Stories of Healing from Native Indian Residential School Abuse

by

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B.A., University of Alberta, 1986

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the department of Psychological Foundations in Education

University of Victoria

"The people who get to tell their stories rule the world"

A Hopi saying

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ABSTRACT

The following study presents five stories of healing from individuals who have experienced abuse in Native Indian Residential Schools. The stories are presented as complete narratives in the words of the individuals themselves. Utilizing a hermeneutic-phenomenological perspective, the narratives are examined for exemplary statements and common themes.

The traumatic effects of residential schools have had far-reaching effects on many First Nations individuals and communities (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Cariboo Tribal Council 1991; Jaine, 1993;). First Nations children were forcibly taken from their home and were placed in residential schools with the intent that full assimilation would solve Canada's "Indian problem" (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986; Bull, 1991; Dawson, 1988; Miller, 1987; Nock, 1988).

This study details the history of residential schools, the incidents of abuse, and ramifications of this alarming period of history. However, these pages also seek to give a voice to the healing that many First Nations people are engaging in today.

The five narratives contained in this study are inspiring and poignant examples of healing. The stories speak of remarkable courage, conviction, and strength. They articulate the spiritual and personal quests that are not represented in the media nor in the education system.

These stories speak about the process of recovery from oppression. They reveal a

voyage along 'The Red Road' of healing. Once victims, now survivors, the narrators of these stories detail a journey of personal, spiritual, and community empowerment.

A note on terminology

In this study, I have used the term 'First Nations' so as to honour the historical, political, and social autonomy of this group. The term 'Native' is also used interchangeably with 'First Nations'. In addition, the term 'Indian' also appears, but I have deliberately used this word only when speaking in a historical context and when citing other writers.

I have also used the term 'co-researchers' to refer to the five people whose healing narratives appear in this text. This term is common in phenomenology and is used to demonstrate the significant and invaluable contribution that these people made to the research project at hand. The word 'participants' also appears as an alternative term to 'co-researchers', which refers to the same group of people.

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Acknowledgments

I wish to pay respect and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Vance Peavy, for his unfaltering belief in me and my work. The experience of having a supervisor who was encouraging, supportive, and genuinely interested in my research has been immensely gratifying.

I would also like to acknowledge my partner, Martin de Valk, for inspiring me to pursue this research. Through the many projects that he has created and implemented with First Nation's people, Martin was responsible for introducing me to this research topic. For his support, patience, and love, I am most appreciative.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation and respect for the five individuals who shared their healing narrative with me. From them, I learned about the integrity of courage, the importance of commitment, and the gift of sharing. Thank you.

Chapter One

Introduction

The research question

In recent years, information has begun to surface which details the maltreatment of First Nations children in residential schools. There is a growing awareness and concern about the ramifications of this abuse and the impact it has had on generations of First Nations people (Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

Although it can be argued that the media in general is still biased and racist in their presentation of First Nations People, more coverage has been given to Native issues in recent years than in the past. Newspaper reports, television coverage, and film documentaries has helped to expose the public to the traumatic and often brutal mistreatment of First Nations children in government institutions. Specifically, the residential school system has been implicated in these incidents of tragedy.

All over Canada, cases have been heard before the courts which involve the sexual, emotional, and physical abuse of Native students at the hands of teachers and administrators of residential schools. These cases, in addition to addressing the judicial rights of survivors, have also served to increase the public's recognition that the abuse perpetuated against First Nations children in the past has created enormous repercussions in Native communities of the present.

Although the importance of understanding how past abuse has created tremendous

problems for the survivors cannot be overstated, media attention, and thus public knowledge, has focused almost exclusively on this perspective. What the public is not exposed to are the stories of healing; narratives which tell of survival and transcendence from what is sometimes referred to as 'the residential school syndrome' (Royal Commission, 1992). Little is know about those individuals who have embarked on a healing journey, and less is understood about the components of healing itself: the meaning it has for survivors, the process of healing in individual lives, the stories of transformation and liberation.

In addition to dwelling on stories of tragedy, the public generally, and the field of psychotherapy specifically, tend to focus on deficiency. People who have experienced violence or oppression are often viewed not on the grounds of their resistance to the violence, but on the disorder they have manifested as a result of their experience. As Wade (1995) asserts, "it is assumed that persons experience the effects of oppression, however there is no recognition at all of the fact that persons also engage in a resistance to oppression" (p. 175). Inherent in healing stories is such resistance to oppression, as healing narratives detail the experience of reclaiming Native identity.

In light of this dearth of information which focuses on healing from Native Indian residential school abuse, the following research is thus presented. The stories contained in these pages are unique accounts by five individuals who are actively working towards healing their experiences of Indian residential school.

Potentially, their stories and experience may be used to inspire, direct, and assist others who wish to engage in the process of recovery. They may also serve to inform helpers and educators who work with persons who have experienced abuse in residential schools.

This study, which was carried out using a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, sought explication to the following questions:

What is your personal story of healing?

What has helped you in your healing process?

What factors do you feel are necessary for healing?

What, if any, traditional Native beliefs or values were instrumental in your healing?

What metaphor or symbol would you choose to describe your healing?

Focus on the residential school system

It is necessary for any study to have a clear focus. Thus, this study is designed to develop an in-depth, detailed understanding of post-residential school healing as reported by five participants.

For the purposes of this study, co-researchers were not required to share their stories of abuse nor reveal any details of the past. It was not the intention of this thesis to explore individual stories of past trauma; on the contrary, the healing process remained the priority. Thus, the use of the term 'abuse' may be physical, sexual, emotional, or spiritual in nature and has been defined by the co-researchers themselves.

It is important to note, however, that residential schools are not the only institutions in which First Nations people have experienced serious discrimination, oppression, and exploitation. Many other religious, social, educational, and community agents are guilty of perpetuating abuse and discrimination. It is equally vital to note that not all First Nations children who attended residential schools were subjected to abuse; some fortunate children were not individually hurt. However, as the Cariboo Tribal Council (1991) points out, "even those not specifically victimized will have been touched in some way by this particular 'plague'" (p.174).

Social-Political Background

The revelation of residential school abuse comes at a time in history when First Nations people are actively working towards reclaiming their cultural, spiritual, and political communities. As some Nations move towards Self-government, others revive the use of their language. In many communities, Native bands are establishing their own education system. and instilling their children with Native values through the use of traditional teaching techniques.

The history of First Nations Peoples in Canada, however, is a bleak one. There is substantial evidence which accounts for cultural, religious, and social exploitation. In studying any issue related to First Nations People, it is impossible not to provide a social and cultural context with which to view the material. For this reason, a detailed history of residential schools in Canada is presented. Also included is a description of wellness from a First Nations perspective, and information about the use of psychotherapy with First Nations clients.

Research Background : A personal account

My interest in researching stories of healing from Native Indian residential school abuse grew out of my work interviewing and meeting with First Nations' Youths for a project entitled "Our Emerging People." This was a photo-documentary begun by photographer Martin de Valk designed to provide students in grades 5 to 9 with the opportunity to speak about their experiences growing up in a multi-cultural environment. In small groups. students

were interviewed and photographed as they reflected on the cultural and racial influences in their lives.

As a result of our work on this project, both Mr. de Valk and I were contracted by the Saanich Indian school board to work on a drop-out study of Native youths entitled SNEPENEK. SNEPENEK, a SENCOTEN word referring to the discipline of the whole person, was designed to identify factors which contributed to students' leaving school prior to graduation.

I conducted interviews with approximately twenty First Nations youth using a loose ethnographic method. In these interviews and in my subsequent interactions with the First Nations students, their struggles with school became a painful and reoccurring topic of conversation. Many of them shared with me their personal history in the school system, and the numerous examples of racist, demoralizing, and oppressive experiences that they had encountered.

I found that my research question "What led you to drop out of school?" offered a forum for relating some of their experiences, but other issues began to appear on the horizon of their words. What I learned from the students was that their parents' experience in residential schools had a lingering effect on their own school experience. Many students spoke about a general mistrust and suspicion of school, and a belief that education was incompatible with a First Nations' way of life. The firm belief of each interviewee was that past abuses and injustices of the residential schools continue to negatively affect all Native People.

As a result, my interest in the effects of the residential school increased. Thus, I choose to focus my research in this area. The research question of this study is designed to extrapolate personal thoughts and feelings in such a way as to understand how five First Nations People have healed from abuse they experienced in residential schools. As stated by the Cariboo Tribal Council (1991), "one factor that has consistently worked against a genuine understanding of the magnitude of the non-Indian assault upon First Nations cultures is trivialization" (p.163). In presenting this research, I hope to validate the importance of First Nations' experiences, and provide an educational resource for Natives and Non-Natives alike, that they might gain from these stories and use the information for empathetic and proactive understanding.

It is thus with the hope of continued healing and growth that this study is undertaken. It is offered to all First Nations People in a gesture of respect and gratitude. It is my sincere wish that these stories may inspire others in their journey of healing.

Contributions of the study

A study which describes stories of healing from residential school abuse stands to serve as an important resource for therapists and survivors alike. Despite the increasing media reports concerned with First Nations' experiences in school, the phenomenon itself is not fully understood nor appreciated by many people. Personal stories which can illuminate this phenomenon have the potential to present material that remains inaccessible through other

forms of inquiry.

In the act of telling their stories, survivors of residential school abuse may also experience a sense of validation and affirmation. As Parry (1991) says, " The discovery of a person's own voice for the telling of her story occurs to the extent that she experiences her story being heard, hence validated as her unique perception of things" (p.44).

It is with the intention of educating and empathically increasing awareness that the research is here presented. Through this research, I hope to provide a needed perspective to add to the literature. I also hope to provide the co-researchers with an opportunity to validate their stories of healing and offer them as models to others.

Chapter Two

Literature review

The History of Residential Schools in Canada

From the time of Champlain's settling of New France in 1608, education has been used as a means to assimilate First Nations people into White society (Bull, 1991; Dawson, 1988; Miller, 1987; Wilson, 1986). The religious clergy who accompanied the first French settlers to North America worked under the assumption that Native People were "a people lacking restraint and discipline, economically unstable, politically simplistic, socially immoral and culturally void" (Kozak in Nock, 1988, p. 77). Missionaries thus acted as "key agents both in the process of cultural replacement and in the destruction of the political autonomy and subsequent assimilation of their charges" (Nock, 1988, p. 33).

As depicted by the words of Rev. Dr. Alder in his report of 1828 to the English Aboriginal Society, the new settlers wanted Natives to "shake off the rude habits of savage life and embrace Christianity and civilization" (Wilson, 1986, p. 65). Thus, rudimentary schools were set up to teach reading, writing, hymns, prayers, and some agricultural and trades skills (Dawson, 1988).

At first, the attempts to educate First Nations children were met with limited 'success'. In the early years of colonization, there was much frustration among the missionaries with their inability to alter the Natives value system and way of life. Many missionaries returned to France without converting their pupils (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986). Others sent

their pupils back to France with the hope that education and conversion would be more easily obtained (Dawson, 1988).

Following these Catholic missionaries, other religious orders from many countries took it upon themselves to "civilize and Christianize the savages" (Dawson, 1988, p.44; Haig-Brown, 1988, York, 1990) and to transform the migrant savage into a settled Christian who would be equipped with the mechanical and moral skills necessary to compete with the Europeans settling in Upper Canada (Nock, 1988). For all denominations, "a measure of literacy and familiarity with the English language was deemed essential" (Wilson, 1986, p. 65).

For many years, representatives from twenty-five different religious orders actively worked to transform 'Indian heathens' to a way of life that more closely resembled a European value system (Bull, 1991; Miller, 1987). The mandate of the missionaries was to build a school for Indians to civilize them and improve their moral condition (Persson, 1980). However stated, their true purpose was to strip the Indians of their culture, value system, and language. In the candid words of an American Indian Affairs bureaucrat, "the extinction of the Indians as Indians is the ultimate end" (Miller, 1987, p.3).

By the 1820's, concern was beginning to mount over the education and disposition of Canada's Indian population. Authorities sought a system of education that could foster European values whilst protecting against the possibilities of the Natives from becoming "an indigent pauper class and a burden to the public purse" (Titley, 1986, p. 133). In the 1830's, the authority over Natives changed from the military to the civil governors. This transfer occurred when the Native population were no longer required as allies and their 'tendency for

idleness' came under scrutiny (Wilson, 1986).

In 1845, Dr. Egerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, worked to establish the Indian industrial schools, where Native children could be trained to provide agricultural and domestic services for newly arrived settlers and could be educated away from their 'savage behaviour' (Persson, 1980,).

Initially, only Native boys were enrolled in Industrial schools, learning such skills as farming, blacksmithing, carpentry, shoemaking, etc. (Jaine, 1991). Later, girls were admitted, and they received instruction in domestic skills such as sewing, cooking, cleaning, and practical nursing (Assembly of First Nations, 1994). In addition to the practical skills the children learned, religious content was predominant.

The design of these schools was modelled after the industrial schools in Great Britain (Bull, 1991; Morrissette, 1994) and apportioned equal time to study and work with the hope of creating graduates who could be economically self-sufficient (Titley, 1986). However, this half day system of equal academic instruction and vocationally oriented work soon degenerated into exploitation of the children's labour. Often, children were kept working long hours in the kitchens and fields in order that the institutions could operate within their budgets (Miller, 1987).

In 1847, the province of Canada published a report directing policy for Indian education which clearly expressed the superiority of Europeans and inferiority of the Indians. This report detailed the mandate of schools by saying that "Their education must consist not merely of the training of the mind, but a weaning from the habits and feelings of their ancestors, and the acquirements of the language, arts and customs of civilized life" (Prentice

and Houston in Haig-Brown, p. 25).

In 1867, following the confederation of Canada, the British North American Act firmly established federal authority over Native people. In section 24.14, this act clearly mandated that Indians were the wards of the Canadian Government. Thus, the department of Indian Affairs was established in 1876 to administrate the lives of the Indian population, thus beginning what is commonly referred to as The Indian Act (Assembly of First Nations, 1994). Two of the most significant mandates of the department were treaty signing and the establishment of boarding schools.

In 1879, the federal government contracted a lawyer-journalist by the name of Nicholas F. Davin to make an evaluation of American Indian boarding schools. According to Barmen et al., (1986), Davin reported that "the Americans believed that Indian children were best prepared for assimilation into the dominant society if they were removed from the influences of home, family, and community" (p.6). The Davin report made strong recommendations to establish church-run industrial boarding schools. He reported that "the industrial school is the principle feature of the policy known as aggressive civilization" (Davin 1879, p. 1) that could "take away their simple Indian mythology" (Titley, 1986, p. 135).

In addition, the prospect of separating Indian children from their parents was viewed as crucial. E.F. Wilson, a prominent missionary, spoke for many others when he said that he looked forward to the time when "the old people will die off" (Nock, 1988, p.74) and be replaced by their civilized children. This paternalistic attitude led to viewing school masters as surrogate parents who could lead the Indian child out of the conditions of his or her birth to a civilized, domestic life (Nock, 1988). Duncan Campbell Scott, who worked for the

department of Indian Affairs from 1879-1932 wrote, "The danger was recognized that they might relapse to the level of reserve life as soon as they came into contact with their parents" (Shortt and Doughty in Nock, 1988, p. 74-75). Davin reported the same concern after viewing the American system. He wrote, "it was found that the day-school did not work, because the influence of the wigwam was stronger than the influence of the school" (Davin, 1879, p. 1). It was to address this concern that residential schools were built great distances from reserves (Miller, 1987).

Davin's report was submitted for consideration while Ottawa devised a plan for various missionaries to compete for control of the schools. This leisurely pace heightened the grave economic situation that many First Nations people found themselves in with their transition to reserve life after 1870 (Titley, 1986). Increasingly, the urgency to train Natives in agricultural self-support prompted the opening of the schools, in light of a famine which occurred as a result of the disappearance of the buffalo on the Prairies (Bull, 1991; Miller, 1987; Titley, 1986) and the decline of the fur trade (Miller, 1987; Wilson, 1986).

Thus, by 1883, Indian boarding schools were beginning to be built across Canada; a joint enterprise of throne and altar. Christian denominations provided the staff while the governments continued to provide funds and approve the curriculum (Miller, 1987). Support for these schools, and recommendations for more schools was made in 1887 by L. VanKoughnet, then Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, in a proposal to John A. Macdonald. The agenda of these schools was openly and widely acknowledged; they were, in fact instruments of cultural replacement, with the aim to westernizing Natives as completely as possible (Nock, 1988).

When Indian boarding schools formally opened in the fall of 1884, they were confronted with a problem that would continue for many years: a less than ample supply of pupils (Titley, 1986) and very few graduating students (Miller, 1987). Native children often left school early or refused to submit to the rituals of the school such as having their hair cut and attending long hours each day. Bribery and pressure were used to keep the students in school, whereby officials would threaten parents with reduced food rations or to devise ways in which students could be 'bought' from their parents (Titley, 1986). These tactics held limited power over Native families and thus the officials of schools began to push the government to make the schools mandatory.

By 1920, amendments to the Indian Act made it compulsory for Indian children to attend boarding schools (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Miller in Haig-Brown, 1988; Persson, 1980; Persson, 1986, York, 1990). Students were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to these schools, often under great resistance from parents and children. Children as young as six years old were separated from their parents for months or even years at a time (Assembly of First Nations, 1994 ; Royal Commission, 1992, "Framing the Issues"), a separation which both parents and students found enormously painful (Miller, 1987).

In this same year, Duncan Campbell Scott, in a House of Commons discussion, summed up the attitude of the educators by stating "Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department (Haig-Brown, 1988 p.31-32; York, 1990, p. 23).

In 1923, industrial schools and boarding schools formally became residential schools (Miller, 1987). In most cases, the schools functioned as prisons and indoctrination centres.

rather than educational institutions (York, 1990).

These schools continued to operate until the 1970's and 1980's, although they ceased to be the only alternative for Indian education in the years following the second world war (Persson 1986). Between 1946 and 1948, a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on the Indian Act urged for the abolition of separate Indian schools. This motion was due largely to growing doubt over the effectiveness of Indian education. The Catholic church, however, fought against abolition as well as a new law which required Indian parents to give their written permission for their child's attendance. Priests and administrators often forged the admission forms, marking admission forms with an 'X' in the place of parents' consent.

From the late 1940's to the 1960's the policy of residential schools went through many phases with each new government, but few real changes took place. Despite a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons (1946-48) recommendation that Native children be educated in mainstream schools (Persson, 1980), this was more theory than practice (Miller, 1987). The mandate of the schools officially changed from that of assimilation to integration, though most Native children remained unaffected by these changes because of the lack of day schools near their homes.

Although it was now legal for Natives to attend public schools, it was still a rare occurrence until the 1960's. Many parents continued to send their children to residential schools, believing it necessary for the economic survival of their offspring as well as to offset problems with overcrowding and poverty on reserves ("Indians protest, p.1). However, this compliance was the exception to years of resistance in which Indian parents reacted to the

assimilative mandate of the schools. These parents wished their children to gain skills that would enable their children to cope with the demands of society, but never wished their young to be converted into Europeans (Miller, 1987). As Wade (1995) contends:

> The fact that some survivors of residential school clearly state that they benefited from attending residential school is less a reflection of the value of these institutions than it is a testament to the remarkable ability of human beings to create something positive even in the most oppressive conditions. (p. 173)

Throughout their history, residential schools were a constant political and administrative headache (Miller, 1987). The rivalries between denominations and the inadequate government funds underscored the meagre results of Indian children. In addition to these concerns were the many fires which "destroyed the schools buildings with suspicious regularity" (Miller, 1987, p. 6), the overcrowding of schools, and the diseases which spread rapidly among the students.

During the early 1970's, residential schools came under harsh criticism from a growing number of First Nations individuals who were concentrating on self government concerns (York, 1990). In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada called for the cessation of federal control over Indian education (Assembly of First Nations, 1994). This marked the beginning of the trend towards First Nations People insisting on control over the education of their children.

It wasn't until a Native political consciousness began to grow in strength that people

began to acknowledge the negative experiences they had in these schools. In the 1980's, there were three residential school conferences which brought many former students together to share their stories and express their pain. The movement towards healing residential school experience grows daily, with literature, workshops, and conferences occurring in greater numbers each year. In the words of one former student, now "Native people are willing to deal with the pain and the shame in order to work towards healing" (Haig-Brown, p.18).

The History of Residential Schools in British Columbia

The first Indian residential school in British Columbia was St. Mary's, which opened in Mission in 1861, and was run by the Roman Catholic church. By the 1880's, the department of Indian Affairs began forcibly removing Native children from their homes and sending them to the church-run schools. Parents who tried to resist having their children taken away were either jailed, or forbidden to leave reserves (Royal Commission, 1992, "Overview").

By the early 1900's, there were fourteen residential schools operating in the province. They were run by the Roman Catholic Church, the United Church, and the Anglican Church. Many of these schools remained opened until the 1970's, when Native activists began to lobby for greater Native control over education. Although the Canadian Government formally abandoned their residential school policy during the 1970's, the last residential school in British Columbia wasn't closed until 1984.

Following is a list of residential schools in British Columbia and their dates of operation:

St. Michael's	1929-1975
Kuper Island	1890-1975
St. Eugene	1890-1970
Lejac	1910-1976
Kamloops	1890-1978
Lower Post	1951-1975
St. George's	1901-1979
St. Mary's	1861-1984
Squamish	1900-1959
Alberni	1920-1973
Sechelt	1922-1975
Coqualeetza	1890-1941
Christie/Kakawis	1900-1983
St. Joseph's Mission	1953-1981

(Provincial Residential School Project, 1996)

A Clash of Cultures

Residential schools encompassed a value system that was dramatically opposed to the First Nations world view. Consider the following manifesto of teachers in the residential school system:

> Instructions to teachers printed on Residential School registers.
>
> Teachers note the following suggestions:
>
> Language:
> Every effort must be made to induce pupils to speak English and to teach them to understand it. Insist on English during even the supervised play. Failure in this means wasted efforts.
>
> Reading:
> Pupils must be taught to read distinctly. Inspectors report that Indian children either mumble inaudibly or shout their words in spasmodic fashion. It will be considered a proof of the incompetency of a teacher if pupils are found to read "parrot fashion", i.e. without an understanding of what they read. Pupils should understand as they read. The sentence is the unit of thought. Bend every effort to obtain intelligent reading.

Calisthenics:

Exercises, frequently accompanied by singing, to afford variation during work and to improve physique. Lay stress on physical activities that will strengthen the chest and neck. Special emphasis on outdoor group games and supervised play.

Vocal music:

Simple songs and hymns. The themes of the former to be interesting and patriotic. The tunes bright and cheerful.

Religious instructions:

Scriptural reading, the Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer, The Life of Christ, etc.

Ethics:

In the primary grades, instill the qualities of obedience, respect, order, neatness and cleanliness. Differentiate between right and wrong, cultivate truthful habits and a spirit of fair play. As the pupils become more advanced, inculcate as near as possible in the order mentioned, independence, self-respect, industry, honesty, thrift, self-maintenance, citizenship and patriotism. Discuss charity, pauperism, Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement. Explain the relationship of the sexes to labour, home and public duties, and labour as the law of existence.

Sanitation:

Great care must be exercised by the teacher to see that the schoolroom is kept thoroughly clean. The floors should be swept daily and scrubbed frequently. Ventilation should receive earnest attention. The air in the schoolroom should be completely changed during recess and at the noon hour, even in the coldest weather, by opening of windows and doors. Spitting on the floor, or inside the school building, should not be allowed.

General:

Instruction is to be direct, the voice and blackboard the principal agents. The unnecessary use of text-books is to be avoided. Do not classify students in advance of their ability.

(Knockwood, 1992, p. 47-48)

The cultural differences between this English teaching style and First Nations traditional teaching methods are significant. As York (1990) contends:

The philosophy according to which the residential schools operated was diametrically opposed to the traditional Indian philosophy of education. Before the arrival of the missionaries, Indian children learned by watching their parents and elders. Their family and their community were intimately involved in their education. The myths and stories told by their elders were an important part of the

process of learning. (p. 32)

Pepper and Henry (1991) corroborate on this, adding the concept of interconnectedness that is fundamental to most, if not all, First Nations belief systems:

> The Indian way always considers the wholeness of things. Life is viewed as an interactive process within the physical, social, and spiritual environments. When there is harmony of interaction, one lives and grows with a sense of intactness within one's world. (p.145)

The clash of value systems is also represented in the Cariboo Tribal Council (1991), Dawson (1988), Haig-Brown (1988), Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), and Pepper and Henry (1991). Kirkness and Barnhardt review historical literature and site some of the major differences between Native and Non-native culture at the time of European contact. These include: the role of men and women, the role of authority, the practice of corporal punishment, the role of religion, and the role of community.

In contrast to European society, First Nations people observed that "personal autonomy for every individual, rather than obedience to a leader, was central" (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991 p.14). They go on to say that "this principle of autonomy extended to relations between men and women" and that in contrast to European role division, Natives historically shared work equally. Haig-Brown (1988) discusses the residential school rule wherein sexes were separated from each other due to religious beliefs.

> Not only were older and younger siblings separated, but in the spirit of old Catholicism, males and females were isolated from one another. Sexuality has often been viewed by conservative factions within the Catholic Church as an area which may lead to sin. Initially, it resulted in the separation of brothers and sisters. More than one student reported seeing her brother once or not at all during years of attendance at the school. (p.49-50)

Another crucial difference between cultures lies in the arena of adult discussions. wherein with important matters, First Nations people "were raised with the consideration and patience of listening intently as others spoke, never with interruption or with all talking at once" (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991, p.15) This contrasts with the debates and interruptions commonly found in European-Canadian discussion, and the hierarchical nature of dialogue within the residential school system.

As well, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) reveal the fact that generally "Indian people did not practice corporal punishment on their children" (p.15). The Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery colludes with this when they state, "In traditional society corporal punishment was not used as a means of disciplining children" (p. 90) and that "there is very little evidence to support the existence of child sexual abuse in traditional societies" (p. 91).

In addition, traditionally, a First Nations community was where "social ethic called for generosity, cooperation, and patience" (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991 p.14). "No one role was regarded as more or less important than another; nor were the roles static" (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, p. 23). Each member of the community was viewed as an

important person whose skills and abilities were necessary for survival.

> Just as each member fit within the family, and each family within the community, so too did the people have a place and a role to play within the Sacred Circle of Life. This Circle included all living things that were put on the earth by the Creator. They lived in 'harmony with life'. (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, p. 23)

The difference in value systems was thus extreme. Even in small ways, the distinction was reinforced and remained a source of considerable pain and confusion to students. Given the cultural differences, the rigid schedule, the religious indoctrination, and the frequent incidents of neglect and abuse, it is clear that residential school represented a full-scale assault on every aspect of First Nations life. The extremity with which this assault took place was not acknowledged by the White authorities - and still isn't even in the present day. Those who ran the schools seemed wholly unconcerned with the world view of their students and seemed to make no effort to learn about even the most basic of First Nations cultural beliefs. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), emphasize that, even today, schools:

> Represent an impersonal, intimidating and often hostile environment, in which little of what (Natives) bring in the way of cultural knowledge, traditions and core values is recognized, much less respected. They are expected to leave the cultural predispositions from their world at the door and assume the trappings of a new

> form of reality, a reality which is often substantially different from their own. (p.6)

Knockwood (1992) cites an personal example which exemplifies the lack of understanding with which teachers and administrators of residential schools operated:

> I remember a nun shaking a girl by the shoulders and yelling, 'Look at me, look at me,' because she did not realize that direct eye contact between child and adult was considered arrogance in the Native culture. (p.50)

There are also some researchers who claim that First Nations people may possess a learning style that is distinct from those of European-Canadians. Browne (1990), Dawson (1988), Elofson and Elofson (1988), Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), and Wilson (1991) all describe in detail the profound difference in Native learning styles and values and those of European-oriented schools. Browne (1990), who believes that Native students are primarily right hemisphere thinkers, contrasts the First Nations way of learning with a European-based school system in which "the linear, sequential processes of the left hemisphere dominate the curriculum and instructional methodology" (p.29). She explains that right hemisphere dominant children experience many problems when they are asked to participate in curriculum that is left hemisphere oriented.

