A Community-Based Participatory Approach to Supporting Indigenous Youth Activity-Promoting Programming in Alberta

by

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Abstract

The ultimate goal of this dissertation was to explore how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada. Three interrelated phases were conducted and, together, form a larger community-based participatory research (CBPR) project. The purpose of the first phase was to discuss and reflect upon a process of building relationships and conducting community consultations to co-create a relevant CBPR agenda exploring Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Four consultations were conducted with approximately 30 community members in Edmonton, Alberta to relevantly and respectfully engage Indigenous Peoples and community members in discussions about Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. A research question was created from the community consultations to inform relevant knowledge generation. A research agenda was also created with community members to inform future community engagement in the research. We reflected upon our process and discussed the strengths, challenges, and recommendations of incorporating culturally-relevant practices and sharing knowledge within and outside of the community group.

In response to community consultations that were conducted in the first phase of this CBPR, the purpose of the second phase was to explore programmers' experiences of co-creating and engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada. Fifteen programmers from four urban areas in Alberta participated in a one-on-one interview and follow-up discussion. A thematic analysis highlighted seven themes that represent participants' experiences of co-creating or engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming: (a) advocating for youth and programming, (b) creating holistic programming with youth, (c) supporting traditional cultural practices and community connections, (d) focusing on relationships and building partnerships, (e) providing and receiving professional support, (f)

promoting and navigating interagency support, and (g) identifying program outcomes and evaluation methods. This research extends upon programming research by providing practical knowledge and considerations for developing activity-promoting programming that fosters holistic health of Indigenous youth. The important consideration of working with and exploring the relationships between multiple agencies or partners is discussed.

In response to feedback from the second phase of this CBPR, a gathering was organized to bring together programmers to discuss creating and engaging in activity-promoting programming in Alberta, and the next step in receiving and providing programming support. The purpose of the third project was to share an integrated knowledge translation (iKT) project that emerged as a gathering of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programmers in Alberta. Approximately 35 people attended the gathering and participated in open space technology discussions and professional development speaker sessions. The gathering outcomes highlighted several factors that facilitated knowledge-to-action within the context: a) supporting participants' needs, b) facilitating a decolonizing space, c) creating opportunities for networking and engagement, and d) supporting on-going networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. This project extends upon the knowledge translation and participatory research literature by highlighting those aforementioned considerations for developing an iKT project and, ultimately, quality community scholarship. Overall, the results indicated the important role of partnerships in supporting Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming that facilitates the holistic health of Indigenous youth. The dissertation also highlights several strategies and considerations for developing partnerships and supporting decolonizing spaces that promote a positive context for creating and exploring Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada from a collaborative approach.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Angela Coppola. The research projects a part of this thesis received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Culturally-Relevant Sport and Physical Activity Programming, Pro00040235, June 26, 2013, and Experiences of Indigenous Youth Activity-Promoting Programmers, Pro00047764, May 14, 2014.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW AND DISSERTATION INTRODUCTION

Several researchers are beginning to explore relevant sport and activity programming with Indigenous youth (e.g., Halas, McRae, & Carpenter, 2012), yet, there are few examples of community-based research exploring how programmers co-create and engage others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Since January 2012, the purpose of my engagement with Indigenous[1] community partners has been focused on activity-promoting programming for Indigenous youth. For the purposes of this dissertation, I use the term activity-promoting to encompass sport and physical activity (PA). Whereas some Indigenous Peoples may see these terms as interchangeable (Canadian Heritage, 2005), the sport and PA literature often use or report these terms separately. Activity-promotion has been advocated by scholars and communities (e.g., Blodgett et al., 2010) and documented as beneficial and relevant to the holistic development of Aboriginal[2] youth (Hanna, 2009). Furthermore, researchers have been working *with* community partners to explore relevant research questions and self-determined research agendas that support Aboriginal youth PA opportunities (e.g., McHugh, Kingsley, & Coppola, 2013). Culturally relevant PA programs (e.g., Forsyth, Heine, & Halas, 2007) and locally defined programs have been suggested for Indigenous youth to connect with their self, communities, and cultures (e.g., Rose & Giles, 2007). A community-based approach to studying how to support these programs could provide insight into how community programmers can develop relevant activity-promoting programming for Indigenous youth while also developing "project deliverables" or direct benefits to the community as the project is conducted.

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[1] The term "Indigenous" is capitalized when referring to Indigenous Peoples, who are native to a land (NAHO, 2012) and represent a population (e.g., youth).

[2] The term "Aboriginal" is often used when the Indigenous population referred to is native to Canada. The term "Aboriginal" is used when referring to previous literature that uses the term. In all other cases throughout the dissertation, I use "Indigenous."

The overall objective of this dissertation was to explore how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada from a CBPR approach. The remainder of this introductory chapter will provide an introduction to community-based participatory research (CBPR) as an approach that can facilitate decolonizing spaces that support the self-determined representation of Indigenous Peoples in a research project. This chapter also includes an overview of the literature that describes the construction of sport and physical activity spaces for Indigenous Peoples. An overview of my commitment to supporting the representation and voice of participants is then provided. This chapter ends with an overall project and study phases' rationales and brief overview of the chapters that comprise this dissertation project.

Decolonization and Self-Determination Defined and Contextualized

Broadly, decolonization is a social process and political process of undoing the colonial influence on Indigenous Peoples (Laenui, 2000). For instance, there is literature discussing the decolonization of language, and recovery of indigenous knowledges and cultural revitalization (Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002; Simpson, 2004). Simpson (2001) discusses in her seminal paper the process of decolonizing knowledges of Aboriginal Peoples. She shares how decolonization should be considered in research, language, land, managing resources, childcare, and other social realms. Specifically, she states how knowledges that are shared by Indigenous Peoples should be shared respectfully and not appropriated and reproduced to fit others' agendas. These knowledges can be shared through story-telling, dreaming, relationships, experiences and other oral traditions, for instance. Simpson (2001) also describes paradigms and research approaches that influence knowledge production and re-presentation. She states how researchers are influenced by their paradigms to see what they want to see or not to see. Participatory approaches are different from indigenous worldviews and research paradigms (Simpson, 2001;

Steinhauer, 2002), however, it is important to recognize these different paradigms and learn how to work together from different perspectives to create and share knowledge (Smith, 2012).

Decolonization has also been explored in different institutions and within different contexts because the process of decolonization is ongoing, involving the consistent challenging of institutional norms, such as educational or higher educational norms (Battiste et al., 2002). Battiste (2000) discusses cognitive imperialism or cognitive assimilation, which is the imposition of one worldview on peoples who have an alternative worldview that happens to be an oppressed worldview. Cognitive imperialism denies the cultural values, languages, and identity of the oppressed worldview and maintains the legitimacy of only the dominant worldview. Battiste (2000) discusses this in the context of education. She goes on to say that textbooks, for instance, have been known to be inconsistent with Indigenous Peoples' worldviews.

One example of colonial influence that was noticeable in my recent work with an Elder was the colonial influence on educational systems. For instance, the learning environment created by the Elder was more focused on the individual needs of the children as opposed to lecturing at the children. She indicated the children learn better in this environment. Having read about decolonizing education, I realize that the "norm" that I am used to is the colonial approach to education, and I realize the importance of challenging that norm to benefit the learning environment for children. Consistent with the convention of various Indigenous scholars (e.g., Daes, 2002; Simpson, 2001), I believe that the process of decolonization involves both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and should be continuously explored and discussed. Facilitating self-determination and self-determined agendas can play a role in creating decolonizing spaces.

Self-determination is described by Smith (2012) as a term that is commonly used in Indigenous discourses and is important to understanding practices that facilitate decolonization in different contexts. Self-determination has been discussed by James Youngblood Henderson (2000) in relation to the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* He discusses how on paper the UN claims that Indigenous Peoples have a right to self-determination. However, he also states that we need more than words on paper to create transformation and decolonization. I draw upon decolonizing research methodologies (Smith, 2012), research ethics (CIHR, 2014), and Indigenous scholars' discussions of research practices (e.g., Hanson & Smylie, 2006) to guide my actions or practices that will facilitate self-determination and decolonization of knowledge production.

Decolonizing research methodologies and practices are explored in the current dissertation project. According to Smith (2012):

> "Decolonizing methodologies is concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which research questions are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities." (Smith, 2012, p. ix)

A focus on recreating a decolonizing space in which Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples can work together has been recommended (Smith, 1999; 2012). Decolonizing methodologies challenge Westernized epistemologies that may stem from colonization and perpetuate the assumption that objective means of knowledge production are superior to Indigenous ways of knowing. Decolonizing methodologies facilitate Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, participation, and representation in the research process (Smith, 1999; 2012). Some researchers advocate for the use of traditional Indigenous activities, such as talking circles

or story-telling, in self-determined research with Indigenous communities (Smith, 1999; 2012).

As a non-Indigenous researcher, decolonizing research methodologies helped me realize that my

role as researcher in the community cannot be assumed and should be co-defined with the

community members along with the agenda and benefits of the research for the community. I

also recognize that self-determined research agendas can be facilitated by consciously reflecting

on how participants' voices are included in the research and by recognizing participants as agents

in research. A CBPR approach facilitates the development of a research agenda with others and

encourages iterative reflection of participants as co-researchers in the project.

Community-Based Participatory Research: Facilitating Decolonizing Research

A CBPR approach has facilitated my relationship-building and development of relevant

and decolonizing research processes with Indigenous Peoples. CBPR (Israel, Schulz, Parker, &

Becker, 1998) is conceptualized as a partnership approach that equitably involves academic and

non-academic partners in all phases of the research process. Each partner contributes their

expertise and knowledge to understanding the community issue and enhancing the wellbeing of a

community (Israel et al., 1998, 2001). Programs and research designs may be co-created with

community members and, therefore, community engagement, service, and partnerships are an

integral component in CBPR (Cargo & Mercer, 2008). The general CBPR phases include

building relationships, identifying an issue, developing research programs, interpreting and

sharing knowledge generated from research, and creating a plan for change (e.g., Israel et al.,

1998; Israel, Eng, Schulz, & Parker, 2005). New issues may be identified after each of the phases

and the process continues. The CBPR framework was used in the current dissertation for two key

reasons. First, the framework is consistent with my paradigm as a researcher (Sparkes, 1992).

Specifically, my critical feminist participatory research approach aligns with the CBPR

framework mainly because both strive for research with a focus on the self-determined nature of participants, highlighting participant voices and experience as the focus of the research (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005). Second, Indigenous community partners have the right to collaborate and control the research process and this framework is recommended (e.g., Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012) for engaging in relevant and respectful research with Indigenous community partners.

CBPR frameworks allow practitioners to engage with communities and develop self-determined research agendas with communities. For instance, a CBPR framework establishes local relevance of research by acknowledging that the community members are experts in their own experience and they are able to develop their own relevant research agendas (e.g., Israel et al., 1998). Community members are able to choose levels of engagement in the research process and to engage in discussion about research interests, processes, data, and knowledge sharing. However, it may be challenging to engage in these discussions without understanding the community context and developing partnerships.

A CBPR approach has facilitated my relationship-building and development of relevant and decolonizing research processes with Indigenous Peoples. Community engagement and relationship-building should be facilitated for decolonizing practices and research agendas to be co-created with community members. Scholars (e.g., Fletcher, 2003; Smith, 2009) have documented suggestions for developing research partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. For instance, Fletcher (2003) provides a detailed description of what to consider when developing research questions and designs, and building and maintaining research partnerships with Indigenous Peoples. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's work with Māori communities has exemplified how to identify the roles of research in indigenous communities and co-create and communicate

research agendas with Indigenous Peoples. Her work has supported researchers' development of decolonizing agendas with Indigenous Peoples, including those who conduct activity-promoting CBPR with Indigenous Peoples and youth (e.g., Blodgett, Schinke, Fisher, Yungblut, & Recollet-Saikkonen et al., 2010; McHugh, Coppola, et al., 2013).

Historical Context of Research with/on Indigenous Peoples

Building partnerships with Indigenous Peoples is a necessary and complex process given the history of unethical research-related practices (Schnarch, 2004). Indigenous Peoples' and communities' past experience with unethical research systems influenced by Westernized power structures and notions of objectivity have left Indigenous communities feeling over-researched, under-served, and exploited (Schnarch, 2004). Schnarch (2004) describes how university members have extracted knowledge from Indigenous Peoples and communities with no return or potential benefit to the community. For the context of this research I have provided a relatively brief overview of the historical research relationship that has created the researcher/researched paradigm and influenced relationship-building in research with Indigenous Peoples today.

Research in recent history with Indigenous Peoples has not been collaborative, but manipulative, and Indigenous Peoples in Canada have been used merely as a source of data (Schnarch, 2004). Furthermore, individuals have been coerced into research without understanding the risks to health and safety and have not had these explained adequately to fully provide an informed consent (Schnarch, 2004). This does not indicate that Indigenous Peoples are vulnerable or not educated enough to understand research. However, it does indicate that information was withheld and individuals were not fully informed of risks and research processes and potential outcomes. For instance, in July 2013, it was publicly announced that in 1942, hungry Indigenous children were used to study malnutrition:

"The researchers ran a randomized, double-blind controlled trial — giving one group

vitamin C supplements and the other a placebo — again after a two-year baseline period.

Children at a third were given bread made with a type of fortified flour that was not

approved for sale in Canada; many of them later developed anemia. The researchers also

prevented the children at all six schools from receiving preventive dental care, because

oral health was a parameter used to assess nutrition." (Owens, 2013, p. 1)

This was *recent* history, and it is evident that the unethical treatment of Indigenous peoples in

research is not something of the past. Such research highlights the larger systemic issue of the

relationship between the dominant and oppressed in society, and the relationship between the

dominant research practices and the researched.

Challenges to the dominant notions of knowledge production, and calls for the creation of

ethical research spaces, occurred in the 1970s with the voicing of resistance to inhumane and

unethical treatment of Indigenous Peoples in research (Ermine, Sinclair, & Jeffery, 2004).

Ethical guidelines in Canada, such as Chapter Nine of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical

Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2; CIHR, 2010; 2014) recognizes the

importance for all research with Indigenous Peoples being non-prescriptive and including a

collaborative research agenda. Coming from a position in academia and identifying as non-

Indigenous, I recognize that I have certain biases about how research should be conducted and

represented, and this should be explored with those with whom I work. Consistent with the

beliefs of Indigenous rights scholars such as Daes (2000), I believe that Indigenous and non-

Indigenous peoples both have a role in creating decolonizing spaces, and I cannot assume an

ethical space has been created. Considering decolonizing or self-determining practices in the

research process facilitates my consistent consideration of my position as an academic.

Indigenous Peoples and the Construction of Sport and Physical Activity Spaces

When exploring Indigenous Peoples engagement in activity-promoting programming, it is important to consider historical and contemporary sport and physical activity experiences and how these experiences affect participation in activity-promoting programming today. For instance, sport in the lives of Aboriginal Peoples has been documented as playing various roles including that of assimilator, oppressor, and decolonizer depending on why and how Aboriginal Peoples participated in sport (Forsyth & Giles, 2012) or how they have been racialized in sport spaces (e.g., Hokowhitu, 2003; 2004). Forsyth (2012) shared the story of one man who described hockey as a positive part of residential schooling. However, sports within residential schools were linked to larger social, political, and economic objectives of Indian affairs. Forsyth (2012) described how the settler government sends messages through policy and priority area initiatives that set up a dominant discourse regarding what is important. This discourse sometimes results in assimilation strategies that discount Indigenous Peoples' cultural identity and therefore set up unequal power relations. For instance, in the early 1900s, the objective for Canadian Aboriginal children's engagement in sport was meant to mobilize support for Indian assimilation and in the later half of the 1900s was meant to integrate Indigenous children in the public school system (Forsyth, 2012).

Supporting Indigenous Peoples participation in sport may involve challenging existing dominant discourse and unequal power relations (Forsyth & Giles, 2012; Paraschak, 2012). Sport spaces have been constructed (at least) as racialized, racializing, and racist spaces for Indigenous Peoples (Paraschak, 2012). These spaces produce racialized discourse that affects others' perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and athletes. *Racialized* spaces in sport define sport participants based on their heritage, overtly placing value and meaning over one's race and

creating objective criteria for participating in sport. Paraschak (2012) provided an example of a

racialized sport space in Canada as the "Little NHL," an Ontario-based inter-reserve First

Nations hockey tournament, where players must provide evidence of their Aboriginal heritage,

such as a status card or parent's Certificate of Indian Status. *Racializing* sporting spaces are

created when the race recreates identities and reaffirms cultural identities. An example of a

racializing space is the North American Indigenous Games, where those of Aboriginal heritage

are participants but their Aboriginal identity and pride is fostered in their sport and culture.

Racist sporting spaces construct a racialized other and send the message to the broader society of

unequal power relations or that people should be treated and perceived differently because of

their race. A classic example of the construction of a racist sporting space within the North

American Indigenous culture is Native-themed mascots, such as Chiefs, Indians, and Redskins,

in mainstream or "whitestream" sports (Paraschak, 2012). I recognize that these spaces have

likely discouraged Indigenous Peoples from engaging in research and programming initiatives

with people they do not know well or trust. The history of the relationship between Indigenous

Peoples and colonial physical activity is a complex one, and those who promote activity might

think about physical activity spaces as possible sights for decolonization. Thus, the

aforementioned knowledge was critical for me to explore in order to begin understanding why it

is important to build trust and explore power relations with Indigenous Peoples when exploring

how to support indigenous youth activity-promoting programming.

Representation and Voice

When considering engagement of Indigenous Peoples in the research process and creating safe spaces for research, it was important to explore how to support, as a non-Indigenous researcher, their representation and voice in the project. When considering Indigenous ways of knowing (e.g., Blackstock, 2011, Gillet, 2009) and methodologies (e.g., Bishop, 2008; Mucina, 2011; Smith, 2012), as well as the research/researched relationship, the positionality of the researcher, collaborative methods or approaches, and mutual dialogue are key components to supporting participants and creating a relevant and respectful research project. Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous methodologies may be used as a means of knowledge production. Positioning one self in a research collaborative to address power, voice, benefits, ethics, and representation is important when one does not approach research from an Indigenous worldview. Mutual dialogue can address the co-construction of a research project with collaborative members from different paradigms or ways of knowing.

Before discussing Indigenous methodologies, it was important for me to consider Indigenous ways of knowing as a means of knowledge production and viewing the world or one's life-world (Gillet, 2009). I have learned that the way we view the world influences how we go about conducting research or generating knowledge (Sparkes, 1992). When reviewing literature on Indigenous ways of knowing, I noticed that these epistemologies tend to be relational in that we are connected to nature, others, and the spiritual world, for instance. Gillet (2009) discusses Indigenous epistemologies and how they are subjective and relational and the way in which we generate knowledge from this perspective may not be seen as legitimate to the dominant scientific field. However, it is important that researchers challenge these dominant assumptions of knowledge production and consider new ways of working together to produce

knowledge that is beneficial to not only an academic community, but relevant and beneficial to participants or communities we are working with and for (e.g., Andreotti et al., 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008).

While I may not see the world through this lens, as a critical researcher, it is important for me to respect these ways of knowing and respond to how these ways of knowing can be a foundation for how we approach our research together. For instance, Mucina (2011) discusses Ubuntu story-telling and how this process of producing and sharing knowledge is highly relational and interactive. While we cannot necessarily test the impact of this work, it can bring about substantial individual and social change by highlighting how the connection between the storyteller and listeners can bring about individual change in that the relational experience itself is transformative. This process involves collaboration and engagement from participants as does other Indigenous methodologies such as collaborative story-telling (Bishop, 2008). The collaborative nature of producing knowledge in Indigenous methodologies is beneficial and relevant because Indigenous epistemologies are relational and espouse a connectedness between our self, others, Mother Earth, and the spiritual world. Thus, when considering the research/researched relationship, it is important to mutually consider how each will play a role in the research process and how one positions their role in a collaborative.

