleft (pa), \subset (ta), \subset (la) is what it says. A lot of people here have an issue with this last one 'la'. Some people say 'la' isn't in our language. But this system encompasses those other dialects that I speak about. For instance, if I were to say 'I like you' I would say *kimiyoimitin*. A person with this dialect would say *kimilemitin* and there

will be other syllabics that there encompass those other dialects. So, this goes off into the east direction a pa ta la.

When we talk about the number 4, the philosophies that are within our Worldview are also covered in this. In order to have life we all need fire (source of heat), we need the Earth of course, we need a water source and we need air; the 4 elements are included in that. A lot of people say the 4 directions, well that's what comes from the 4 directions. 4 and a half billion years ago, our sun came into being and then through all that turmoil and chaos the Earth formed and there were comets that hit the Earth. There was water from the comets that were carrying ice and there was air was formed, a few hundred million years ago.

That's the grandfather in the East" (Reuben Quinn, 2015).

Nehiyawewin: Cree Language and Syllabics

Picture 3:

Reuben Quinn Nehiyaw language class in 2017



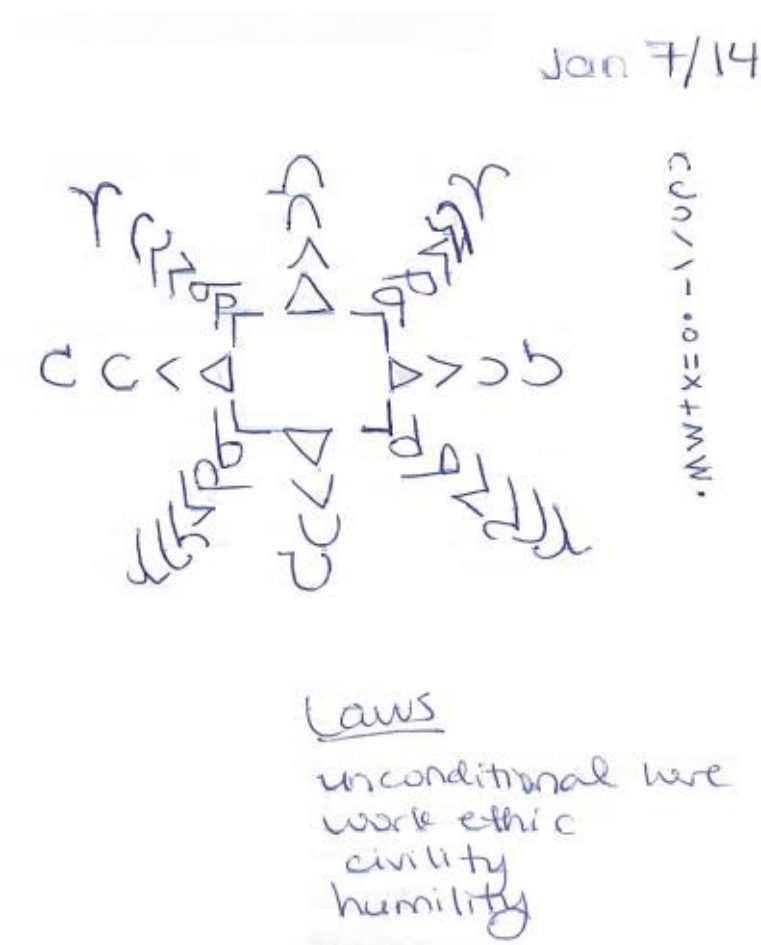
*Note: Centre for race and culture https://twitter.com/cfrac_veg/status/944049616072343552
Retrieved August 23, 2023*

Nehiyawewin carrier Reuben Quinn teaches the history of the Cree language explains how learning the traditional syllabics requires a “paradigm shift” from the thought we have been

raised in Western Society (Quinn, Reuben, 2016). Since Reuben teaches the language using the traditional teachings along with the syllabics chart (Picture 3). He recommends when learning Nehiyawewin we must learn the syllabics and the many ontological and epistemological stories that come along within the teachings. Therefore, when I think about an Indigenous Research Paradigm, it adopts traditional ways of knowing and is presented in a way that honours our ancestors; by the use of analysis that is holistic and uses spiritual principles as show below.

Picture 4

Aimee's Syllabic Chart



Note: Nehiyawak Laws include unconditional love, work ethic, civility and humility (Quinn, Reuben, 2014)

The methodology of storytelling has been used not only by traditional teachings such as Reuben Quinn, but also by many Indigenous researchers (Atkinson, 2012, Kovach, 2009, Dorion, 2014, among others). Shirt et al. (2012) provide the following definitions on stories in nehiyawewin:

“*âtayôhkewina* (sacred stories) are the containers through which Cree ontology is transmitted from one generation to the next, providing continuity to each new generation – an avenue to connect to the past while indicating a path to the future... One central Cree ontological perspective that *âtayôhkewina* carries is ᐃᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ wâhkôhtowin (act of having relatives). *âtayôhkewina* explain how we are connected to the world through kinship” (206).

As Shirt explains, storytelling has many different purposes and times when certain stories are shared. I am using Nehiyawewin to show that all Cree teachings, philosophies, and ways of understanding require what Reuben calls a “paradigm shift”. When Reuben explains that we must use the dominant hand and tap the non-dominant knee to rewire the synapses. One example, is that nouns are categorized as either inanimate or animate. This means that words such as the word ‘tree’ in nehiyawewin is *mistik*, ᐱᐱᐱᐱ and is animate which mean the tree is living. Furthermore, Cree ontology is how we understand our place in the World and our relationship with all of creation through elaborate kinship systems including but not limited to the sun, moon, sky, earth, animals, and humanity. Elder Mary Lee elaborates on the Medicine wheel, life stages and the Circle of Life or as I refer to it, the life cycle of humanity:

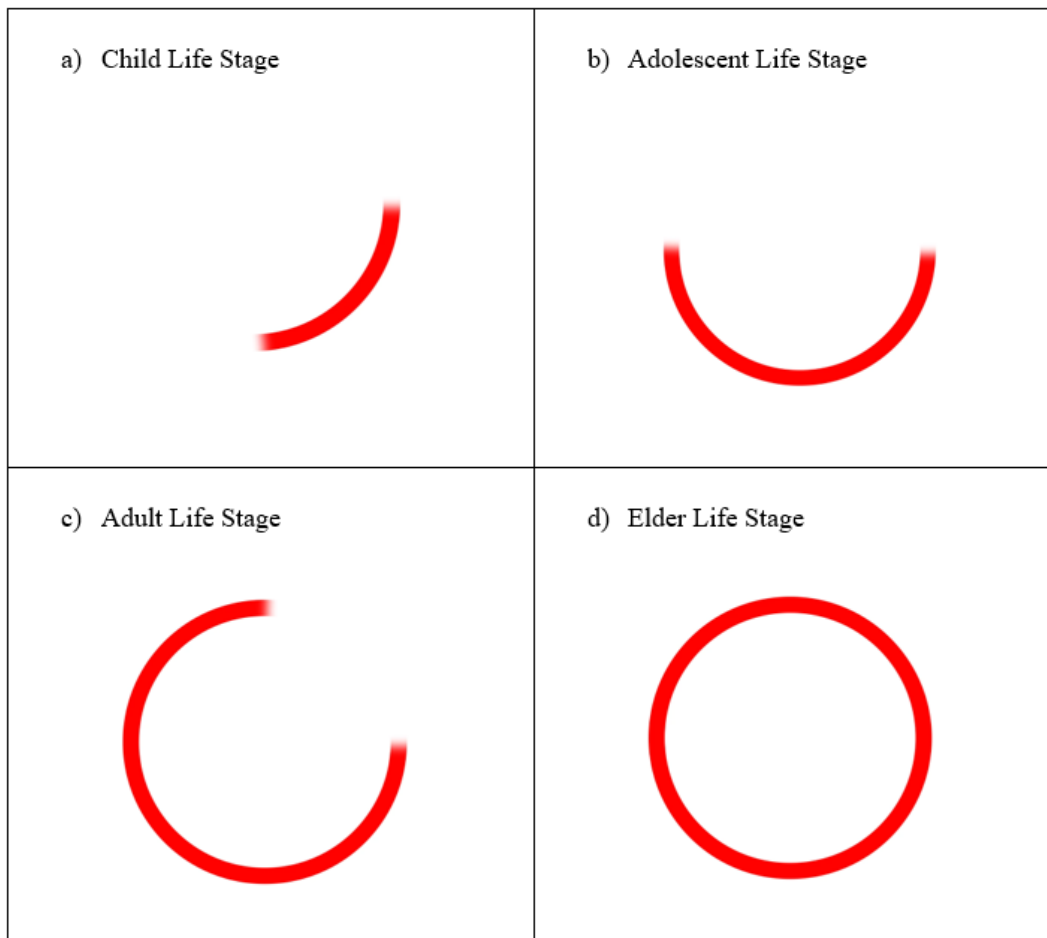
“This is how the Medicine Wheel represents the life journey of people. The old people will tell you it is life itself. Look at the four seasons and follow the sun. Spring in the East, summer in the South, Fall in the west and winter in the north. It tells the whole story of how all life came into being abundantly bright, rising in the east and then fading away as it moves west and north. All life rises and sets like the sun. What we do in between is our journey. This is where the gifts of the four directions are needed - the gifts of the spirit, physical body, emotions and mind - and where we need to find balance within these four realms. Today, many people are out of balance because they tend to only favour two realms of self, the mental and the physical. They forget to look after their

spiritual side, and often don't know how to express and deal with their emotions" (Lee, 2006)

We cannot only be defined by our physical bodies, as we must acknowledge the mental, spiritual and emotional aspects of self. As Elder Mary Lee (2006) points out that the medicine wheel is a device which represents the Circle of Life. I use the Circle as Absolon (2010) does, to reflect the four directions as well as the four stages of life.

Figure 3:

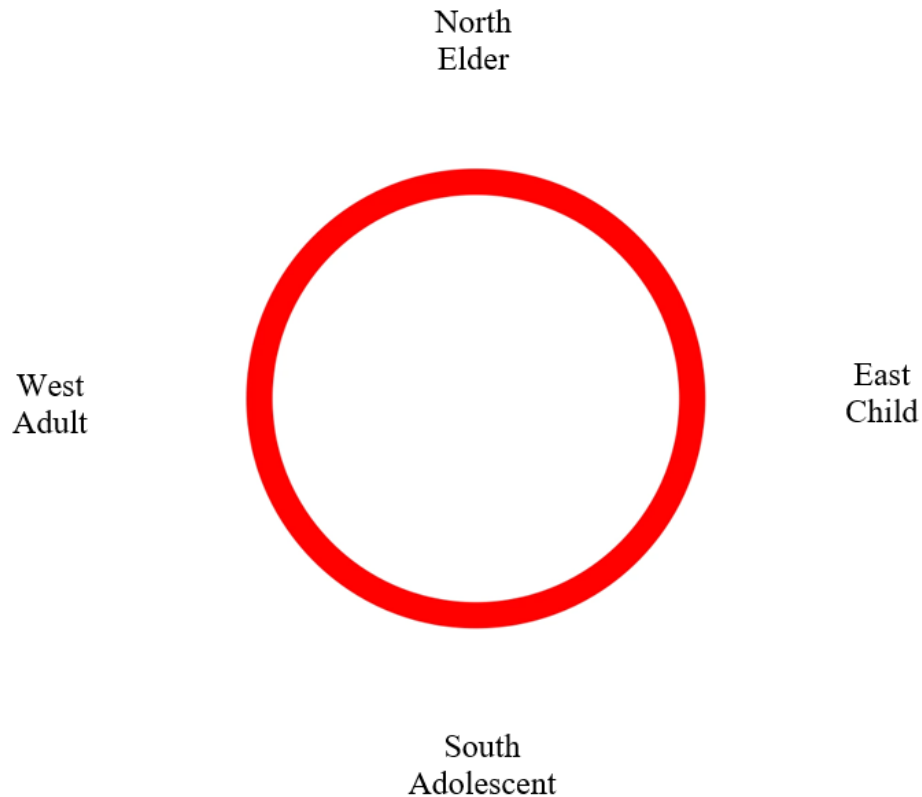
Life Stages starting in the East Direction representing a person's whole life journey



Below is an image of the life stages of a human being as Elder Mary Lee explains in her Tipi Teachings; these life stages create the Circle of Life.

Figure 4:

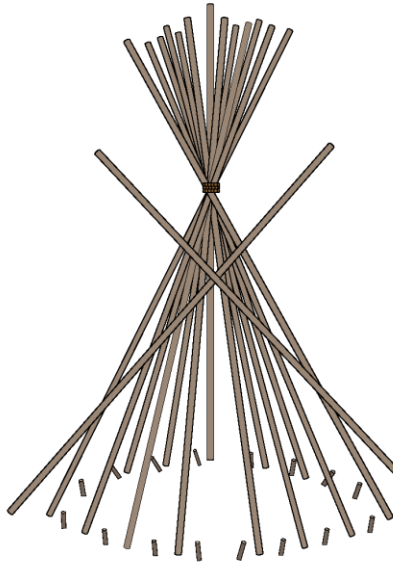
Circle of Life: The life cycle of humanity



Note: Life cycle of humanity envisioned from Elder Mary Lee's tipi teachings (2006)

Throughout this thesis, the Circle of Life and the life cycle of humanity are used interchangeably to describe the image in Figure 4. Ko'ona Sabre (2016) explains the Circle of life lessons within the Tipi Teachings:

“The circle of life represents life, our connectedness to each other and with all of Creation. The circle of the Tipi represents the whole of our mother, the Earth. The poles are connected together at the top representing all Nations of people living on Earth. The connections of our relationships as human beings. As the points in the circle are infinite all the Nations of the Earth fit around this circle as equals. Each pole stands in its own place upon the Earth, showing the different languages, food, medicines, and governments of each Nation. The single bond is the connection to the Creator. We are all made different but equal on Earth. Each Nation has its original instructions to follow but all lead to the Creators work.” (Sabre, 2016)

Picture 5:*Tipi Poles*

Note: Envisioned from Elder Mary Lee tipi teachings. There are 15 poles in the Nehiyawak tipi teachings (Appendix Mwach ke'kwa'n)

Using the medicine wheel philosophy, we can see the Western paradigm neglects the mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of a human making their assessments, diagnoses, and treatment plans inefficient and incomplete of the whole person. As a mother and a life giver, my connection to the spiritual realm is significant. As women, we have the power to give life or not to give life, we carry the gift of life, and therefore, this gift is honoured and utilized in a good way. In Spirituality and spiritual care in and around childbirth, Crowther and Hall (2015) assert that although the dominant paradigm recognizes the importance of spirituality around palliative patients' care, the biomedical model fails to recognize childbirth as a spiritually relevant experience. This work shows how the Spirit is quintessential to childbirth and child rearing.

Acimowina ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦ (Personal Stories): Who I am

Acimowina of nimosom my dream to have a voice for Nehiyawak. As the founder of Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation (Indian Birch), he hoped that by possessing land he might secure a

future for our family and the following seven generations. Additionally, by advocating the Federal Government for a school on reserve for awasisak up to grade six, now named Chief Charles Audy Memorial School. As nimosom saw, the education of First Nation children by First Nations people is a critical aspect to nehiyawak miyo–pimatisiwin, collective identities and wellbeing of our First Nation communities. Nimama was born overseas in Bristol, United Kingdom to a British mother and Jamaican father. My Grandfather moved with nimama and my uncles to Canada in the 1970s. Therefore, I am not only made from this land, but I represent all people including other first generation Canadians and the mixed community.

Wakohtowin ᑭᐱᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦᑲᑦ (Kinship/Community): Where I come from

“‘Wahkotowin’ Today it is translated to mean kinship, relationship, and family as in human family. But at one time, from our place it meant the whole of creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and inter-connected to all things within it. Wahkotowin meant honoring and respecting those relationships. They are our stories, songs, ceremonies, and dances that taught us from birth to death our responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to each other. Human to human, human to plants, human to animals, to the water and especially to the earth. And in turn all of creation had responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to us.” (Mary Campbell, 2007)

Being connected to this land, Winnipeg, and being from this land is who I am as Nehiyaw iskwew. Equally, as an Indigenous mother, I am responsible to ensure the following seven generations do not experience the same barriers in child rearing that I have experienced since 2016 upon moving home to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Greenwood and Jones (2015) assert:

“Indigenous children hold a unique place within the collective because they embody the past through our teachings, they experience the presence and they hold our dreams for the future” (p.65)

This quote precisely describes my connection to the research study, as a mother I see the children as holding our future. Our children must know who they are and where they come from.

Consequently, I self-position within the research from my understanding of nehiyaw identity,

culture and overall wellbeing as an urban Indigenous *iskwew*, giver of life, connected to the spiritual realm through this role.

Hart (2007) found that Indigenous ways of knowing is highly dependent on people's experiences within their local ecosystem. Additionally, Atkinson (2002) defines community a group that is living, sometimes in close proximity, with similar interests, interdependent and interacting with each other for mutual support, in a "network of relationships". Therefore, for the proposed research, I chose Winnipeg, Manitoba for its geographic location, as I am currently a full time graduate student at the University of Winnipeg. More importantly, I am from Winnipeg, Manitoba and consider myself an urban Indigenous woman, more specifically I am *Nehiyaw iskwew*, a Cree woman with my ancestral roots to *Wuskwi Sipihk* First Nation, Manitoba.

Communities can be a network of people and groups separated by space but interlinked by common concerns and consciousness (Atkinson, 2012). Common concerns within this primary research study are the lived-experiences of First Nation adults who were raised child welfare system to document experiences within the colonized child rearing system. In opposition, the common consciousness of Indigenous Elders and knowledge holders of various ages and genders is explored and presented to gain invaluable insights into traditional *Nehiyawak* child rearing philosophies and how these teachings should be integrated into Indigenous child rearing practices today. As Hart (2007) points out, Indigenous ways of knowing is also heavily reliant on Elders and knowledge holders, not only to guide its transmission but also the development of the research study through each step in the process.

Atayohkewina (Sacred stories)

Shirt et al. (2012) found *acimowina* develop *Nehiyaw* epistemology and *atayohkewina* embody our *Nehiyaw* ontology, while both inform our axiology (2012). These skills have been

lost among our nations across Turtle Island as well as our connection to Creator through prayer, *wahkototowin* and living the good life by migrating in patterns like a herd of Buffalo –

Paskwawi-mostos. Shirt et al. (2012) also found that:

“Both *ācimowina* and *ātayôhkewina* inform the natural laws that guide us to live the *iyîniw* (true, original human) way, enabling us to become ethically and morally correct within the life we live here on Mother Earth” (p.206).

Learning from the Sacred is a theme from my spirit family members from Saddle Lake Alberta.

For example, in “*Nehiyaw iskwew kiskinowâtasinahikewina— paminisowin namôya*

tipeyimisowin - Learning Self Determination Through the Sacred,” Makokis finds that the

nehiyaw ideological concept which best articulates self-determination is *iyiniw pahminsowin*

(Makokis, 2008). This Cree term translates to “how order and organization are given to the

people” (Makokis), and it is foundational to the conceptual meanings in our teachings and

structures of our *nehiyawak* ceremonies (Makosis, 2008, p 42). When we reframe our

understanding on the importance of women in our cultural ways of knowing, we can then begin

to move forward in asserting our self–determination in child rearing to preserve Indigenous

culture, identities and overall well-being.

Creation Stories

Creation stories help us understand who we are. The four races of man need to know these

stories to place themselves in relation to the Creator, Kichi Manitou. In the Turtle Island

Worldview, each Nation has creation stories, some are similar and some are different. The

fundamental similarity is that all contain valuable information about how we came to be (Treaty

Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Also, they tell our relationships to Mother Earth and

the rest of creation (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). For example, the

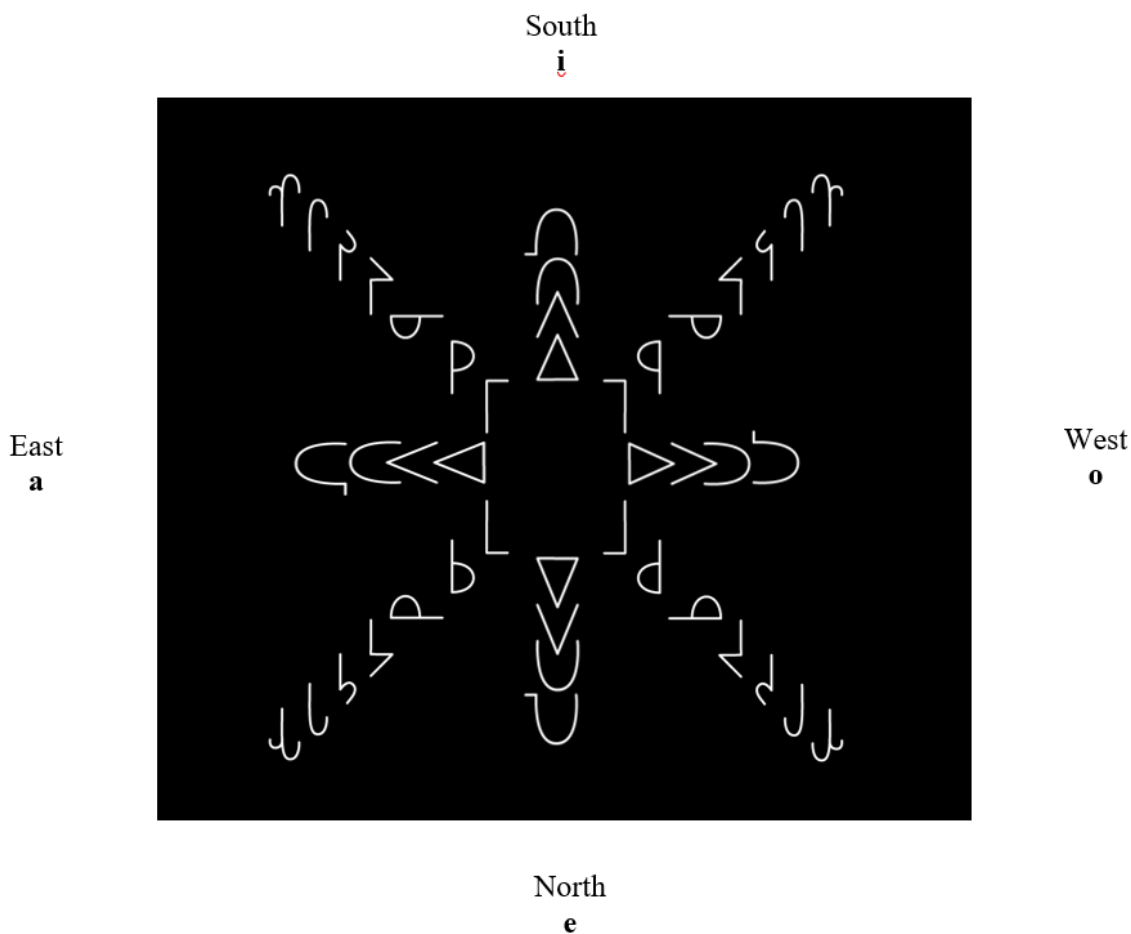
Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway, begins with the Ojibway creation story and how first

man came to Earth (Benton-Banai, 2010). The following chapters in the book provide the reader traditional teachings about the acquisition of fire and tools, the creation and meaning of the clan system, the migration of the Ojibway people from the Atlantic Coast to their present locations in Canada and the United States (Benton-Banai, 2010). Events within creation stories allow us to understand the complexities within creation and the supernatural quality of Kichi Manitou.

Philosophical Framework

Figure 5:

Nehiyawewin – Cree Syllabics Chart



Note: Envisioned by Aimee Louis from 2012 teachings from Reuben Quinn

Expansion on Nehiyawewin Teaching from Reuben

Reuben (2012) explains that the system we have become accustomed to today is a colonial language system that is linear, and goes left to right such as the alphabet which is A to Z. Nehiyawewin is a traditional language system which uses a heuristic methodology which reflects nature's teachings. There are 4 vowel sounds: a, i, o and e. Furthermore, the syllabics chart uses directions. The Grandfather teachings are in east, south, west and north and encompass 4 vowel sounds in each direction. The Grandmother teachings are in the southeast, southwest, northwest, and northeast directions.

Using a holistic approach

This study uses a holistic approach to review, analyze and address child wellbeing, child development and spiritual identity as a substantial indication of Indigenous health and community healing. The Nehiyawak Tipi teachings from Elder Mary Lee (2006) are the foundation of this work and the *mikiwahp* (tipi) is used as a conceptual framework (Kovach, 2009) symbolizing the spiritual side of *miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin*. In Chapter 1, Mary Lee states Nehiyawak are composed of four parts: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of self. The balance of these four aspects results in holistic health for the individual. However, the Western paradigm, or more specifically, the biomedical model defines health within the physical body, which magnifies only the physical quadrant on the medicine wheel. This system of diagnosis recognizes the signs and symptoms and responds by addressing these physical abnormalities in a reactive manner. Kathy Absolon (2010) introduces an Indigenous Wholistic Theory defined as wholistic and multi layered, which encompasses the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical elements of being. Absolon uses an alternate spelling of holistic, the online dictionary Grammarist defines

“Wholistic is the philosophy that all parts of a thing are interconnected. In medicine, *wholistic* treatment is the treatment of a person as a whole, mind, body and social factors. Related words are *wholism*, *wholistically*. *Wholistic* appears in 1941 as a cross between *holistic* and whole.”

Absolon explains “Indigenous theory is rooted intimately within Indigenous epistemologies, worldviews, cultures and traditions” (74) and she employs a wholistic framework of the four-direction circle. Additionally, she positions that:

“We also acknowledge our past present and future. By that very nature we must look at the past and into our future and Indigenous theory factors in seven generations past and the seven generations into the future.... Indigenous theory is earth based and derived from the teachings of the land, sun, water, sky and all of Creation. Its’ methodologies of practice integrate the natural teachers and elements of the earth” (74).

Within this theory, spirituality is inherent within Indigenous epistemologies that result in belief systems, which are relational to Creation, Mother Earth, recognizing that all life is sacred and has a spirit. Furthermore, Absolon asserts that methodologies rooted in Indigenous Worldview and ancestral ways of knowing set the stage for visioning, beginning, and renewal that will emerge a duality of knowledge, which characterizes both a cultural and colonial discourse. Absolon’s theory and Elder Mary Lee’s teaching provide the foundation for the physical-spiritual duality of this work that creates balance within the literature.

Castelano (2015) asserts that in her years of medical practice, she has seen little in the shift of understanding of the spiritual aspect of health among colleagues trained in biomedical model of medicine. Although she first heard of the concept of spiritual health from Elders over 30 years ago. Therefore, we meditate on the spirit to provide a Wholistic understanding of health, encompassing the mental and emotional bodies of humanity, while addressing the underlying cause of the physical illness. Many of the works in the field of Indigenous Governance propose various solutions to “return to traditional ways of knowing.” Many believe that the answer lies within culture, language, land base, politics, and so on. Although all of these are important,

through this study I show that fellowship with Creator, igniting the spirit within, is the one and only solution to the substantial external symptoms (growing suicide rates, the meth crisis, socioeconomic divide, etc.) we see in the physical realm. Unequivocally, I propose that the physical, mental and emotional imbalance within the physical world are directly linked to the lack of spirit within humanity.

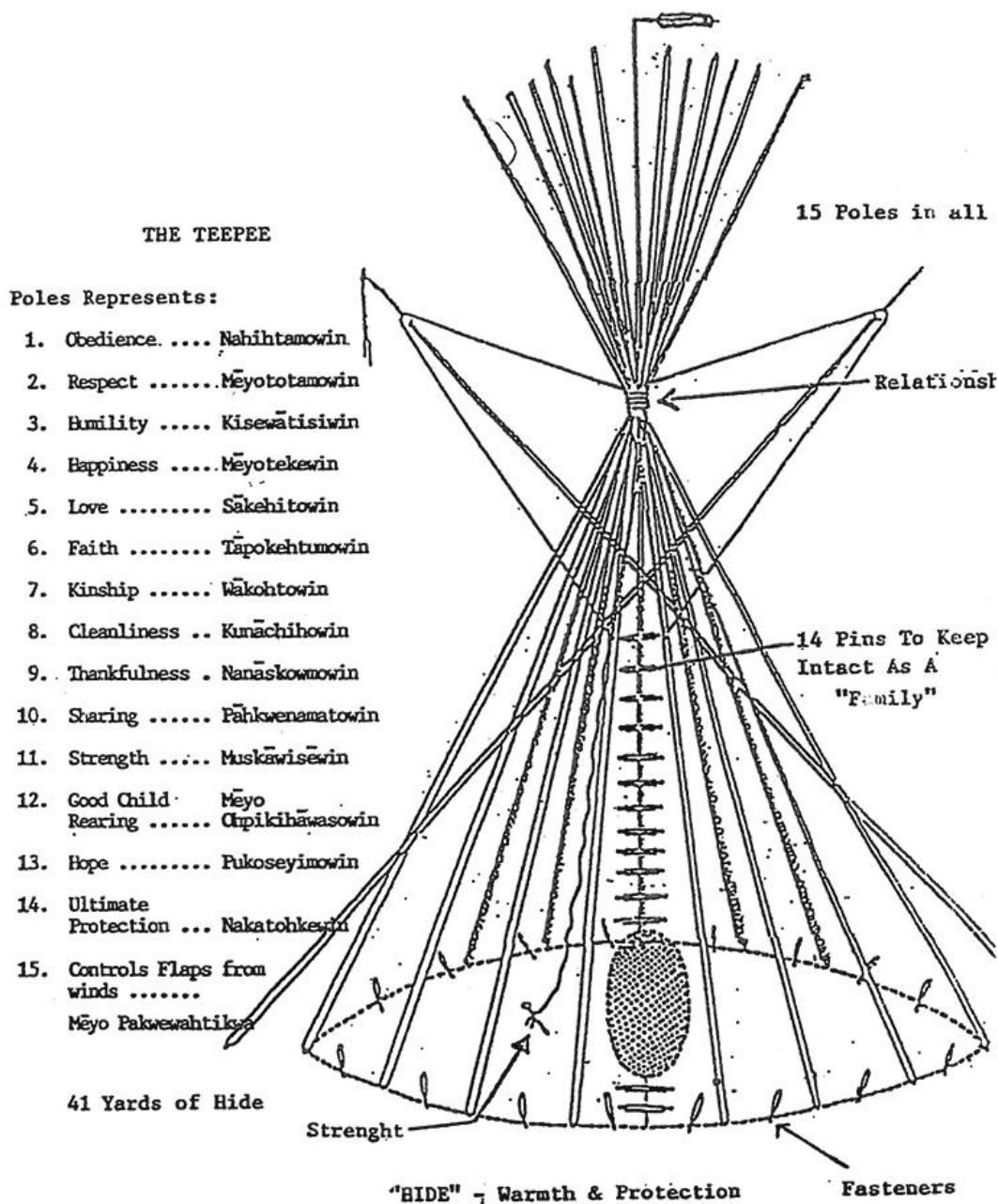
The essence of human beings through our creation is our spirit, which must be reignited for Creator to guide us to the language, teachers, land, places, medicines and ceremonies that we as individuals need to heal the roots, the inside. Like the trees, each human's journey is different from one another because we are all unique and only Creator knows our true path to healing, that is, what we need as individuals to grow. Each of our healing journeys will look different and must be guided by the spirit. Once we acknowledge spirit, we walk on the Red Road to walk alongside Creator and heal through growth and life stages as we are designed.

Since the summer of 2018, I have had the pleasure to learn spiritual truths and principles from the late Senior Pastor Leon Fontaine. At 4 months old, my young twins, older twins and I began attending the Springs Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I appreciate the message of "Spirit Contemporary," a culture founded by Senior Pastors Leon and Sally Fontaine. They assert that religious practices are not of the Spirit, but contrary. Abiding by institutional and religious rules does not result in a spiritual way of life. Leon explains that Spirit Contemporary "is about reaching the world in a relevant and practical way without compromising any of Holy Spirit's awesome power." My goal is to bring the spirit of this approach to Turtle Islanders in relation to traditional teachings on child rearing by acknowledging each person's value within creation.

Chapter 3: Sacred Bundle Methodology

Picture 6:

Tipi teachings



Note: image source

<http://thegatheringteachers.weebly.com/uploads/3/2/1/0/32109417/tipipolenames.jpg?454>
retrieved August 25, 2023

Many tribes of the Great Plains are known to use the mikiwahp for housing of the family and community (Lee, 2012). Nehiyawak would use 15 poles to make the structure of the mikiwahp and for every pole there is a teaching about child rearing. According to Elder Mary Lee, these 15 teachings work together collectively, equally by leaning on one another to hold up the mikiwahp (Lee, 2012). Nehiyawak ontologies and epistemologies around the tipi represent the spiritual side of miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin.

A spirit based methodology is a set of practices for completing research projects on colonial violence in deeply colonized spaces as an attempt to imagine new ways of surviving academia (Lucchesi, 2019). As defined by Lucchesi (2019) spirit based research is:

“Work that is rooted in the researcher’s spiritual practices and beliefs, the spirits impacted by and involved in the work, and the researcher’s spirit itself... Generally speaking, it is heart-work, or work that is centered on and guided by compassion, empathy, prayer and love, rather than the clinical disconnect colonial academia espouses....” (2).