In the case of children from a right hemisphere culture, hemispheric preference has

> a broad impact on all kinds of learning situations. It creates a characteristic right-brain way of relating to all of life, affecting a wide range of behaviours... including language style and interpersonal interaction style. (p.29)

If these learning styles can be generalized to First Nations populations, this difference represents yet another distinction between the First Nations children and their non-Native instructors.

Given the broad discrepancy between the First Nations world view and the way students were treated in residential schools, it is easy to surmise that the operators of the schools were both ignorant and dismissive of the value system of their pupils. The sense of moral and social superiority prevailed, and the hierarchical structure of the English boarding school was implemented with authoritarian precision. There is very little evidence to suggest that teachers and administrators considered the cultural, religious, and social values of their students in any way.

Abuse at residential schools

Detailing the abuse directed towards First Nations children in residential schools constitutes an overwhelming and mournful task. Current evidence provides a plethora of examples which are horrific and barbarous in nature, but which must be revealed.

For the sake of clarity, discussion of abuse will be separated into categories of spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse. Emotional abuse is not specifically detailed, as it is implicit in any form of abuse or neglect. The arbitrary categorization of abuse was chosen to provide a clear rendering of the information; it does not represent a philosophical framework.

Given this categorization, it is crucial to emphasize the integrative and holistic nature of human beings. Especially, it is important to note the concepts of connection and circuity that are fundamental to most indigenous people and which form the basis of many First Nations' belief systems.

Spiritual Abuse

The Christian denominations that administrated residential schools believed that First Nations' People lacked a religious belief system. Native people were viewed as heathens who were "addicted to witchcraft and innumerable superstitious practices" (Peterson, 1959, p.2). In addition, "First Nations traditions were devalued and denigrated, and then redefined as primitive, pagan and invalid" (Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

Although Nations differ in their spiritual ceremonies and traditions, spirituality is a

integral and fundamental component of most, if not all, First Nations' cultures. Given the extensive and widely regarded spiritual teachings and ceremonies in many Native communities, it is ludicrous to suggest a general lack of spiritual conviction. However, the missionaries refused to acknowledge the importance of the Natives' own spiritual belief system and relentlessly asserted their own rigid religious views. As articulated by the Assembly of First Nations, "that these children were denied the right to speak their own language and partake in their traditional ceremonies amounted to complete denial that they had a spiritual life" (p. 56).

Thus, the religious convergence of Native children was seen as the prime objective of residential schools. Religious indoctrination was omnipresent and unrelenting. For many students, daily mass and several daily prayer sessions were mandatory. In Out of the Depths (Knockwood, 1992), the author recalls her own church experience:

> Attendance at Mass seemed to be an obsession, and even seriously ill children were required to go. I remember boys and girls fainting during Mass, being picked off the floor, placed on the benches, revived and then made to go to communion just barely walking and pale as ghosts. (p.31)

Often, mass was followed by a lecture on the sinful nature of Indian beliefs and the lack of morality within Native communities.

In Residential Schools: The stolen years, Chief Phillip Fontaine recalls the commitment authorities had to the conversion of First Nations people:

> We were told to pray for the conversion of our people. I remember buying pagans when I was in grades one and two...All of our names would be put at the back of the classroom and we would get a gold star for each pagan we bought. One of the things that really struck me as strange was that the pagans were never white; they were either brown, yellow, black, or red. We learned to have a negative image of ourselves and of those who were different than the people that ran the school. (Jaine, p. 50)

The concepts of sin and impurity were inculcated, as was the notion of hell. For First Nations' children, these religious beliefs were confusing and often terrifying. In her book. Shirley Sterling (1994) recalls her first introduction to Christianity:

> That night, just before she turned the lights off, Sister Maura taught us how to pray on our knees with our hands folded. Then she told us about devils. She said they were waiting with chains under our beds to drag us into the fires of hell if we got up and left our beds during the night. When she turned the lights off I was scared to move, even to breathe. I knew those devils would come and get me if I made a sound. I kept really still. (p. 19)

Another Christian notion that caused profound confusion and fear was the belief that children could be considered impure. Students were inundated with the thought of sin: that their bodies were dirty and sinful, that looking at the other sex was sinful, that touching

themselves sexually was sinful, and that their desire to practice their own traditional rituals was sinful.

Haig-Brown quotes an informant who emphasizes the religious differences between Natives and Non-natives by saying:

> I remember when we were in the school there that all other churches were wrong. If you believed or read any of the other books, you were going to hell. That was pushed into our brain day after day after day at school. Didn't matter what church, what religion... the Catholic was the only church. There was no other church, absolutely (p.57).

The impact of this was profound, for in most First Nations' beliefs systems, "children are generally thought to be gifts, symbolizing new life, innocence and a blessing from the Creator" (Assembly of First Nations, p.59). The polarity of these views served to create disconnection and distrust in the children and left them deeply uncomfortable with their own value system.

The result of this spiritual abuse is still felt deeply within many First Nations' communities. Students who were exposed to Christianity at school only to return to their homes and witness the 'sinful' practices of their own families were deeply alienated and disconnected from their communities. Having lost the language, and indoctrinated into fearing their own spirituality, many survivors of residential school became broken spirits, alienated from their identity as First Nations People, yet still unfit to reside in the white world

(Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

Given this background, it is poignant to note that largely, the occurrence and prevalence of abuse in residential schools was kept a secret for many years. Concealment of these events may be attributed to the grave shame associated with the incidents as well as the influence and power of the governing religious bodies (Morrissette, 1994). In the words of one student of the Kamloops residential school, "They started talking to us about sin, about what sin was... I felt really dirty 'cause this sexual abuse happened to me" (Haig-Brown, 1988, p. 58).

Effectively, the fear of the punishment from both God and the school authorities acted as an insurmountable barrier to disclosure. An informant of the Haig-Brown (1988) study extrapolates on this by saying:

> I believe the reason so little attention has been paid to Indian residential schools in North America is that the churches were connected to so many of them. Native people, being a spiritual race, have always been reluctant to criticize any kind of church (p. 18).

Thus, the use of religion was an effective weapon of protection for the administrators and teachers of residential schools. Religious ideology, which was a predominant factor in the causation of abuse, was ironically, the barrier to the disclosure of abuse.

Physical abuse

It is crucial to bear in mind that incidents of abuse did not occur in isolation, but rather against the backdrop of militaristic institutions run in a manner akin to prisons. In fact, in many schools, the term used for students was inmates (Furniss, 1992). In elucidating the atmosphere of the schools, Persson (1986) describes a typical first day for students':

> Upon entering the residence, the child's clothes were removed. After being bathed and deloused, he or she was issued a set of school clothing. After acquiring a uniform which was the same as that worn by others of the same sex and size, the child was given a number. All clothing, towels and eating utensils were marked with the number. Role dispossession continued through such processes as staff insistence that pupils hold their body in a particular attitude, sit at their desks not looking at each other, line up to eat, and so forth. (p. 152)

The shock of the first day of school is a memory of many ex-students. Particularly vivid are images of the military hair cuts and the hair delousing. Janice Acoose in Jaine (1994) succinctly describes this as students being "herded away to be 'scalped' by a nun, and powdered with DDT (supposedly because all Indians were lice-infested)" (p.5). Betsey Paul, a former student of the Shubenacadie Residential School in Nova Scotia, recalls the ill-fitting clothes. Years of wearing what she refers to as 'old ladies' shoes' have resulted in feet that are crooked with permanently misshaped toes (Knockwood, 1992).

Within the daily regime of residential school horrific acts of violation took place. Children were often physically beaten in front of their peers and frequently humiliated (Haig-Brown, 1988; Jaine, 1993). Instances of abuse also included "the repeated insertion of a hat pin into a child's rectum", and children who were "strapped into an electric chair and then zapped with electricity..." (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Natives reveal childhood hell 1994).

Many punishments were rendered to children who spoke their own Indian language. In all residential schools, the use of any language other than English was met with dire consequences. In the forward to Haig-Brown's book, one of the informants of her study remembers a particularly gruesome incident which he attests was a common punishment for speaking a Native language: having sewing needles pushed through the tongue. A survivor of the Coqualeetza school near Chilliwack, B.C. corroborates on this by explaining that if children were caught speaking their own language, "they had their mouths pried open and sewing needles were driven through their tongues into the bottom of their mouths" (Jensen & Brooks, p. 153). In Breaking the Silence (Assembly of First Nations, 1994), another informant refers to this abusive practice by saying:

> Today I understand quite a few words in my language. But everytime I try and talk it, my tongue hurts. I don't know why. I ran into another woman who went to residential school with me and we were talking about it. She asked me if I remembered how they would stick a needle in our tongue if we got caught talking our language. I don't remember that... but maybe what she said is true. Maybe

that's why my tongue hurts whenever I try and talk my language. (p. 25)

Morrissette (1994) cites other examples of abuse such as strappings with nail studded belts, brutal physical beatings, and deprivation of adequate nourishment. The latter is one of the most often cited experiences of students in residential schools. Students remember great hunger and the necessity of stealing food.

Mary John, in a biography written by Bridget Moran (1988) remembers the lack of proper nutrition. She recalls:

> I was always hungry... At school, it was porridge, porridge, porridge, and if it wasn't that, it was boiled barley or beans, and thick slices of bread spread with lard. Weeks went by without the taste of meat or fish. Such things as sugar or butter or jam only appeared on our tables on feast days, and sometimes not even then... I believe I was hungry for all seven of the years I was at school. (p. 39)

Shirley Sterling, in her book My Name is Seepeetza (1992) remembers how poorly the students ate, and how well the staff ate:

> They get bacon or ham, eggs, toast and juice. We get gooey mush with powder milk and brown sugar... Supper is usually cabbage stew, two slices of bread with margarine, and wrinkled apples for dessert... Once I found a worm in my soup. When I told Sister Theo she told me not to be ungrateful. There were starving

children in Africa.

In Victims of Benevolence (Furniss, 1992), Ellen Charlie, who attended the Williams Lake Residential School remembers that "they gave us bad food which was fit only for pigs, the meat was rotten, and had a bad smell and taste... when I did not eat it they gave it to me again for the next meal... (p.67).

Discipline was used extensively and often with an accompanying attitude of violence. Teachers and administrators of residential schools firmly believed in corporeal punishment. As Haig-Brown says:

> Discipline ... was severe. Based perhaps on the old saying 'Spare the rod and spoil the child', punishment was a topic raised repeatedly by informants. The strap was mentioned most frequently, but other forms of punishment including public humiliation, head shaving and bread and water diet were also reported. (p. 76)

Allan Wade, a family therapist in private practice, who has worked with many First Nations People who have experienced violence, tells of a particular experience which underlies the dark paradox of residential schools:

> I spoke with one woman who was made to spend two days and nights on a urine soaked mattress that had been set into the permafrost in the basement of the school because she wet her bed. She was cleaned up an hour before being presented to

Prime Minister Diefenbaker as the model student of the school. (p.169-170)

For their manual Breaking the Silence, The Assembly of First Nations (1994) interviewed 13 survivors of residential school and comment that "Every one of the people interviewed either saw other children beaten or were themselves beaten" (p.50). They tell of "three boys who were stripped, tied, and then severely beaten in front of the rest of the boys at school" (p. 50). Also included is a story about a boy who witnessed the following:

> His brother's leg was accidentally broken when he was kicked during a soccer game. The supervising priest went over and repeatedly kicked the injured boy until he got up. The child then had to walk up a flight of stairs to a second-floor dormitory. It took some time before the child received medical treatment.(p. 50-51)

To escape such conditions, students periodically attempted to run away. One such attempt resulted in a suspicious death. According to Furniss (1992), in February, 1902, at the Williams Lake Residential School, a group of nine boys ran away from the school. Pursued by a teacher, all but one was captured and returned. Eight year old Duncan Sticks died during the escape under suspicious circumstances after being chased by his teacher.

Despite the suspicion, the boy's body was not examined by a coroner, though one happened to be visiting the school when the news of the boy's death arrived. In addition, the possibility of holding an inquest was thwarted until two local White residents who had

grievances towards the school interceded. An inquest was held, and the non-Native, six-man jury suggested that something was seriously wrong at the school. A later government investigation whitewashed this conclusion, and sent in the Indian Superintendent of B.C., A.W. Vowell, who discrediting the inquest testimony, reported that the conditions in the school were good, and blamed the students' themselves for any punishment that was inflicted upon them.

Over the next few decades, students continued to run away to escape the beatings and abusive conditions at school. In 1920, again at William's Lake School, nine boys made a suicide pact to escape their treatment. One boy, Augustine Allan, died. When an investigation was ordered by the Indian Agent, the idea was belittled by the Principal of the school and overruled by Ottawa. The matter was closed without investigation.

Recently, more allegations of deaths have arisen in relation to residential schools, though these have yet to be investigated.

Sexual abuse

The incidents of sexual abuse among survivors of the residential school system is staggeringly high. According to York (1990):

> Maggie Hodgson, an expert on sexual abuse who works at a native alcoholism foundation in Edmonton, has conducted seminars for Indians who spent their childhoods in residential schools. She discovered that as many as 80 percent of the

Indians had been sexually abused at church-run schools. (p. 30)

Similarly, the Caribou Tribal Council commissioned a study by Chrisjohn et al that found and estimated "70 to 80 percent of children who attended residential school in the area surveyed were sexually abused" (Wade, 1995).

Although many First Nations' People are now speaking openly about their history of sexual abuse in residential school, this issue remains one that is still cloaked in a veil of secrecy. Many survivors of school are willing to discuss physical abuse, but speak much more reluctantly about sexual abuse.

However, those who are now willing to speak of sexual abuse reveal that supervisors coerced students into sexual acts through fear, punishment, and bribery. Some students remember being sodomized at night in bed, others recall being fondled during sports activities.

The Assembly of First Nations (1994) reports many sexual violations including fondling, rape, as well as some occurrences of forced abortions. One man remembers "there was girls that got pregnant and they were shipped away and this happened two or three times a year, every year" (Assembly of First Nations, p.53). Another reported example is the ritualistic washing of boys genitals:

> Individuals interviewed recalled that the boys would tease the victims when they were summoned for the ritual by one particular priest. The victims would be asked if they had any impure thoughts that day, especially about the opposite sex. After certain confessions had been made, the boys would then have to wash their genitals

while the priest looked on. (p. 52)

In the book Residential Schools: The Stolen Years, Vera Manuel quotes her mother Sousette's story about sexual molestation that occurred in the sickroom at school. One day, because of an illness, Sousette went into the sickroom to rest. Already there was a little girl named Sarah, who was quite ill and thus spent a considerable amount of time in the sick room. Immediately, Sarah warned Sousette of the Priest who would come. The Priest subsequently arrived and upon finding a new little girl to molest, expressed his pleasure and immediately began to fondle Sousette:

> I kept my eyes tightly closed hoping he'd go away. I felt the weight of him on the bed as he knelt down. At first I thought he was going to pray over me, so I just lay there. Then I felt his hand underneath the covers, touching me down there. I tried to push his hand away, really I tried but he told me, 'No, no Sousette, you just lay still'.
>
> He kept feeling around and I kept pushing his hand away. I started to cry because I didn't want him doing that. I was so scared. I couldn't stop crying. Finally he got mad and got up and said, 'I'll go over to Sarah. Sarah's not scared. She's not a cry-baby like you.'
>
> I shut my eyes tight and tried not to listen to what he was doing. It made me so sick

> to hear that, and Sarah, she didn't say a word, didn't make a sound, didn't even cry. I think he did that to her a lot. She was always sick, always in the dorm. She finally died too. That must have been a relief for her. She suffered so much.(p. 115)

Tragically, sexual abuse occurred in an environment where sexuality and physical maturation were never discussed. This compounded the confusion and shame in the young students. Many students left the residential school system knowing nothing about sexuality expect that it was sinful, and that it was something forced upon themselves or others in an act of hate and violence.

Disclosures of abuse

Shortly after the closure of residential schools allegations of abuse began to emerge. The first convictions for sexual abuse in British Columbia were of staff members at the Lytton and Williams Lake schools. In 1992, a Royal commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1992: "Overview" and "Framing") identified "residential school syndrome" (p.18) which includes a myriad of social and psychological problems such as suicide, substance abuse, and family dysfunction stemming from the separation of Native children from their parents, and the abuse experienced from teachers and supervisors in residential schools. The Royal Commission (1992, "Overview") likened residential schools to the policies of Nazi Germany and to the Vietnamese re-education camps.

In November of 1994, the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council invited the R.C.M.P. in Port Alberni to hear disclosures of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse of First Nations people who had attended Native residential schools. After hearing some initial stories:

> It was concluded that if previous experience with residential schools was to be any guide, the scope of the investigation could quickly expand beyond associated bands of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, and the R.C.M.P. must be in a position to respond appropriately. The result was the Native Indian Residential School Task Force. (Provincial Residential School Project, 1995)

At the time of writing, all fourteen residential schools in British Columbia are under investigation by the R.C.M.P. for past abuse. Currently, the R.C.M.P., who have a 25 member team, have found the following:

- 174 victims of Indian Residential Schools have been identified
- 45 Victim statements have been taken by the R.C.M.P.
- There are currently 102 suspects
- Of these suspects, 13 are deceased, 89 are still alive

(R.C.M.P. Native Residential Schools Task Force update, 1996)

To support these disclosures, there is a crises line in place to handle calls from former students who may remember painful memories as a result of the investigation.

Affects of residential school abuse

Clearly, the abuse experienced by students in residential schools has had serious and long-lasting implications in the Native community. Morrissette (1994) states that "a generation of Native people who were raised in cruel environments... have been left with haunting memories and deep emotional scars" (p. 383-384).

It is crucial to note that the affects of abuse in school were not restricted to those students who personally were victimized. The nature of trauma is that it can be experienced both individually or through a process known as vicarious traumatization. Underlying this is the social nature of many First Nations communities and the shared repercussions abuse held. As Knockwood (1992) asserts:

> A lot of resentment built up over the years because we belong to a tribal society where everyone is affected by the good or bad of one. People coming from the same reserve acted like extended families at the school, so that if you picked on one reserve member, you picked on all. So if someone from your reserve had their head shaved, you became part of their shame. (p. 43)

Among the many repercussions of residential schools is the breakdown of the Native family unit. Most children who attended school were separated from their parents for long periods (Royal Commission, 1992, "Framing"). Due to the great distances between reserves and residential schools, most children only saw their parents once or twice a year (Persson,

1986).

McDonald (1991), reviewing a provincial task force report on Native justice asserts that family breakdown and high levels of crime in the Native community are a direct result of the residential school system. He adds that "Whole generations of aboriginal children lost their sense of identity and were denied the opportunity to acquire parental skills" (p. G1).

In the 1992 report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples ("Overview") states:

> At almost every hearing intervenors raised the issue of residential schools and spoke of their impact on Aboriginal language and culture, and of the chain of abuse, violence, suicide and problems with the law that the experience of these schools had generated in Aboriginal communities. (p. 19)

Dawson (1988) quotes Vernon R. Douglas who spoke about the long-term negative effects that residential school has on the self-esteem of many First Nations people:

> Because of discriminatory legislation and an only recently abandoned assimilative education system, many Native people know little about their own history and culture. Significantly, this lack of understanding and awareness has contributed to the low self-esteem many Native people have of themselves. This low-esteem nurtures resentment, and inferiority; it can lead to despair, which all too often expresses itself through alcohol abuse and violence. (p.43)

These incidents of self-abuse and self-annihilation are well-documented in the literature. The foreword in Haig-Brown's book is written by a 'survivor' of the Indian residential school system, Randy Fred. He speaks of alcoholism by saying:

> At the age of twelve booze discovered me. A beautiful escape from hell. The same year I experimented with drugs and began chainsmoking cigarettes. By the time I was fifteen booze was a real problem, and continued to be until only recently. I know this was the case with many people who attended residential schools. Booze was an easy escape. (p.19)

In newspaper articles, the language and details concerning residential school abuse is graphic and condemnatory. For example, an article in the Vancouver Sun entitled "Atrocities alleged in mission schools" made a common assertion that:

> Abuse suffered by Indian children at residential schools, including rape, whippings and electrocutions, is a critical factor underlying the social breakdown in native Indian communities. (Aubry, 1994)

Like many reports of its kind, the link between past abuse and present problems is clearly indicated. In an article in the Winnipeg Free Press, (Krueger, 1994), Phil Fontaine, the grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, states his belief that the violence and social problems now plaguing many Native communities is a direct result of the residential school

experience and what he calls the 'assimilationist' policies of governments past. This sentiment was echoed by Elijah Harper when he stated his belief that residential schools were a "prime example" of tactics of assimilation ("Harper slams", 1991).

Similarly, an article in the Vancouver Sun states:

> The Natives of these rolling hills south of Williams Lake have been at the forefront of dealing with the alcoholism, sex abuse and family breakdown that has resulted from more than a century of natives attending Canada's 80 church-run residential schools. (Todd, 1993)

It is significant to note the seriousness which these charges of abuse have been heard. In the sentencing of Arthur Plint, a former supervisor at the Alberni Residential School, Judge Douglas Hogarth summarized many people's feelings when he commented that "The Indian residential school system was nothing more than institutionalized paedophilia" (Hall, 1995, p. A3). Plint, who was referred to as a 'sexual terrorist' pleaded guilty to 18 counts of indecent assault of boys from 1948 to 1968 and received a sentence of 11 years in jail.

Justice William Blair, in sentencing Derek Clarke, a former dormitory supervisor at St. George's School who may have been responsible for up to 140 sexual incidents and perhaps as many as 700 incidents of abuse, identifies abuse as a "major contributing factor" to the high rate of suicide and alcoholism in the Native community (York, 1990, p. 29). He goes on to say that such abuse "made the lives of the victims close to unbearable" (York, 1990, p.29).

The Cariboo Tribal Council (1991) also conducted research into the long-term effects of schooling on Native students. They explored three main areas: school experiences, sexual abuse, and family life. In general, they found that former students had undergone psychologically destructive experiences that had wide-ranging negative effects. Of these repercussions were problems with anger, depression, suicide, sexual relations, sleep disturbances, anxiety/compulsion, drugs, alcohol, criminal behaviour, parenting skills, relationship with self and others, and in some cases, negative feelings about Native culture and identity.

Chapter 3

Healing from Residential School abuse

Western psychotherapy with First Nations Clients

First Nations' clients, despite disproportionately high levels of alcohol and drug abuse, mental health problems, and suicides (Nelson & McCoy, 1992) make limited use of western counselling services. Of those who do attend, approximately half drop out after the initial counselling session (Sue, 1981). Given the oppressive history that First Nations people have experienced as a result of the enforcement of a non-Native value system, it is not surprising that many Native clients view White counsellors with suspicion and hostility (Heinrich, Corbine, & Thomas, 1990).

There is evidence that western psychotherapy may be ineffective or even harmful if applied without consideration of the uniqueness of the cultural background of clients (Sue & Sue, 1990; Trimble, 1981). As Wade (1995) points out, "Psychotherapy is not a politically or culturally neutral instrument" (p. 167), and "there is a very close and mutually supportive relationship between colonialism and the so-called 'helping professions' "(p.168).

Those who write in the field of cross-cultural counselling insist that conventional counselling techniques are often inappropriate for First Nations clients (LaFromboise et al., 1990; Trimble, 1976). In fact, there is evidence to suggest that the neo-Rogerian communication style that is taught in many counsellor-training institutions may be counterproductive for many North American ethnic minorities, including First Nations people

(Atkinson, Morton, & Sue in LaFromboise et al., 1990). This may be due to the "extreme importance and centrality of the client-therapist relationship" (LaFromboise et al., 1990). There is doubt as to whether this isolated one-on-one interaction is effective, given that it exists outside of the context of the client's family and community at large.

Other reasons that the exclusive use of Western psychotherapy lacks effectiveness with First Nations clients is due to the cultural encapsulation of many counsellors (LaFromboise, Dauphinais, & Roew, 1980) who lack knowledge and respect for the First Nations world view. It is also the result of differing views of wellness, where in First Nations people "believe that mental health is much more spiritual and holistic in nature than conventional psychological definitions would suggest" (LaFromboise et al. 1990, p.629). In addition, First Nations clients may have goals, expectations and attitudes towards therapy that differ significantly from non-Native clients (LaFromboise et al, 1990).

LaFromboise et. al (1980) conducted a small-scale study and learned that Native students deemed trustworthiness to be the single most important aspect of a counsellor. In later research, LaFromboise et al. (1990) make a strong correlation between this trustworthiness and knowledge of First Nations culture:

> Knowledge of and respect for an Indian world view and value system - which varies according to the client's tribe, level of acculturation, and other personal characteristics - is fundamental not only for creating the trusting counsellor-client relationship vital to the helping process but also for defining the counselling style or approach most appropriate for each client. (p. 629)

That trust can be gained through demonstrating an appreciation for Native value systems is emphasized by Henirich et al. (1990) who suggest that counsellors working with First Nations clients must make many adaptations in their practices. Some of these changes may include extending the traditional fifty-minute hour, changing the counselling locale, allowing for drop-in clients, and noting of nonverbal communication. In addition, incorporating First Nations symbology and rituals may be a large step towards establishing trust and maintaining an atmosphere inclusive of the differing value systems.

The integration of traditional First Nations values into Western Psychotherapy has spawned a therapy process called Network Therapy:

> In the network approach, a clan or group of family, relatives, and friends is organized and mobilized to form a social force or network that works to combat the depersonalizing aspects of contemporary life patterns especially prevalent in urban environments. The role of the counsellor is that of a 'catalyst'. He or she helps to conduct the process, but it is the social support system which works to deal with the crisis or bring the person out of isolation. (LaFromboise et al., 1990, p. 642)

The network approach and social learning theory are now being heralded as the most appropriate means of utilizing western psychotherapy for First Nations clients. To augment this, Wade (1995), asserts that Native clients should be viewed as resistors to oppression, rather than just a survivors. He suggests that it is the duty of the counsellor to acknowledge

the significant resources and resistance that clients have engaged in throughout their lives. By using a narrative therapy approach in which clients are asked re-authoring questions which evoke the meaning of their own history to resistance, clients are able to name the initiatives they took to combat oppression in their lives. Through recognition of this resistance, clients are more able to come to see themselves, and their communities, in a positive way.

The components of wellness from a First Nations world view

Before discussing the process of healing, it is important to gain an overview as to what comprises a sense of wellness from a First Nations world view. This subject is extensive and a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this research. However, a brief description of wellness incorporating symbology of The Medicine Wheel will provide a broad sketch of a profound topic. It is important to note, however, that interpretation of the Medicine Wheel differs amongst Nations. The orientations that Nations have reflect their own culture and history. However, some generalities may be made.

According to Heinrich, et al (1990):

> The key concept of Native American philosophy is holism, and one of the most important symbols is the circle, or hoop of life... Illness is identified as a disruption of the essential harmony of life, or as an imbalance of various elements, or as a break in the hoop of life. (p. 130)

This hoop of life is, of course, manifested by the Medicine Wheel which acts as a graphic representation of traditional First Nations philosophy. It encompasses four aspects of human nature: the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional.