Bishop (2008) discusses Kaupapa Māori Research and the co-creation of a whanau or what is described as a kind of research family. Once you are positioned in the whanau, there is no need to "other" any one as it is considered at this point that you are a member of a collaborative doing your part to achieve the collective project goals. There are five key considerations that may help the group address issues of power, representation, benefits, and voice (e.g., whose voice is heard?) in the project. These considerations include initiation (e.g.,

whose research questions/issues are being addressed?), representation (e.g., whose voices are highlighted and knowledge represented?), legitimation (e.g., is this an accurate representation of one's voice and who decides?), benefits (e.g., what will this work produce for the community?), and accountability (e.g., what are the roles of those in the whanau?). These considerations can influence mutual dialogue about the research process given this type of relational work is evolving and ever-changing. Thus, engaging in dialogue among the group may be necessary to discuss how knowledge is represented, whose voice is heard, as well as identifying the benefits and ethical processes within the research to come to a consensus about how to move forward or evolve the project (Bishop, 2008; Smith, 2008). Considering how knowledge will be translated, particularly in a culturally-relevant manner, will also take time to establish when working with Indigenous Peoples in Canada (CIHR, 2014). Whereas this dissertation is not interpreted from an Indigenous worldview, I drew upon these reflections and methodologies to influence my relationship with participants.

Overall Study Rationale: Justifying the Approach, Overall Project, and Research Papers

Because this is a CBPR project, the overall research approach and research studies or phases as they fit within the existing literature should be justified. Above, I provided a rationale for the CBPR approach. Next, I will explain how the approach and relationship-building efforts influenced the community-based projects in each phase, and this explanation will be accompanied by the rationale for the research papers in the subsequent chapters.

This dissertation is comprised of three phases, which together form one larger CBPR project. Phase One, which is described in Chapter Two, involved community consultations to create a research agenda, and the paper discusses and reflects upon a process of building relationships and conducting community consultations to co-create a relevant CBPR agenda

exploring Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Exploring the *process* of engaging in CBPR that is focused on activity promotion for Indigenous youth may provide insights into the methodological and relational practices that are necessary for addressing the quality of participatory research methodologies (Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013) and enhance culturally responsive practices in activity programming and research.

Phase Two, which is described in Chapter Three was an exploration of the question generated from Phase One. Specifically, the purpose of the phase was to explore how Indigenous youth activity-promoting programmers co-create and engage others in programming. Exploring how programmers co-create and engage with others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming can provide necessary insights into the program context that can inform health programming and policy and extend current Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming research (e.g., McHugh, Holt, & Andersen, 2015) by identifying how to support partnerships and program development promoting the holistic development of Indigenous youth.

Phase Three, Chapter Four, involved a gathering to support Alberta Indigenous youth health programs, and the paper discusses strategies by which KT practitioners can facilitate knowledge-to-action in CBPR. An exploration of the process of creating and implementing a knowledge-to-action project can provide insight into *how* to produce relevant project outcomes when working within an Indigenous context (Hanson & Smylie, 2006), contributing to existing quality community scholarship principles (Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013). The final Chapter Five discusses the role of partnership development and support of culturally-relevant and decolonizing spaces for Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada. Specifically, the need to explore relationships and create networking opportunities between those involved in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming is discussed.

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CHAPTER TWO

PHASE ONE: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS REFLECTIONS

Considering Culturally-Relevant Practices and Knowledge-Sharing when Creating an Activity-

Promoting Community Research Agenda

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to discuss and reflect upon a process of building relationships and conducting community consultations to co-create a relevant community-based participatory research agenda exploring Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Four consultations were conducted with approximately 30 community members in Edmonton, Alberta to relevantly and respectfully engage Indigenous Peoples and community members in discussions about Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. A research question was created from the community consultations to inform relevant knowledge generation. A research agenda was also created with community members to inform future community engagement in the research. We reflect upon our process and discuss the strengths, challenges, and recommendations of incorporating culturally-relevant practices and sharing knowledge within and outside of the community group. This work contributes to literature enhancing relevant and respectful methodological and relational research practices with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Considering Culturally-Relevant Practices and Knowledge-Sharing when Creating an Activity-Promoting Community Research Agenda

The role of sport in affirming Indigenous cultures and identities has been documented in the sport literature, and research has demonstrated the role of sport for the holistic development and overall health of Indigenous[3] youth (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006; Hanna, 2009). Specifically, scholars have indicated that sport may be one of the "most salient mediums for recapturing spirits" among Aboriginal[4] Canadians (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006, p. 294) and may positively impact the physical, mental, and emotional health of Aboriginal youth (Hanna, 2009). Sport is just one of the many forms of physical activity that can contribute to health. For instance, the Alberta Indigenous Games Resource Manual for Walking in Balance (2013) reports Indigenous community members' support of a holistic approach to youth development and leadership in areas such as sport and activity.

Several Indigenous athletes, such as Olympic medalists Billy Mills and Waneek Horn-Miller, and high-school scholar athlete Sheridan Fox-Many Grey Horses, were featured in the Alberta Indigenous Games Resource Manual, and shared sport and activity experiences in their lives. These athletes discussed the role of others, as well as culture and traditions, in holistic development and activity promotion. For instance, Fox-Many Grey Horses competes nationally in rodeo, barrel racing, and breakaway roping and has excelled in both high school academics and athletics. She discussed the inspiration of her aunties, parents, and grandparents who supported and encouraged her to achieve her full potential. Waneek Horn-Miller discussed the role of traditions and culture in enhancing her sport experience. She said:

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[3] The term "Indigenous" is capitalized when referring to Indigenous Peoples, who are native to a land (NAHO, n.d.) and represent a population (e.g., youth).
[4] The term "Aboriginal" is used when the Indigenous population referred to is native to Canada.

Ceremonies like the Sundance are our sports psychology. That's how we prepare our

warriors for battle, whether it's in a water polo pool, in an academic setting, on the

business front, or political front, we need to have our grounding in that...the essence, the

meaning, and the teaching of it will never change (Alberta Indigenous Games Manual,

2013, p. 36).

Given the salient role that sport has played and continues to play in the lives of Indigenous

Peoples, academic and non-academic communities are exploring activity-promoting

programming and opportunities for Indigenous youth (e.g., Schinke, Yungblut, Blodgett, Eys,

Peltier, & Ritchie et al., 2010).

Whereas previous literature has identified terms such as physical activity, health, and

sport as distinct, in the current article and research program these terms will be included in

"activity-promoting[5]." Activity-promoting is an encompassing term that includes health, activity,

and sport practices of Indigenous Peoples, many of whom consider the terms to be interrelated

(Hanna, 2009; Lavallée, 2008). For instance, the medicine wheel is a traditional teaching of

balancing and enhancing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Lavallée (2008)

has explored how activity can help balance the medicine wheel. Exploring young Aboriginal

women's experiences in martial arts, Lavallée (2008) concluded that the women were able to

begin a journey to healing through their participation, citing stories about confronting identity

and self-esteem issues, and feelings of 'undeservingness.' The term also encompasses the idea

that the programming is not solely about increasing activity of Aboriginal youth, it might foster

emotional, spiritual, or mental health through reading or language learning as well. Activity-

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[5] The term "activity-promoting" is used to encompass both physical activity and sport
programming or programming that incorporates physical activity or sport as a program
component.

promotion has been advocated by scholars and communities (e.g., Blodgett et al., 2010) and

documented as beneficial and relevant to the holistic development of Indigenous youth (Hanna,

2009).

Sport and activity promotion literature has identified the health and behavioural benefits

associated with participation for youth (Strong et al., 2005; Hanna, 2009), however these benefits

may only occur in certain contexts (Perkins & Noam, 2007). There is little support from the

literature linking the direct benefits of engaging in sport and healthy development or active

lifestyles (e.g., Kidd, 2008). Some scholars claim that it is not sport itself that produces positive

or negative outcomes for health but the sport organizations and the interactions one has within

the organization or environment, making context of sport an important factor in considering the

sport and health relationship (e.g., Perkins & Noam, 2007). Thus, the health and behavioural

benefits of sport and physical activity participation may depend on the messages we send to

youth in these contexts. For instance, sport and sport programs have been used as an assimilator

among youth to White or western ways of being (Kidd, 2008). Hokowhitu (2004) sheds light on

the historical or genealogical constructions of Indigenous Peoples' physical bodies throughout

colonization to contemporary constructions of Indigenous Peoples in sports. He argues that this

perpetuates the dominant message that has been constructed throughout history and inadvertently

in cotemporary society, that achieving through physical labour or in sport may be their only

means of achieving in life (Hokowhitu, 2004). The aforementioned research indicates that

activity-promoting programming is a constructed context, and can be addressed by co-creating a

supportive activity-promoting programming context for youth with the community (Blodgett et

al., 2010).

Community members may play a role in developing and participating in activity-

promoting programming for Indigenous youth (Blodgett et al., 2010), and researchers have engaged with Indigenous Peoples in sport research to inform Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming (McHugh, Coppola, & Sinclair, 2013; McHugh, Kingsley, & Coppola, 2013; Schinke et al., 2010). In terms of program development, Aboriginal youth, family members, and school staff have reported the need to better understand how communities can support sport opportunities for Aboriginal youth (McHugh, Kingsley, & Coppola, 2013). When Blodgett and colleagues (2010) conducted talking circles with a reserve community (e.g., youth, teachers, coaches, family members), the community discussed the importance of integrating Elders in activities, promoting Aboriginal role models, and developing a volunteer base for youth sport programming. This finding is consistent with Schinke and colleagues (2010) work reporting that family members in a reserve community play a role in sport programming. For instance, parents were expected to commit to funding, encouraging, and managing their child's participation in sports. The aforementioned findings provide valuable information for developing programs and incorporating relevant community members, particularly from a community-based participatory research (CBPR; Israel et al., 1998, 2001) approach or decolonizing approach (Smith, 1999; 2012). For instance, Smith (2012) discusses Indigenous Peoples' perceptions of research:

> The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful (Smith, 2012, p. 1).

CBPR frameworks promote practitioners engagement with communities and development of self-determined and decolonizing research agendas with communities. Decolonizing research agendas facilitate Indigenous Peoples autonomy or control over the

research process, which is their right (Battiste, 2002). Indigenous Peoples' and communities'

past experience with unethical research systems influenced by Westernized power structures and

notions of objectivity have left indigenous communities feeling over-researched, under-served,

and exploited (Schnarch, 2004). For example, Schnarch (2004) describes how university

members have extracted knowledge from Indigenous Peoples and communities with no return or

potential benefit to the community. A focus on recreating a decolonizing space in which

Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples can work together has been recommended

(Smith, 2009; 2012). Decolonizing methodologies challenge Westernized epistemologies that

may stem from colonization and perpetuate the assumption that objective means of knowledge

production are superior to Indigenous ways of knowing. Thus, decolonizing methodologies

facilitate Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, participation, and representation in the research

process (Smith, 1999; 2012).

Several recommendations and considerations for facilitating a decolonizing and

participatory research agenda when working with Indigenous Peoples have been documented

(Bishop, 2008; Fletcher, 2003; Halas et al., 2012). Broadly, these recommendations include

building relationships and a working community group, establishing culturally-relevant or safe

practices, and relevantly and respectfully generating and sharing knowledge. Cultural safety is a

relatively new concept emerging in New Zealand in the healthcare discourse. This concept has

also been used in the field of nursing, knowledge translation (KT), and clinical practice for

Indigenous Peoples in Canada (Browne et al., 2009). Cultural relevance involves reaffirming

Indigenous youth's cultural identity and providing them with a space to engage in activity that is

relevant to their community or culture (Canadian Heritage, 2005).

Decolonizing spaces are promoted in research with Indigenous Peoples given the history

of research on, as opposed to with, Indigenous Peoples (Schnarch, 2004). Their passive and unsolicited role in the research process led to the exploitation of Indigenous Peoples and children even in recent history (Owens, 2013). Actively considering how to support and include the voices of Indigenous Peoples in the research process is important. Whereas the terms "cultural relevance" or "decolonizing spaces" on paper can be seen as passive, it is important to critically reflect upon these terms and how non-Indigenous researchers are actively engaging Indigenous Peoples in the research process. Cultural relevance or culturally-relevant practices in the current paper include acknowledgement and inclusion of cultural practices to promote a safe space of acceptance and comfort that I feel cannot be assumed. Whereas cultural relevance may be established differently depending on the program and community, existing literature suggests that there are strategies to enhance cultural relevance that relate to active self-reflection and engagement with community members (e.g., Browne et al., 2009; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998; Ukpokodu, 2011).

Specifically, self-awareness, constant reflection, and on-going dialogue with communities may facilitate cultural relevance. Iterative and on-going reflection has been recommended to practice cultural humility, or constantly exploring one's position in a community context (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). Ukpokodu (2011) explored strategies for developing cultural competence among teachers in order to enhance students' activities and behaviors to function in different cultural contexts and build positive relationships. Similar to previous literature, self-reflection, awareness of assumptions and expectations, and a critical reflection of how assumptions fit within larger social and cultural institutions was recommended as an on-going process. Browne and colleagues (2009) report that cultural safety practices may involve the critical reflection of political, economic, and social assumptions in practice through

dialogic reflection. The purpose is to challenge race-based discourses by exploring key concepts and terms, by being transparent, and by initiating reflexivity to examine how we are all positioned within wider structures and discourses. Specific to research, an exploration of terms such as "culture," "safety," and "cultural safety" with community members was recommended to engage in iterative critical self and group reflection regarding relevant practices (Browne et al., 2009). Whereas there are strategies to enhance cultural relevance, it is important for scholars to document the process of establishing cultural relevance and engaging in culturally-relevant practices with communities. This process is important to document because learning about different processes of establishing cultural relevance can inform one's own context.

Exploring the *process* of engaging in CBPR that is focused on activity promotion for Indigenous youth may provide insights into the methodological and relational practices that are necessary for addressing the quality of participatory research methodologies (Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013) and enhance culturally responsive practices in activity programming and research. This process can be shared so that researchers can consider and apply strategies for working relevantly and respectfully with Indigenous communities within their context (McHugh, Coppola, & Sinclair, 2013). Thus, the purpose of this article is to discuss and reflect upon a process of co-creating a relevant research agenda focused on Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. We describe the background of the project informing this article. We then describe how building relationships and community consultations were essential components in co-creating a relevant research agenda. Upon describing the process, we reflect upon the strengths and challenges to be considered when incorporating culturally-relevant practices and sharing knowledge.

Project Description and Reflections

Our research provides a practical example of building relationships and engaging in the process of community consultations to co-create a relevant research agenda within a larger CBPR project[6]. The first author used field notes and reflection upon field notes and experiences to create the current article discussion points. She then collaborated with the second author to iteratively and reflectively discuss the notes and discussion points. We drew upon reflection-on-action and delayed reflection-on-action as a guiding methodology to reflect upon and learn from previous experiences (Cropley, 2010; Holt, McHugh, Coppola, & Neely, 2014; Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Neville, 2001) in order to convey ideas and strategies for relevantly creating a community-based agenda in the future. First, we position our selves in the research process. Then, drawing upon existing literatures (e.g., Browne et al., 2009; Smith, 2012), we describe and reflect upon the following components of the project: building relationships, consulting with the community, incorporating culturally-relevant practices, and sharing knowledge.

Researcher Positionality: What is our role in creating research agendas with Indigenous Peoples and communities?

The first author, who conducted the research, identifies as Caucasian-American and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Alberta. The second author identifies as an English-Canadian Associate Professor, whose research is focused on the body image and physical activity experiences of youth. Her role in this work was supervisory to the first author. We operate under the assumption that both Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples should work together to produce knowledge and action regarding Indigenous youth activity promotion.

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[6] The larger CBPR project was a multiphase project exploring how to support Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta, Canada.

When generating knowledge and change with the researcher and others, the participant is meant to engage in equitable and self-determined research (Lather, 2006; Sparkes, 1992). Thus, this research is meant to be transformative with and not manipulative of the participant.

I (the first author) recognize, as a non-Indigenous researcher, that my feminist perspective facilitates a balancing of power dynamics and facilitates a decolonizing research process. However, I also recognize that I have not experienced colonization and racial oppression and neither have my ancestors, making my beliefs, influences, and reasons for engaging in the research process substantially different from the Indigenous Peoples I will work with. I also recognize that I have been afforded several advantages such as my education, and that I am of a privileged race. It is my responsibility as a researcher to commit to self-evaluation and self-critique to acknowledge power imbalances in research partnerships (Chávaz, Duran, Baker, Avila, & Wallerstein, 2008). Coming from a position in academia and identifying as non-Indigenous, I recognize that I have certain biases about how research should be conducted and represented, and this should be explored with those with whom I work. Consistent with the beliefs of Indigenous rights scholars such as Daes (2000), I believe that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples both have a role in creating decolonizing spaces, and I cannot assume an ethical space has been created. Considering decolonizing or self-determining practices in the research process facilitates my consistent consideration of my position as an academic.

A feminist participatory research approach can enhance my process of cultural humility as a part of a research partnership. For instance, feminist research from a participatory approach stresses the need for inclusion, participation, action, social change, research reflexivity, and placing the experiences and perspectives of participants at the core of the research (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005; Reid, 2004). This approach as well as cultural humility will help me

consider and reflect upon my roles as a non-Indigenous critical feminist participatory researcher and the roles of the participants in this research to bring about social change. The process of engaging in this approach may bring about individual and social change as we work together from different perspectives and experiences to achieve a common goal.

Building Relationships

Relationship-building is a key component to working with Indigenous Peoples because developing a self-determined research agenda involves the identification of community needs and the discussion and development of a research relationship (Fletcher, 2003). My partnership with a *cree* Elder began in January 2012 at a predominantly Indigenous junior-senior high school in Edmonton where she was an Aboriginal studies and *cree* language teacher. After volunteering with her in a classroom setting and at the school as a program evaluator and lunch aide, we engaged in our first research project together (McHugh, Coppola, & Sinclair, 2013) when we used photovoice to explore Aboriginal youth's meanings of sport. Our continued work led to the development of a *cree* sport program in a school community, however, we realized that even if physical activity-promoting programming was created for Indigenous youth, how could it be sustainable? We discussed the importance of including family members and other Elders in developing programming, as they could share traditional knowledge with Indigenous youth. But how were we going to engage them?

During the Spring of 2013, my community partner and I were awarded a grant from the Interdisciplinary Research Academy (IHRA) at the University of Alberta. The generation of a research project with a community partner should begin by taking the time to mutually-develop a research plan (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012), including the identification and acquisition of funding (Ball & Janyst, 2008). Thus, it was beneficial for us to apply for funding together to plan

the development of a community-based research agenda. The purpose of the grant was to build relationships and co-create a research agenda with a community group. Specifically, we proposed that we would hold community consultations with Indigenous youth, parents, Elders, and families, and other interested community members, to learn how to engage them in "culturally-relevant" sport, and physical activity programming for Indigenous youth. The funding was used to honor our community partner, to support feasts, and to provide participant honorariums and tobacco peace offerings.

Recognizing the importance of co-creating an understanding of our partnership, my community partner and I wrote and negotiated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for this phase that was supported by the IHRA. This was an agreement between the Elder and I, not the community. However, we did outline participant ethics and engagement. There were no discrepancies in opinion between her and I when developing the MOU. We simply discussed how we would support each other to achieve our goals. Thus, the MOU was developed through iterative discussions. This was an opportunity for us to speak to each other honestly, openly, and equally about our roles in the community consultations.

CBPR practitioners have recommended developing a MOU to outline project goals and roles and responsibilities of partners (e.g., Flicker et al., 2007). MOUs have been advocated for in health-related fields with Indigenous Peoples and communities in various countries to outline research or working agreements and terms of reference to establish a mutual understanding among partners (e.g., Cunningham, Reading, & Eades, 2003; Health Council of Canada, 2012). Specifically, MOUs are drafted to build relationships and a research agenda in a "good way" and conduct "good" research practices as the community sees it (Ball & Janyst, 2008). Ball and Janyst (2008) recommend considering the effectiveness of this tool by having frank discussions

between partners and by making the effort to understand one another's perspectives and work demands or environments. For instance, an academic might take the time to understand community perspectives and cultural practices, and the community might take the time to understand university and grant procedural requirements.

