

2019-10

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Smeja, K., Inkster, C., Goodwill, A., & Jordan, S.R. (2019). Creating space for indigenous research in Canadian counselling psychology graduate programs. Proceedings from the 2018 Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference, 148-161.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1880/111417>

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Creating Space for Indigenous Research in Canadian Counselling Psychology Graduate Programs

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Abstract

This article builds off the symposium presentation entitled “Decolonizing Canadian Counselling Psychology: Creating Space for Indigenous Scholarship” which was delivered by the authors at the 2018 Canadian Counselling Psychology Conference. The symposium presented Ms. Inkster and Ms. Smeja’s respective Master’s research projects, while Dr. Jordan and Dr. Goodwill shared their supervisory experiences overseeing research aimed at advocating for Indigenous communities. This paper expands on the individual presentation topics by discussing broader systemic issues and considerations relevant to making space for Indigenous scholarship within Canadian CP programs. Personal narratives are weaved throughout the paper, emphasizing challenges in academic environments, resilience and resistance strategies, as well as the important role of mentors in graduate students’ decision to pursue Indigenous Research Methods. Specific recommendations addressed to our field are also discussed.

Key words

Indigenous, epistemology, research, supervision, decolonization

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples have inherent rights to self-government within Canada and the right to define their own goals of education (Stonechild, 2006). Federal Government assimilation policies violated these rights and have left an indelible mark on Aboriginal* peoples (RCAP, 1996). When making space for Indigenous Research in Canadian Counselling Psychology (CP) graduate programs, it is good practice to be familiar with the depth and extent of Indigenous students' inherent rights as protected by Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, the Royal Proclamation of Canada, and the numbered Treaties. For example, Section 25 of the Canadian Charter of Human Rights makes it clear that other rights contained in the Charter must not interfere with the rights of Aboriginal peoples. Where Aboriginal students are entitled to special benefits under treaties, other persons who do not enjoy those benefits cannot argue that they have been denied the right to be treated equally under sections 15 and 25 of the Charter. Canadian discourse around “post-secondary education is free for Indigenous peoples” reflects the need for remedial education on the meaning of inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, as well as a history lesson on the violation of inherent rights in the context of post- secondary education.

The Canadian post-secondary education system has been used as an assimilation strategy. For example, from 1880-1960 under the Indian Act, an Indigenous person's status was terminated upon admission to university. The Indian Act is a Canadian federal law that governs in matters pertaining to Indian status, bands, and Indian reserves (Venne,1981). Enfranchisement is the legal process for terminating a person's Indian status and conferring full Canadian citizenship, which occurred if you were an “Indian” admitted to university between 1880-1960.

Indian Act Section 99.(1) Any Indian who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University of Learning, or who may be admitted in any Province of the Dominion to practise law [...], or who may enter Holy Orders, or who may be licensed by any denomination of Christians as a Minister of the Gospel, may upon petition to the Superintendent-General, ipso facto become and be enfranchised under the provisions of this Act [...].

Knowledge of Federal Government assimilation tactics such as these are important to recognizing their reappearance in our education practices and discourses within our graduate training programs. The CP graduate students' experiences shared here will illustrate the subtle and overt ways assimilation practices have affected their pursuit of Indigenous Research Methods (IRMs)* in Canadian CP graduate programs (i.e. the problem/challenge). Student narratives discuss how the problem surfaces in their respective academic environments (i.e. the environment), as well as how they navigate educational institutions that prioritize colonial* worldviews by challenging the status quo through their research initiatives (i.e. taking it on). Students' and CP professors' combined perspectives highlight the important role of Indigenous scholarship and mentors, share resilience and resistance strategies, and reflect on ways of honouring community in their professional roles (i.e. carrying forward). Finally, specific recommendations addressed to our field are made by a CP professor.

Operationalization of Terms

Aboriginal. Though we use the term “Aboriginal” to encompass First Nations (status and non-status Indians as defined in the Indian Act), Métis and Inuit peoples whose traditional and

ancestral lands spread across (but are not limited to) Canada, we mainly use the more current term “Indigenous”. We acknowledge the diversity of the peoples this represents and the limits of using such vast terms. Given the brevity of this paper, we hope they serve its purpose by conveying what are perhaps common experiences between these groups in dealing with colonial spaces, particularly educational institutions.