Similarly, scholars have defined the research process in itself as a ceremony (Wilson) which nourishes, sustains, heals, strengthens, and empowers the spirits of the researcher and generations of research subjects, past, present, and future (Lucchesi, 2019). This project adopts a spirit based methodology which is unique to my lived experience through the research process. The use of traditional protocols such as passing of tobacco, prayer, dreaming, fasting, spirit plates, using medicines and attending ceremonies ensured my Wholistic health as the researcher. The Sacred Bundle methodology utilizes my sacred items along with my personal connection to the Creator throughout the research process, I successfully demonstrate an Indigenous Research Paradigm. Upon this journey, I have been fortunate to meet traditional knowledge holder Ko’ona Sabre, from Peguis First Nation Manitoba, who facilitates Traditional Parenting Workshops. She

taught me about the continuum of spirituality that exists for all of humanity. All people in this World are somewhere along this continuum regardless of age, race or religion:

Zero Spirit _____ Full Spirit

This coincides with Elder Mary Lee's (2006) medicine wheel teachings where the physical quadrant is opposite to the spiritual quadrant. Therefore, the continuum also appears like so:

Physical _____ Spiritual

Furthermore, Mary Lee explains the Nehiyaw philosophies that are carried within the construction of a tipi:

“The tops of the poles have many teachings. Each one points in a different direction. We are like those poles. We all need the strength and support of our families and communities, but we accept that we all have different journeys and point in different directions. The poles also teach us that no matter what version of the Great Spirit we believe in, we still go to the same Creator from those many directions and belief systems; we just have different journeys to get there. And where the poles come out together at the top, it's like they're creating a nest. And they also resemble a bird with its wings up when it comes to land, and that's another teaching: the spirit coming to land, holding its wings up.” (2006)

In the Nehiyaw Worldview, all of humanity has one Creator and whichever way people choose to pray or have a relationship with spirit, that is the individual journey of each person. As we see the Circle of Life, or the life cycle of humanity are individual. We cannot change anyone as they are on their own journey, they are on their own circle.

Dr. Deepak Chopra is an expert in the field of mind-body healing, a world-renowned speaker and author. I use a diagram from the book “*How to know God: The soul's journey into the mystery of mysteries*” which Dr. Deepak Chopra introduces as shown in Figure 6. This diagram is used to situate the dominant paradigm of health and the Indigenous Research

Paradigm that resides within the spiritual realm and encompasses the acknowledgment of Creator, the spirit (2000):

Figure 6:

Depiction of the Spiritual realm in connection with the Physical realm



Note: reimagined from Chopra, 2000

Chopra differentiates characteristics of the Material World that are those, which we are able to see and feel with our five senses, whereas the characteristics of the Spiritual World are those which transcend time, space, and place (2000). This figure is congruent to teachings I have received on my healing journey. I use Chopra's figure because it reminds me of a teaching from Elder Wanda Murdock from University of Manitoba, when we offer tobacco we meet the Creator in the middle (transition zone). I have placed the Indigenous Research Paradigm into the Spiritual Realm because Indigenous peoples' health is multi-dimensional, encompassing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions (Castelano, 2015). Furthermore, in the Biblical Studies 2, Leon Fontaine describes two types of faith. That is faith in what we know through the 5 senses (physical) versus faith that surpasses all understanding, reason and is unseen (Fontaine, 2021). Therefore, faith is also a continuum much like the physical – spiritual continuum shown above.

Faith in the 5 senses Faith in the unseen

Indigenous Research Paradigm

For this research, an Indigenous Research paradigm is synonymous with Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous research as the methodology has potential to improve relevance in practice and policy (Kovach, 2009). Dr. Michael Hart from Fisher River Cree Nation, has made a commitment to learn and follow Indigenous ways of knowing. In the article, “Indigenous knowledge and research: the mikiwáhp as a symbol for reclaiming our knowledge and ways of knowing,” Hart obtained teachings from various Cree and Anishinaabe Elders regarding Indigenous ways of knowing (2007). In his review of the literature on Indigenous Knowledge, he reflects on his teaching of mikiwáhp to devise imagery of the tipi and share his understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing. This includes a collective understanding in which all individual understandings participate to create the foundation and support of the tipi (Hart, 2007). To define the Indigenous paradigm within research must see these constructed and multiple, holistic realities to which the researcher and participants interact to gain a mutual learning and sharing responsibility for the research (Hart, 2007). Picture 5 of the tripod shows the foundation and main support of the tipi. The first 3 poles signify central teachings during the child life stage: obedience, respect, and humility.

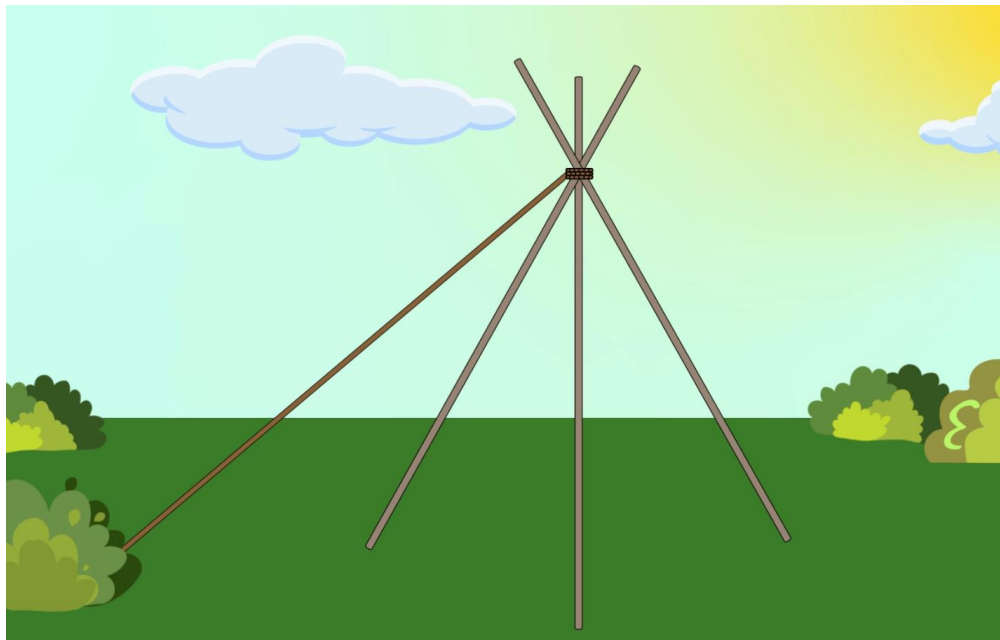
An Indigenous Research Paradigm acknowledges the Creator and the gifts, purpose and plan he has given to each individual person (Lee, 2016). The primary research design is Qualitative and adopts the perspective that Indigenous ontology and epistemologies are relevant modes of knowledge transmission. Hart (2007) found that Indigenous knowledge has various characteristics including:

- a) Holistic;
- b) Personal (subjective);
- c) Social (dependent upon inter-relations);

- d) Highly dependent on local ecosystems;
- e) Intergenerational;
- f) Incorporates the spiritual and physical; and
- g) Heavily reliant on Elders to guide its development and transmission (85).

Picture 6:

Tipi Tripod – Obedience, Respect, and Humility



Hart describes the qualities and characteristics that must be present in Indigenous research. I use the term ‘ways of knowing’ within the research carrying the exact characteristics listed above. Additionally, Hart uses the mikiwahp as a symbol for reclaiming our knowledge and ways of knowing (2007). By using the mikiwahp as a metaphor in relation to knowledge, where the 15 poles of the mikiwahp represent an individual’s perspective, because not one pole can stand alone, they must lean on one another, and the first three poles lay the foundational requirement to hold up the mikiwahp (Hart, 2007).

The importance of spiritual principles within the Indigenous Research Paradigm is significant because of the definition of health being wholistic, is inclusive to the spirit. In “Remembering where I came from,” Hart acknowledges the importance of identity and knowing that Creator has made every person unique with his or her own purpose to live the good life (Hart, 2002). He asserts that as Indigenous peoples’ we are to use the gifts for, not only ourselves, but also for the betterment, wellness and self-determination of our families, communities and nations (Hart, 2002).

Qualitative Research study

For the Qualitative Indigenous research study, participants are 18 years or older and reside on Turtle Island. An informed consent form was provided prior to the interview outlining the risks and benefits of the research. An Online Screening Tool at www.surveymonkey.com was used to recruit participants and distribute to others using word of mouth. The Online Screening Tool gathered questions related to the tipi teachings and demographical data such as ethnic background, age, and home community. Morgan (2020) outlines protocols and best practices for remote online interviews such as ensuring access to the right equipment, applications, and transcription services. The Oral History department was consulted to ensure minimal complications during the in depth interviews using the online applications Zencast and/or Zoom.

The research questions for the in depth interview are:

- 1) What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?
- 2) How does opikinawasowin (traditional child rearing) look today?
- 3) As Indigenous peoples who have survived ongoing inter-generational trauma from colonization, how can we as diverse, unique communities, heal?
- 4) Please provide specific examples or teachings from your healing journey.

In depth interviews occurred between November 2022 and January 2023 running approximately 30 to 75 minutes in length. All Interviews began by sending a link for the Zencast application for video conferencing and audio/transcript generation. One interview took place on Zoom and transcript generation was performed through Otter Ai. The remaining 10 interviews also had Otter Ai transcription. The principle investigator coded all 11 interviews manually and identified common themes. For the purposes of this Master of Arts, data analysis was completed on the first question about the significance of the tipi in relation to child rearing ways. The last three questions will be analyzed at the next level of research.

Online Screening Tool

Survey monkey was used to administer 17 questions to participants who signed the online consent form. To be eligible for the in depth interview, participants completed the following information:

- 1) Age (over the age of consent in their current city)
- 2) Current City (Postal Code or Zip Code)
- 3) Nation, Tribal Affiliation, First Nation, or home community
- 4) Permission to contact by telephone or by video conferencing

An email was sent to questionnaire participants that agreed to participate in an interview to schedule the in depth interview to document their knowledge and experience with tipi teachings in relation to child rearing ways. This method was used to retrieve instrumental and relevant ontological and epistemological data from knowledge holders across Turtle Island.

Observations

Originally recruitment would be online, email, and through posters hung at Universities and community organizations in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We observed that email was no longer a

primary mode of participant and community organization interest. Participant recruitment was online through the Traditional Parenting page, through word of mouth and a handful had emailed as a response of the recruitment posters at University and community organizations. To get a better estimate on the success of online versus community organization recruitment, future studies will include a question on how the participants heard about the research study. Early on in the data collection, the online consent form was added to the first question of the survey monkey to increase the response rate. Under the consent form, full name, email address, and Zip/Postal code was added ensuring the participant contact information was complete prior to moving forward to the questionnaire. An answer was required to all questions to move ahead in the questionnaire. A draw for six gift cards took place online in the Traditional parenting community page. Gift cards, thank you notes, and small gifts were mailed to the six online screening tool participants, interview participants, and the thesis committee.

Traditional and Ethical protocols

Knowledge holder Ko'ona Sabre demonstrated traditional protocols during the 2019 Traditional Parenting Workshop facilitated by knowledge holder Ko'ona Sabre at the University of Winnipeg. Registration was open to any member of a Manitoba First Nation (a member of Treaty 1 to 5). In the workshop, I observed the protocols and ethics used in the Traditional parenting workshop. Furthermore, the recruitment poster was emailed to attendees of the Traditional Parenting Workshop in November 2022 during the recruitment phase of research. Chilisa (2012) states that the use of a culturally responsive methodology acknowledges the local histories, traditions, and knowledge systems of the participants, communities, and/or Nations who participate. According to Kovach (2009), Indigenous research that flows from an

Indigenous paradigm generally shows ethical considerations such as research grounded in Indigenous values, community accountability, benefits the community, and does no harm.

This research is approved by the University Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Winnipeg as of April 14, 2022 for 1 year. A renewal was submitted and approved for an additional year beginning April, 14, 2023 to ensure adequate time to complete the data analysis. Through the guidance of knowledge holder Ko'ona Saber, the research is mindful and holistic. Ko'ona was able to sit on the Thesis Committee and provided assistance throughout the research process, especially during the recruitment phase. Creswell (2013) states that ethical issues can arise in various points of the research process such as prior to the study, beginning the study, collecting data, analyzing data and reporting, sharing and storing data. No ethical issues arose during any stage of the research.

Part 2: Meditation on the Spirit



Niya

I am the people
From the 4 directions

Wahkowitzin

We are all related
Everything within Creation has your Spirit
The Spirit of Life

Thank you,
For the galaxies
The sun and moon
The earth and sky

We respect and honour all of Creation
The four legged
Winged ones in the sky
The ones in the waters

Wahkotowin

Thank you for the land from which you made us
And all of humanity
We are all one Spirit

Thank you for your breath of life
And for unconditional Love
The spiritual force that cuts through time and space

Thank you for the Spirit in our hearts
May we radiate light as you have designed us

Wahkotowin

Everything in creation is connected
May we honor Life
And send love to the people of the four directions

I am all people
Sending Light and love to all of creation

All my relations

Chapter 4: Indigenous ways of knowing

“Indigenous people believe that all four races were created. One is not better, and one is not worse. All four races of Man were created at the time when Man was created and went to different directions. All others believe that creation began with them. Them is the key because the stories were centered around them.

The story of creation starts from darkness and goes forward from there. Look at every creation story and how it begins with darkness.” (Elder Gary Robson, 2022)

Tansi kiya. Niya nehiyaw iskwew ekwa nidodem pihisiw. Hi, how are you? I am a Cree woman and my clan is the Thunder Clan. Moving forward, we shift our gaze to Great Spirit, Kichi Manitou, and meditating on the stories, wisdoms, and virtues I carry on this healing journey. From Elder Mary Lee’s explanation of how the medicine wheel represents the life journey of human; there are four inter-related life stages child, adolescent, adult and Elder. we begin in the center starting from self, we look out and create the circle along our life journey. Therefore, time in relation to human life stages, is circular. As shown in Figure 12, we are to start in the East side when we are *eshkwasis* (new child) in and grow into the next life stage. Recall from Chapter 2, this circle represents the life cycle of the humanity. In order to start on the healing journey, we need to know who we are. We are always learning and growing. Below are some teachings I received while on my healing journey in Winnipeg Manitoba, the Heart of the Turtle.

There is a light at the University of Manitoba located at *Migizii Agamik*, Bald Eagle Lodge. As a Student Advisor at the Indigenous Student Centre, I had the honour to attend the Winter Solstice Ceremony on December 21, 2019 led by Elders Garry Robson and Carl Stone. After the ceremony, Gary and I had a conversation and he advised me that my spirit name seven star woman was significant. He asked if I had heard about Paleides, the hole in the sky. I had not.

3 years later, Gary's words about Paleides came to my remembrance. In 2022, during a phone conversation about my thesis he advised me to research Creation stories about Paleides. He said that Northman Vikings, Romans and Greeks also have stories about Paleides. He told me that Paleides is a group 7 stars in the sky that make a circle; they call this circle the hole in the sky.

Teachings by Elder Gary Robson

Solstice Ceremony 2019

Gary is 74 years old but he has survived 73 winters. The winter solstice represents darkness and is the woman's voice time. The woman is night (longest), and is represented by the moon which controls the water. The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year which is conception of life. This darkness is required for new life. For example, no animals are born in the winter. On the other hand, the summer solstice represents man and is the shortest night. The fire represents the man, and the summer solstice is the man's voice time. Therefore, we need both woman and man, which are two equals. Additionally, the summer and winter solstice, June 21st and December 21st, are celebrated for 4 days and then life is coming back so we have a feast and give gifts. People have forgotten their teachings and these ways (Robson, 2022).

Conception - The Egg and the Sperm

In Winnipeg, provincial, municipal leaders and Indigenous leaders have been attempting to "solve problems" within Indigenous communities. In Chapter 1, we saw that Manitoba provincial policies are continuously being tweaked and adjusted to try and "stop" the negative outcomes and disparities in wholistic health among Indigenous Turtle Islanders. Jobs are created to surveil, document, and report but they never address the root of the problem. Therefore, to best address the issue, we must go back to the beginning of Life, the start of the life cycle.

Figure 7:

Creator's formula: The egg and the sperm

Women are the Circle

Ova/Ovum



Men are the Line

Sperm



Creator's Formula:



+



=

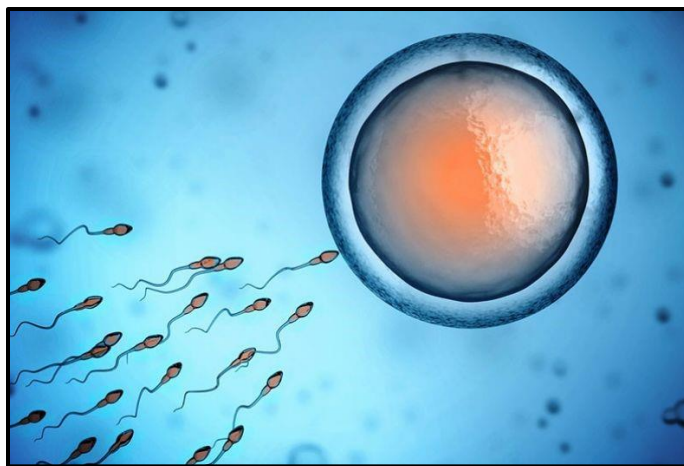
Conception of New Life

Note: for human life to be conceived, both the egg and sperm are required

Children are genetically the father and the Mother. Biologically, females contribute a bit more than 50% of the DNA because they contribute the mitochondrial genome (Good, 2023). They also exert more environmental effects on the fetus/child because of in utero environmental effects (Good, 2023).

Picture 7:

Conception



Note: Retrieved from <https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/conception-how-it-works>

Genetics

In human reproduction, there are many variables. Conception occurs in darkness, and new life occurs once the egg is fertilized by a sperm. Egg and sperm are haploid unlike other cells, which means that they have only half of the genetic material. Genetic material is required from both the mother and the father. Humans cannot create a new life without the man and woman. There is a balance in creation. Creator's way of making new life in all of creation is unique but at the same time follows a similar formula. This awareness is essential for understanding the miracle of new life and how to apply the Circle of Life Analysis. Indigenous ways of knowing and Science are one and the same. The dominant paradigm, biomedical science, does not understand the origin of life. They are missing what happens in the beginning. With no awareness about Creation, all of their assessments, processes, solutions, etc. are missing the mark. Only meditation on the spirit provide results because creator knows the inner workings and design of each person.

Creator is the common denominator (Who you Are)

Everything within creation has a spirit (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Everything and everyone in creation has a purpose, plan and gifts. Every living thing has a life cycle. This is Creator's universal formula. Creator made everything therefore the formula for creation appears as this:

Formula 1:

Creator's formula

$$\frac{\text{All of creation}}{\text{The Creator of the Universe}} = 1$$

Note: Equation signifies our relationship with Creator and all of creation to make a Whole

All people will begin their life cycle when they know who they are. Creator made four races of man, with their own unique gifts, purpose, and plan. When a man and a woman reproduce, conception occurs and we are brought into this World through the miracle of life. This new life begins a life cycle as Creator has designed us.

Creators Formula and the generations

Elder Gary Robson mentions the “Finding their roots” series where a Black genealogist uses genetics and family trees to find out where you came from (Robson, 2022). I use the concept of generational learning in my teaching. As a Nehiyaw iskwew my teaching point of view is the opposite of Western academia because I embrace the individuality of each student. For example, I view every person as unique with their own gifts, purpose, and plan. From this perspective, we inevitably recognize that each person learns in a different way. As an educator, I use a holistic student-centered approach as shown in Chapter 1.

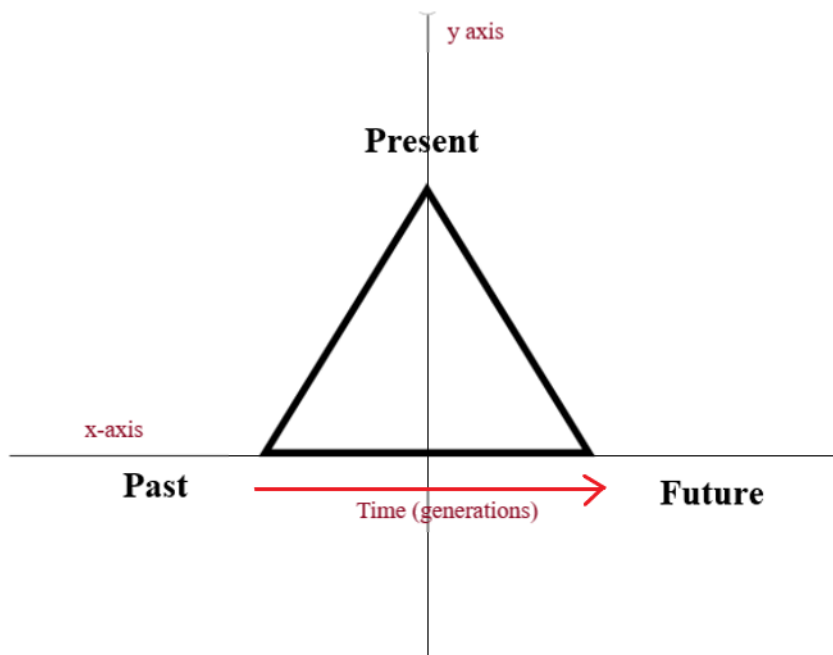
Generational learning means that we acknowledge the life cycle of a human. For example, when we look at the life journey of humanity we see it is a lifelong process of growing children. For generational learning to be successful, we must know these four life stages of the life cycle and understand that each stage is essential in learning and teaching. We adapt our learning/teaching to the audience.

Elder Mary Lee’s tipi teachings show a lifelong learning as well as learning certain virtues within stages of life. The concept of time is a variable that must be included in any effective learning assessment, health treatment, service provision, etc. in colonial derived institutions. The social determinants of health show that time is a variable that we cannot ignore. For this reason, I use the Indigenous understanding of seven generations to show how trauma resulting from policies established during the formation of Canada (Indian Act, Residential

schools Act, the 60 scoop Act, and now the Child Welfare Act) impact Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. Since Time is a variable on most scientific graphs, it would also be on the x axis on the Generational Graph in as seen below.

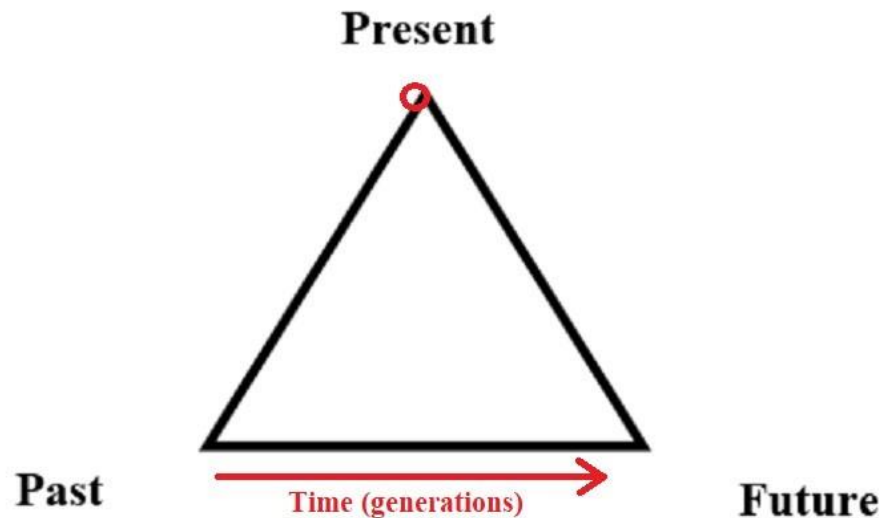
Figure 8:

Four periods of time: Past, Present, Future, Eternity



Note: Louis 2023. Envisioned from Rueben Quinn's teaching on the number four philosophy. Reuben states there are four periods of time (2016).

Nature is used to measure time in Indigenous ways of knowing because of our land based way of life (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). For example, the moon cycle is used to mark different phases of time (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Figure 8 shows the four periods of time envisioned from teachings of Reuben Quinn (2016). I imagine myself standing at the top of the triangle in the present time. I will need to look to the past 7 generations in order to make the correct choices today in order to make the greatest impact on the next 7 generations. We all need to be connected to creator and to know what choices to make to positively impact ourselves and progeny.

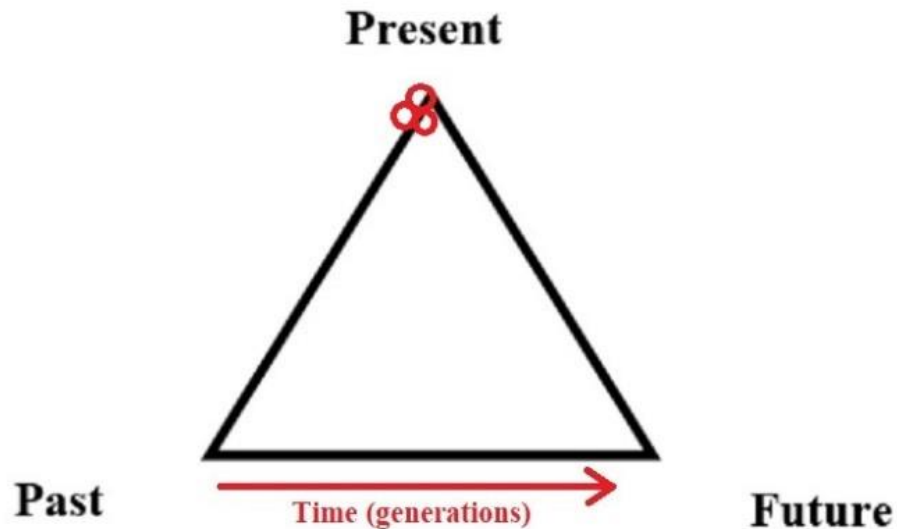
Graph 2:*The Generational Graph*

My complete life cycle as Creator intended is at the top of the Generational Graph and my life cycle is in progress. According to the seven generation teaching it would take seven generations to heal from the intergenerational harms (White Bison Publishing) caused by colonial laws and policies created during the formation of Canada. To make a good choice now, I must look back *kayas* (long ago) seven generations. The history of my ancestors must be acknowledged to make good choices which will impact the next seven generations. Indigenous ways of knowing are generational seeing. To impact eternity, I mentally collect the following graphical data throughout my healing journey. Through this data, I make choices to ensure my children will not experience the same barriers that I have experienced in this life. This includes the interference I

have experienced through surveillance, documentation, and serial reporting by Child Welfare agencies in Winnipeg.

Graph 3:

Generational Graph which includes the proceeding generation

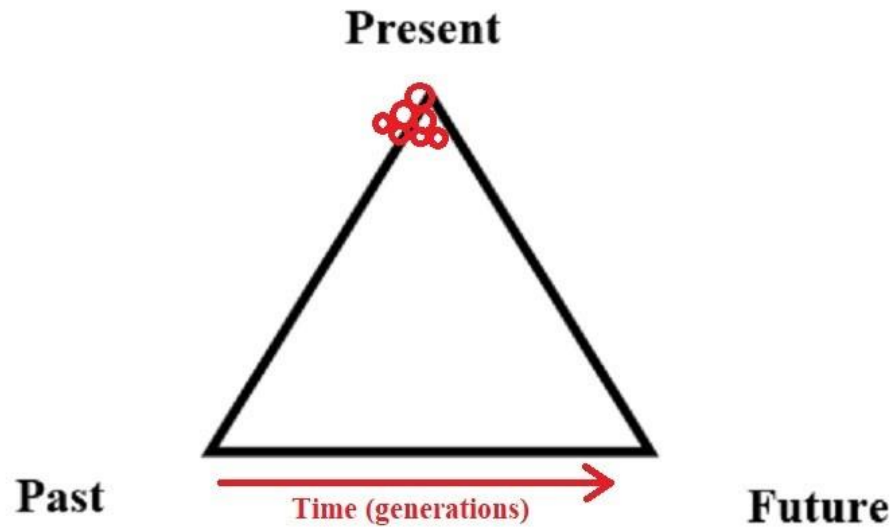


Note: My mother and Father's life cycle is added to the z-axis on my Generational Graph

I am on the top of the circle (today) which indicates this Generational Graph belongs to me. The generation that proceeds mine would be my mother and my father. My parents circle would be half the circumference of my circle because I am created with 1 strand of DNA from my father and 1 strand of DNA from my mother. This means, genetically, I inherit trauma changed DNA equally from both my mother and father.

Graph 4:

Generational Graph showing another generation back



Note: The generational graph includes my Maternal and Paternal Grandparents.

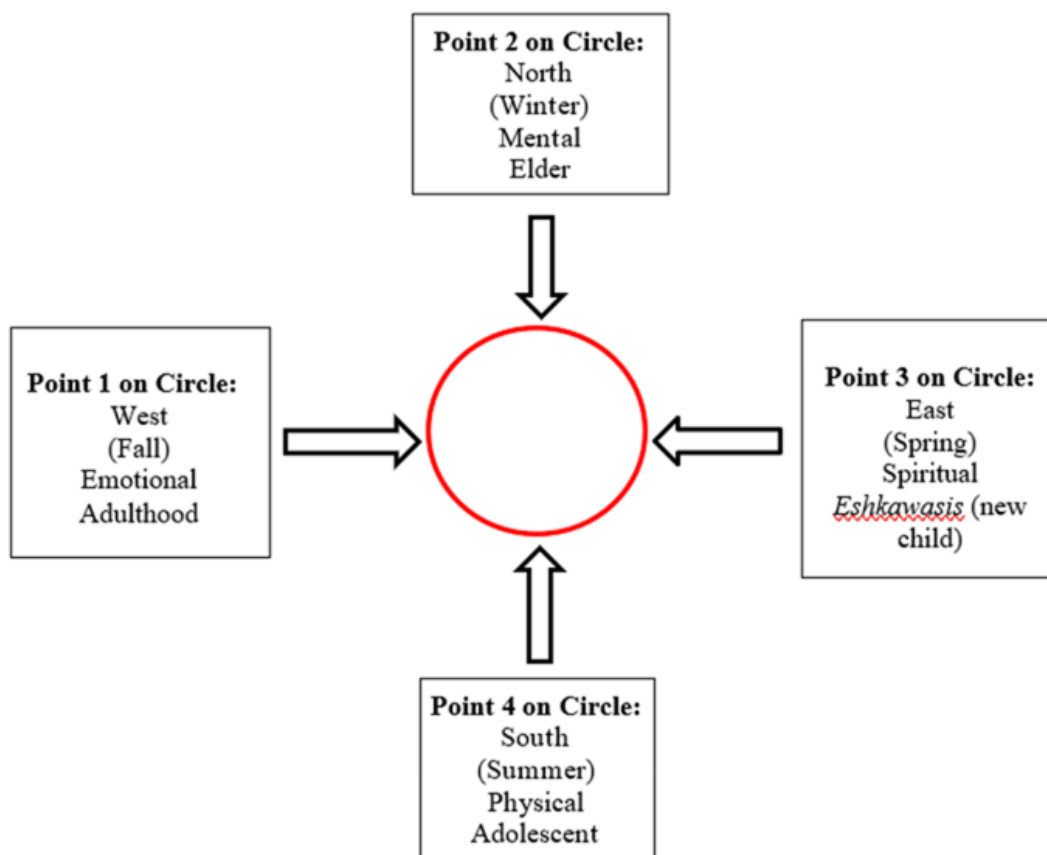
Graph 4 shows my generational graph including my paternal Grandparents and my maternal Grandparents. Now, the smallest circles represent the life cycles of my grandparents. The circles are half the circumference of my parents' life cycle showing that I will also be inheriting traumas (in a lesser percentage) of all four of my grandparents.

Understanding the intergenerational trauma in one's family tree helps us to break cycles we may not be aware of. When a person does not know who they are in Creators' eyes they do not begin the life cycle. Because of the history of the formation of Canada there are abundant broken circles in Indigenous North America. Adding this lens to generational learning illustrates trauma-informed education practices for learners in all life stages.

Circle of Life Analysis

For miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin, we must know who we are when we are born. Growing up, I knew I was Native but no more. Nimama is half Jamaican and half British born in Bristol, United Kingdom and moved to Manitoba when she was 14 years of age. Nipapa registered later in life to Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation (my granny Barbara was half native and nimosom was full native), but my dad did not feel accepted by WSN; these emotions are the results of colonial policies including but not limited to the Indian Act, residential school act, 60s scoop act and child welfare act. The dominant paradigm is breaking our circles, our life cycles, which continues to segregate and divide, to put people against people. Since my dad struggled with alcoholism since I was a baby. I began a good relationship with my father in my teenage years. I was blessed to receive a father by spirit, my step dad Ricardo from Chile who I was raised by. I am thankful for my father and stepfather as they have both impacted my life which has brought me to where I am today. Spiritual families are also wahkotowin, we are all related. The relationships we have with spiritual mothers, fathers, and siblings are just as strong as biological relations.

I became a registered Indian at 22 years old and I knew that I was registered in WSN but still had no connection. In 2011, I went to visit WSN for the first time and meet my granny (Grandfathers sister), my auntie Lori and my cousins. I have many relatives. My granny, Tina, told us stories about how we were all Sapotoyak reserve but nimosom applied to get a new reserve called Indian Birch Wuskwi Sipiik. Good relations with our families, knowing our genealogy and the oral history of our people is essential for healing.