Ultimately, the MOU was co-developed for the purpose of conducting the first phase of this research. This process was beneficial to communicate what we wanted to do and how we were going to get there. We outlined individual partners' interests, roles, and responsibilities, such as supporting cultural protocols and creating interview guides (see Appendix A). We also were able to discuss ethical considerations and grant agency stipulations. Whereas a key strength was being able to communicate contextual considerations, it is difficult to ensure follow-through and continuous understanding. Thus, we planned frequent meetings to go over the progress of the consultations and attempted to practice humility in the community context. Based on the CBPR literature (e.g., Guishard, 2009; Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998), in the broadest sense humility could be characterized as an ongoing process of praxis involving reflection, dialogue, and action regarding CBPR partners' positions or influence on the project. At these meetings, our "needs" for support were discussed. In the MOU, we gave this the term "process evaluation" (Butterfoss, 2006). Although a MOU does not guarantee that what is said and planned for will be done, a key strength is that the needs of partners and goals of your project are explicit and not assumed. Thus, we noticed that a process of on-going discussion and reflection was important.

Given our goal to engage in community consultations, we recognized the need to engage as many community members and Elders as possible. In an effort to connect with community members and identify a location for community consultations, we developed a partnership with the director of a local traditional healing society called The Bent Arrow Society, in Edmonton,

Alberta. With the support of the director of the Bent Arrow Society, participants were recruited

primarily through list serves and word-of-mouth. Quality community scholarship in this context

involved reflecting upon sustainability, MOU agreements, and funding discussions, as well as

praxis regarding sustainability of community programs. Also key to the establishment of a

quality community scholarship agenda was consulting with the community.

Consulting the Community

Four consultations were held at Bent Arrow Society from August to October 2013. The

community consultations were attended by a total of approximately 30 Elders, Indigenous youth,

parents, school workers (e.g., social workers, teachers), and members of organizations in

Edmonton, such as the City of Edmonton and Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA)

identifying as Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples

participated in the consultations and the diversity was welcomed. My community partner and I

created the agendas for these consultations, which included demonstrations, presentations and

ceremonies, and notable contributions from community members.

Bringing together a community group and encouraging on-going meetings were essential

to set the foundation for sustainable projects and programming (e.g., Cargo & Mercer, 2008;

Israel et al., 1998). Previous community-based research literature with Indigenous Peoples has

also encouraged working with community members throughout all phases of the research (e.g.,

Battiste, 2002; Fletcher, 2003; Smith, 1999; 2012). This may include participation in accessing

and applying for funding (Ball & Janyst, 2008) to dissemination, KT, or future project planning

(Browne, Varcoe, Smye, Reimer-Kirkham, Lynam, & Wong, 2009). Despite the evidence that

researchers are working with community members throughout all phases of research (e.g.,

Schinke et al., 2010), the literature documenting and reflecting upon the process of working with

a community group is relatively new and emerging. Upon reflection of our process of bringing together a community group, we identified the important role of connecting multiple agencies and community members as well as navigating funding successes and challenges.

The community consultations created an opportunity for Elders, youth, school social workers, parents, and others interested in physical activity and sport opportunities for Indigenous youth to connect with each other. Youth and community members were encouraged to speak their thoughts and ideas about activity-promoting programming. These consultations also provided a forum for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples to speak about what brought them to the consultations. Peoples with different interests and backgrounds shared their feelings and ideas. However, this did not come without challenges. There was one incident where an Indigenous woman felt a non-Indigenous woman was "speaking for" Indigenous youth in saying that youth were unfamiliar with their culture. This sparked a debate that had to be mediated. My community partner and I suggested prefacing meetings with a vision or axiology. McKenzie and colleagues (2014) discuss the importance of including an axiology or philosophy for working together as a collaborative to address health-related community programming. This axiology could include that all thoughts are welcomed and open for discussion, and that we are all here because we care about the well-being of Indigenous youth in our community regardless of our background or ethnicity.

We recognized the importance of networking when consulting with the community and developing an agenda or next steps in the research process. Of particular importance when developing an agenda is incorporating culturally-relevant practices. Specifically, addressing the conflicts that may arise when others are not comfortable with the culturally-relevant practices that have been identified is important.

Incorporating Culturally-Relevant Practices

Our experiences also involved incorporating culturally-relevant practices that revealed several considerations for those wanting to work respectfully with Indigenous communities. Whereas previous research exploring cultural relevance and safety was in the context of healthcare and was explored among healthcare providers (Browne et al., 2009), our reflection was related to health and activity programming. These reflections are relevant and beneficial because of the call for cultural relevance and safety in physical education (Halas et al., 2012), physical activity (Young & Katzmarzyk, 2007), and sport opportunities for Indigenous youth (McHugh, Coppola, & Sinclair, 2013). It may be difficult to engage Indigenous Peoples in shaping sport programming when they are untrusting of others and do not feel that a "safe space" has been fostered given past experiences with research (Paraschak, 2012). There may be various reasons as to the lack of engagement, yet researchers are exploring how sport and physical activity participation should be culturally-relevant to enhance engagement of Indigenous youth (e.g., Halas et al., 2012). Thus, we considered cultural practices a key component of developing the consultation meetings and discussions, and identified several strengths and challenges of incorporating culturally-relevant practices to be considered. Specifically, we refer to pipe ceremonies and cultural traditions that were incorporated into the research process and community members' discussions of the relevance of the term "culturally-relevant."

When hosting community consultations my community partner and I were committed to respecting cultural protocols and incorporating culturally relevant practices. Previous research supports the inclusion of cultural practices in research with Indigenous communities to ensure cultural sensitivity and self-determination in the research process (Brant-Castellano, 2000; Smith, 1999; 2012). For instance, Brant-Castellano (2000) argued that it is important to consider

the role of Elders and cultural teachings in the research program to respect traditional knowledge and practices in self-determined research agendas. Specific to this context, sport and physical activity research with Indigenous youth has included cultural practices, such as sharing or talking circles (e.g., McHugh, Coppola, & Sinclair, 2013). Thus, we found it relevant to include cultural practices and traditions in our project.

Based on our experiences and reflections, the benefit of incorporating "culturally relevant" practices may be to generate a sense of inclusiveness for some community members. For instance, the Elder included the youth in ceremonies and it was an opportunity to share cultural traditions with Indigenous youth. However, not all community members appreciated the cultural protocols. One community member was offended by the way in which an Elder was conducting a pipe ceremony and left the ceremony with his child, as it was not consistent with his cultural practices. Thus, it is important to consider the diversity of cultural practices among Indigenous Peoples in urban centres where Indigenous Peoples who practice different cultural traditions may convene. Browne and colleagues (2009) discuss "culturalism" or the assumption that one group of people practice the same traditions which is detrimental to cultural safety or providing a safe space for discussions with Indigenous Peoples. In the aforementioned experience, the sense of cultural safety was compromised in that even though we worked together to identify relevant and respectful cultural practices with the community, a community member was still offended because the cultural practice was not his own. Whereas these situations may be unavoidable, we recommend considering a plan for remedying these particular instances where community members take offense to certain cultural practices.

Previous cultural relevance and safety literature in the healthcare setting recommends exploring and establishing meanings of "cultural relevance" through critical reflection and

discussion of key terms and assumptions with community members (Browne et al., 2009). In this case, building relationships to address power relations is also recommended (Browne et al., 2009). In the current context, it involves addressing assumptions and power with Indigenous youth and communities to facilitate Indigenous youth engagement in physical activity. For instance, culturally-relevant physical education in the school setting may involve being an ally to Indigenous youth, understanding day-to-day cultural landscapes, and providing a supportive learning environment that includes a meaningful and relevant curriculum (Halas et al., 2012). The exploration of "cultural relevance and safety" is an emerging literature. Thus, the current article extends upon the previous literature by identifying and reflecting upon the challenges of establishing cultural relevance in an urban community research setting.

The term "cultural relevance" was discussed at the consultations and interpreted and described in the context of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programing. Culturally-relevant programming was described as teaching with kindness, including Elders, and having respect for others. It was also described as using role models and bringing youth together to help grow one's own sense of culture and identity. Whereas some preferred the consideration cultural relevance in this context, others disliked and were critical of the term.

An Elder disliked the term "cultural relevance" because of history of residential schooling and colonization. He felt it was another means of pushing societal terms and agendas on Indigenous Peoples. This was not surprising considering the history of colonization and unethical practices of researchers with Indigenous Peoples and communities (see Schnarch, 2004). Thus, it is important to note that although this type of research or programming is encouraged, as Browne and colleagues (2009) suggested, the term and concept of "cultural

relevance" should be explored with community members and perhaps other definitions or terms should be generated that are relevant and respectful to the community.

As for the programming context, those who are involved in implementing programming may matter just as much as whom it is for when establishing "culturally-relevant" programming. Health promoters might consider cultural relevance for those involved in running programming as well as those receiving the programming. For instance, if a program includes Indigenous language learning or cultural traditions, the teachings will have to be relevant to not only the youth but also the programmer. This reflection extends upon current research by recommending that culturally-relevant activity-promoting programming be not only considered program participants (e.g., McHugh et al., 2013; Young & Katzmarzyk, 2007), in this case youth, but also for program providers or the community, given they may be implementing the programming. This may have implications for sustainability of programming and research, and sheds light on the complexities of being "culturally-relevant" to all community members involved in projects.

These experiences led us to ask the questions: How relevant is "culturally relevant" for programming and consultations when we take into account the different cultural practices of urban Indigenous Peoples and youth? Who decides what cultural practices are incorporated? And how can we mediate potential feelings of discomfort and offense from community members who do not agree with others' cultural practices? All researchers and CBPR practitioners may consider the aforementioned questions when creating research agendas and programs. Table 1 provides a summary of additional questions for consideration when co-creating an activity-promoting community research agenda.

INSERT TABLE 1

Sharing Knowledge

Sharing knowledge within and outside of the group posed strengths and challenges to strengthening relational practices, acquiring financial support, establishing on-going communication, and representing group knowledge when co-creating the research agenda and implementing the community consultations. Sharing knowledge with other peoples and groups who may be interested is a key component of our CBPR project, particularly after prolonged engagement and consultation (Schinke et al., 2013). Prolonged engagement and consultation is considered a part of quality criteria for community-based research in sport and physical activity (Schinke et al., 2013). With prolonged engagement and consultation comes the building of relationships, however, in certain contexts it may be difficult to have continued face-to-face interaction. Thus, it is important to consider how you will maintain engagement and consultation when in-person interaction is limited. This is particularly important when sharing knowledge and communicating within and outside the group, and setting the agenda for the rest of the CBPR. It is important to consider what, and how, information will be shared with community members. Newsletters written by my community partner and I were sent to community members as a form of communicating the progression of the consultations and the experiences shared by community members. Throughout the consultations, community members emphasized the important role of recreation, sport, and physical activity programming. However, those who should conduct this type of programming, how, when, and what is needed, should be further discussed.

The four consultation discussions were used to guide research question development as a part of co-creating a research agenda (e.g., Fletcher, 2003). As a researcher, my (first author) role is to develop relevant research questions and sub-questions with community members and to co-design a project based on these questions. The information gathered during consultations, and

summarized in the form of newsletters, was used to construct research questions to bring back to the community for feedback. Based on the emergent questions, the next phase research question was constructed.

Research questions were not the only knowledge sharing concern to be addressed. After the final consultation, my community partner and I (first author) were interviewed about the consultations with *Alberta Sweetgrass: Alberta's Aboriginal News Publication*. *Alberta Sweetgrass* publishes more than 9,000 copies monthly on topics such as Indigenous politics, health, and sovereignty. Thus, my community partner and I immediately saw the benefits of having an article published about our work to be shared with Indigenous Peoples in Alberta. However, I knew that it was important not to share any personal stories and discussions from the consultations without the consent of the community members. I felt I could not discuss with the interviewer the messages that the community conveyed given we did not discuss how the information from consultations would be summarized and publicly disseminated. Before any information could be shared freely, there needed to be a discussion with my community partner and the group members about what we could share. This discussion among partners is important considering media representations, specifically non-Aboriginal media outlets, reproduce colonial discourses concerning Aboriginal peoples, such as being hopeless regarding their health and social status (Coleby & Giles, 2013). Important to note is that there is evidence that Aboriginal media actively challenges these discourses (Coleby & Giles, 2013), thus, working with *Alberta Sweetgrass* was less concerning. Aboriginal media sources in Canada, like *Alberta Sweetgrass*, provide a decolonizing media source (Knopf, 2010) to share community-based knowledge that highlights Indigenous initiatives accurately and from a strengths-based approach (Coleby &

Giles, 2013). Our responsibility as initiative leaders was to represent the community respectfully and share knowledge approved by the community.

Given my apprehension about sharing knowledge from the community consultations, it was necessary for me to have an open discussion with the journalist. A key concept to consider when engaging with the media as project coordinators is representation. Representation involves considering who is involved in creating and sharing knowledge regarding a project (Bishop, 2008). When considering representation, my community partner and I asked our selves, "What does the community group need to know about the article? What does the journalist want to share about the project?, What are we willing to share in the article?" When these questions were addressed, we ensured that we were clear on what we were willing to share with the media. I also asked for questions in advance. We were also in constant discussion with the Elders and partners guiding the project.

When discussing the project, it was important not to "speak for the group," rather we discussed our own perspectives based on our experiences with the group and only shared mutually-agreed upon information. Decision-making was something to be considered in this situation. Consensus-building is a more inclusive, participatory, and cooperative approach to decision-making (Baldwin & Linnea, 2011) where the group establishes a consensus or discussion process to reach consensus when making decisions regarding a project (e.g., funding allocation, community consultations, interviewees). Thus, future considerations for discussions include: How many people need to agree on what was to be shared and how will decision-making occur? How do you begin a discussion about sharing information outside of the group? CBPR practitioners might reflect upon the aforementioned components of knowledge sharing when developing a research agenda, specifically one that strives to promote a self-determined

space for engagement.

Developing a plan for communicating and staying in touch was crucial to ensuring the connectedness of the group and the democratic nature of the group processes. Developing a democratic process and action-oriented outcome are considered quality considerations to enhance a CBPR project (Bradbury & Reason, 2008; Schinke et al., 2013). One strategy to build a stronger bond within the community group would have been to hold more meetings, which was contingent on continued funding from the institution. The granting agency acknowledged the need for ongoing participation to foster sustainability of community programming. For instance, when we were awarded the funding, the institution made plans to fund the first year and help the group acquire future funding for up to three years. With budget cuts in Alberta, the organization through which we received funding was disbanded and no funding was available after the first year. Furthermore, the consultations needed to happen within two months as funds needed to be spent quickly before the organization was officially disbanded.

The goal of establishing an on-going process and opportunity for communication among community members was a challenge that we considered easier with the funding to host and honor participants. The funding cut, unfortunately, compromised the authenticity of our relationship-building with the community in that if it was not explained to the consultation participants, it would seem like we were extracting knowledge from them without any intention of continuing a relationship. The challenge of navigating funding has been documented as a barrier of CBPR (Savan, Flicker, Kolenda, & Mildenberger, 2009). Whereas funding is not the only integral component of building relationships, it is still beneficial to acknowledge participants with food, honorariums, and support cultural protocols when working with Indigenous communities (McHugh et al., 2013). Funding was planned for and attained but fell

through because of decisions outside of our control. Thus, it was important to establish an on-going process of communication given future in-person meetings were a challenge to be considered.

Conclusion

Decolonizing approaches and discussions of cultural relevance are important in research to facilitate a self-determined space for working with Indigenous Peoples to address health issues important to a larger community and society. A democratic and on-going process of decision-making with research participants and community groups is proposed as a means of creating a self-determined and decolonizing spaces for knowledge sharing. Creating a space for relationship-building and not assuming that the research is ethical may be particularly important to conceptualize culturally-relevant practices and terms, and mediate conflicts within a community setting.

Discussing roles and responsibilities, funding, culturally-relevant terms, and communication and feedback plans for the project can facilitate self-determined research spaces. Decision-making and ethical considerations regarding knowledge-sharing support the importance of representation of community members in the research process (Bishop, 2008). A key question moving forward with the study of cultural relevance may be, how can we support those who do not feel included in established culturally-relevant practices? Contributing to the quality community scholarship literature (Schinke et al., 2013), the study of this process can facilitate community praxis, or dialogue, reflection, and action, in community-based research and programming agendas. These aspects are key to co-constructing a decolonizing research agenda (Smith, 1999; 2012), and ultimately, a research and programming context that is supportive of youth and communities in sport and activity (e.g., Agans et al., 2015).

This paper highlights strategies for establishing mutually-beneficial, ethical, and relevant research relationships and methods when working with communities to develop youth sport programming, specifically for Indigenous youth. The insights and reflective questions facilitate collaborating and relationship-building with participants for those who conduct research from all approaches and paradigms in sport, education, and society. Partnerships are key regardless of the type of research, and the authors recommend exploring the complexities of the community in which you are working and listening to the community insights that may inform the research. Based on our experiences and reflections, we recommended discussing the relevance for all involved and bringing participants together as partners to discuss research agendas, roles, and responsibilities.

Future research might expand upon activity-promoting research and programming literature by describing how mutually-relevant agendas are negotiated. Exploring and reflecting upon key processes of developing and implementing a project may be beneficial to inform activity-promoting program development that is relevant to and inclusive of youth and communities. Future research and reflections might also explore the development of partnerships and ask partners for recommendations and feedback on the process creating cultural safety and relevance in the context of sport. Project negotiations, such as roles and responsibilities, could be described as well as how partners have identified, addressed, and resolved potential tensions.

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Table 1

Potential Questions and Reflections for Co-creating an Activity-Promoting Community Research

Agenda

Building Relationships and Consulting the Community
How can we promote stronger interagency work to support culturally-relevant activity-promoting programming?
What are our roles and responsibilities in supporting each other to achieve our project goals?
How can we all promote a democratic process of decision-making?
How can we engage in continued dialogue to co-create project outcomes?
What is our partnership philosophy?
How will we address conflicts that arise?
Incorporating Culturally-Relevant Practices
Is the term "culturally-relevant" or "cultural relevance" appropriate within our group? And how are we exploring or understanding how the community's culture is honored?
Who should be involved in conducting culturally-relevant activity-promoting programming?
How do we engage youth leaders in culturally-relevant activity-promoting programming?
Are we promoting culturally-relevant practices for all members of the group?
Are we using terms that are appropriate and non-offensive within the group?
Sharing Knowledge
How can we promote on-going meetings?
What is the best way for our group to communicate?
What does the community group need to know about sharing outside the group?
How do you begin a discussion about sharing information outside of the group?
What are we willing to share about the project?
How many people need to agree on what is shared, and how will decision-making occur?
How are we creating opportunities for networking?
How are we creating a safe space for growth and support for our partners?
Have we considered how and when we will translate knowledge to other groups or partners, and who should receive this knowledge?