Colonial(ism). We also use the terms “Western” or “Eurocentric”.

Decolonization. We refer to the long-term process of Indigenous people resisting colonialism. We understand this as a cultural, political and theoretical movement involving Indigenous revitalization and self-determination, an awareness and critical analysis of the impacts of colonization on Aboriginal people, as well as a focus on Indigenous perspectives and concerns (Smith, 2012).

Indigenous research methods (IRMs). We mean ways of conducting research that are grounded in Indigenous epistemologies/worldviews.

Problem/Challenge

For CP research to prove valuable in the urgent project of enhancing and decolonizing Indigenous mental health (CPA, 2018), our research and counselling praxis must make space for Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing. We argue that the urgent need for responsive, safe mental health care in Indigenous communities is connected to the safety of Indigenous persons and practices in CP graduate training. One such practice is how knowledge is produced, recognized, and honoured within the academic framework. In spite of our field’s stated commitments to meet the need for Indigenous centred research, graduate student researchers face challenges in carrying out Indigenous research within Canadian CP Traditions.

The Environment

All authors have the shared experience of living, working, studying and practicing on the unceded Coast Salish territories. We acknowledge the Halq’eméylem and Hən’q’əmin’əm speaking peoples with whom we share space as uninvited guests in their lands. While authoring this paper in the English language, we acknowledge their ongoing efforts to revitalize and reclaim their languages. We share the predicament of negotiating the tensions of using English to express Indigenous concepts in spaces that might contribute to hermeneutic deficits that negatively affect the “researched”.

Epistemological Violence is closer to personal than to structural violence in that it has a subject, an object, and an action, even if the violence is indirect and non-physical, the subject of the violence is the researcher, the object is the Other, and the action is the interpretation of data that is presented as knowledge (p. 295, Teo, 2010).

The environment that Indigenous graduate students navigate during their training is an important context to consider when discussing spaces for Indigenous scholarship. Universities are complicit in the colonial project when Indigenous students encounter epistemic erasure, with

Western post-positivist research methods given primacy over Indigenous worldviews and research methods. It is an environment that has been referred to as hostile, toxic, alienating and destructive by Indigenous staff and students (Smith, 2012). The following paragraphs describe two graduate students' experiences that speak to a larger issue often echoed by Indigenous scholars (Smith, 2012).

Cheryl's Experience

In my undergraduate research courses there was no mention of IRMs. In my graduate research courses there was brief mention of IRMs, in that they exist, but this was not the professors' area of expertise, so we were advised against using them for our thesis research and in-class assignments. We were told that if we wanted to publish our thesis, IRMs were not widely accepted. This narrow, ignorant viewpoint made me originally design my Master's study with a Western method despite my intention to pursue IRMs. I received similar statements from classmates questioning the validity of IRMs. As a new researcher, these combined experiences made me move away from my desire to pursue IRMs.

Katrina's Experience

During my undergraduate studies in psychology, IRMs were never discussed in the courses I enrolled or the laboratories I volunteered for. There was a strong emphasis on quantitative research methods and qualitative research was only mentioned in passing, conveying to me that it was less desirable. Given those parameters, I didn't feel a pull towards conducting academic research. Outside of my studies, however, I had opportunities to work on community-based research projects in my traditional territory. I personally connected with the research I was involved in because I was able to get familiar with Cree language, connect with Elders, and learn about practices such as those based in Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Those experiences showed me that I did have an interest in research, provided it was related to Indigenous ways of knowing. When I was applying to graduate studies, I was seeking out supervision to carry out research in an Indigenous context. None of the professors I encountered had expertise in this area or seemed interested in supporting it. The lack of Indigenous scholarship and mentorship at the time, discouraged me from pursuing research altogether. The message seemed clear to me: there was no space for the work that was meaningful to me. Therefore, I applied to graduate programs with a stronger emphasis on practical training and was admitted to the non-thesis stream of SFU's CP program.