As stated by Pepper & Henry (1991):

> The goal of the traditional Indian was to strike a harmonious balance in life. It is believed that the power of the world worked in circles, represented by the symbol of the wheel. With Natives, the circle stands for togetherness. An Indian tribe is only one part of the universe. The universe is circular and is made up of the earth, sun and the stars, which are round. The moon, the horizon, and the rainbow are circles within circles within circles, with no beginning and no end. To Natives, this is beautiful and fitting - symbol and reality at the same time - expressing the harmony of life and nature. The Indian circle is timeless, flowing; it is new life emerging. (p.146)

Thus, this connection with the circle of life emanates from each of the four aspects of human nature. "From each area we look at ourselves and our relationship to the rest of the environment" (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, p.34). The medicine wheel thus acts like a mirror, in which one is able to "visualize wholeness and see how all things are interrelated" (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, p.34).

Within the Medicine Wheel are the four directions. Each of the directions represents a time of year, a time of day, a phase of ones life, and personal lessons and attributes. As well,

each direction has a colour and an animal emblem, though these differ across Nations.

The East represents spring and morning, it is a place of renewal and the site of the unseen spiritual aspect. Lessons learned in the East are trust, purity, acceptance of others, and the warmth of spirit. The South is the direction of summer and day; it exemplifies physical strength and fullness. Lessons involve sensitivity, generosity, and self discipline.The West is the autumn and evening. It is a place the place of the unknown, of dreams, meditation, and prayer. The primary lesson learned in the west is that of tenacity and meeting the challenges that life presents. The North is winter or night time. It is a direction which gives the gifts of understanding, prediction, and discrimination.

Sun Bear & Wabun (1980) explain that each of us begins at a different place on the Medicine Wheel, according to the time at which we are born. As we journey through life, we continuously move around the wheel. They stress that:

> To stay with only one moon, one totem, one element, is to become static. To become static is to cease to grow, to cease to know that one has a connection with all of thewheel. It is tantamount to stopping the flow of the life force through your being (p.6).

Thus, the wheel demonstrates the lessons one needs to learn in each stage of life and the means through which one can co-exist in harmony with others and with the universe. Embracing each direction culminates in a whole being who personally and interpersonally is emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally well.

> The essence of the Medicine Wheel is movement and change. Through this knowledge, people attempt to allow themselves as much room for change in any one life as they can handle. They wish to progress around the wheel and experience as many manifestations of human nature as possible. They know that they contain all of these manifestations within themselves, but they have to place themselves in various positions and experiences in order to feel them. (Sun Bear & Wabun, 1980, p. 7)

Given that the wheel is interdependent, when one aspect is out of balance, all other aspects are affected. The development of healthy self-esteem in all people is dependent on all aspects of wellness in the Medicine Wheel.

Healing from residential school abuse

Many First Nations' people and communities have taken it upon themselves to begin the process of healing from residential schools. In the past five years, healing conferences, circles, and workshops have taken place all across Canada. The first of its kind, held in Vancouver June 18-21 1991, served as an inspiration for the many others that have followed.

A main component of many of healing is the process of reuniting with First Nations traditions, spirituality and history. A training manuel for First Nations male substance abusers in prison states that "a historical overview will be a major component" of the treatment program (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, 199 , p. v). Like the Assembly of First

Nations, it is their belief that addictions and other social problems "cannot be addressed separate from issues of oppression as a peoples and multi-abuse situations (i.e. sexual, physical, neglect), etc." (p. v).

In a dissertation entitled The Facilitation of Healing for the First Nations People of British Columbia (1994), McCormick establishes fourteen themes of healing through the analysis of 437 critical incidents. Involvement in traditional Native practices comprised a significant portion of the categories. Included themes were: established social connection, anchoring self in tradition, exercise, self care, involvement in challenging activities, expressing oneself, obtained help / support from others, participation in ceremony, setting goals, helping others, gaining an understanding of the problem, establishing spiritual connection, learning from a role model, and establishing a connection with nature.

McCormick stresses that these themes be used in services to First Nations populations. He asserts that "mental health services provided to First Nations people have been based on the wholesale adoption of Western approaches without regard to their efficacy with First Nations people" (p.137). Rather, he contends that western approaches can be used to supplement First Nations practices, but must be applied with a sensitive understanding of First Nations world view.

Such an integration is modelled by the Ka Ka Wis Family Development Centre on Meares Island, B.C. The former Christie Residential School has been transformed into a healing centre that utilizes both traditional Native ceremonies as well as western psychological practices. Families who have experienced alcohol or drug related problems spend four weeks within their family unit partaking in a myriad of exercises and groups. Healing involves using

First Nations' traditions such as the Sweatlodge ceremony, the Blue Bead Ceremony, and the Sweetgrass ceremony as well as Western traditions such as communication exercises, roleplaying, expression of emotions, and family mapping.

The movement towards healing past abuses is expanding, and use of traditional First Nations' traditions is pivotal in this healing. Many First Nations groups are approaching healing from a multi-modal perspective such as the one that Todd (1993) reports:

> Shuswap natives have provided counselling for each other, held several conferences on residential schools, rediscovered traditional spiritual healing methods and challenged the federal governments and churches through the media and the courts. (p. A14)

Some of the money needed to fund counselling for survivors is coming from the churches themselves. The Roman Catholic Church in Manitoba set up a $500,000 fund to help natives heal from trauma experienced in former residential schools (Flood, 1993). In British Columbia, the Alkali Lake band of Williams Lake received $80,000 to hire a psychologist (Legge, G. 1991). Although this band is still struggling with the repercussions of sexual abuse, two residents, Andy and Phyllis Chelsea have implemented an alcohol program and have successfully changed a 100 per-cent alcoholism rate to a 95 per cent sobriety rate.

Many Native communities are implementing their own traditional healing rituals. In Manitoba, for instance, Ojibwa Natives at Hollow Water have created a program called Community Holistic Circle Healing (Moon, 1995). This has a strong spiritual component that

includes ceremonies, sweat lodges, and prayer in the circle. This program is designed to help offenders in the community, who are able to participate in the healing circle rather than be sentenced through the canadian court system. The offenders are themselves victims of abuse, many from the residential schools.

Healing circles are also being utilized within federal penitentiary systems. Currently, at William Head Federal penitentiary, sweat lodges, sweetgrass ceremonies, and education of First Nations culture and tradition is the basis of a healing programme used by inmates who have formed a Native Brotherhood Circle.

Healing may also be found in the establishment and participation of Native-run educational programs. Dawson (1988), Elofson and Elofson (1988), Haig-Brown (1988), Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), and Wall and Madak (1991), all speak of the emergence of tribal schools and educational policy changes which are geared to creating a school system that is respectful and inclusive of Native values. Although such programs cannot directly facilitate the redress of past hurts, they do provide hope and inspiration that future generations will experience less oppression and more equality at school.

A healing model

The Assembly of First Nations (1994) detail four aspects of the healing process from residential school abuse: recognizing, remembering, resolving, and reconnecting.

By 'recognizing' one is able to see that his or her way of life is no longer constructive, manageable, or healthy. It is a pivotal moment when the effects of trauma are acknowledged

and the decision to take responsibility for ones life is made. The Assembly of First Nations describes recognizing in the following way:

> Without exception, healing begins with the moment of recognition when an individual sees clearly that his life is no longer manageable, that his way of life is destructive to himself and to others. It is also the moment when an individual realizes that he is much more worthwhile than he had previously believed (p.123).

Remembering is a time when denial is abandoned and a clear evaluation of past hurts is acknowledged. In 'remembering' one "makes a commitment to recalling parts of the experience which have been lost to memory" (Assembly of First Nations, 1994, p.125-126). This step is also an act of breaking 'the code of silence' in that the isolation and denial of the effects of residential school are overcome in favour of disclosure.

> Remembering means that one makes known to oneself and to others what happened in residential school and recalls the experience in such a way that the experience emerges as a complete story which makes sense. (p.126)

Resolving is a deep exploration of ones' past trauma and the ramifications that this abuse has created. "Moving to this stage opens the way for individuals to re-connect with themselves and with others in meaningful and constructive ways" (Assembly of First Nations, p.127). It also entails reaching out for help and seeking guidance through traditional means

or outside sources.

The final stage, reconnecting, is the culmination of the previous three stages. It involves the rebuilding of relationships with self and others, affirming a sense of pride in being a First Nations person, contributing to the community, building on personal strengths, and working to maintain communication skills between family and community.

These stages are circular, rather than linear, and detail a process that manifests in a distinct way for each person. The journey of healing is thus a individual experience, with its own sense of timing, progress, and development.

Chapter 4

Research Methods

Introduction to the narrative approach

Stories, or narratives, are a ubiquitous force in our lives (Polkinghorne, 1988). Some form of story-telling has been practised by virtually every civilization throughout the ages. Through our narratives we describe ourselves and others, speak about the past, share the experiences in our present lives, and express what we hope for the future. Stories form the foundation of communication amongst people: they serve to educate, entertain, elucidate and warn. As Mullins (1986) says, "story-making seems to be an indigenous activity of the human person as reflexive and essential an activity as breathing" (p.1).

The use of narrative is not new to psychology. Sigmund Freud, in utilizing 'talking therapy', effectively began narrative therapy simply by listing to his client's stories and allowing clients to grapple over the gaps and inconsistencies in their life stories (Parry, 1991; Parry and Doan, 1994). The healing potential of allowing a client to articulate and express life's events has continued in many schools of therapeutic thought, but has only evolved as a specific philosophical and psychological theory in the last decade. The power, universality, and pervasiveness of story-telling is finding its way into many areas of the social sciences: disciplines referred to as narrative therapy, narrative inquiry, and narratology.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) speak for many others when they assert that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of

narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p.2).

The stories we hold about ourselves are inherently self-legitimizing (Parry and Doan, 1994). When we use our own words to describe our own experiences, we are engaged in making sense out of the incidents and aspects in our lives. In being heard, we find a validation in our new story that is able to replace the invalidation of our experiences implied by other people's descriptions (Parry, 1991).

In their book, Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends, Michael White and David Epston (1990) agree that story telling is a crucial meaning-making experience for human beings. They believe that:

> Persons give meaning to their lives and relationships by storying their experience and that, in interacting with others in the performance of these stories, they are active in the shaping of their lives and relationships. (p.13)

The domination of stories in our lives can be accounted for by the components of the stories themselves. Mullins (1986) believes that stories are important to human beings because they provide meaning to the temporal existence of our lives. He believes that we are "helpless victims of temporality" (p.2) and we feel the need to give order and to make sense of our linear lives, a need easily addressed through narrative. Novak (1971) believes that stories bind a persons' many diverse actions together into one sequence. A story "unites past and future. It supplies patterns, themes, motifs by which a person recognizes (or someone else recognizes) the unity of his or her life" (p.60).

Mullins (1986) extrapolates on this by suggesting that, "Our awareness of self largely consists of our memory or past events, of circumstances which occasioned personal responses. Products of a personal history, we come to know ourselves by telling our story over and over again" (p.2-3).

This idea that narratives serve to bind together events in our lives as well as contribute to the meaning-making process is echoed by Polkinghorne (1988). He suggests that narratives are powerful because of their ability to configure a sequence of events into a unified whole. This process "serves to cohere human actions and the events that affect human life into a temporal gestalt" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.18).

Robinson and Hawpe (1986) believe that stories are a natural and functional means through which humans recount experience. They assert that narratives create an understandable order of affairs by offering the fundamental components of economy, selectivity, and familiarity. The economy of a story is essentially the ability of a narrative to provide "an economical cognitive instrument for understanding everyday life" (p. 113). Selectivity is a means through which "narrative schema identifies categories of information and specifies what relationships between those categories are essential" (p.113). Familiarity is the aspect of storytelling in which a balance is struck between uniqueness and universality of events. Thus, storying is an economical and functional means of organizing perception, thought, memory, and action.

By viewing stories from this perspective, the attentive listener can learn a great deal about the teller of the story: their desires, beliefs, preferences, identifications, intentions, and determinations. It is important to note, however, that all stories are framed by the dominant

culture and the social and institutional contexts of our lives.

Novak (1971) argues that the culture into which one is born has a ready supply of stories that the individual will inherit. Social classes, religions, cultural groups, and races all maintain storied histories which speak to them as a unique group. These cultural stories serve as lessons of value by providing positive models for people to emulate and negative models to be avoided (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Novak (1971) goes on to say that although diverse in their particularities, many stories are cross-cultural and contain universal themes. One such theme is that of struggle or agony. He believes that "the key struggle of life is that of psychic transformation: of breakthroughs in the way one perceives events, imagines oneself, understands others, grasps the world, acts" (p.53).

Stories, therefore, may be thought of as standpoints of how we view ourselves, who we are. Thus, "we are carried along by our biographies" (Mullins, 1986, p. 3) until such a point as we choose to create new possibilities of who we are. Perhaps the most crucial tenant of narrative therapy is for a client to re-author their life according to their own, consciously-chosen value system. The desired outcome, then, is the generation of "new meanings that persons will experience as more helpful, satisfying, and open-ended" (White and Epston, 1990, p.15).

The potentialities of re-storying, however, come under attack. Hewson (1991) cited several studies which demonstrate selective memory regarding storytelling. She speaks of the possibility of becoming revisionist historians with respect to our autobiographies, shaping the events of the past to be consistent with current attitudes. This concern can be addressed by

a greater understanding of the meaning-making procedure of human beings, as suggested by Michael White (1991). He asserts that " Not only do these stories determine the meaning that persons give to experience, it is argued, but these stories also largely determine which aspects of experience persons select our for expression" (p. 28).

In this way, even a revisionist historian is true to the meaning of their experience, in that their exaggeration reveals an infinite amount of information regarding their experiences, and what meaning it had for them. Parry (1991) further emphasised that:

> A story is not a life, only a selection of events about a life as influenced by that person's beliefs about herself and others. Thus, it becomes possible to use the story to re-invent, revise, or otherwise re-write the story of the person's past. The person might now choose her own course according to current emerging beliefs about herself, others, and life itself. (p.43)

Stories, then, are forceful tools of expression, meaning-making and communication. Efran (1994) speaks about the inherent power of language by confirming that:

> After language takes hold, all percepts are linguistically encoded, and life is lived within a communal cocoon of shared explanatory fictions. Social identities, large and small, are sequentially created, disintegrated, and recreated. (p.220)

This transformative power of story-making has long been known to First Nations' People. Cynthia Chambers (1993) believes that in the act of remembering our pasts, we

practice a powerful ritual known to Aboriginals as 'Love Medicine'. In the traditional Native folklore of many Nations, love medicine was a distinct kind of magical power in which one person could compel the will of another. It was a force that could bind two people together in an inextricable way; transforming friendship to intense desire, a platonic relationship into a spiritual union. Such medicine was to be used with great respect and forethought, judiciously practised and carefully executed. To use this power was to summon the will of The Great Spirit, to practice a sacred art of healing.

Chambers (1993) believes that in telling their story of the past, the speaker effectively practices Love Medicine on themselves. By facing who they have been and the experiences that have shaped them, people are sharing in the process of creation, creating a permanent bond between themselves and their story of themselves. The sacred union is thus created between two sides of a person; the remembering self and the self who is remembered.

The Philosophy of Existential-Phenomenological Thought

The Phenomenological method is a marked break from the natural science paradigm in that it expressly attempts to investigate the inner realm of human experience.

Phenomenology emanates from existential philosophy, founded by the Danish thinker Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who is believed to be the primary proponent of phenomenology. For Kierkegaard, "it was imperative that philosophy address itself to the concrete existence of the individual person and attempt to elucidate the fundamental themes with which human beings invariably struggle" (Valle, King,

& Halling, 1989, p.6). Husserl sought to understand human consciousness and experience through the study of things as they appear (Valle et al.,1989).

One of the first persons to synthesize existential philosophy and the phenomenological method was Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who was a student of Husserl. Twentieth century existential philosophers, such as Jean-Paul Satre and Merleau-Ponty also incorporated existential thinking within phenomenological inquiry. The fusion results in an existential phenomenology which "seeks to understand the events of human existence in a way that is free of the presuppositions of our cultural heritage, especially philosophical dualism and technologism, as much as this is possible" (Valle et al.,1989, p.6).

Phenomenology is used in psychology due to its ability to construct a description of human experience. It presupposes that meaningful experience is a fundamental locus of knowledge and that human behaviour is an expression of meaningful experience rather than a mechanically learned response to stimuli (Polkinghorne, 1983). Human knowledge, according to the existential-phenomenology, is ascertained through our experiences and thus the study of our experiences is an appropriate place to begin the study of ontology, or what it means to be human (Osborne, 1990).

There are several principles and assumptions on which existential-phenomenology is based. The following is an overview of the major components of phenomenology.

Co-constitutionality:

In contrast to the traditional conception that asserts the belief that people and their environment are two distinct and separate entities, co-constitutionality presupposes that there

is an indissoluble relationship between the two (Valle et al.,1989). This is to place humans within a context of their own worlds, wherein they are not objects in the world, but of it. According to Valle et al.,(1989) "in the truest sense, the person is viewed as having no existence apart from the world and the world as having no existence apart from persons" (p.7)

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Intentionality:

Intentionality refers to the assumption that consciousness always has an object. Thus, as conscious beings, we are aware of something during every moment of our lives. Natanson in Seamon (1982) describes intentionality as "the fact that all human impulses and actions do not exist unto themselves but are directed towards something and have an object" (p.124).

Colaizzi (1978) states that intentionality is that "by which it is meant that human existence and the world constitute a unity, a unity so vital and basic that either one is absurd and inconceivable without the other" (p.54).

Fidelity to Lived Experience:

Persons engaging in phenomenology, unlike those in natural science, value the nature of experience rather than how behaviour compares to scientifically evaluated 'norms'. Luijpen and Koren (1969) describe experiencing as placing oneself in relationship to something, assuming an attitude toward it, and allowing oneself to be affected by it. Experience is thus the "reality" of the one experiencing.

Consequently, fidelity to the experience is required from both the researcher and the

co-researcher. This entails what Giorgi (1975) explains as "allowing anything that the subject feels is worthy of mentioning to be registered as data as well as making explicit the perspective of the researcher" (p. 99). Experience is thus regarded as integral to the lived context of the co-researcher and is explored as naive experience. Phenomenologists explain that everyday experiences must be expressed in everyday language "with the world as given in direct and immediate experience... independent of and prior to any reflective interpretation, scientific or otherwise" (Valle et al. p.9).

Validity:

Osborne, (1990), asserts that natural science research "aims at objectivity through explanation, control and prediction, while phenomenological research aims at the elucidation of meaning and understanding of human existence from an individual's point of view (p. 86). Given the different mandates of these two methods, it is clear that validity plays a very different role in each.

In brief, validity in phenomenology is what Kvale (1983) describes as "whether one has in fact investigated what one wished to investigate" (p.191). In phenomenology, there are four means through which validity is assessed. First is the concept of bracketing, wherein a researcher engages in critical self-reflection of their own biases and presuppositions regarding the subject matter of their investigation. Kvale (1983) describes bracketing as "an attempt to place the common sense and scientific foreknowledge about the phenomena into parentheses in order to arrive at the essence of the phenomena" (p. 184). As Osborne (1990) suggests, "by bracketing his/her orientation to the phenomenon and carefully describing the procedure and

data analysis, the researcher provides the reader with the opportunity to understand his/her interpretations of the data" (p.87).

Second is what phenomenologist refer to as 'goodness of fit'. This is a means of "checking the congruence of the researcher's interpretations with participants' accounts of their experiences" (Osborne, 1990, p.87-88). Generally, dialogue and questioning with co-researchers during both the collection and the interpretation stages of research are means through which 'goodness of fit' can be assessed.

Third is what is referred to as 'the juridical process' whereby the researcher presents his/her interpretation through convincing and coherent arguments to the research community. As Polkinghorne (1983) suggests, the researcher must persuade a community of scholars that the "inferences that they have made in reaching their findings are powerfully supported" (p.57). The jury must "be able to follow the thought processes that have led to the conclusions and to accept them as valid" (Polkinghorne, 1983).

Last is the test of structure resonance, in which the data interpretation is given to other people who have not participated in the study, but have experienced the same phenomenon. Validity is thought to occur if the data resonate with and reaffirm the experience of others. As Polkinghorne (1983) suggests, "in those cases where the phenomenon is one that the readers have experienced, the findings must also correspond to the readers' own experiences of the phenomenon" (p.57).

Reliability:

In natural science, reliability refers to the replicability, consistency, and stability of the

data. In phenomenology, this word represents a distinct and unique frame of reference.

Phenomenologist view reliability as context bound upon meanings rather than facts. They seek "a unified description of a shared phenomenon" (Osborne, 1990) in which the essential structure of an experience is described, elucidated, and understood. This search for the eidetic of an experience emphasizes the motivation to uncover what a phenomenon is like, rather than why it exists.

Seamon (1982) explains that "a major goal is to seek out within the uniqueness of concrete phenomena more general experiential structures, patterns and essences" (p. 121). Reliability is thus the accomplishment of the researcher in exposing the common structural experiences and themes within a given phenomenon in a form recognizable to anyone who has had the same experience.

Generalizability:

In contrast with natural science, which seeks statistical generalizability, phenomenological research strives for empathic generalizability. The discovery of essential structures of an experience should have wide-spread veracity for others who have had the same experience. Referring to the higher-order clustering of themes found in each of the co-researcher's data, Osborne (1990) states: "the final structure must be shared by all participants" (p.86). Thus, an essential theme or structure of experience must be extrapolated from each person who has explored the experience, giving generalizability to the phenomenon.

Given these tenants of phenomenological inquiry, the research questions of this

present study will be examined by means of an appropriate and tailored methodology. The deep descriptions that I am seeking from the five Native women and men will illuminate the experience of healing in a potentially powerful and accessible manner.

Bracketing:

Colaizzi (1978) speaks for many phenomenologists when he asserts that anyone embarking on this method of research must first begin by asking themselves, "Why am I involved with this phenomenon? ... What are the hidden gains that I might acquire in investigating it, and in investigating it in this way?" (p.55)

In addressing my motivation for exploring this issue, it is important to first qualify myself as a Non-Native. I am a caucasian of Irish-Scottish heritage who has lived a middle-class lifestyle for most of my life. Thus, it may be argued that I am a 'privileged interviewer', unable to understand the social, cultural and historic milieu of my co-researcher.

Although some may criticize my relative social power and prerogative, it is important to acknowledge that phenomenological inquiry does not require membership in a group as a pre-requisite for research. As Becker (1986) states, "the most important principle that guides interviewing is a respect for the interpersonal encounter between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p. 108). She goes on to add that "human science researchers cite attributes of empathy, authenticity, care, sensitivity, responsiveness, transparency, playfulness, and curiosity as qualities to be cultivated by interviewers" (p.113). Clearly, inclusion in a cultural group is not a pre-requisite for research about that cultural group.

Hermeneutics

The etymology of the word hermeneutics comes from Hermes, who was messenger to the Greek Gods (Mueller-Vollmer, 1989; Packer and Addison, 1989). Hermes's task was to bring messages of instruction, advice, and warning to humans from the Gods (Packer and Addison). However, in so doing, Hermes had to be literate in both the language and idioms of humans as well as that of the Supreme Beings. Thus, Hermes was above all an interpreter who was skilled at understanding, articulating and explicating the Gods' intention into a meaning understandable for mortals (Mueller-Vollmer,1989).

The hermeneutical approach is one of interpretation of language and texts. Hermeneutics is thus a methodology by which researchers can interpret the text of human lives.

Many of the proponents of phenomenological philosophy are also those who have brought hermeneutics to psychology and the social sciences. Perhaps the most pivotal work in this area is Heidegger's Being and Time which was published in 1927. Like those who first wrote about existential phenomenology, writers in the area of hermeneutics have a strong philosophical base; Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Riceour among them. Phenomenology and hermeneutics arise from the same philosophical foundation, though the former is primarily about the expression of experience, whereas the latter allows for the interpretation of that experience. This research project follows Heidegger's, in that it is a hermeneutic phenomenological method because "there is a need for interpretation when one is explicating experience" (Packer. 1985, p.1082).

Packer (1985) says "When we adopt a hermeneutic approach to human action, we

essentially treat the action as though it has a semantic and 'textual' structure" (p.1082). The act of viewing human beings as 'texts' is a sharp contrast to methods of understanding that have traditionally been used in psychology. For decades, humans were often viewed as slightly more complex forms of laboratory animals and researched only within these parameters. This viewpoint has been followed by the belief that humans are like large machines or computers that can be reduced to an understanding of input-output (Gergen, 1988). Viewing human beings as 'texts' provides an opportunity to study the complexity of human beings: the metaphors they live by, the contradictions they embody, the meanings for their actions.

The process of conducting hermeneutical inquiries is often referred to as 'entering the hermeneutic circle'. Packer and Addison (1989) categorize this entry into three distinct tasks.

1) Selecting and preparing the entity for interpretation:

This concerns itself with choosing the right entity to be studied; choosing the kind of event that one wishes to study. In the current research, the focus will be on stories as narrated by persons who have experienced the phenomenon of residential school abuse.

2) Preparing action for interpretation:

Interpretive research must be viewed within the context of temporality; the particular time and place of the event. The current research project has been designed to use audio-recorded stories of the past in order to draw out themes within stories of healing.

3) Securing access to the entity:

Access to the text can be obtained by adopting an appropriate perspective through the process of identifying personal prejudices and biases. These can be either 'positive or negative movements' in which the interviewee either adopts a broader perspective or negates a limited one. This closely resembles the phenomenological process of bracketing.

Once engaged in the circle, interpretation of texts can begin. Gergen (1988) describes three major tenants for viewing humans as texts. These are as follows:

1) **The interpretation of any given action is subject to infinite revision.** As our understanding of events is continually modified by both retrospective and emergent contexts, thus our interpretation of events must change. The context in which one interprets is the product of the information, intelligibility, and resources one has at their disposal. Thus, interpretation of any event must, by necessity, be open-ended.

Packer (1985) speaks of this same tenant by articulating that all practical activity has a holistic character. Essentially, this means that "understanding a particular act is not possible without understanding the context within which it occurs" (Packer, p. 1086). This is what Heidegger called referential totality, in which action is situated in its historical, social and cultural milieu.

2) **The anchor point for any given interpretation is not fundamentally empirical, but relies on a network of interdependent and continuously modifiable interpretations.** As interpretations of one facet of a text or action changes, thus the entire situation must be

interpreted anew. In light of a continuing alteration of understanding, there must be a holistic evolution of interpretation over time.

3) **Any given action may be subject to multiple interpretations, no one of which is objectively superior**. As the interpretation of an event changes, one may redefine aspects of the event. For instance, the definition of what constitutes an event may change, as may the range of events to which one is exposed, and the system of intelligibility one uses. Given the lack of an empirical touchstone in this changing interpretation, it is impossible to argue for the superiority of one interpretation over another.

Packer emphasis this characteristic by speaking of the perspectival quality of interpretation, "from one point of view it may seem sensible, whereas from another it may not" (Packer, 1985, p.1086). This plurality thus allows for several interpretations of the same action and acknowledges the fact that people are influenced by a variety of factors that may not be understood by an objective observer.

The use of Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Method in this research

Given the very co-operative nature of these two methodologies, and the appropriate-ness with which they address the research question of this thesis, it is my assertion that a narrative interview will explicate the stories of healing in a compelling and significant manner. As stated by van Manen (1990):

> In hermeneutic phenomenological human science the interview serves very specific purposes: 1) it may be used as a means of exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and 2) the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience. (p.66)

For the present research, both of these mandates have been utilized. The use of the hermeneutical approach is important to the present research in that it provides the perspective of interpretation that phenomenology in and of itself may not offer. It also offers the opportunity to place human activity and meaning into a contextual framework, which is an integral part of the experience of healing from residential school abuse.