Appendix A

Excerpt from the Memorandum of Understanding

I. Partner 1 responsibilities under this MOU:
a. Ensure that proper protocols are followed with Indigenous community members by talking with ceremony leaders and elders before events
b. Teach Partner 2 cultural protocols for ceremonies and knowledge sharing with Indigenous peoples when preparing and implementing consultations and interviews with community members
c. Take a leadership role in identifying and recruiting community members and elders for community consultations and interviews
d. Take a leadership role in scheduling the community consultations and interviews with community members after discussing it with the partners
e. Take a leadership role in organizing gifts, food, venue, and ceremonies for the community consultations and interviews
f. Take a leadership role in co-facilitating interviews and community consultations
g. Support the co-development of a report and initial program from the knowledge shared from this project with Partner 2
h. Support the development of research questions and design for the CBPR project
i. Support the development of a research plan and MOU for the next phase of the project

II. Partner 2 responsibilities under this MOU:
a. Respectfully engage with Indigenous parents and children in discussions of culturally-relevant programming
b. Learn a new culture and cultural protocols and practices (e.g., attend ceremonies)
c. Engage in conversations with Partner 1 regarding fulfillment of protocols
d. Take a leadership role in co-creating the community consultation and interview guides
e. Take a leadership role in documenting and delegating tasks for documentation of the interviews and community consultations through field notes and recording (if allowed)
f. Support Partner 1 in identifying and recruiting community members and elders for community consultations and interviews
g. Support Partner 1 with organizing gifts, food, venue, and ceremonies for the community consultations and interviews
h. Support Partner 1 with co-facilitating community consultations and interviews
i. Support Partner 1 with scheduling the community consultations and interviews with community members after discussing it with the partners

CHAPTER THREE

PHASE TWO: EXPERIENCES OF CO-CREATING AND ENGAGING OTHERS IN

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ACTIVITY-PROMOTING PROGRAMMING

Creating a Space for Growth and Support:

Experiences of Indigenous Youth Activity-Promoting Programmers in Alberta

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Abstract

The current phase is a part of a larger community-based participatory research (CBPR) project focused on Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. In response to community consultations that were conducted in Phase One of this CBPR, the purpose of this interpretive description was to explore programmers' experiences of co-creating and engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada. Fifteen programmers from four urban areas in Alberta participated in one-on-one interviews. A thematic analysis highlighted seven themes that represent participants' experiences of co-creating or engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming: (a) advocating for youth and programming, (b) creating holistic programming with youth, (c) supporting traditional cultural practices and community connections, (d) focusing on relationships and building partnerships, (e) providing and receiving professional support, (f) promoting and navigating interagency support, and (g) identifying program outcomes and evaluation methods. This research extends upon programming research by providing practical knowledge and considerations for developing activity-promoting programming that fosters holistic health of Indigenous youth. The important consideration of working with and exploring the relationships between multiple agencies or partners is discussed.

Creating a Space for Growth and Support: Experiences of Indigenous

Youth Activity-Promoting Programmers

Activity-promoting programming encompasses physical activity (PA) and sport

programming, which has been advocated by scholars and communities (e.g., Blodgett et al.,

2010) and documented as beneficial and relevant to the holistic development of Aboriginal[7]

youth (Hanna, 2009). Scholars have indicated that sport may be one of the "most salient

mediums for recapturing spirits" among Aboriginal Canadians (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006, p.

294) and may positively impact the physical, mental, and emotional health of Aboriginal youth

(Hanna, 2009). Furthermore, activity-promoting programming is inclusive of health goals other

than solely increasing activity (Coppola & McHugh, in press), such as holistic health. Holistic

health refers to the promotion of the balance between mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional

health (Hanna, 2009; Lavallée & Levesque, 2013). This paper uses the term activity-promoting

to refer to programming that promotes not only physical activity but also other health goals that

may include holistic health programming.

Sport and physical activity can provide spaces for positive youth development of

Aboriginal youth, particularly when these spaces promote overall health and fitness or holistic

health, and traditional culture and values (Bruner et al., 2015; Hanna, 2009). Hanna (2009)

documented the voices of Aboriginal youth in British Columbia who described and requested

relevant sport opportunities or activities, such as rowing, hunting, and traditional Aboriginal

games. She reported that a holistic health approach, which may include the cultural teachings and

traditional knowledges of Aboriginal peoples, is necessary for the development and sustainability

of activity opportunities. McHugh and Kowalski (2011) also documented the importance of

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[7] The term "Aboriginal" is used when the Indigenous population referred to is native to Canada
(NAHO, n.d.) and when the authors of the original article use this term.

holistic programming, and included youth in the development of such programming, in their

participatory action research (PAR) project with young Aboriginal women in Saskatchewan.

While the focus was creating a positive view of body image, PA classes, such as yoga, were

incorporated indicating that Aboriginal youth in this PAR recognized the important role of PA in

promoting holistic health. The important role of holistic programming for youth has been

suggested, and a decolonizing approach (Smith, 1999; 2012) can support the development of

relevant holistic programming for Indigenous[8] youth.

      Community-based participatory research (CBPR) practitioners and community

organizations have been and are currently working with Indigenous Peoples to enhance activity-

promoting opportunities for Indigenous youth (e.g., Blodgett et al., 2010; Halas, McRae, &

Carpenter, 2012; McHugh, Holt, & Andersen, 2015; McHugh & Kowalski, 2011). McHugh,

Holt, and Andersen (2015) recommend collaborative approaches when exploring sport and

physical activity with Aboriginal youth in Canada, and research (e.g., McHugh & Kowalski,

2011) suggests community support and input is necessary for developing relevant sport and PA

opportunities. Sutherland's (2007) work with a First Nation community also reported that

community input is necessary for identifying relevant sport and health programming

opportunities. When Blodgett and colleagues (2010) conducted talking circles with a reserve

community (e.g., youth, teachers, coaches, family members), the community discussed the

importance of integrating Elders, promoting Aboriginal role models, and developing a volunteer

base for youth sport programming.

      The role of community members in activity-promoting programming for Indigenous

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[8] The term "Indigenous" is capitalized when referring to Indigenous Peoples, who are
native to a land (NAHO, n.d.) and represent a population (e.g., youth).

youth is evident (Blodgett et al., 2010), and researchers are engaging with Indigenous Peoples in

sport research to inform Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming (e.g., McHugh,

2011; McHugh, Coppola et al., 2013; Schinke, Yungblut, Blodgett, Eys, Peltier, & Ritchie et al.,

2010). For instance, McHugh (2011) explored the PA experiences of eight Aboriginal youth in

Canada. The youth acknowledged the way in which physical activity can make them stronger

and healthier, and highlighted the important role of Aboriginal communities in supporting their

physical activity (McHugh, 2011). Continuing this line of inquiry, McHugh, Coppola et al.

(2013) explored the meanings of sport with Aboriginal youth and findings provide programmers

with valuable information about those activities to include in sport programming. In terms of

program development, research by McHugh, Kingsley, and Coppola (2013) found that

Aboriginal youth, family members, and school staff are interested in better understanding how

communities can support sport opportunities for Aboriginal youth. This finding is consistent with

Schinke and colleagues (2010) who reported that family members in a reserve community play a

role in sport programming. The aforementioned findings provide valuable information about

activities that could be included in programming and the importance of incorporating relevant

community members in such programming.

Further research identified program specific characteristics that are recommended for

youth sport programs in general, and such research sheds light on what to include in the

development of youth sport programs. For instance, Perkins and Noam (2007) discussed program

characteristics to promote positive developmental settings in youth sport programs. They

suggested 13 features related to program goals, opportunities, and approaches, such as holistic

health programs and supportive relationships. Most recently, Agans and colleagues (2015)

discussed three quality criteria for promoting positive youth development through sport and

activity, including positive youth-adult relationships, skill-building, and leadership opportunities. Whereas these are important considerations when developing a youth program, it is important to also explore program contexts and how partnerships with others can support these program contexts.

Exploring how programmers co-create and engage with others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming can provide necessary insights into the program context and how to support partnerships and program development promoting the holistic development of Indigenous youth. Thus, the purpose of this research was to explore how programmers co-create and engage others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, Canada.

Methods

The current project was the second phase in a larger CBPR project focused on Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. A CBPR approach has facilitated my relationship-building and development of relevant and decolonizing research processes with Indigenous Peoples. A CBPR framework (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998) is conceptualized as a partnership approach that equitably involves academic and non-academic partners in all phases of the research process. Each partner contributes their expertise and knowledge to understanding the community issue and enhancing the wellbeing of a community (Israel et al., 1998, 2001). Programs and research designs may be co-created with community members and, therefore, community engagement, service, and partnerships are an integral component in CBPR (Cargo & Mercer, 2008).

The first phase of this CBPR involved community consultations that informed the current phase (see Coppola & McHugh, in press). Approximately 30 community members (e.g., Elders, youth, parents) in Edmonton, Alberta participated in community consultations to discuss

culturally-relevant Indigenous youth health and activity programming. The consultations, which included cultural practices, such as pipe ceremonies, feasts, and honorariums, were held over a three-month period. These consultations supported the development of the research purpose and agenda for the current phase.

Researcher Positionality

I, the first author, identify as a non-Indigenous Caucasian-American and doctoral candidate at the University of Alberta. I recognize, as a non-Indigenous researcher, that my feminist perspective facilitates a balancing of power dynamics and facilitates a decolonizing research process. However, I also recognize that I have not experienced colonization and racial oppression and neither have my ancestors, making my beliefs, influences, and reasons for engaging in the research process substantially different from the Indigenous Peoples I will work with. I also recognize that I have been afforded several advantages such as my education, and that I am of a privileged race. It is my responsibility as a researcher to commit to self-evaluation and self-critique to acknowledge power imbalances in research partnerships (Chávaz, Duran, Baker, Avila, & Wallerstein, 2008). Coming from a position in academia and identifying as non-Indigenous, I recognize that I have certain biases about how research should be conducted and represented, and this should be explored with those with whom I work. Consistent with the beliefs of Indigenous rights scholars such as Daes (2000), I believe that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples both have a role in creating decolonizing spaces, and I cannot assume an ethical space has been created. Considering decolonizing or self-determining practices in the research process facilitates my consistent consideration of my position as an academic.

I conduct research from a critical feminist participatory research paradigm, which I believe enhances the process of cultural humility and research partnerships. For instance,

feminist research from a participatory approach stresses the need for inclusion, participation, action, social change, research reflexivity, and placing the experiences and perspectives of participants at the core of the research (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005; Reid, 2004). A feminist participatory research approach can enhance my process of cultural humility as a part of a research partnership. The practice of cultural humility involves reflecting upon my role as a non-Indigenous critical feminist participatory researcher and the roles of the participants in this research to bring about social change. Thus, my role is to support Indigenous Peoples perspectives and voices in CBPR and facilitate their engagement and decision-making in the research process. Relationship-building is a key component to CBPR, particularly with Indigenous Peoples (Fletcher, 2003). The first phase of the larger CBPR project involved building relationships with community to develop a relevant research agenda. Part of my role as a facilitator of CBPR is ensuring this democratic process of creating and conducting the research.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines are significant for all researchers because such guidelines serve to protect human research participants' dignity, welfare, and even social justice and inclusiveness (Castleden et al., 2012; CIHR, 2010). Ethics is a particularly significant concern because CBPR practitioners work "with" as opposed to "on" (Heron & Reason, 2001) dynamic and ever-changing participants and communities. Relational and contextual situations require attention iteratively as opposed to a one-time "procedural" consideration. These relational situations, not always expected in outlined methodological procedures, can potentially harm a participant or entire community—not just physically, but socially and emotionally, if not addressed properly (Ellis, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Given the relational nature of this CBPR project, ethics and power were explored to understand *why* and *how* to engage in ethical relationships from a

participatory approach.

University REB approval was obtained before interviews were conducted, and this research adhered to recommendations outlined in chapter nine of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2; CIHR, 2010; 2014). This policy discusses various ethical guidelines for engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples, such as the need for non-prescriptive and collaborative research agendas, which was utilized in the current phase. Because a CBPR framework does not dictate research design (Israel et al., 1998; 2008), it is the responsibility of the collaborative (e.g., researcher and community) to decide which methodology is appropriate to explore a relevant phenomenon. Based on the purpose of the research and philosophical positionality of the researcher, interpretive description (ID) methodology (Thorne, 2008) was used to guide the current inquiry.

Funding opportunities in this research also required ethical considerations. Castleden and colleagues (2012) discuss ethics and CBPR, and the "ideal" of having conversations with community before seeking funding. Feedback from consultations in Phase One informed the funding application for the current phase. Thus, the first author applied for a doctoral award to support the current phase and was awarded approximately $30,000 in research funding from the Alberta Centre for Child, Family, and Community Research (ACCFCR). The ACCFCR is a non-profit organization that promotes effective public policy and service delivery to improve the health and well-being of children and families or communities. The funds were used to support participant honorariums, research, and a knowledge translation project.

Interpretive Description Methodology

Interpretive description (ID) is a qualitative description methodology that has epistemological underpinnings in naturalistic inquiry (Thorne, 2008; Thorne, Reimer Kirkham,

& O'Flynn-Magee, 2004). Developed within the field of nursing, the objective of ID is to explore meanings and explanations of a clinical phenomenon that may have practical implications or applications (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004). Thus, ID allows researchers to not only describe a phenomenon of interest but also analyze and interpret the data[9] and descriptions to make applied or practical implications from the results. Thorne and colleagues (2004) argue that data collection and research methodologies are not prescriptive, yet they discuss several ID mechanisms to consider for data collection. ID accounts for the process of engagement, imagination, and conceptual creativity that is necessary when exploring new phenomena of interest (Thorne et al., 2004). Thus, multiple sources of data collection (e.g., interviews, photos, writing samples) are recommended in order to iteratively and holistically explore a phenomenon. I encouraged participants to explore multiple means of sharing their knowledge as per the request of the Phase One participants and the aforementioned recommendation for data collection methods. Whereas the participants were given a choice of how to share their experiences and answer questions about the phenomenon, the participants chose to use interviews.

Participants. Fifteen activity-promoting programmers (12 female and three male) from Alberta, Canada participated in this phase. Their experience in programming ranged from 5 to 20 years, with programming taking place at friendship centres, schools, or non-profit organizations. Thorne (2008) describes how the researcher should think about the phenomenon of interest and the perspective sought to answer the research purpose. Therefore, the current phase drew upon purposive sampling methods. Purposive sampling involves recruiting specific individuals who

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[9] The term "data" is used when describing published literature on interpretive description methodology. However, when referring to the generation of themes based on the participants' experiences, the term "knowledge" is used.

can speak to an experience that will help us better understand the phenomenon (Mayan, 2009). Thus, individuals who have current or previous experiences of co-creating Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming and engaging others in this programming were invited to participate via listserves or were invited to participate by previous participants in the current phase or larger CBPR project. When determining sample size, I reflected upon the following considerations as recommended by Thorne (2008): what knowledge is needed?, what options are there for getting as close to the knowledge as possible?, and how can the inquiry be conducted in the most respectful and ethical manner while doing justice to the topic? In consideration of these recommendations, participants were recruited through email, list serves, or recommended by other participants**.**

Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identity. *Superwoman* and *Harper* chose their own pseudonyms. *Fred*, an Aboriginal male, has been living in Alberta for 12 years and working with different youth communities, including schools, for over four years. *Athena* identified as a teacher and researcher with eight years of experience creating Aboriginal youth programming in school and non-profit organization settings. *Ruby* has over 15 years of experience with programming and five years in her current role as a coordinator of a program promoting play opportunities for youth. *Tiffany* identifies as a First Nations female who was adopted by Caucasian parents who supported her exploration of her own identity by enrolling her in on the land activities and fancy dance. She has five years experience in Indigenous youth programming. *Meaghan* identifies as a First Nations woman from Saskatchewan with 15 years of experience with Indigenous youth programming. She has adopted different roles within different organizations, such as social services and native healing centers. *Nehiyaw iskwew* has a degree in native studies and identifies as a *cree* woman. She has over 10 years of experience with holistic

health programming for Indigenous youth and communities. *Bowden* identifies as Metis and a teacher in Alberta who created activity-promoting programming with Aboriginal youth through a post-secondary practicum opportunity. *Saoirse* is a white female with a university degree and 5 years of experience in holistic programming for Indigenous youth through an Alberta organization. *Cally* is from Edmonton with a *cree* family from Saskatchewan. She has 12 years of experience in Indigenous youth programming. *Superwoman* self-identifies as Metis from a reserve in Alberta. She has 4-5 years experience as a youth success coach. *Joyce* identifies as a First Nations woman from a reserve community in Alberta. She has over 20 years of programming that promotes activity, culture, and self-identity of Aboriginal youth. *Briana* identifies as a Bill C-31 Indian. She has a degree in Indigenous studies and 10 years of experience in Aboriginal youth health programming. *Harper* has over 7 years of experience as a center and FNMI coordinator. She also identifies as a mother of five and non-Indigenous woman. *Vincent* is a non-Indigenous man from Fort Saskatchewan who has experience as a leader of Aboriginal youth program in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. *Stacy* is from Ontario with a social work background and over six years experience in Aboriginal youth wellness programming experience.

Knowledge Generation

The knowledge generation practices and methodologies were based on suggestions from participants in the Phase One. For instance, the goal was to come up with key components to co-creating and engaging in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. All participants engaged in in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews at their convenience, and one participant also engaged in a follow-up interview, and three engaged in follow-up email discussions. One-on-one interviews seek the participants' interpretation of their personal

experiences of a social phenomena (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Mayan, 2009), which in this phase was the process of co-creating and engaging in Indigenous youth-activity promoting programming with Indigenous Peoples. A semi-structured interview guide was developed based on suggestions from Phase One participants, and piloted with an Indigenous youth activity-promoting programmer (see Appendix A). The interview guide included questions about creating programming with others (e.g., What were the key components to co-creating the program?) and engaging others in programming (e.g., Please describe your process of engaging Indigenous Peoples/youth in this programming).

The average interview was 66 minutes and approximately 18 hours of interviews were collected. Participants were provided an honorarium for their participation. They received $10 amazon.ca e-gift cards for each hour up to three hours of participation. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in the participants' respective communities or via conference call services. Recommendations for using phone interviewing as a knowledge gathering technique, such as pre-testing the interview protocol, creating different types of questions during the interview, and revisiting the interview transcriptions for accuracy (Burke & Miller, 2001), were drawn upon. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription agency. The author reviewed transcriptions once they were completed. Field notes were used to be responsive throughout the research process and document the progression of knowledge generation (Mayan, 2009; Thorne, 2008). Thus, interview field notes were taken to highlight the participants' key points about co-creating and engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming.

Representing the Knowledge

Thorne (2008) acknowledges that there is no prescriptive method for interpreting interviews or shared knowledge in an interpretive description. However, she recommends taking a thematic analysis approach to interpreting knowledge. I recognize that community-based work is contextual and a conceptual level analysis may be too prescriptive. A general, thematic analysis of key components to contextualize in certain communities may be most practical. Thus, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of conducting thematic analysis was utilized. Interview field notes and project field notes guided by Thorne's (2008) general recommendations for responsiveness and reflection during analysis were also used in conjunction with the participants' knowledge. *Phase one*, which involves familiarizing your self with the shared knowledge, included repeated reading of and listening to interviews throughout interviewing. The general field notes were recorded during this stage to note key messages from the individual participants' interviews as well as their overall tone and demeanor during the interview. *Phase two*, "generating initial codes," involved coding of transcripts that were guided by the research purpose. *Phase three*, "searching for themes," involved exploring codes to identify broader level themes. *Phase four,* "reviewing themes," involved two levels of reviewing and refining themes. First, I read the categorized codes to ensure they fit into a coherent pattern. The refining of themes involves taking the themes and reviewing them in relation to the interviews to ensure it fits within the overall shared experiences and words of the participants. The field notes, and re-reading and review of interviews helped to complete this phase. *Phase five*, "defining and naming themes," involved identifying the 'essence' of each theme by explaining them in an accompanying narrative while recognizing how it fits into the overall story about the purpose of

the current exploration. In *phase six*, "producing the report," I provide sufficient evidence of themes by using verbatim quotes in the subsequent *Results* section of the paper.

