



KOTAWE (Start a Fire): Igniting cultural responsiveness through community-determined intervention research

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Each seasonal research circle is guided by the 4 question relating to the women's experience:

- 1)How do Indigenous women experience cultural intervention practices or CIPs?
- 2)In what ways, if any, do CIPs influence how women experience physical wellness through fitness/strength, stress level, aches and pains, ect.?
- 3)In what ways, if any, do CIPs influence how women experience relationships with themselves and/ or spirit change?
- 4)what do women do to encourage wellness in their lives after participating in the CIPs?

BACKGROUND

Kotawe's goal is to contribute to the restoration of Indigenous women's wellbeing through culture intervention practices (CIPs). The goal of the study is to develop, implement, and assess the impact of land and gender-based cultural interventions (that address risk behaviour and contexts, mental health and trauma, foster wellness) among Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. This research is about intersectionality in Indigenous women's lives and how communities and systems can work together, with women and one another, to deliver better, sustainable and affordable, integrated care.

METHODS

Indigenous methodologies of Storytelling and Research Circles were used in the qualitative approach. The CIPs, an empowering community-based research strategy, was utilized and the WWs in this project are asked to participate in seasonal cultural teachings and are to answer 4 questions as it pertains to them personally. 1) How do Indigenous women experience cultural intervention practices or CIPs? 2) In what ways, if any, do CIPs influence how women experience physical wellness through fitness/strength, stress level, aches and pains, ect.? 3) In what ways, if any, do CIPs influence how women experience relationships with themselves and/ or spirit change? 4) what do women do to encourage wellness in their lives after participating in the CIPs?

The project recruited 7 Willow Warriors (WWs) living within the Regina area, who have completed 12 months out of 36 months. The WWs have participated in weekly programming and 4 CIPs that focused on teachings and knowledge by Elder and healers working with the WWs in group settings and individually for 12 months.

RESULTS

Morning Star Lodge Staff performs the nanâtawihowin âcimowina kika-môshaknikêhk papiskici-itascikêwin astâcikowina (NAKPA), a data analysis method developed by Dr. Judith Bartlett. NAKPA is appropriate for community-based research, and is an Indigenous grounded data analysis process that was utilized in this research project and identified up to 34 themes for all 4 seasons.

RESULTS CONT'D.

Seasons	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8	Theme 9	Theme 10
Spring	Finding Spirituality Through Song	Initial experiences with ceremonies	Bringing CIP's into homefires	Connections to Cultural Teachings	Connections to Nature	Finding Spirituality through Dance	Memory of Teachings	Managing your emotions/ feelings	Intergenerational knowledge exchange	Building relationships through KOTawe
Summer	Finding direction through ceremony	Recognizing Internal Struggles	Passing Cultural Identity to Children	Culturally Safe Spaces	Womanhood					
Fall	Moving forward	Feelings/ Emotions	Uplifting Spirituality	Healing with types of ceremonies	Programming/ Routine	Healer's Guidance	Turning to ceremony	Recognizing self growth	Comfortability with community connections	Sisterhood
Winter	proactive responses to adversity	Cultural encounters	self-reflection of healing journey	Intergenerational responsibility of culture	Igniting self-courage	awakening/ recognition of self-love	Body Awareness	Seven Sisters	Awareness of wellbeing and self-care	

DISCUSSION

- The essential point the WWs brought up was the initial experience with ceremonies and finding spirituality through CIPs and bring these teachings into their home fire. Also recognizing internal struggles, and passing cultural identity to children was also very important to how the WWs experienced the CIPs. These practices brought positive change to self-esteem and built relationships through Kotawe (internal, Cultural, sisterhood, home fire, nature, and community), as well as taking care of themselves through memory teachings and Intergenerational exchange.
- Finding direction through the ceremony, and creating culturally safe spaces was also crucial to the WWs. The influence of the CIPs has built a sisterhood in Kotawe. The three phases included building of relationship, womanhood, and sisterhood.
- The WWs expressed moving forward and allowing feelings and emotions were a way of recognizing self-growth. Healing with types of ceremonies and healer guidance was also outstanding. Programming/routine and comfortability made a connection with the community.
- Positive response to adversity allowed self-reflection of the healing journey. The WWs recognize the importance of igniting self-courage and intergenerational responsibility of culture.

CONCLUSION

The evidence here clearly states that new intervention practices and cultural teachings are beneficial to Indigenous women's wellness and cognitive health. Seven women originated together and formed a sisterhood that was first built on trust and womanhood. The personal growth created a space for the women to heal, cry, laugh and practice culture together. For some Willow Warriors, it might have been their first time learning or participating in the ceremony, but with support of the sisterhood brought comfort and strength. Finding direction through ceremony has brought structure and discipline in their relationships. It has come to an understanding that culture intervention practices play an essential role in building relationships. These relationships have been identified as internal, home fire, spirituality, sisterhood, ceremony, Elder/healer, and community. These seven relationships are the transformation of the 7 WWs.

KOTAWE's Journey



Kotawe's Goal

Is to contribute to the restoration of Indigenous women's wellbeing through culture intervention practices (CIPs). The goal of the study is to develop, implement, and assess the impact of land and gender-based cultural interventions (that address risk behaviour and contexts, mental health and trauma, foster wellness) among Indigenous women in Saskatchewan. This research is about intersectionality in Indigenous women's lives and how communities and systems can work together, with women and one another, to deliver better, sustainable and affordable, integrated care.

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KOTAWE's Journey



Discussion

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Comments

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with questions and or comments. We are grateful to be apart of the CAHR 2020 poster presentation.

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