Figure 9:*Aimee's Life Cycle*

Note: Using Aimee's Identity to show "Broken Circles". I start my spiritual journey at Point 1 on the circle in the West direction. Although I was physically 22 years old, I was being born in the spiritual sense and began my journey of miyo pimatisiwin because I finally knew nimosom and nitocin.

The Circle of Life Analysis is when we go back to the beginning and understand how new life begins. Without going back to the beginning – that is *Creation* – we cannot understand the root. For my situation, at 22 years old I became aware of my community Wuskwi Sipihk First Nation, that led me to meet my cousins, aunts, and granny Tiny Audy Stevens. Tina Stevens is a catholic and fluent Cree speaker who never attended residential school. She told me about my nimosom – her brother the Late Chief Charlie Audy. Below is a picture of my granny on her 82nd birthday.

When we apply the 7 generations approach using the visual graphical data, we can begin to see exactly what inter-generational trauma looks like.

Picture 8:

Granny Tina (Audy) Stevens



Note: 82nd birthday in 2022

7 generations approach

In trauma trails - Recreating Story lines: The Transgenerational Effects of trauma in Indigenous Australia, Atkinson asserts that the colonialist history in Australia has created trails of transgenerational trauma which negatively impacts Indigenous peoples' (2012). Atkinson uses the framework called *Daadiri* "listening to each other" which is used among the Māori. This relates to Indigenous protocols for the culturally appropriate research among Māori survivors of

colonial history. From her analyses of “these stories of pain, stories of healing”, she is able to point both Indigenous and non-Indigenous readers in the direction of change and healing. She defines trauma as an event or process which overwhelms the individual, family, or community, and the ability to cope in mind, body, soul, spirit; and that transgenerational trauma caused by colonialism is transmitted across a number of generations (Atkinson, 2012). I use Atkinson’s definition of transgenerational trauma to explain how policies and legislation such as the child welfare industry in Canada results in negative outcomes across many generations.

Renee Linklater states that *Ozhaawashkobinesi* (Blue Thunderbird) is Anishinabe kwe from the Otter Clan. In her book, *Decolonizing Trauma Work*, the author explores healing and wholistic wellness in Indigenous Communities across Turtle Island. She coins the term ‘soul wound’ of colonialism, which is at the center of her decolonizing approach. Linklater shares the story of 10 Indigenous professionals in a dialogue regarding wholistic health critiques of psychiatry as well as Indigenous approaches to helping people through trauma, depression and experiences. Through stories and strategies that are grounded in an Indigenous paradigm, Linklater offers practical methods to help individuals and communities that experienced trauma:

“For the most part, Indigenous trauma has largely been diagnosed through non Indigenous theories. Western frameworks of psychiatry and psychology have medicalized the experiences of indigenous peoples, applying digital diagnosis such as post-traumatic stress disorder, further pathologizing their trauma. Yet there are Indigenous health care practitioners that utilize strategies that are rooted in Indigenous philosophies worldview and trauma informed approaches” (Linklater, 2014, p.20).

She writes that, “colonization has caused multiple injuries to indigenous people, and therefore many indigenous people experience traumas in a multi traumatic context; Thus, living in and with trauma is a common experience. Yet not all people will be equally traumatized by the same circumstances. Therefore, some indigenous people will experience a high degree of traumatic response, while others may experience little, if any at all” (p. 22-23). This aligns with the life

cycle of humanity; every human journey is different, we all are unique in creation and in our lived experiences. Linklater describes Indigenous Trauma theory:

“Indigenous Trauma theory is beginning to emerge as Indigenous healthcare practitioners and other community workers bring forth a way of understanding current circumstances of community life. These theories are rooted in indigenous experience and worldviews... Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island have been impacted by unique form of trauma resulting from European colonization. The trauma resulting from mass deaths caused by foreign disease, the loss of lands and resources through relocation and treaties, the imposition of state legislation and institutions, including residential boarding schools and the child welfare system, were foreign and unpredictable. They were not in the cultural context that was familiar to Indigenous peoples” (Linklater, 2014, p.32).

We are beginning to grasp that Indigenous Worldview is essential to heal Indigenous peoples. As discussed in Chapter 1, Indigenous health practitioners are trained in the biomedical model of medicine and they often utilize western methods, such as race based research. Linklater expresses how we will need more Indigenous healthcare practitioners that are grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing. However, being grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing while implementing western methods will not “solve” the root because the two concepts clash. In the book chapter “Cultural wounds demand cultural medicine,” Chandler and Dunlop (2015) have two main conclusions:

“The first is that the sum total of malaise and ill-health suffered by Canada’s (and the world’s) Indigenous peoples is best understood, not as some simple aggregate or additive sum of the personal woes of separately damaged individuals, but as a culmination of ‘cultural wounds’ inflicted upon whole communities and whole ways of life. Yes, of course, the raw nerve endings of those in distress are naturally wired to pain centers in the private brains of single sufferers, but the various forms of wholesale damage communally inflicted on whole peoples is collective, rather than simply personal, and multiplicative, rather than simply additive.

The second of these conclusions is that such shared cultural wounds require being addressed, not one individual sufferer at a time, but require instead being communally treated with ‘cultural medicines’ prescribed and acted upon by whole cultural communities. Taken together, the broad implication of both of these position statements is that, when it comes properly catching on, most suicide prevention efforts have been fishing in ‘the wrong pond.’” (p.147)

Chapter 5: Indigenous Ethics

Picture 9:

Arvol Lookinghorse (2022)



Note: <https://worldpeaceandprayer.com/> retrieved March 1, 2023

Land as our Mother

The land is who we are as Indigenous peoples and we must remember where we came from (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). The teachings we receive in ceremony are fundamental to understanding how we came to be. I first met Arvol Lookinghorse at the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada (IPAC) Culture Camp for Indigenous Medical Students in August 2009 at Blue Quills. Below is a Prayer that Arvol spoke on June 21, 2021:

“Maka akantula (People of the earth),

This is our 25th year in our efforts to bring attention to the importance of the remaining Sacred Sites around the world; where we have visited Nations and honored their ancestor’s place of worship.

One day I would like to see “Honoring Sacred Sites Day, June 21st” recognized all over the world, when people will finally understand their importance.

My personal direction and responsibility has been to pay attention to our prophecy of White Buffalo Calf Woman. She said there would come a time when a sign would show where man's behavior had gone too far in their destructive choices. And our Ancestors have shared from ceremony — “we warned – people would not be able to control what they have created.”

In 1994, the same year Global Warming was first announced, in Janesville Wisconsin, a white buffalo calf with black hooves, black nose and eyes was born. She was named Miracle. Many people came from the four directions to pay homage, because spiritual people knew this was a blessing and yet a warning.

Since that time, many white animals around the world have revealed themselves to Nations that hold them important in their culture. Memories I recall through this 25 year journey; while with Aboriginal Nations in Australia, a white kangaroo came out of the bush during our ceremony, and being shown pictures of Migalo, the white whale, in the great waters. Many of these white animals are still coming, telling us to pay attention to the choices we have to make, to change our behavior. This attention is to respect the gifts from Mother Earth, to respect one another's way of life in helping to protect Sacred Sites, bring respect back to Nation's sacred spiritual items and ceremonies that are now being abused.

We will come together once again during this time, but now we are being asked to stand apart, in order to be safe. We are told we need to keep distance if we respect one another – because a dark spirit has come upon us that is causing much suffering for all humanity.

In this present time there is a lot of anger, hatred and racism. We need to create change in all our lives and respect one another's ways of prayer. We know in our hearts that good will always overcome if we stand in unity.

Some of the places where we have created a sacred fire will be able to join us during this time. We will visit them through technology, where they will share what they have witnessed since our visit to their territory.

I humbly ask people to join together in prayer for a great healing, even by lighting a candle within your home and offer tobacco outside to the earth to give thanks.

There are now the crossroads: either be faced with global disasters, earth changes, climate changes, different sicknesses causing tears from our relatives' eyes – or we can unite spiritually, globally – All Nations, All Faiths, One Prayer.

In a Sacred Hoop of Life, where there is no ending and no beginning!

It is time all People understand Mother Earth is the Source of life, not a resource.

Onipiktec'a (that we shall live)” (Arvol Lookinghorse, 2021).

Circle of Life Analysis

Colonial Acts, policies and legislations result in the dislocation of peoples from their land, meaning they are lost, disconnecting and their true identities. “Signing” the Treaties led to the creation of the Indian Act. I choose the term dislocate so the medical community can be clear that the mechanism of action, that is removing Turtle Islanders from their way of life is not displacement. Displacement implies a secondary event of people settling whereas dislocation implies that the people are cut off from their land, language, culture, and way of life. For instance, if your shoulder joint was dislocated the blood supply would also be cut off therefore an intervention is required as soon as possible. Another example is testicular torsion which is a medical emergency. When something is dislocated, twisted, and restricted from its blood supply it eventually dies. The biomedical approach is to ‘cut it off’ or to ‘segregate’ people to small plot of lands called reserves, then the people also die. Turtle Island is our mother, as they say in Manitoba *Ininiw*, we are the land. To put Turtle Islanders on small plots of land they suffocate our mother. Reuben explains that Cree word for reserve translates to ‘left overs’ (2014). We need Creator’s perspective and we need to know that Turtle Island is our mother. When we have Creator’s perspective, we know who we are, and then we are on the circle beginning our life cycles as human beings wholistically, spiritually.

Policies have morphed from Indian act to Residential Schools Act to 60s scoop Act to Child Welfare Act. When Canada was formed the intention of the first policy was to assimilate so every other policy that follows will have the same result, regardless of the name. Signing our land away is the mechanism of action. Our people do not know they can say no to CFS when they come to the door. They believe that CFS will help them but in reality only Creator can help

them. We must turn towards Kichi Manitou and reject government policies which systemically harm Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

The importance of understanding the treaties

Patricia Makokis, '79 *BEd*, has devoted her life to building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous culture. I am honoured to have relationships with Patricia, Eugene, Janice and Dr. James Makokis during my time in Edmonton, Alberta from 2009 to 2016. Patricia's family welcomes us to ceremony and family gatherings with open arms. Below are some teachings she shares from "Kayas – Looking back to the beginning: The importance of understanding the treaties:"

"At contact, our ancestors welcomed our white relatives and agreed to share the land with conditions. Those conditions, negotiated with the crown, include the constitutionally recognized right to access the land for food as, as well as many other entitlements such as the right to education and health care. These rights have been affirmed many times by the courts. In other words, we *all* - Indigenous and non-Indigenous - have a responsibility for Treaty relationships.

In the Indigenous Worldview, we do not own the land. We are stewards of the land, our Mother Earth. How can we own our mother? Rather, we respect and protect our mother. That same respect is offered to our four-legged relative, the moose. If we kill a moose for food, we offer tobacco to its spirit because we believe it gave up its life so we have life, in the cycle of life. My husband and I are teaching our grandson about this spiritual connection and responsibility so he will have the same respect for the land, the animals, the fish, the insects and the waters, just as our ancestors taught us to respect the land and our other relatives." (Makokis, 2021, p. 12)

Our Mother Earth is sacred and we are thankful for all of her gifts. Our grandfathers, grandfathers passed down to us what was explained during negotiations. We know the oral history of the formation of Canada and we must be guided by our own Constitutions, by our own way of life. We have not surrendered our land or our way of life. At the time, the Crown proclaimed many "benefits" to signing the Treaties such as annual payments of \$5 for each registered Indian.

Picture 10:*Elder Gary Robson Story*

Note: Elder Gary Robson gets his \$5 Treaty payment. Winnipeg free press, 2011

In Treaty 6, our ancestors negotiated the Medicine Chest clause signifying the importance of health of the people. During Treaty negotiations it was declared that as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow, the Treaty agreement would remain intact. Elder Gary Robson exhibits the ceremonial aspect of the Treaties and how this contract was brought before the Creator:

“Gary Robson, an Anishinabe elder, steps forward, greying braids brushing a beaded moosehide vest, and starts to talk about the Treaty. Robson points out the flag, the \$5 bills and the Mountie as ceremonial symbols to government officials and the Treaty Indians watching him.

“These Treaty payments are ceremonies,” Robson says, “a recognition of the relationship of Nation to Nation. We have to understand this flag means something,” he says, and gestures to the Maple Leaf.

The first Treaty was signed in 1871 in front of the British Union Jack during Queen Victoria’s reign. Robson’s ancestors from Peguis, may have been among the 3,000 people who witnessed the first Treaty...

“When those treaties were signed, they were signed as Nation to Nation. It has to be recognized that as First Nations, we never gave up our rights,” Robson says.

The first ceremony opened up tracts of land in Winnipeg and southern Manitoba to settlement. Another 10 Treaties opened up the rest of the West, and were followed by a century of mistreatment.

“The Treaty ceremony is vital because it is the one day a year when First Nations are recognized as founding Nations,” Robson says. Robson breathes a prayer to seal his words and turns the podium over to Treaty commissioner” (Winnipeg free press, 2011)

Robson illustrates the spiritual side of the Treaties and considers receiving annual Treaty payments a ceremony. During the Treaty negotiations and the pipe was smoked, Creator was invited into the negotiation. The Treaty agreements are not merely words, there is a spirit in the Treaties that means nothing to mooniyawak. In fact, spirit is life.

Map 3:

Turtle Island Perspective of Treaty Negotiations



Note: The historical Treaties of Canada (2001, Natural Resources Canada)

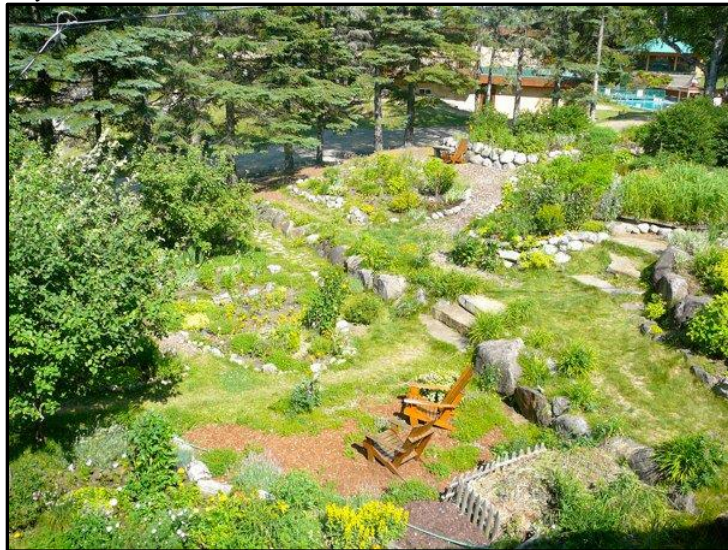
The Turtle Island Perspective can be applied to any scenario. When we zoom out to see the top half of the Turtle, we see what year each Treaty was signed. Recall the idea of owning the land (Lookinghorse, Makokis, among others) was not a concept Indigenous Turtle Islanders could conceive. Not honouring the Treaties results in our sick Mother Earth, a sick Turtle Island. Mother Earth has been treated badly in many ways (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Money is at the root of some of her sickness; when money was brought here, they removed all of Creator's gifts our mother's body (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Moreover, we see the results of the dislocated people/land every day. When we walk outside downtown Winnipeg and see all the lost brothers and sisters who have forgotten *who they are* and *where they come from*.

Chapter 6: Miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin

“Our names are not always something we want but something we are to learn from and learn how to be.” (Elder Gary Robson, 2019)

Picture 11:

Sivananda Ashram July 9, 2010



Note: Located in the Laurentian Mountains in Val Morin, Quebec

In the summer of 2010, I successfully completed a 200-hour yoga teacher certificate training at the Sivananda ashram situated in the Laurentian Mountains of Quebec. It was then that I was trained to shut down the computer that is mind and sit in silence; there was no technology allowed in the ashram and the yoga training was for 30 days. Ashram guests are awakened daily by a large bell that was rung at 5am. Each morning at 6am and each evening at 6pm we had *Satsang*, where we would gather and sit on the floor in meditation for a set amount of time. During the last week of yoga training could be given a spiritual name and/or mantra. I opted for the spirit name and was given the name *Anandi*. I was advised the name means ‘*giver of love.*’ The name *Anandi* is translated to: *One who Brings Happiness, Bliss and Joy; Jovial; Bestower of Pleasure.*

The Tipi Teachings

“In our language, for old woman, we say, *Notegweu*. Years ago we used the term *Notaygeu*, meaning when an old lady covers herself with a shawl. A tipi cover is like that old woman with a shawl. As it comes around the tipi, it embraces all those teachings, the values of community that the women hold. No matter how many children and great grandchildren come into that circle of hers, she always still has room. And if you put it up right, the poles never show on the bottom, and that tipi stands with dignity, just as, years ago, women always covered their legs with the skirt, which also represents the sacred circle of life. And when you put the flaps up, it teaches you how we embrace life itself. It’s like a woman standing there with her arms out, saying “Thank you” to everything.

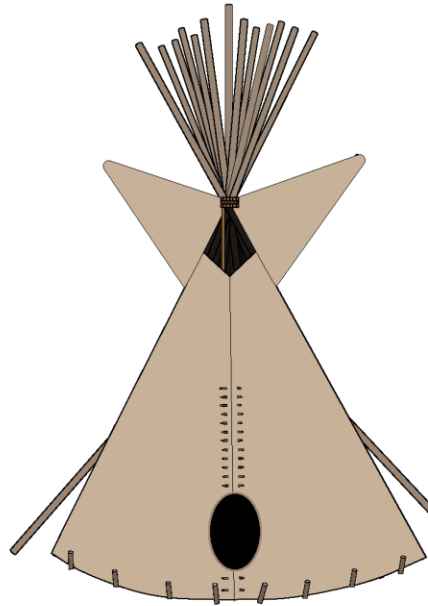
That is what the tipi is - it is the spirit and body of woman, because she represents the foundation of family and community. It is through her that we learn the values that bring balance into our lives. That is why, when you construct a tipi, it involves ceremony: because the ceremony of making a tipi represents the value of women’s teachings” (Lee, 2006, p.4).

The tipi teachings help us understand the spiritual side of *miyo pimatisiwin opikawasowin*. Likewise, they help to ingrain belief systems and promote togetherness among individuals, families, and communities. We require a ‘paradigm shift’ within the World and begin to place

value on the woman, *iskwewak*. Only then will there be a return to balance on Turtle Island and the healing of our Mother Earth.

Picture 12:

Mikiwahp



Note: envisioned from Elder Mary Lee tipi teachings (Appendix Mwach ke'kwa'n)

Red Masks, Colonial Minds, and Colonial Hearts

Chapter 1 shows a small component of a larger complex organization chart of Manitoba Child and Family services accountability (Appendix Peyak). This ‘managing’ of people by race, nationhood, First Nation, or community including their geographical region is inflicted upon the Other. The industrial organizational structure of CFS has a direct negative impacts, outcomes and generationally effects on Manitoba Indigenous children, families, and communities. Since moving home to Winnipeg in the summer of 2016, we have had over 40 interactions with Winnipeg “child welfare” offices. From Child Welfare Research Portal:

“Child welfare” is a term used to describe a set of government and private services designed to protect children and encourage family stability. The main aim of these services is to safeguard children from abuse and neglect. Child welfare agencies will typically investigate allegations of abuse and neglect (these activities are called “child protection services”), supervise foster care and arrange adoptions. They also offer services aimed to support families so that they can stay intact and raise children successfully” (<https://cwrp.ca>, 2023).

The child welfare industry is alive and thriving. The commodification of Manitoba Indigenous children, families, and Nations is evident. We know that race based Acts, legislations, policies, and procedures produce the same result because it is designed and implemented with the lens of the Western Worldview. Furthermore, the cultural appropriation and exploitation of Cree people, language, culture and family systems by the Province of Manitoba and its affiliated agencies and organizations is unmistakable. Chart 3 displays information retrieved from the ‘contact us’ tab displaying the 14 sub offices of the Cree Nation Child and Family ‘Caring’ Agency. There is an enormous amount of administration costs to run the 14 offices keeping in mind they operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure the “safety” and “protection” of Manitoba Cree children. The guise of “protecting” awasisak is clear in this algorithmic system enforced onto Nehiyawak and other Manitoba First Nation communities. For context, my reserve is Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation which has 700 registered members with approximately 250 people residing on the reserve. Yet, we have our very own sub office to “serve” those living on reserve. Is it a coincidence that every single cousin that I have met from WSN, has lost their children at birth or during the child life stage of the circle of humanity? These mechanisms erase who children are and where they come from.

Chart 3:

Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency Sub-offices



Note: Aimee Louis (2023) data retrieved from <https://creenation.ca/contact-us/>

Picture 13:

Cree Nation Child and Family “Caring” Agency: Cultural appropriation and exploitation of Nehiyawak culture and family systems



Note: retrieved from <https://creenation.ca/> July, 7, 2023

In the 2015 “Report of educational outcomes of Manitoba Children in Care” by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) on behalf of Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors, at the request of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet (HCCC). The HCCC asked MCHP to identify factors that contribute to the educational success of students in Child and Family Services in Manitoba (e.g., children in foster care or other forms of “out-of-home” care). MCHP was also asked to make recommendations regarding what schools, school divisions, and Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning could do to contribute further to the “educational success” of children in care. By 2015, the Province of Manitoba was surveilling, reporting, and documenting the forced assimilation through the apprehension of Manitoba Indigenous children for decades. “The Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) is located within the Department of Community Health Sciences, College of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Manitoba. The mission of MCHP is to provide accurate and timely information to healthcare decision-makers, analysts and providers, so they can “offer services” which are “effective” and “efficient” in maintaining and improving the health of Manitobans.” (Brownell et al., 2015 p. i) Although the purpose of this report is to improve the “health of Manitobans,” what exactly is accomplished? Funds put into this report tell us what we already know; the Western approach and methods do not align with Turtle Island cultures, traditions, and ways of knowing. The coopted Indigenous sub authors validate these serial algorithmic methodologies continuing their oppression of the Other. Under the heading Background on Children in Care of the Report:

“Compared to other countries, Canada has a very high rate of children in care. Among Canadian provinces and territories, Manitoba has among the highest rates of children in care—over 3% in 2011 (Brownell, 2013). The number of children in care in Manitoba increased substantially over the past decade; according to the Manitoba Family Services Annual Report, there were 10,293 Manitoba children in care on March 31, 2014 (Manitoba Family Services, 2014a)” (Brownell et al., 2015 p. xi).

Manitoba Provincial Leaders have known about the disproportionality of the Other in these “child welfare” institutions that remove children by force for over a century. Furthermore, they list “issues” and disparities of Indigenous families proudly producing findings which justify the harm they inflict onto the Other:

“The over-representation of Indigenous children in care has its roots in the historical disadvantages experienced by Indigenous peoples, including the negative effects of colonization and the inter-generational impact of the residential school system which separated children from their families and subjected many children to maltreatment. The long-term impact of these historical experiences are also at the root of many of the difficulties experienced by First Nations and Metis families today, including suicide, family violence, substance abuse, mental health issues, and parenting challenges (Ball, 2008; Blackstock, Trocmé, & Bennett, 2004; Sinha, Trocmé, Blackstock, MacLaurin, & Fallon, 2011; Tilbury & Thoburn, 2011; Wright, 2013); these are the very challenges that contribute to children going into care” (Brownell et al., 2015 p. xi).

Brownell et al. proudly boast about all the reasons why Indigenous people are “guilty” and need protective services. Bias such as the second half of this quote are ingrained into biomedical, multi-disciplinary health professionals from Manitoba and other provinces. Furthermore, the lifelong surveillance of children who ‘age out’ of the Child and Welfare system via provincial policies, such as birth alerts, have the same result as the first Act, legislation and policy created 150 years ago. The cultural appropriation by the province via Social Service Agencies that are labelled Metis, Cree and so on, when they are not created by or staffed by Metis, Cree, etc. Services are provided using the Western assumption that Indigenous peoples are less than and need “help.” Nevertheless, the key findings from the report are essential to understand the roots of colonialism and the political legislature designed to assimilate Indigenous peoples:

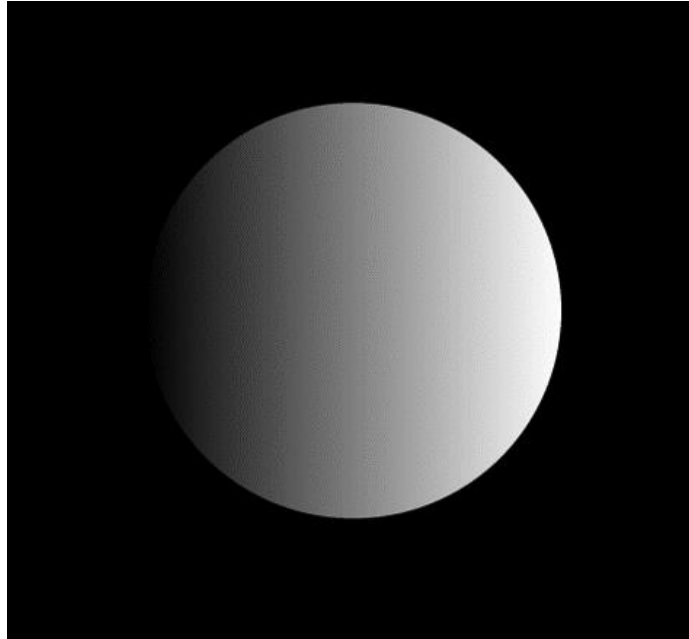
“Age at first entry into care tends to be quite young, with almost one third (32.9%) of the children in care during our study period having their first entry into care before their first birthday; nearly half of these children were taken into care at birth.”

“How long children stay in care is strongly related to age of entry into care: children who enter care at younger ages tend to stay longer. For children who enter care at less than one year of age, over one quarter (26%) stay at least 12 years in care. For children who

enter care at age five or older, one quarter stay at least three years” (Brownell et al., 2015 p. xii - xiii).

Everyone is a teacher

Recall Elder Mary Lee explains how the medicine wheel represents the life journey of people and that teaching about beginning at self; we look out and face the East direction and make our circle. The process she describes is introspection. Additionally, when learning the syllabics from Reuben, we also draw our first syllabic in the series starting in the center. Time is not linear and we must start at the beginning of conception when making a correct patient-centered assessment rooted in the fundamentals of Absolon’s Wholistic Theory (2010). The life cycle of humanity needs to be considered when assessment and analysis are implemented to achieve the most effective result. When we first enter this World as Creator has designed us, we are meant to grow alongside our parents who are also on their own life cycle. Our life as human beings is only possible because of the conception that occurred from the gametes (egg and sperm) from our mother and father. Each person is created with gifts that are developed through the life stages. We are all individuals, on our own healing journey, on our own circle and every human carries lived experiences that are valuable. Additionally, the circle represents everyone, no one is excluded, and no one is higher or lower while together in a circle because they are in unity. Everyone is a teacher and people have the answers we seek, that is Creator’s formula. The more people who are involved, the closer we get to Creator’s formula. Creator sends us teachers. Every single person we cross paths with is a teaching us something we need to know in order to grow but we can only learn when we look inwards. Not one person has all the answers. You need all of the people to have the wisdom of Creator. This is the Turtle Island perspective.

Figure 10:*Turning towards the Creator*

Note: Since following the direction of Creator, I am now facing the East basking in the light and radiating the light.

Figure 10 “Turning Towards the Creator” uses Elder Mary Lee’s approach. We start from self, that is introspection, and we are in the center of the circle. When we are born and do not know who we are, we are facing toward the West direction and we are in darkness. Eventually, we learn who we are from our parents, if they have the privilege of knowing who they are; on Turtle Island knowing who you are and where you come from is a privilege because of the process of colonization. I truly began to understand my identity when I sat with Elders and listened with intention. Once we become a witness and begin listening to that small voice, the spirit within our Hearts, only then do we begin to turn to the light. Once we are connected to light and we follow Creator’s direction, we turn closer towards the light, to the East of the circle in Figure 10. We are presented with choices. Our choices either glorify Creator and we turn towards the light, or we glorify the self and remain in darkness.

Opikinawasowin

The lifelong process of growing our children means that we all start the circle in the East direction at birth. When we look back 7 generations, we learn what has happened, we go back to the beginning. All creation stories remind us of the importance of timelines and going back to the beginning. We need to know these timelines as shown in the generational graphs in Chapter 4.

Land and People are one in the same. *Ininiw* means from the land in Nehiyawewin. Cree language group can be broken down further by dialects. There are 5 Cree dialects (y, n, th, r, and l) and the language spans a large amount of Turtle Island land mass. In Map 4 the Cree Language Continuum, Cree is a large portion of Turtle Island. Land is the people, but the people are also the Language which spans the land from which we are created as shown in Map 2 the Linguistic groups of Turtle Island. It is also important to note that language is a continuum whereas the people are constant. When people are created they exist and are part of the whole shown by Formula 1. Wherever the person lives or moves is irrelevant because they are alive and contribute to the whole. Cree is both a language and a people interchangeably, we can create the equation:

Formula 2:

Cree = Land + People

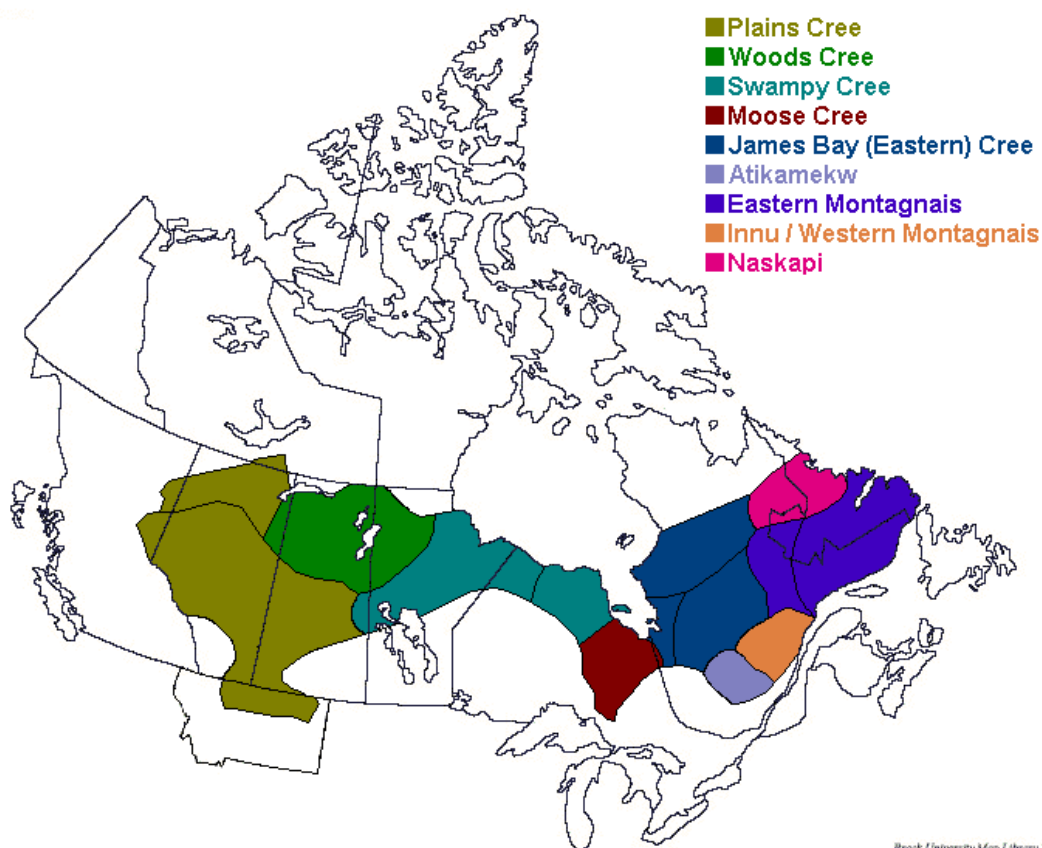
Chapter 2 shows that Language and Land are also one as in Map 2. Many Turtle Island names for people/human beings also translates to ‘of the land’. Therefore, the full equation looks like:

Formula 3:

Definition of Nehiyawak

Cree = $\frac{\text{Language} + \text{Land} + \text{People}}{\text{Cree}} = 1$

Note: Cree are 3 in 1

Map 4:*Cree Language Continuum*

Note: <https://creeliteracy.org/2013/04/15/which-cree-is-which/>

Since Cree people are both the language and land we cannot separate the term Cree without including the 3 aspects of the people because the result is strangulation and suffocation of Mother Earth. When Nehiyawak identify with reserves, or as I call them a tiny dot on the Body of the Turtle, they do not realize their full potential and remain subjects of the Crown. Turtle Islanders with land are prosperous and have a base for the language. We cannot forget the language! The language is key because it shapes our Worldview and identity. Without language we cannot have miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin. Living the good life in child rearing means

that we grow alongside our children as they are our greatest teachers. The children are a reflection of ourselves and where we need to grow.