Knowing the challenges Indigenous students face in their graduate programs, such as the self-doubt fostered about the legitimacy of IRMs, raises the following question: What would it take to for Indigenous researchers to feel that Indigenous scholarship belongs in CP?

Taking it on

Encountering Indigenous Scholarship

Going beyond University classes and discovering the depth of knowledge in Indigenous scholarship was an important part of the student authors' learning process and path to engaging in

Indigenous centred research. In this section, they share how connecting with the literature and other Indigenous scholars was a validating experience that encouraged their pursuit of IRMs.

Cheryl's experience. Connecting with Indigenous scholarship and mentors aided me in returning to IRMs. I learned from existing literature that Western epistemologies have been colonially established as superior and are privileged through research practices (Chilisa, 2012), and about the need for Indigenous informed and Indigenous centred research (Duran, 2006; Duran & Duran, 1995). Researchers also argue that Indigenous knowledge frameworks should be recognized within academia (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012; Wendt & Gone, 2012). Connecting with other Indigenous scholars and mentors, taught me that there is lots of important, rigorous and meaningful research being done.

For my Master's research, I interviewed female Indigenous youth who had been relocated from rural northern communities in the Northwest Territories to live in foster care in British Columbia's Lower Mainland (Inkster, 2017). Using Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) and Métis Beadwork methodologies, youth were invited to share their experiences of relocation. When designing my study, I learned from other researchers that qualitative methods (QMs) used within an Indigenous methodological framework have the potential to be decolonizing (Wendt & Gone, 2012). Scholars have shown that most, and perhaps all, major issues for Indigenous groups cannot be separated from the atrocious histories that continue to affect them (Wendt & Gone, 2012). The goal of a decolonizing methodology, therefore, is to assist colonized groups to reclaim their specific cultural traditions as well as to reveal the effects of colonialism (Smith, 1999). This became apparent to me as I reclaimed my specific cultural traditions and Teachings through Métis beadwork. Also, the effects of colonialism were revealed in the girls' stories of relocation (Inkster, 2017). My experience conducting my Master's research highlights the importance of using IRMs to advance the decolonization of CP.

Katrina's experience. My experience in graduate school was different from that of my undergraduate studies, thankfully. For the first time within academia, I was encountering pockets of Indigenous scholarship. For instance, we read Kathy Absolon's (2010) article on Indigenous Wholism during a Theories of Counselling class taught by Dr. Jordan. I was finally becoming familiar with material referring to Teachings and worldviews that were in line with those of my birthplace in a classroom setting. Furthermore, during a QMs class, I was introduced to IRMs after engaging with Michael Hart's (2010) article, which was another required course reading. These were key moments that opened up my research process: I eventually switched to the thesis stream of my program. Those experiences also encouraged me to incorporate IRMs into my study design and invited me to delve deeper into Indigenous scholarship.

Eduardo Duran (2006), for instance, highlighted how the mental health field has been another avenue for colonial ideas to be pushed onto Indigenous people. He put professional terms to what I was experiencing and noticing. I also became familiar with the work of Rod McCormick, another Indigenous scholar who stressed the need for culturally relevant practices. He has also commented on the general direction the literature has taken, in that little emphasis has been put on the strengths of Indigenous peoples, which he argues perpetuates their disenfranchisement and disempowerment (McCormick, 1998). Furthermore, Shawn Wilson (2001) outlined some ways qualitative approaches overlap with Indigenous perspectives. Much like him, I couldn't help but feel they were incomplete in some respect. Therefore, I found the works of IRMs scholars Linda Smith

(2012), Margaret Kovach (2005) and Michael Hart (2010) helpful to my research design and process. These scholars discussed ways of knowing and sharing knowledge that were more in line with those of my community Teachings.