I believe it is crucial to view human action within a context of personal, cultural, and historical perspectives, lest we engage in research that objectifies, generalizes, and pathologies human beings. Given that the co-researchers of this study are First Nations People who have undergone a cultural-specific experience, it is paramount that acknowledgment is given to their very unique and specific situation. Hermeneutic Phenomenological methodology provides the opportunity to discuss and elucidate the context in which the research resides.

The Co-researchers

Co-researchers were chosen due to their ability to illuminate the research question. They were considered experts of their experience and regarded for their ability to articulate their experiences as they live it in their daily lives (Colaizzi, 1978).

Other criterion met by the co-researchers include the following:

1) Are First Nations People

2) Attended an Indian residential school in Canada.

3) Participated in a healing activity such as psychotherapy, a self-help group. traditional healing rituals, or any other personal process that was embarked upon as a means of healing or recovery.

4) Volunteered to be a part of this study without expectation of financial award or public recognition.

Co-researchers were contacted through personal and professional associates, including therapists, First Nations Educators, and friends. In addition, the anthropological method of 'snowballing' also took place, wherein one co-research made a referral to another, and so on.

Procedure

Initial contact took place via a telephone conversation. At that time, the co-researchers were given a brief verbal description of the project.

An initial meeting was then held as a means of introduction and in the interest of establishing rapport. At that time, prospective co-researchers received a written description

of the project.

Data was gathered through one-on-one, in-depth, unstructured interviews with each co-researcher. Although there were no specific time regulations, interviews were between one and three hours in duration.

All interviews took place in a mutually convenient location where privacy was assured. The following parameters of phenomenological research were set forth:

that co-researchers share only that information which they felt comfortable disclosing,

that co-researchers could ask questions at any time,

that co-researchers could cease the interview at any time,

that co-researchers could request any data to be deleted or added,

that the nature of the interview was strictly confidential and pseudo-names were given to each co-researcher, except for the two participants who requested that their real names be used

that co-researchers were encouraged to describe their experience in any manner they felt was appropriate.

Data analysis

Initial data analysis was conducted according to the steps outlined in Colaizzi (1978), Giorgi (1975), and van Manen (1990).

1) The Interview: The interview was tape-recorded and transcribed. The tape was

listened to once through in order to gain a general impression of the data. Attention was given to pauses, tone of voice, repetition, timbre of voice, and notes regarding body language that are recorded during the interview itself.

2) The transcript: The transcript was read through many more times in order to glean key words or phrases. Colaizzi identifies this step as "extracting significant statements" (p.59).

3.) A detailed reading: The transcript was then read according to van Manen's (1990) detailed reading approach. In so doing, each part of each text was viewed with the following query in mind, "What does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described?" (van Manen, 1990, p. 93).

4.) Meaning units: Each sentence cluster was then assigned a theme or meaning unit. These meaning units are comprised of phrases or sentences which delineate a particular experience of healing from residential school abuse.

Final data analysis continued to follow van Manen's (1990) approach, and broadened to include narrative approaches used in Wolter-Gustafson's (1984) and Dudley's (1987) dissertations.

5) Writing the narrative: A narrative was then written, explicating the story of each co-researcher. Each narrative is an edited version of the transcript which retains all meaning units that are applicable to the research topic. Each section of the narrative was then entitled in accordance with thematic statements / meaning units.

After each narrative was completed, all co-researchers were provided with the opportunity to read their story and change any part that they felt was appropriate.

6) Discussion of the narrative: Each narrative was then viewed as a unique

presentation and was discussed as such. Significant events and experiences of each co-researcher were highlighted.

7) Themes of the narratives: Themes inherent in each narrative were then presented. Each theme was illustrated by a verbatim example to verify its selection.

8) Common themes in relation to the literature: Themes common to the co-researchers were discussed in relation to the available literature.

Chapter 5

The Narratives

Introduction

To render an authentic representation of the experience of healing from residential school abuse, the stories of each co-researcher is presented in their own words. All of the narratives have been edited slightly for length and clarity; otherwise, little has changed from the original transcriptions. Each co-researcher was given a copy of their story to peruse prior to the completion of the final draft of this thesis. Some made small changes in spelling, or in the use of proper names, but no editing work was deemed necessary.

During the telephone conversations in which I discussed with co-researchers their reaction to reading their own narratives, I was struck by the emotional responses I heard. Most of them articulated a strong sense of surprise and discomfort at reading their own words and becoming a witness to their own story.

One participant admitted to "being triggered" by reading about some of the events of the past; a reaction which she believed revealed lingering layers of denial within her. Yet she also confirmed that in seeking information about the healing components, I was "asking the right question" which permitted her to articulate some positive information, rather than dwelling exclusively on the negative experiences of residential school. Another mentioned the surprise with which she learned of her "relationship to the English language". She informed me that as she read her narrative over, she was reminded constantly of the fact that English

was not her first language.

Another participant felt that the story represented not only a personal experience, but encompassed a story of culture that was extremely important to share. The hope expressed was that others may hear the stories and become more aware as a result. The remaining two participants did not express their reactions explicitly, but indicated that reading their own personal story was a poignant and perhaps uneasy experience.

In discussing the narratives with co-researchers, the question of ownership arose. One participant wished to read her story at a residential school workshop. In addressing these queries, I made it clear that the stories told in this study belong to the people who lived them. Thus, they may be used in any way that co-researchers deem appropriate. In so doing, I wish to acknowledge that I view my own role as that of scribe, and I would like to formally relinquish possession of these stories. The narratives which form this thesis are the healing journeys of courageous individuals, and they appear in this study only by the generosity of these people.

Two of the co-researchers in this study have requested that I use their real names in their narratives. Both Art and Jerri felt that it was unnecessary to have a pseudo-name, as they felt no need for anonymity. The names "Sarah", "Elizabeth", and "Kelly" are pseudonyms.

Art

Art is a Ditidaht from the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation. He was born 1948 in Whyac on Nitnak lake in British Columbia. From 1954 - 1962, he attended Port Alberni Residential School, operated by the United Church.

Art is an internationally respected artist. Drawing upon and celebrating his Native heritage, Art's artistic achievements pay homage to his ancestors. His mediums include traditional drawings and paintings, wood and ivory carvings, masks, totem poles, limited edition serigraphs, logos, house panels, and gold and silver engraved jewellery. Art travels extensively, giving seminars and demonstrations of his work all over the world. He has numerous artistic achievements, including carving a totem pole for the Canadian Embassy in Thailand, and designing and carving the 1994 Commonwealth Games' Queen's Baton and the Games' medals.

We had cultural activity, we had something to fall back on:

"I think one of the really saving things with us was in the last years that we were there, there was a guy named George Clutesi. He used to come in, even though he was Tse-shaht, a different tribal group from a lot of us who were in there, he brought in cultural activities into the school. We learned Tse-shaht songs, we learned Tse-shaht dances. That was really nice, it kinda brought us part way back around that full circle again. We had some contact.

As I'm thinking about it again, I think that they were starting to realize that there was something drastically wrong with this system and that they really needed to focus in on who

we were as kids. I really think that there was a guilt thing going on there. I remember seeing George there as a young person saying, 'Why don't we do this for the kids?', and then the church went to see him, 'Can you come up here and do this for the kids?' So, we had some cultural activity there.

We had a lot of cultural activity when we went home, we'd get to spend two months out of the year at home. It was only during the summer months. I had a great opportunity, my great-grandmother was still alive when I was young, and she used to talk with us in Indian and talk to us about who she was and where she came from. So, we had a lot of closeness with grandparents. My grandfather was a canoe-builder and he used to talk a lot when I worked with him, cleaning out his canoe, and taking those chips away and burning them. We had the opportunity to be with all our parents and grandparents, and the village system that was in place then. We got to see a lot of really nice things; gambling games with songs, dances with songs, ceremonial blessings, weddings, that type of thing. And it was all done with the Native language. I think that really helped a lot of us out as kids. We had that opportunity to see this stuff. We had something to fall back on."

I started shifting, saying the white people weren't all that bad:

"When I got out of residential school, I was a really angry human being. Really angry young man. Thirteen, not quite fourteen years old. I started working when I was fourteen years old, working in a logging camp. I had to bunk in with this white man. I know that's where I started to shift my thoughts. He used to wonder why I was so agitated about bunking in with him, because in the logging camps, that's just the way it was, they had this system set

up.

So, I finally told him, 'I'm afraid. I'm afraid of who you are and what you stand for.' He told me, 'Look son, not all of us are like that. Sometimes you run into problems with some people, but we don't all come out of that same mould. Don't put us all into one category. A lot of us are really compassionate too. We have families, we have children, we have wives, we have mothers, we have fathers. And we understand.' Hearing that, I know that started shifting me, right at the age of fourteen. Coming from a white person, I think that had a really strong impact on who I was, that there was another side to it. So, I started actually shifting, saying the white people weren't all that bad. So we carried on, we had a good relationship together, we started talking. He became really angry about the whole situation of residential school, not even knowing who I really was, and not understanding a lot about the policy. Myself included at the time. All I could do was tell the story, my story. And he was pissed off, he said, 'you guys had every right to take guns and shoot these assholes, shoot these animals. They're lower than dogs.' But I couldn't bring myself that far because what happens with us as Native People, learning from my grandparents and parents, is that we cannot take another life. It's wrong to take another life."

One of the things that really pulled me out of it was my own parents

"I think a lot of us come out of really, really strong families. Whether or not you listen to your family is your choice. If you listen to your family, then I really seriously think that a lot of people have done a turn around.

A lot of people were broken, and broken really badly. I could have ended up on skid row too, just like a lot of our brothers and sisters. Actually, I was there for quite a while. I was broken down to a point where I was really heavy into drugs, into heroin. I had a $300.00 a day habit. One of the things that really pulled me out of it was my own parents. They came over and saw what I was doing and my father said to me, 'What the fuck are you doing to yourself? Come back home. Let's get it together. You're a much better person than what this is all about. I know you are.'

That's the way my dad used to talk to me. It was none of this pointing fingers and getting aggravated about your situation. He used to really look at the good side of all of us. They knew there was something better there, and that's what they kept on prodding. 'There's a better part of you, I'd much rather see that nicer side of you than to see this dark side.' He knew, he understood the pain."

You treat human beings the way that you want to be treated

"The next step was to try and get rid of the anger. How do you get rid of anger? My Grandmother would ask me that, 'how do you want to get rid of your anger?' 'Well, I really don't know, I feel like hitting somebody.' She took me into the woods, brought me into the woods and she said, 'here', and pointed to a tree. She said, 'pretend that's one of these guys,

pretend it's' - she didn't name a name specifically - , 'pretend it's one of those people that hurt you. What are you going to do with them?' But she was talking in Indian, in our language. 'What are you going to do with them? What would you like to do with them? If he was standing right there, what would you say to him? Would you talk about how he hurt you? Would you yell at him? What would you do to him?'

I said, 'I think I would hit him first, and then I would start talking after'. She said, 'go ahead, hit him. Close your eyes and hit him.' So I did. I doubled up my fist and I went wham! Into the tree. She said, 'do you feel better?' And I didn't feel better. She said, 'well, go ahead and hit him again.' So she made me start hitting him and I started working on that tree with both fists until my knuckles were bleeding. She didn't interfere, she didn't say anything. After I was finished, I was tired, I was exhausted. I fell on the ground, I was crying. She didn't say anything, she let me cry. She never touched me, she let me finish. I finally got up, I wiped my tears away, and she asked me, 'If that was really that human being, do you think you'd feel better?' I said, 'I don't know. I know that I'm strong enough now, I could probably do it. He's probably a really old man.' She said, 'would you hit an old man?' It didn't take me long to think about it, 'No. I don't think that I would'.

So, she started really talking about those kinds of lessons, about the way we are, the way we should be as human beings. 'Yes, they did something wrong to you.' And it's that old story that you treat human beings the way that you want to be treated. But we couldn't see that as kids. Here was this man that was beating us up, hitting us with straps, throwing shoes at us, bending our fingers back, hitting us with sticks.' I kept asking her, 'how are we supposed to be nice to these people? I wanted him to treat me nice. Why do I have to be nice

to him?' But it's that same old story, you keep your friends close, you keep your enemies closer. You keep them close. Tell them that you like them. So, you keep them closer to you all the time so that you know what they're going to do. You know their every move."

She would ceremonially bathe me, my grandmother

"So there's that ceremonial aspect of our people that my grandmother brought us through. She would ceremonially bathe me, my grandmother. She was in her '80's. We were in Neah Bay, Washington. I lived there for thirteen years. It was close to Christmas, just shortly after my birthday. She knew that something was wrong. I have a problem with alcohol, and I used to have a really bad problem with drugs. And she could see it in me. She said, 'c'mon son, let's go for a ride.' I jumped in the car, and we left. 'Where are we going?' She said, 'I want to bring you to a place where my great-grandparents used to bathe.' My grandmother's grandmother was from Clallum Bay, which is a little east of Neah bay. And she brought me to this creek. The road went right over, there was a bridge over it. She said, 'stop the car.' I stopped. We went walking through the bush. We got to this beautiful place, this incredibly beautiful place. It had trees leaning over it, and it was really nice and clear in there. There was grass, moss on the rocks. She said, 'this is my great-grandfathers' bathing place.' It was so nice that when they worked on it, they used to smooth out all the rocks, they used to chip all the rocks, instead of having sharp edges, they were all smooth going into the water where he used to go. So, obviously, he spent quite a bit of time there, doing ceremonial bathing. He was a whaler, he cleansed himself with prayers and branches. She said, 'This is where my great-grandfather used to bathe, this is where my grandfather bathed, this is where

my mother bathed, I want you to bathe here.'

And not a thing about embarrassment, anything, there was nothing, there was no embarrassing times between my grandmother and I. She started taking off her clothes and said, 'c'mon.' So, I took off my clothes and we both went in. She was already in her eighties, her late eighties and that water was cold! It was cold! She had this rattle, and she started singing before she went in, before she started walking in. That's when I started realizing that there was a pathway into that pool, it was nice and smooth. I followed her in, even though it was cold, it was physically cold. She walked in, and I was shivering, but her body never trembled. We got down into the water, we were up to our chests. She said, 'Listen to the song'. I wasn't listening, I wasn't paying attention to the song. I was more worried about physical things. I was cold! She said, 'No, listen to the song. It talks about where you are going to get your strength. Where you are going to get your powers from. Who is going to give you the powers?' And she asked me, 'Do you remember whose place this is? Whose bathing place is this? They were great people. They were whale-hunters. You're bathing in a whale hunters place. And you talk about cold? Think about who used to walk in here. Think about who make this pathway down into this water. Why it's so smooth. These are so smooth. These were great people. I show you this place because I love you, and I want you to bathe here, because this spot is really sacred to me.'

And I used it in all the thirteen years that I was in Neah Bay. My grandmother passed away twelve years ago. I still miss her today. I know that in my heart, she left me with so many gifts, so many songs, so many different answers for so many different situations, and how I should react and act as a human being."

The Higher Power gave us these gifts

"I know that we have a higher power. He's not called God, but he's a higher power, stronger than who we are as human beings, looks after everything. My Grandmother saying prayers to that higher power herself, it got me on the road to follow her. So, I started understanding those songs and what they say, and how she uses the language, and in those songs - because those prayer songs were handed down generation to generation. They are songs that are very straightforward, they are meant to be lessons. So, she taught a lot of those songs to me, and how to use them.

Even though it's hard, how they taught me was that you had to be a human being, take all the ceremonial stuff and use it in the proper way. They are not gifts from that man, they're not gifts from anybody else, they're gifts from your higher power. They came to us, the Higher Power gave us these gifts, these songs, these dances. Our way of life was given to us by a Higher Power. There's not one of these people that call themselves Human Beings, they didn't give it to me. We got it from our Higher Power. You treat that with respect. You learn from that. You learn from those songs, because it talks about great things, great things that happened to our people. When you listen to the words of them, it makes you understand that what we're all here on this earth, how we exist together is not by fighting each other, it's by co-existing. When you listen to the words of them, then you start understanding that these are incredible, everything around us are incredible gifts that came from the Higher Power. It's not mankind. Mankind never created them. There's nothing on this earth that mankind made. Everything around us all comes off this earth."

I've always looked at my art as a process to refurbish our people.

"So, the cultural activity of our people was basically a saviour for me. I got into the arts. I've been in the arts for thirty years. It's one of the things that my grandmother kept saying over and over again, 'You were always meant to be that way. When you were small, my father used to take your hands and rub his medicine in your hands.' And I sincerely believe that, because I've never had any ambition to be anything else other than an artist, I've been one 30, 31 years of my life.

I've always looked at my art as a process to refurbish our people. I've repaired a lot of the older pieces. I understand, I've felt them. I understand the power of where the songs came from and how they were used and that closeness with them really helps.

It's an ongoing thing, the creativity. After visiting all those old pieces in museums, I know that we still have a lot to contribute to our people. It becomes a real rush after a while when you do something for our people. I can contribute back to our people. Give it back to our roots. It's part of our healing. You can see a lot of the pride, looking back on our people. When you see something that really looks like the older pieces that are in the museums. It's almost like they glow.

When it's done, all of our people will have these arts again. And to sit back and say, 'Look at all these incredible things that we have. We still have a life! We have things that our artists have made, we still have the songs, we still have the language, we can still dance and sing, we can still sing the songs, we can make more drums. We're not totally lost. We might think that we're lost, but we're not lost. But who made us think that way? Who made us think that we are lost? It wasn't our people."

The power of women

"The thing that comes to mind is the power of women, because they've helped me out so much in the last 22 years. My grandmother, my mother, my aunties, my wife, my daughter. They've all helped me. My daughter helps me live my childhood again. It's on-going, with my wife and my daughters, they help me out a lot. Women are the backbone of healing. It's the women who are really doing the work in this area, and I get so much of my empowerment from women.

My first wife, she's passed away now, but she was one of the first people to see it. She had a university degree, and as we stayed together, she'd ask me, 'What the fuck is your problem? You've got a really big problem and you have to get it off your chest. Talk to me about it, we're supposed to be really close. Talk to me about it.' She was one of the first people - and then again, a woman. It just started this whole thing, started the ball rolling. It was really easy to talk to her, because she knew. She knew what was went on."

It was not the alcohol, it was not the drugs, it was the underlying issues.

"Not all of my healing has been in a traditional way. I'm a really dysfunctional person still. I've had quite a bit of counselling, family counselling, couple counselling, and I went to Tsowtunlelum. A six week program at a drug and alcohol treatment centre in Nanoose. I think what happens at Tsowtunlelum is that it's got a twist of culture to it. Even though it's not totally from our area, like they have sweet grass ceremonies, those type of things, sweatlodges, not really peculiar to our people on the Coast. But still, it has that little flair of culture. They utilize elders there, which is a really, really nice addition to their program as

speakers in circle, right at the beginning of the day, at lunch time, and then at the end of the day. The elders come out of different cultural backgrounds, they don't just come out of one cultural stock. So, they utilize elders, they utilize the sweatlodge, and they utilize sweetgrass at Tsowtunlelum. They don't utilize language because we're all from different areas, they use English.

It was a structured program for 6 weeks and it was in residence, so you get to spend quite a bit of time with 23 or 24 other people, who have different backgrounds. We found that a lot of our families, 90, 99 % of them came out of this situation of residential schools. Whether it was the aftermath, or their parents went and they didn't go, they felt it. They felt the ongoing abuses. But they were victims in themselves. That type of program there was really helpful in a lot of respects because it really got you to look at underlying issues. It was not the alcohol, it was not the drugs, it was the underlying issues.

That's the way our counsellors talked about it. That's the problem with alcohol, we can see it, it's visible. But what's underneath? Can we probe at that? Can we talk about that? A lot of times, people have a really hard times to deal with issues. That type of program I found was really really helpful because it got me to look at the issues more than look at the alcohol. It made me look at the underlying issues and I think those underlying issues helped me put this case with Plint into perspective. It made me get in touch with my feelings a lot more. The healing part of it is really really nice. I think you get to retrain yourself in calming down."

Would this benefit me?

"I know a lot of the people that were victims at the school, they learned bad habits. They turned into child molesters, abusive people. That's not the good side of us as human beings, that's not the gifts that we got from our parents. I know what kept me away from a lot of that was understanding the pain.

One of the early teachings with our people is to question, 'are you going to benefit from that?' If the answer is 'no', stay away from it, there's not much point in doing. It's almost an instant thought."

If you're honest with the kids, I feel that it's going to be better for them.

"With some of our parents, the less they said about residential school, the better off everyone else would be, was their attitude. And it's like that with a lot of the older people. 'If you don't talk about it, it's going away'. It's not like our generation now. I think that with our children, it's going to be the really big turn around because what they see us doing as people, as human beings in talking about what happened to us, I think it makes them stronger. I know that at this court case, my daughter was there. I wouldn't have it any other way! I would much rather my kids know about the things that happened to me and how much pain I was going through, rather than keep it a secret from them. I talk tough with all of my kids; my boys, my girls. I talk with them about it all the time. So, it helps them understand where I'm coming from. 'Where does dad get all his anger from?' If you're honest with the kids, I feel that it's going to be better for them. They'll understand me, and they'll understand what they can do for themselves, and how they can help me along with it."

I know someday I'm going to get the language back

"I live away from the village, I live here in Victoria. I don't teach my kids the language. It's something that was actually taken away from me. I understand the language, and I try really hard to speak the language, but it was something that was beaten right out of me. I know someday I'm going to get the language back. Time is going to be right, and I'm going to be able to use it again. But I can't rush those things. I've got lots on my plate with my life yet still. When I get finished with what's on my plate, I'll have some more, and that'll come along. But for me, my brothers, my sister, my mother, my late father, my grandmother, it was culture. They were very cultural people. That was our saviour, I think."

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was born in 1947 in Alert Bay, a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. She attended St. Michael's Residential School in Alert Bay from 1953 - 1962. Following that, she was in the Home Program from 1962 - 1965.

Formally, Elizabeth worked in the field of psychiatry as a nurse. Over the past fifteen years, she has worked for the First Nations community in both paid and volunteer positions. She devotes much of her time to educating groups and individuals about First Nations history and oppression. Elizabeth is an active member of the Kwakwaka'wakw community in Victoria.

I like to look at it as a process

"I think it's a lot like grieving, when you start the healing process. I think you go from one stage to the next, and you feel very strong once you've gone into a next step, but you always go back. Kubler-Ross, there's a lot of people who have talked about the process of grieving, or they've talked about stages. I like to look at it as a process, cause I think you go back and forth.

It was a process for me, but I had to come to a place where I realized that this needed to happen. I had no idea that I was dysfunctional. I had no idea. I thought things were o.k. for me because I managed to come through the residential school system fairly sane. if nothing else. I think that a lot of our lives, as First Nations People, we feel happy that we've come through it with a shred of sanity."

I started my life off in a very traditional household

"But I think that I was fortunate that I started my life off in a very traditional household. You know, I grew up with my grandparents, and my mom and dad were very traditional in their way of thinking."

I gotta take some responsibility for this

"I learned a lot of from my father about reverse racism, reverse prejudice - 'it was all their fault'. And it took me a long time to realize - and it was a really painful process to come to the understanding that - I gotta take some responsibility for this. It's not a fun place to be when you've realized the pain and the agony. I thought, "I don't want to make friends with them, whoever 'they' were, I wasn't really clear about who 'they' were. I don't want to make life easier for them, I don't want them to teach me."

There's something wrong here

"When I was eighteen years old, I remember thinking, "Why do I have this raging anger?" I used to have this raging anger in me. I realized that this anger and this raging wasn't normal. Anger, raging, controlling...

I realized at 18, but I didn't really know what that was about. I was able to get a job because it was my first year at university, and I worked with two other people. I realized that I had a very controlling thing. That's what you learn at residential school, to control. It's the only way that you ever will become something, is if you take control of your life. Control, you always know where you're going, you're not dependent on other people.

I realized that my viewpoint was so very narrow, and thinking about religion, I knew there was something wrong there. I remember thinking, 'I don't get it, there's something wrong here'. But I didn't really know what it was."

I started to realize that I didn't have to believe everything that I read

"I realized how unvalued or devalued our culture had been. When I was at university, I realized how devalued, or how there was no value placed on my beliefs. There was no place in this world that I was carving out for myself for my culture and my beliefs. And yet, it was very strong in me because my grandmother was a midwife. Her job also was to prepare people for their journeys after they had died, she prepared people for dying and prepared them after. So, there was a real conflict for me about that whole world I was learning about.

So I started to realize that I didn't have to believe everything that I read, and everything that I was told. And that doesn't get to be very much fun."

I realized that I had to have parallel lives

"I realized at university that I really had to come to terms with some things because I was running a parallel with cultures. I never really thought that being involved with the cultural was a part of my healing cause I'd always done it, but I realized later on and I realize now that it was part of my salvation and that's where I turned in order to rationalize and figure out some of those things that I was doing in this other world.

I realized that these two had to run together like a railroad track, one couldn't go without the other. I couldn't totally immerse myself in my own culture, which made me mad,

which really angered me, but I also couldn't bring a lot of my culture and world into being a nurse.

I realized that I had to have parallel lives. I realized that I wasn't willing to give up this world of being traditional, and the kinds of teachings I had. I still used a lot of those traditional kinds of teachings in how I conducted myself. But there were some things I couldn't talk about and I couldn't go about doing as a nurse."

This isn't about sexual abuse, this isn't about physical abuse, this is about spiritual abuse

"The residential school conference was not to educate ourselves about residential school, but to purge ourselves of the demons that were there because of it. But I remember just being so affected by it, but I couldn't figure out why I wanted to react so much to it. During the conference I was in a breakdown group with about five elders. I was really happy I got into this group. I thought 'I gotta find out, I need to feel something more about this, I didn't realize that this happened to other people.'

So, when it came to my turn in the healing circle, I said, 'Well, I really have to say that I don't know why I'm busting about crying about every time I talk about residential school. You know, I wasn't sexually abused, I probably got a couple of good licking for being such a jerk, but I didn't really have that kind of trauma that other people were talking about. I don't know what I'm doing, thinking that I need to be in this great healing process.'

And this elder said to me, 'Talk to me about your losses' and I kinda realized, oh, o.k. That's what it was really all about, was the loss of culture, it was the loss of family, loss of the home base, loss of home lands, loss of all those things that were important to us as far as

having an identity, being a part of the teachings and the wisdom of those people, not having access to elders any more.

He said that this is what it's really all about. We have to get rid of that pain, this isn't about sexual abuse, this isn't about physical abuse, this is about spiritual abuse. And you need to look after the spiritual part of it before you even think about the emotional or the physical. He said you can't fix the physical parts until you can fix the spiritual part of it.

So, I kinda sat there and thought, o.k., it made sense to me, it was then I really - 1985 or '86 was the conference, I forget - but it was then that I realized I had to consciously work at fixing myself. It was then and only then."

I realized that I needed to be a role model

"So, I reached the point that I realized several different things. I realized that I had to start breaking some cycles in my family. I started to see my own children growing and getting into different ways of thinking that were really not ways that I'd been taught. And I realized that they had very little, very little compared to what I had, as far as being a First Nations Person. We moved away from the reserve, and that only so we could get quality education. I realized that I needed to be a role model, I had to immerse myself in my culture, that I had to go back to understanding what those teachings were really all about and make a commitment that every time I went home to a Potlatch, that I'd bring my children.

So, that was a difficult part for me, to come to terms with that. I also realized the more I tried to do the teaching with them, and get them involved, and when they finally got involved with the big house and in the dances and became initiated and had rites of passage.

coming of age stuff, that I was a different person. I really felt, I realized, that there was a healing process that had to happen and that was going on.

Going back to my culture is a commitment I have certainly made. I've done this much with the culture for my children. My two girls are very, very involved in the potlatch. My first husband's family is very, very traditional and I have carried on and have a big name in potlatch circles."