Relationality in Nehiyawewin

Shawn Wilson defines relationality in his book “Research is ceremony” (2020). Although he describes how research is ceremony using a Western approach, he does not describe the process and ceremony he has used in his healing journey. When we share our story, not only are we healed as humans but we also heal the other’s around us. We are the light. We are all related. Wahkotowin. The Nitsiyihkâson parenting resource, awina kiyanaw (“who are we”; in press), demonstrate relationality in Nehiyawewin ontology and epistemologies. The parenting resource was developed to help parents understand the importance of behaviors that promote attachment with their infants and children, and the traditional teachings which support these practices:

“Nitsiyihkâson means “my name is”. However, the term encompasses more than the factual statement – it relates to the kinship connections of the child to the network of social relationships in the community, and indeed the genetic and spiritual connections the child shares with their ancestors. Therefore, it seeks to understand the child’s connection, linkage, and attachment” (Pazderka, et al, 2014, p.54).

Attachment is fundamental in Nehiyawak child rearing ways. In the book, Untuwe pi kin he: who we are, Manitoba Elders share that many teachings around child rearing skills and teachings did not get passed down to them. Below is an excerpt from Ininiw Elder Madeline Spence:

“When a child knows they are loved they do not forget that. So that they will know from us what had happened to us. They can hear our stories. They will learn what they do not know yet today. We have lost so much as a whole amongst our people. We have lost how to relate to one another. They have lost how people are related to each other. When I was growing up we were told who we were related to and how we were related. Some of these people are so closely related. They told us how we should call each individual through relations. Which ones was I very closely related to. Who were our closest relatives out there. That is why I know how I am related to these two men that are sitting here with me right now.

Long ago we used to gather our children at night and hold them close. You felt their hearts. You loved them. Today kids the same thing. Instead they go and put them in the

room to lie there by themselves. Then they do not know you. And then you feed them milk from a bottle” (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014).

A child’s holistic attachment to their biological parents is natural and has been proven scientifically. Recall the 1958 Harlow Study on attachment that had significant findings in the fields of psychology, and psychiatry:

“Harlow’s monkey experiments were cruel, but it would have been impossible to conduct the same experiments using human infants. Furthermore, Harlow’s experiments helped shift attention to the important role that caregivers provide for children.

When Harlow was publishing his research, the medical fraternity believed that meeting the physical needs of children was enough to ensure a healthy child. In other words, if the child is fed, has water, and is kept warm and clean, then the child will develop into a healthy adult.

Harlow’s experiments showed that this advice was not true and that the emotional needs of infants are critical to healthy development. With love, affection, and comfort, infants can develop into healthy adults” (Nortje, Alicia, 2021).

The evidence based literature about attachment has grown significantly since Harlow’s unethical experiments decades ago. We know that all children need their parents. However, Manitoba Health multidisciplinary professionals continue to harm Indigenous families through the forced removal of children despite the insurmountable evidence and negative outcomes.

Relationality in nehiyawewin is apparent within diminutives. For example, the word for woman is iskwew and the word for girl is iskwesis. The diminutive –sis is added to the end of the word which translate to “little”. Therefore, iskwesis is the Cree word for little woman. We see how relationality and placing ourselves in the World is significant in Nehiyawewin. Pictures of Reuben’s syllabics teachings are below to show the role of women.

Picture 13:

Iskwew teachings from Reuben

Iskwew = woman

Δ n q̇ . o

Schematic hierarchy :

any more { * Milewak → leaders
 * Akohpiyinowak → blanket holders
 Kinteyiyak → respected elders
 opawaminok → ceremony helpers

Rules of the •

The • ("w") consonant is "always" placed to the right of the syllabic. The • ("w") sound is articulated before the syllabic vowel

Δ • Δ • " egg

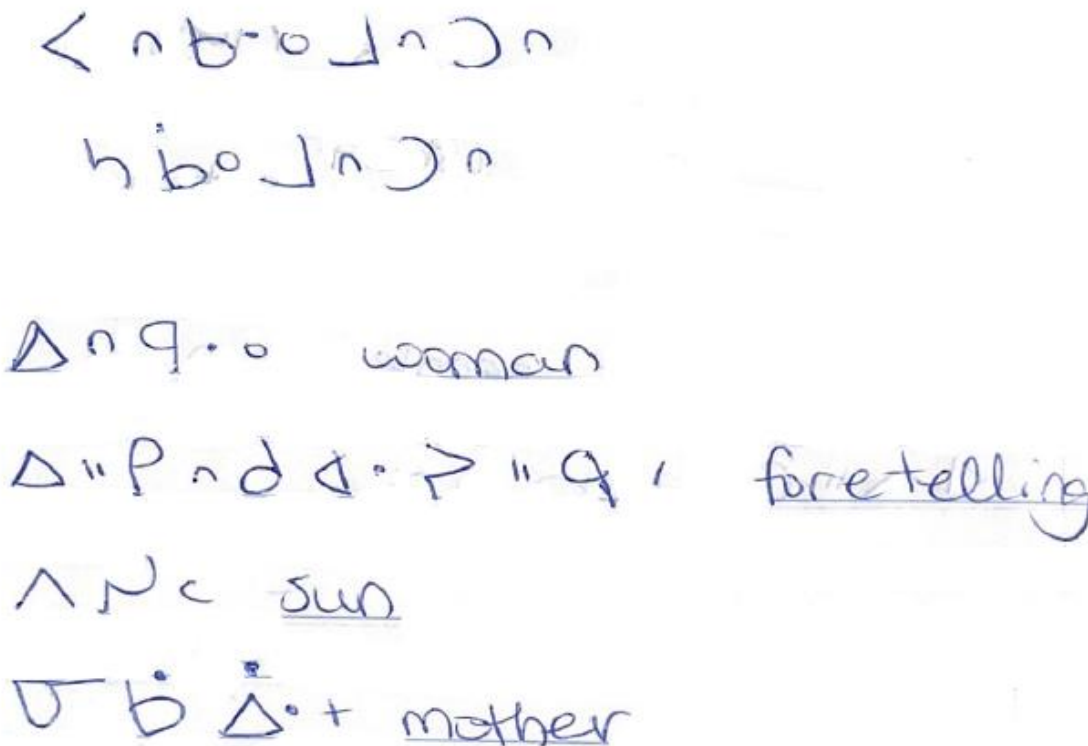
Δ • Δ • " eggs

Lⁿ b • " bear

Note: A Nehiyawak schematic hierarchy including milewak (leaders) and akohpiyinowak (blanket holders) which do not exist anymore (September 27, 2012).

Picture 14:

Relationality in Nehiyawewin



Note: Reuben's Teachings show that the word woman and foretelling are related in Nehiyawewin (September 27, 2012).

The three pictures from Reuben's teachings show that lateral thinking is required to translate syllabics into standard roman orthography. Additionally, women have significant roles in Turtle Island ways that have been degraded by all things that come from the Western worldview. In the Manitoba based "Mental Health Harm to Mothers When a Child Is Taken by Child Protective Services: Health Equity Considerations," Kenny (2018) conducts a longitudinal study comparing mothers of children taken by CPS to those who had a child death:

"According to study results, mothers who lost custody of a child to foster care experienced significantly higher rates of depression, substance use, physician visits for mental illness, and prescriptions of psychotropic medications compared to mothers surviving the death of a child. Interpreting these results, authors suggest the disproportionate share of mental health burden among women with children in foster care

is likely a reflection of lower social support and a lack of social acknowledgment of grief following this form of loss. Since the analysis could not evaluate the role of exposure per number of children lost, the authors further identify the higher likelihood of compounded grief among the target population due to losing multiple children to this system. In addition, authors note that mothers who experienced a child's death were more likely to be of higher socioeconomic status, which could be an important factor in facilitating their access to mental health supports outside the public health care system and in turn explain some of the mental health disparity between populations" (p.305).

Their justification of harm is not acceptable. One important step in becoming a doctor, medical students must take the Hippocratic Oath where they proclaim "first, do no harm" (or "primum non nocere," the Latin translation from the original Greek.) (Shmerling, 2020). There is no clear priority given to the avoidance of harm over the goal of providing help and so we see harm over and over. Although they pledge to do no harm, the need to "help" the Other is in their minds and in the Hearts. Another Manitoba based study about Indigenous doulas found a main theme within their interviews:

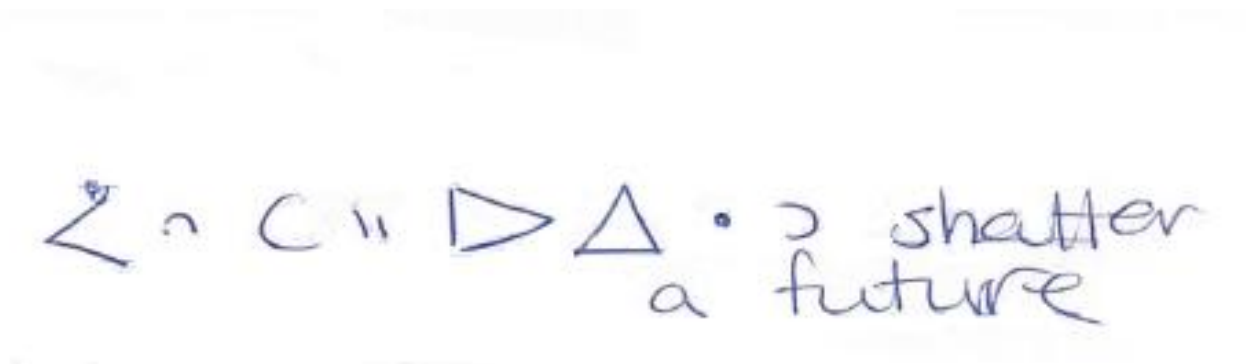
"The issue of babies being apprehended was one of the most searing themes that reoccurred in nearly every interview we conducted. In fact, one of the main roles the doulas articulated as part of their work was to support mothers and babies targeted by the system... The possibility of Indigenous women's babies being taken away from them can be a source of great trauma in the delivery room, where social workers have been known to appear without any prior warning and sometimes leave with the infant... The sense that CFS workers could intrude into the hospital and potentially take their children away contributes to the perception of hospitals as unsafe spaces. The doulas articulated the extent to which the threat of child removal impacts many Indigenous women's experiences of pregnancy, birth and motherhood. Even when these mothers, like this interlocutor, end up keeping their children, the stress and anxiety of knowing they could or might be visited by social workers in the hospital often transforms their experience of birth into one of fear. Thus, many of the doulas were adamant about creating spaces that feel safe for Indigenous women to give birth and considered an integral part of their role to be defending these mothers and babies from CFS workers. Critically, however, the doulas clarified that even when their work cannot prevent an apprehension, they still see a vital role for themselves in standing with the mother" (Cidro, et al., 2018).

Indigenous doulas support mothers through apprehension in Manitoba Hospitals but this type of harm is irreparable. All must stand to reject this mechanism of action by Manitoba – the removal of children based on the race of a person must end now. Their economy is not above our work

ethic, our civility, our humility. Through this research, I declare the present timeline will shatter and the forceful removal of awasisak concludes anoch. No more broken circles, *it is finished*.

Picture 15:

Cree Syllabics



Note: Nehiyawewin word for shattering a future (December 10, 2012)

Directionality

Directionality is a theme that I have been leading up to in this work. As we have seen throughout these works the underlying theme and Nehiyaw understanding which is grounded in directionality. Kathy Absolon's Wholistic Theory (2010) is another model which uses this directionality as a foundation for Anishinaabe understanding in research. Absolon uses the four directions framework to develop her Wholistic Theory. The Circle of Life represents directionality also. Human beings are to start their good life when they are born and in the East direction. As seen in Chapter 1 and 5, there have been great impacts when children are apprehended at birth breaking the life cycle of humanity, or as I refer to them as *broken circles*. Creator has designed life in a specific way with a specific formula (Chapter 4).

Picture 16

Directionality within Thesis Title

Miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin

ᑲᑲ ᐱᐱᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅᐅ

Living the good life in child rearing ways

Note: Recall from Reuben 4 vowel sounds: ᐱ (a), ᐅ (i), ᐅ (o), and ᑲ (e) which point to East, South, West and North. The syllabics show directionality which require lateral thought when we read the thesis title (Quinn, 2016).

What is Directionality?

Directionality is a process and way of understanding ourselves in relation to the world and all of creation. When we honour the four directions, we are honouring all of our relatives across Mother Earth, the world and outside of ourselves. It is like Gary Robson said about Creation stories from Turtle Island always include 4 races being created but other religions and cultures, the creation story only includes themselves. We must remember what Reuben said about learning how to speak Cree using the syllabic system. It requires a “paradigm shift” because we are not reading from left to right. In this method, we start in the east direction for the “a” sound. We must see what is similar, not what is different. We also must remember what directionality means and implies. Within Creation, we must start to view the similarities and honour the gifts of the individual, family, community and nation. Creator made all four races of man in the four directions.

Spirit Marker Teachings

Reuben's nehiyawewin syllabic teachings clearly possess directionality. Recall Picture 5 in Chapter 2 where we see the four vowel sounds in the East, South, West and North. He explains these spirit markers or syllabics (vowel sounds) represent the 16 Grandfather Teachings; he states that there is a Sundance obligation for 16 years. Then, he explains the significance of the number 4 and associated philosophies:

“Life has the 4 elements: fire, water, land, and air. Body: body, mind, emotions, and spirit (4 aspects of self). The Spiritual plain has 4 Levels of communication: Voice, hearing high pitched sounds, Ceremony (songs, chanting), and **Love** is the fourth level of communication. 4 phases of time: Past, future, present and eternity” (Quinn, 2016).

Reuben explains the significance of the number 7 and the associated philosophies. Recall that in the Southeast, Southwest, Northwest and Northeast (Picture 4 and Figure 5) are the 28 Grandmother teachings. The number 28 is also significant as every lunar cycle is 28 days, the turtle has 13 markings on the back which is the same number of full moons, the women's menstrual cycle is 28 days and there are 28 bones in each foot. Even more amazing is that the square in the center of the syllabics chart represents the thirst dance (Sundance) where we suffer for our people. Reuben explains how the number 7 is symbolic to the Nehiyawak:

“We all have 7 directions: left, front, right, back, below, above and inside. Love, it's amazing, full of wonder, full of beauty (irrespective of your own belief systems)” (Quinn, 2016).

He adds that 'Kichi Manitou' is a kind productive creator and the sound 'ay ii' is the word for divinity. We see that the syllabics teachings from Reuben are complex, directional, reflect nature's teachings, and also carry Nehiyawak laws. In Picture 12 we see the 'a' vowel sounds in the East direction a, pa. For each syllabic or vowel sound there is a corresponding teaching; of the 44 vowel sounds there will also be a corresponding virtue. For example, starting from the

center we see the first Spirit Marker “a” is the First Law in the East *sakihitok* which means ‘you all love each and one another now.’ Starting from the center, the second Spirit marker “pa” which represents the second law *wicihitok* which means ‘you all help one another now.’ We will use these principles in the analysis of the results and to assess cultural match of the current regime of Child Welfare across Turtle Island.

Figure 14:

Grandfather Teachings of the ‘a’ vowels in the East direction



Note: Remember, when we are reading the syllabics chart we start from the center. The first Grandfather teaching in the East is the ◁ ‘a’ vowel sound. The spirit marker teaching is sakihitok which translates to ‘(you all) love one another now.’ The second Grandfather teaching in the East is the < ‘pa’ vowel sound. The spirit marking teaching for this grandfather is wicihitok which translates to ‘(you all) help one another now, (you all) cooperate with one another now’ (Quinn, 2016)

Miyo pimatisiwin opikinawasowin

Cidro and Neufeld (2017) show the importance of bond between the mother and child and how this must be nurtured continually, and we cannot understand the challenges facing Indigenous women in the child bearing stage without considering the larger context of colonization. Forced separation from children is deeply traumatizing for mothers and detrimental to the wellbeing of Indigenous families, communities and Nations. Ritland et al. (2021) found that:

“Child apprehension is harmful to the health of these mothers, who are more likely to attempt taking their own lives after recent separation from their children. Child apprehension must therefore be understood as a negative social determinant of Indigenous peoples’ health... Stopping cycles of apprehension and respecting Indigenous self-determination over child welfare is critical to the future health of Indigenous children, families and communities” (1).

This is significant as it does acknowledge the harm that apprehension has on the mother, child, family, community, and Nation. However, declaring apprehension as a social determinant of health does not change anything in legislature, practice and policy. Decades ago, colonization was deemed a social determinant of health (SCO, 2016), however, this classification and assessment strategy has not transformed current practices. Quite frankly, deeming colonization and its protocols as a determinant of health further detracts the responsibility away from the healthcare provider and back onto the individual. Furthermore, “respecting Indigenous self-determination over child welfare” sets our gaze towards putting the responsibility of Indigenous peoples’ to solve the child welfare problem. Under the Western paradigm, there is no way to solve the child welfare industry, regardless of who is administering the services. Indigenous people administering a broken system will have the same outcome because the foundation of child welfare was based on the idea that Indigenous peoples’ need “help”. Unfortunately, the Province of Manitoba will soon have to realize that directing more money into a broken system will produce the same results.

I met Sandra Hunter through work as the Indigenous Graduate Student success coordinator. She is a mother and friend who completed her Master of Arts in Psychology in 2023 from the University of Manitoba. Sandra is an Anishinaabe and mixed settler woman who writes about traditional Indigenous child rearing practices:

“I viewed my own parenting knowledge through the lens of my experiences growing up on a small reserve, being surrounded by and caring for other children of various ages. As I continued to parent and engaged with other Indigenous mothers, through personal and professional experiences, I recognized that we were often attempting to fit our approach to motherhood into a colonial system that was not consistent with cultural values. The approaches and expectations, language, and the size of responsibility were not a match. Despite having had rich experiences caring for children, I felt looked down upon by my peers in the majority culture because of differences in how I parented. My experiences have motivated me to gain insight on how this contrast could have come to be and ways

to reduce these negative experiences for other Indigenous parents. With the hope of strengthening Indigenous families and their wellness, I believe it is important to begin by examining Indigenous child rearing and ways to reclaim traditional practices, defined as beliefs, values, expectations, and teachings. Parents are perhaps the single most important influence on a child's development, and critical to a child's understanding of who they are, which can affect intergenerational wellness" (Hunter, 2023, p 7).

Sandra and I have a common vision and goal in our research studies. Her work aims to reclaim traditional child rearing practice which ultimately influence a child's development and their identity. In her qualitative research study, she gained valuable data around child rearing practices from Elders at the University of Manitoba. The findings are:

"Relationships were of utmost importance and family and community members were addressed by that relationship. Children were taught through observing others and nature as relationships and time spent together opened the opportunities for teaching. Children were welcome to participate in all activities in the community and witness ceremony which also communicated community and family values.

Another important theme was the concept of children's sense of agency. They were given the opportunity for natural learning via the ability to make their own mistakes and learn from them...Children's lives on earth began with naming and birthing ceremonies, and continued through their childhood with walking out ceremonies, becoming a man or woman ceremonies, and participation in ceremonies of the varied societies such as Sundance or Midewiwin. These were ways to promote a child's gift and give a sense of belonging and teach about loving our nations and non-human relations" (Hunter, 2023, p. 75-76).

The idea of the "child's agency" or "child autonomy" was also noted by Muir et al. (2014) and is important when we look at the life cycle of humanity. If each person is on their own path, their own healing journey, we cannot force a person to do what we want. This is what is so problematic with apprehension, because we are taking away a child's agency because of an observation and decision made about the parents by a person with the authority to break the Circle of Life. We must not forget that all humankind has biases based on their lived experiences (University of Calgary, 2022 and Dettlaff et al., 2020). No human is perfect, therefore, no policy or procedure can be perfect. Indigenous transitional practices have gained scientific merit

underlying the practices described in “Nitsiyihkâson parenting resource”. This means that Nehiyawak teachings and way of life is continually being proven to be correct by the dominant biomedical paradigm:

“It is the conclusion of our study team that, in some ways, science is catching up with traditional practices that have been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. That is, the perspectives of the Indigenous community, their traditional practices and techniques, are now being borne out by modern neuroscience. It is noteworthy that these teachings were practiced pre-contact, and were passed down through oral tradition, ceremony, and relational concepts, but we in the western world are only now starting to appreciate their true value. For this reason, Indigenous thought is both relevant and prescient in terms of our understanding of attachment and bonding. In one sense, the fact that the scientific community might be surprised to hear this underscores the issue with colonization: until western science has “proven” a phenomenon to be true, it means little and is taken as curious or hypothetical. In fact, this point of view perpetuates colonialistic attitudes towards Indigenous populations” (Pazderka, et al, 2014, p.63).

Truth and Reconciliation

As of late, the discourse around “Truth and Reconciliation” has been making me physically and spiritually ill. According to Maxwell (2014) we cannot put the historical truth into the past because there is ongoing systemic trauma occurring simultaneously. I have found myself resenting the slogan “Every Child Matters” which has been printed on hundreds of thousands of shirts and worn by the dominant society usually on September 30. If “Every Child Matters,” then why have there been over 10,000 First Nation Children in Manitoba Child and Welfare for the last decade? I understand the need to acknowledge Residential School Survivors, but I cannot for the life of me wear a shirt that says “Every Child Matters” when babies are being apprehended at birth daily from the Health Science Centre and other Manitoba Hospitals (Puxley, 2015). In 2008, Oltheus et al. reported that there were 3 times more Indigenous Children in the Child Welfare System than at the height of residential schools. 15 years later and I wonder how much that statistic has grown. I find myself asking Indigenous people who wear the Orange “every

child matters” shirt what that shirt means to them. Often the response will be that their grandparents went to a Residential school. Fine. Mine did not. For me, from my lived experience, the assimilation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system will have significantly more trauma than the ones who came before us. Every day I am reminded about the failure of humanity. Patricia Makokis gives us some insight into Truth and Reconciliation:

“Many years ago, I started to participate in our annual summertime fasting ceremonies. Led by Elders, we go out on the land without food and water for four days and four nights to sit quietly, by ourselves, away from the hustle and the bustle of life. It is a time of introspection and appreciation for what is really important: our collective need for land and water, and how we must respect and protect them for our children, who are the future.

Which brings me to another story. (Having learned from Elders, I know story is a powerful means of sharing life experiences and lessons.) A few years ago, I facilitated a talking circle about truth and reconciliation with a group of retired U of A professors. I spoke about the importance of the land and our collective relationship to the land. As we moved into a round of conversation, one man said: “I need to go back and talk to my grandson. I told him we left the land to move to urban centers. But I was wrong.” The discussion had helped him see we are all “of the land” and need to rekindle that individual connection toward our collective relationship to the land.

That Indigenous World view — our interconnectedness to each other as human beings and our collective connectedness to the land — is often misunderstood or not recognized. This contributes to ongoing racism, marginalization and oppression... We all have a responsibility to educate ourselves for this relationship to be balanced, to the benefit of all of us” (Makokis, 2021, p. 12).

The Prophecy

Leona Makokis has dedicated her life to supporting the growth of programming that balances Iyiniw language and Worldview with contemporary experiences. I have used Dr. Makokis’ excerpt from her book entitled “ohpikinâwasowin / Growing a Child: Implementing Indigenous Ways of Knowing with Indigenous Families” as it reminds us of creation stories which help us place ourselves in the World. Chapters within the book emphasize that ‘child welfare’ for Indigenous peoples must be informed and guided by Indigenous practices and

understandings. Because Indigenous ways and teachings include all four quadrants of the medicine wheel there is no way in combining Indigenous ways underneath the dominant paradigm/physical quadrant. Below Elder Leona shares a prophecy about the four races of Man:

“A long, long time ago - before the settlers arrived - when life was good and the Ancestors were happy, a prophecy was shared among the nehiyaw (Cree, four dimensional) people. The prophecy spoke of *omanitewak* (visitors) who would come to this land. They were to be welcomed because they would bring gifts and responsibilities that would contribute to the four realms, the four dimensions: physical, spiritual, mental and emotional. It is these four realms that, when each is lived to their fullest, create *miyo pimātisiwin* (a good life). The visitors would help complete these four realms for mother earth and for the people living on Turtle Island.

The prophecy teaches that the Creator had a vision in creating the world, and when the Creator placed all the humans in their own homelands each race was given both a responsibility and a gift by the creator. The responsibility given to each of the groups was one of the four elements; earth, wind, water, or fire; each would be the special learning of that group. The Creator's gift to each race complemented their element. The Creator knew that, as the people honoured their gifts, they would receive an understanding of the gift's power and wisdom. The gifts were given the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental abilities and understanding. It was the Creator's intention that all these responsibilities and gifts would eventually be shared between all the races - and enable all to live *miyo pimātisiwin*.

The Red People (Spiritual and Land)

The Creator's vision of spirituality was given as a gift to the Red People. To keep the gift of spirituality, the Red People were granted the power to remember the laws of the creator, to carry the teaching stories and to maintain the language of the heart. These stories contain the vision of the creator. The Creator also gave the Red People the ability to nourish and nurture the spirit no matter what chaos, trouble or turmoil befell the people. There are, among the Red People, many who have made the commitment to carry this knowledge and wisdom to each generation by selecting the carriers of the spirit of the Red People.

The responsibility of the Red People is the land. The land is theirs to steward; the animals, plant life, and their relationships to the earth were taught to the Red People through teaching stories. These stories are accompanied by vital seasonal ceremonies and rituals that serve to maintain balance between the earth and the sky. The Red People continue to preserve the balance between taking and giving back, based on the need and use, on the land known as Turtle Island. In this area of responsibility, the Red People have learned the sacredness of our mother the earth. The Red People have been granted the responsibility to maintain the Creator's vision on this land. The sacredness of this responsibility and the gift of this vision is heralded across the land, in the four directions. This was known to the Elders a long time ago, and the Elders said that in order to keep

this land alive and in balance, the red people had to perform their ceremonies in their own language.

The Yellow People (Emotional and Air)

The Yellow People are the second youngest of the human beings. The creator gave them the responsibility of the air we breathe. The Yellow People have learned to use air and breath for both health and vitality. Their traditions and teachings include discipline and the revitalization and flow of life's energy. The gift given by the Creator to the Yellow People is the realm of emotions, as these are linked with the body and mind. The Yellow People of this tradition have navigated the teachings about the emotions and their relationship to the energy of well-being, vital life forces, health and meditations. From these traditions we can understand and practice the steadfastness associated with attending to our emotional health.

The Black People (Physical and Water)

The Black People are the oldest of the human beings. The Creator's gift to the Black People was that of the physical dimension and its relationship to the body. The Black People were given this gift in order to develop the skills and understandings of self-esteem, self-awareness and self-determination. The responsibility of the black people is water and in learning how to use it for the benefits of life and to ensure that there is clean water for future generations.

The White People (Mental and Fire)

The White People were given the responsibility of fire to learn and to control. The White People are the youngest of the human beings however they have developed their responsibility of fire with great thoroughness. Using the basic element of fire, they have developed motors, generators and electrical power. Other uses of this element have resulted in microwaves, lasers and atomic energy. The internal combustion engine is used in all aspects of home, work and leisure activities. These inventions have made life easier and to live and life expectancy has increased due to the aid of technology. The White People were granted the gift of the mind by the Creator. They are to use this gift to develop communication skills and rational thinking. They are responsible for communication and understanding among all peoples because without effective communication we cannot share our gifts. However, the White People have developed their gift and responsibility with enthusiasm and have used rationality and fire as a tool to exploit Mother Earth and human beings. The mind is powerful but requires the balance of the heart.

The vision of the Creator was that each human race would develop their gift and responsibility and, when they were ready, would come to the land of the Red People. Here, each race would create opportunities to share their gifts and the knowledge of their responsibilities. When each of the gifts have been shared and everyone is living the integrity of the four gifts and the four responsibilities, the Creator's vision would be realized. That people would recognize that in unity they are stronger.

This is the prophecy as shared by Leona Makokis" (Makokis, Leona, et al., 2020, p 1-3)

Chapter 7: Turtle Island Perspectives

The Turtle Island perspective is a visionary tool to help the reader appreciate relatedness among Turtle Islanders. We close our eyes and imagine our Spirit zooming out of our physical bodies, we float up in the sky, up, up, far up enough to see Turtle Island. This perspective helps us achieve a complete circle and unity. The four maps presented depict the Turtle Island perspective. This research represents the Turtle Island perspective which is lacking among the current research literature. Studies without this perspective are zoomed in, fragmented, polarized and promote segregation. When we are zoomed out far enough to visualize Turtle Island it paints a positive imagination onto our hearts and all politics, policies and legislation are irrelevant because we are all Turtle Islanders in unity and a part of the circle.

The Story of Big Bear

As an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta, I took a course on the *Treaties* with the late Dr. James Dempsey. I recall that Big Bear was from an Ojibwe tribe in Manitoba and the significance being written on the tablet of my heart. Like myself, Big Bear was created from the land which is now referred to as Manitoba. He also moved west and eventually became a leader in Cree territory showing that Turtle Island communities, families and Nations are fluid, moving and ever evolving. Recall, Turtle Islanders received instructions to be the stewards of this land and each Nation had their own purpose, gifts and responsibilities. Below is a historical recount of Big Bear (mistahi-maskwa) (ca. 1825– 88):

“Born near Jackfish Lake around 1825 to an Ojibwa chief named Black Powder (Mukitoo), Big Bear spoke Cree as a first language, but also Ojibwa...He was a capable and uncompromising leader; but his adherence in traditional customs made him appear stubborn in the eyes of the federal government. Big Bear hesitated to sign Treaty 6, and became the leader of the First Nations who remained outside of it. He led his followers to

the Cypress Hills, where they faced starvation from lack of game and the withholding of food rations, as the federal government attempted to coerce them to sign treaty and move onto reserves. Big Bear still refused to sign. He and his followers moved to Montana, where he spent time with Sitting Bull and Louis Riel, discussing a means to perpetuate their way of life. Big Bear realized that if all the tribes of the North-West Territories spoke with a united voice they could achieve more in their negotiations with the federal government. Faced with another winter of starvation, he grudgingly signed Treaty 6 in 1882, but as he did not choose a location for his reserve his people did not receive rations. In the summer of 1884 he met Riel at Duck Lake but failed to be swayed by Riel's plans. Big Bear waited to choose a reserve in the spring of 1885, but his decision drew much criticism from his band. As his authority declined, Wandering Spirit gained influence over the more militant band members. Big Bear continued his attempts to reach a peaceful resolution but was unsuccessful. The arrival of troops from eastern Canada squelched the Métis resistance, and First Nations people including Wandering Spirit, Miserable Man, Four-Sky-Thunder, and Big Bear surrendered. Big Bear was tried in Regina on September 11, 1885, on four counts of treason-felony and was imprisoned in Stony Mountain Penitentiary, Manitoba. When he was freed two years later, his integrity remained intact but he was broken in health and spirit. He died in the winter of 1887–88” (Thompson, 2023).

Prior to the treaties, plains nations existed as fluid and moving in a symbiotic relationship with the Buffalo. The story of Big Bear illustrates the importance of our way of life, Natural laws, and the mindset of Turtle Islanders forced to sign the numbered Treaties 150 years ago.

Storytelling with Intention

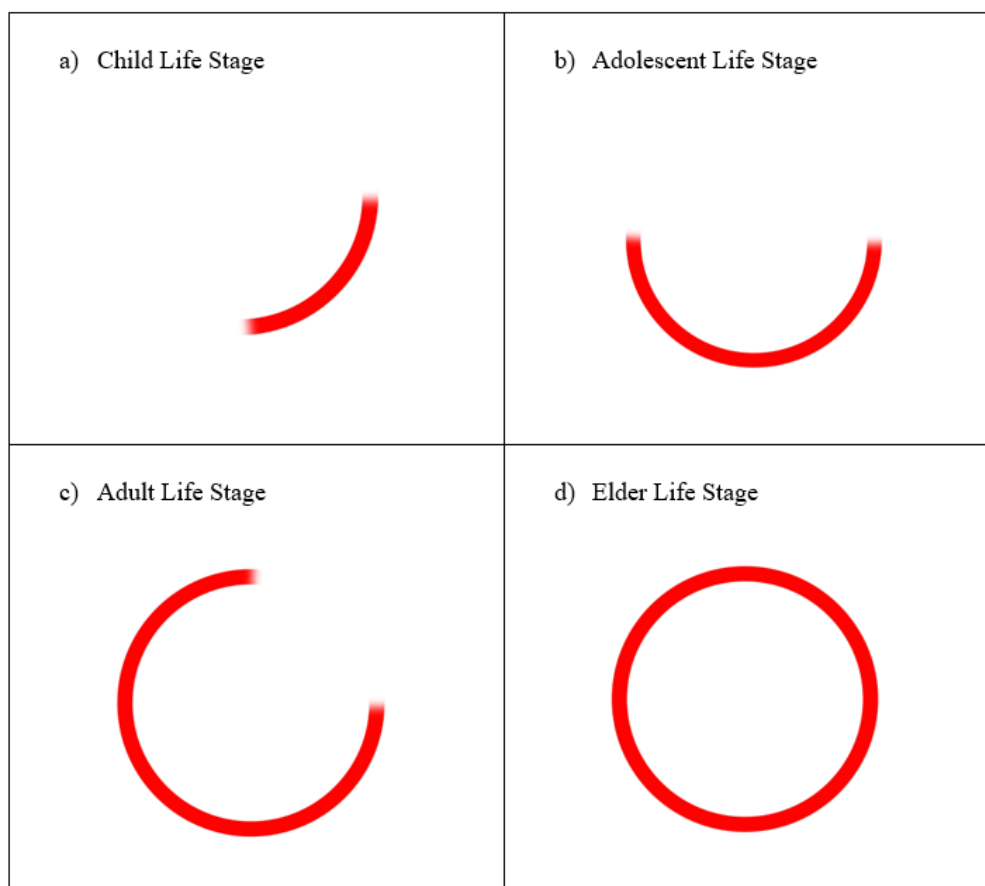
In Chapter 4, I mention teachings I carry from ceremonies held at the University of Manitoba. During my employment at the Indigenous Student Centre, I was enlightened to the methodology of the circle during the ceremonies such as Winter Solstice 2019, Full Moon ceremonies, and sharing circles led by Elders for the University of Manitoba community. Since moving home to Winnipeg, I have experienced what I refer to as ‘spirit downloading’ which occurs when we listen to spiritual leaders who tell stories with intention. These circles are a vehicle for Spirit, Kichi Manitou, to download teachings onto the tablets of our Heart, our Spirits. Later in my healing journey, these teachings are brought back to my remembrance at times when I need them. For spirit downloading to occur, a teacher connected to Creator sets an

intention to share stories, wisdoms, and spiritual truths about life. We have spiritual mothers and fathers, or teachers, that cross on our life journey and they provide us teachings that shape our identity. Our Heart, or Spirit, is like a tablet and the stories are shared with us they write or download onto the tablets of our hearts. Some examples of Spiritual teachers I have include, but is not limited to, Jerry Wood, Marge Friedel, Reuben Quinn, Wanda Murdock, and Leon Fontaine; all of whom have shaped my healing journey and understanding of what it means to be Nehiyaw iskwew.