Quality Considerations

Quality considerations for developing a democratic process and action-oriented outcome in a CBPR project have been identified (Bradbury & Reason, 2008; Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013). Specifically, scholars (e.g., Bradbury & Reason, 2008; Schinke et al., 2013) have indicated that checkpoints can be considered depending on the context and research purposes to judge the quality of community scholarship. For instance, I facilitated a democratic and equitable process, and played the role of a decentralized academic (Schinke et al., 2013) by supporting the voices of the community members and providing resources to create a community relevant project. Schinke and colleagues (2013) suggest that community scholarship includes prolonged consultation and community-driven research agendas. I supported this process within the larger CBPR project by holding community consultations that included localized and traditional practices, and by facilitating feedback from participants. Several strategies were also used to ensure methodological rigor in the current phase. Methodological rigor, as proposed by Morse and colleagues (2002), was also used to reflect upon the quality of the current knowledge generation phase. For instance, a critical discussion with a co-researcher who read the transcripts and asked critical questions about the theme names and descriptions was conducted as a means of iteratively reflecting upon the results (Morse et al., 2002). The discussion continued until we both agreed on the final themes and descriptions. Participants' on-going participation in knowledge representation was encouraged. Furthermore, participants' feedback was solicited in person at the gathering event when the results were shared, and the findings were also shared at a national conference on Aboriginal physical activity in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Activity-

promoting programmers, specifically in Ontario, provided feedback about how similar the experiences were in that province as well.

Results

Seven themes that represent participants' experiences of co-creating Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming and engaging in this programming with others were generated from the thematic analysis. Thorne (2008) recognizes the relationship between findings and encourages researchers to consider that relationship. Overall, the themes involved creating and promoting spaces for mutual support of youth, programmers, and their community or interagency partners. Participants described (a) advocating for youth and programming, (b) creating holistic programming with youth, (c) supporting traditional cultural practices and community connections, (d) focusing on relationships and building partnerships, (e) providing and receiving professional support, (f) promoting and navigating interagency support, and (g) identifying program outcomes and evaluation methods. Each theme includes a brief description followed by the participants' direct quotes to support the themes.

Advocating for Youth and Programming

To create and promote a space for growth and support of youth and programs, participants discussed how they advocated for youth and programming for youth. Advocating for youth and programming involved championing for youth, programs, and initiatives. The participants described how they and others engaged in programming because of the positive experiences they had with programming as a youth. They also discussed how advocating for youth was a reward.

Most participants benefited from activity-promoting programming when they were a youth. They were passionate about creating programs with youth and found it rewarding**.**

Meaghan described herself as a youth who struggled and that fitness was a positive change in her life that she could translate to others:

> For me, it was more personal, so just struggling as a *cree* person really struggling just with my identity growing up. I mean I'm 37 years old right now but it took me until like I was in my early 20s mid-20s before I really began to accept my identity as a *cree* person and I really explore my roots and I thought man, that's a really long time and I know how hard it was being a female but being a teenager, but then being an Indigenous person on top of that. So just being engaged in being that kind of champion person who wants to champion our young people I felt was really important and really needed and then too for me I found fitness. It changed my life. It really helped develop my own person and I thought OK well if this helps me then this, this can translate in to other people. So just spent a lot of time thinking and dreaming up ideas of how to engage our young people in this way… so personal passion really stirred this um to come towards this, this path.

Tiffany also described how she is passionate about introducing youth to physical activity. In particular, she enjoys introducing youth to the sports from which she benefited as a youth:

> I found that I always participated in sport and that it helped keep me motivated in school um, you know it was a way to blow off steam, it's where I put all of you know that extra energy and stuff… And so you know I really love introducing other youth to that, to those benefits and you know to be able access those you know positive effects of physical activity and the opportunity to you know feel like the sky's the limit or that they want to do whatever they want and that they, well, you know no matter where they are in life no matter you know what's going on they can always engage in some sort of physical activity generally.

In terms of engagement, participants explained how seeing a child's smiling face is the reason they engage in activity-promoting programming. Participant's also described their desire to be a champion for such programming. For instance, Bowden said, **"**The goal of Indigenous youth involvement in sports and recreation and everything is creating happy smiley faces as often and as for as long as possible. It's what's gonna create the positive outcomes, positive attitudes." Whereas advocating for youth and programming involved affording youth similar opportunities and experiences the programmers had when they were young, it also involved championing for the programs. Joyce summed up this component of the theme by describing the role of a community developer: "I think every organization needs some sort of a champion that's pushing forward the cause, and doing that PR kind of work." Participants were very clear that they engage in programming not only to support youth but also to advocate for the type of programming that they deem necessary.

Creating Holistic Programming with Youth

Creating holistic programming with youth was key to the experiences of the participants. Holistic programming involved fostering emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual health or identity. Participants described the importance of creating balanced persons or youth:

> I think the best way to understand it is to think about the medicine wheel and how, we're taught in the medicine wheel that we are based, as *cree* people, we are nehiyaw, which means we are four-part person so there's really no separation in our culture between our physical, spiritual, emotional, and physical needs, it's all intertwined, and they all have to be in balance to be a balanced person. (Joyce)

Creating a safe space for youth to grow emotionally and physically and to celebrate their unique attributes and identities was described and suggested. Harper said: "We're gonna coexist in a

way that's meaningful in a safe place, and it's about family, it's about connections, it's about interconnectedness within that group and with the community as a whole."

The participants also emphasized the importance of working *with* youth to create programs, and activities can be chosen by youth. Participants recommended asking the youth about how to create play to be freely chosen and self-directed. As youth were considered experts in play experiences, participants described youth as those who play a central role in creating relevant and fun programming:

> [Play] is freely chosen, it's, it's intrinsically motivated by the child. It's self-directed and all of those things…The agenda is not the adult's but rather the child's 'cause we believe that the child is an expert in their play…Of course you have to plan and organize and schedule somewhat like you would program anything else but it's really built on the relationship foundation where play worker and, and youth are engaged together so co-constructing the space and trying get into a place that kids can own and can be motivated to explore and discover. (Ruby)

The participants indicated that youth had the opportunity to engage in programming that provided experiences, hope, aspirations, particularly through trips, mentorships, and retreats as a part of engaging in the co-created holistic programming:

> [Youth group is a] group of youth that want to improve their community through meeting together and bringing their voices forward…so just being able to organize themselves and figure out what's most important to them as the voice of the youth in the community and then bring that forward to council or turn it into another group. One youth council ended up turning into an anti-bullying group, and they traveled all over the province doing presentations about bullying in different communities. (Saoirse)

Creating holistic programming with youth to highlight the voices and experiences of youth was described in the participants' experiences and recommended by participants. To support a space for growth and support of youth and youth programming, participants also discussed the important role of supporting traditional cultural practices and connecting to community members.

Supporting Traditional Cultural Practices and Community Connections

Supporting traditional cultural practices of Indigenous communities and community members was described as a key component to creating programming, and creating community and cultural connections with Elders and mentors, parents, and youth was recommended. Participants also discussed the sharing of traditional knowledge, and traditional games and traditional ways to promote health. It was important to create a safe space for culture and offer protocols when necessary. For nehiyaw iskwew, it was about accessing people who had traditional knowledge to share, and then welcoming them to a safe space for sharing their culture:

> I just think you have people with gifts, right from community, they're right there, we just have to utilize them and reach out to them and just say you're the ones that can drum, the ones that can sing, the ones that can make moccasins, the ones that do traditional regalia, the ones who know how to dance, the ones who know how to fiddle. Those are gifts that not everyone has, so allowing people to come in to showcase their gifts, to acknowledge that, and I think that's something we don't do a lot of.

Meaghan echoed nehiyaw iskwew's sentiments and highlighted the importance of protocol, "In the next couple months I will actually connect with some Elders and protocol them and say this

is the vision for the program, I ask for your prayers and perhaps maybe you wanna give some guidance and perhaps if this interests you, your involvement."

Building connections with community members can lead to community and culturally-relevant programs. Saoirse described how supporting a space for cultural and community connections can bring about cultural programming. She said:

The Elders know how the community works better than anyone else does and people in the community respect them and if they know that you're, that you're engaging and taking advice and trying to connect the Elders with the youth, 'cause often that link is broken and so intentionally doing programming that, that creates those connections, it builds a lot of incredible outcomes because you're sharing knowledge across the generations and you're building it within the community rather than bringing people from outside.

Saoirse went on to discuss how Elders incorporate cultural activities, and how it provides a safe space for discussion among the different generations:

Our community contact is an Elder and so they're taking the youth workers medicine picking on their second day and taking them hunting and showing them how to do fish scale art and tufting and all this stuff. It's just a very integral part of their experience in the community, one of the events in almost every community is usually a cultural camp where they take kids out into the bush with a couple of the Elders and they learn about skinning animals and what to do with the hides and how to treat the meat and how to do these different traditional arts. And some of the most successful programming is just informal. Like let's ask your cook questions and have people just create those spaces for people to talk.

Co-creating and engaging others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming involved developing connections with community members, particularly Elders. However, the participants also discussed the important role of focusing on relationships and building partnerships to create a space for growth and support of the programs and those involved.

Focusing on Relationships and Building Partnerships

To support programs and program partnerships, the participants described the importance of focusing on relationships and building partnerships. Participants' description of this theme resembled CBPR principles and the development of organic, authentic relationships. For instance, Stacy discussed the importance of focusing on relationships to identify community needs within everyday conversation. She said, "working on those community relationships that makes the community engagement better to the point where you don't have to hold focus sessions or groups to find out what the community needs, it's just very casually mentioned within your everyday relationships."

Participants described how relationships and building partnerships often does involve consultation with the community. Stacy discussed how community interest is essential for successful programming:

Programs have to be geared towards the needs of the community, and the needs of the clients that you wanna serve. So whereas somebody can kinda come in and say well I think this recreation program would be great for all the kids and youth, but if there's no need for it, or if there's no interest for it, your program's not gonna be successful. So I think you know any kind of program, especially with Indigenous youth has to be adapted towards the needs and the wants of the community itself, not as opposed to what we think that they want. It kinda depends who's doing the programming, if it's a community

member of course they know what the wants and needs are of the community, but for

someone that's just coming in and doing programming, it has to be relevant, it has to be

up to date, it has to be, in order to be effective.

She went on to discuss how important it is to take the time to build relationships to create

relevant programming, "we actually do a lot in regards to the programs … [we take] the time to

build that relationship with the youth, sit down and talk to them, find out what it is that they

want, what it is that they need." Furthermore, Bowden argued that it is important to build

relationships with everyone in the community that is interested and to be flexible in building that

partnership. When asked what was key to being able to provide opportunities to Indigenous

youth, he stated:

Being able to form relationships with literally you have to be able to form relationships

with everyone in the community, so that's from people who'll, from the First Nations or

the Metis community, you have to be able to find outside sponsorship to be able to

provide money. You have to able to work, be able to quickly make relationships with

youth. You have to be able to drum up support from the youth 'cause if they wanna do

something and they're leading the way, it generally will happen. You have to just

constantly be making new plans, being extremely flexible, changing your plans.

Partnerships were facilitated by being consistent and intentional, mutual supporting one

another, identifying goals, listening, being a nice person, discussing roles and expectations, and

holding consultations. For instance, Tiffany said:

I think it's always going into relationships knowing that to start off with you do need to

listen first. It's not about going in there and introducing who you are and what your ideas

are first and foremost. It's going in there and meeting with someone and sitting

down…it's hearing their story before you share yours and just going in there confident

and with a plan of action already prepared so people were more willing to listen to us and

have faith in us and believe in us.

The important role of focusing on relationships and building partnerships was evident especially

when participants discussed the ways in which they create spaces for support and growth in

programming with others by providing or receiving professional support from partners.

Providing and Receiving Professional Support

The participants described the need and benefits of providing or participating in

professional development to support activity-promoting programming. Joyce clearly describes

the need for support: "In the education field there isn't a lot of training for support staff that work

in education. So you know a lot of our school districts employ what they call aboriginal liaisons,

well where do those aboriginal liaisons go for an education?" Participants also provided specific

examples of how they seek out or provide such support. Cally described building capacity to

promote play experiences:

We might go out and do direct programming with a youth group and their leader or their

teacher, or we might provide them with on-the-job PD but working with youth and

showing our modelling how they could be providing some physical activity opportunities

or sometimes even mentoring a group of youth leaders so that they can work with other

younger children in activities.

Stacy discussed how funders provided free professional development to staff at her organization

and she described the various benefits of the workshop. She said:

So you don't always necessarily have that funding to be able to provide your staff with

professional development. So what they've been doing is in-kind training where they're

sending their staff to come in to provide this training to our staff free of charge um as you

know part of their, part of our partnership. So I think that's, uh it's absolutely amazing

that they're sharing their learning, they're taking their time out of their day to provide this

for us, especially when we necessarily don't have the funding to, like I said, send all of

our staff out for training. So that's been an amazing experience.

She went on to discuss an example of the professional development workshop and describe the

benefits of the workshop, including decreasing workplace burnout:

It was kinda neat so you got to know each other, understand each other a lot better, as

well as understand why they do things the way they do in the workplace. So, kind of like

everybody's different, so that was one of the courses that they did. There's the second

course, the one that we just recently did was based on the laws of attraction, so being

positive in the work place, and tying that positive energy back to you, so decreasing work

place burnout and self-care. So they came in and did a full day workshop on that with us.

Working with children and youth, it's a very demanding profession that does see a lot of

staff burn-out very quickly, so it's kinda just helping the staff see that there's ways to

avoid that and ways to take care of themselves as well as the children and youth, so very

beneficial workshops.

Participants held professional develop seminars or workshops regarding critical

reflection, self-reflection, conflict resolution, leadership, evaluation and program planning.

Building skills, such as key messaging, and writing funding reports was recommended. For

instance, Tiffany shared:

We have tons of sheets and examples of skills. The step guide of how to manage conflict

literally from like step one to step whatever from how to approach someone when you

want to talk about conflict, how to express your feelings without making the other person

feel like they're being blamed or victimized or anything like that and all important skills

to learn and we practice them a lot.

Participants described how they benefit from various types of professional support and they

provided suggestions for the type of support that could be beneficial in the future, such as

learning to write funding reports.

Promoting and Navigating Interagency Support

The importance of promoting stronger relationships and combining resources between

different programmers in Alberta was discussed. Participants also spoke of the benefit of

working together. Participants were clear that they were working with youth and different

partners, such as community members, government agencies, and funders, in order to create

programming.

Some participants described that when many people work together, there is more

organizational support and more opportunity to build capacity and create opportunities for youth

programming. Vincent discussed how different community partners contributed resources

necessary to run the programming:

If we ever needed help with anything, or wanted to use the different spaces or open the

gym at different times for the kids, the school was open to that. The rec department had

some stuff that they would let us use equipment, [that] was available to us. The

Friendship Center were extremely open to us, they gave us a key to the center so that we

could go in there and we could do stuff even if there was nobody from the Friendship

Center there, that they would allow us to use the space.

Promoting stronger interagency work involved combining resources, such as friendship centre spaces and council funding and support, in order to foster sustainability. However, participants argued that there is still a need for interagency work. When discussing interagency work, Joyce said:

> What often happens is when a little organization is trying to run say a weekend drama club or a weekend camp, they have a hard time attracting the youth. They have a hard [time], 'cause there's no relationship…so I think we should be working together more, and supporting each other more. There needs to be more communication, more interagency work.

Also a part of interagency support was navigating social, organizational, or community challenges. Specifically, participants discussed playing the "funding game" with governmental or organizational funders who funded primarily pilot or one year funding and not core funding. The process of playing the "game" or searching for funding and changing funding applications led to a high amount of paperwork for programmers. Their message to funders was that everything is connected holistically and to fund core programs. For instance, Briana said: "They shouldn't only have one focus that's for all Aboriginal youth that live in the city…Ideally it would be best to have programming or funding from the Federal government that does support the holistic needs of Aboriginal kids." Furthermore, when discussing the barriers of funding opportunities, Harper said, "That's what you need is multiyear funding…our life doesn't begin and end in 1 year. It's an ongoing process. The biggest barrier is that multiyear funding, or lack of I should say." Participants described how government and funding agencies might want to provide support, but programmers felt argued they were not being listened to:

The research says we need this spectrum of support to keep our students engaged in

education. It includes a whole prevention model, invest in that prevention model so that

our youth will stay in school, and then it's better for Canada…When are people going to

stop pointing fingers and blaming other ministries and just take it on and make a

difference? (Joyce)

In regards to feeling that the government is ignoring community issues, Briana said:

[the government is] completely ignoring what the community is saying are issues and just

focusing on what they think is an issue, and then just forcing the community through

funding to provide programming that they think is important or relevant.

Briana recommended the need for advocacy and a stronger community voice within the

government:

I would say though that like uniting, like having a more united front in terms of a stronger

voice among Aboriginal services and, saying what our needs are, and having more of a

collective body to speak on behalf of what we need and, and what we think is the best

approach for funding, I think would be a good thing. Like maybe an advocacy body

versus a service providing body.

Participants shared numerous experiences related to the challenges, and also the

recommendations, for promoting and navigating interagency support.

Identifying Program Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

A key component of participants' experiences of co-creating and engaging others in

Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming were identifying outcomes and evaluation

methods. Exploring program outcomes and evaluation methods support programmers'

documentation of program successes and challenges for formative program development, as well

as youth's voices and experiences in the program. Identifying outcomes and evaluation methods involved reframing what is widely considered success and evaluating with words and in an Indigenous way. Harper used alternative ways to report to a funder:

> Because it was an aboriginal arts program, we did dance, my report ended in a poem and a story. Because what I wanted to do was thank you for the money, we achieved the outcomes, but I want to give it back to you in an Indigenous way, in a story-telling perspective, based in oral stuff. Because they want numbers and they want this, and this, and that. I wasn't willing to do that. If they didn't accept my report, then I'd have to do that, right? But I wanted to challenge them with accepting a different way of reporting. They accepted it.

Briana had similar sentiments about the approach to evaluations from an Indigenous worldview: "that might be helpful to have an evaluator come in and help with like some ways of including like an Indigenous world view into program evaluation or something, that would be helpful."

> Unconventional outcomes or "less measurable outcomes" were described as aspects that should be explored and defined as well as evaluation or assessments. In terms of evaluation, ongoing assessment was recommended as well as having internal evaluators. For instance, Briana said:

> I work a lot with external evaluators and they just don't know enough about the programming and they can't get the interviews or data collection processes working effectively, and I've even been an external evaluator and it's challenging because [the external evaluators] don't understand the day to day operations of the organization or the program, and it's not as effective, could they, could an external evaluator evaluate the

outcome of say the group and the advocacy and roll up findings generated by the staff of

those programs, certainly that would be helpful.

Less measurable outcomes included going back to school or building confidence:

The less measureable outcomes, a lot of those come from the informal things like trust

being built and just confidence. Like you see kids that show up, they're so shy, and then

by the end of the program, they're just all over the place and helping plan the program

and cleaning up, and they're really taking initiative and you can just see them totally

opening up. Often one of the unplanned outcomes is that a lot of kids that we work with

end up going back to school, 'cause we, we work with a lot a kids that have dropped out

of high school because of a lot of the different barriers they face living in a remote

community. (Saoirse)

Discussion

The knowledge shared by participants in this research extends upon previous literature

(e.g., McHugh et al., 2013; Perkins & Noam, 2007) by identifying considerations to support the

development of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs. Most notably, this research

suggests that Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs should involve the support of

multiple agencies or partners, and supports a collaborative approach to Indigenous youth

activity-promoting research and programming (McHugh et al., 2015). Findings also provide

further support of the need for programs that foster the holistic development of youth (Bruner et

al., 2015; Hanna, 2009). The knowledge shared by participants in this research can support the

development of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming in Alberta, and highlight

practical considerations for building partnerships and program agendas that are relevant and

sustainable.

Participants described building partnerships and focusing on relationships as key components to co-creating programming. The overall narrative of the findings was that focusing on relationships and partnerships would bring upon opportunities for programming. Building relationships is a key component to include in research with Indigenous youth (McHugh et al., 2015) and programs for youth (Perkins & Noam, 2007). Thus, creating community and interagency relationships and partnerships are important to facilitate a space for growth and support of programs. Findings from this research make a unique contribution to the literature in that they highlight *how* to facilitate relationships and partnerships and promote interagency support. Participants recommended several strategies for building partnerships that resemble CBPR principles and practices as described by Israel et al. (1998). For example, participants described how partnership development could be facilitated by being consistent and intentional in communication, mutually-supporting one another, and identifying goals. Previous research in the area of Indigenous youth activity research and programming has approached partnerships from a participatory approach (e.g., McHugh et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010). This is integral to practicing CBPR (Israel et al., 1998) as well as decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 1999; 2012). The findings of this research support previous partnership approaches in Indigenous youth sport and activity programming (e.g., Blodgett et al., 2010; McHugh et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010) and provide considerations for developing partnerships to support programs that create a positive context for youth.