I realized what that serenity prayer was about

"My husband's been involved in twelve step programs for probably ten years. One day, I sat and listened to him talking to somebody who had an eating disorder, just around what he had learned in a twelve step program. And I thought, 'wow, he's way ahead of me in understanding.'

It was the same message, you need to look after yourself spiritually. And how do you want to do that? It doesn't matter how you do that.

I remember the kids sitting there and saying, 'Well, I don't want to talk about God, if that's what you want' and my husband saying, "No, that's not what it's about. It has to do with you and what's inside of you.' It was then that he said the serenity prayer to the kids, and I realized what that serenity prayer was about. It was about me, nobody else! Here, I'd been praying for all these people all of the time. 'I'm gonna help you'. 'I'll help you, I'll fix you.' (Lots of laughter). Now I've done twelve step programs."

We're not carrying on the grieving process in a way that we need to

"So that's when I really started to work really hard on it. And then 1989, my cousins - who I'm very, very close to - their son committed suicide. He committed suicide, on his nineteenth birthday. It just felt like we'd never recover from that. We spent days and days just asking questions, and just trying to figure out what happened, why this happened. Why to them of all people?

Their daughter is my godchild and I felt a real responsibility around that. I thought, 'I need to talk to her about this and see just what her mind set is about'. And again, that's around healing as well. Having that urge to teach other people. So, I went to talk to her and that was one of the first questions I asked her, 'Have you ever thought of suicide?' She says, 'ya, I did. I've thought of it many times. I've even written my letter'. And I really got scared then.

So, I phoned up my cousins I said, 'You know, we need to get our kids together'. And shortly there after, another boy who had lived with them committed suicide. And the more reading I did, the more I realized that if it's in your family experience, you're a real high suicide risk.

So we had a meeting at Z's. Z is the head of our family and we went to his house and there was about fifteen adults there and eighteen to twenty kids. And we said, 'We're here because we're concerned, we're not carrying on the grieving process in a way that we need to.' We asked people how many people had thought about suicide and everyone of those kids put up their hands except two of them. And we asked how many people had attempted suicide. Fifteen kids put up their hand. Their parents never even heard about their kids making

suicide attempts."

The pain doesn't go away

"So, that's where our support group came out of. We don't go and talk about how our day was, we have to talk about this on-going healing process, about how that happens, and not just talk about the good times of it all, but really look at the bad times. And look at ourselves really critically, and how we are caring for ourselves on a day to day basis. Confronting people when they are getting into states of depression, confronting people when they are ignoring obvious real problems that are happening in their lives. It's a tough process to always be going through. There are times when we can sit and look at video's or something around healing. We realize - you know, the old joke - how long does it take for you to get healed, how long does it take for the pain to go away? And after all this time, you know, probably only in the last six months we realized that it's an on going process. The pain doesn't go away. I think that you have to remember that pain, I don't feel that I could ever feel it's gone, it's not a part of my life any more."

I really had to let go

"My daughter was sexually abused and she went through real suicidal periods. She had several suicide attempts, each time getting worse and worse. I just thought, within this year, she's going to kill herself, I honestly thought she was not going to ever make it. It was my letting go finally, I just said, "I'm not dancing with you any more. This is yours now, I've done all I can, I can't be a part of it any more." I was really just enabling her in a lot of ways.

rescuing her, and not validating her pain and allowing her to feel that pain. Because I don't want my kids to feel that pain.

I really had to let go. It was terrible! The last suicide attempt that she made, my friend phoned me. My friend looked after my daughter, I looked after her son, she had a son who was very suicidal. I'd go, and just sit and spend a lot of time with him. My friend realized that she couldn't also be a part of her son's life at that point in time.

There was a lot of resentment and I said to my daughter, "I know that when the time comes, I have to be open to hearing what you have to say about me, to know what that pain is about." I was terrified! I was afraid! And I publicly said that, when I went to do suicide workshops. And take her with me and she'd be part of the panel. And I always said, 'The next step in the healing is to be able to sit down and hear what my children have to say about the things that were not quite right in our relationship. To be able to sit back and appreciate her perception of what that was. It's not about my perception, it's about hers.'

It was a long time. I said it over and over publicly to people. And it happened bit by bit by bit. And when it happened, I didn't even know it happened. I didn't realize until I went 'Oh, Gee'. It wasn't as painful as if it had been done in the anger..."

Teaching our kids coping mechanisms

"The fact of the matter is that for First Nations People, the injustices will continue to happen, it will affect our children, it will impede on our daily lives. Racism is alive and well. and it's now not so much a healing journey as it is teaching our kids coping mechanisms. giving them skills that will encourage them to feel that they want to be participating in this

life and be part of society."

What you think about me is none of my business, so don't tell me

"Just this morning, in the doctor's office, the nurse handed me some papers and asked me, 'Are you able to sign your name?' Then she said to me, 'Aren't you a bit young to have had a hip replacement? What happened to you, you just falling around, accidents and stuff?'

I felt like saying to her, 'Are you asking me if I'm an alcoholic and I've been drunk and fell on my leg?' I didn't say that. I said 'No, actually, I think it's a genetic thing' and I went into this big rambling thing Dr. H told me.

Fifteen years ago, I would have walked out of there and said, 'Screw you, I don't give a shit if my hip comes out, but I don't need this shit. I'm outta here.' And that's what I would have done, I used to do that. I used to just walk off and take it very personally. Now I see it as 'It's your problem'. What you think about me is none of my business, so don't tell me. I'm not interested. Don't even get in my face about it, cause you're not even going to get a reaction out of me any more.

And I don't, and I used to. I used to, but I didn't know what I was getting angry about. I didn't know why I was so incensed by certain things. It was triggering old stuff. And the more I talk about it, the more.. I think that you have to talk about it more to educate people."

I've gone around educating people

"And that's has been what I've done, I've gone around educating people - that's another part of my healing... I don't just go to the schools, I've gone to the police and said.

'Look, I'm able to give you Native awareness. And it's not really Native awareness, it's really about challenging yourself.' I don't have an interest in some cop walking in my moccasins for a mile, I don't have any interest in that. I have an interest in him standing behind me and looking at his own reaction when I tell him my story about where I've been.

A part of my healing journey is going and talking to social workers. What I tried to do was to teach them, and it teaches me also about my own racist attitudes and my discrimination, against my own people sometimes as well. But teaching them to come to a conclusion that they are racist. It's very difficult to get people to admit that and to talk about it. I called people in from different places, kids that lived on the streets, kids that were fairly well to upper middle class, First Nations People, people who worked in the system, front line workers, whatever, to come and be a part of that, so that they could tell their stories as well. And that's a part of healing, is to be able to tell your story to someone else and for them to understand why you are the way you are. And to understand that we're not this way because we're lazy, alcoholics, uneducated. A lot of people have no idea."

I've educated people about our history

"The other thing I've done is gone around and educated people about our history, mainly about our history. When I talked to First Nations kids in schools, we talk about the resistance that did happen. A lot of our kids say, 'Well, you guys didn't do anything.' There was a peaceful resistance where people continued and went underground to do potlatches. Some went to jail, but they carried on. People continued to teach, and to make sure that the teachings never died and that they carried on, no matter how they did it, or who did it. So,

there was a resistance, there was, it just wasn't a violent resistance. I think it's important for them to hear that.

I had a great aunt who went to jail and she was in Okalla for three months because she initiated her children. She did rites of passage with her kids that had come of age, and she came back and initiated the next lot. So there was that, there was a lot of that."

Praying to myself about giving myself inner strength

"I look after myself more spiritually than I ever did before. Which means not just. sitting and kneeling and praying and hoping that whoever it is up there is going to take it away from me, but praying to myself about giving myself inner strength and centering yourself to give yourself the direction to calm yourself, in order to be able to think about the direction.

There's big money in healing now, and it's getting to be kinda passe stuff. I don't think that you need to go and look for that somewhere, I think that you have to make the decision yourself. The answer is there within yourself and the catalyst is whatever you choose it to be. Is it elders that you need to talk to, is it in a song, is it in art, is it in whatever your strength is?"

It was recognition of the importance of my culture

"Another factor is making use of those cultural kinds of things that are available to you. Our communities are full of them. Just because I'm Kwakiutl and I'm an outside here on Salish territory, that I don't utilize the Salish people for some of the teachings. I think there are some teachings across this world among indigenous peoples around respect for self, the

importance of roots, culture, inherent rights to live with different things.

For me, it was recognition of the importance of my culture and using a lot of the healing ceremonies of my own culture and being brave enough to go and take a stand. because everything is very public.

My husband and I also carry along a lot of our traditional food gathering, and my husband is known for that in the community. We do a lot of traditional food gathering, food preparation, but also share that with the community. Understand that we need to be properly fed as well, and making a big issue of that. Talking about that, and being role models in that we do a lot of feasts, even if it is just at our house, and making sure there is a good variety of people, not just our close friends all the time, but other people that come and share.

The big healing thing for me is making dance regalia. I've done a lot for the initiates. and I've talked them about what that means, about the initiation, the process around that. Getting people to do their own research around the houses they come from, and the clan system, and where they moved to."

I hope to become one of those hearty flowers

"I think there's that imagery for me of being a flower, of opening, and getting all the information. But also, times get tough and the rain comes and the sleet and snow comes. it closes back up again. If you walk in Victoria and the weathers cold, you hope to be one of those flowers that stays open when there's three feet of snow on the ground and there's a flower sitting there. And you see that in Victoria. I hope to become one of those hearty flowers."

Jerri

Jerri was born in 1948 in Alert Bay, a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. She was 18 years old by the time she attended Port Alberni Residential School in 1966.

Currently, Jerri coordinates the suicide intervention program for Kwakiutl Urban Society. She is also involved in a number of projects encompassing spirituality, healing, and art with First Nations People.

Residential school impacted me even before I was born.

"I went to residential school really for a very brief period, it was only one year, but I tell people that residential school impacted me even before I was born because my mother was a product of residential school. She learned behaviours that were really not healthy for raising children. She chose relationships that were not healthy.

So, that was the impact in my life, that was the beginning of how it affected me. And also, I had a cousin who was like my sister, and she went to residential school in the same community as me, and I could never understand when I was little why she had to be there and I was in my own home. And I used to sneak into the residential school to see her. I was always sneaking into the school to see her. She'd come and spend summers with us and leave, and it was always a feeling of her always going away, and I was really attached to her, so I really felt it a lot. A lot of the time, I really missed her. I had other cousins that I was very close to that were in the villages when I was little, and all of a sudden, they were gone, and when they came back, they were very different, and it was like we were strangers and it really

hurt my feelings. So, it had a lot of impact on me.

Also, there was a prejudice against the residential schools in our community, and I was, because of my cousin, I had to make a choice, and so I decided to be a kind of defender for the residential school kids, because of my cousin. So it put me in a really weird position in the community with the other kids too, so, it was really difficult."

Something really, really wrong.

"Two years before I went to residential school, I went and boarded with a D.I.A. (Department of Indian Affairs) worker, who befriended my family in Alert Bay - that's where I'm from. His wife kinda took a shine to me so she asked my family if she could take me, and I could board with them when they moved to Vernon. So, my parents reluctantly let me go.

I remember the D.I.A. guy, part of his job was to go and pick up Native students and take them to residential school in Kamloops. One day, he said, 'Do you want to come with me, come for the ride?' I said, 'Well sure!' He said, 'I'm taking some kids to the residential school.' I thought it was like, 'Oh ya, they're picking them up and driving them.'

So we drive into the bush, and there's a cabin in the woods, I guess the father was a trapper, and I just remember this horrible, horrible feeling because the D.I.A. went to the door, and the two little boys bolted. They went running into the woods, and I will never forget that scene of him running through the woods chasing them, hunting them down, and the father standing there crying, and the D.I.A. dragging them back to the car. We rode in silence, I was in shock, I just sat there, and the two little boys were just sitting there looking straight ahead and I just went, 'Oh my god, oh my god, what is this?' That's when I really

started to think and realize that there was something really, really wrong with whatever was going on with us. And when I went to residential school, I really understood why they tried to run away."

I don't believe it because my grandpa doesn't believe it

"My grandfather was a great man - on my father's side, my grandfather was very strong in his belief of who he was. He really in his heart believed that our way was a healthy way and a good way and he never said much, but it was the way he carried himself that made me know that. So, all of the self-racism that was around me when I was growing up, and all of the racism that was around me, somehow, him being that way reinforced in me that I don't believe that stuff. I don't believe it because my grandpa doesn't believe it. And somehow, that really helped me through. So, those were some of the strengths that I had, even though there were all those things going on."

I also learned how people can take power.

"When I went to residential school, I had never experienced that level of disrespect on my person, and on the other kids around me. I was really shocked. It was my last year in high school, and in my community, we had a high school but if you wanted to go onto university, you had to leave the community, and residential school was my only option. So, I went to the Port Alberni Residential School for grade twelve.

What happened there was I had a senior girls supervisor in the senior girls dorm. The senior girls supervisor was totally emotionally and verbally abusive to us, and every sunday

after church - and we had to go to church, we didn't have a choice - after church, she'd round us up and give us this weekly lecture. If it wasn't for god-fearing white people like her, we'd still be savages. She used to accuse us of being prostitutes when we went out on saturday afternoon, we were allowed out for two hours on saturday afternoon to go get shampoo and things that we needed like that. Just real vile things would come out of her mouth. That's what it would be like for an hour after church.

And the junior boys supervisor who is now in prison for the charges that were laid against him, Arthur Plint, he was there when I was there. We knew about it, the senior girls, some of their younger brothers were in his dorm, they came and told us what was happening, we knew what was happening to them. It was a total feeling of helplessness. We thought the junior girls had it the best because their supervisor was an alcoholic and she used to just pass out, and they'd have the run of the place. So, it was a really, it was the beginning of my understanding of how powerless people can be.

But I also learned how people can take power, and that year, there were students in there who were so-called 'trouble-makers'. They sent them to Port Alberni because they were kicked out of every other residential school. And one, Sarah, I just love her very much, and I'll always think about her because she organized the students, she taught us how to do a petition, she taught us how to organize. We did a petition and we stated all of our concerns. About the abuse, we brought up the abuse, we brought up the alcoholic supervisor, we said, 'And you expect us to end up being well adjusted human beings when you have these very sick people looking after us? So we did the petition, and of course, they said to me 'Well, the principal likes you, you bring it to him', so they made me go in and bring it to him. He did not

deny it, he knew. He said, 'I know, but this is the best I can do. We can't get anybody else to come in here. We can't get anybody else to take care of you' basically is what he said.

So, that was the end of that, by that time the feelings were really, really strong about this, and we ended up meeting with the students and the students demanded that the supervisors come. We voiced our demands to them, and then one of the guy's got up and said, 'If we don't get our demands, we're going to burn the place down.' So, they started getting scared, they began to realize that we were serious about what was going on. Everything changed for that year, we got new supervisors, we got whole milk instead of the rotten skim milk they were serving us."

I'll do something to help other people

"After I graduated I went to the city. I went to Vancouver, and I ended up trusting the wrong people. I had been introduced to this guy one night and he asked me if I wanted a ride home. I said, 'oh sure', just thinking he was friendly. Well, I ended up being raped by this guy.

I didn't really associate it, but shortly after that, I got into drugs. I never drank, all the time I was in high school growing up, I never drank, never did drugs, it just wasn't something that I did, and all of a sudden, I was doing drugs. I never, ever connected it until my healing path years later, but that was what I was doing, I was numbing out that experience.

And then I got sick, about three months after that, I got hepatitis and ended up in the hospital. I remember laying there and thinking, 'I don't care if I live or die any more, I don't care if I'm alive.' I don't believe in committing suicide, I didn't believe in ending my life, so I

thought 'at least I could be useful, so I think what I'll do is when I get out, I'll do something to help other people, and that way, my life will be useful, because I don't care about myself any more.'

And it was really strange, cause I got out and I met other Native People who wanted to form an organization because there was a Native woman from up north who had been tortured, murdered, and thrown in the garbage dump. That went to trial, and one of the accused got acquitted and the other one got a $200.00 fine. In the same bloody paper, a hunter who shot a moose out of season was fined the same.

That just outraged a whole bunch of our people living in Vancouver and they said, 'This has to end, our lives can't be just worth that much, we have to do something about it.' And they asked me if I would be part of joining them to do something about this, so I said 'sure', and out of that came the Red Power movement, the Native Alliance for Red Power."

We studied what happens to colonized people internally.

"And I would say that organization in many ways saved my life as well, because we started studying colonization and we studied what happens to colonized people internally. I started understanding our own internalized racism. And we all thought this was wonderful and we studied other revolutions around the world and we spend a lot of time reading Franz Fanon and The Wretched of the Earth. It was during the Algerian revolution and he was an Algerian psychologist, who during that process of the Algerian revolution, studied the Algerian people who were resisting, but he was also studying the oppressors.

What he was saying was 'this is what happens, this is what develops, both sides are

very sick, and both sides have to heal. The oppressor is also sick, they develop sickness as a result of being the oppressor. And that both need to be healed. And it was so exciting for us to study these things. We studied different world economics, and this all came from ourselves. We didn't take any courses or anything, we got these book and we started going through them, and we went only as fast as the slowest person. Cause some of our people only had grade four. We had our little dictionary and sometimes it would be just one paragraph at a time, you know. And that's how we learned things, and a lot of things really made a lot of sense to me. So to me, it was a big part of my healing."

We have our own healers

"And then I was introduced to Medicine People at that time too, I was still around 18 when this started happening to me. I went to help the Nisqually People with their fishing rights in Washington, and a lot of different tribes from all over North America came to help them. We were there for months. And in those people, came a lot of traditional Medicine Men and Medicine Woman. This was my first exposure to the fact that we have our own healers, that we actually had our own way of healing, our own way of being. This was so exciting to me because at that time, in the late '60's early '70's in Alert Bay, there were very few people practising and having potlatches, there were very few people who were practising the tradition. In that period of history, people were ashamed of who they were, and here were these people who loved who they were.

It was like coming home, it was really exciting to me. From that point on, it has always been my search to find wellness and healing for myself and for the community, and

looking for answers."

I really developed a strong relationship with nature and animals

"I think one of the things is - and my background has been physical, sexual, emotional abuse, it's very similar to mostly everybody else's history, and there's a lot of pain. I used to go and spend a lot of time in the woods; I used to spend a lot of time outside. I remember I had a relationship with a rock when I was a kid. I remember whenever I felt really really depressed and really down, I would go to the rock in this field, and I would sit on this rock, and really, I felt like that rock healed me every time I went there. When I got off it, I was really full of joy again, just like a kid, I'd be full of joy. And that's where I went for my healing.

I really developed a strong relationship with nature and animals. And they were my comforters. In many ways, they really were my comforters. My strength came from them.

Right now, the stars are really important to me. The reason that I say that is because there is a lot of stories about the stars. A lot of the stories say that the first being that came from the stars was a woman. The stars have a lot to teach us. I've taken to meditating, actually, that's what I do and I think that is why the stars are really important to me right now. In the evening, I stand out on my patio and I'll look at the stars, it's a form of meditation for me and I've really felt their presence. It's like the rock that I sat on, the stars now are becoming like that rock. It's really healing for me when I feel that about the stars.

I've always felt unconditional love from the universe, the universe has really helped me, but it hasn't always been that way with human beings, so it's been a real struggle to learn

about healing that. I feel that every living thing has a consciousness and an intelligence and I feel very very loved by nature; birds, everything.

My daughter, she's H.I.V. positive, and when I first found out, that was about five and a half years ago, I was so full of grief, I was just devastated. And I was walking down Beacon Hill Park, and I was crying because I was just so sad. This eagle flew really low over me, and I looked up and, it sounds really crazy, but it felt like what it did was it dropped a song on me. I started singing this song, the more I sang it as I was walking, I felt peace come over me. I realized it was a comfort song. Then it left; it didn't stay, because I can't even think about what that song was. But for the time that I needed it, it was there, and it was given to me."

I really loved the philosophy and the teachings

"I read books, a lot of books that we really inspirational to me. I think one of my favourite ones when I first started reading about Native People, was the story of Crazy Horse. And when I read about him, I really loved the philosophy and the teachings in there because I didn't know a lot about the teachings from home, except for the stories that my Grandpa told me. It's just been that kind of journey all along, all the way through my life."

If a few people put their minds together, they can accomplish a whole lot

"I've always been involved in the community and that's been a real strength for me because I think a lot of the disease has to do with that feeling of powerlessness. I feel very lucky that at a very early age I learned that if a few people put their minds together, they can accomplish a whole lot. And that's that feeling of 'we do have the power to do and change

many things', but I think that part of the problem, that a lot of our people - and maybe even society in general - feel powerless. And the sense of having the power to change things.

It bothers me that now so many young people are committing suicide, like that's more of an option than trying to change what's causing pain. It's like trying to solve that riddle. What's different today that is different than then, and how do you change that? Turn it around. That's what revolution is - is turning it around. That's what that word means. I love studying root words of things, radical means getting to the root of. Radicals are always called troublemakers but they're the ones that dig deep and find the real truth to situations."

I see the benefits

"But since then, the healing process, I started understanding about sexual abuse and its effect on me about nine years ago. And dealing with it, I had to go for therapy, you know, regular therapy for sexual abuse and did that work on myself. I came from an alcoholic family. my father was an alcoholic, my step-father - my biological father died when I was six so Mom remarried and married someone who was an alcoholic. So I had to do the Al-Anon and the Adult Children of Alcoholics, and I went to Ka Ka Wis, to the family treatment centre, and took my children and myself there to work on ourselves. I've done a lot of that kind of healing and I've also followed traditional healing and spiritual process work. I think they've been very helpful to my healing path and healing journey. There's so many layers, there's just so many layers of that grief, it just goes on and on. But I know, when I look back 8 years ago, I see the benefits. I see the benefits in my children, and in my two grandchildren, I see the difference in our lifestyle 8 years ago and now. It makes it worth it to me."

Colonialism never goes away.

"When I went to university, it was a nightmare, I almost quit by third year. I was in art, I thought art would be different, but whoa, forget that! You know, in art, and it's the same value system. I see art very much as a healing tool, as a spiritual tool, and that's what I was trying to do and talk about, in terms of my work. Using it as healing, expressing it as healing, and also, the act of art is about spirituality. The feedback I got was 'I don't want to hear any more of that spiritual mumble-jumble around here, I don't want any use of organic materials...' You name it, every time I turned around.

And my sculpture teacher, I ended up just breaking down in front of everybody, because he really, really just ripped me to shreds. And it became a kind of obsession with him, it was like 'You will not believe this stuff'. It pushed his buttons about the belief systems, and I wasn't the only Native woman in his class that went through that. A year later, I got a phone call from another Native woman who said, 'I hear you went through the same thing with this man, may I talk to you?'

That's the reality, it's a day-to-day thing, and that colonialism never goes away. We're still in it, and people don't think we are. We are! We're in it still. And how do we keep healthy in the face of that knowledge? How? We do a lot of work all the time to keep each other strong and healthy. We're very there for each other. And it's not programs or anything like that, it's our spiritual life, our emotional life."

The training part of our social development work

"I worked for the Kwakiutl district counsel as a social development worker and then as a social development coordinator, and I've always worked in the community doing these things. We had these modules that were developed, so we'd have once every month for a couple of days as the training part of our social development work. We would bring in counsellors and other people who were in the social services field to come in and give us workshops in these modules. So, there were about 20 of us throughout the district that took these module training courses just to help us with our skills cause we were all new to what we were doing."

I will purposely work for organizations and groups that will allow me to give

"I know that I am a very intelligent person and I have a lot of experience and skill, but I will purposely work for organizations and groups that will allow me to give.

I run a continual support group every Monday night for people who are suicidal or people who have relatives who are. So every monday night we get together, and it's on a rotation basis, we go from home to home, so we have a schedule of places and people know that they are welcome to come. We've been running that for five or six years now, and part of my job is doing suicide awareness programs and I run a support group of volunteers in any community. We've been to Port Alberni, and we've been to Ladysmith, and we've been to different communities to show them how to run a circle for themselves or to give them information about how to help each other."

Healing and spirituality issues that are important to me.

"I apprenticed as a northwest coast carver at home in Alert Bay and I did that for about ten years and worked for the cultural centre documenting life histories for the elders, and documenting potlatches with video.

Sometimes I incorporate art into projects I do, we did an 'animaction' workshop with sixteen youth and they learned how to do animation. They did six 30 second cartoons on violence, suicide, their own story. Then, it was put on film and we had a screening out at the cultural centre. They were so proud of what they did! So, that was a project. We did a self-esteem public speaking with the youth and the elders, and they had a lot of fun. The elders were in their acting, doing improv. It was just a blast, they had a great time!

I've done theatre as well, a few things like that in the arts, I've dabbled into film, but a lot of it to deal with healing and spirituality issues that are important to me."

It's my responsibility to pray for those generations yet unborn so that they will continue to survive.

"I just heard this from a friend of mine. He said, 'the reason we're here today, and the reason we survived, is because of the prayers of our ancestors. You've heard that term 'seven generations', the concern is always for the future children. My friend believes that our ancestors knew that so many generations of their descendants, would be going through very hard times. These people prayed for us, they prayed for the seven generations, and those prayers have helped us survive. As a grandparent, as a person, it's my responsibility to pray for those generations yet unborn so that they will continue to survive. "

Kelly

Kelly was born in Alert Bay in 1938 and is a member of the KwaKwaka'wakw Nation. She attended St. Michael's School in Alert Bay from 1945 to 1955.

For many years, Kelly has worked in a number of volunteer and paid positions with both First Nations organizations and non-Native groups. Currently, she works as a home support worker for a Native Friendship Centre.

Can you imagine how the parents felt when their treasures were taken from them?

"Must of been just the last two, three years I've got to understand parent's behaviours. I'm not saying my parents, cause my parents didn't raise me. I was taken to residential school at six years old till I was about fifteen. And never in that time did I live in a family with a father and mother and children - you know, the Dick and Jane books. That's not the kind of life I lived.

I guess it's just in the last few years that I started to think 'Can you imagine how the parents felt when their treasures were taken from them?' I never ever looked at it that way. I was into blaming. Blaming, it was the government's fault, it was the church's fault."

We just accepted the pain and no one being there for us

"The only life I knew was residential school. I thought that's the way it was supposed to be, even if bad things were happening to students. Teachers were quite mean, supervisors could only do as much as they could. We had junior girls and intermediate girls and senior

girls at residential school and they had about two supervisors to each level. So, we didn't get nurtured, there was no one to nurture us. We just accepted the pain and no one being there for us. Guess that's the way it is, that's just the way I took it, I guess that's the way life is and you can't do a thing about it.

My dad became an alcoholic because he had no children, he had no one to look after. He died in a boat; I think he was leaving Alert Bay, you know, from drinking during winter. I just didn't understand why he died like that. That's it, and he was just gone. I didn't think too much about it. 'I got no more parents, so what, I guess it's just how life is.' I just took things for granted. If it happens, it happens and you can't undo it."

Just schedule, schedule, schedule

"They put so much rules on us at residential school, we had to get up at six or seven, line up, wash up, line up, and wait for breakfast. Stand at the kitchen table, say your grace. I memorized it, 'God bless our food and help us to grow strong.' And then we went and lined up again. And then if you had to do dishes, you went to the dining room and did the dishes and then go back and line up again. Line up and go to school. Do this, do this, do this, do this, do this.

I think the only free time we had was after school between three and five or six or until supper time. And then we did that same thing again: line up. Even after supper, we went upstairs to the gym and we had half an hour church, sang hymns and said, 'Our Father who art in heaven' and the little ones went to bed at seven. Just schedule, schedule, schedule, it was like that."