Indigenous stories and generational learning

Figure 15:

Four inter-related stages of life: the life cycle of humanity



Note: Generational learning means specific teachings in one of four life stages

In Indigenous community organizations and throughout academia, Elders are center-pieces of the organization. However, we need to shift our attention to an inclusive model where every person is a teacher, regardless of age, social, political, economic status and stature. Every person on Earth is valuable and has something to offer. When we use a creationist lens, we can understand the current state of humanity and fully appreciate the social, political and economic stratification between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

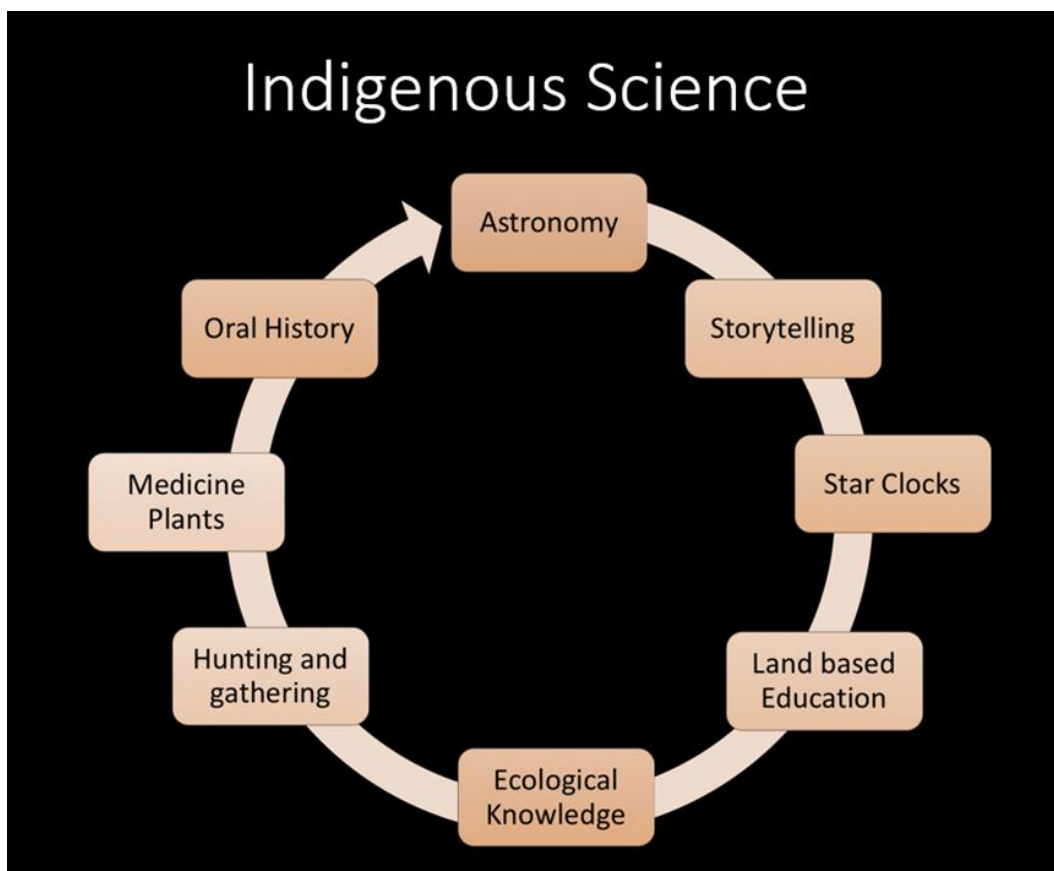
Indigenous Science

The literature review links traditional ecological knowledge with Indigenous science which misses the mark by not encompassing significant processes of Indigenous ways of knowing. Traditional ecological knowledge is one piece of Indigenous ways of knowing. The variable of time needs to be incorporated for accurate “science” to exist. This is what makes the biomedical model of healthcare inefficient. Without the variable of time and how we came to be, there is no science. That is, mainstream science is missing the mark because they do not acknowledge creation or the supernatural quality of Kichi Manitou. We must go back to the beginning, or to the root of what we are assessing. In Chapter 4, the term Indigenous Science or ways of knowing is used to describe the various life cycles of Creation. The hypothesized themes within Indigenous Science that could appear in my interview data was composed in 2019 as shown in Figure 14. All of these aspects come together as one to produce the all-encompassing Indigenous ways of knowing. At this time, I was at rest with the Creator, in a constant meditative prayer and receiving one on one teachings to produce fruitful research. I had not realized yet that Indigenous Science is synonymous for the life cycles of creation. In the tipi teachings, the circle around the tipi is where the woman’s skirt meets the ground. To learn more about how the tipi teachings are related to child rearing ways, I conducted 11 in-depth interviews with knowledge holders from

across Turtle island. This research represents the Turtle Island perspective. When we are zoomed out far enough to see Turtle Island, tribal/First nation politics are irrelevant, policies and legislation are irrelevant because we are all Turtle Islanders in unity and a part of the circle.

Figure 14:

Hypothesizes themes



Note: Indigenous Science by Aimee Louis (2019).

Results

Discussion: Online Screening Tool (Zoomed out – the Turtle Island perspective)

47 self-identified Indigenous participants who are over the age of consent and reside on Turtle Island completed the Online Screening Tool which opened on November 11, 2022. The main

themes of data set are significance of tipi teachings to child rearing ways, generational learning, and inclusivity of all genders/ages in storytelling. 90% of participants found the tipi teachings important for the transmission of Indigenous child rearing ways. The age of participants are 18 to 69 years old, where 60% are Female, 40% are Male and 2 that identify as two spirit. Urban city living was found among the majority of Indigenous Turtle Island participants in the Online Screening Tool. In Appendix Newo, Table 1 shows the relationship between the following 3 questions from the data set:

- 1) Where do your tipi teachings come from?
- 2) Home community, Nation, tribe, First Nation
- 3) City, State/Province, postal code/zip code

Although 90% of survey monkey participants found the tipi teachings significant in transmitting child rearing ways, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of participants 77% completed the long answer question about the tipi poles (36) as seen in Appendix Newo Table 2. Only 23% of respondents could not explain the significance of the tipi poles in relation to child rearing ways using their own words (11). This confirms the need for Indigenous epistemologies within the broader context of North American contemporary culture, history, and educational institutions. Additionally, 79% of participants reside in urban centers (37) versus 13% who reside on reserve (6), and 4 who did not respond. 34% of participants (16) reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The majority of participants received tipi teachings from their home community and/or Nation. However, a handful of participants received teachings from another Nation.

The key findings of the Online Screening tool are that 64% of participants had Child and Family Service involvement, compared to 10% that are 60s scoop scoop/adoption survivors and/or 25% that are Residential/Boarding School Survivors. The time allowance for this study

was limited so it is unknown how many participants chose none or multiple demographical questions about the three mechanisms of interference by state legislation. There was substantial data within the 17 questions of the Online Screening Tool about the tipi teachings and child rearing ways (Table 2), including important demographical data (Table 1). Data retrieved from the Online Screening Tool may be statistically analyzed at the next stage of research using mixed methods study design. The 100% online format allowed for a diverse sample representing a large portion of the body of the Turtle.

Discussion: In Depth Interviews and Online Screening Tool (Zoomed in)

There are 11 Indigenous contributors to the online interview. Data exploration of the Online Screening tool revealed that 100% of interviewees/knowledge holders found the tipi teachings important for transmission of child rearing ways. The age of interviewees ranges from 29 to 69 years old where 64% are Female, 36% are Male with 1 interviewee who identifies as two spirit. 100% of interview participants reside in Urban cities with 6 participants who live in Winnipeg, Manitoba making up 55% of the interviews. 72% of interviewees had CFS involvement, compared to 9% that are 60s scoop/adoption survivors and 18% that are Residential/Boarding School Survivors. The results of the Online Screen tool for interviews parallels with the screening tool findings. The Indigenous voice is negligible in the child welfare literature in North America (Landers et al., 2018), therefore these experiences are the most noteworthy discovery. The Child Welfare system has yet to be deemed assimilatory in North America.

Interview Data from the Online Screening Tool

Table 3.

Tipi Teachings versus First Nation, Community, Nation, Tribe versus City

Tipi Teachings	FN/Community/Nation	City of residence
Cree/Ojibway/Dakota	Cree/Ojibway/Dakota	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Miawpukek Samiajj First Nation, Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland)	Miawpukek Samiajj First Nation, Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland)	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Nehiyaw	Anishinabe	Winnipeg, Manitoba
sakaw'ayitinewak	Unchaga-askiy country District of Athabasca Treaty 8 sakaw'ayitinewak kihcokimanahk	Grouard, Alberta
From here in Algonquin territory, James bay region and from wiki region	Swampy Cree from my mom's side, and Chippewa from my dad's side	Ottawa, Ontario
Anishinabe	Anishinabe	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Hopi & Dakota	Crow Creek Sioux Tribe (Dakota)Hopi	Rugby, North Dakota
Sagkeeng Anishinaabe First Nation	Sagkeeng First Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Alexander First Nation	Canoe Lake Cree First Nation	Spruce Grove, Alberta
Anishinabe	Cree	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa(Michigan) and Ketigaan Zeeping(Garden River FN, Ontario)	Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians (Michigan) and Kitigaan Zeeping (Garden River FN, ONT.)	Hayward, Wisconsin

Note: Urban city living was found among 100% of interviewees. The majority of interview participants received tipi teachings from their home community and/or Nation. However, 18% of interviewees (2) received teachings from another Nation.

11 In Depth Interviews (Zoomed in – the Turtle Island Perspective)

The research question “What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?” was posed to 11 interview participants over an online platform. Interview transcripts have been provided in full and are presented in order of interview date. Interviews began in November 2022 and ended in January 2023.

1) Wawate from Inner-City Winnipeg

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“My name is Wawate and I grew up in the inner city of Winnipeg, my mom's non Indigenous, my dad's Indigenous. My dad went to residential school. My parents were divorced when I was young, so I grew up disconnected from my dad, my dad's community, my granny, my grandpa's community. I grew up in a home with poor mental health. I grew up in a home where there was no parenting. I was left on my own to figure things out, which was okay, it worked out besides some bumps along the road. For the past ten years, I've been on a healing journey, and seeking out traditional teachings including the tipi teachings. I could share where I first came into contact with the tipi teachings which was at Janet Fox's traditional parenting workshop in Brokenhead in 2016 or 2017.”

“What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways? I work supporting frontline staff and workshop development, having access to knowledge keepers and traditional ways of being and we call them at work, our template laws. I was recently in a university program. Within my own university journey, it's important to get some information about where I'm coming from and where's my position, what's my perspective. Within my experience supporting families, I see how important it is to bring back our traditional ways of child rearing within the family.”

“What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways? I'm not going to regurgitate the traditional tipi teachings but I could just share that many families have internalized colonialism and paternalism from government interventions, and our independence as parents has been taken. I have seen that a lot with parents who are involved with the child welfare system and that level of dependence, and families who are on social assistance and what does it result in? Powerlessness and dependence, dependence on these systems... ‘well, it's not my fault,’ ‘they should have supported me better,’ or parents and that independence to care for our children, to decide what's right for our families, has been taken. With all these rules, and they don't benefit our families, they just take that power away. And there's always a gray area, but I just wanted to share that I've received teachings from Elders where, this Elder, he says, ‘we don't change anything, we don't add anything, and we don't forget anything.’ So there's three principles to internalizing, adding traditional teachings to your bundle, to yourself with what you carry. I've also heard the teaching where ‘all teachings are right, they're all right. Everyone's teachings that they carry are right and whatever feels right to you that's what you're going to carry.’ The traditional tipi teachings are important because they give power back to our families, and we know what's right for our families.”

“Thinking about raising a tipi you have the three main poles, the three supports, and with some teachings, four main supporting poles, and with a purpose being you can't be a family all by yourself. As humans, we're social, we need support, we need companionship, we need to collaborate, we need the kindness of others. So those foundational poles, they're so important. You know, that we need each other. Even the act of putting up a tipi, you can't put up a tipi alone, there's no way it needs to be

collaboration, cooperation, support, each person taking a lead role on something, whether it be tying up the poles, where you're going to place the pole, one person deciding that pole is going to go there. And then six steps away, or whether it be eight steps, then that's where the other pole is going to be placed. And then depending on the way of raising a tipi, then you put one pole, you carefully place it, they don't go just any which way, right? They're carefully placed and the rope is carefully tied around to secure.”

“Good child rearing is one of our foundational principles in our ways in Cree. I was talking to my kids about how these teachings are all intertwined. There's a teaching of obedience, and it's a colonial term so there's a lot of things lost in translation. What I was explaining to my kids, there's a teaching of obedience and it's not to give me unquestioned authority over you, as me being your parent and me being the leader of the House, but it's you showing me respect when you're obeying things that I'm asking you to do. So that's, that's one interpretation. Then there's one of the teachings of cleanliness, and I'm sharing this with my kids because we're reclaiming, we're decolonizing, we're working at healing as a family healing from intergenerational trauma... So with regards to cleanliness, an Elder shared with me, you hold on to something, something will bother you, you hold on to it for a few days and then you release it, you let it go and that's related to the teaching of cleanliness. As Indigenous people, we have our own ceremonies to help us release things and to help us meet that principle of cleanliness; we have our own ways of keeping ourselves clean, whether it be smudging, we're cleaning ourselves to think good thoughts, hear good things, see good things. There's so many teachings with sage and with smudging... it reminds us that I'm here, right now I'm safe, I'm with my family. You know, the smell, the sense of smell is super strong, our strongest sense but also that smudge, we use it to clean ourselves. We use our full moon ceremonies to release things and to keep ourselves clean. When we keep our space clean that shows that we're grateful. We have a new moon ceremony where we give thanks on the new moon. So there's not only a full moon, but there's a new moon. We're so grateful that we've made it for those 28 days and with our full moon, we let it out. We let it out in a sweat lodge, we throw up with scream, yell, cry, everything. I want to share a couple of those because you can't put up a tipi alone. As humans we're social creatures, we need one another, we need our family, we need to be kind to each other. We need to show gratitude, we need to have a hope that the sun is going to come up, that at the end of the winter, the spring is going to come. We need to be grateful for what we have.”

“I'm not going to regurgitate all the tipi teachings, I want to share there's so many different interpretations and they're all right, they're all good. They promote independence and empowerment within our families. I always promote that because with government interventions and the colonial disempowerment that happens as a result of us internalizing that, the tipi teachings are important for us to build that healthy sense of belonging. We have our own ways of being, we have our own ways of doing things, we have our own ways of healing our family.”

Key Themes: inner city Winnipeg, healing journey, ways of being, good child rearing, ceremonies, collaboration, cooperation and support, cleanliness

2) *William Brule Okimaw-kinosew Unchaga-askiy country, District of Athabasca Treaty 8 sakaw'ayitinewak kihcokimanahk*

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“Prayers answered, that's what that is. Prayers answered and it's the shaping of a human being. It's ownership, dignity of the family, of the home fire. There's truthful speech at that home fire and it's a kind place. It's a spiritual connection with home fire.”

“It's the prayers when you're setting up your home and there's an importance of a woman's knife. A woman's knife strikes the ground where your lodge is going to go up and you got your tripod. You put up the tripod, usually put up by what we call the kingmaker, and it's done with three, so you're looking at mind, body, spirit. There's intention with it, spirit, the intention of physical and that's not all that you also put there. You know, it's the dignity. It's how you set it up, the whole process. Because you're shaping and nurturing. You intend to shape and nurturing a human being and having that sacred home fire, be a good place, safe place for your family for yourselves.”

“I went for the 15 poles, and I want wanted to thank you for asking me to share these teachings and to converse in this. It's a place of a family. It's the place of a woman and a man, they're raising families and so some of this teachings that I'm sharing an *iskwew* would share, a woman would be leading that process. I know that this area is part of the women's teachings and so I apologize for any transgressions that I may do. All right, that being said with the first one I got is 1. Obedience and you're talking about manners, talking about the language, you're talking about honoring the rules, and appreciating differences in insight, discipline, rewards, and punishments, healthy boundaries and you're talking about respect for oneself, where you are. It's a safe place. It's is it safe and that's part of the whole tipi, is it safe? You can mark your poles as well. You can put your syllabics on the pole. Prayer ties will go on poles as well, and that's part of the whole protection for the family, for where you are in the community, and the ownership and having those rights to teach, to share.”

“2. Respect. Respect for other people. You're learning that you're a spirit, a sacred spirit. That you're in this physical body and in this this body you take care of you, respect yourself, you respect others, and you're learning Consent. You got to learn that. Safe aspects of a person, of other people, and that's what respect is. That you are sacred spirit, *acahk*, star people, and that you're here for a little bit of time and the time that you share with us is infinite. To be respective others and in respective life and those teachings you'll put out into the community.”

“3. Humility. You're developing helpers for the home, helpers for the community, and for the Nation. Your physical and your spiritual aspects. You're becoming *oskapew*, so you're going to be traditional ceremonial helpers and *oskapew*. Humility, developing helpers, that's when we learn how we can help. Being ceremonial helpers, the processes that we go through. There's processes for men, there's processes for women and that helps us on our journey, a good place, this a safe place to start.”

“4. Happiness. That's finding our gifts. That *kichi manitou* gave us parents, providing encouragement and praise. Understanding and appreciating your children that are lent to you by Creator and where you are in your own journey shaping this beautiful human being.”

“5. Love, *sakitin*. Making a home fire safe, secure, and loved. Relationship building, healthy and unhealthy discussions to find out what's right, what's wrong and to have that guidance. And to have that comfort and reassurance about our place in the world, of our place in the community and our self-worth. Love will set us on our journey and alongside our relatives, where we are in our journeys.”

“6. Faith, our beliefs, our values, and our way are passed down from our parents, our family, our societies, and our spirit guides; this is from the fire that never dies of which women, *iskwewak*, carry, a strong spirituality makes life decisions easier.”

“7. Kinship. Our society, social support network, our name in lodge, our name in community. Over here, it would be different when you're in Ceremony, that's when you do your ceremony name and if you're out in the community, that's your community name and that's is how the Creator knows you and living alongside family and neighbors. So that's kinship. And also this old teaching I'll share, that's *wahkotowin*, with kinship as well. ‘*Wa*’ is like ‘to be’ and ‘*wa*’ with egg and ‘*wawa*’ is eggs. Kichi manitou teaches us ‘how can Creator choose one egg to love over another, when creator kichi manitou loves all of his children in creation’ and that's part of *wahkotowin*. A lot of our fish scale art is building something, you're creating, you're allowing Kichi Manitou to work through you to create something very beautiful. Fish is essential for us because it's also a part of our Constitution.”

“8. Cleanliness. That's good hygiene. A tipi is in a circle and in the tipi, there's no toilet the waste is outside of the tipi. Not like today, we've got these structures, these four 4 corners, or these 4 walls and the toilet is inside our home. Growing up, the Elders here would laugh at the new generations coming and laughing that they have the toilet inside their home. So that was part of cleanliness because having the toilet inside our home, it invites sickness, it's not good, the waste is outside the home. Back then as well because that's how mooniyawak lived, they had the toilet inside their home, we saw them as dirty and because they have that bathroom inside their home. This one's ‘consuming a squirrel’ teaching. When the squirrel is consuming and it spits out what it doesn't need, that's part of the wisdom teaching. It takes the good part but does not keep the bad stuff, it spits it out. So what's not good for it well they'll spit it out and that's part of our wisdom and being clean. It's part of the wisdom teaching and filtering whatever message comes to the home. You can filter it. Okay, that's not true, that doesn't sound too good. You can filter what sounds good and what doesn't sound good for the home and that's part of that cleanliness.”

“9. Thankfulness. Everything is a gift, responsibility to not be wasteful, thankful for our bodies. Even harvesting, when you know like breaking branches or whatnot. There's

reciprocity, you put down tobacco if you're going to make a new drumstick for example or so it doesn't go to waste. And you're thankful for this for this life."

"10. Sharing. *Aciminowin, atayohkewina*. \You're talking about stories and legends and share what you have with family and others. You can talk about stuff that's appropriate during the season. Some stories you cannot talk about or share about depending on the season because you would be inadvertently summoning this thing that you do not want. It's also a good time to learn our community boundaries as well. Like okay, you go to this point and it's safe, outside of this point, you might not know where you are. Or you know don't go to the river, don't go up to the mountains, there could be a bear den over there or whatever, stuff like that. So you learn about that through our stories and our legends."

"11. Strength. In the tipi you're learning resilience, flexibility, and balance and you'll hear this phrase, it's usually said in Cree, "it's hard being an Indian but I love my Indian ways." That's what you're learning. Resilience here can be facing grief and loss and you have to accept the grief and loss to persevere, just to strive and thrive in this life, in this journey."

"12. Good child rearing. Remembering children, that they're unique, they're loaned to us from the Creator kichi Manitou. Kichi Manitou sees something in us which we can impart upon his children to survive, thrive, and flourish and that we're responsible for their wellbeing. And that reminder to check on ourselves and our children and our neighbours' children as well and our neighbors because we are also children of kichi manitou. We are also children of Creator and the creator loves all his creation and working through that with our community and our own fires."

"13. Hope. Dreams, goals. The child is a good reflection of your home fire and our community. So the good work that you put in, it's reflected in your child being out there in the public, out in the community, through their good works, through their volunteering, through their generous acts. That's a reflection of the home fire and so that's part of that hope as well. Also with hope, that with the grandfathers and grandmothers, that the prayers that they have done, the ceremonies that they have done, the pipes that they have lifted, that you are their hope realized and going forward."

"14. Ultimate protection. Achieve balance for Creator's child as they walk their own path in the family, community, and the Nation. Self-care, your self-talk tools that you have in your toolbox they'll help you, and the gifts, introspection, the gifts that you have that are special and unique. You can draw on them to help you, and in others, confidence in ourselves, prayer ties also hung for them in the home"

"15. Control flaps. How we're connected. Parenthood. You know, it will depend on how we are and how we're connected to each other in our home fire, in our home community."

"I'll just rehash the very beginning, that it's our prayers that we put forth and that we are shaping, nurturing, and mentoring a human being. We're shaping a human being and it's reciprocal. Not only are you shaping this child that's on loan to you, you're looking

inside. You don't realize how much gifts you have too, the wisdom that you have, the knowledge you've obtained and that you're sharing it and that's dignity, that's truthful speech. It's a spiritual connection with home fire. And around the tipi, the foundations, you've got your poles, you've got your tipi, you got your skirting there. What also you'll find is the rock circle, the rocks are there, that's the grandfathers. The grandfathers are there keeping your home safe in a circle and that's what I wrote and thought about with the first question and it was really good. Thank you.”

Key Themes: Prayers answered, intention, home fire, place of a family (It's the place of a woman and a man), tripod, Woman's knife, women's teachings, our journey, shaping and nurturing a human being, wakhotowin, reciprocity, looking inwards (introspection)

3) Hopi and Dakota from Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“Before I answer that, let me interpret my understanding of tipi teachings. I wasn't raised with anything with tipi even though I'm Dakota. My knowledge of tipis didn't come along until these last few years, recently, but prior to that, all of my teachings were about the home. I'm interpreting tipi as a home because that was our traditional homes for centuries. So with the tipi, I'm going to interpret it as the teachings from home, the education within the home, from the Hopi perspective because that's the way that I was raised. My mother is from the Hopi tribe in the Southwest of the United States in Arizona. A lot of my knowledge and everything that I learned about raising children in the home was all through Hopi. The significance of these teachings in relation to child rearing is very important. It is exactly how I was raised. There were so many teachings that I received from my mom that I carry with me today; and not only from my mom but from my aunts, my Grandmas, my great Grandma and my Grandma and then my other Grandmas. You know the extended family that we have. We don't call them Aunties and Uncles and with our cousins we don't call them cousins, they're either our siblings or depending on which side of the family they're on, they our nieces and nephews or there our aunts and Uncles; it really just depends. With child rearing, I just think about the way that I was raised and it was very strict. I mean these ways are ancient these go back thousands of years and so the discipline was there. I know a lot of people think that people aren't supposed to discipline their kids, especially in our traditional ways but there was forms of discipline that didn't involve like striking them. It wasn't it wasn't the kind of discipline that military style or the boarding school style or the residential school... It wasn't like that our discipline is different. We have we have a different type of discipline where we tell stories, we do that through storytelling and there's teachings within these stories and you learn from those stories and there's events that happen. There's also instructions in these stories, some of these stories like our some of our prophecy stories we have, there's teachings in there and that goes back to when we first got here on the Earth, came to this world as human beings and the instructions that we got to take care of each other, to take care of the environment, to be peaceful, to be kind, and to help each other and to not be greedy, you only take what you need. And then other teachings came along the way as we lived here on Earth, from the animals, we took on a clan system and

it wasn't just through the animals it was through all of the other elements. For example, there's fire clan. So my mom is from fire clan, my grandma was from fire clan, my great Grandma was from fire clan and her mother was fire clan and I am fire clan; so it's matrilineal, so whatever the mother is what the baby's going to be. If I had a brother, he would be fire clan too. My child is going to be fire clan and if I had a brother his child would not would be the clan of the mother, if she didn't have a clan then I'm not sure what we would do.”

“For Hopi our society is run by the women and then with the home itself, the way that I was taught was that the home belongs to the woman because she's the homemaker. Everything that's within the home she also owns. The only things that the men own are their tools, their personal belongings, and their weapons if they have if they had weapons, they're ceremonial items and those kinds of things. Another one of the teachings I think is important that when if there was there was a couple that were not doing well together and if the woman decided, and it was the woman's choice, if she decided she didn't want this partner in her life anymore, if he wasn't contributing or if he wasn't you know doing his role as a man she had the right to ask him to leave. Or sometimes if he'd already be gone, she could pick up all of his belongings and put them outside the door. He would have to not question and he would have to pick them up and leave and that's just the way it was. There was no arguing, there was no fighting, there was none of that around children. It was just decisions were made by the women and that was it. Of course you know there was decisions made by men too but that was through their area. For men their place of authority was in the Kiva which is where all of the ceremonies happen and all of those ceremonies are all run by the men. That's the men's responsibility. They have to do their part, hunting if they needed to hunt and then I believe they were the planters too. The women were the seed growers, they would take the seeds and they would give them to the men and go plant them. There were all these roles that were really significant in the home and then of course outside of the home there was a lot of roles for the men to do and the men participated in the ceremonies and the ceremonies go back. We still have those too and those go back through ancient times too and everything has to be done in the Hopi Language.”

“With the knowledge that was brought to us, I learned from my mom that our people were very good astronomers because that's how we knew when it came time to plant, have ceremonies, to hunt. When it was hunting season or any kind of event that was happening at a certain time of year, it didn't really have anything to do with what season it was, it was by the position of the stars in the sky, and the position of the sun and the moon, we call them solstices and equinox. Those times of year were pretty significant and those would signify what time of year it was, what season it was going to be, it would tell which animals are going to be out and so that's when you know certain ceremonies would happen or hunting would happen or anything like that, planting crops. So with child rearing, I think all of those things are important. Unfortunately, a lot of those ways, of course they're being lost, they're not being preserved and participated in the way they once were.”

Key Themes: home, discipline, roles of men and women, matrilineal, storytelling, language, stars and hunting/harvesting, clan system, ceremonies

4) *akii kwe, Anishinaabe*

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“I didn't grow up in the traditional way of life in terms of the tipis because they were long gone by the time I arrived. We lived in those semi-permanent log houses and every community member built their own house back in the day. My dad built our house. But as far as the tipi teachings and the tipi with regards to child rearing. First I'll talk about the significance of the tipi and then the child rearing. From what I've learned over the last several years from knowledge keepers, my grandparents, and other Elders. My understanding of the tipi and its significance, it's a representative of the woman and there's many teachings that go with that. Those are not my teachings. These are teachings that were I've learned along the way and I think that teaching is beautiful because it's symbolic of a woman's dress. It makes a lot of connections for me as anishinaabe kwe and that teaching is about security, safety, nurturing all of those things are symbolic of what a tipi is. It's there for protection and the coldest of winters, it kept us warm in the rainy days. We could seek shelter and the beauty of it is that we always have access to the outside. It's not an enclosure that separates you from the air outside so you're always receiving fresh air, the way our lives were intended to be lived and experienced. That's what I loved about talking about the structure of the tipi and the other piece of it is it could be dismantled very quickly and then raised depending on how many people are there to help but certainly our community was never individualistic, it was always very community oriented. That would be another teaching that would come from that tipi about child rearing, that it takes a community to raise a child and there's enough privacy that you can close the door and put children to sleep at night and so on, but it was open enough that you were still within the community and people could hear and know you're there and if there's an issue they could come quite quickly to your assistance.”

“Back to the significance of the tipi and it's representative the woman, that we come from a matriarchal society where the woman is center of all of our way of life and everything it revolves around the female or the woman. I've heard so many teachings about the women and their roles and it's been eroded over time of course as you probably know through the Indian Act but traditionally our teachings are without women it would be very difficult to have a balance in life and it was the men's position to ensure that women were protected and well taken care of to ensure a good way of life, not only the family but the community and the more women were protected the better off we would be in all aspects: spiritually, mentally, physically and so we have the this really important role as women to live that good life and to pass it on to our Children. We have a very important, a critical role to play and then we need to rise up to that huge challenge that we have. We don't only bring people little people into the World, but it's much more, a reason why we need to ensure that we take care of ourselves and be the best that we can be for the future of our children and Grandchildren. So now connecting it to child rearing and maybe I've been doing that already but child rearing is probably the most important role we will play

as women. Not every woman can have a child and I really feel that we've been given a gift each time we bring a child into this World and so as a woman I take that role very seriously. Regardless if I had to do it on my own or with the help but again it goes back to that erosion. I felt during my lifetime I've been really put in precarious situations and been made to feel very vulnerable and not supported and not protected, so at times I've had to endure the path alone and it was quite a challenge and really put me at times in a very desperate situation in terms of decisions that I made. But not to lose sight of why it's like that and I believe that it has a lot to do with our history and colonization and what it's done to erode our way of life, our teachings, and especially our families. The Indian Act in particular really did a number on our women and as a result we see this despair in our communities. I'm getting off track here a bit, but what I think we need to get back to those teachings and that way of life and bring women back to the center where they rightfully should be, and I really believe that would change everything. It would create a better life but Western systems don't share that same Worldview and they've put men at the top, at the center, and as a result of that decisions have been made that really go against our Worldview and our teachings and made us very vulnerable. As a result, had negative, and huge impacts on the way we child rear. Even today I felt that, I knew it was very wrong for me when I first had my child to leave her and care of someone else when I should have been the main caregiver but I was forced to live like that in order to support my family financially so they'd have a place to live and food on the table, you know the very basic necessities. I was forced to go out in the work world which I knew was very wrong and I endured that and I regret it to this day and I wish there was another way that I could have raised my children without having to leave them in care of someone else. In doing that I felt like I've harmed my children and so those teachings are traditional teachings very much connected to the tipi.”

“The one other point I wanted to make about the tipi teaching is that, I love all the teachings but the one that came to me was the one where how connected we are to the land and European Western Worldview really could not appreciate our way of life and the way we lived. They brought their way of life and imposed it on us. The narrative that they utilized to justify their behavior and their imposition on us, is that we were uncivilized, that we were savages and we didn't know how to live a civilized life, and to become domesticated to the way they believed was the proper way to live. Yet our way of life was very sophisticated and the teaching I love the best about the way we lived is how we cared for the land. When we built tipi we didn't harm the land, we ensured the land would be intact and well taken care of for many generations to come. We didn't destroy the land around us, we respected all the life on that land, our medicines, the animals, everything, the water and what we tried to do is to keep it in pristine condition. A tipi allowed us to do that because we only took from the land what we needed. We lived quite well in the tipis under extreme weather conditions, we were able to survive and thrive and live this most beautiful life in harmony with our environment. The Western Worldview is more about controlling the environment, reaping everything that's worth money regardless of the consequences and now there's a lot of issues around the World and a lot of pressure on governments to stop the abuse of the Earth, water and air. At the rate we're going we're basically destroying our way of life and there'll be nothing left. When the animals, the plants, the medicines die, and we die. When the water gets

poisoned, we get poisoned, and we die. I think they're getting the message but it's in some ways people feel it's kind of late because there is so much damage done. I'm really hopeful that we could stop this assault that's happening on the Earth to allow it to heal and to get back to the place where we can continue to live and thrive in a peaceful way.”