The participants in this research and previous research (Hanna, 2009; Perkins & Noam, 2007) described the need for programs that foster the holistic development of youth. However, participants also voiced that the government does not support holistic health agendas. The perceived lack of support from government agencies (e.g., local, provincial, national) was also

documented in sport for development research in South Africa (Whitley, Wright, & Gould, 2013). Coaches running a sport-plus program for underserved youth recommended including the government in programming efforts in order to negotiate community and government partnerships. In the current phase, the perceived lack of relevance between the government agenda for Indigenous youth and the community's needs to foster the holistic development of Indigenous youth is problematic. As suggested by Agans et al. (2015), this discrepancy may threaten the synergy within the youth programming context. Similar to Holt and colleagues (2013), there seemed to be structural constraints, such as underfunding, that were a part of the youth workers' description of an uncoordinated approach. Whereas there was evidence of strong partnerships, there was also evidence of partnerships that needed to be strengthened (i.e., program and funding organization). Findings from this current phase suggest that creating a space to address how to navigate discrepancies between programmer needs and government programming and funding expectations, and *addressing* this discrepancy, is important to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs in Alberta. Ultimately, there is a need for further exploration of partnerships that support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming given the important role of multiple agencies or partners in supporting a space for growth and support of this programming.

Participants considered the identification of program outcomes and evaluation methods to be a key component to their experiences of creating and engaging in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Of particular salience to participants was identifying how to measure and capture outcomes that may be considered "less-measurable." This was deemed important for finding a balance between funder acceptable program evaluations and evaluations that fit with the worldview of the organization. Bruner and colleagues (2015) discuss the importance of

Aboriginal youth activity program evaluation. Chouinard and Bradley-Cousins (2007) conducted a review of evaluation literature with Aboriginal communities and recommended including alternative ways of knowing and discussing epistemological viewpoints. The findings from this phase highlighted ways in which program outcomes could be shared and evaluated (e.g., outcome reports that include poems and storytelling). Such insights support critical understandings for developing program outcomes and evaluation methods that are relevant to health programmers working in Indigenous contexts in Alberta. Expanding upon Bruner and colleagues' (2015) recommendation, the process of creating programs, identifying program outcomes, and evaluating programs should be mutually considered and agreed upon, and these efforts should be documented.

Findings from this research provide necessary insights and practical examples of holistic programming for Indigenous youth, which could include "on-the-land" traditional teachings and creating a safe space for traditional practices to be included in programming. The importance of supporting traditional practices and community connections extends upon the decolonizing methodologies literature by highlighting the important role of youth's connection to traditional practices, Elders, and other community members in the context of activity promotion. For instance, McHugh and colleagues (2013) have included traditional practices in their research with Aboriginal youth, and youth in this exploration indicated the important role of traditional games when defining sport. Furthermore, Robbins and Dewar (2011) discuss how governmental policies should support traditional Indigenous approaches and Indigenous Peoples' to learn, maintain, and build upon traditional knowledge. Findings from this research further supports the importance of including Indigenous Peoples and knowledge keepers in programming to share knowledges that enhance youth development of self-identity and holistic health. Extending upon

Coppola and McHugh (in press), exploring how to support traditional practices and community connections can be promoted instead of using the term "cultural relevance" to facilitate a decolonizing approach to research or programs.

The knowledge shared within this research highlights the importance of health advocacy among various partners to support the development of Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta. Health advocacy has been described as "the application of information and resources to effect systemic changes that shape the way people in a community live" (Christoffel, 2000, p. 722), and it can come in different forms and from different peoples or agencies. Researchers, such as Blackstock (2009), have highlighted necessary community-based advocacy efforts for Aboriginal youth to receive healthcare access and support. Youth advocacy was described by participants as one of the main reasons for which they engage in programming. There are several integrative frameworks for community engagement that suggest strategies for developing a partnership and identifying mutual communication strategies (e.g., Cargo & Mercer, 2008; Christopher, Watts, Knows His Gun McCormack, & Young, 2008; Santiago-Rivera et al., 1998), but there is limited literature on *why* people engage in community programming. An implication of this finding for health researchers and programmers alike is to connect to an advocate for Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Another option may be creating a network of programming champions. For instance, the *Health Champions Program Model* (Western Region Health Centre, State Government of Victoria, Australia, 2013) is an initiative to support individual and community health through a network of health champions. Recruiting champions to play a role in promoting the health of Indigenous youth should be explored. Specifically, *how* champions connect with government liaisons and other representatives should be explored and documented.

Phase Limitations and Future Directions

Several limitations and future directions should be noted. First, mostly one one-on-one interview was conducted with participants with the exception of one participant. To gather more depth of experiences, future research might consider more than one interview with participants. However, it is important to consider the limited time of community programmers. Telephone interviews were used as a means of interviewing participants when I could not interview in person. I used these methods to make interviewing possible for participants in different areas of Alberta and not exclude a participant because of their location. To effectively engage in telephone interviewing, I drew upon recommendations for using phone interviewing as a technique, such as pre-testing the interview protocol, creating different types of questions during the interview, and revisiting the interviews for accuracy (Burke & Miller, 2001). However, I recognize that in-person interviews could have better facilitated relationship building and accuracy of transcriptions.

Such findings suggest that Lavallée and Levesque's (2013) integrated Indigenous-ecological model (IEM) may serve as a guide or framework for co-creating and engaging with others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. The IEM was created specifically for sport and recreation development in Indigenous communities; yet little (if any) published research has documented the use of this model to support the development of activity-promoting programs. The IEM describes a two-eyed seeing approach integrating Indigenous knowledges (e.g., teachings of the medicine wheel) and the westernized concept of the social-ecological model. However, the IEM extends upon the social-ecological model by suggesting the enhancement of one's *holistic* health and incorporating decolonizing approaches at each leverage point (e.g., interpersonal, community, policy). The participants in this current research shared

detailed descriptions about how to create support for programs at an interpersonal or community level as well as a broader political and governmental level. Therefore, the knowledge shared by participants in this research highlights *how* different levels of influence might contribute to creating a space for growth and support of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs in Alberta, Canada. Thus, future research should consider the use of IEM to identify, develop, and explore partnerships that support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming agendas.

A case study approach (e.g., Stake, 1998) to exploring the development of partnerships for Aboriginal youth health programs in Alberta may be a future research direction. Case study designs help researchers explore the process of a phenomenon as it unfolds. A case study may be used to explore the process of developing partnerships across multiple agencies, including the government, to support Alberta Aboriginal youth health programs. This may contribute to the knowledge of support strategies for programmers and youth and the development of sustainable programming partnerships. Future research could also include interviews with government liaisons or representatives, who create Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming, to explore their experiences of negotiating a mutually-beneficial agenda with communities. Lastly, future research should consider exploring how government-community partnerships can support activity-promoting programming for Indigenous youth and communities. For instance, the Mi'Kmaw Physical Activity Leadership program in Nova Scotia was developed from a government liaison's interest in strengthening the ties between Indigenous communities and the government to promote physical activity opportunities. This case would be beneficial to explore and share in order to inform potential government-community partnerships in other provinces.

Concluding Remarks

Indigenous youth activity-promoting programmers and their partners might focus on

advocating for youth and activity-promoting programming, and implementing the partnership development strategies identified in this phase to strengthen programming. Multiple agencies should explore how to work together to mutually support one another in terms of program resources and funding as well as professional development and capacity building. Finally, non-governmental and governmental organizations and funders that support Indigenous youth health programs might consider how to better support holistic health programs for Indigenous youth.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

<u>Dissertation Phase Two—Interview Guide</u>

<u>Introduction</u>
1) **Incentive information (Address, phone number), pseudonym?**
2) A little about my self and the project. **Tell me about yourself.**
   a. Background, ethnicity, years in programming? Other relevant background?
3) **Why do you engage in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming?**
4) What are or have been your **experiences with physical activity-related programs for Indigenous youth?**
   a. Describe the program, program participants, and facilitators? How did this initiative begin, and who was involved? Where was it held?

<u>Programming</u>
1) Can you describe your **initial involvement** with the program(s)? What was **your role(s)** in the initiatives and program?
2) Who is/was a part of making the programming sustainable (e.g., **stakeholders**)? What are/were **the roles of others** (Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples) in this process?
   a. How was this decided?
   b. Who should have been involved? (Ecological model example)
3) What were the **key components to sustaining the partnership**?
   a. What worked? What did not work? (What were barriers and facilitators?)
   b. How did you:
      i. Negotiate conflicts?
      ii. Identify purpose and scope of programs? Outcomes? Mutually beneficial agendas? Knowledge generation and management? Ethical considerations? Decision-making?
5) What were the **key components to co-creating the program**?
   a. What worked? What did not work?
   b. What serves to facilitate co-creation of programs?
   c. What serves as a barrier?
   d. How can these barriers be overcome?
   e. What resources (e.g., money, human resources) did you acquire? What was needed? PROBES:
      i. How did you acquire resources or support to co-create this programming?
      ii. How did you allocate the resources?
6) What **cultural activities** were incorporated in the programming?
   a. How did you do this? If any, what cultural activities might be relevant to all Indigenous youth/Peoples?
7) Please **describe your process of engaging Indigenous Peoples/youth** in this programming. PROBES:
   a. What worked? What did not work?
   b. How have you and members (e.g., executive directors, health directors both Indigenous and non-indigenous) engaged Indigenous community members in programming?
      iii. What facilitates engagement?

      iv.   What serves as a barrier for engagement?
      v.   How can this be overcome?
      vi.   Is this integral to programming? Explain.

8) **How have Indigenous community members engaged** in this programming? And **Why?**

Recommendations for Other Programmers:

1) Based on your experience and reflections (e.g., what have, could have, should have done…for improvement), **what would be your recommendations to programmers for co-creating activity programming for Indigenous Youth? And with Indigenous Peoples and/or other community members?**
2) Based on your experience and reflections (e.g., what have, could have, should have done…for improvement), **what would be your recommendations to programmers for:**
    a. **Developing partnerships for this programming? And;**
    b. **Engaging Indigenous community members in this programming**?
        i.   Identifying and creating roles for others?
3) **Who would you talk to now to address enhancing facilitators and decreasing barriers to this programming? What is needed?**

Knowledge Translation: *Taking this knowledge and applying to other contexts to begin developing partnerships and planning or contributing to initiatives and programming for Indigenous youth*

1) Key messages/components of program and partnership development for Indigenous youth health?
2) How can this information be shared with you and others so that it is relevant? And where/when or in what context?
3) Who should receive this knowledge?
4) What can be taken to apply to another context?

*Additional Information***:**

1) What else would you like to share related to developing and implementing this type of programming for Indigenous youth that you didn't have the chance to say?
2) How would you like to engage in continued participation in this project? Would you be willing to participate in a KT project?
    a. *Describe project goals—Alberta meeting and project, back and forth discussions with community members and participants to create relevant knowledge and discussions about iKT goals, approach, strategies, audiences, feasibility, outcomes, and indicators of success to guide our process of developing an effective iKT project.*
3) Others who I should talk to?

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE THREE: FACILITATING KNOWLEDGE-TO-ACTION

Supporting Alberta Indigenous Youth Health Programs:

A Gathering to Facilitate Knowledge-to-Action

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Abstract

The phase described in this paper is a part of a larger community-based participatory research (CBPR) project focused on exploring how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. In response to feedback from the second phase of this CBPR, a gathering was organized to bring together programmers to discuss creating and engaging in activity-promoting programming in Alberta, and the next step in receiving and providing programming support. The purpose of the current paper is to share an integrated knowledge translation (iKT) project that emerged as a gathering of Indigenous youth health programmers in Alberta. Approximately 35 people attended the gathering and participated in open space technology discussions and professional development speaker sessions. The gathering outcomes highlighted several factors that facilitated knowledge-to-action within the context: a) supporting participants' needs, b) facilitating a decolonizing space, c) creating opportunities for networking and engagement, and d) supporting on-going networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities. This project extends upon the knowledge translation and participatory research literature by highlighting considerations for developing an iKT project and, ultimately, quality community scholarship.

Supporting Alberta Indigenous Youth Health Programs:

A Gathering to Facilitate Knowledge-to-Action

"You have given life to a purpose and like a child, [it] needs to be nurtured, keep feeding…the child will mature (as is your purpose to this)" -Gathering Attendee

When considering health inequities and the social determinants of Aboriginal Peoples[10,] health (Loppie-Reading & Wein, 2009), factors that have been described as affecting Aboriginal Peoples' health status include health behaviours, education, community resources and capacity, healthcare, and colonialism. Furthermore, the repression of self-determination has also been cited as an influential factor of health inequities of Aboriginal Peoples (Loppie-Reading & Wein, 2009). Lavallée and Levesque (2012) proposed an integrated framework and ecological model depicting the reciprocity between individuals, families, friends, communities, organizations, and all things spiritually known and unknown to support the holistic health of Indigenous Peoples[11]. This model indicates the importance of paradigms, and different community, social, and political organizations working together, not in silos, to address the health inequities of Aboriginal Peoples in a self-determined space. Knowledge translation (KT) activities can provide a context or opportunity to bring together communities and their organizational partners. Communities and their organizational partners may use research knowledge to advocate for change (Canadian Institutes of Health Research; CIHR, 2015). KT has been described as an essential component when engaging Aboriginal Peoples in research to ensure that research done with communities is mutually-beneficial and relevant to their context (Hanson & Smylie, 2006; Ranford & Warry, 2013).

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[10] The term "Aboriginal" is often used when the Indigenous population referred to is native to Canada. The term "Aboriginal" is used when referring to previous literature that uses the term.
[11] The term "Indigenous" is capitalized when referring to Indigenous Peoples, who are native to a land (NAHO, n.d.) and represent a population (e.g., youth).

The gathering that is described in this phase was developed to facilitate knowledge-to-action. "Knowledge-to-action," and knowledge "dissemination," "translation," and "implementation" are some of the many terms used to describe health implementation research (Rabin, Brownson, Haire-Joshu, Kreuter, & Weaver, 2008). Whereas I chose the term "knowledge-to-action" to describe the current project, the broader KT literature was drawn upon to inform this project. Within the context of health, KT is defined as "a dynamic and iterative process that includes synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethically sound application of knowledge to improve the health of Canadians, provide more effective health services and products, and strengthen the health care system" (CIHR, 2015). Various KT frameworks have been developed to help move knowledge into action (Rycroft-Malone, 2004; Wilson, Lavis, Travers, & Rourke, 2010) by linking the discovery and impact of knowledge in community or organizational practices. The goal of sharing and applying health research knowledge is relatively consistent across the KT literature (e.g., Straus, Tetroe, & Graham, 2009; Smylie et al., 2009), yet there are different approaches to creating a translation project.

The two key approaches documented within the health KT literature (e.g., Graham, Logan, Harrison, Straus, Tetroe, & Caswell et al., 2006; Smylie et al., 2009; Straus et al., 2009) are a top-down or bottom-up approach to sharing and applying health research knowledge. The top-down approach seems to be the most widely published type of knowledge translation. This approach involves gathering evidence-based practices and creating tools to help communities apply research to their context (e.g., Straus et al., 2009). The knowledge-to-action framework is a cyclical depiction of how KT practitioners might engage in knowledge inquiry and synthesis to create tools for knowledge users to adapt in a local context (Straus et al., 2009). The bottom-up approach involves developing KT methods within the community context as community ways of

knowing or paradigms may be dissimilar from western approaches to knowledge translation (Smylie, Martin et al., 2003). Integrated KT (iKT) may facilitate the development of bottom-up or community-based KT practices.

The current phase was developed as an iKT project because this category of KT involves participatory research and recognizes self-determined research processes. iKT involves knowledge users as equal partners alongside researchers, and such partnerships will "lead to research that is more relevant to, and more likely to be useful to, the knowledge users" (CIHR, 2015). The goal of iKT is to facilitate knowledge-to-action or increase the understanding of knowledge application through the process of translating knowledge between researchers and knowledge-users during and at the end of knowledge generation. Conducting this phase from a community-based participatory research approach (CBPR; e.g., Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 2001) facilitated the process of developing an iKT approach, in that knowledge users were engaged as research partners and involved in decision-making throughout the project. This is particularly important when working with Indigenous Peoples because of the history of exploitation when conducting research with Indigenous communities (Schnarch, 2004).

When developing KT projects for Indigenous health, several considerations and strategies have been recommended. For instance, Hanson and Smylie's (2006) KT Toolkit for Indigenous Communities identifies specific considerations for engaging in KT that accounts for Indigenous knowledges and concerns. The toolkit recognizes the importance of Indigenous community contexts and involving community members in the process of applying and translating knowledge (Hanson & Smylie, 2006). Specifically, the toolkit acknowledges the importance of context-specific and culturally-relevant KT, such as cultural protocols (e.g., smudge and prayer), ethics (e.g., university REB, community ethics), and language and methods of communication

(e.g., is the language used relevant and understandable to the knowledge users?). The development of diversity and ethical spaces, the protection of Indigenous identity, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous ways of being are all reasons for developing a KT plan or project. The development of relevant research and the recognition of reciprocity when producing and exchanging knowledge with Indigenous Peoples and communities were also discussed as a reason for developing a KT plan within an Indigenous research agenda (Hanson & Smylie, 2006). Given the new and emerging literature on translating knowledge to action, particularly for Indigenous health research agendas in Canada, the process of creating knowledge-to-action projects should be explored.

An exploration of the process of creating and implementing a knowledge-to-action project can provide insight into *how* to produce relevant project outcomes when working within an Indigenous context (Hanson & Smylie, 2006), contributing to existing quality community scholarship principles (Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013). Thus, the purpose of the current paper is to share an iKT project that emerged as a gathering of Indigenous youth activity-promoting programmers in Alberta, Canada, and discuss factors using participant feedback that facilitated knowledge-to-action in this context (i.e., supporting Alberta Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs). A description of the gathering and how the gathering facilitated knowledge-to-action is provided. Specifically, I discuss how the gathering provided an opportunity for: a) *supporting participants' needs,* b) *facilitating a decolonizing space*, c) *creating opportunities for networking and engagement*, and d) *supporting on-going networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities*. The paper also includes a discussion of how iKT projects can serve as an opportunity to confirm and mobilize research findings and can contribute to

quality community scholarship and methodologies. Relevant relational and methodological implications are also shared.

Methods

Researcher Positionality

I, the first author, identify as a non-Indigenous Caucasian-American and doctoral candidate at the University of Alberta. I recognize, as a non-Indigenous researcher, that my feminist perspective facilitates a balancing of power dynamics and facilitates a decolonizing research process. However, I also recognize that I have not experienced colonization and racial oppression and neither have my ancestors, making my beliefs, influences, and reasons for engaging in the research process substantially different from the Indigenous Peoples I will work with. I also recognize that I have been afforded several advantages such as my education, and that I am of a privileged race. It is my responsibility as a researcher to commit to self-evaluation and self-critique to acknowledge power imbalances in research partnerships (Chávaz, Duran, Baker, Avila, & Wallerstein, 2008).

Coming from a position in academia and identifying as Caucasian-American, I recognize that I have certain biases about how research should be conducted and represented, and this should be explored with those with whom I work. Consistent with the beliefs of Indigenous rights scholars such as Daes (2000), I believe that Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples both have a role in creating decolonizing spaces, and I cannot assume an ethical space has been created. Considering decolonizing or self-determining practices in the research process facilitates my consistent consideration of my position as an academic.