I overdid it by babying my kids

"That's all I ever knew. I think I even ran my family like that. I had my kids in bed by seven. My older kids had to be in bed by nine. My daughter laughs when she thinks about it cause when she went through teen age she says, 'Boy, when I saw night time, I saw night time!'

You know, cause I had them in bed by nine. I guess that's the only rule I ever knew, you know, you had to do it. I think one thing good I got out of residential school was getting them to bed on time. I never fought with them in the morning to get them up, they got up on their own cause they got enough sleep, ten, eleven hours sleep. But, you can only do that for so long until they realize that they need to be teenagers. I robbed them of their teenaged life. Kids will act it out later on in life, if you don't allow them to be free.

I think I really made a mistake cause I thought if I got angry at them, they'd run away from home. If I ask them to do something, they're gonna get angry and we're gonna fight, so I think I overdid it by babying my kids, you know. I'm their mother, I'm supposed to look after them. I'm the mother, I'm supposed to care for them. I'm the mother, I'm supposed to cook. I think even in high school, I was still doing their laundry for them. But I guess, in order to keep my children, I did it for them. They're not going to leave if mother does everything at home."

I was involved with my children

"I've always been active, I guess because of what happened to me as a child, I've always been really active. I helped with the nursery school when it started on the reserve and

then I went and helped in the kindergarten. I went to all the P.T.A. meetings that ever happened, I was involved with my children."

Separate the behaviour from the person

"We moved here in '72 because when I was on the reserve, my children were starting to do nothing but walk around on the reserve. There was nothing to do on the reserve expect walk around and get into mischief, trying to stay out late, or start drinking or sniffing gas, because it was a fishing town and there was lots of boats there. And I was at the point that I was starting to hate them, and I didn't want to hate them.

As I learned, it was their behaviour that I didn't like, not them that I hated. I learned that not too long ago: separate the behaviour from the person. And I couldn't take it, every time that police car went by my house, they were going to stop by. 'Got your kid, he's done this, he's done that'. To a point it was shameful. I think it was more shame."

I kept the language

"Then I moved on up to the college. The kids were all in school so I thought, 'I'd go back to school and get my upgrading', so I went to the college there. And then they offered a program at the University there, in linguists, if you were fluent in your language, they'll teach you their international writing system at U Vic.

I always told people that I must be very stubborn cause I kept the language because we were forbidden to speak it and I was in residential school for ten years and we were forbidden to speak it. I was there for a year and a half I think in the linguists program and then

I got hired to teach the language in junior high school for three years."

I think it's just through continuous education that I've learned to heal

"I think it's just through continuous education that I've learned to heal. As an adult, I've volunteered left and right, I've trained and I think it's all coming together.

I think my first volunteer job that I really liked is the street kids office, A.S.K. - the association for street kids. I volunteered there for five years, I think. Just going there three times a week, answering calls and just sitting around and street kids would come in and have coffee and just sit around. The executive director, he was good. He trained us along the way. Then I went to children's sexual abuse survival series. I volunteered there and answered calls for about a year and they trained us, you know if you get a phone call how to handle a phone call. You know, don't over react, don't under react.

I also volunteered at the Women's Sexual Assault Centre, where I answered calls and I did photocopying and made sure I knew what each counsellor was doing. They were really good with giving you instructions all the time, all the places I worked and volunteered for.

I volunteered for the meals on wheels. We delivered meals to people who couldn't cook their own, once a week or twice a week, we brought meals to them.

I also went into the training program with the transition house, where we learned stories about who you attract. You attract the guy who has the same behaviour - if you're in an abusive home life, your spouse will be an abuser. It was interesting, we saw that movie 'One hit leads to another' and the guy that was in it was an abuser and he said, 'When I saw that girl, I told myself I'm going to marry her. Didn't know her, but what she had written on

her forehead was 'Take me and beat me'." And that's what I learned you attract. If you come from an abusive relationship, a lot of abuse at home, that's what you attract.

I also trained with 'Nobody's Perfect' where you do parenting, facilitate parenting with mothers of zero to five kids. Share and learn parenting skills. That's a good program. The other one I trained in was called Parents in Crisis, where you teach parents how to handle discipline. I learned that from the co-facilitator that worked with me, she doesn't say 'How you punish your kids', but 'How do you discipline your kids'?"

It taught me how to listen. I learned that you have to treat people equal

"I took my life skills coaches' training program which was twelve weeks. It was hard. it was a really hard training program. They say it's like a treatment centre. They say if I'm going to work with people, I have to have healed. I can't help someone whose been abused if I've been abused myself and I've never fixed that. And I'm glad I took it because it taught me a lot. It taught me how to listen. I always try really hard if someone comes to me and I'm writing, I put my pen down or turn my radio off. Because people that come in here are important. And I always tell people, 'If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be here. We need one another'.

I used to talk about how mean some teachers were. They were really teachers, they talked down to you. After I took my life skills coaches' training, we had to talk to each other eye to eye level. But teachers stand up at the front and you're sitting down on a chair and they talk down to you. And that's how I talked to my kids for a while, I used to say, 'I pay the bills in this house and you listen to me. If you don't like it, out you go.' Probably worse than that.

like 'get the hell out of here... what I say goes in this house.' And that's what I knew. if you didn't like it, out you go. And in my life skills coaches' training program, I learned that you have to treat people equal. And what you give out comes back to you.

I had a young fellow stay with me and I'm really glad I took those courses cause it taught me how to talk to him. He said no one listens to him so I said 'Sit down and I'll listen to every word that you have to say.' That he could actually sit on the chesterfield and I could sit on the other chesterfield and we can exchange without shouting at each other."

You have to validate your feelings

"I learned from one of my grandchildren that to listen is so much easier between you and another person. He says that nobody ever listens and so I said, 'Sit down and I'll listen to you'. So, he comes and he talks and he'll cry if he needs to cry and I don't make fun of him for crying. Anybody that comes in the office and they feel like they need to cry, I tell them it's o.k. You have to validate your feelings. They're yours and no body can take it from you. You know, if you're angry, it's o.k. to be angry, but how you display it is important. We were taught that if you don't talk about it, you'll go home and kick the cat. The poor cat gets it'."

I learned to use 'I' statements

"I learned not to use 'you'. 'If you behaved', 'If you didn't argue', 'If you didn't stay out so late, you wouldn't get in trouble.' I learned this from one of those training program, I think it was the 'Ready or Not' program, that you don't use the 'you' cause they get defensive. They get defensive, and the walls go up. I learned to use 'I' statements."

I think putting all these little things together is healing

"So, I've done a lot of training and that's what really healed me. You know, that's the healing part of my life. Somebody out there has an answer. And I share them. My friend taught me, 'What you think of me is none of my business'. If you say something to me that I don't like, I take it as information. What I do with it is my business.

Another friend said I should have gone to visit him, but I didn't. We learned not to say 'should have'. Instead: wouldn't it been nice if I'd gone to visit him, but I didn't and he died and I never got to see him. So, you learn all these little lessons from people.

We had a young fellow at work here and he said, 'If you have a negative thought in your mind, get rid of it so it doesn't come out.'

I think putting all these little things together is healing. If I think about it, it really makes sense because if I have a negative thought about somebody, I say to myself, 'What are you doing?' So, I think all the training programs that I've had is what carried me through. So, it's a learning. Every training program I've had, it seems to just be coming together. I think that's where my healing is."

I had to learn how to take it as information

"My kids have told that they hated living with me and my husband cause we don't talk. We just assume everything. We assume you're supposed to know what I want. You assume that I want to go shopping, but you never ask me. You assume that I need to go for a ride, but you never ask me. You know, that's the trouble I always get into, is assuming.

Hearing my children talk about this - and I had to learn how to take it as information

what they said about me and my husband - it was true. But through my training, I didn't get angry at them. It's my learning, and I think my children have learned through that."

He seemed to heal faster once I started letting go

"I started going to support group meetings when my son became suicidal and I learned shared parenting skills and I learned from a friend of mine that they have to be responsible for what they do. If they choose to drink, if they choose to do drugs, there are consequences that they have to face and no matter how you try to baby them, it gets worse.

I find it hard, but I guess that's teaching them responsibility. But I leave it with them. I know that we have to give them responsibility. Which is something I just learned - not to interfere with them - a little while ago. You know, they have to be responsible.

I went to a drug and alcohol training program for a week, then I realized that I was burying my own kids. Every time I gave them a dollar, I was taking a shovel full out of the ground. That I was putting my own kid into the ground. That was hard! And then one of them tried to ask me for money and I said 'No' and they said, 'That's o.k. at least I tried'. That was it, he took it. And that same young fellow said, "Let me go, I can do it on my own." And he seemed to heal faster once I started letting go. It's important to get over the shame, the shame-based stuff. When you do, it becomes healthy shame. You start opening up, letting go of all the shame. Like, your teenagers are doing teenage stuff, your children are into alcohol or your children are into drugs. If you can talk about it openly, it becomes healthy shame."

We talk until we know it feels better

"My cousin, he's having a hard time right now. He's really having a hard time, I feel his pain for him now. So we sit there and we talk until we know it feels better and then we end up with a joke. I think his way is Indian Life Skills and mine is life skills through another way. You never leave somebody hanging, you always make sure they feel better before you part with them.

I made a friend with a girl, two of us got together and we used to visit this lady. Two of her sons died in an airplane crash together. And we spent hours and hours with her, three, four o'clock in the morning we stayed with her. And we became very close.

I have my friend here that I'll call. Sometimes we don't hear from each other for a long time and I'll give her a call and see how she's doing."

Plant a seed with your grandchildren

"Thank goodness for all this training I've had cause I've learned to use it. I couldn't use it with my children, so I used it with my grandchildren. That's what I was taught in the coaches training program. If you can't work with your husband or if you can't work with your children, plant a seed with your grandchildren. Then they can - when they learn how to talk, they can start talking to you and they can start talking to their Grandpa. At least start something.

You know, they say it's seven generations, I don't know where that came from. Mine's gonna be my great, great granddaughter before it comes out of our family."

You know you have a big family, you're not alone

"I'm still learning. My Aunt and my cousin on my Mother's side are really strong cultural people. And what they do is they try to include relatives. And my cousin, he's had potlatches and what he does is he recognizes and acknowledges all his relatives that's coming from his dad's side of the family. He acknowledges uncles' kids, he acknowledges aunties' kids, makes sure they're included. It seems to me, my goodness, you know you have a big family, you're not alone.

I'm just learning and if I need to know, I'll go and ask him. He's very good, what he learned, he learned from his Mom. His mom was the one that helped me in linguistics. She always asked if there was anything you need to know. 'Do you understand me? She would say that in Kwak wa luk. And if I said 'yes' or 'no' she would take time to explain it to you.

I have two friends that are very good, they included me in anything that happened. If there's a meeting, or there is anything, they always phone me up and I went.

And my nephew, he's still alive, we talk on the phone a lot. He always speaks Kwak wa luk and I go along with it and I always tell him, 'I lost again' because I start speaking English first."

I think the culture has really been strong

"I think with the potlatch, it seems to bring family together because everyone is related and everyone knows that they have a part in it. My mother did the wolf dance, so I get it. I got the wolf dance because my mom had it. And because I figure I'm too old, I wanted to give it to my daughter, so she gets it. It's important to let people know this is our family and this

is who's all in it and these are the dances that they have. And when I don't understand, sometimes I get out of hand and I phone somebody and they say, "No, that's not how you do it" and I learn from them.

So I think the culture has really been strong. My youngest boy, on his own, I have to give him lots of credit, he goes to the museum, he reads books, he learns, he works with cedar a lot. He makes regalia and he makes blankets and he makes vests and he listens to old tapes of family songs and dances.

My daughter, she was more or less like me, she wasn't too involved in the culture till her younger brother had an Indian wedding and she was in there and helping with the Indian blankets and learning how to dance, and that kind of stuff. Then her son, her oldest boy is quite involved. He learns how to sing, he owns a drum and he'll be getting initiated in maybe a year or so. So the culture part lets you know who you're related to.

I lost that when I was in residential school. I only learned, not even a year ago, that songs belong to certain families. When a song belongs to someone, the ladies from that area do the dancing. The people from Wispioux do their dance, then the next song comes from Fort Rupert so the Fort Rupert ladies dance. I just thought they danced, till my girlfriend told me that the songs belong to certain people."

<u>You have to connect</u>

"I think my biggest fault is, I don't know how to fix it, I have, two, three nieces and a nephew that I don't connect with. And they got into trouble cause I don't. When I was in training, they asked 'Well, what do you have to do about it? At least meet half way, you

know, if you can't do it, at least try to go halfway with it.'

When we talk to each other, we talk like we know we're related, but we just don't see enough of each other. It's like those old childhood days when you had family but you never ever lived with them. I think that's my biggest problem is, my sister's kids, not connecting as much as other people, the rest of the family.

I guess it's that same old thing again, why bother? That's the way it is, don't need to connect. That's still back, it's in the back of my head and it has to come out. You have to connect. Why bother about it, why bother about it? That's probably my other greatest fault. They've got their own lives."

Making a negative into a positive

"I guess what we do is take it as information. So, all these programs that I've gone to, I've learned a lot. You're never too old to learn. You learn the surviving skills. I learned also, from Parents in Crisis, they make a positive out of a negative, 'Well, what did you learn from it?'

The one I like was the thing about being lazy. They always called us "Lazy, Stupid". The lazy one is "Well, I'm sharing my work. Saving my work for another time. I'm letting other people work with me." And stupid - "I'm just storing it all in here waiting to use it when the time comes." Or a sensitive person, sometimes our kids are called cry-babies. And we were taught that a sensitive person has a lot of feelings. Really nice soft ones. I really like that - making a negative into a positive."

I put the little lost child in a corner

"I think I spent my days with that abandoned child, rejection feeling, but now I've learned how to open. I've reached out to all my family members. I think that's probably what it is. I put the little lost child in a corner. I always had to stand in a corner when we were in residential school and we got in trouble, you stood in a corner. That was an awful feeling, you know you were punished, you know you did wrong, everyone knows you were bad.

As a child, I didn't know what family was. But after all the training and learning how to ask and learning how to take put downs as information, and accepting it and reaching out to people. "

Sarah

Sarah was born in Sidney in 1948, a member of the Coast Salish Nation. She attended Kuper Island Residential School from 1955-1962.

Sarah has been active in Addictions work for many years. Currently, she is a Native Support Worker in Drug and Alcohol Services.

Sarah created three collages that represented her healing journey. The collages integrated pictures and phrases cut from magazines. She referred to these collages as she shared her healing narrative.

I gotta quit this drinking

"I quit drinking about '86. I quit because I saw that our kids didn't want to come home any more while all that alcohol was around. I had a quick temper, I used to have a really bad temper. I was just raising hell.

One night, I went into a drunken rage. I would flash in to what I was saying, then fade out again. I could hear myself talking, but I couldn't stop myself. I was raging at my kids. I remember saying things like 'And furthermore...', 'Do you know what that means?' and I'd just fade out again.

The next day, I didn't want to see anybody, I felt such remorse, I felt so bad! I really didn't know what to do because the kids were saying they didn't want to come home with me. They didn't want to travel back home with me, they wanted to stay with my sister in Calgary. It really upset me. I said, 'Gee, I gotta quit this, I gotta quit this drinking. It's awful.' That was 1978. I just quit.

But I still wasn't happy, I wasn't going to A.A. then. I signed up for a life skills class and I started to change, I started to heal different things that made a lot of sense to me. Then I realized I could quit drinking for a long time, but somebody just joking would say, 'Wanna beer?' and I'd say 'Sure'. And I'd start all over again. I was that kind of a drinker. I guess they call it a binge drinker."

I can't go on like this

"Then I became a drug and alcohol worker, I became a worker here on the reserve, and I was setting up all kinds of things, healing circles, this and that, workshops galore. We were really rallying up the people and everything was so monumental like, I would be busy from 7 in the morning until midnight, just being with people. You know, day in and day out, day in and day out. It took its toll on me and I really got physically sick. I had to go in for heart surgery, that's how much I really internalized everything, I didn't even know I was doing all that.

I think that was the turning point for me, because I thought, 'I can't go on like this, I don't have the skills to do all that I'm trying to do.'

So, I went and signed up for school and I started to learn more about the historical background of our people. And then I started to realize that it took us five or six generations to be where we are at today, and a five year drug and alcohol program wasn't going to change everything. That sorta made me aware of 'I can't do it in this lifetime, but I can start it. I can't bank on changing the whole world'."

I have to start with a renewal of myself first

"I had to really look at my own issues, because what was happening to me as a worker and a leader in my community was that people would tell me all their different things and I'd just go home and (she breathes heavily) sit there and cry. These sounds would come out as I was crying and the sounds would often turn into a song. And it was just because all these problems were pushing my own buttons, so I had to stop, 'I can't change the community, I can't change the world, I can't change my family, I have to start with a renewal of myself first'."

I started to do my own journey

"I used to go to a lot of Al-Anon which was important because I quit drinking way ahead of my husband and it was really challenging at the time because I knew what it was doing to us but I couldn't point that out enough to him. 'It's killing us, it's killing you, it's killing everything.'

When I took this job, he drank harder than ever. More than ever, drunker than ever. you name it, he was going stronger at it. It put more pressure on our relationship because I had this job and he loved his drinks.

That was hard on me. It was a real conflict for years. I was at the point of getting out of the relationship because it was so abusive and I didn't need to be there. But it took me a long time, it took me a long time to finally take a step forward and say, 'That's it. I need to look after myself. This isn't working.' It seems like when I was ready to step forward, that's when he said, 'Enough. I've had enough.' I guess five impaired charges are enough, and all the

other things that piled up on him. He knew it. He knew when he'd had enough. So, that was the turning point in our relationship.

I think when it turned for him is when I stopped trying and I started to do my own journey. 'This is what I need, this is what I want, this is where I'm going.' And take ownership on what I want. That was really scary. He was able to pick up his own key and go with that. I couldn't do it for him, I wasn't meant to, it wasn't my job. But I also wanted happiness and peace and harmony within myself. Pick up all these pieces and start my own journey, looking at me."

It just takes one person in the relationship to change the whole relationship.

"I cut out the words, 'Don't wait for me'. What I got from this picture is my husband saying 'Don't wait for me to quit gambling. Don't wait for me to get into therapy'. Cause I've been in therapy and I've come a long way but that's because I didn't wait for him, I did it on my own. I really believe it just takes one person in the relationship to change the whole relationship. Because when I started to change, he started to change so that he could be in my space."

Getting in touch with my real feelings

"To go from the victim role to the nurturing role for myself and for other people. I have to start with myself first. It took a long time to get to me, it took four years before I got it. So, that's when I started paying attention to sexual abuse, and alcohol, and gambling and all the addictions I was doing. What I was trying to avoid by doing all that. And it was getting

in touch with my real feelings. The real me, and to look at all that pain and experience and feel it and then let it go.

I just got tired of being the way I was. And the way I was that I was full of rage, I was a rageoholic. I was full of anger. And it spilled over into my relationship, it spilled over into my children, my parenting, and I had to look at where that rage was coming from, where the sadness was, and the sorrow that I carried."

A lot of my healing was going back and dealing with all those hurts

"My husband and I went to Round Lake Treatment Centre. I had quit drinking for so long, and I did start to go to A.A. and Al -Anon. I changed a lot. So, when we went to round lake, I said, 'Oh, that's great, he's in treatment and everything going to be o.k. now.' When I got there, I broke down. I really allowed myself to break down and fall apart. Whatever I needed to do. So, they kept me and they let him go home. (laughter). I was really neurotic. I was really insane from living like this for so long. I became part of the insanity and I didn't even know it. Because there was so much tension and so much hurt. I'd get hurt and angry when my husband was drinking - and at really important times, like a birthday for one of the children, or a marriage, or something. It was just constant. I was hurting so badly and I never dealt with it. I just said, 'oh well' and go on. A lot of my healing was going back and dealing with all those hurts.

So they kept me in Round Lake and it helped me a lot. It wasn't easy, it was pretty difficult in fact. As one of my friends said, 'No body ever died from getting well.' But it feels like it, especially when I first started out. But I did get caught up big time in this gambling."

It becomes a danger walk

"All along, I kept seeing a counsellor once a week. I kept getting stuck on the gambling for so long. I thought, 'What could be wrong with it, because we were all doing it. Everybody's gambling. It's a way of life. We need to have fun too, we can't be all serious, joyless' - that was my thinking. But the counsellor said, 'So if everybody's going off the cliff, you're going to go because they're all doing it?' There was a big struggle in me all the time about it, and it becomes a danger walk. You spend your whole pay check, not worry about your food money, you borrow money, you hock your stuff, your jewellery. I never did get that far, but I was going that way.

We were pulling out a $20 and another $20 and another $20 and then we'd be broke and then we'd be sorry and then we'd be living on dried fish and a sack of rice. Just living poorly and we didn't have to do that. We could get by in a good way with all our needs.

A lot of the time, I can deceive myself from looking after myself. I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't even put salt on my food any more! These are good things that I'm doing, but there is still stuff that I am doing. But there is still something falling on my head, big time now, with gambling. I like gambling, it's o.k. to gamble periodically. But I was really going overboard. Every night I was at the black jack table. I'm staying away from it now."

Healing is getting lots of information

"I go to a school called Salishan Training Institute in Naramata and it's Native owned and operated and I guess they get grants and stuff like that from medical services. And their task is to train and educate health workers like myself to, on the reserve, do real life, real

drama, real stuff. So, it gets us ready for that. It involves a little political science, sociology, psychology, early childhood, bits of everything in there. And I think learning all that, it put me in the space of looking at where I've been and where my people have been, so that we know, I know where I'm going now, where my people are going.

I did go with the idea 'Well, this is going to help me with my job, and my clients' but then it would always help me.'

When I went to Salishan, I had a three week course in family violence and addictive behaviours. That was really powerful. I learned a lot, and I shared all that information with my husband. And from that information, we started to move in our relationship towards intimacy. Getting beyond talking about salt and pepper and the weather. It was that course and the counselling therapy that really clicked in terms of moving. The next course I'm getting into is called 'Individual and Family Change'.

Healing is getting lots of information. I attended many, many workshops on sexual abuse, on alcohol in the family, on alcoholism and the individual, grief and loss, - major stuff on grief and loss. My own personal story and my family's personal story and my nation's story, really lots, lots of information."

<u>To say it wasn't my fault</u>

"I looked at the loss of my Mom, my biological mother, and I looked at residential school, leaving home. Can you picture a five year old leaving home forever, for good, to come back all educated? I had to look at that, and the sense of the longing, all those years what I looked for and didn't know what was wrong. And, operating from that magical

thinking age, you know, I always thought that there was something wrong with me, it was me, but it wasn't, it was the system that was there. To change that and to say it wasn't my fault. As an adult now, I can see now."

The real stories of all of us

"It wasn't until really lately that I started to look at the adults and what it must have felt like to send their kids off to residential school. You can read about it in textbooks but, you know, the real stories of all of us, what it was like to watch someone, a little person leaving home, and they're never going to come back until they're like white people. We're all the victims of that reality, generations that have so much to go through. But I think the main thing is that there is lots of us on the healing path. And being the best that we can for ourselves."

To let go of different people

"So, there was lots of behaviours that I needed to change and lots of thoughts that I needed to change within myself to let my husband and my people go, to be, to do whatever they can do. And my children, they're young adults now, and the tendency is still to give them money, fix up their situation, and get on with their life. They'll never learn how to be self-reliant or self-sufficient as long as I'm there."

Let's look at some options

"Healing goes on and on and there's more and more but always it comes back to me. It comes back to each person doing their own journey and influencing other people and showing them that their is a safe way and a good way to be. But to pull them all together too, because what happens is that when people come in and say, 'I wanna quit drinking' and you say, 'Let's look at some options', and you go through all the options, and allow them to choose whatever they would like to see happen. Because that's what this is all about, oppression and no choices at all. Addiction is no choice at all. And power, there's no choice, but when you start to empower the people, empower your families, you start to give choices. 'Here are some of the options you can choose. I can't make you do it, it's all up to you, and whatever you want to see happen. These are some of the ways that I helped myself move into sobriety, but you don't have to take it, the choice is yours'."

Little children

"In residential school, there were no choices. No decisions that we made. And today, the government is still like that with us and the more we talk, the more we're called cry-babies or whatever they call us, 'What do they know?', we're always discounted.

I had a dream about a month ago, in this dream, we were all running along this river bank and there was a panic. And I turned and there was all these soldiers running along side of us and when I looked back, all of us had turned into little children. And all these soldiers, we were running away from the soldiers. And just like that, we all started diving into the water, into the river. And I don't know if it was me, or if it was The Spirit above, and the river

was shallow at first, and the soldiers were running in the water. And this voice was saying, "Move to the left, there's a soldier, his leg is right next to you, go that way, there's a soldier coming right at you, and it was guiding all these little children. And then when I looked down the river, these kids were swimming away, all these people were swimming away from the soldiers.

And I woke up. And it was a real powerful dream because I thought, "That's the way the government still treats us today, like we're little children." And when little children speak, adults don't pay attention to what they're saying. They'll just nod and say, 'Oh that's nice', they don't really listen to little children, and that's the way the government treats us, like we don't know what we're talking about, we're just imagining things. They really minimize whatever it is that we're trying to deal with, like land issues or whatever, Native Rights and justice. I guess that's what the dream meant to me, we're still treated like little children."

I never ever heard of culture until I started our healing

"I do a lot of the sweatlodge ceremonies, and I do a lot of extended family work. Using Indian names, connecting to family, to the land, to the universe, to our songs, to our teachings. But, always relying on myself.

To me, there always has been a war in going to residential school. I never ever heard of culture until I started our healing. I didn't. It was then that I noticed that the prayers were different, the ceremony was different, everything."

To get my family involved in counselling therapy so that we can all change in a meaningful, purposeful way

"They tell us to start with ourselves, then the family, then the community, then the Nation. I'm as far as family now. Me and my daughter, we went and sat in on some joint counselling sessions - that was really hard, it was really powerful. I was really scared because I always felt like a really bad parent, and there was some really hurtful things that I did to my children. Now, when we talk about it with a trained counsellor, it puts into light where I was at at that time, why I did all that. I also did one with one of my sons. I've asked all four children at different times to come with me. It's to get my family involved in counselling therapy so that we can all change in a meaningful, purposeful way."

I have a really good network

"I still go to A.A. and I have a really strong network of different counsellors, psychologists that I talk to. These are not counsellor-client relationships, but colleagues or co-workers. People that I refer people to. I end up talking to them. So I have a really good network that way. Really, really good. They give me feedback on me and my behaviour and my thoughts and call me on it. Knowing all that and using Virginia Satir's work."

We're looking for a safe place to land

"I like that story about the Eagle. I don't quite know where the story comes from but it's the story of all of the earth being on fire. And the eagle is flying around and around, looking for a safe place to land, but everything is on fire. But eventually, a fire does go out

somewhere, and the eagle can land. Then, the eagle can start landing all over.

All of us that were sent off to residential school, we're the eagles, we've been flying around ever since. We're looking for a safe place to land.

And there's a prophecy, a Hopi prophecy. The Hopi's said that when the Eagle has landed on the moon, our people will start looking at alcohol and all these issues and our people will change the world because of our healing. And the Eagle landed on the moon in 1969 and that was the turning point."

Walking the red road

"This is where I'm at now. Walking the red road. Sometimes, in certain groups, they'll talk about walking on the red road. The red road takes you to higher places. That's living with sobriety, living in a good way, healing, passing on the healing, sharing and caring. The red road is the good road, the road to life."

Chapter 6

Examination and Discussion of the Narratives

The healing narratives included in this document represent five distinct and unique experiences. They are inherently constructivist in nature, in that they are oral presentations wherein five individuals create and explicate meaning about their own lives (Hoskins and Peavy, 1994; Mahoney, 1991).