Key themes: representative of the woman, teachings, security, safety, nurturing, way of life, land

5) *Elaine Kicknosway member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Treaty 6, Swampy Cree from Amisk Lake on mother's side and Chippewa from Buffalo narrows on her dad's side*

What is the significance of the teepee teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“*Boohzoo, aniin, tansi*, Elaine *indishnakas*. I'm known as Elaine, *mahihkan* from the Wolf clan. I come from Pelican Narrows through my Grandma, and through my Mom Amisk Lake, and through my Dad Buffalo Narrows. To my mom, I'm all Cree and I'm known as her baby, the baby girl. A lot of times in child rearing ways, there's different times of our childhood that has affected this oppressive practice of raising our children. I'm from the era, I was born into grief. I was born at that time, there was Indian residential schools, there was Indian hospitals. Indian hospitals and residential schools were all run by the church, it was state partnership with practice. The day I was born, I was indoctrinated, I was baptized within my first 24 hours. When we recognize the church's impacts on our way of life, and the reality is some relations that I have directly still utilize the church, and I don't speak hard about the church, but I talk about the impacts related to our childhood.”

“I'm a swing baby. I'm from the era where I was tied, what they say I was tied, and I'm a swing baby. So I take that pride fully. I'm very grateful for that teaching of swing baby and moss bag baby. And that is one of those teachings related to the fire, the tree life, because you have the tree of life right above your head, right in focus to your soft spot. You're connected to those trees, and the sway is the wind. And you are the fire, you're the heartbeat and you're the water. And when we talk about those traditional tipi teachings, we talked about the relationship with the spruce, the black spruce, knowing that those are the straightest poles. And people use the outside bark for other medicines, the sap in there and then there's the actual stems that we use the black spruce for cleaning, cleansing. When we choose each of those trees, there's different names, in the first pole that you hold is your obedience pole and it takes patience to be a parent. Even being a child, that takes patience because in my generation there's a lot of patience, of witnessing. And you undo some of that as you get older. I remember that when I was a child or some people will tell you well, you remember, you know you did that when you were a kid.”

“When I was in different foster homes, because those are those places of my childhood because I was apprehended in 1969 so I was only home for a couple of years. I saw tipis but I didn't always connect with them primarily because I'm from the wigwam territory. We didn't all have tipis necessarily and sometimes that's the distinctiveness and the uniqueness of each other's Nation and territories. But there's a draw and a pull to say I belong there just don't know how. I know the first pole that you hold when you even

when you get out from the A frame, and you line up all those poles, there's a significance to each and every one of them. And that A frame, even when you choose the significant A frame, vary the strongest, and then the one that brings that the whole up, that holds that, that that skirt as they say, but skirt isn't gender specific right, just like those poles aren't gendered, some have seats, some don't. In some societies, we didn't live back then but we go on to the oral tradition of the words of how we took care of the tipi practice, which is responsibility and obedience. The responsibility to care for it, the responsibility to nurture it, the responsibility to make it a communal space. And we each had a role and responsibility to ensure that when it was long and tied up, and how we moved it, to ensure that they were in good standing, is a good standing. And we raise our children in good standing, we want you to stand tall, you are the tree of life that goes all the way to this beautiful brain of yours, this spine of yours as your connection and your breath. You know, what they call those ribs, you're in good standing all the way down to your tools, the way you dance. And not is in relation to good standing. And that's why when we're wrapped tight, they're in good standing. So they can breathe, your arms are here or down by yourself or down here, you're in good standing. Because you're protecting the seeds of the future, the water of the future. And sometimes they look at these tipi teachings or, or the teachings of our peoples and Nations. And they always give that old 'it doesn't matter.' It mattered then and it matters now. And it will matter in the future, it will matter 20 to 30 generations ahead of us. So that we can always know that our way of life has always mattered. Our way of our communication, through the silence, through the verbalization, through the signals. You can put up a tipi and I always recognize, because it goes back to that space... I've been in community more since my 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s than I was away as a three-year-old to my mid-20s. I was only away for a short time like 15 years. It wasn't 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, right? And I still feel sometimes I walk in like a tourist. But I was drawn to the tipi by saying there's a place of acknowledgement that I want to be a part of. Now I help fold the tipi, I am a tipi owner. In the communities that I've traveled to, I've witnessed a walking out and it's that child that walks out, does a walking out ceremony, and represents their role and responsibility of hunting, of sowing, of gathering, of doing, of capability. And I always remind myself in some communities are within the individual or family or territory, sometimes it's new. And sometimes in some territory, family and community, it's old. So we're still at that merging, like, who does and who doesn't, but everybody wants to go back to what they say authentic. And as the tipi holder, and learning, it's a place of community, it's a place of fire, it's a place of eating, it's a place of teaching, it's a place of bravery, it's a place of honesty, it's a place of vulnerability, it's many places."

"Going back, Wanuskewin has some really good teachings of the life cycle too. In there is that teaching of love, honesty and bravery and some over here call that those Seven Grandfather Teachings. They gendered it, I'm like, there's more to it. There's much more to it and I believe that in there is that learning that when we're walking in these two or three or four different roadway and pathways, from homelessness pathway, to foster kid pathway, to 60 Scoop pathway, to just being you. It's that growing, like you've always been a part of this life. In this life, it's a good life. It's a beautiful life. It's one that has always loved you and nourished you and wanted you to be a part and never wanted you to feel left out. And that's what I believe because there's doorways there. In the eastern

doorways, that acknowledgement of the, the obedience, like that's their first pole when you hold it when you come out and sometimes that place of have in our Eastern door what they call that place of childhood or even yourself as a parent or community member. It's knowing that sometimes you have to speak up in relations to loving your community and speaking up to ensure that their voices and your voices are heard in good ways, speaking up so that people aren't hurt or harmed. And bringing that place of respectful conversation, we don't swear in front of our kids, and we don't put them down and put those places have those old ways, right? Those are our ways; those are old ways that were harmful to their spirit. And it's reminding ourselves that if we've lived through that, as a parent, that we don't pass that forward. That's that interloper. That that is that can be very harmful to that little beautiful human being that precious. And they chose to be Cree. They chose that when they sat with their counsel, before they came to the Earth, they chose, I chose to be Chippewa, I chose to be Cree. I chose that with my counsel and my loved ones. And they set that pathway to say in your life, you might have these hardships, and we'll put some of that in you to bring you forward, to help you move forward. And then there's that place of that loving, humility and understanding to ask for help. And that's why all those poles are together at the top, right, and the tie of that umbilical cord to that tie; the Creator's umbilical cord that ties you tight to the ground, it keeps you grounded, and make sure that those flaps are open or close on the outside to make sure that you can breathe. There's so many beautiful things related to the understanding and that's just a real simplified version.”

Key themes: swing baby, moss bag baby, fire, tree of life, way of life, walking out ceremony, growing, respectful conversation, umbilical cord, breathe

6) Aleah Fontaine from Sagkeeng First Nation

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“I wanted to start by saying that thank you for sharing some of the traditional tipi teachings because I had not heard about the tipi teachings before. When you said I might know more than I thought I did, you were right on that. As I was reading through the tipi teachings, it was my understanding that this had come from a Cree Elder who had shared this and I saw so much overlap and consistency with our teachings, our anishinaabe teachings and I should clarify that I am anishinaabe kwe. Anytime I think about teachings or I think about our 7 Grandfather teachings, I'm always kind of drawn to and always mindful of the teachings that I find particularly easy to live by as well as the ones that I find myself having more struggle with. As I was reading through the tipi teachings and kind of meditating on my own kind of experiences with those. I was again thinking about the ones that I find to be easier to live by and then those ones that I find harder to live by. Those are really important feelings to be aware of, because it tells us those are the areas where we need to put that extra special attention to in order for us to be able to grow as well as heal. Passing on those teachings to our little ones is important for a couple of different ways. When I think about teachings they remind me a lot about values to live by. I should mention that for the purpose of this interview that I do come from a background in Psychology and values is something that we talk a lot about in in

Psychology. Often when I'm working with people who are really struggling or feeling lost, I'll do values-based work. We'll work on identifying what is meaningful to that person, what sort of qualities do they want to embody as they move throughout life. They serve as important guides for where we should go. Often if we're feeling off in life, it's because this is the way we want to be, our values over here, this is the way that we want to move through the World, relate to other people but maybe we're over here, we're not in line or we're not quite living in line with our values or our teachings that we receive. Having our teachings be front of mind and being aware of and reflecting on what are the ones that I am living by and what are the ones where I'm struggling in is important for identifying where we need to put in that special work and attention. All of the tipi teachings, as well as other teachings because it's one of our teachings that all Nations have a lot of important knowledge to share... I'm always interested in what teachings other Nations have to share with others as those provide a solid base for children as they grow and move through life on their journey. That's one point when I think about the significance of the teachings to our little ones. The other one that I think a lot about is that these teachings are a way of being able to pass on knowledge that has existed for Millennia. When you think about just the transmission of knowledge from parent to child, from parent to child, from parent to child, and not just parents of course, like aunties and uncles and grandparents, other members of the community, it really is a way of connecting us through time; it's a way of connecting us to both our ancestors as well as our unborn relatives to come. It's that way of ensuring that we all live on forever by passing on those teachings, by passing on those qualities. Those are the two bigger points that I see how our teachings, the tipi teachings are significant to child rearing.”

Key themes: Anishinaabe, 7 grandfather teachings, grow, heal, passing on teachings, values, life, transmission, connecting us through time

7) Mel Joe from Miawpukek Samiajij First Nation, Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland)

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“To me, that's the foundation of our identity and who we are. I didn't quite understand when I was growing up that I had lost an identity or that I didn't have an identity and I knew we were vulnerable for certain things. My Mom had explained these things but even though she taught the same things that's in the tipi teachings that I learned later on and they may not be taught the same way in Mi'kmaq culture, in the same method. We did have wigwam but I don't think we have this set up but she taught the same things, and the importance was the same and it was still on the land. But we missed a crucial piece of tying those concepts to a center, that core identity because that was not formed and it was still unshaped. That led me to being exploited over and over again and being harmed. When we look at the tipi teachings and how crucial they are, I see all these pieces that are fit together like a puzzle that form and shape a solid form of an identity of a person. That is how a person is able to walk through the World and have protections that our ancestors and Creator intended us to have. Her going to residential school and the school system I was part of is not considered a residential school, it was considered French immersion

here in Winnipeg, eroded that. They did everything to take that away and have you be a colonial idea of who you're supposed to be but it didn't fit with a feeling inside. The outside doesn't represent the inside and it's the same thing with the gender identity. I was supposed to go to the female washroom but it didn't feel right, what's on the outside did not fit with what's internal and without the words to express that, without the tipi teachings, without being. Let's say 'I know this is who I am, this is what I learned from so and so, and this is part of our culture,' without that structure it leaves us vulnerable. It leaves our children vulnerable so when somebody comes along and says 'hey let's go do this' or 'let's do that' or 'is this actually right?' They don't have a point of reference to say 'well my ancestors, my parents, my siblings, my people, this is what we do.' They don't have anything to bounce back and say that this is who I am, there's no structure there to keep them safe. That's how I end up being vulnerable. I've watched my kids too. My two oldest kids they were in French immersion and I've advocated, it was a school in a school division in the south end of this city that has an Indigenous person's name but it was more focused on colonial French culture than Indigenous French culture. To me they're one in the same because the East Coast Mi'kmaq and French knew the relationship that we were kin and I don't see a difference between the two, I see that they're more alike than they are different. That colonial piece is the one that's different. It's not the other cultural aspects, it's the colonial piece that can be in any culture really, it's a mindset not a culture in itself."

"All those teachings that I understand them as being divided into different parts where you focus on at different stages in your life, they guide me in how to be the appropriate parent for my each of my children and other people's children. Not just like today, I had 4 pregnancies but I gave birth to 3 children and I have an older adult son that has autism and special needs, then I have a middle child who was born male but is a transgender person and then I have a youngest child that was not meant to be born. I wasn't going to have any more children. I started a relationship with someone who did not want children, I was on 2 forms of birth control. The way Creator made me as an intersex person, I had hormonal imbalances and they were trying to correct it and we were trying to use birth control to make sure that everything was corrected but then this little being existed between me and her father. We felt like the Creator definitely worked really hard to make this person exist because we did everything to try to not make it happen but this person exists and that's powerful medicine, this person has a powerful existence. My middle child, all the struggles that they've had to be who they are now and that they're coming about now, they all lost that identity but as they've come out of that school system and away from the colonization, they're starting to accept those teachings, those same teachings that are represented in the in the tipi teachings, the medicine wheel, and the 7 grandfather teachings. All the teachings from our people, all the teachings on the land. Their identities are getting stronger and stronger and stronger and reinforced here at home. The only difficulty is that we're almost isolated, like we have a community outside of us, but where we have to walk every day, those teachings aren't there and those spaces aren't safe for these children. These are special children; these are not just everyday children. You have children with autism that are sensitive to lights and sounds that we don't perceive. My uncle passed away a number of years ago and he was diagnosed as schizophrenic and my partner as well. But they perceive things that are just not there, that

we don't. It's not that they're not there, just that we don't perceive them or we have some level of perception of them but they perceive it more intensely and that changes how they go about the World, how they interpret the World.”

“As I study economics, I realize how everything is about money and capitalism... how much we consume and how much we produce, everything's a production line whether it's our medical system or our education system, those are all harm; all those systems are harm, they don't heal a person or people like myself, they harm people like us but when we do follow these tipi teachings, when we leave this space, when we leave the city and we follow these teachings out on the land that harm stops. I keep telling my kiddos here, if you follow these things, you're safe, you're well, and you are medicine, you're able to share your medicine. There's medicine inside of you and it's absolutely true.”

“My kiddo, she's almost twenty years old and she tries doing things that other twenty year olds do that are not following these teachings. She gets she starts feeling very unwell, then her unwellness destabilizes our family unit and everyone starts feeling unwell. ‘What's going on? Why is there chaos, why, what's happening, I feel so ill, I feel unsettled, I feel like I'm missing something.’ I'm like ‘because you're trying to do what others are doing and that's not what you're supposed to be doing. Your medicine comes about because you follow these teachings.’ She's at a point where she's learning her kinship, she's learning cleanliness, she's learning gratitude and she has those things but it's wobbly because she's just starting that journey... I said ‘you have far to go,’ I remember what it was like being 19, 20 years old and learning those things, ‘who am I related to?’ and asking those questions and my parents not really knowing because they had to leave it all behind because they didn't even really completely understand everything that happened of why the community collapsed the way that it did. Now there's books written about it because the Elders spoke out. But they tried to instill these things and are still learning, my parents are still learning but it is the very core. When we don't have it, we aren't well and when we're not well, our medicine isn't able to be shared among everyone. It's almost the same thing and the way the economy measures and the way we study money and capitalism is that when it's scarce people hold on to it, they don't want to let it go. In times of scarcity people in this economy they hold onto money. But the thing is money is still toxic, it's still not medicine and when we're not well, when there's scarcity in kindness, when there's scarcity in our culture, when there's scarcity and all of these things that are how we understand the World and our identity, when there's scarcity and that, we hold on to our medicine. But when this flows, like the way Mr. Trudeau there wants to make the money flow, when our culture flows and our teachings flow, our medicine flows and so she's learning that through these teachings.”

“My spirit name is Medicine Wheel woman, it was given to me by a small child, a little four-year-old little kid that was being cheeky... I was teaching about the Medicine Wheel and he thought so then ‘you're not a forced woman, you're a medicine wheel woman’ and I said ‘well I guess I am part woman, yes I have given birth to children’ and I said ‘but that's not my name though,’ he says ‘well it is now because that's what I'm going to call you’ and the name stuck. I kept thinking I go to Elders, I'm supposed to go through ceremony, and do all these things like give a gift and tobacco, I'm supposed to get my

name in this grand way and they gave it back to me... two Elders gave it back to me. They said “you already know your name I can't give it to you. You already know your clan I can't give it to you, already know your colors I can't give it to you,” and I felt like I was being deprived of something but then I realized the gift that I was given was that children have those lessons, they come from the Spirit World, they come with so much knowledge and they forget it as they grow older and we're here longer, we've forgotten it long time ago and we're now trying to remember it and they come with it. We've learned how to adapt here and we're just here as a guide with these tools that Creator said to use to live a good life. The tipi teachings and following each of those stages is what we focus on for each of my kids but their knowledge that they give me is equivalent. Those three ones: obedience, respect, and humility, I sometimes have a hard time with the word obedience because it's different in English. The way we understand and obedience from a colonial church is like do as you're told obey but it's actually trust. That one I had to learn before I could teach them. I had to learn all of these first and teach myself first and remember and connect all the pieces of where my parents taught me here and there on the land what each of these meant. I had to learn that obedience isn't do as you're told I had to trust someone to be able to follow what they're telling me and they had to trust me. One of the certifications that I got was as a circle of security facilitator parenting program for attachment. I gravitated to that one because it talked about a circle but it made sense all the things that I realized was part of our culture was worded in their understanding and their research. And it's a colonial research but there's people that will listen to that but our teachings follow that same circle, that same medicine wheel, the same circle in the tipi. I realized that's what we were missing from residential schools, that's what they took away is that attachment because when we follow a pattern of attachment, we learn trust, when we learn that we're respected our needs are met. That humility that we talk about isn't what I had learned in school about being humble, about lowering yourself and I learned later on that's a church thing, that is not an Indigenous concept. It is that, I've brought myself here and I bring everyone else as equals to the same place. When someone feels shame and they feel lower than me, I don't need to make myself smaller or lesser to match them, I give kindness. I project kindness and love, so that they are raised and feel the same as me, equal to me.”

“There was a time after I took Early Childhood Education (ECE), I shared a lot of these teachings in workshops and school activities. I shared with other ECE's that were being trained here Winnipeg to go up North and do early childhood education. How I took these things and every day interacting with small little people, they're not little children. Some of the ways that the early childhood education was more like a production line of numbers; how many numbers, so many tasks you have to do and checklists - they're not people but how that they can be people? Following those teachings around the medicine wheel, around the tipi and using the 7 grandfather teachings to help guide kids... we're not there to count them.”

“My family has intergenerationally been guides. I did ancestry far back to the seventeen hundreds and we've been guides, our entire family lineage has been guides. My mom was raised by her grandmother, she was a medicine woman and midwife, and her grandfather who was the *saka mao* or the hereditary chief. That went back generations and

generations ago. There's an overlay of epigenetics that studies how that transforms each generation. That your brain, each child's brain is developed to remember these things and that we carry this blood memory that passes on intergenerationally. That didn't line up what I was learning in school, and it was not the tipi teachings, it was not the medicine wheel teachings and it did not fit. I had two lives, the life that I'm supposed to live in school, that was very much like you're female, this is the box that you are in and you check this because it says female on your birth certificate and then there's the one on the land, with my family, which said that okay... I wasn't even called Melissa growing up, I was Les and it was more of a neutral name for me and I did not do a lot of the girl stuff, I did a lot of in between of going back and forth and I still do. I didn't understand that, I didn't have words for that. My parents didn't either but they didn't really force one concept over the other, it was just you want to go hunting, you want to collect wood, you want to do this. This is great. You also like taking care of kids, you like making bannock, you like caring for people and I did both; I always walked between two. It's only recently that I understood that I was gender fluid but I didn't understand the other concepts of myself and that's how I help my kiddos is through understanding myself, understanding the tipi teachings, understanding the medicine wheel, and the grandfather teachings. But I only recently found out that what I was being told by the medical community as a hormone imbalance and that my body was not operating, it was sick that I'm an actually intersex person; a person that holds both male hormones and female hormones and that all my childhood of being tormented by other people for being fat was because I was built like a boy. I had so much extra muscle, played lots of sports, became a carpenter and loved doing all of that stuff but didn't really align with a female identity. I think all of those things, if I had more time because if you're growing up and you're on the land, you only have a certain amount of time on the land before you're mandated to go back to school. Legally you have to go back to school and going back to school you don't get to explore those things. Those things don't get to be reinforced because literally after my mom got home from work and my dad got home from work and after the babysitters, we literally had a meal and got ready for bed. We didn't get the rest of our culture so to me residential schools still continue and the harm still continues. Everybody keeps telling me that 'no no, they're done, they're gone, they're shut down.' I don't see it that way. I see that my two oldest children did not get to benefit from these teachings, their six plus hours a day and it's caused them harm. They did not get to learn the happiness, the love, the faith in their adolescence that they should have. They learned bullying and pain and as much as I've tried to teach that in our home, we only have so much time so they don't actually get to know their whole identity. Now as they're adults and they're free from that system, the extra cost is on us too to keep them here, not to send them away because our children, from my traditional understanding is they're not sent away at 18, they're not full adults until they're 25. So we're going through the tipi teachings, back through that where they've gotten pieces of it that they can remember from their childhood between the pain of being in school and being forced to do certain things that didn't feel right and the shame and all the trauma. Because it's seemingly sequential like Ko'ona and Janet Fox taught me specifically the tipi teachings in a certain order. Then Darren Courchene had shared more about it in the Ojibway language. It seems like I can remember it when he teaches me and it's like 'oh it makes sense' and then a year later it's like 'I know Darren taught me this' but it's the way that they're spaced out and set off a certain way. When I

went to Red River and I remember taking child development. They're teaching us these levels and I'm like 'I don't think that,' 'no, my kids didn't follow that,' and they're trying to give us this rigid timeline of human development. I'm like 'I don't think that actually works that way, I'm pretty sure it doesn't work that way.' The amazing part of the tipi teachings is that we can miss those pieces but we know they're missing like if you're missing a tipi pole and your structure is weak. When you try to get help, at least in this system, I know that this tipi is weak, I know my kid's tipi is weak, I know that they're missing tipi poles. I go try to tell that to anyone in these systems that are saying 'you have to go to the doctor,' 'you have to go see a therapist,' 'you have to get help too' when I know that there's tipi poles missing. If I try to explain that to them, they think I'm nuts but I'm like 'no, no, I know that these pieces are missing, I feel that these pieces are missing but I didn't know how to explain.' I do now but I didn't know then. A mother, a father, whomever is the caregiver for children they know these in their heart, they remember them. They may not have the words but it's still part of their core that they feel it's missing, they can feel that it's missing from residential schools and intergenerational trauma. They feel that those pieces are missing and they're trying to get it but this society does not know how to give those pieces, it is not set up that way. Inevitably we feel like we have this success of residential schools being gone and being done and closed but it's not... we're still perpetuating the same pain and the same trauma each generation."

"Having worked in this school division, having volunteered and worked in the other school division, I'm familiar with the curriculum and that it's not an Indigenous person that's developing the curriculum. There's people working on it and they try to put their pieces into it to try to balance it out, but it's not working because one of the things when I studied as an early childhood educator was the adverse childhood experiences (aces). They talk about when you sprinkle in someone's culture, you do more harm... when you immerse a person in their culture, they heal. Right now with reconciliation and everybody wants to do a piece in their work, in their own way. It's still just that sprinkling because they're not actually giving us it back. On reserve it's completely different, most reserves are still underfunded. My home community is blending two Worlds; our culture, our language, our teachings as well as the English World, French World, trying to blend it all together and I think that was the way it was intended to be. How we saw our prophecies is all 3 cultures, that we could all exist together and we could understand each other's culture, but not to have ours taken away."

"How that tipi is related to how we're raising our kids. Many Indigenous kids have many other issues, it's not just that we have this blank slate of a person, we have a two-spirit child that struggled with their identity. For so long, going to the medical system and trying to explain the differences in my kiddos when within the culture we didn't need to do that. Doesn't have that in these tipi teachings, not where you need to identify these things, I just had everything that was neutral because I knew that child from the time I was pregnant, was not going to be like their older sibling. I knew what it felt like to carry my first child and my very first child was different, did not make eye contact did not do a lot of things, was very strong and a very big child but did not do a lot of things as other children do. We followed those tipi teachings so it wasn't like the doctor. The doctor wants to know are they walking, are they talking, just this checklist... that will happen

when it happens, that will happen when it's ready to happen. We're more focused on 'does this child trust me?' 'How do I show my child a respect so that that child will respect me?' It's like this is the section for childhood like the first three is the foundation, if you don't have those three the other ones are going to be wobbly. I worked very hard on the first three and I spent the time as a young person being 19 years old of looking at 'okay so what did I learn from this school system that was toxic for me? What did I learn from colonial society that did not help me?' I listened to my parents, what they saw and what they learned from their parents. You have this big jumble of stuff and you just kind of teasing these all out to fit with a strong enough foundation of trust so that my child would listen. My child did not like to listen very much and so much so that they thought he had hearing problems which they did find he had some hearing problems. How do you teach these things with a different kind of person that doesn't learn the way that other people learn? It was that respect and humility, I got to his level and looked at the World from his level, where certain feelings, certain touches are terrible feeling and they make you want to scream and certain lights and certain clothes. It was like I put his baby clothes on 'How does that feel?' 'Oh well, if that feels rough on my skin maybe it feels rough on his skin' and then there are some things that were soft that was like okay, that's soft but he doesn't like that and people think it was weird me saying 'well my newborn likes this or likes that' they're like 'well how do you know? You can't know that,' I'm like 'no you can know that you when you respect someone and you can be at the same level and being the same, you want to earn trust from someone, you want that infant to trust you, you need to make sure that you can interpret what they're communicating to you.' This little person I wanted so badly to have a *tikinagan* (cradleboard) because I realized this person had sensory issues that was only resolved from being swaddled and so I swaddled him up until he was almost 10 years old. We used to play a game I had a very fluffy blanket that was quite heavy down and we play hotdog and he'd just pull out this blanket. It was just the right size and roll them all up and he just lay there so content and he was a big baby's he was eleven and a half pounds. I had to get like a full size blanket to be able to swaddle him until he felt secure enough and all the other sensory information would go away. I could not find a *tikinagan* and my mom did not have that cultural knowledge at that time. I'm not too sure if they brought it back in our community or not but it really is essential for those other teachings to fit alongside with the *tipi* teachings because it is important. All of my kids have sensory, I have sensory, my partner, my brother to some degree; they want to relate it to Autism but now I'm diagnosed with fibromyalgia and that's a nerve disorder which is sensory. I also spent time learning about the epigenetics of trauma and the neurobiology of attachment and found these teachings, when you're swaddling a child, you're calming their vagal nerve so there's polyvagal theory and that connects your inner ear drum and through your face, down your neck, to your heart, your breathing down into your stomach and your digestion. What I didn't understand when my very sensitive baby was young, both of them, the dysregulation that I tried so hard to follow what the nurse says, the lactation consultant, check, check, check, check, check... I'm a good parent and I'm going to do everything in this society that they tell me to do and get them on a routine, set the clock, and put the timer on, and feed, and breastfeed, and pump and do all this stuff. I was losing my mind of how much that was the absence of feeling a core identity of these teachings, was that all these external things had to queue me to be the parent, that I was

supposed to be the good parent, that my kids weren't taken by CFS. I realized that I was in an unhealthy relationship years later, I kind of saw pieces of it that coincided with my child's dysregulation and I struggled to try to find balance in that relationship. I didn't quite know myself so I was dysregulated, tried to understand what that even meant, like those words came later on to now knowing, if I had a core identity with these teachings at an early age I would have learned emotional regulation instead of being numb. Because in school, it's just stop, this is what you're supposed to do, all these external things, check, check, check, check, check all these external things to be a good little worker, here's your grade, this is your value as a person... is a complete opposite of those teachings.”

Key Themes: who we are, wigwam, core identity, teachings on the land, special children, you are medicine, trust, circle of security, neurobiology, attachment, tikinagan, dysregulation, emotional regulation

8) Mahihkan from Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“That is a good question and it gave me an opportunity to look back on my own experiences. Time spent with family members and my first answer was time. We live in a fast-paced World that the moments we have with knowledge keepers, Elders or family members, it goes by quickly and they're far and few between. I feel very familiar with the process of tipi teachings and I've done it many times and so when I think about the process in its entirety. I think about the relationships that I have with those knowledge keepers, how it has impacted that transfer of knowledge and the fostering of the relationship that we have. Time spent was my first answer. The next was, I'm a science geek so the mathematics behind tipis is really cool and I found that very interesting in no way did we ever use a tape measure or a paper and pen, everything was done through the natural tools that we had available to us through nature. Knowing the mathematics was very helpful, also the opportunity to listen. I found in the latter half of my life that listening is a skill and that you really have to work on it in order to be able to truly understand the teachings that come along through the relationships and through this opportunity. At first I remember trying to bring a paper and pen with me but it never really worked and on multiple occasions I was told to put it down. This really meant to hone in on what those teachings were and through repetition and of course experience, eventually getting the opportunity to place that in my long-term memory so that I could eventually pass on that knowledge myself. Putting up a tipi takes a minimum of 3 people... I have heard that it can be done by 2 and I think you're very special if you can do it on your own but it would be pretty hard and the interpersonal relationship that's developed when working, teamwork wise, with other people that is another opportunity I think that can be passed down through child rearing. Then of course, we're doing it inevitably to survive and so that means you know looking back at the importance of this type of dwelling and how it meant surviving if we didn't have it. Then of course once the tipi is up, there is other things associated with it like building a fire. You know that is another survival piece and something that I think every person should know the importance of, not only how to build a fire but also how to respect the fire and how it relates to our heart and the way we live. The other thing is saving money, tipis are

expensive so placing them in a place where they're not going to get wet over the winter, if you're if you're utilizing it just in the summer, you have to put it away properly. If you put it away wet, mold can grow on it which then you ruin it and it becomes very expensive. Learning how to keep those parts in a good place so that they're not ruined, so that it can be used for many years is good. Then you know the process of getting the materials too, like going out into the bush and making prayers, connecting with Mother Earth, placing your feet on the ground and chopping down the trees. Listening to the trees before you chop them down, thanking them, offering them tobacco. Those are more ways that reinforce the connection that we have, not only with ourselves and our family members, but also with the with the World and Mother Earth around us and so being a part of that reinforces the relationship that we have with Mother Earth and the importance of that relationship.”

Key Themes: time, relationships, mathematics, nature, listen, fire teachings, way of life, making prayers, connecting with Mother Earth, listening to the trees

9) Steven Naganashe Perry, Ph.D. *Mkade Miigwan from Little Traverse Bay Band (LTBB/GRFN) of Odawa (Michigan) and Ketigaan Zeeping (Garden River FN, Ontario)*

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“I believe that the tipi teachings follow the traditional course of teachings that are given in the Native American communities throughout Turtle Island and reminds us of those values that we should have, that have been values that we've held as *anishinaabe* communities for thousands of years. Following the 7 grandfather teachings, teaching how important the community is and how important it is that we take care of each other, we live together and live with all things out there. We live with not only other human beings and two-legged people but with those 4 our-legged animals and with those plants and all the things that make up Mother Earth; all the things that make up the connections that we have on an everyday basis to all the things that are on our Mother Earth.”

Key themes: values, 7 Grandfather teachings, we take care of each other, we live together, plants, Mother Earth, connections

10) Kristen Mineault from Canoe Lake Cree First Nation

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“From my experience teaching within a First Nation school, the tipi teachings are significant for making sure that we taught our children about the practices that we should be embodying on a daily basis and having kinship, love, guidance. With those tipi poles, we had a diagram in each of our classrooms that showed those practices. When we had culture camps, we would also have them in the tipis and we would practice those teachings that came from the Elders within those tipis. A lot of that knowledge was shared was understanding roles within communities and understanding the significance of family; realizing that it needs to be respected and honored in that regard. It was central to understanding that connection and understanding why that humility and respect is needed

for those practices... especially when the honor of the tipis are going up, understanding that ceremony, and being there and being present and experiencing it. A lot of the truth that our students would feel, would come through those practices and understanding and I shared that it was really important to honor and respect the Spirits of the children... knowing that, that's very important.”

Key themes: kinship, love, guidance, tipi poles, culture camps, roles within communities, significance of family, connection, ceremony, truth

11) Northern Cree

What is the significance of the tipi teachings in relation to traditional child rearing ways?

“Growing up in the community I haven't heard the tipi teaching identified as such; I haven't heard that sort of being expressed or even in Cree Language. I am aware of opikinawasowin, in meaning ‘raising a child’ and I am aware of the significance of tipi teaching through my work. I work in the field of health and we were looking for a logo that we could utilize in terms of doing our field work; that's where I heard the concept about the tipi teaching. From what I understand, the tipi represents the woman’s skirt and it represents a sheltering the family and each of the poles come with a teaching. It's been a long time now pardon me, I can't recall each of the teachings that each of the poles represent.”