Resilience and Resistance Strategies

Navigating systems require resilience and resistance strategies on Indigenous students' part. Making use of academia's platform can create tensions for Indigenous students and scholars, especially when they are trying to ensure that they do not become alienated from Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing (Hart, 2010; Smith, 2012). The student authors certainly experience these tensions, particularly the more immersed they become in both worlds. The following are some strategies they have found helpful. Much of their experiences overlapped, therefore they are presented in a joint narrative.

Collective student authors' experiences. In order to thoroughly engage with Indigenous scholarship in a university setting, we have mainly had to create those spaces for ourselves. We have, for instance, chosen to write course papers on Indigenous topics and have decided to take on theses. Writing represents an act of resistance (Anderson, 2006). We have also sought out courses outside of our programs with an Indigenous focus, but these were not always safe learning spaces. Whereas we encountered the microaggression of oversimplified statements negatively stereotyping Indigenous people in general required coursework, we experienced moments of alienation in courses with an Indigenous focus when we were singled out or tokenized in front of the class.

When we have the energy to do so, we may choose to offer remedial education to peers and instructors diplomatically. Holding difficult conversations such as these, however, requires us to be in a good place. At times, we feel like we are "walking on eggshells", not wanting to bring up defensive reactions in others, which becomes exhausting. When we are feeling depleted, we may choose instead to withdraw and distance ourselves from those who hold ignorant views. We argue though, that these moments of retreat or silence, are still acts of resistance and a form of resilience. Putting adversity aside and focusing our energy on other areas that move us forward (e.g. coursework, research, training, practice) give us opportunities to channel our voice on different platforms, ones where we can have more impact (e.g. writing this paper, reaching a wider audience). When we do step back, we may question whether or not these (in)actions are in line with our values and may need to work harder on reminding ourselves that we need to "pick our battles" now and then.

We recognize this is not a struggle we can take on alone though. Some of our strategies are based in building supportive networks on and off campus. For example, we have sought opportunities to meet other graduate students and professors who lift us up and who engage in Indigenous Research. We have been able to do so by attending and sitting on the planning committee for the Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium (IGSS), a partnership between SFU and the University of British Columbia (UBC) arranged to bring graduate students together to share their research. We also made use of visible campus spaces, such as the Indigenous Student Centre, that offer practical resources and a safe, welcoming environment. These spaces represent an informal personal support system that created an extended sense of community, when contacts

with our home communities were disrupted. Connecting with Elders also fostered skills that promote resilience and ideas for resisting marginalization. When available to us, we made use of community resources (e.g. counsellors, post-secondary student support) from a distance too.

Building Relationships with Mentors

Mentorship was another key factor in supporting the student authors' research journey. In the following paragraphs, student authors share how mentors provided them with guidance and encouragement, as well as connected them with valuable resources, such as Indigenous scholars and campus supports. They highlight that perhaps most importantly, mentors created a safe space that recognized their work as legitimate and as a valuable contribution to CP. Dr. Jordan speaks to her role engaging in co-mentorship as a way of supporting the student authors Masters research.

Cheryl's experience. Making space for Indigenous scholarship in academia involved connecting with mentors and faculty members who were willing to admit their limitations and help connect me with others. Dr. Jordan first supported me by agreeing to supervise me. She has an extensive background working with QMs but did not have a background with IRMs. She did not advise against using IRMs but rather modeled how to search for assistance. Dr. Jordan can be a great example for educators wanting to support Indigenous students in pursuing Indigenous centred research. Dr. Jordan connected me with my second thesis co-supervisor, Dr. Amy Parent. As an Indigenous scholar, Dr. Parent has been a great role model for me. She supported me in carefully following protocols of Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008). She was also flexible, encouraged me to use teachings from my Métis community in my research, and challenged me to be bold in my discussion section. With the support of my co-supervisors, I invited Elder and Scholar, Dr. Richard Vedan, to join my thesis committee. Dr. Vedan provided invaluable guidance, Teachings, and encouragement throughout my research process. My co-supervisors also supported me by approaching my institution and securing an honorarium for him. When it came time for my defense, Dr. Goodwill was my external examiner. It was helpful to connect with her and have her read and critique my research.