I conduct research from a critical feminist participatory research paradigm, which I believe enhances the process of cultural humility and research partnerships. For instance,

feminist research from a participatory approach stresses the need for inclusion, participation, action, social change, research reflexivity, and placing the experiences and perspectives of participants at the core of the research (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005; Reid, 2004). A feminist participatory research approach can enhance my process of cultural humility as a part of a research partnership. The practice of cultural humility involves reflecting upon my role as a non-Indigenous critical feminist participatory researcher and the roles of the participants in this research to facilitate decolonizing or self-determined research spaces.

Self-determination is described by Smith (2012) as a term that is commonly used in Indigenous discourses and is important to understanding practices that facilitate decolonization in different contexts. Self-determination has been discussed by James Youngblood Henderson (2000) in relation to the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* He discusses how on paper the UN claims that Indigenous Peoples have a right to self-determination. However, he also states that we need more than words on paper to create transformation and decolonization. I draw upon decolonizing research methodologies (Smith, 2012), research ethics (CIHR, 2014), and Indigenous scholars' discussions of research practices (e.g., Hanson & Smylie, 2006) to guide my actions or practices that will facilitate self-determination and decolonization of knowledge production.

A focus on recreating a decolonizing space in which Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples can work together has been recommended (Smith, 1999; 2012). Decolonizing methodologies challenge Westernized epistemologies that may stem from colonization and perpetuate the assumption that objective means of knowledge production are superior to Indigenous ways of knowing. Decolonizing methodologies facilitate Indigenous Peoples' self-determination, participation, and representation in the research process (Smith,

1999; 2012). As a non-Indigenous researcher, decolonizing research methodologies helped me realize that my role as researcher in the community cannot be assumed and should be co-defined with the community members along with the agenda and benefits of the research for the community. I also recognize that self-determined research agendas can be facilitated by consciously reflecting on how participants' voices are included in the research and by recognizing participants as agents in research.

Gathering Description

This gathering was a part of a larger CBPR) project focused on exploring how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming programmers. In response to feedback from participants in Phase Two of this larger CBPR, this current iKT project was developed. Consistent with recommendations by Smylie and colleagues (2003), the knowledge users in the current project worked together with the researcher (i.e., first author) to shape knowledge generation and dissemination. The process of iKT began during the first phase of this larger CBPR when a research question was created (see Coppola & McHugh, in press). The interviews in Phase Two, which focused on exploring how to co-create and engage others in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming, included questions about how such knowledge should be shared with other programmers (see Chapter Three). Smylie and colleagues (2009) discussed several dissemination pathways for sharing knowledge that were identified by Aboriginal communities, with conferences, workshops, and word-of-mouth being among the most relevant. Notably, Phase Two participants in this current CBPR provided similar recommendations for translating knowledge, when they suggested a community gathering.

Participants in Phase Two informed the development of the gathering, including the program agenda, activities, and potential gathering participants. As well, I (i.e., first author) held

three formal pre-gathering discussions with community members who had participated in the

larger CBPR project. Participants identified the necessity of bringing together community

members and other advocates to discuss Indigenous youth activity-promoting or overall health

programming in Alberta. They suggested networking with others at the gathering to explore the

already existing programs and resources in the community for programmers and youth.

Government-community relationships should be facilitated to support youth activity

programming (Agans et al., 2015; Whitley et al., 2013). Thus, it was not surprising that

participants recommended that representatives from the government be invited and that a safe

space be provided for discussions during the gathering.

Regarding supplies for the event, a conference bag was recommended as well as food for

lunch and refreshments throughout the day. Previous research (e.g., McHugh, Coppola, &

Sinclair, 2013) has included a feast and refreshments when conducting photovoice circles with

youth as an offering to thank participants for sharing their knowledge. Therefore, during the

gathering, food and refreshments were provided on both days, and giveaways, such as books,

mugs, and sweatshirts, were raffled. Participants also suggested incorporating activity into the

event to enhance opportunities for informal relationship-building and to simply be active. Thus,

we planned a dinner and river valley walk as extra-gathering activities. Finally, pre-gathering

discussion participants requested that the gathering be held in a community hall and that an Elder

be brought in to share traditional ceremony and to acknowledge community protocols. Previous

health research with Indigenous youth and communities incorporated traditional knowledge or

practices in a community setting (e.g., Lavallée, 2009; McHugh et al., 2013; Shea et al., 2012).

The free event was held at Oliver Community Hall in Edmonton, Alberta, and a pipe carrier

came in to offer a prayer and smudge to open and close our gathering.

Feedback from participants throughout the entire CBPR, including input during the pre-gathering discussions, supported the identification of the main goal of the gathering. The main goal of the gathering was to bring together programmers to discuss creating and engaging in activity-promoting programming in Alberta, and the next step in receiving and providing programming support. A key message from Phase Two participants was the need to create a space for support and growth for community programmers. Thus, based on the findings and identified needs of participants from Phase Two (see Chapter Three), speakers were brought in to share experiences and resources about promoting interagency support, sustaining programs, and connecting with youth. Three hours were dedicated to listening to and engaging with speakers, and the remaining time in the two-day gathering was dedicated to facilitating and engaging in open space discussions.

The pre-gathering discussion participants identified participants or partners who should be represented at the gathering. Individuals that are currently involved, or have previously been involved, in creating or supporting Indigenous youth health and activity programming were welcome to attend. Youth and youth leaders were also welcome to attend. The gathering included approximately 35 attendees from various provincial and community organizations, university, education, and First Nations communities in Alberta. A majority of the participants were women representatives from these organizations. The gathering was comprised of two key components: *professional and program development speakers*, and *open space technology* discussions.

Professional development sessions and speakers. A key component of the gathering was to support programmers in attendance by hosting professional development (PD) speakers. Whereas pre-gathering participants recommended professional development sessions, other

dissemination pathways, such as workshops, conferences, and experience-sharing have been suggested for knowledge translation in Aboriginal communities (Smylie et al., 2009). The PD topics were based on identified needs of participants that were highlighted in Phase Two and during the pre-gathering discussions. Three topic areas were chosen: connecting with youth, sustaining programs, and promoting stronger interagency support. The speakers were community members recommended by other participants. Michelle Nieviadomy, is community leader with over 12 years experience. She discussed her experiences of engaging with youth as a fitness instructor and how fitness has been a tool to connect with youth. Colleen Buffalo shared her role as a community builder and athlete and discussed community engagement and the North American Indigenous Games. Emma Wilkins, a community-based researcher and evaluator, shared her knowledge about program evaluation and provided activities and resources for conceptualizing program evaluations in the community. Krista Devoe from Membertou, Nova Scotia, shared her experiences as a Mi'Kmaw Physical Activity Leader (MPAL). Wayne McKay, Cape Breton Regional Physical Activity Consultant, joined via Skype to share his experiences of developing the MPAL program. Specifically, he shared how he bridged the gap between the Nova Scotia government and Mi'Kmaw communities to support PA opportunities for Aboriginal communities. The professional development sessions provided an opportunity for attendees to learn about community engagement, program evaluation, partnership-building with government and communities, and healthy relationship-building with youth.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Open Space Technology: Discussing Relevant Questions. Open space technology (OST; Owen, 1993) was used to provide a space for discussion of relevant issues with diverse gathering participants. OST is a highly engaging process, whereby the attendees propose topics

of discussion and facilitate those discussions with other attendees. This ensures that the issues

that are most important to attendees are raised and discussed, and action items can be

documented. Bryson and Anderson (2000) reviewed several large group engagement strategies

including OST. The strengths of OST were the self-determined agenda and relevance to

participants from diverse professions and backgrounds. Given participants came together to

discuss supporting Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta, the following guiding questions

were proposed at the beginning of the gathering: "What is needed to further support Alberta

Indigenous youth health programs and programmers?" and specifically, "What are our roles and

the roles of others in providing this support?"

Gathering Feedback

Feedback was solicited to identify if we met the goals of the gathering. Twelve attendees

filled out the evaluation form (see Appendix A). The University of Alberta Research Ethics

Board approved the gathering feedback form and recruitment procedures, and the 12 participants

signed a consent form to have their knowledge shared. These participants were primarily from

university, non-profit organizations, and social services. Most heard about the gathering through

word-of-mouth or email listserves, and they attended the gathering primarily to network and find

support, and to learn from and engage with others. They shared their thoughts on components

they found useful and beneficial, their ability to network, their key take-away points, and their

next steps in supporting Indigenous youth health programming. A full report of the gathering

description and outcomes, as well as participant feedback was shared with gathering participants.

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Facilitating Knowledge-to-Action

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Upon reflection of the existing KT research literature (e.g., Hanson & Smylie, 2006;

Smylie et al., 2009; Straus et al., 2009) and in consideration of the participants' feedback, several

factors have been identified as facilitating knowledge-to-action. The factors that facilitated knowledge-to-action in this context and could be applied to other KT practices involve: a) *supporting participants' needs,* b) *facilitating a decolonizing space*, c) *creating opportunities for networking and engagement*, and d) *supporting on-going networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities.*

Supporting Participants' Needs

The purpose of KT is to translate knowledge that is useful and relevant to participants (CIHR, 2015; Graham et al., 2006). Thus, identifying the needs of programmers in Phase Two, and creating an opportunity to address their needs, was a central component in the process of iKT in the current phase. Identifying relevant outcomes for the community is essential (CIHR, 2015), and Schinke et al. (2013) argued that the identification of relevant outcomes or "project deliverables" is a staple of quality community scholarship. Providing a forum to support Alberta Indigenous youth health programmers' needs was key to delivering relevant outcomes to the knowledge users. Noteworthy outcomes of this gathering are how discussions informed the programmers' projects and created awareness about current community issues related to Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. For instance, the participants indicated that they found the professional development sessions "very informative," and there were "great ideas" and "concrete examples to bring back" to their programming or organizational context. One participant said that Michelle was "awesome and inspirational," Krista was "inspiring," Emma's presentation was a "good refresher," and Colleen's presentation was "eye-opening." They also indicated that they were able to take away "new ideas for students, youth, and family." One attendee said, "I always love hearing community stories" and another indicated they "are always interested in learning from successful programs." A participant also said that the

feedback received at the gathering "will help shape the content of the certificate I'm currently working on which will contribute to longer term Indigenous youth health." The attendees took away many messages and concrete tasks or ideas to facilitate the support of Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta. A participant said, "Many communities are ready for comprehensive PA strategy," and there is an "importance of letting communities lead. I'm taking away everything b/c they are all relevant in my work!"

The incorporation of key findings from Phase Two of this larger CBPR into the agenda of the current gathering enhanced the relevance of the gathering outcomes. As well, participants played a central role in the identification of a relevant process for knowledge translation (i.e., gathering). Lessons learned from this phase lead to a recommendation for KT practitioners to have on-going discussions about the process of translating knowledge, supporting previous suggestions from Graham and colleagues (2006) and CIHR (2015). Extending Smylie and colleagues (2009) discussion, the gathering provides evidence that community networks and workshops for disseminating knowledge in communities can create relevant knowledge translation practices and outcomes that benefit community members and support the self-determined process of knowledge translation.

Facilitating a Decolonizing Space

Supporting a space where project participants could come together to engage in self-determined discussions was important to facilitate a decolonizing space and culturally-relevant KT practices. It is important to facilitate this space to reframe the context of research with Indigenous Peoples. Previous research has been exploitative with no beneficial outcome to Indigenous Peoples and communities (e.g., Schnarch, 2004); thus, it is important to facilitate self-determined research agendas and outcomes that benefit Indigenous Peoples and

communities (e.g., Smith, 2012). Smylie and colleagues (2014) highlighted the importance of facilitating culturally-safe space in KT practices when working with Aboriginal Peoples and communities in Canada. Hanson and Smylie (2006) also outlined considerations to enhance cultural-relevance in KT practices, and several strategies were included in the current gathering. For instance, Hanson and Smylie (2006) described the development of ethical spaces, and inclusion of community members and cultural protocols when developing KT projects. In the current project, participants described OST (Owen, 1993) and the welcoming of protocols and cultural traditions as facilitating factors of creating a decolonizing space for promoting knowledge-to-action.

An Elder shared a prayer and smudge in the form of an opening and closing ceremony for the gathering. Including Indigenous knowledges and traditional practices is described as a respectful consideration and important to include when working with Indigenous Peoples (e.g., Pelletier Sinclair, 2003; Smith, 2012). Being inclusive of traditional practices is a part of my role as a researcher and is also important in KT to be culturally-safe and responsive (Smylie et al., 2014). Participants were explicitly grateful for the inclusion of prayer and smudging at the gathering. When asking for additional feedback at the end of the survey, a participant said, "Thank you for providing healthy choices, thank you for implementing a walk, thank you for the smudge, thank you for allowing a safe space for this conversation, thank you for knowledge sharing, ay-ay!"

OST (Owen, 1993) was proposed as a means of shaping discussions at the gathering, and this process of engagement can be considered a culturally-relevant KT practice promoting a decolonizing space for KT. Hanson and Smylie (2006) discuss the importance of developing diverse and ethical spaces, and reciprocity when sharing knowledge and learning from one

another in culturally-relevant KT. The participants described how they benefited from and

enjoyed OST, indicating "I enjoyed the concept of open discussion spaces, a great concept

guided by the people in attendance and the one I participated in was very interesting, and I

gained a lot." Smylie and colleagues (2009) described pathways of sharing knowledge and the

importance of experiential learning and sharing experiences was discussed. For instance, a

participant stated, "Open space sessions gave participants a chance to contribute as well as gain.

Knowledge exchange is very valuable in each sector, not only for moving forward for 'next

steps' but also just for affirmation and encouragement." One attendee described how open space

discussions are key components of creating an enjoyable gathering, stating, "I enjoyed this

workshop because it offered an open safe atmosphere." The OST sessions facilitated a safe

atmosphere in which participants could engage with one another and have their voices heard and

respected. As suggested by one participant, "The group was all very respectful of everyone's

voice and opinion." Another participant said, "All were respectful in this safe space."

A key practical implication from this phase was the use of OST in creating a safe space

for discussion of relevant topics to participants. Utilizing open space discussion sessions and

providing a gathering where programmers could come together to receive support, as well as

identify goals and action items, sheds light on how KT practitioners can create a relevant and

decolonizing Indigenous youth health research agenda. Using iKT as a guiding framework in this

process influenced my decision to host gathering discussions using OST (Owen, 1993). This

approach to discussions was highly engaging and participatory, and the approach explicitly

encouraged participants to play an active role in the gathering.

On-going OST sessions are recommended to address Bryson and Anderson's (2000)

noted weakness of the potential lack of discussion topic experts in OST gatherings. On-going

sessions can promote the involvement of others who can address the specific concerns of participants. Another recommendation to the broader KT community is to involve community members in KT practices that promote a decolonizing space by exploring the use of OST and incorporation of cultural protocols. Adopting an iKT approach might facilitate the promotion of a decolonizing space because of the on-going involvement of participants (CIHR, 2015). Thus, promoting participant feedback on creating decolonizing spaces and relevant KT practices through on-going invitations and discussions is recommended. Soliciting feedback encouraged participant engagement in the current project and supported the self-determined involvement of participants in the research project.

Creating Opportunities for Networking and Engagement

Opportunities for engagement in the development of the gathering, and networking amongst participants during the gathering, were created to facilitate knowledge-to-action. iKT approaches may be participatory to create relevant programs or tools with the community (e.g., CIHR, 2015; Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). Using participatory approaches, such as CBPR, can facilitate engagement in KT through partnership or relationship building, and addressing the community context (Wallerstein & Duran, 2010). At the community level, the processes of networking with others and sharing experiences are key pathways to sharing knowledge in Indigenous communities (Smylie et al., 2009). Thus, it is not surprising that opportunities for engagement and networking facilitated knowledge-to-action.

The program agenda items, such as the topic of speaker sessions and four corners activity, would not have been part of the gathering without the partnerships and relationships I developed throughout the larger CBPR project. Identifying community partners and building relationships are integral steps in the engagement phase of the CBPR process (Cargo & Mercer,

2008; Wallerstein et al., 2005). Cargo and Mercer (2008) describe an integrative practice

framework that includes a set of initial questions and considerations for identifying community

partners, including "who needs to be involved in the partnership to ensure the research can be

implemented with a balance of integrity, social relevance, and cultural relevance?" (p. 332).

Community engagement is meant to be reflexive and iterative in that both the CBPR practitioner

and community members engage in consistent feedback regarding values and interests or share

knowledge in order to identify mutually-beneficial agendas and create "ties that bind" (Wright,

Williams, Wright, Lieber, Carrasco, & Gedjayan, 2011, p. 83). Several CBPR practitioners have

documented strategies and models to develop partnerships and to foster some of the

aforementioned components to partnership development, specifically, developing on-going

communication (e.g., Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005; Wallerstein et al., 2005).

Building relationships was important to the participants and was important to facilitate at the

gathering. One participant said, "Relationships are key. People really do care and want to make

connections with colleagues." Thus, this project highlights the importance of building

partnerships and relationships and exploring partnerships in a multi-phase community-based

participatory research project.

Facilitating networking opportunities and sharing the knowledge from Phase Two in a

relevant manner was planned since the beginning of this larger CBPR project. This on-going

planning of knowledge translation is a recommended iKT strategy (CIHR, 2015). The important

role of building partnerships and connecting with community members was advocated for in

Phase Two and in the CBPR (e.g., Cargo & Mercer, 2008) and decolonizing research literature

(e.g., Fletcher, 2003; Smith, 2012). Thus, it was imperative that an opportunity for networking be

facilitated. The important role of networking was evident when attendees provided feedback

about why they attended gathering. A participant attended to find "out about what is going on around Alberta, and about challenges others face and how I can help." Another participant indicated their reason for attending was to "network, share ideas, make connections, learn from others to enhance the common goal."

Networking among participants at the gathering was facilitated through the use of OST (Owen, 1993). Many participants described how the networking was most beneficial, and that "through open space discussions and even longer whole group discussions there were many comments from participants about satisfaction and networking. People were thrilled to be able to connect with each other." Another person indicated that "networking is always key and we had plenty of opportunities to do so," and "the open space technology allowed us to have organic conversations about issues." These findings highlight an important role for relationship-building in KT practices. The incorporation of participants' KT ideas and the use of OST as a part of the KT project, should also be considered in the promotion of networking.

Supporting On-Going Networking and Knowledge-Sharing Opportunities

Promoting sustainability is a key factor in knowledge translation of evidence-based health interventions (Rabin et al., 2008). Sustainability is the extent to which healthy habits are maintained, whether a program is institutionalized, or capacity has been built within the community (Rabin et al., 2008). Within this phase's current bottom-up approach, sustainability of knowledge sharing and networking opportunities was identified as a key feature in facilitating knowledge-to-action. The overwhelming positive comments about the gathering provided evidence that future gatherings could provide further support for their respective programs. One participant said, "I was not sure what to expect, it exceeded my expectations. I learned about issues others face, I made contacts, and I left with a few concrete things I can work on." Another

was enthusiastic about having another gathering opportunity, "Let's have a gathering like this each year. I could help support this happening," and others also felt more follow-up meetings and workshops would be valuable. For instance, one participant argued, "Follow-up, more meetings/workshops, as this was free and many conferences I find are expensive and not as valuable. I had a bigger voice in these sessions."

The identified need for the sustainability of networking opportunities was a particularly noteworthy factor indicating knowledge-to-action. For instance, one participant wanted to, "share with others what I learned about the lack of funding and Indigenous Games," whereas another said, "I will follow-up with at least one participant to see how they can work with [organization]." The importance of connecting in person was shared, "Re-check, connect…lots of coffee time." Efforts to collaborate with others were mentioned when asking what the participants' next step in supporting Indigenous youth health programming. For instance, one participant wanted to start, "working with Aboriginal sports initiatives, collaborating with physical health (sports centers, i.e., ualberta)." The participants suggested sharing knowledge an appropriate next step. For instance, a participant was going to, "bring back to my work, follow up on funding opportunities that adhere to the criteria we talked about, propose similar cost-sharing initiatives." Furthermore, a participant discussed the importance of being a role model as an important next step: "I know I need to show up and be a role model—not just talk about it, but be about it! Many of our youth do not have healthy role models→we as "leaders" and we as individuals need to be a part of the change ☺." These findings provide further evidence of the importance of networking, creating opportunities for workshops, and sharing experiences when engaging in a knowledge translation project (e.g., Smylie et al., 2009).