Key themes: opikinawasowin ‘raising a child’, woman’s skirt, sheltering the family, tipi poles

Data Analysis of Interviews: Main Themes

Table 4:

Interview Themes

	Spiritual		Emotional		Physical		Mental
1	Healing journey	ways of being	Ceremony	Cleanliness		good child rearing	collaboration, cooperation and support
2	Woman's knife, women's teachings	intention, our journey	reciprocity	Tripod, shaping and nurturing a human being	Wahkotowin, place of a family	It's the place of a woman and a man, home fire	looking inwards, introspection
3	matrilineal	Storytelling	Ceremony, stars and hunting, harvesting	roles of men and women,	Home, discipline	Clan system	language
4	Represents the woman	Way of life	Teachings	Nurturing	Safety	security	land
5	Tree of life	Way of life	walking out ceremony	Breathe, swing baby, moss bag baby	respectful conversation	Growing, Fire	umbilical cord, 7 grandfather teachings
6	Life, heal	Connecting us through time	passing on teachings	Values	transmission	grow	7 grandfather teachings, Anishinaabe
7	Who we are, you are medicine	Wigwam, Core identity	Special children, emotional regulation	Trust, <i>tikinagan</i>	Circle of security	Attachment	Neurobiology teachings on the land
8	Time, listen	Nature, way of life	making prayers	relationships	mathematics	fire teachings	Connecting with Mother Earth
9	we take care of each other	Plants	teachings	Values	Connection	we live together	Mother Earth, 7 grandfather teachings
10	Guidance, truth	Love	tipi poles, ceremony	roles within community	Connection, Kinship	significance of family	Culture camps
11	Woman's skirt		tipi poles		opikinawaso win 'raising a child'	sheltering the family	

Note: Major Themes: Spiritual - way of life, significance of the woman, Emotional - Ceremony, roles of men and women, Physical - home, security, connection, Mental - land, teachings.

Conclusion

Unlike pan-indigenous approaches, the Turtle Island perspective is a universal understanding of teachings from Nations across Turtle Island. We envision that we zoom out of our physical bodies and are up in the sky far up enough to see Turtle Island. The four maps of Turtle Island visually depict the vastness of the Turtle Island perspective. The results provide a Turtle Islander perspective on Indigenous child rearing teachings, philosophies, and practices associated with the tipi. By including all Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island ensures that these results will be applicable.

With more Indigenous peoples residing in urban centres (Table 1, Appendix Newo), the Tipi teachings offer fundamental methods of appreciating Indigenous ways of knowing, specifically in regards to traditional child rearing ways. Although 90% of survey monkey participants found the tipi teachings significant in transmitting child rearing ways, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of participants 77% (36) completed the long answer question about the tipi poles. Only 23% (11) of respondents could not explain the significance of the tipi poles in relation to child rearing ways showing the need for Indigenous epistemologies within the broader context of North American contemporary culture, history, and education.

The conceptual framework of the tipi illustrates a lateral approach and lateral thought when being built as each pole is not added in a linear way. Setting up a tipi takes lived experience and more than one person to build it. In the dominant paradigm, policies are linear and procedures are implemented by humans with their own lived experiences, unconscious biases within hierarchal structures which make them subjective to their lived experience. Reuben teaches us that when we are learning Nehiyawewin syllabics we need a 'paradigm shift' because Nehiyawewin is not left to right, or linear. Therefore, linear approaches such as race based

policies and legislation will consistently have the same result; the assimilation of Indigenous Turtle Islanders. The indicators of self-determination chosen for data analysis are (1) cultural continuity/cultural match of governing policies (2) revitalization of the woman's role within Indigenous social, political, and economic realms and (3) language/transfer of teachings using Creator's natural laws and mechanism of action. These 3 indicators are foundational in the overall health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. Themes within the 11 interviews parallel these indicators and are of utmost importance to the interviewees.

Furthermore, many common themes to emerged in the Interviews which have been organized into **Table 4** by the four aspects of self. Interview themes include: *relationships, family, home fire, way of life, teachings on the land, plants, stars and harvesting/hunting, clan system, healing journey, family, kinship, relatives, discipline, roles of women and men, having a strong foundation, working together, being a helper, value systems and core identity*. There is a significant overlap with the themes within the interview responses to the hypothesized themes from 2019 (Picture 4). The major themes identified through coding are as follows:

- 1) *Spiritual – Way of life, significance of the woman*
- 2) *Emotional – Ceremony, roles of men and women*
- 3) *Physical – Home, security, connection,*
- 4) *Mental – Land, teachings*

The literature review in Appendix Niso shows that child welfare and wellbeing by the colonial state do not recognize the autonomy or agency of the child. Eliminating the racial inequities that exist in the child welfare system, are the responsibility of us as a society and will require bold steps that reimagine our understanding of child wellbeing by putting the evidence into practice. Regrettably, the Province of Manitoba's approach of layering bureaucracy symbolically

capitalizes on Indigenous families through continued surveillance, documenting, and reporting which does not match with the findings of this research and the indicators for self-determination. 72% of interviewees had CFS involvement, compared to 9% that are 60s scoop/adoption survivors and 18% that are Residential/Boarding School Survivors. Given that Indigenous children are continuously overrepresented in the Child Welfare system; such findings are influential in moving forward in an era of reconciliation for Indigenous Turtle Islanders.

Living the good life in child rearing means that parents have the freedom to grow alongside our children and are able to experience the four interrelated life stages: child, adolescent, adult and Elder without surveillance or interference. When we are on our journey called life, along the way we pick up teachings, receive our spirit names, make mistakes and grow into our gifts and purpose as Creator's children. As parents, our children are the greatest teachers we have because they are genetically both the mother and father which is Creator's formula. When our children are growing they reflect to us, the parents, where we need to grow; *our children are a reflection of ourselves*. When we are triggered in life, we must look inwards to know why; all of the answers we seek are found within ourselves. Not only do we inherit traumas but we also have blood memory, our spirit has the ability to bring to remembrance the teachings we have received in the past. When we are connected to Creator we can be guided by Kichi Manitou to make the correct choices.

I will continue the research I have begun in the seven chapters presented. The remaining three research questions on traditional child rearing ways, healing, and personal stories on healing will be analyzed in the next level of Graduate research. Thank you for listening, I declare this research will positively impact families and the next seven generations. Ekosi, All my relations.

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Appendices

Mwac ke'kwa'n: Elder Mary Lee Tipi Teachings

A tipi (also tepee or teepee) is a cone-shaped tent, traditionally made of animal skins upon wooden poles. A tipi is distinguished from other conical tents by the smoke flaps at the top of the structure.

Historically, the tipi was used by Indigenous people of the Plains in the Great Plains and Canadian Prairies of North America, as well as by indigenous peoples of northern Europe and Asia under other names.

Tipi lodges are still in use by these peoples, though now primarily for ceremonial purposes. Tipis are stereotypically and incorrectly associated with all Native Americans in the United States and Aboriginal people in Canada, despite their usage being unique to the peoples of the Plains. Native American tribes and First Nation band governments from other regions have used other types of dwellings.

The tipi is durable, provides warmth and comfort in winter, is cool in the heat of summer, and is dry during heavy rains.

Tipis can be disassembled and packed away quickly when people need to relocate and can be reconstructed quickly upon settling in a new area.

Historically, this portability was important to Plains Indians with their at-times nomadic lifestyle.

The Cree people use 15 poles to make the structure of the tipi. For every pole in that tipi, there is a teaching. So there are 15 teachings that hold up the tipi. Other Nations use 16 poles, and maybe more.

The tipi does not have to face east all the time; it can rotate in any direction. It is only the first time that I request that the tipi face east, because of the opening ceremony.

To start, we take three poles and bind them together to make a tripod. Each pole also has a very specific meaning. These three together fortify the structure. They are obedience, respect and humility. Notice the poles, the way they stand. If they stood straight up and down, they couldn't support a tipi. But balanced properly together, they are able to reinforce each other. There's a teaching in that. In order to live in righteousness we need a relationship with the three: The Creator, He Son and His Spirit, to live in balance with Him and His creation.

The tops of the poles have many teachings. Each one points in a different direction. We are like those poles. We all need the strength and support of our Creator, but we accept that we all have different journeys and point in different directions we are all ONE knitted together.

The poles also teach us that no matter what version of the Great Spirit we believe in, we obey The Creator from those many directions and belief systems; we just have different journeys to get there. And where the poles come out together at the top, it's like they're creating a CROSS. And they also resemble a bird with its wings up when it comes to land, and that's another teaching: the spirit coming to land, holding its wings up.

TIPI POLES top

We could talk about each of these poles for a long time; each one holds many teachings, and takes a long time and much experience to truly understand. I will give you some words on each pole, to give a beginning idea of what the poles represent.

TIPI POLES OBEDIENCE

Obedience means accepting guidance and wisdom from outside of ourselves, using our ears before our mouth. We learn by listening to traditional stories, by listening to our parents or guardians, our fellow students and our teachers. We learn by their behaviours and reminders, so that we know what is right and what is wrong.

RESPECT

Respect means giving honour to our Elders and our neighbours, to the strangers that come to visit our community, and to all of life. We must honour the basic rights of all others.

HUMILITY

We are not above or below others in the circle of life. We feel humbled when we understand our relationship with The Creation. We are so small compared to the majestic expanse of Creation, just a “strand in the web of life.” Understanding this helps us to respect and value life.

HAPPINESS

After the tripod is up, the fourth pole completes your doorway. This fourth pole teaches us happiness. We must show some enthusiasm to encourage others. Our good actions will make our Creator happy in the next world. This is how we share happiness.

LOVE

This is the greatest teaching, to love one another as The Creator loves us. If we are to live in harmony we must accept one another as we are, and accept others who are not in our circle. Love means to be good and kind to one another and to ourselves.

FAITH

We must learn to believe and trust The Creator, to believe that His power greater than ourselves, whom we worship and who gives us strength and guidance. To sustain our spirituality, we need to walk it every day. Not just sometimes, but every day. It’s not just once a week; it’s your life.

KINSHIP

Remember where came from and Who created us. Our family is important to us. This includes our parents, brothers and sisters, who love us and give us roots that tie us to the lifeblood of the earth. It also includes extended family: grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and their in-laws and children. They are also our brothers and sisters and give us a sense of belonging to a community.

CLEANLINESS

We’ve been washed, we were filthy but now we are not.

Today when we talk about cleanliness, most people think hygiene, and that’s very important. But years ago, when old people talked about cleanliness, they meant spiritual cleanliness. When I used to sit with The Creator in their tipis, spiritually, He is so powerfully clean. Clean thoughts come from a clean mind and this comes from our spirituality. With a clean mind and sense of peace within we learn not to inflict ills on others. Good health habits also reflect a clean mind.

THANKFULNESS

We learn to give thanks: to always be thankful for the Creator's bounty, which we are privileged to share with others, and for all the kind things others do for us.

SHARING

We learn to be part of a family and community by helping with the provisions of food and other basic needs. Through the sharing of responsibilities we learn the value of working together and enjoying the fruits of our labor.

STRENGTH

We are not talking about physical strength, but spiritual strength. That was instilled in us when we were young people through fasting. We must learn to be patient in times of trouble and not to complain but to endure and show understanding. We must accept difficulties and tragedies so that we may give others strength to accept their own difficulties and tragedies.

GOOD CHILD REARING

Children are gifts from the Creator. We are responsible for their wellbeing, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually, since they are blessed with the gift of representing the continuing circle of life, which we perceive to be the Creator's will.

HOPE

We must look forward to moving toward good things. We need to have a sense that the seeds we are planting will bear fruit for our children, families and communities.

ULTIMATE PROTECTION

This is the ultimate responsibility to achieve the balance and well being of the body, mind, emotions and spirit for the individual, the family, the community and the nation.

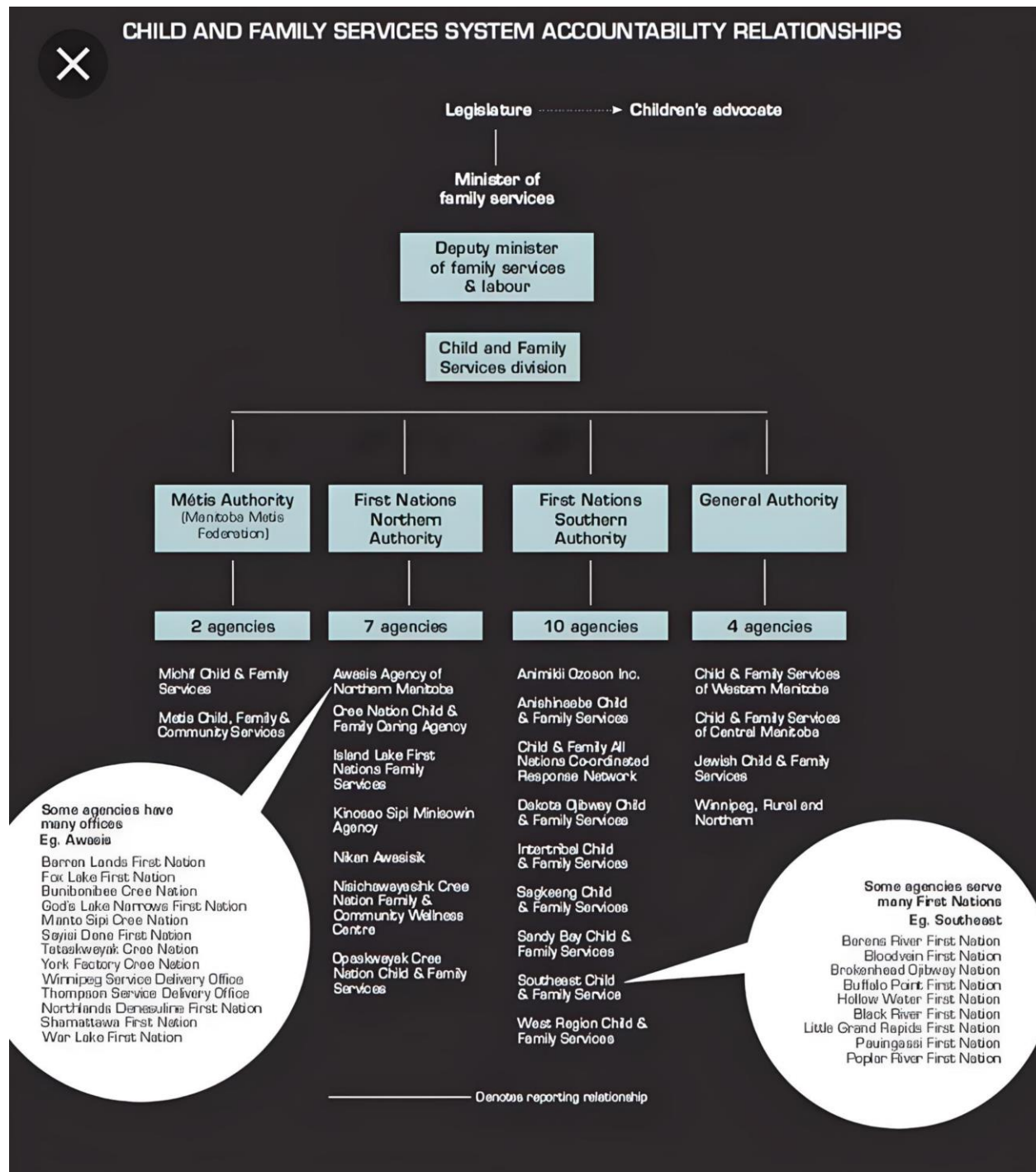
CONTROL FLAPS

The control flaps on a tipi teach that we are all connected by relationship and that we depend on each other. Having respect for and understanding this connection creates and controls harmony and balance in the circle of life. When we don't know how to use the flaps, it gets all smoky inside the tipi, and you can't see, which is like life – because if we can't live in balance, we can't see clearly where we're going.

CONCLUSION - POLES

For every time that a pole is added, a rope goes around to bind that pole into place. You have to be there and see it to appreciate that teaching. That rope is a sacred bond, binding all the teachings together until they are all connected.

Peyak: Colonized Child Rearing



Note: 2015 Manitoba Child and Family Services System Accountability relationships showing the financial and economic expansions of the Province of Manitoba by implementing race based legislation and policies.

Niso: Literature Review

The literature review includes articles in North America or traditionally named Turtle Island and around child wellbeing and child rearing practices. The literature contains three main themes that encompass different dimensions. The first theme is colonized child rearing practices (Tait, 2013, and Landers, 2018), the second is best practices in child rearing (Castelano, 2015, and Young, 2016) and the third is Indigenous child rearing practices (Muir/Bohr, 2014, Wilson, 2004, and Dorion, 2014). Colonized child rearing shows lack of identity with regard to Nation, kinship, and culture as well as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The second theme of Best Practices includes a holistic approach to health, recognition of the family network and a Worldview that includes the uniqueness of each individual, but because this approach still falls under the dominant paradigm there is no cultural match. The last theme of Indigenous child rearing includes a handful articles on opikinawasowin, the lifelong process of growing children (Dorion, 2014).

Theme 1: Colonized child rearing

Children residing in impoverished communities are more likely to experience neglect (Landers, 2018), therefore, a one fits all approach is inadequate in meeting the needs of First Nation children. Despite such realities, Tait et al. (2013, 2) assert that child welfare system involvement be a social determinant of health because of the “decades long correlation between elevated rates of Indigenous children being in foster care, and the resulting poor health and social outcomes experienced by them as children, adolescents, adults, and across subsequent generations.” This work moves beyond the Social Determinants of Health to meditate on the spiritual dimension of health (Castelano, 2015). The dominant biomedical paradigm attempts to

“solve” “problems” using methods in the physical realm such as social, economic, and cultural. The following articles describe the methods of colonized child rearing.

Maxwell (2014) asserts that in the current literature of Indigenous child wellbeing it has been commonplace over the past decade to invite “colonization” as a determinant of contemporary health problems and social suffering. Much of the literature highlights the disparities of Indigenous peoples while offering no solutions. More discussion around Indigenous mental health and Indigenous child development “health professionals” that institute assimilative interventions (Maxwell, 2014). Current health and social services professionals use historical trauma as a tool to stigmatize and undermine Indigenous families, and legitimize their own state-sanctioned interventions into Indigenous family life on the grounds of children need for protection and parents’ needs for clinical intervention (Maxwell, 2014). More importantly, colonial professionals pathologize Indigenous parenting, thereby legitimating assimilative educational, and clinical interventions targeting children (Maxwell, 2014). Through thesis results, we expand the evidence to conclude the clinical approach of assessing child wellness and child development is fragmented and has no cultural match.

Landers et al. (2018), “A scoping review of evidence-based interventions available to parents of maltreated children ages 0-5 involved with child welfare services” is the first review concerning children ages 0 to 5 involved with Child welfare system; the review included 65 studies, which are from the USA (77.8%) and others included such Canada (15.9%), Australia (3.2%), and Spain (1.6%). Most of the studies about child maltreatment are from North America and Europe (Landers et al., 2017). The current literature on the child welfare in North America is not representative of the populations involved in child welfare interventions. Few studies included Indigenous parents, despite the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and families

in the US and Canadian Systems (Landers et al., 2018). Landers concluded that more studies are needed in Canadian context to add to the current literature. This primary research study fills the gap by adding the Turtle Island perspective to the literature.

In the journal article “Child Welfare: A Social Determinant Of Health For Canadian First Nations and Métis Children,” authors Tait et al. contend that Child Welfare is a social determinant of health for First Nations and Métis children (2013). The authors successfully outline the historical construct of the child welfare system and how colonialism contributes to the deteriorating health of First Nations. The authors provide data analysis of the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel 2010 to underline how the Province Saskatchewan have forced assimilative legislation upon families (Tait et al., 2013). Although this article is issue oriented and underlines the historical construction of this policies and legislation, it fails to articulate the voice of Indigenous people.

Decision making process is along a continuum in Child Protective Services (CPS). Dettlaff et al. (2015) provide a theoretical way to frame the context of decision making and found how to measure this context through the development of new administrative tools that assess the case, organizational and environmental factors which influence decisions. Furthermore, making decisions is subjective and there is a need for an objective measure by developing aids to better support decision-making within the CPS. Dettlaff et al. (2020) found that “although child welfare reforms have occurred over decades, they have focused largely on system improvements, while the fundamental intervention of forcible involuntary separation has remained unchanged.” Therefore, to eliminate racial inequities that exist in the child welfare system, are the responsibility of us as a society and will require bold steps that reimagine our understanding of child wellbeing.

Theme 2: Best Practices as Evidence – Based Practices

In “Aboriginal Children’s Health and Well-Being Measure (ACHWM) Health and Quality of Life Outcomes,” Young et al. create the ACHWM tool to measure the gap in access to health outcomes for Aboriginal children (2015). The purpose of this study is to find the child's experience of a culturally appropriate model in assessing Aboriginal youth wellbeing. Due to the detailed debriefing of the study, the authors could locate problems and solutions in the assessment tools to modify ACHWM as needed. For example, the study was found to be culturally appropriate as there was the inclusion of characteristics of wellbeing, such spirituality and connection to culture, within the holistic assessment of child wellbeing (Young et al., 2015). The Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve and quantitative assessment tool is designed in collaboration with children, using a medicine wheel framework. This qualitative study is inclusive to children and parents/caregivers via participation in a detailed interview process as they completed ACHWM to ensure its validity to community. Questions are revised based on the retrieved information, and reviewed with new participants until a stable version is established. The resulting version is reviewed by health care providers and community members to ensure cultural relevance within the community showing validity. Collaborative participatory research with Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve is successful to create the ACHWM which is a 58 question survey incorporating the medicine wheel to assess health and wellbeing among children. This insures the cultural appropriateness of this tool for Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve and can be adapted to other Indigenous communities given future collaborative participatory research studies in First Nations communities. It is important to note who is deeming the methods as “culturally appropriate.” Therefore, this method still falls under the physical quadrant of the medicine wheel by the use of a biomedical approach.

In the “Final Report - Factors that contribute to positive outcomes in the Awasis Pimicikamak Cree nation kinship care program,” Wright et al. articulate findings from study participants such as children and youth, a community person, kinship foster parents, and agency staff to outline their voices in the “kinship based program” (Wright et al, 2005). This report outlines important recommendations for the success of this program and the ongoing challenges to kinship care. According to this report, there are positive outcomes when kinship care is implemented within First Nations. This mixed-methods study used a quantitative approach to outline data of Cross Lake Band while the qualitative interviews with children, youth, and kinship foster parents to successfully incorporate all stakeholders in the research process. This paper is from 2005 and outlines the benefits of kinship care program which is overseen by a provincial agency for Cross Lake band members (Appendix Peyak). Since 2005 there has been insurmountable evidence in the form of suicide rates for the Cross Lake community indicating that provincial “cultural programming” and such “kinship based programming” is fruitless. In March 2016, Pimicikamak Cree Nation declared a state of emergency was “after six suicides in two months and 140 attempts in two weeks alone.” (Puxley, C, 2016). Therefore, best practices under the dominant biomedical model of health and social services are direct causes of harm in First Nation communities like Cross Lake.

In the article, “Making the Invisible Visible: Are Health Social Workers Addressing the Social Determinants of Health?,” Craig et al. found that although many of the Social determinants of health are addressed by Health Social Workers in their daily practices are not directed to diversity and equity, such as racism (2013). This supports the need for implementation and policy around the inclusion of all social determinants of health (SDH) including proximal, intermediate and distal factors (SCO, 2016). The theme of holistic

assessment means that numerous factors within the individual, family, and community must be considered. Until SDH become a priority it will be difficult for current Health social workers (HSW) to address all SDH implications when assessing clients (Craig et al, 2013). These assessments are not holistic and do not have cultural match. Furthermore, the entire idea of the field of “social work” does not have cultural match with Indigenous Turtle Island ways of knowing. As Nehiyawak, we follow spiritual principles such as *sakihitok* and *wicihitok* without any salary or job title as this is who we are as human beings.

The overarching best practices are still operating through the biomedical definition of health within the Western paradigm. While these are current best practices, new approaches which operate under an Indigenous paradigm and Worldview are required to see measureable results in holistic health and create change for Indigenous North Americans.

Theme 3: Opikinawasowin (traditional child rearing)

Traditional child rearing is a shared responsibility, and this was a means not only for caring for children but also for caring for the elderly (Carrier, 2010). Additionally, Carriere (2010) expresses how tribal perspectives on identity formation include experiences to inform awasis sense of self on spiritual, emotional, mental and physical areas for development over a life-long process. This collective view of identity is linked to traditional view that awasisak are gifts from Creator where their identity is acknowledged as having a critical place in the family and community from which they are from (Carrier, 2010). Lastly, she shows that Elders play a critical role of identity formation of Indigenous children by teaching skills to be strong community member and relations – a bond that is instrumental in the collective identity. Using a model called *The Circle of Connectedness for Aboriginal Children* (Carriere, 2010, 116 – 119)

we see that the Indigenous approach is circular and not linear like Acts, policies and legislations. This aligns with Abosolon's Wholistic Theoretical framework used for the primary research (2010).

In "Contemporary Practice of Traditional Aboriginal Child Rearing: A Review," Muir and Bohr explore what constitutes contemporary practice of traditional child rearing methods. The purpose of this review article is to allow professionals to have a better understanding of the cultural differences in child rearing that occur in Indigenous families, so they are better equipped to make decisions to ensure wellbeing of the child, while tending to the cultural needs of not only the youth, but their families and communities (2014). These traditional child rearing ways include child autonomy, and developmental areas (spiritual, mental, emotional and physical realms) which are of key importance to Indigenous communities. Furthermore, traditional child rearing ways support the transmittance of cultural ways of knowing resulting in positive outcomes. The review article concludes that there needs to be more research completed in the field of traditional child rearing which this study does successfully and fruitfully.

The thesis Opikināwasowin: The lifelong process of growing Cree and Metis children, is a regional case study providing narratives about traditional child rearing ways. The project examines the concept of Opikināwasowin using a Cree philosophical framework about growing children from Cree and Metis Elders (Dorian, 2010). This paper demonstrates how storytelling is used to facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge (Dorian, 2010). For generations Cree and Metis people use storytelling to actualize the teachings of Opikināwasowin:

"Storytelling is used by Elders to impart core values and beliefs about parenting. Through stories Elders give specific teachings relating to how individuals, families, and communities are expected to practice traditional child rearing" (Dorian, 2010).

The idea that child rearing is a lifelong process is incomprehensible in the dominant biomedical paradigm. More studies on traditional child rearing must be produced to fill the gap in the literature and to more accurately inform decisions made by professionals. This paper is able to use Cree philosophy in its design and methodology while supporting the passage of traditional knowledge and the theme of traditional child rearing.

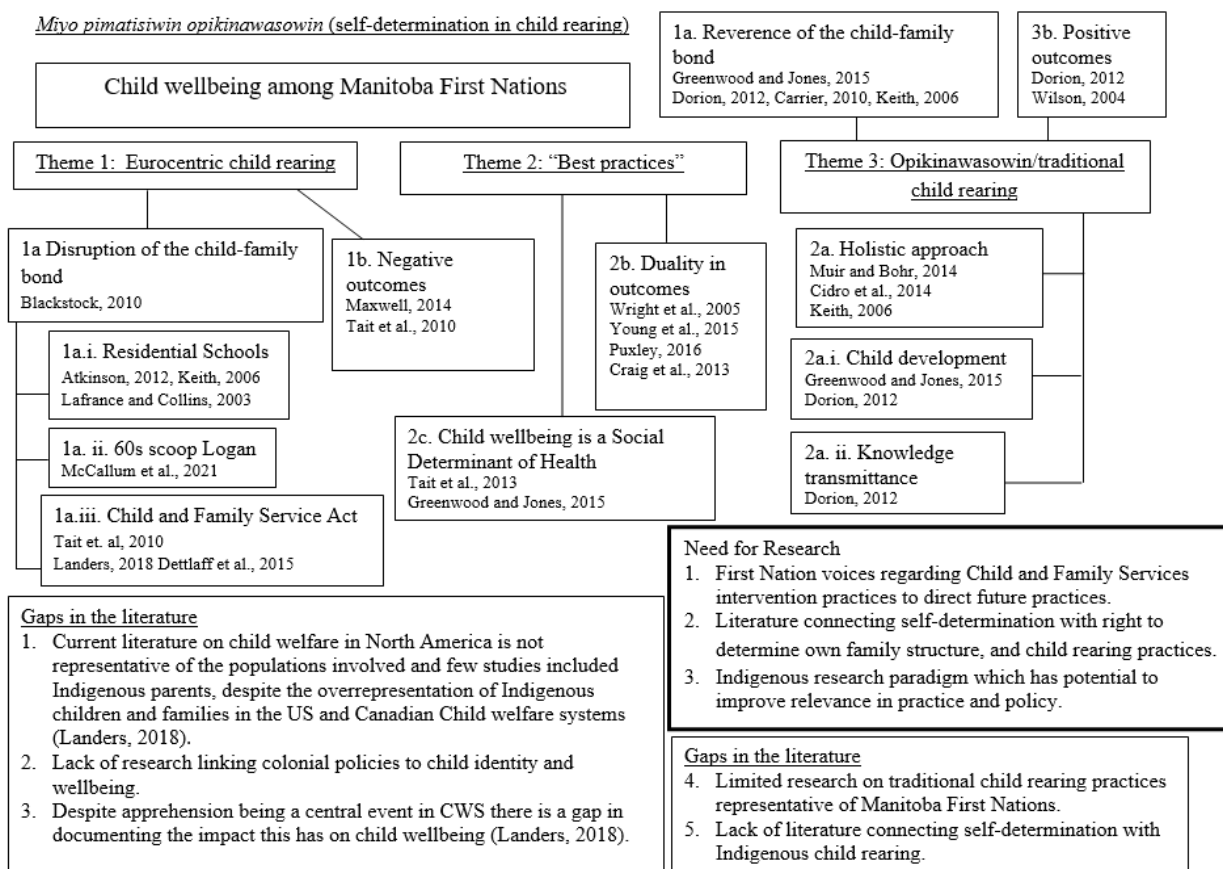
In the book, “For our children our sacred beings: Understanding the Impact of Generational Trauma on our Aboriginal youth,” Keith outlines the effects of generational trauma as a result of colonization and its horrific outcomes (2006). The purpose of this book is to be a catalyst of healing for Indigenous youth. This book outlines the Indigenous perspective of colonization, the impacts as well as the protective and risk factors to wellbeing of Indigenous youth. Qualitative research with methods which embrace social and historical construction to shed light to the concept of generational trauma and the resulting outcomes on Indigenous youth. Furthermore, Keith explores ways of Indigenous healing including stories, and ceremonies using a change-oriented approach. Keith is able to use her understandings of Indigenous ways of healing to combat the colonial outcomes of Residential schools. The Indigenous Worldview on how to begin healing our youth is through tradition, song and ceremony.

Summary of Literature Review Section

Colonized child rearing, best practices and traditional child rearing are the overarching themes in the literature. Today, the literature outlines how the current child welfare regime is assimilative, has negative outcomes, and does not adequately address the needs of First Nation family units. Moreover, social determinants impact not only the individual but also the family and community (SCO, 2016). Revitalization of the roles of women, family and community is necessary to begin healing communities from the harm that has been imposed upon First Nations children and families.

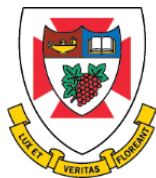
The gaps show that although there is an over representation of First nations in the child welfare system there are few studies that include Indigenous families and children. This research addresses these gaps by using Indigenous Research paradigm with Qualitative research design. In depth interviews with a diverse group to gain narratives on how the tipi teachings transmit significant information on child rearing ways.

Literature Map



Nisto: Consent Forms

Online Screening Tool



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Master of Arts in
Indigenous Governance

Graduate Student:

Aimee Louis, *BSc*
Department of Indigenous Studies
University of Winnipeg
louis-a@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

PIKE-Net
Prairie Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Network



Supervisor:

Dr. Jerry Fontaine, *PhD*
Assistant Professor
Department of Indigenous Studies
University of Winnipeg
jerry_fontaine@yahoo.com

Consent Form - Online Screening Tool

You are invited to be a participant in a research project that will be conducted by Graduate Student Aimee Louis from the Indigenous Studies Department at the University of Winnipeg. Aimee can be contacted through email at louis-a@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca and her Supervisor Dr. Jerry Fontaine can be reached at jerry_fontaine@yahoo.com. This research has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Board.

As a participant you are helping to share the importance of traditional child rearing teachings and disseminate Indigenous ways of knowing to learners, communities, and academics. The participants in the Research Project will be adults over the age of consent across Turtle Island (North America). Data will be stored safely and securely in a computer in the researcher's personal office. All research materials resulting from your participation, including audio-recordings, transcripts, and research documents, will be available to you upon your request during the research process. If you have any questions or concerns about this study or the way it is being conducted, please contact the researcher directly. If you have any remaining concerns about the conduct of this study that the researcher has not been able to address, you may contact the Ethics Program Officer at (204) 786-9058 or by email at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

The research is voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. They will email or Phone the Primary Investigator at any time if they no longer wish to participate in the

Research Study. No additional questions will be asked with no consequences. Thesis findings will be presented in conferences and published in journals after approval of defense draft by the supervisor.