Outside of my thesis committee, it was important for me to connect with other role models to move forward in academia. In my first year of graduate studies, I made connections through the IGSS. By sitting on the planning committee with other Indigenous students and allies, I gained confidence and felt a sense of belonging. The support I gained from my thesis committee and other mentors ultimately led to my successful defense and graduation from my Master's program. Just before completing my Master's program, I was hired as a faculty member at a local community college and prepared and gained acceptance into a CP PhD program to conduct further Indigenous centred research.

Katrina's experience. I likely would not have embarked on a research path, had it not been for the role mentors played in my professional development. Dr. Jordan, for instance, recognized that I had something valuable to contribute and fostered a safe space for me to engage in academic research. It was helpful to have found a genuine and self-aware ally in her. Moreover, Dr. Jordan connected me with her fellow scholar-practitioner, Dr. Goodwill. Together, they formed my thesis supervisory team, each bringing their own expertise and guiding me in indispensable ways. Dr. Goodwill recommended key Indigenous scholars for me to look up and their writings became an

integral part of my learning. For example, Kim Anderson's (2006) model of the reconstruction of Native Womanhood is central to my research process. Having engaged in Indigenous research herself, Dr. Goodwill cautioned me on certain aspects of my preliminary research design and provided information on community resources. Seeing Indigenous people represented in CP, helps me believe I can achieve my career goals and creates space for me to feel welcome as I enter the field. It has been a real privilege to have mentors whom I look up to and can relate to.

Co-mentorship as solidarity praxis: Sharalyn's experience. I believe that we will all be enriched by creating academic spaces that are open to and informed by Indigenous ways of knowing. We all have a role in creating universities where Indigenous and Western ways of knowing can circulate together, with equal respect and validity—transforming our scholarship and clinical practices. I also firmly value that efforts to address the grave inequities in Indigenous mental health must be led by Indigenous communities. Graduate schools in CP have not yet risen to the challenge of truly nurturing and developing the skills of Indigenous students as leaders in this effort.

For these reasons, when Cheryl and Katrina started asking questions about Indigenous worldviews, I encouraged this inquiry. When they became excited about research and its social justice potentials, I agreed to help them transition to a thesis trajectory. When they started asking about conducting their research using IRMs, I wanted to be able to say yes. I also felt profoundly inadequate to the task. What is my place? What are my responsibilities? To whom? How do I most responsibly use the power and privilege I occupy?

Cheryl has stated that one of the first ways I supported her was by not advising her against using IRMs. This speaks to the pervasive power of epistemic invalidation in universities. Saying yes, rather than using my authority to delegitimize, was a small but important act of resistance to the colonial logic of academia. I wanted to say yes, but I also knew I could not do the work alone. My knowledge of IRMs was limited. I was familiar with Linda Smith's (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies*, and work by Joanne Archibald (2008), but lacked the deep knowledge needed to supervise their research. I knew from my praxis as a Queer researcher in LGBTQ2+ communities that responsibly navigating the complexity of insider/outsider researcher positionalities requires mentorship from someone with lived, embodied knowledge of the communities, issues and stakes involved.

This awareness informed my decision to seek out collaborators and offer mentorship as a co-supervisor. I am fortunate to be in a Faculty of Education and wider University with some exceptional Indigenous scholars. I could look beyond our immediate program to build a team that offers the best possible chance of bridging good Indigenous Scholarship and the disciplinary expectations of CP. Dr. Parent agreed to co-supervise Cheryl. Dr. Goodwill joined our program in 2018, offering CP-specific expertise to guide Katrina, and future Indigenous graduate students. Co-mentorship has proven both challenging and deeply rewarding. I will share some of my learnings, in hopes that they are helpful particularly to others who, like me, were schooled almost exclusively in Western ways of knowing and schooled out of recognizing our own responsibility in a colonial-settler state.

In the early formation of the research team, we had helpful conversations about what knowledge areas we could each contribute. I tried to work from a stance of self-reflexivity and cultural humility: What do I have to offer—as a person and as a scholar? What are my limitations? What is my responsibility and stake in this research process? In both Katrina and Cheryl's projects, narrative has been a great bridging epistemology. Together, we have found resonance between narrative research and IRMs. Supervision meetings have become places where we ask and explore questions from these distinct, but complementary, ways of knowing.