The following discussion is designed to highlight key healing factors unique to each person's experience.

Art's story

Art's story is a lyrical narrative which emphasizes a very personal journey of healing. As described by his wife, Art's story represents the evolution of a man from victim, to survivor, to warrior.

A significant component in Art's healing experience can be attributed to his connection with his own cultural heritage. Traditional First Nations' ceremonies, teachings, and rituals form the backbone of a culture that has sustained Art throughout his life.

Art establishes that his own family of origin was firmly rooted in traditional teachings. The closeness he felt to his parents and his grandparents seemed to have provided a strong foundation for healing. Despite the years Art spent in residential school and later in drug and alcohol addiction, he was able to return to this base and begin healing.

Ironically, Art reveals that some of the Traditional Teachings were bestowed upon

him in residential school. Although the cultural activities were limited and could not begin to redress the abuse that Art experienced, he recognizes the Tse-shaht ceremonies as a means of coming "full circle again".

Although Art had many challenging years ahead of him, the cultural framework was in place. Building on this was the influence of many people, predominantly women. Among these supportive women was Art's Grandmother. Details about rituals, conversations, and activities that the two of them shared were dominant to Art's narrative. In many ways, Art's grandmother acted in a variety of capacities: as a familial support, as a teacher of culture, and as a healer or healing guide.

In her role as a healer, the grandmother provided Art with a forum in which Art was permitted to express emotions about his experience at residential school. In a ritual similar to a Gestalt technique, the tree, acting as a substitute for the men who sexually, emotionally, and physically abused Art, was the recipient of directed emotions. Through this expressive work, Art's grandmother also acted as a cultural teacher, sharing fundamental Traditional Teachings. Thus, the expression of emotion was not an end in itself, but rather a means for imparting an important tenant of First Nations' world view.

Another means through which Art's grandmother acted as a spiritual elder was through the cleansing ritual that took place in Neah Bay Washington. The ritual was a transformational experience in that Art was given an opportunity to use prayer in his Ditidit language, express reverence to his grandparents, and experience a ceremonial cleansing. In so doing, the pain of the past began to be replaced by a strong connection with ancestors, the natural environment, and his Higher Power.

Such invaluable love and support strengthened the sense of family as foundation, which Art continues to recognize as a crucial element of healing. His wife and children provide Art with a continuing support system and a deep sense of interconnection and love that continues to be a significant factor in his healing journey.

In addition to these traditional teachings, Art accessed western counselling and support groups. The Tsowtunlelum Treatment Centre integrated both western and traditional therapies, thus drawing on the strengths of both practices. Art also mentions his experience in couples counselling, wherein his healing work is extended to include his relationship with his wife.

Learning to trust some 'White people' has been another movement towards healing for Art. A pivotal experience which began this process of learning to trust was provided by his bunk mate at a logging camp, who experienced anger, disbelief, and compassion towards Art's experience at residential school. This provided Art with what was perhaps his first positive encounter with a White man. The trust that Art continues to emanate is apparent in his willingness to share his story with friends and strangers alike.

As Art continues his healing journey, he nourishes his people with the gift of his paintings, jewellery, carvings, and drawings. Producing fine art is a means through which he is able to share his skills and strengths with other First Nations People. It is through his continual healing that Art is able to participate in his community and share his gifts with others.

Elizabeth's Story

Elizabeth's story details a process of growing self-awareness and an ardent acceptance of responsibility for the healing journey. Viewing healing as a life-long commitment comprised of many stages or steps that are continually revisited, Elizabeth's path demonstrates an evolution of understanding, and a firm commitment to change.

Elizabeth's narrative highlights the experience of balancing two cultural ideologies, which she likens to parallel railroad tracks. Raised in a traditional First Nations' home, Elizabeth's childhood was rooted in her own cultural context. Although she has not always been aware of the impact of this foundation, it has acted as a source of strength and guidance throughout her life. Through the presence of culture, Elizabeth has found the strength to question the teachings and values of non-Native society, and has assisted many others in their homecoming to First Nations culture.

Most striking about Elizabeth's narrative is the acknowledgment of her position as a role-model. The acceptance of this began with her own children, and expanded to include supporting and educating extended family members, friends, social workers, students, the police force, and many other community agencies. Role-modelling provides Elizabeth with a means through which she is able to address concerns and questions regarding the history of First Nations People and the current living experience within her own community. In addition to providing information to those who benefit from her knowledge, Elizabeth also has learned when it is time to let go of helping others so that they may help themselves.

To counterpoise the assistance she provides for others, Elizabeth also readily accepts

help. Her husband, through his work in A.A., has been a companion and support on the road to recovery. Utilizing both western therapy and First Nations' traditions, Elizabeth and her husband continue to walk the parallel roads of healing.

The suicide of friends and relatives was a catalyst which propelled Elizabeth to delve further into a healing journey. Witnessing the impact and pain that the suicides of relatives caused her and others, Elizabeth acknowledged the significant grieving work that needed to be done. Her involvement with support groups and healing circles continues to sustain her own process as well as the healing experiences of others.

Spiritual guidance in the form of self-reliance and self-care is crucial to Elizabeth's healing journey. Through discovering her own personal spiritual connection and embracing the spiritual element inherent in her cultural tradition, Elizabeth continues to engage in a recovery process from the spiritual abuse she experienced in residential schools.

Although Elizabeth admits that "the pain never goes away", she recognizes the progress she has made through her continual work. Bearing in mind the importance of working for future generations, she continues to walk the road of healing, inviting others to join along.

Jerri's story

Jerri's narrative encompasses a unique experience as both witness to and participant of the residential school experience. Many of her impressions of residential school were gleaned vicariously through the trauma of others, and well as through her own experience at

school.

Jerri's assertion that "residential school impacted me even before I was born" is a significant testimony to the long-term, community-wide effects of the residential school system. By acknowledging the ramifications that school had on her mother, Jerri demonstrates the cyclical nature of residential school syndrome.

A cornerstone the First Nations' world view was embodied in Jerri's grandfather, whose deep belief in the integrity of Native life provided her with an cultural infrastructure that she could return to on her healing journey. Augmenting this is the significant connection Jerri has with nature, and the healing powers that the natural world hold for her.

Jerri's story is pivotal to understanding the history of residential schools in that it articulates a strong element of resistance to oppression. Inspired by fellow students in residential school, Jerri's refusal to submit to the subjugation of her race paved the way for a cultural homecoming. By transforming wounding and violent experiences into a call for action, Jerri's determination to help herself and others became an inspirational force that propelled her along her healing journey.

Political activism inevitably led to a renewed involvement with First Nations' healers and cultural practitioners. In aligning herself with the Red Power Movement, Jerri had the opportunity to construct a personal analysis of the oppression of her people and begin what continues to be a thoughtful and proactive rendering of social and cultural issues.

Jerri's healing has also been augmented through her experience in western therapy and the admirable tenacity with which she addresses the issues in her life. Through her courage, and her unrelenting conviction that change is possible, Jerri exemplifies her own doctrine: "If

a few people put their minds together, they can accomplish a whole lot".

Despite her confidence in the power of people, Jerri also acknowledges that "colonialism never goes away." She speaks of her experience in a fine arts program at university, citing the racist attitudes of the teacher as yet another example of cultural and religious suppression. Yet even in the face of such aggressive opposition, Jerri continued her studies and graduated with a B.F.A. degree. True to her form, she acted as a support system for other Native women who experienced similar racism in subsequent years.

This integration of spirituality, education, cultural identity, and counselling have drawn out inherent strengths in Jerri which now allow her to give back to her community. Using her gifts for visual and performing arts as well as her intelligence and communication skills, Jerri is an important role model and guide for others on the healing path, those alive and those yet unborn.

Kelly's story

Kelly's story attests to the power of training and education in healing work. Without a family base to fall back on, Kelly's healing journey began in adulthood and has been sustained by her continual willingness to engage with knowledge presented to her through seminars, training intensives, volunteer organizations, and the personal experiences of others.

Kelly's involvement with community agencies is extensive; through her diverse work, she has gleaned a great deal of practical information and experience that she has successfully translated into self-understanding and personal change.

A large component of Kelly's healing journey is learning about communication skills and equality amongst people. The tenaciousness with which Kelly sought this information is impressive, for she continually exposed herself to the teachings and guidance available to her from many divergent areas. By engaging with the new information, Kelly successfully transformed passive, blaming beliefs into a proactive and expansive world view. This determination and spirit also displays itself in the fact that despite ten years at residential school, Kelly has nevertheless been able to retain her Native language.

The shift from thinking "that's the way life is" to realizing that she could consciously alter her life has transformed Kelly's experience of her own family as well as of herself. Reframing feelings of hate and shame into an acknowledgement of learned behaviour, Kelly's relationships with her children and relatives has substantially improved.

Perhaps the most striking example of the personal work she has done is reclaiming her extended family. Growing up without a mother and father, Kelly has sought out relatives and garnered them to her side as a means to reunite herself with her culture. Honouring these relatives are important resources, Kelly has recovered a connection to her own culture and traditions.

Kelly's story is significant in that it attests to the impact that residential school had on parenting skills. Having no other role model of parenting, Kelly speaks openly about how she raised her children in a manner similar to how she was treated in residential school. Referring to such factors as a rigid bedtime schedule, lack of communication between family members, and an authoritarian style of mothering. Kelly's story exemplifies the many ramifications residential schools had on generations of First Nations People.

Surrendering control over her children's lives proved to be an important component in Kelly's healing. Learning to let her children make mistakes and assume responsibility for themselves was altering the conditioning of domination and control that was modelled to her at residential school.

Kelly continues her own healing process as well as helps others on their journeys. In her openness to the advice and information provided by others, Kelly has learned the art of sharing feelings and speaking honestly with others. In so doing, she acknowledges that she has reached out to others and "put the little lost child in the corner."

Through her work as a counsellor, Kelly continues to widen the circle of healing. Reaching out, listening, learning, and sharing are actions that continue to replace the negative residue of residential school.

Sarah's story

Sarah's narrative reveals a courageous journey of self-renewal and an unwavering dedication to personal growth. Striking parallels between her personal and professional life reveal a process of education and awareness about addictions, family violence, and healing. Sarah's growth as a drug and alcohol worker mirrors her own internal development, creating a symmetry of personal and professional worlds.

Notable is Sarah's sense of personal responsibility for her own change process and her conviction that to help others, she must first help herself. After many years of assuming responsibility for the concerns and problems of others, Sarah's solicitous efforts led to

physical and emotional illness. Struggling to free herself from this inclination and to focus on her own life instead, Sarah began the initial step of her healing path.

The initial movement forward was one that exacted a great deal of effort on Sarah's part. As her husband was still active with his addictions, Sarah was moving against formidable odds. Years of conflict followed until Sarah realized that it was time to focus exclusively on herself. Ironically, this was the seal that kept her marriage together. The result of this growth is that Sarah has become a source of inspiration to others and an experienced, supportive friend and partner.

Addiction work has acted as the backbone on which Sarah has engaged in her renewal process. Combating her own addictive behaviour and examining the process of switching addictions, Sarah was led to a deeper place of past hurts, abuses, and pain within her. In so doing, she accepted that alcohol and gambling were means through which she clouded the presence of her pain. As she acknowledges, it was necessary to "look at all that pain and experience and feel it and then let it go."

Not having been introduced to culture as a child, Traditional First Nations Teachings provided the welcoming embrace of culture. Learning about Native history and examining the effects of residential school and colonialism, Sarah's conviction to work on herself and with her own community grew in strength.

To compliment the traditional teachings, Sarah also utilized Western Therapy, an experience she continues to share with her family. In working along with family members, Sarah continues to work towards relinquishing her tendencies towards serving others, encouraging self-sufficiency instead.

Education and training provide additional resources, wherein Sarah has increased her practical knowledge of First Nations People and addictions. In so doing, Sarah has become an invaluable guide on the road to healing; an eagle searching for a place to land, and a leader on the Red Road.

Narrative Themes

This study sought to give a voice to five unique narratives of healing. The personal and subjective nature of each story has been exemplified via an individual discussion. By also addressing dominant themes in each narrative, it is my hope that a sensitive rendering of the material is more readily possible. Healing themes for each co-researcher are extrapolated via a quotation from the co-researcher.

Themes in Art's Narrative

Traditional First Nations' Culture:

> George Clutesi... he brought in cultural activities into the school... it kinda brought us part way back around that full circle again. We had some contact.

> We got to see a lot of really nice things; gambling games with songs, dances with songs, ceremonial blessings, weddings, that type of thing. And it was all done with

the Native language. I think that really helped a lot of us out as kids. We had that opportunity to see this stuff. We had something to fall back on.

Befriending a 'White' Person:

He told me, 'Look son, not all of us are like that...' Hearing that, I know that started shifting me, right at the age of fourteen. Coming from a white person, I think that had a really strong impact on who I was, that there was another side to it.

Family Support/Guidance:

We had a lot of closeness with grandparents...

One of the things that really pulled me out of it was my own parents... They knew there was something better there, and that's what they kept prodding...

Emotional Expression of Past Hurts:

So she made me start hitting him and I started working on that tree with both fists until my knuckles were bleeding.

A Cleansing Ritual:

> She would ceremonially bathe me, my grandmother....She had this rattle, and she started singing before she went in... I followed her in...

Spirituality:

> I know that we have a higher power. He's not called God, but he's a higher power, stronger than who we are as human beings, looks after everything. My Grandmother saying prayers to that higher power herself, it got me on the road to follow her.

Giving Back to the Community:

> After visiting all those old pieces in museums, I know that we still have a lot to contribute to our people. It becomes a real rush after a while when you do some thing for our people. I can contribute back to our people. Give it back to our roots. It's part of our healing.

Having a Support System:

> The thing that comes to mind is the power of women, because they've helped me out so much in the last 22 years. It's the women who are really doing the work in this area, and I get so much of my empowerment from women.

Recognizing that Something is Wrong:

> My first wife, she's passed away now, but she was one of the first people to see it... she'd ask me, 'what the fuck is your problem? You've got a really big problem and you have to get it off your chest' ... It just started this whole thing, started the ball rolling..

Western Therapy:

> I've had quite a bit of counselling, family counselling, couples counselling, and I went to Tsowtunelum. A six week program at a drug and alcohol treatment centre in Nanoose.

Looking at the Pain:

> It made me look at the underlying issues and I think those underlying issues helped me put this case with Plint into perspective. It made me get in touch with my feelings a lot more.

Traditional Teachings:

> And we learn that early with our people. One of the early teaching, 'are you going to benefit from that?' If the answer is 'no', stay away from it, there's not much point in doing it.'

Working for Future Generations:

> I think that with our children, it's going to be the really big turn around because what they see us doing as people, as human beings in talking about what hap pened to us, I think it makes them stronger.

Healing yet to come:

> I know someday I'm going to get the language back. Time is going to be right, and I'm going to be able to use it again.

Themes in Elizabeth's Narrative

Healing as a Process:

> I think it's a lot like grieving, when you start the healing process. I think you go from one stage to the next, and you feel very strong once you've gone into a next step, but you always go back.

Family Support / Guidance:

> I was fortunate that I started my life off in a very traditional household. You know, I grew up with my grandparents, my mom and dad were very traditional in their way of thinking.

Taking Responsibility:

> It took me a long time to realize - and it was a really painful process to come to the understanding that - I gotta take some responsibility for this.

Recognizing that Something is Wrong:

> I used to have this raging anger in me. I realized that this anger and this raging wasn't normal... I remember thinking, 'I don't get it, there's something wrong here'. But I didn't really know what it was.

Learning about Oppression:

> I realized how unvalued or devalued our culture had been. When I was at university, I realized how devalued, or how there was no value placed on my beliefs.

Learning to Take Power:

> So I started to realize that I didn't have to believe everything that I read, and everything that I was told.

Balancing Cultures:

> I realized that these two had to run together like a rail road track, one couldn't go without the other.

Traditional Teachings:

> I realized that I wasn't willing to give up this world of being traditional, and the kinds of teachings I had. I still used a lot of those traditional kinds of teachings in how I conducted myself.

Evaluating Losses:

> And this elder said to me 'Talk to me about your losses' and I kinda realized, oh. o.k. That's what it was really all about, was the loss of culture, it was the loss of family, loss of the home base, loss of home lands, loss of all those things that were important to us as far as having an identity, being a part of the teachings and the wisdom of those people, not having access to elders any more.

Becoming Proactive:

> I realized that I needed to be a role model, I had to immerse myself in my culture, that I had to go back to understanding what those teachings were really all about and make a commitment that every time I went home to a Potlatch, that I'd bring my children.

Learning from Others:

My husband's been involved in twelve step programs for probably ten years. One day, I sat and listened to him talking to somebody who had an eating disorder, just around what he had learned in a twelve step program. And I thought, 'wow, he's way ahead of me in understanding.'

Traditional First Nations Culture:

Going back to my culture is a commitment I have certainly made.

For me, it was recognition of the importance of my culture and using a lot of the healing ceremonies of my own culture and being brave enough to go and take a stand, because everything is very public.

Western Therapy:

Now I've done twelve step programs.

Helping Others:

> Their daughter is my godchild and I felt a real responsibility around that. I thought, 'I need to talk to her about this and see just what her mind set is about.' And again, that's around healing as well. Having that urge to teach other people.

Having a Support System:

> So, that's where our support group came out of. We don't go and talk about how our day was, we have to talk about this on-going healing process, about how that happens, and not just talk about the good times of it all, but really look at the bad times. And look at ourselves really critically, and how we are caring for ourselves on a day to day basis.

Letting go of the Responsibility for Others:

> It was my letting go finally, I just said, "I'm not dancing with you any more. This is yours now, I've done all I can, I can't be a part of it any more." I was really just enabling her in a lot of ways, rescuing her, and not validating her pain and allowing her to feel that pain.

Recognizing the Impact on Others:

> The next step in the healing is to be able to sit down and hear what my children have to say about the things that were not quite right in our relationship.

Working for Future Generations:

> Racism is alive and well, and it's now not so much a healing journey as it is teaching our kids coping mechanisms, giving them skills that will encourage them to feel that they want to be participating in this life and be part of society.

Letting go of Others' Opinions:

> I used to just walk off and take it very personally. Now I see it as 'it's your problem'. What you think about me is none of my business so don't tell me. I'm not interested. Don't even get in my face about it, cause you're not even going to get a reaction out of me any more.

Educating Others:

> I've gone around educating people - that's another part of my healing. I don't just go to the schools, I've gone to the police ... A part of my healing journey is going

and talking to social workers.

When I talked to First Nations kids in schools, we talk about the resistance that did happen.

Spirituality:

I look after myself more spiritually than I ever did before. Which means not just sitting and kneeling and praying and hoping that whoever it is up there is going to take it away from me, but praying to myself about giving myself inner strength and centring yourself to give yourself the direction to calm yourself, in order to be able to think about the direction.

Giving Back to the Community:

The big healing thing for me is making dance regalia. I've done a lot for the initiates, and I've talked to them about what that means, about the initiation, the process around that.

Healing Yet to Come:

I hope to become one of those hearty flowers.

Themes in Jerri's Narratives

Helping Others:

> I decided to be a kind of defender for the residential school kids, because of my cousin.

> I don't believe in committing suicide, I didn't believe in ending my life, so I thought 'at least I could be useful, so I think what I'll do is when I get out, I'll do something to help other people...

Recognizing that Something is Wrong:

> That's when I really started to think and realize that there was something really, really wrong with whatever was going on with us.

Family Support / Guidance:

> My grandfather was very strong in his belief of who he was. He really in his heart believed that our way was a healthy way and a good way ... So, all of the self-racism that was around me when I was growing up ... him being that way rein forced in me that I don't believe that stuff. I don't believe it because my grandpa

doesn't believe it.

Learning to Take Power:

But I also learned how people can take power... We did a petition and we stated all of our concerns... We voiced our demands to them...

Learning About Oppression:

We started studying colonization and we studied what happens to colonized people internally. I started understanding our own internalized racism.

Traditional First Nations' Culture:

And in those people, came a lot of traditional Medicine Men and Medicine Woman. This was my first exposure to the fact that we have our own healers, that we actually had our own way of healing, our own way of being.

Connection with Nature:

I really developed a strong relationship with nature and animals. And they were my comforters. In many ways, they really were my comforters. My strength came from them.

Traditional Teachings:

I think one of my favourite ones when I first started reading about Native People. was the story of Crazy Horse. And when I read about him, I really loved the philosophy and the teachings in there because I didn't know a lot about the teachings from home, except for the stories that my Grandpa told me.

Becoming Proactive:

I feel very lucky that at a very early age I learned that if a few people put their minds together, they can accomplish a whole lot.

Western Therapy:

I had to go for therapy, you know, regular therapy for sexual abuse and did that work on myself. I came from an alcoholic family, my father was an alcoholic, my step-father - my biological father died when I was six so Mom remarried and married someone who was an alcoholic. So I had to do the Al-Anon and the Adult Children of Alcoholics, and I went to Ka Ka Wis, to the family treatment centre, and took my children and myself there to work on ourselves.

Training Programs:

> We would bring in counsellors and other people who were in the social services field to come in and give us workshops in these modules. So, there were about 20 of us throughout the district that took these module training courses just to help us with our skills cause we were all new to what we were doing.

Giving Back to the Community:

> I know that I am a very intelligent person and I have a lot of experience and skill, but I will purposely work for organizations and groups that will allow me to give.

Having a Support System:

> I run a continual support group every Monday night for people who are suicidal or people who have relatives who are. So every monday night we get together, and it's on a rotation basis, we go from home to home, so we have a schedule of places and people know that they are welcome to come.

Spirituality:

> I see art very much as a healing tool, as a spiritual tool, and that's what I was trying to do and talk about, in terms of my work. Using it as healing, expressing it as healing, and also, the act of art is about spirituality.

Working for Future Generations:

> As a grandparent, as a person, it's my responsibility to pray for those generations yet unborn so that they will continue to survive.

Themes in Kelly's Narrative

Learning About Oppression:

> Must of been just the last two, three years I've got to understand parent's behaviours... I guess it's just in the last few years that I started to think 'can you imagine how the parents felt when their treasures were taken from them?' I never ever looked at it that way, I was into blaming.

Evaluating Losses:

We didn't get nurtured, there was no one to nurture us.

My dad became an alcoholic because he had no children, he had no one to look after. He died in a boat; I think he was leaving Alert Bay, you know, from drinking during winter.

They put so many rules on us at residential school... just schedule, schedule, schedule.

I robbed them of their teenaged life. Kid's will act it out later on in life, if you don't allow them to be free.

I think I really made a mistake cause I thought if I got angry at them, they'd run away from home. If I ask them to do something, they're gonna get angry and we're gonna fight, so I think I overdid it by babying my kids, you know.

Becoming Proactive:

I've always been active, I guess because of what happened to me as a child. I've always been really active. I helped with the nursery school when it started on the

reserve and then I went and helped in the kindergarten.

Western Therapy:

As I learned, it was their behaviour that I didn't like, not them that I hated. I learned that not too long ago: separate the behaviour from the person.

I learned not to use 'you' cause they get defensive. They get defensive, and the walls go up. I learned to use "I" statements.

Hearing my children talk about this - and I had to learn how to take it as information what they said about me and my husband - it was true. But through my training, I didn't get angry at them. It's my learning, and I think my children have learned through that.

Embracing the Language:

I always told people that I must be very stubborn cause I kept the language because we were forbidden to speak it and I was in residential school for ten years and we were forbidden to speak it. I was (at U of Vic) for a year and a half I think in the linguists program and then I got hired to teach the language in junior high school for three years.

Training Programs:

I think it's just through continuous education that I've learned to heal. As an adult, I've volunteered left and right, I've trained and I think it's all coming together.

Giving Back to the Community:

I always try really hard if someone comes to me and I'm writing, I put my pen down or turn my radio off. Because people that come in here are important. And I always tell people, 'if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be here. We need one another'.

Anybody that comes in the office and they feel like they need to cry, I tell them it's o.k. You have to validate your feelings. They're yours and no body can take it from you.

Helping Others:

He said no one listens to him, so I said, 'sit down and I'll listen to every word that you have to say.'

My cousin, he's having a hard time right now. He's really having a hard time. I feel his pain for him now. So we sit there and we talk until we know it feels better and then we end up with a joke.

Learning From Others:

Somebody out there has an answer. And I share them. My friend taught me. 'What you think of me is none of my business'... So, you learn all these little lessons from people... We had a young fellow at work here and he said, 'If you have a negative thought in your mind, get rid of it so it doesn't come out.' ... I think putting all these little things together is healing.

Having a Support System:

I started going to support group meetings when my son became suicidal...

I have two friends that are very good, they included me in anything that hap pened. If there's a meeting, or there is anything, they always phone me up and I went.

Letting go of the Responsibility for Others:

I know that we have to give them responsibility. Which is something I just learned - not to interfere with them - a little while ago. You know, they have to be responsible...

And he seemed to heal faster once I started letting go.

Working for Future Generations:

I couldn't use it with my children, so I used it with my grandchildren. That's what I was taught in the coaches training program. If you can't work with your husband or if you can't work with your children, plant a seed with your grandchildren. Then they can - when they learn how to talk, they can start talking to you and they can start talking to their Grandpa. At least start something.

Family Support / Guidance:

My cousin... I'm just learning and if I need to know, I'll go and ask him. He's very good, what he learned, he learned from his Mom. His mom was the one that helped me in linguistics.

I think I spent my days with that abandoned child, rejection feeling, but now I've learned how to open. I've reached out to all my family members. I think that's probably what it is. I put the little lost child in a corner... As a child, I didn't know what family was. But after all the training and learning how to ask and learning how to take put downs as information, and accepting it and reaching out to people.

Traditional First Nations' Culture:

I think with the potlatch, it seems to bring family together because everyone is related and everyone knows that they have a part in it. ... So I think the culture has really been strong... So the culture part lets you know who you're related to. I lost that when I was in residential school.

Traditional Teachings:

I only learned, not even a year ago, that songs belong to certain families. When a song belongs to someone, the ladies from that area do the dancing. The people from Wispioux do their dance, then the next song comes from Fort Rupert so the Fort Rupert ladies dance. I just thought they danced, till my girlfriend told me that the songs belong to certain people.

Healing Yet to Come:

> I think my biggest fault is, I don't know how to fix it, I have, two, three nieces and a nephew that I don't connect with.... I guess it's that same old thing again, why bother? That's the way it is, don't need to connect. That's still back, it's in the back of my head and it has to come out.

Reframing Negatives to Positives:

> I really like that - making a negative into a positive.

Themes in Sarah's Narrative

Recognizing that Something is Wrong:

> I quit drinking about '86. I quit because I saw that our kids didn't want to come home any more while all that alcohol was around...It really upset me. I said, 'gee. I gotta quit this, I gotta quit this drinking. It's awful.'

Personal Crisis as Turning Point:

It took its toll on me and I really got physically sick. I had to go in for heart surgery, that's how much I really internalized everything, I didn't even know I was doing all that. I think that was the turning point for me, because I thought, 'I can't go on like this, I don't have the skills to do all that I'm trying to do.

Taking Responsibility:

I can't change the community, I can't change the world, I can't change my family, I have to start with a renewal of myself first.

Western Therapy:

I used to go to a lot of Al-Anon which was important because I quit drinking way ahead of my husband.

Cause I've been in therapy and I've come a long way...

All along, I kept seeing a counsellor once a week... The counsellor said, 'so if everybody's going off the cliff, you're going to go because they're all doing it?'

Letting go of the Responsibility for Others:

I think when it turned for him is when I stopped trying and I started to do my own journey.

So, there was lots of behaviours that I needed to change and lots of thoughts that I needed to change within myself to let my husband and my people go, to be, to do whatever they can do. And my children, they're young adults now, and the tendency is still to give them money, fix up their situation, and get on with their life. They'll never learn how to be self-reliant or self-sufficient as long as I'm there.