Following the gathering, an infographic (see Appendix B) and twitter page were created

to connect those interested in supporting Alberta aboriginal youth health programs, and specifically "Supporting Alberta Aboriginal Youth Interagency Networking" (SAAYIN). An infographic is any graphic combination of text, pictures, and data visualizations that is presented in a manner that tells a complete story (Krum, 2013). Turck and colleagues (2014) have reported that healthcare professionals prefer infographic reports as opposed to conventional abstracts for translating clinical knowledge. Thus, translating the report and project into an infographic was considered a beneficial medium for sharing the project. In terms of moving forward, the question posed on the infographic was: **"**Based on the project themes and feedback, what role could YOU play in promoting growth and support of Alberta aboriginal youth health programs? Share your role by Supporting Alberta Aboriginal Youth Interagency Networking (SAAYIN) and "SAAYIN SOMETHING" on Twitter. According to the Twitter.com website, Twitter is "an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets." Registered users can read and post tweets." It has also been reported as a means to share health information (Scanfeld, Scanfeld, & Larson, 2010). Based on the outcomes of the current project, KT practitioners could consider whether or not on-going discussions have been promoted and if there is a space for continued engagement and connection after the KT activity.

Concluding Remarks

The implications from the current iKT project contribute several methodological and relational strategies to the CBPR (Israel et al., 1998; 2008) and KT (Hanson & Smylie, 2006) research literature. This phase highlights how to create a decolonizing and culturally-relevant space for translating knowledge-to-action within a participatory health research agenda. Specifically, this phase provided a practical example of how KT practitioners can facilitate decolonizing, comfortable spaces for discussion (Hanson & Smylie, 2006), specifically by

advocating for the needs of the participants or community. Considering one's role in supporting and sustaining the knowledge sharing opportunities may also be useful for facilitating knowledge-to-action. This project highlights the importance of developing and maintaining relationships as a means of facilitating knowledge-to-action, especially from a bottom-up approach as opposed to the dominant top-down approach (e.g., Graham et al., 2006).

The CIHR (2015) outlined important topics of discussion (e.g., feasibility, goals, outcomes) that practitioners should have with participants for an iKT project, which influenced the current gatherings' planning process. However, such discussions do not guarantee that participants' suggestions and knowledge will be incorporated into iKT projects. Thus, reflecting upon my role as the researcher was an important step that was added to the development of the iKT. Whenever I had questions throughout this larger CBPR project, or I questioned my decision-making processes, I consulted with the participants (i.e., knowledge users). The voices of all knowledge users were heard in the decision-making process, and a mutually-agreed upon decisions were made. Wallerstein and Duran (2010) discuss how CBPR strategies can address the challenges of translational research from a top-down approach. The use of CBPR strategies in this project, such as the incorporation of community perspective in decision-making and responsiveness to their needs, supported the necessary development of trust and partnerships in this knowledge translation project.

The outcomes of this gathering supported a quality CBPR project (Schinke, Smith, & McGannon, 2013). Schinke and colleagues (2013) provide a list of criteria to judge the quality of CBPR, including the role of a decentralized academic and development of clear deliverables for the participants. Specifically, my role supported the quality community scholarship suggestion of being a "decentralized academic" (Schinke et al., 2013). The participants were part of the

decision-making for the gathering, and identified relevant discussion topics related to the broad agenda of supporting Alberta Indigenous youth health programs. According to the feedback, the participants benefited from this decentralized approach. Because the gathering was community-driven, localized cultural practices, such as a smudge, were included in the gathering, contributing to another key indicator of quality community scholarship (Schinke et al., 2013). There were also clear "deliverables" or benefits to the community that were either tangible (e.g., free networking and professional development opportunity) or perceived (e.g., relationships built), and an opportunity for capacity-building based on the needs of the programmers and attendees (Schinke et al., 2013). Knowledge-to-action was facilitated and quality community scholarship was supported because of these efforts to enhance the relevance of this gathering.

While the development of the iKT project was described as beneficial to the knowledge-users, this project did not come without limitations and notable future directions. One limitation of the project was the little representation from Indigenous youth. Given the purpose was to discuss how to better support Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta, it would have been beneficial to have more youth voice and representation at the gathering. Indigenous youth are experts in their own experiences (McHugh et al., 2013) and could have provided insight into their basic and holistic health needs. Thus, exploring youths' role in supporting Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta would be beneficial. Because of the important role of partnerships in health research and programming, a future direction would be a longitudinal phase of the development of partnerships and networks. Specifically, how partners are coming together to create programming opportunities and advocating for the development of knowledge and action items in health research should be explored.

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Press.

Table 1

Program Sample

July 6, 2015 Monday, Day 1	July 7, 2015 Tuesday, Day 2

9:00
Check-in and Refreshments
 	
10:00
Opening Ceremony (Prayer and Smudge)
Eric Daniels
 	
Welcome and Introduction Circle
 	
Four Corners Activity
Program or Role Successes, Challenges, & Supports
 	
Creating the Open Space Marketplace
	7:00 Walk in River Valley
	(Emily Murphy Park)
	8:30
	   Check-in and Refreshments
	9:00
	   Welcome and Introduction Circle
	
	9:30-10:30
	Sustaining Programs
	Colleen Buffalo
	Community Engagement
	Emma Wilkins
	Program Planning and Evaluation
	
	BREAK
	Open Space Discussions

HOUR LUNCH **(BREAK OPTIONAL)** ~1:00-2:00	**HOUR LUNCH** **(BREAK OPTIONAL)** ~12:00-1:00
2:00-4:30 **Connecting with Youth** *Michelle Nieviadomy* **BREAK OPTIONAL** **Open Space Discussions** Closing Circle Moving Forward **6:00—Dinner at Earl's** Downtown (11830 Jasper Ave) **Appetizers provided*	**1:00-4:30** **Promoting Stronger Interagency Support**, *Krista Devoe & Wayne McKay* Mi'Kmaw Physical Activity Leaders Program, Nova Scotia **BREAK OPTIONAL** **Open Space Discussions** Facilitated Discussion-Moving Forward Closing Circle & Ceremony (Prayer and Smudge)

Appendix A. Gathering Feedback Form

<u>**Preliminary Background Questions**</u>

How would you define your primary role or position? Other relevant background information?

How did you hear about the gathering?

Why did you attend this gathering?

What day(s) did you attend? Day 1? 2? Or both?

<u>**Key Questions**</u>

1.) What components of the gathering did you find useful valuable, or beneficial? Please explain why.

2.) What components would you change about the gathering (e.g., add to, remove from the gathering) or did you feel were less valuable? Please explain why.

3.) What are some key points you will be taking away from the gathering? Please explain.

4.) The primary purposes of the gathering were to provide an opportunity to network, discuss relevant issues, and learn from professional development speakers and attendees while creating discussion and goals around supporting Indigenous youth health programs in Alberta. Do you feel these goals were satisfied? Please Explain.

5.) Were you able to network? Did you meet anyone you will connect with in the future? Please explain.

6.) Did you benefit from speaker sessions? Please explain.

7.) What were the outcomes for you (particularly for open space discussions), and whom should the outcomes or messages be shared with to help support you?

8.) Do you feel your contributions were heard and respected? Please explain.

9.) What will be your next step in contributing to Indigenous youth health? What is one thing you will do as a result of attending the gathering?

10.) Were there topics not addressed that you would suggest for the future?

11.) What do you feel should happen next as a result of this gathering?

12.) Please share any additional feedback about the gathering. Do you feel you achieved what you attended for? Please Explain.

Appendix B. Infographic

Supporting Alberta Aboriginal Youth Health Programs: What is your role?

https://twitter.com/SAAYIN1

Follow @SAAYIN1 and Tweet your role!

Here is what to consider:

First:
What are some of the roles of sport and health programs for Aboriginal Youth?

1. Connections to Community Members
2. Perceived Overall Health Benefits
3. Cultural Revitalization

So How Do We Enhance and Increase These Opportunities?

ASK PROGRAMMERS!

15 Aboriginal Youth Health Programmers in Alberta were asked:

How have programs been created and sustained?

They generally talked about how to create a space for growth and support of programs relating to the following 7 Themes:

#1 Advocating for Youth and Programming

#2 Creating Holistic Programming with Youth

#3 Supporting Traditional Cultural Practices and Community Connections

#4 Focusing on Relationships and Building Partnerships

#5 Providing and Receiving Professional Support
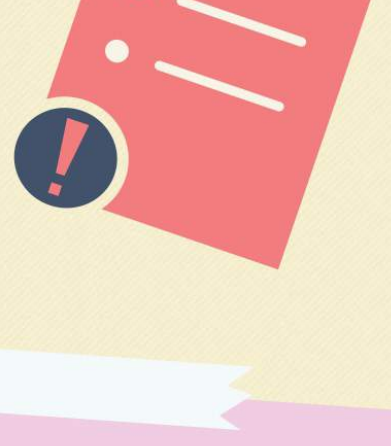
LISTEN AND LEARN

#6 Promoting and Navigating Interagency Support

#7 Identifying Program Outcomes and Evaluation Methods

So a gathering was held to explore how we can better support programmers...

Their Feedback

Facilitate Engagement
1. Plan programs with the community
2. Utilize "open spaces" for discussion
3. Participate in and create community gatherings

Support Holistic Health Programs
1. Address the basic needs of youth (food, water, shelter)
2. Focus on mental, physical, emotional, spiritual health
3. Adapt the program to the community, not vice versa
4. More multi-year or core funding

Network and Connect
1. Create opportunities to connect
2. Share stories, experiences, and resources
3. Collaborate between services and organizations

Advocate and Champion
1. Create opportunities for positive change with others
2. Find partners and offer partnership
3. Celebrate the youth

Based on the themes and feedback, what role could YOU play in promoting growth and support of Alberta aboriginal youth health programs?

Share your role by Supporting Alberta Aboriginal Youth Interagency Networking (SAAYIN) and "SAAYIN SOMETHING"

Who should be #saayinsomething?

Government Representatives

Universities and Researchers or Academics

Non-Profit and For-Profit Organizations

YOU and your communities or organizations

Anyone with skills or resources to share

How can you start SAAYIN?

1 Connect
Connect with us to hear more about the project and how to network
Angela Coppola angela.coppola1@gmail.com
Keren Tang keren.tang@gmail.com
Lisa McColl lisa.mccoll@edmonton.ca

2 Share
Share and Discuss!... the gathering report and infographic with others, and come up with an action plan!
For the report Contact Angela (info above)

3 Tweet
Tweet your 1) Name and organization, 2) Role you can play, 3) And how to contact you.
Be sure to add the hashtag #saayinsomething AND Follow SAAYIN1 on Twitter to see other partners and information on future gatherings
Tweet your role Twitter Page: @SAAYIN1

4 Create
Create opportunities to bring partners and organizations together and create initiatives

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The three phases in this dissertation are interrelated and provide an example of how a CBPR approach can unfold to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. This approach can evolve from creating a research agenda to facilitating knowledge to action by promoting collaboration, and including participant voices and suggestions. The findings from this dissertation make several contributions to the Indigenous youth activity-promoting literature (e.g., McHugh et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2010). Specifically, key components of creating activity-promoting programming for Indigenous youth were identified (e.g., holistic programs, interagency support). The identification of key components adds to the current literature advocating for working with others to create programs (e.g., Schinke et al., 2010) by identifying areas to address when creating programs with others. The findings from this dissertation also emphasize the critical need to explore relationships and create networking opportunities between those involved in Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Specifically, various partners from the ecological levels of influence depicted in the Integrated Ecological Model (IEM; Lavallée & Levesque, 2013) may work together from a decolonizing or self-determined approach to support Alberta Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs and contexts. Such findings support the future use of Lavallée and Levesque's (2013) IEM to explore how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Furthermore, this conclusion provides further justification for the need for multidimensional, partnership approaches to address the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples and youth.

The dissertation findings are timely and provide detailed insights into opportunities for addressing some of the recommendations outlined in The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report (2015). The TRC report noted that sport is a means of inspiring lives and healthy communities, and participants throughout the three phases in this dissertation shared detailed

examples to further support this contention. The TRC called upon the federal government "to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples" (TRC Calls to Action, p. 10). The findings from this dissertation highlight detailed examples of how to promote and navigate interagency collaborations, which are necessary for supporting activity-promoting programming for Indigenous youth. As well, findings from the dissertation provide insight into how to address the committee's call for the inclusion of traditional cultural practices in sport.

The processes and outcomes described within the three phases of this dissertation highlight the important role of building relationships in CBPR projects. Fletcher (2003) discussed the important role of building relationships and a research agenda with Indigenous Peoples and communities, and this dissertation provides a practical example of how a CBPR project evolved from relationships with community partners and participants. In terms of project outcomes, the establishment and maintenance of relationships among community members and partnerships with organizations were identified as a key component in supporting Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs. Thus, not only is relationship-building key to building a research agenda (e.g., Fletcher, 2003), it is also key to creating and sustaining Indigenous youth activity-promoting programs, and relationship and partnership development efforts should be further explored and documented.

This project is an example of multiphase research that incorporated iKT in each phase. This integrated approach to KT was necessary to enhance the relevance of outcomes to the community, and to create opportunities for action by facilitating networking and connections.

Ranford and Warry (2013) discuss how a KT plan is important to include in a general research plan in order to mobilize results. The community should play a role in the translation plan (Hanson & Smylie, 2006), and therefore the process of KT began during the first phase by including the community members in co-creating a research question during the consultations. iKT discussions and projects continued throughout the rest of the project and were reflected upon. This documentation provided a process (e.g., consultations, interviews, and a gathering event and evaluation) and recommendations (e.g., facilitating a decolonizing space, creating opportunities for networking and engagement) for iKT practitioners who are facilitating knowledge-to-action. It is critical to plan and document processes of iKT to add to these recommendations and to inform and add insight to recommended culturally-relevant practices (e.g., Hanson & Smylie, 2006). Therefore, further CBPR should consider discussing, planning, and documenting knowledge-to-action with participants to enhance the relevance of research outcomes and to exemplify research practices that promote self-determination.

The dissertation also identifies several practices that can be included to promote safe spaces for Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Several considerations for consulting a community, sharing knowledge, and including "culturally-relevant" practices were discussed and should be further explored. Notably, findings from this CBPR also suggest the term "cultural relevance" is subjective and relevant cultural practices should not be assumed. This finding supports research on culturally-responsive programming and pedagogy (e.g., Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998; Ukpokodu, 2011) that recommends constant and iterative reflection of practices that facilitate self-determination in the research process. CBPR practitioners might consider documenting their establishment of practices that support self-

determination of participants in applied settings in order to inform the process of creating

decolonizing research practices with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

A key practice that should be further explored is OST (Owen, 1993). OST was described

by many participants in Phase Three as an important component in creating a safe space for

discussion and connection. Thus, OST may be considered a tool for facilitating a decolonizing

approach to research practices (Smith, 1999) by facilitating a self-determined space. Within the

context of this CPBR, individuals from government agencies, university, community, social

services and other organizations were able to come together and share relevant knowledge

through OST. As demonstrated in this research, OST facilitated connections and networking, and

may enhance relevance and autonomy for those participating in a community health project.

Thus, future research and evaluation of the use of OST to facilitate knowledge to action is

warranted.

The promotion of holistic health, or the balance of physical, emotional, mental, and

spiritual health, is recommended from the findings of the current project, previous research (e.g.,

Hanna, 2009), and from an IEM approach (Lavallée & Levesque, 2013). Lavallée and

Levesque's (2013) IEM provides an example of how there is an interaction between holistic

health of an individual and other relations to support sport and physical activity opportunities

from a decolonizing approach. From an interpersonal perspective, creating holistic health

programming with youth was described in Phase Two as a means of including youth who are

experts in their experiences in the development of programming. Creating holistic health

programming also involved creating opportunities for leadership and experiential learning, which

has been recommended in previous positive youth development literature (Agans et al., 2015).

There are several implications for supporting Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming

at the community level implying that community members have a role to play in supporting

activity-promoting programming that fosters holistic health and traditional knowledge learning.

The findings are not surprising given socio-ecological factors have an impact on health and

health behaviors (Loppie-Reading & Wein, 2009). This conclusion supports the use of Lavallée

& Levesque's (2013) IEM to explore how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting

programming.

Project Reflections: The Importance of Advocating for Participants

Scholars (e.g., van der Meulen, 2011) have reflected upon action research dissertation

processes and noted that their participatory research dissertation was full of challenges and

rewards that warranted consideration. van der Meulen (2011) described how her connection with

the community increased her drive to complete the project and facilitated her ability to develop a

project that led to benefits for the community and academic field. My experiences within this

dissertation are consistent with those described by van der Meulen's (2011). As well, upon

reflecting on my overall experience as a CBPR practitioner and PhD student, I recognize the

importance of advocating for participants. Schinke and colleagues (2013) suggest the role of the

"decentralized academic" in that the community voices are at the forefront of research.

Although I agree with Schinke et al. (2013), I would extend upon this role as one of an advocate

that listens to, incorporates, and applies the knowledge of participants to achieve a common goal.

I firmly believe that many of the opportunities I was afforded, such as grants, connections

with provincial organizations (e.g., MPAL program, Alberta Ministry of Health), and a

multiphase CBPR project, would not be possible without the constant communication I had with

community members and organizations. Not only did I communicate with them, but I also

applied their recommendations and identified needs to the project. As described in Phase Two by

a participant, sometimes community members are asked for advice (e.g., from the government) but nothing is applied to programs or policies. This is problematic and can hinder the relationships between the different "ecological leverage points" described by Lavallée and Levesque (2013). Thus, it is important to recognize that the role of an advocate is to listen and be present, as well as combine and include the recommendations of participants to enhance the relevance of a project and to address the needs of participants regarding the health initiative.

My personal reflections on this CBPR project likely influenced by my belief that many people and organizations are able to play a role in supporting Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. Creating spaces for growth and support of those involved in programming might be done through discussion, networking, and training. However, it may first involve asking, "what is our role, or my role?" regardless of what you do or who you represent. To address such questions, it may be beneficial to also create a network or space for networking where programmers can access partners, such as community members and organizations, representatives from government, universities, and non-profit organizations. The partners could explicate what they offer, what they need, what their roles are, and how they can support programs. In terms of programmers' needs, opportunities to provide professional and social support to programmers were identified. Networking and agency mapping were suggested as a next step for supporting Alberta Indigenous youth programs. Creating community gatherings in which the attendees have a chance to voice their questions receive feedback, concrete ideas, and strategies for moving forward together and individually were also suggested. The TRC report (2015) indicated that support from the government is needed to bring about more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in Canada to flourish in sport and to lead healthy lives. Thus, creating and documenting opportunities for support and relationships would be a reasonable next step in

contributing to quality community scholarship (Schinke et al., 2013). For instance, a case study of the development of community and government partnerships would be beneficial. Researchers could use the IEM (Lavallée & Levesque, 2013) to identify appropriate participants' or partners to interview or work with in a research project.

Concluding Remarks

Findings from this dissertation explored how to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. This dissertation highlighted the importance of building relationships as well as interagency partnerships, and networking to support programs. Thus, partners from different ecological levels of influence may work together from a decolonizing or self-determined approach to support Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming. The project provided recommendations for building relationships, creating partnerships, and supporting Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming, such as considering cultural practices, creating holistic programming with youth, and identifying program outcomes. Moving forward, it is recommended that programming partners adopt CBPR approaches to relationship-building that facilitate knowledge-to-action and networking among programmers, their interagency partners, and program participants. Furthermore, based on the dissertation, I would recommend participants' voices be highlighted throughout the project and their perspectives of cultural practices and knowledge translation be incorporated. Finally, given the overwhelming emphasis on holistic health, a holistic approach to Indigenous youth activity-promoting programming should be welcomed.

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