This is not a seamless process, however. I remember, for instance, discussing how to interpret Cheryl's narrative interview transcripts. Referring to a form of dialogical analysis I often use, I would describe the voices/selves I was reading, interpreting as I went. At first, Cheryl would look at me perplexed and ask: "where are you getting that?" After some more examples, she acknowledged that she could see where these interpretations came from but remained very uneasy with the approach. "How do you know that you're not imposing something on them?" I shared my process of bringing interpretation back to participants, owning the responsibility of interpretation, and the epistemology of polyphony or multivoiced texts. Cheryl stayed steadfast in her commitment to represent the voices of her participants with minimal interpretation. This is when I saw the power of unembellished narratives. Bridging, rather than trying to integrate, distinct epistemologies is a stance Dr. Goodwill recommends. I have learned to sit with the unease of this and have seen that it is generative.

Bridging epistemologies also occurs in the research design and ethics review process. While working on her ethics application, Katrina called and sounded concerned. "Do I have to store my interviews on RADAR (SFU's digital data repository) when I am done?" She had been reading other data stewardship plans which cited open-access initiatives like digital repositories as examples of best practices. I heard the unspoken issues in the question: Katrina interviewed psychotherapists who work with Indigenous clients. Her interviews are not simply practitioners' stories, but also those of their Indigenous clients, as Dr. Goodwill highlighted in an earlier research meeting. We needed to carefully consider our responsibilities for sharing these stories, which could include Indigenous community Teachings. Katrina could not commit to digital storage of transcripts. Would Storytellers want their Teachings stored at a University and if so, could they potentially be misinterpreted or misappropriated? Once again, it was important for me not to assume that the best practices of the discipline were best practices for this project. Together, we discussed the rationale for the ethics review board. Senior Indigenous scholars at SFU have done considerable work in advising the ethics review board, and so Katrina's approach was understood and accepted.

As a final example, I have learned that co-mentorship with Indigenous students sometimes requires stepping into advocacy. Dr. Parent helped Cheryl invite Elder Dr. Vedan to advise us on her project. He brought years of experience with Indigenous health and social service agencies across Canada. Although SFU has official policies of providing honourarium for Elders, we soon learned that the amount available did not reflect the knowledge and time Dr. Vedan had brought to the project. Reciprocity was undermined, and we risked tokenizing his contribution. Amy and I, two junior faculty members, needed to advocate with senior administration to ensure that an appropriate honourarium was offered. We were successful, largely, because of the network of Indigenous and allied scholars that weighed in on behalf of the principle of reciprocity and respect.

This was a small but important act of resistance to a practice that would have perpetuated a colonial practice of undervaluing or tokenizing Indigenous knowledge.

Carrying Forward

This section centres the voices of the authors who identify as Indigenous: the student authors and Dr. Goodwill. They introduce the section using a collective voice then share their individual experiences of carrying community forward.

Moving forward in our careers, we carry a deep sense of commitment to the communities we are linked to. With that dedication in mind, we feel a duty to regularly reflect on how we might carry the community Knowledge and Teachings shared with us, all the while balancing our professional demands and abiding by ethical codes of conduct outlined by professional/regulatory bodies. Having been trained in a predominantly Eurocentric field, we are particularly attuned to our need to envision ways of honouring marginalized worldviews so as to not commit epistemic violence against others.

Katrina's Experience

I have not lived in my traditional territory for a long time, attending educational institutions based in Eurocentric worldviews, in order to meet the standards of professional training for the career I chose. Carrying forward, therefore, requires me to acknowledge warranted fears and skepticism from community and family members while I am away and when I go back. My hope is that, when I do return home, I will have professional skills that will allow me to give back to community. Regardless of the level of professional training I acquire, I believe carrying forward involves a level of humility, such as recognizing that “book knowledge” is but one form of learning and admitting its (and my own) limitations. I also need to continue being mindful of past and current extractive and exploitative research practices within Indigenous contexts and act by doing things differently. When returning to practice in my community (and that of any Indigenous peoples), I want to ensure I am honouring the worldviews of the people I am working with. I think adapting my training to the context I find myself in, might help with this.