We invite you to take part in a Research study on opikināwasowin (traditional child rearing). The purpose of this Qualitative Indigenous Research Study is to gather invaluable teachings, insights, and philosophies on child rearing in relation to the Tipi Teachings from knowledge holders who reside on Turtle Island (North America). If you choose to participate, we will ask you to complete a 20-minute Online Screening Tool. We will ask demographic questions (e.g., age, gender), a series of questions about your thoughts on the Tipi Teachings, and some questions about you so that we may contact you for the In-Depth interview by phone or Zoom later.

This study is minimal risk, meaning that the risks are no greater than what you might encounter in your daily life. A risk is that you may feel badly after completing the Screening Tool, as you may if you were to discuss negative experiences in daily life. We expect these feelings will be temporary. If they are not, we encourage you to call one of the following:

In Canada:

The new Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS), by Crisis Services Canada, enables callers anywhere in Canada to access crisis support by phone, in French or English: toll-free 1-833-456-4566
Available 24/7

Crisis Text Line (Powered by Kids Help Phone) Canada Wide free, 24/7 texting service is accessible immediately to youth anywhere in Canada by texting TALK to 686868 to reach an English-speaking Crisis Responder and TEXTO to 686868 to reach a French-speaking Crisis Responder on any text/SMS enabled cell phone.

Indian Residential School Survivors and Family
1-800-721-0066

The Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24-hours a day for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of his or her Residential school experience.

In the USA

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor
Free 24/7 support at your fingertips
US and Canada: text 741741

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. 1-800-273-8255

The benefits are that you: (1) may value sharing your experiences with a researcher; (2) will be entered into a draw for one of six \$50 Gift Cards; and (3) contribute to a collective of community-based experiences and recommendations to inform future Indigenous child rearing policies. This research will likely be published or presented, and thus, your anonymous experiences may help to improve others' understanding of opikināwasowin.

Your participation and all your responses to the Online Screening Tool are anonymous. After completing the screening tool, you will be redirected to a page to enter your contact information to be phoned or emailed later. Here, we will ask you to enter your name, email address and phone number as well as the best date and time to be contacted for the In-Depth interview. Once the data and names are collected you will be emailed to confirm the date of your telephone/Zoom interview.

Please check one:

I wish to participate in the Online Screening Tool

I do not wish to participate in the Online Screening Tool

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Thank you for your consideration

Online In-Depth Interview

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Master of Arts in
Indigenous Governance

Graduate Student:

Aimee Louis, *BSc*
Department of Indigenous Studies
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PIKE-Net
Prairie Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Network

**Supervisor:**

Dr. Jerry Fontaine, *PhD*
Assistant Professor
Department of Indigenous Studies
University of Winnipeg
jerry_fontaine@yahoo.com

Consent Form for In-Depth Interview (Narratives)

You are invited to be a participant in a research project conducted by Graduate Student Aimee Louis from the Indigenous Studies Department at the University of Winnipeg. Aimee can be contacted through email at louis-a@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca and her Supervisor Dr. Jerry Fontaine can be reached at jerry_fontaine@yahoo.com. This research has been approved by the University Human Research Ethics Board.

The purpose of this Qualitative Indigenous Research Study is to gather invaluable teachings, insights, and philosophies about the Tipi teachings in relation to *opikinawasowin* (traditional child rearing). The participants will be gender-diverse Elders, knowledge holders, and community members, over the age of consent, who reside on Turtle Island (North America).

An honorarium and/or gift will be provided to you at the completion of the interview. Your address will remain confidential. As a participant you are helping to share the importance of *opikinawasowin* and disseminate Indigenous ways of knowing to learners, communities, and academics. Data will be stored safely and securely in a computer in the researcher's personal office. All research materials resulting from your participation, including audio-recordings, transcripts, and research documents, will be available to you upon your request during the research process. We will be happy to share paper copies of your interview transcripts for verification and personal use. An electronic copy of the study will be available for all participants through the library services at the University of Winnipeg, and a hard copy will also be available to you upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or the way it is being conducted, please contact the researcher directly. If you have any remaining concerns about the conduct of this study that the researcher has not been able to address, you may contact the Ethics Program Officer at (204) 786-9058 or by email at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

Your participation is voluntary, you may refuse to answer any question(s) and are free to withdraw from the study without any consequences any time prior to my thesis defense, which will take place once the draft thesis is approved by my thesis committee members. Thesis findings will be presented in conferences and published in journals after approval of defense draft by the supervisor.

I'm glad you've indicated that you are interested in doing this interview. I would appreciate your allowing me to audio record an interview with you. The interview will probably take under 60 minutes. If we start the interview and you do not wish to continue, please tell me and I will not continue. If I ask a question or questions you don't want to answer, that is perfectly OK with me--you don't have to answer. You can also contact my supervisors at a later date if you don't want me to use the information you gave me. I will do my best to ensure that your information is removed from any presentation or publication that has not already happened.

Do you agree to be audio recorded during the interview?

Yes / No

I do not foresee any risks that could result from your participation in this research. The benefits are that you:

- (1) may value sharing your experiences with a researcher;
- (2) contribute to a collective of community-based experiences and recommendations to inform future practices; and
- (3) This research will likely be published or presented, and thus, your experiences may help to improve others' understanding of opikinawasowin, experiences with the Tipi Teachings and healing as diverse Indigenous/Native American Peoples.

The information I get from you may be used in my teaching and further research. It could be published in books or articles, and/or on the Internet. I may give public talks about it at events in Canada and internationally. The final draft will be provided to the participants and advisory committee before the thesis is finalized and made public.

DO YOU AGREE TO LET ME USE THE MATERIAL IN THESE WAYS?

yes/no

DO YOU WANT TO RESTRICT ANY OF THESE USES?

yes/no

COMMENTS

—

The decision of certain participants to waive confidentiality can only be implemented if it does not lead to identification of participants that wish to remain anonymous. While I will do my best to ensure your confidentiality as a research participant and identity as per your choice, there is

always the chance that people will recognize where the contributions to the research came from. By consenting to participate, you do not waive any rights to legal recourse in the event of research related harm. If you wish to receive a summary of the study's results, please be in touch with me at the contact information noted above.

Would you like your name and community to be included in the Research? YES/NO

_____ I wish to remain anonymous in the research.

_____ I would like my name to be included in the research.

Chosen pseudonym, if any: _____

You will be giving me a lot of valuable information for my research. I would be happy to give you a copy of the recording and/or a copy of the written transcript of the interview. I will do my best to contact you before I present any of my research results to see if I have accurately represented what you told me.

Do you want a copy of the audio- recorded interview? YES/NO

_____ I want a copy of the audio-recorded interview.

_____ I do not want a copy of the audio-recorded interview.

It is standard practice in the field of oral history to keep the audio recordings of interviews for 10 years. Your interview will be securely kept on digital files. At a future date, if you choose, these interviews, including the audio recordings, questionnaires, and/or transcripts, will be archived so that future generations can benefit from your knowledge. My supervisor, Dr. Jerry Fontaine, will safeguard the raw data after my graduation and am no longer affiliated with University of Winnipeg. You are under no obligation to agree to this. In addition, if later you wish to have the interview, transcripts and questionnaire removed from the archives and/or destroyed, that authority is in your hands.

DO YOU AGREE TO HAVE YOUR INTERVIEW DEPOSITED IN AN ARCHIVE? yes/no

I hope everything will go well with your interview.

Do you have any QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS before we begin?

Thank you so very much for helping me. Please provide your:

Name:

Complete mailing address:

Phone number:

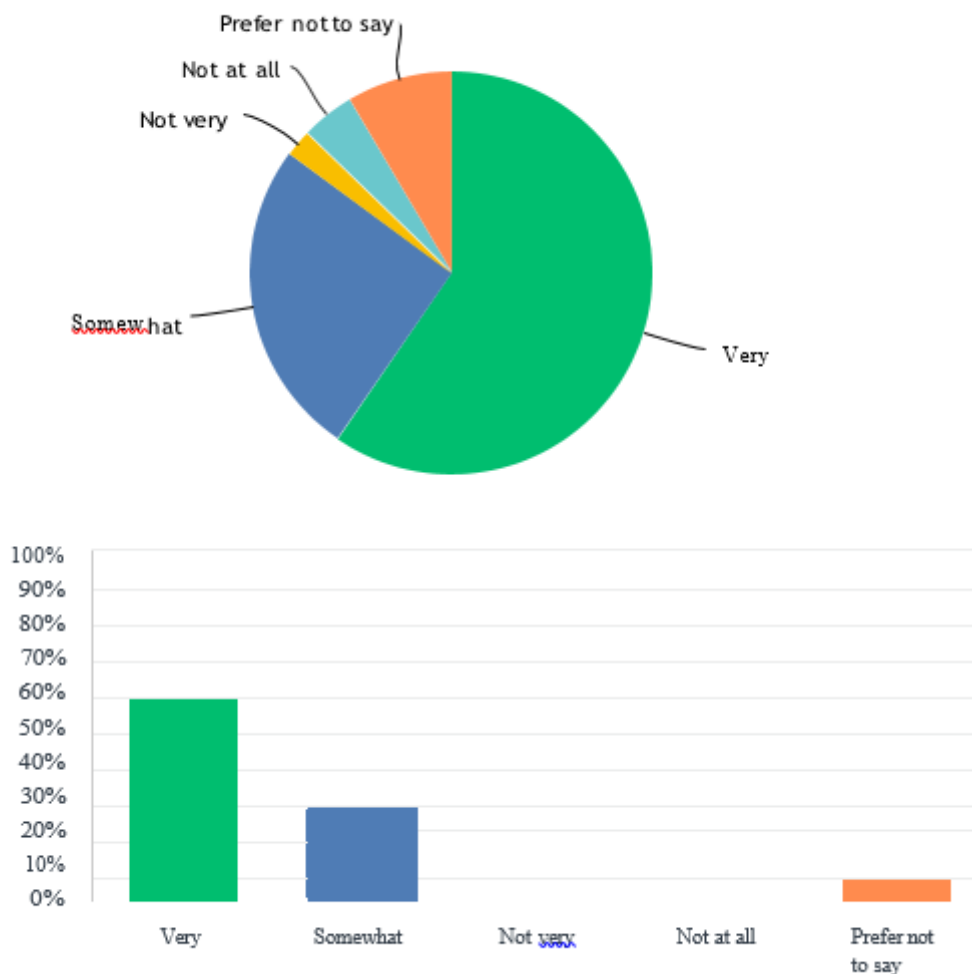
e-mail address:

Newo: Online Screening Tool Results

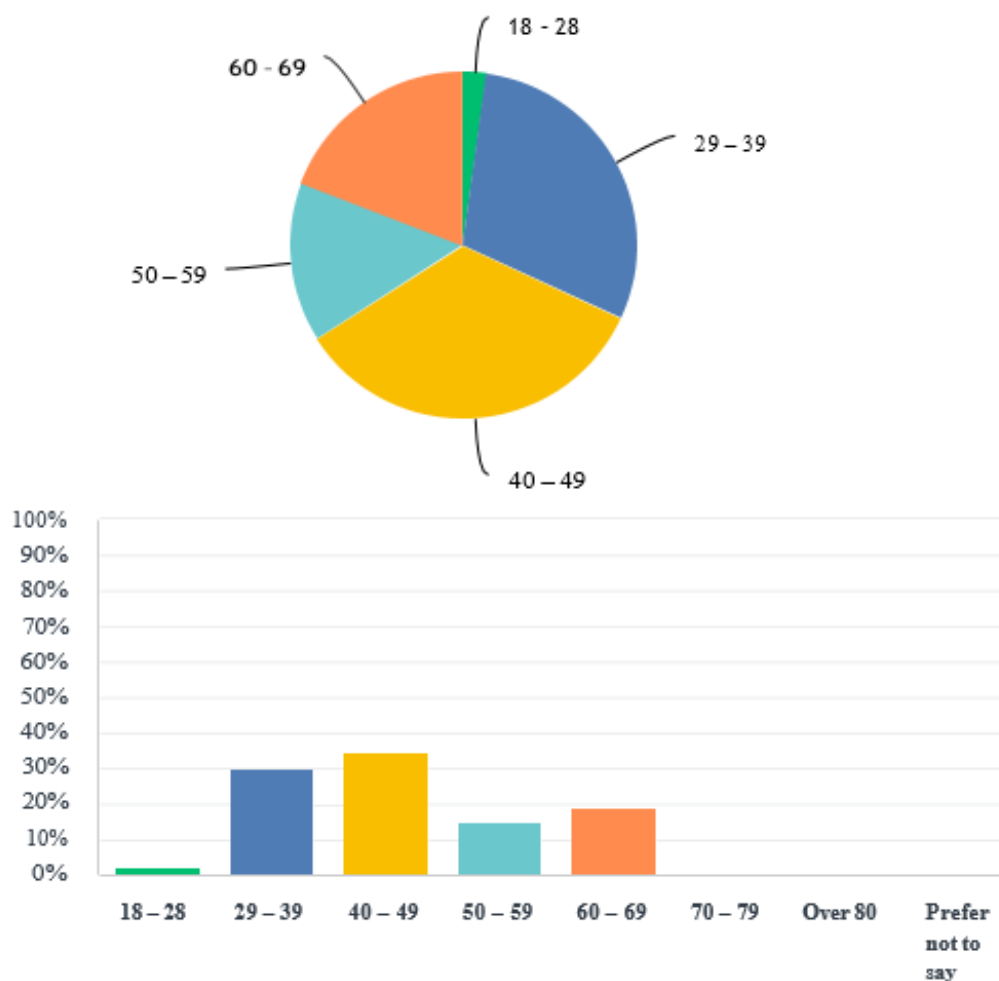
Important Data

Graph 1:

Significance of the Tipi Teachings



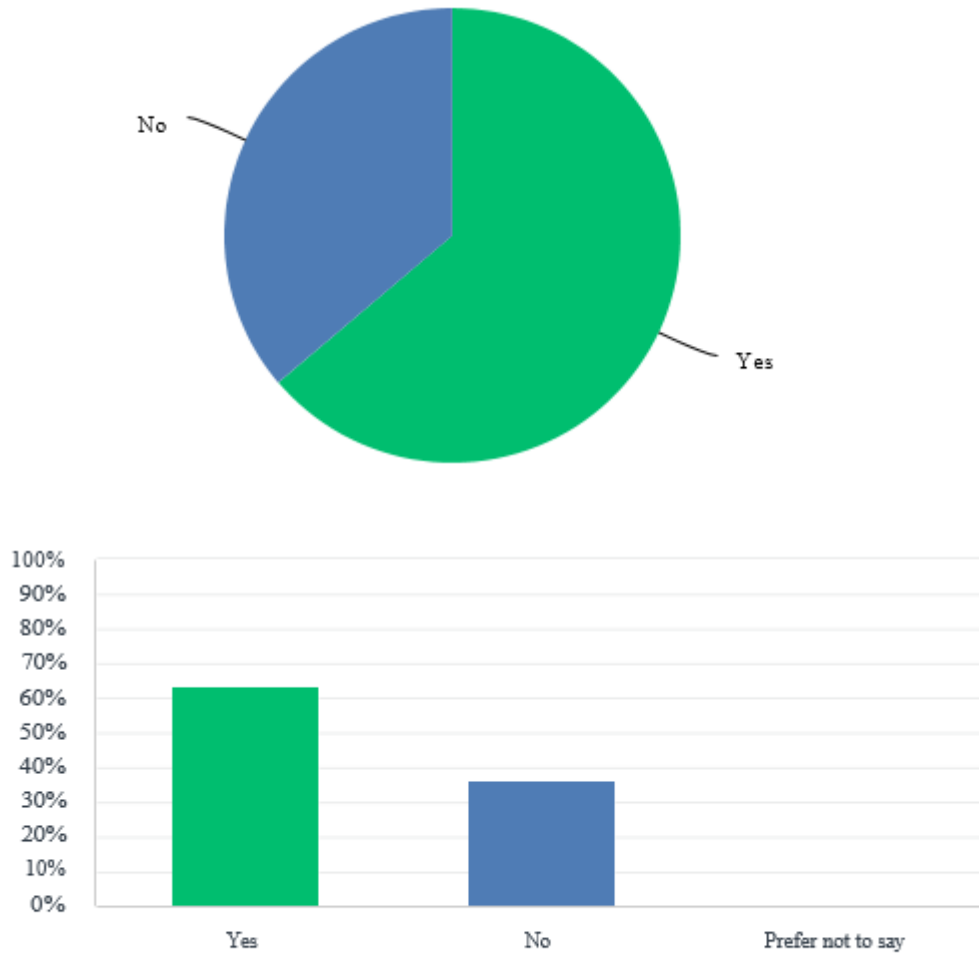
Note: 47 self-identified Indigenous Turtle Islanders completed the online screening tool on surveymokey.com. 90% of participants found the tipi teachings important in transmitting child rearing way and 7 participants chose 'prefer not to say'.

Graph 2:*Age of participants*

Note: 47 self-identified Indigenous Turtle Islanders completed the online screening tool on surveymokey.com. Of those 47 online participants, 2.13% are the age 18-28, over 29% are 29-39, 34% are 40-49 years of age, almost 15% are 50-59 years of age and approximately 19% are 60 to 69 years of age. No participants are over the age of 70 years old.

Graph 3:

Participant interaction with the child welfare system/child protective services



Note: 47 self-identified Indigenous Turtle Islanders completed the online screening tool on surveymokey.com. Of those 47 online participants, 64% (30) had interactions with the child welfare system and/or child protective services.

Table 1:

Tipi teachings received versus Home Community, Nation, and/or Tribe versus City

Tipi Teachings	Community/Nation/Identity	City of Residence
Anishinaabe	Metis	Dauphin, Manitoba
Cree/Ojibway/Dakota	Cree/Ojibway/Dakota	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Cree	Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Nehiyaw	Anishinaabe	N/A
Miawpukek Samiajj First Nation, Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland)	Miawpukek Samiajj First Nation, Mi'kmaq (Newfoundland)	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Missipawistic Cree Nation	Missipawistic Cree Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
not sure	Fisher river cree nation	N/A
Treaty 5	Pimichakamak Cree Nation -Treaty 5	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Nehiyaw	Anishinaabe	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Anishinabe, Minnesota Chippewa Tribes	White Earth	N/A
Chichimeca	Chichimeca	N/A
Driftpile Cree Nation/ Pic Mobert Ojibway Nation	Driftpile CN/Pic Mobert FN	Edmonton, Alberta
Ojibwe	Ojibwe - Wikwemikong Ontario	Sudbury, Ontario
sakaw'ayitnewak	Unchaga-askiy country, District of Athabasca, Treaty 8, sakaw'ayitnewak kihcokimanahk	Grouard, Alberta
Metis Nation Zone 5, Treaty 8 Territory, Cree	Gift Lake Metis Settlement	Gift Lake, AB, T0G1B0
Anishinaabe	Anishinaabe	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Hopi & Dakota	Crow Creek Sioux Tribe (Dakota)Hopi	Rugby, North Dakota
Curve lake First Nation	Curve Lake First Nation	Curve Lake, Ontario
Cree	Flin Flon, Manitoba	Flin Flon, Manitoba
Cree Teachings	Cree First Nations Misipawistik Treaty 5	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Sagkeeng Anishinaabe First Nation	Sagkeeng First Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba

From here in Algonquin territory- James bay region and from wiki region	Swampy Cree from my mom's side and Chippewa from my dad's side	Ottawa, Ontario
Ojibwa, treaty 1, Sagkeeng	Ojibwe, parental roots, Manigotagon, and also Ontario, St. Peter's Reserve/Peguis. My great great grandfather on father's side was a signatory to treaty one. I originally lived in Sagkeeng but mostly grew up in Winnipeg.	Winnipeg, Manitoba
N/A	Long plain	St Malo, Manitoba
Peepeekisis	Peepeekisis	Regina, Saskatchewan
The Haisla nation in Kitimat, BC, the killer whale and eagle clan	Haisla nation	Kitimat, British Columbia
Alexander First Nation	Canoe Lake Cree First Nation	Spruce Grove, Alberta
Alexis Nakota Sioux	Alexis Nakota Sioux	Gunn, Alberta
Cree	Big Stone Cree Nation	West Vancouver, British Columbia
Dene , Ojibwe	Ojibwe, Chippewa of Nawash, Cape Croker First Nations, Ontario	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Anishinaabe	Cree	Winnipeg, Manitoba
My mother and uncles	Frog Lake Cree Nation, Alberta, although we are and should be one whole nation	Frog Lake, Alberta
Algonquin nation doesn't have tipis.	Algonquin	Ottawa, Ontario
Cree	Tallcree First Nation	Kelowna, British Columbia
Anishinaabe & Dakota from Long Plain First Nation as well as Winnipeg	Dakota and Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation.	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Waywayseecappo First Nation	Waywayseecappo First Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Kainai Nation	Kainai Nation	Calgary, Alberta
Lakota	Lakota	Lower Brule, South Dakota

Anishinaabe	Sagkeeng	Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba
The Cree Nation	Norway House Cree Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Cree	Peguis First Nation	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Blackfoot	Siksika	Calgary, Alberta
Lake Manitoba First Nation	Lake Manitoba First Nation	Lake Manitoba First Nation, Manitoba
Ininiw/ God's Lake Narrows	God's Lake Narrows	Selkirk, Manitoba
Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa (Michigan) and Ketigaan Zeeping (Garden River FN, Ontario)	Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians (Michigan) and Kitigaan Zeeping (Garden River FN, ONT.)	Hayward, Wisconsin
Treaty 6 territory	Fort McMurray First Nation	Kelowna, British Columbia
Ojibwa teachings	Sagkeeng- Fort Alexander Anishinaabe nation. We are Ojibwa	Fort Alexander, Manitoba

Note: 47 self-identified Indigenous Turtle Islanders completed the online screening tool on surveymokey.com. 79% of participants reside in urban centers (37) versus 13% who reside on reserve (6), 4 did not respond. 34% of participants live in Winnipeg (17). Participants currently residing on First Nations, Metis settlements or Reserve/Reservation are highlighted in green. 87% of participants received Tipi Teachings from their home community and/or Nation. Conversely, approximately 4 participants (8.5%) received teachings from another Nation than their own which is highlighted in purple. 2 participants did not respond to the question about tipi teachings received.

Table 2:

What significance do the poles hold in relation to child rearing ways? Please elaborate and explain your answer.

1	The teepee poles are expressed through prayer. Each pole carries a teaching and guides the family in wellness, harmony of family life in its fullness. Respect, honesty, kindness and obedience are Just a few teaching that support family life! It's important to understand that teepees were for living, grooming and survival.
2	I can't remember the correlation
3	Children are gifts from the Creator. They are loaned to us to care for and be responsible for their wellbeing, spirituality, and their emotional, physical, and mental needs. They represent the continuity of the circle of life.
4	The tipi is the body and spirit of women as women represent the foundation of family and community. The tipi brings the balance of what we do with our lives, to help each other.
5	Teachings are universal and applicable to all
6	I have not been provided with these teachings
7	Roots are essential and learning how they nurture the tree...connectedness to each other living in egalitarian ways
8	They outline the 15 ways of doing and knowing that the Cree people practiced to ensure that children grew up in a happy, healthy and prosperous environment. They are significantly important because prior to the coming of the Settlers, all Cree people knew the 15 Tipi Teachings and honoured them in their daily lives. This contributed to healthy families, thus healthy communities and a healthy Nation.
9	Don't know
10	The have a role every tribe is different
11	there are many teaching to the poles
12	Im not sure
13	Each pile provides a significant teaching that usually are not all completely understood until different stages of life are experienced. Each pole has purposeful meaning like the seven sacred teachings.
14	Guides you on how to treat and raise your children and teach them how to live their lives in a good way.
15	We don't have poles, I have no idea.
16	Very much so, although many teachings are being lost I believe it's a tradition that is being lost. we need our children to carry on our tradition and language and beliefs
17	the poles represent child rearing teachings.
18	The tipi poles represent 13 teachings/ principals to live a good life mino bimidiziwewin . The teachings are to instill love and respect for all life. The tipi represents grandmother woman is matriarchal. Center of nations wellbeing, self-actualization, the breath of life. Children are raised with the fundamentals of a successful life (each pole have a different teaching/ principal) the nation/ tribe / Community has a collective responsibility to role model healthy relationships with all creation. When western society says, resources like oil, water, trees we say all "our relatives" we mean everything down to a single blade of grass! If we raise our future generations with the tipi teachings they will reach self-determination and live with sacred purpose utilizing their god given gifts. The goal is to live in harmony with creation in balance with the medicine wheel teachings. Indigenous perspective of child rearing is very controversial to the western ideology of child rearing.

19	The Tipi is the home, the child is brought up. The Tipi is circle and holds in it the values of the circle of life. In the Tipi the family sleeps at certain points in the circle depending on age. Within the tipi the family structure is set, and everyone in the family has a role based on their age, gender, and or familial role in the tribe.
20	Today I know the people that got good at putting up the tipi teach some stuff in how to put it up. And I see old pictures and think they are just making it up. Look at the top of the tipi in old pictures nothing in how they teach. Yup makes me wonder where they get the teachings. Not saying that's how it is, just my thoughts.
21	Each pole has a significant life lesson, the tipi represents the woman, the fire inside is the presence of life. The flaps represent man, woman, and child; p̄yakosk̄an- Family. The poles are sacred to the understanding of why and how to care and nurture children. The poles respected and cared for and have protocol when handling and placing them.
22	I'm I sure if the question as the west coast first peoples have big houses. I would need to familiarize myself with the tipi teaching to compare and relate my ancestral teachings
23	Very important.
24	N/a
25	Some of the teachings include same teachings as seven sacred teachings. And something I've taught to others about living a balanced life. And also include some of the drum teachings. Also includes some of the teachings about four directions. Usually where I begin when teaching children
26	I am not familiar with the tipi teachings, however I would like to learn them so that I can pass on this knowledge to my own children one day. I do not currently have children but would love to share this with them one day as well as with nieces and nephews.
27	It can be said that the poles of the mikiiwaap (tipi) each have their own teachings as some of the knowledge keepers have done in Saskatchewan. This I assume is to bridge a gap of Indigenous knowledge into academic education curriculum of western education. This is a good way to help with understanding the poles themselves have values with which our people lived according to our Indigenous knowledge and worldview. The poles I was told were a gift of the standing people with whom we had/have a sacred relationship. The raising of our children required our respect to those who gave us shelter and warmth. This was also done with how we raised the mikiiwaap as a collective. e.i., when setting up the mikiiwaap the whole community/nation would work together to ensure all the lodges were put up before individuals would tend to their own personal items. Little children who witnessed this work were shown through role modelling the values of the community or nation and these teachings were reinforced by the teachings, legends and instructions of the people. Each pole was to be treated with respect and the spirit of the standing people acknowledged with prayer and songs. Children then would also learn to respect life in the same way. 13 poles within the mikiiwaap (not always done this way according to climate and availability of resources) to signify the natural cycles which were well known at the time when our people shared ceremony, watched and studied the star people. The two flap poles worked with the breath of life (the elements) to bring warmth and comfort to the people within the mikiiwaap. The poles of the mikiiwaap were more than a cognitive education, they were the relatives who shared their life with us so we could live with creation.
28	They are powerful teachings that will help the child through its whole life It will give them tools to be successful in life.
29	The teachings of life
30	I'm not sure. I never had the opportunity to be exposed to any of this.
31	It represents a full calendar year. Children are the center of the TP, The spirit of the family. The teepee has many teachings but it is for sure a symbol of protection as it symbolizes a woman and their sacredness.

32	Stages and teachings within life cycles
33	Each pole represents certain positive characters and traits. Certain purpose for each pole to help hold up the tipi. Such as a whole community raising and contributing to the child's upbringing
34	The 12th pole is the good child rearing pole. There is a place for them at the homefire. In their blessed unique ways. We have such responsibilities.
35	I don't know
36	Teaches them the importance of respect, humility, honour, the importance of being held accountable for their behaviour
37	I haven't fully realized how the individual poles influence parenting in general.
38	Idk
39	The poles provide foundational teachings, of great importance, they also remind us that we need each other, humans need connection with others in order to function
40	The first pole is Obedience. Obedience can be taught through the use of the Moss Bag/Tikanagan. While the child is wrapped and feeling secure, they can use their sacred senses to see the world around them. They will learn obedience through observation.
41	each pole has a teaching...like honesty, etc...
42	Each pole represents values and the moon that are significant to wellness and understanding humanity and cycles. Each tipi is built with good intentions and requires love and safety.
43	They are foundational teachings that provide the necessary teachings to rear a child to become a healthy adult and beyond. The poles are divided in such a manner to provide lessons at every stage of the 4 stages of life, each stage is built upon the previous stage's tipi poles. The final exterior tipi poles for the flaps providing overarching guidance for all stages of life.
44	Each represents a teaching
45	Each pole has a meaning that coincides with raising a child in a good way.
46	I'm not sure...everything is connected to nature and howitzer effects the way we live/lived.
47	Not sure

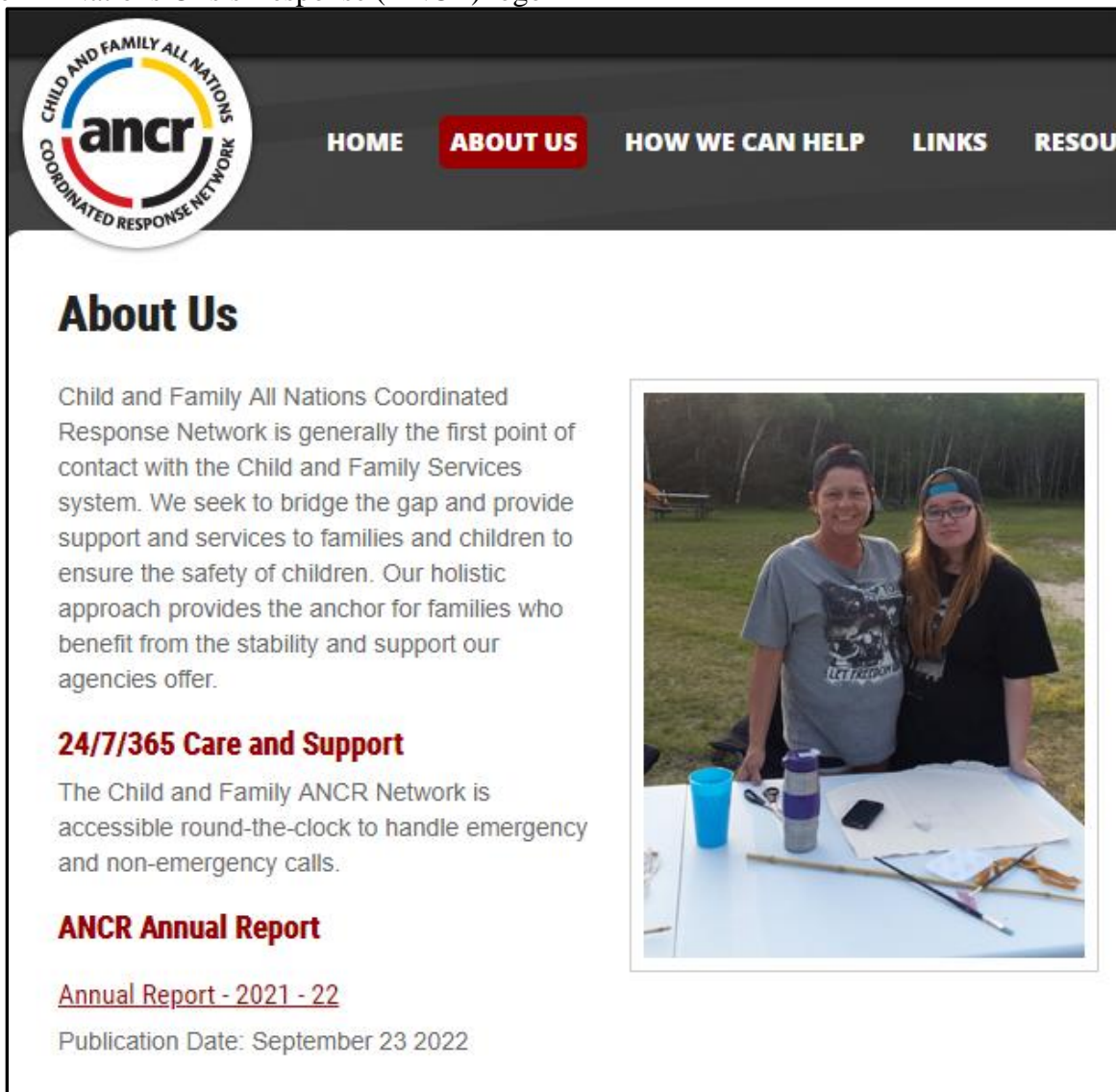
Note: 47 self-identified Indigenous Turtle Islanders completed the online screening tool on surveymokey.com. Although 90% of survey monkey participants found the tipi teachings significant in transmitting child rearing ways, over ¾ of participants 77% (36) completed the long answer question about the tipi poles. Only 23% (11) of respondents could not explain the significance of the tipi poles in relation to child rearing ways. This shows the need for Indigenous epistemologies within the broader context of North American contemporary culture.

Niyanan: Broken Circles

All Nations Crisis Response

Picture 1:

The All Nations Crisis Response (ANCR) logo



Note: The cultural appropriation of Indigenous ways. The circle appears as the medicine wheel but the circle broken with the black, yellow and red race separated from one another. Incidentally, the White race is not included in this distorted version of a 'medicine wheel.'