Helping Others:

I really believe it just takes one person in the relationship to change the whole relationship. Because when I started to change, he started to change so that he could be in my space.

Looking at the Pain:

> So, that's when I started paying attention to sexual abuse, and alcohol, and gambling and all the addictions I was doing. What I was trying to avoid by doing all that. And it was getting in touch with my real feelings. The real me, and to look at all that pain and experience and feel it and then let it go.

Emotional Expression of Past Hurts:

> When I got there, I broke down. I really allowed myself to break down and fall apart...I was really neurotic, I was really insane from living like this for so long. I became part of the insanity and I didn't even know it... A lot of my healing was going back and dealing with all those hurts.

Training Programs:

> I go to a school called Salishan Training Institute in Naramata ... And I think learning all that, it put me in the space of looking at where I've been and where my people have been, so that we know, I know where I'm going now, where my people are going... I did go with the idea 'well, this is going to help me with my job, and my clients' but then it would always help me.'

Healing is getting lots of information. I attended many, many workshops on sexual abuse, on alcohol in the family, on alcoholism and the individual, grief and loss. - major stuff on grief and loss.

Evaluating Losses:

I looked at the loss of my Mom, my biological mother, and I looked at residential school, leaving home.

Learning about Oppression:

It wasn't until really lately that I started to look at the adults and what it must have felt like to send their kids off to residential school. You can read about it in textbooks but, you know, the real stories of all of us, what it was like to watch someone, a little person leaving home, and they're never going to come back until they're like white people.

It was a real powerful dream because I thought, "That's the way the government still treats us today, like we're little children... They really minimize whatever it is that we're trying to deal with, like land issues or whatever, Native Rights and justice. I guess that's what the dream meant to me, we're still treated like little children.

Giving Back to the Community:

> It comes back to each person doing their own journey and influencing other people and showing them that their is a safe way and a good way to be. But to pull them all together too, because what happens is that when people come in and say, "I wanna quit drinking and you say, 'let's look at some options', and you go through all the options, and allow them to choose whatever they would like to see happen.

Spirituality:

> And I don't know if it was me, or if it was The Spirit above, and the river was shallow at first, and the soldiers were running in the water. And this voice was saying, "move to the left, there's a soldier, his leg is right next to you, go that way, there's a soldier coming right at you, and it was guiding all these little children.

Traditional First Nations' Culture:

> I do a lot of the sweatlodge ceremonies, and I do a lot of extended family work. Using Indian names, connecting to family, to the land, to the universe, to our songs, to our teachings...I never ever heard of culture until I started healing.

Family Support/Guidance:

> Me and my daughter, we went and sat in on some joint counselling sessions...I also did that with one of my sons. I've asked all four children at different times to come with me. It's to get my family involved in counselling therapy so that we can all change in a meaningful, purposeful way."

Having a Support System:

> I still go to A.A. and I have a really strong network of different counsellors, psychologists that I talk to. These are not counsellor-client relationships, but colleagues or co-workers.

Traditional Teachings:

> I like that story about the Eagle. I don't quite know where the story comes from but it's the story of all of the earth being on fire. And the eagle is flying around and around, looking for a safe place to land, but everything is on fire. But eventually, a fire does go out somewhere, and the eagle can land. Then, the eagle can start landing all over.
>
> And there's a prophecy, a Hopi prophecy. The Hopi's said that when the Eagle has

landed on the moon, our people will start looking at alcohol and all these issues and our people will change the world because of our healing. And the Eagle landed on the moon in 1969 and that was the turning point.

Healing Yet to Come:

This is where I'm at now. Walking the red road... The red road takes you to higher places. That's living with sobriety, living in a good way, healing, passing on the healing, sharing and caring. The Red Road is the good road, the road to life.

Similarity Amongst Themes

This study has focused on five unique narratives which express individual stories of healing from Native Indian Residential School Abuse.

Although the purpose of this study is to present paradigm case examples, some commonalities of themes amongst co-researchers bear noting. Thus, a discussion will focus on some of the shared themes.

Themes of the Narratives

The following list details the healing themes gleaned from the five narratives. The names of the co-researcher who exemplified each theme are also provided.

Traditional First Nations' Culture:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Befriending a 'White' Person:

Art

Family Support/Guidance:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Emotional Expression of Past Hurts:

Art, Sarah

A Cleansing Ritual:

Art

Spirituality:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Sarah

Giving Back to the Community:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Having a Support System:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Recognizing that Something is Wrong:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Sarah

Western Therapy:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Looking at the Pain:

Art, Sarah

Traditional Teachings:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Working for Future Generations:

Art, Elizabeth, Jerri, Sarah,

Healing Yet to Come:

Art, Elizabeth, Kelly, Sarah

Healing as a Process:

Elizabeth

Taking Responsibility:

Elizabeth, Sarah,

Learning to Take Power:

Elizabeth, Jerri,

Balancing Cultures:

Elizabeth

Evaluating Losses:

Elizabeth, Kelly, Sarah

Becoming Proactive:

Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly,

Helping Others:

Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Letting go of the Responsibility for Others:

Elizabeth, Kelly, Sarah

Recognizing the Impact on Others:

Elizabeth

Letting go of Others' Opinions:

Elizabeth

Educating Others:

Elizabeth

Understanding Oppression:

Elizabeth, Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Connection with Nature:

Jerri

Training Programs:

Jerri, Kelly, Sarah

Embracing the Language:

Kelly

Learning from Others:

Elizabeth, Kelly

Reframing Negatives to Positives:

Kelly

Personal Crisis as Turning Point:

Sarah

Clustering of the Themes

Themes may be organized into larger categories which are inclusive of overlapping ideas and similarity of intentions.

1. Traditional First Nations' Culture:

   Includes: Traditional Teachings, A Cleansing Ritual, Embracing the language

2. Having a Support System:

   Includes: Family Support/Guidance, Learning from Others

3. Helping Others:

   Includes: Working for Future Generations, Giving Back to the Community, Educating Others, Recognizing the Impact on Others

4. Spirituality:

   Includes: Connection with Nature

5. Gaining Understanding of the Problem:

   Includes: Recognizing that Something is Wrong, Emotional Expression of Past Hurts, Looking at the Pain, Evaluating Losses, Personal Crisis as Turning Point

6. Western Therapy:

   Includes: Healing as a Process, Taking Responsibility, Letting go of the Responsibility for Others, Letting go of Others' Opinions, Reframing Negatives to Positives

7. Becoming Proactive:

   Includes: Learning to Take Power, Balancing Cultures, Healing Yet to Come, Learning about Oppression, Training Programs

Themes in relation to the literature

Each of these seven major themes will be addressed in relationship to literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Traditional First Nations' Culture

Given that residential schools sought to annihilate First Nations culture, the re-claiming of traditions amounts to a significant healing experience. Anderson in McCormick (1994) has found that identification to culture is an important component of counselling for First Nations People.

The Assembly of First Nations (1994) also considers culture a fundamental and pivotal

component of healing.

> When people talk about returning to the 'traditional ways', they mean that they wish to look at the world and the universe from a holistic perspective, recognizing that we are all connected and that all things are equal. (p.142)

Essentially, culture entails embracing a Traditional First Nations world view. The holistic healing model, as described by the Medicine Wheel in Chapter 3 of this thesis, addresses the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual levels of human development that comprise a tacit foundation of Traditional Culture.

As articulated by David Zryd, Program Coordinator at Ka Ka Wis Family Development Centre, many First Nations People have rediscovered their own cultural activities as well as participate in rituals that were once endemic to other Nations.

> Cultural practices that have been adopted nationally by First Nations people, such as smudging and the sweat lodge, are balanced with local West Coast customs like traditional songs and drumming. Overall, the rituals bring an appreciation of hospitality and spirituality to everyday life. It is wonderful to witness clients rediscovering their pride of heritage and speaking in their native tongue prayers that were discouraged in an earlier age" (Ka Ka Wis Family Development Centre.. p. 57)

This use of culture extends beyond healing on an individual level, however, in that many First Nations people consider their race as the 'Keepers of the Earth'. Thus, the reclamation of traditional First Nations culture is an act of universal import which stands to have significant impact, beyond the scope of individual communities.

> We should have been told that genocide and genocide went hand in hand... To change this - and it must be changed - or we perish - we must seek the counsel of Native peoples to find the way back. The way of harmony and respect for Nature and her children that we lost in the dim childhood of our culture. The people of the dominant cultures across the world must first ask forgiveness and healing, and then request to be taught the ways of the Earth by Earth's peoples in order to save our Mother and ourselves. This is an endeavour of spiritual and ecological justice. (Dan Turner in McGaa 1992, p. 217)

Traditional teachings are, in effect, the practical lessons through which Traditional First Nations Culture is taught. Teachings may be experiential in form, or may be gleaned through reading, conversations, and observation.

Teachings that are accessible to many First Nations People today are learned at Potlatches, in the Sweatlodge, at Pow-wow's, or in the big house /long house. Often, these take the form of prayers, dances, rituals, and stories. The learning and acceptance of these teachings is implicit in healing as Harold Cardinal contends:

> We have rich traditions among all the regions in this country whether we live in the East, on the Prairies, the West, or the North. We come from a people that are still strong. We come from a people that still know how to love. We come from a people that have a tradition that teaches, on a daily basis, how we as individuals are to live with one another. Those teachings are part of the gifts that we have as traditional Aboriginal peoples. We are not white people. We do not have the freedom to do as we please. Our freedom is defined by our traditions. Our ways teach us what we can do, what we cannot do. Our ways also show us what the consequence is when we don't follow our traditions. (Jaine, 1993, p.26)

Having a Support System

Traditional First Nations families were close units that worked together in unison. Although roles were not static, members each make a contribution that was considered imperative to the balance of the family. No member was seen as more important than others. and children were valued as gifts from the Creator. As articulated by the Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, "Traditionally the strength of Aboriginal families/communities lay in their ability to communicate effectively with one another" (p. 23). Support and guidance are tacit components of this communication process. Families and communities were the social and emotional foundation for traditional First Nations people.

Given this inherent support system, a First Nations person who required guidance and help turned to members of their own community. As LaFromboise, Dauphinais, and Rowe

(1980) describe, "In the past, an Indian person encountering a difficult situation may have sought a Holy Man for advice, the members of the extended family to talk with, or a close friend to share the problem" (p. 11).

Today, a large aspect of healing is the re-establishment of this family and community interdependence. Citing Torrey, McCormick (1994) states that "In some First Nations cultures, establishing harmony within the community and improving interpersonal relationships amongst members of the community is seen by members of the community as the goal of therapy" (p.14).

Thus, having a support system goes beyond merely having friends and family who are understanding of ones personal process. Rather, community connection and healthy interpersonal relationships are components of, and testimony to, successful healing.

Epes-Brown (1989) corroborates on this when he speaks about the theme of interconnectedness that is prevalent in most First Nations cultures. He explains that relationships begin within the family unit, and develop and extend further afield, ultimately encompassing the universe. Thus, the foundation of family support is the microcosm of the support available within the community and, in turn, within the circle of the universe.

This theme of interconnectedness is fundamental to many who have embarked on a healing journey. The experience of Lois Guss, who attended the St. Paul's Residential school in North Vancouver, tells succinctly of the wide-reaching support system and its healing power:

Over the years I have met people with a better concept of life. Some, who have

> been half my age, seem older than me. Now I know why. They have been allowed to grow. They have been with people who have loved, nurtured, and supported them. It may take me the rest of my life to overcome my ten years of residential school trauma, but, I now believe, that with the help of a lot of good people, I shall succeed. We grow by the relationships we have. (Jaine, 1993, p. 87-88)

Helping Others

Community co-operation and mutual support is a strong tenant of traditional First Nations culture. The exchange of resources, knowledge and support has always been crucial to the survival and growth of Native people.

As summated by the Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery:

> Sharing was another essential ingredient of harmony, of cooperation, of the strength of traditional families and essential for survival. It was customary and natural to share because the belief was that the more a person gave away, the richer they would become. Sharing even pertained to knowledge. Knowledge was never hoarded, for knowledge was plentiful, and always accessible for those who cared to learn it. (p. 24)

Validating this, the Assembly of First Nations describes the healing component of giving back to the community by stating:

> As well as rebuilding a connection to their families and their people, the adults interviewed also found a need to contribute to their community. This part of reconnecting often appeared to be directly related to healing from the impact of residential school... Regardless of the nature of the contribution, the outcome of being involved in 'helping others' further empowers individuals and demonstrates to others the benefits of healing. (p.134-135)

The act of giving back to the community may be viewed as an extension of the potlatch ceremony, in which people were honoured for their generosity and willingness to share resources. A kind of healing potlatch is now taking place across Canada as "First Nations people care for and heal themselves, the effort will ripple outward and affect others" (Assembly of First Nations, p.159).

This ripple effect culminates in not only individual healing, but community healing as well. LaFromboise et al. (1990) describe the traditional healing process that involves the entire community:

> The client's significant others and community members often are asked to participate. The 'cure' may require more than therapeutic agents and can also include confession, acts of atonement, restoration into the good graces of family and tribe, and intercession with the spirit world. Thus the collective treatment of psychologically troubled individuals in tribal groups not only serves to heal the individual, but also to reaffirm the norms of the entire group. (p. 631)

Many people agree that healing within First Nations community is a long-term process that will likely take many years. Given this, those who have embarked on their own healing journey do so not only for themselves, but also for future generations.

The Assembly of First Nations (1994) speaks of the process of passing on the healing.

> Since the occurrence of wounding within First Nations communities has affected at least seven generations over approximately 150 years, the re-emergence and rebuilding of First Nations people will take more than just a few years. If First Nations' children's children can be raised with positive parenting skills, having not been subjected to violence and having more of an appreciation and pride in who they are as First Nations people, then all First Nations people will have moved in the right direction. (p. 159)

Spirituality

George Clutesi (1990) speaks of spirituality by saying:

> The Native Indian believed in and sought help from a higher Being who lived in all nature, all things. He was 'the king who dwelt in the heavens beyond the stars (p.137).

Although spiritual beliefs differ amongst Nations, the existence of an omnipresent Higher Power is a common tenant of many expressions of spirituality. The Assembly of First

Nations (1994) refers to a process of reconnecting with spirit. This is necessary when one has forgotten or abandoned their spirit, and must re-embrace this aspect. They suggest that spiritual healing entails at least five components: developing a positive identity as a First Nations person, accessing cultural teachings and people, having knowledge of one's aboriginal language, seeking out traditional leaders and elders, and participating in ceremonial activities such as dances, sweat lodges and fasts.

Healing on a spiritual level is crucial in that "the worst impact of residential school for many Aboriginal children was the loss of traditional spiritual beliefs" (Society of Aboriginal Addictions Recovery, p. 25).

Dawson (1988), Haig-Brown (1988), and Pepper and Henry (1991), all speak about the healing powers inherent in the resurgence of the Native cultural and spiritual traditions. In addition, Moon (1995) describes a Native healing program for victims and perpetrators of abuse, succinctly demonstrates the power of spiritual healing. A participant in a healing circle is quoted as saying:

> The spiritual program is the key... it helps people to understand why they have hurt and been hurt and makes them feel better. It makes all the difference in the world. The ceremonies, the sweat lodge, even the prayers in the circle. And the burning of the sweetgrass, the sage, cedar, the tobacco. It's all part of the spiritual healing process.

As well, Isabelle Knockwood (1992) speaks about the importance of spiritual healing:

> Others have claimed their own identity and the meaning of their lives through the rediscovery of Native spiritual traditions. Despite the efforts of those who ran the school to instill hatred and contempt for Native traditions and culture, many of us have returned to a traditional path as the source of our strength. One man I interviewed joked that he now describes himself as 'a born-again savage.' Some of us have come to realize that we were abused not only physically but spiritually. For us, the Native Way with its Sacred Circle and respect for all living things is a means of healing that abuse. (p. 158)

This spiritual healing process is one in which the co-researchers found refuge from their abuse and oppression. It was a means through which they were able to re-educate themselves about the inherent dignity and validity of Native culture and spirituality. This new way of viewing her culture included an emotional and mental shift of values.

Gaining understanding of the problem

As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, The Assembly of First Nations (1994) details a healing process which encompasses four aspects: recognizing, remembering, resolving, and reconnecting. Each of these aspects demands a thorough self-assessment and a complete inventory of the problem and its consequences and as such, constitute gaining an understanding of the problem.

Recognizing that something is wrong occurs when one realizes that their life is

inadequate, unhealthy, or destructive. It is the moment when one realizes that 'life has to be better than this'. It is an acknowledgment that one is not living up to their potential; rather, they are wasting their talents and skills, and unable to control their behaviour or the course that their life is taking.

Looking at one's pain is the act of remembering what has happened in the past. It is the moment when abuse and neglect are acknowledged. Evaluating losses is the act of breaking through denial and accepting the fact that experiences were harmful and have long-term consequences.

Emotional expression is one means to resolve the abuse of the past. It may occur by traditional means, or it may be the result of a therapeutic intervention.

Western Therapy

The outcomes of western therapy have received wide attention and have been the focus of innumerable studies. Western Therapy as applied to First Nations People has received far less study, however. Those who have devoted research to this area largely speak of the need for culturally appropriate services (LaFromboise et al, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1990; Trimble, 1981).

Although the research indicates that many First Nations People do not utilize western therapy (Sue, 1981), there is some indication that combining western therapy with traditional practices may present an alternative healing experience for First Nations People (Heinrich et. al, 1990). As detailed in Chapter 3, Network Therapy is a means whereby First Nations clients

are actively encouraged to draw on their family and community for support and assistance in healing.

Manson (1986) reported that "many traditional Indian and Native healing practices are gradually being incorporated into contemporary approaches to mental health treatment" (p.64). Such practices, such as the talking circle, the four circles, the sweatlodge and the vision quest may help to balance the effects of Western Psychotherapy which are highly culture bound (Heinrich et. at, 1990).

At Ka Ka Wis, this integration has met largely with success. Although not all their clients have succeeded in overcoming addictions, the merging of counselling and traditional practices has helped a great many people. Joe Tom, a residential school survivor, a former client of Ka Ka Wis, and now a senior staff member comments that "Ka Ka Wis is a place where the cultures come together and every one of us is the richer for it (Ka Ka Wis Family Development Centre, p. 76).

It is clear that for First Nations clients, western psychotherapy must be a place where traditional values and beliefs are affirmed and validated. It is also crucial that counsellors alter the individually-oriented nature of western psychotherapy and consider their clients within a family and community context. If this consideration can be made, western psychotherapy may be a useful supplement to First Nations traditional healing.

Becoming proactive

Becoming proactive is the evolution from victim to survivor. As stated by the Assembly of First Nations (1994):

> Resolving these issues results in moving away from feeling, thinking and acting as a victim, to feeling, thinking and acting as a survivor. (p.131)

Implicit in becoming a survivor is gaining information and understanding about the effects of colonization and oppression. As The Assembly of First Nations (1994) state:

> First Nations people need to know their history. History provides a context for understanding individuals' present circumstances, and is an essential part of the healing process. Having a knowledge of First Nations history can eliminate the stigma and stereotyping which many First Nations people have come to accept as fact. (p.141)

Being proactive may also include setting goals, seeking advice and counsel, getting involved in training groups that teach life skills, and increasing and emphasizing self-care. Many First Nations people choose to focus their energy on land-rights issues, Native education programs, and self-government work. These are all examples of the inherent healing power of becoming proactive, both personally and for the community as a whole.

Summary of Themes

The eight main thematic categories found in this research are very similar to other themes found by researchers in this area. Previous researchers such as McCormick (1994), Lafromboise (1988), Hammerschlag (1993), and Torrey (1972) have found the following areas which they believed facilitated healing for First Nations People. Similarity of the findings of this study with other studies are presented below:

Other studies:	Present research:
Culture and Tradition	Traditional First Nations Culture
Obtaining help	Having a Support System
Interconnectedness	Having a Support System / Helping Others
Spirituality	Spirituality
Exercise	Becoming Proactive
Expressing oneself	Gaining an Understanding of Problem
Healing ceremonies	Traditional First Nations Culture
Understanding problem	Understanding Problem
Role Models	Having a Support System
Nature	Spirituality

The themes of co-researchers of this study emphasize the pivotal role the First Nations culture and tradition play in the healing process. In fact, recovery seems dependent on the

ability to reclaim and utilize the many valuable resources that First Nations people had before these were taken from them through colonization and the residential school system.

By reasserting their identity, First Nations people who have suffered under the racist policies of the residential school program are once again entering the circle of the Medicine Wheel. By learning from others and helping others along 'The Red Road', Native people are effectively rekindling the interconnectedness between community, family, and learning that was once their source of strength. Healing is once again engaging in a First Nations identity, and recreating a life of balance between emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual selves.

To complete healing, First Nations people are effectively de-programming themselves from the oppressive policies of residential schools. They are, in effect, extricating themselves from the White world view and embracing a First Nations world view once again.

The stories of these five First Nations people embody the process of embracing traditions, culture, and spirituality. They also demonstrate that some of the techniques and models of western psychotherapy have been effective as companion tools in healing. As Haig-Brown (1988) says:

> These are the stories that attest to the strength and perseverance of Native cultures in Canada. These are the stories that must be told to all our children and grandchildren so that they too can come to recognize and appreciate the history of the people who came before them and the power of their legacy of survival. (p. 140)

Chapter 7

Implications of this research

Implications for counsellors

This study has demonstrated both the unique and shared experiences of First Nations People who are actively healing themselves from residential school abuse. For counsellors working with First Nations clients, the narratives contained in these pages may be used to provide a framework for other healing journeys. In addition, research such as McCormick (1994) and the wealth of knowledge contained in Assembly of First Nations (1994) can be used a resources which could educate the counselling process.

However, I firmly agree with McCormick (1994) when he states that "in order to communicate and counsel First Nations people, counselling service providers must understand the traditional world view of First Nations people" (p.10). Counsellors must be willing to learn new ways of examining the world, and learn about the ways in which First Nations clients view their world.

Heinrich et. al (1990) state the need for counsellor education explicitly:

> Counsellors must affirm that minority cultures are not inherently inferior and that they possess values and meanings that are, at least in some dimensions, superior to those of the dominant culture. In addition, counsellors must be invested in learning, intellectually and affectively, a new language of culturally relevant

> metaphors that will, at least temporarily, alter their perceptions of what is real and what is possible. (p. 132)

This world view must be comprised of a clear understanding of the personal, cultural, spiritual, economic, and educational losses as a result of colonialism and its descendant, the residential school system.

Counsellors working with First Nations People must seize upon the opportunity to critically evaluate their own biases and closely examine their own tacit belief system. It is not enough to provide a euro-centric perspective to clients who, through research, have been clearly shown to have specific needs in counselling that extend beyond the mental, emotional and psychological aspects that comprise most psychological theories. As Sue (1981) states:

> Counselling and psychotherapy, from the textbook approach, emphasize Western values and are antagonistic to the Indian value system. As such, they are tools of cultural oppression. (p.231)

Utilizing the Medicine Wheel, counsellors must incorporate aspects of spiritual well-being and assist their clients in achieving a sense of balance between mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects. As well, it is imperative to aid clients in developing aspects of interpersonal connectedness, relationship with nature, cultural teachings, traditional ceremonies, and community involvement.

Obviously, many non-Native counsellors do not have such resources at their disposal.

Thus, it remains their responsibility to refer clients to community elders and groups which can provide the necessary framework. This study should inform counsellors of the specific and unique healing tools that First Nations clients may require, and provide an impetus for counsellor and client alike to access resources in both western psychotherapy and traditional First Nations culture.

Implications for further research

This study has presented articulated examples of healing from Indian Residential School Abuse. The purpose was to present unique healing narratives as well as to demonstrate common components of the healing journey.

This study is in no way an exhaustive account of the components of healing from residential school. It was not designed to provide a generalized structure, nor a map of the healing process.

To determine generalizability, a research study of a different kind would have to be undertaken. A survey or a broad scale quantitative study might accommodate this query, in that a large number of First Nations people might be able to account for their own healing themes. As suggested by McCormick (1994), "future research might also examine if categories of healing events differ with age, gender, geographical location, and education" (p. 144-145).

To elicit similar exemplary case narratives, a study utilizing a greater number of participants may provide additional information. Such a study would enable the subjective

experiences to be addressed so that clients and counsellors alike may further recognize the unique and personal nature of a healing process.

Summary

Recovery and transcendence from abuse as experienced in the residential school system entails a multi-faceted, holistic approach. This study sought to present the narratives of five individuals who have embarked on a journey of healing, in that their stories could be used to inspire and educate others.

The study found that there were many distinct experiences which comprised the healing process, as well as many shared themes. A narrative approach was used to provide a forum that could accommodate the rich and personal nature of co-researcher's experience.

This study is offered to First Nations People and counsellors with the hope that it will assist in the healing journey of survivors of the residential school system. It is my wish that both the differences and similarities of the stories help to elucidate the healing process. Counsellors are thus provided with a means by which they may more readily understand and assist their First Nations Clients.

A personal note of closure

The honesty and clarity with which the five narratives were shared provided me with a profound learning experience. Many times through the interview process and the writing of this thesis, I found myself moved to tears. The tears I shed were those of pain, anger, and sorrow, but most of all, tears that expressed the respect and awe I felt for the people who lived these stories.

As a counsellor, I am deeply grateful for the knowledge that was given to me. As a non-Native, I am committed to addressing the tacit racism that surrounds me everyday. As a human being, I am honoured to share this mile of a very long journey towards healing.

To all who journey on the Red Road, others are with you now and forever.

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Appendix A

Sample Interview Questions

1) What is your personal story of healing?

2) What has helped you in your healing process?

3) What factors do you feel are necessary for healing?

4) What, if any, traditional Native beliefs or values were instrumental in your healing?

5) What metaphor or symbol would you choose to describe your healing?

Appendix B

Consent form for participation in an interview

I understand that this research project is part of Margaret Feehan's Masters Thesis in the Faculty of Education. The interviews in which I will take part are about stories of healing from Native residential school abuse.

I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation.

I understand that any data collected in the study will remain confidential. Pseudonyms will be used to disguise my identity and my anonymity will be strictly protected. Any contextual information in the interview that might lead to my identity will be changed or deleted. The data will be kept in a locked room.

I also understand that it is important for me to protect the privacy of other individuals whom I may mention during the interviews. I am not expected, nor should I, in any way, identify the people with whom I interacted at residential schools. I understand that, in light of the Protection of Privacy legislation, that the anonymity of others must be ensured. I understand that my interview will be audio taped and that the tape will be erased after the thoughts/feelings/experiences that I talk about are transcribed and analyzed.

I understand that whether I participate or choose not to participate will have no bearing on my grade/employment/academic standing/job.

Date:

Signature:

Interviewer:

Appendix C: Notice of Research

STORIES OF HEALING FROM NATIVE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ABUSE
A GRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

"The people who get to tell their stories rule the world"
A Hopi saying

I am a Masters student in counselling currently engaged in research of stories of healing from residential school abuse. I am looking for First Nations' participants who would be willing to share their stories of healing.

This inquiry will consist of two or three interviews of approximately one-and-a-half hours in duration. Interviews will focus only on the stories of healing and recovery; you will not be required to speak about the experience of abuse itself.

What I can offer you if you choose to participate in this study is an opportunity to share your story in a supportive and confidential environment. It is my hope that by speaking your story, you will have the opportunity to celebrate the growth and recovery that you have experienced. As well, through my research, your stories may help others in their journey of healing.

I am a trained counsellor who has interviewed and counselled First Nations' people for over three years. If you are interested in this project, please don't hesitate to call with any questions or concerns.

Margaret Feehan Phone: 383-9987