Carrying forward also means lifting others, just as they supported me. I aspire to maintain strong working relationships with my Indigenous colleagues and support their professional endeavors through research collaboration, conference presentation attendance, and consultation to name a few. Furthermore, I hope to someday offer guidance to Indigenous graduate students and encourage their clinical and research initiatives. I believe that taking on a mentorship role myself might be a way of ensuring further Indigenous representation in universities and in CP. I anticipate that, much like my experience thus far, my professional aspirations will come with challenges. Still, Indigenous scholars have already begun to pave the way for students like myself and this helps my goals seem possible and achievable.

Cheryl's Experience

As I move forward in my career as a scientist-practitioner, I have concerns about fitting into CP. My master's research taught me the importance of staying close to community and taking the time

to foster respectful relationships. From the powerful stories of the girls I met and got to know, the Teachings from my Métis community and Dr. Archibald's Indigenous Storywork method (2008), I was sustained and motivated through the research process. I hope to carry forward this way of conducting research, but I worry about how it will fit within academia. Connecting with community is an important research step and one that cannot be rushed. I am concerned about how this might fit as I pursue further positions in academia, with the strong focus on output that is placed on new faculty members to move forward in university positions. Where is the space and acknowledgement within academia for the important work being done in and with communities?

Alanaise's Experience

As a CP tenure-track faculty, I have a rare vista into the workings of academic programming/accreditation reviews, administration of graduate awards, student admissions, and in-camera meetings. The residue of post-secondary assimilationist policies is enacted at multiple levels of decision-making which determine how we support/thwart IRMs in CP scholarship, and Indigenous students' rights and access to the full resources of graduate studies at our respective institutions. Ensuring fair consideration of scholarly potential in Indigenous students (potential and active) requires all of us in CP to be knowledgeable of postsecondary education's complicity in colonization so as to ensure we do not replicate these harms.

Given our personal and collective experiences as CP graduate students and professors, we are acquainted with the need to support Indigenous scholarship within Canadian CP graduate training programs. We have highlighted only some examples of the impacts assimilative practices can have on Indigenous students with their pursuit of Indigenous centred research, and some ways we are challenging systemic and epistemic violence in education. We hope that in sharing our stories and perspectives, we are encouraging other CP professionals to consider how they might make space for Indigenous scholarship at their institution and how they can contribute to decolonizing CP.

Alanaise's Recommendations for Systems and Institutions

Graduate training in CP is placed at the end of an obstacle course best run by candidates unencumbered by geography, mobility, structural and systemic racism, and diversified life roles and responsibilities. One value marker for CP graduate programs is gauged by the competitiveness of their students and attainment of tri-council funding. The perseverance and precious presence of Indigenous graduate students who have made their way into our programs in spite of hundreds of years of assimilation policies also has unique academic merit and should be viewed as such. If these students have also subverted the post-secondary funding cap imposed by the federal government, or obtained funding from their bands, school boards, communities, or Métis groups, the administration of these funds under the rubric of "government program" still does not deteriorate the inherent nature of their rights to an education. We should eliminate the practice of discouraging Indigenous students from applying for competitive funding just because they have accessed their inherent rights to an education, nor should we view their "funds" as a scholarship.

There is a persistent myth that the presence of IRMs in research proposals result in lowered scholarly competitiveness or compromised academic integrity. Other disciplines in education are outrunning CP in their advancements in IRMs and remediation of epistemic violence at multiple

levels of the academy. The presence of scholars like Linda Smith (2012), Jo Ann Archibald (2008) and others have made space for novice and established researchers to re-envision an inclusive field where Indigenous peoples realize their education priorities. Indigenous CP students are innovating by necessity and have the capacity to advance our field's stated commitments in the urgent project of enhancing and decolonizing Indigenous mental health (CPA, 2018).

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