The Moccasin Project: Understanding a Sense of Place Through Indigenous Art making and Storytelling

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The Moccasin Project: Understanding a Sense of Place Through Indigenous Art making and Storytelling

A DISSERTATION
Submitted by

Colleen ‘Co’ M. Carew

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Lesley University
November 2018
Dissertation Approval Form

Lesley University
Graduate School of Arts & Social Sciences
Ph.D. in Expressive Therapies Program

Dissertation Approval Form

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In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

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I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this arts-based, and Indigenous research study was to explore how Native Americans understand ‘place-based imagery’ through an Indigenous art making and storytelling experience to illuminate perspectives and experiences of a ‘sense of place’. Storywork, an Indigenous research method directed the culturally grounded research project. The Native American moccasin was the symbolic cultural catalyst used to create a multimedia art piece to express and reflect traditional cultural knowledge rooted within this symbol. Native Americans representing five federally recognized tribes participated in the study. As a result of a pilot study, a definition of place-based imagery was developed. Place-based imagery is making or creating meaning of symbols, shapes, colors and designs, related to P-People, L-Land, A-Ancestry, C-Culture, E-Experiences that may foster, awaken and/or deepen one’s connection and understanding of self and a sense of place.

The research findings were examined and derived using an Indigenous paradigm. A culturally based understanding of a ‘sense of place’ was developed from the stories and imagery. Perspectives relating to unwavering support, interconnection of culture and land, intergenerational knowledge transfer, deepened cultural knowledge, balance, and an understanding of a felt sense of place, emerged as a result of the moccasin making and storytelling experience. Secondly, an approach was developed using ‘response art’ as a technique that may be used to mitigate secondary trauma. The study showed that Expressive Arts is an effective intervention used with Native Americans to inspire strength based cultural stories and images that encouraged self-understanding.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The purpose of this arts-based (ABR) research study was to explore how Native Americans understand ‘place-based imagery’ through an Indigenous art making and storytelling experience. The research project has attempted to refine the definition of place-based imagery, which was developed in an arts based pilot study (Carew, 2016). The stories and cultural images elicited from 11 students and alumni from Salish Kootenai College were data used to examine a connection to community, family, culture, ancestry, identity, and geographic location. The Native American moccasin was the cultural object used to create a multimedia art piece used as a catalyst to express and reflect traditional cultural knowledge rooted within this cultural symbol.

My personal exploration and examination with art-making and the art works created during the four years of my doctoral studies, encouraged the direction of this Indigenous research and arts-based study. I used the Native American shawl as a cultural symbol to frame the discussion of ‘Indigenous Storywork’ (J. Archibald, 2008) the Indigenous research methodology used in this dissertation.

The underpinning hunch that directed the study was that through an Indigenous art making and storytelling experience, ‘place based imagery’ could act as a catalyst for one to remember, recover, deepen or reconnect to cultural identity. In addition there was an assumption based on the literature review that understanding oneself through a cultural lens may potentially assist in the healing process, moving from past traumas and strengthen an overall sense of well-being (Allen, Mohatt, Beeher, & Rowe, 2014; Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008; Kenny, 1998). Moreover, it was hoped that traditional
cultural knowledge “elder, ethnic, and local knowledge” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 41) could be elicited and expressed through stories and imagery.

The findings of the 2016 pilot study (Carew, 2016) exemplified the initial definition of place-based imagery. Five themes emerged and a mnemonic was developed to understand the construct, PLACE- P-people, L-land, A-ancestry, C-culture, and E-experience (Carew, 2016). It was hoped that the current study would help refine the initial definition of ‘place-based imagery’ and its’ impact on understanding a sense of place. While ‘place based imagery’ is yet to be defined in the literature, the concept of ‘place’ has been acknowledged as an important aspect in psychological well-being. For example, an understanding of ‘place’ is positioned within the dialogue of Native American resiliency theory and psychological wellbeing (Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry & Allen, 2011). According to Mohatt et al., (2011) psychological well-being is a “holistic sense of connectedness of the individual, family, community and the natural environment” (p. 444). Given these factors, the research questions that were developed are listed below.

**Guiding Questions**

1. How does Indigenous art-making and stories cultivate an understanding of a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’?

2. How does a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’ and stories lead one to remember, restore or reconnect with one’s cultural knowledge and to oneself?

pedagogy of place (Greenwood, 2013) were the cornerstones of this research project. This dissertation has been developed and therefore written following the tenants of these methodologies.

**Researchers Positionality**

Numerous Indigenous authors (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Archibald, 2008; Brandt, 2008; Cajete, 1999) reinforced the importance of the researcher examining their own rationale and interest for conducting research in Indigenous communities. According to Lambert, the ‘place’ in which one conducts the study is also where one “draws their passion and inspiration from” (personal communication, December 9, 2016). Smith (1999) encourages the researcher to examine the “cultural, socio, political, and economic” (p. 117) aspects of the ‘place’ where the study will be conducted and reflect upon one’s “positionality” (p. 118) as a researcher in relation to the research participants and community.

My personal lived experience has brought me to this study of ‘placed-based imagery’ and ‘place’. This dissertation illustrates my personal cultural story and self-discovery uncovered through making meaning of the imagery that emerged during art-making experiences, required in several of the doctoral courses. During the first year of my doctoral study, I began to feel the challenge to thoughtfully incorporate my cultural knowledge throughout the doctoral courses. Particular stories from my Native American grandmother echoed in my mind as I reflected and created art in the expressive art therapy courses, thus, her voice and cultural stories have guided this research journey. I recall one poignant memory when she said, “My dear, you are here because of the ones who have come before you. You are loved so deeply by your parents, uncles, aunties and
grandparents” (personal communication, M. Coria, 1978). My grandmother reminded me of our strong, resilient ancestors, and that I am alive today and have benefited from the accomplishments and the lives of my aunts, uncles, mother, father and all of my relations. I often hear the words and stories of my grandmother, and mother, which deepens my sense of gratitude to my relations, the Mescalero Apache peoples, who have survived the colonization process and have lived well. This strong memory has remained with me and made me want to better understand how others live well and how one’s sense of place can contribute to healing and well-being.

Figure 1. Standing on the Shoulders of My Ancestors. Watercolor & acrylic, on paper 8.5 x11 in. Artist: Co Carew

I created this piece of artwork in 2016 as part of my pilot study to articulate my self-location. The image of the horse is made from a photocopy of the Indian enrollment paper from the Mescalero tribe. Each tribe establishes membership according to their constitution and maintains a record of members who are enrolled in the tribe (Juneau, 2001). I created artwork from a piece of enrollment paper that dated back to 1898. The names on the paper reflect my great, great, grandmothers, name which also reflects my mother’s name. The decorated horse symbolizes the continuation of the steps of the
research journey. The horse is traveling away from the East and into the West where a new day begins again in the East. The silver and gold metallic circles near the horses’ head, symbolizes the unknown. The small circles on the left side of the paper are my painted fingerprints. An image of the corn stalk is represented on the right side of the picture, symbolizing the ceremonial use of this plant. Abstract images of a tree and mountains in the background illustrate the Montana landscape which offers me a life where I can be close to nature and connected to myself.

As a way of introduction, and to emphasize my connection to ancestry and place, I am the great, great, granddaughter of Panteleon, known as “eyes of the panther” (American Indian name); I am the great, granddaughter of Juana Toché; I am the granddaughter of Margarita, Silva Coria; I am the daughter of Ruth Coria Arroyo Carew; I am the sister to Micaela Coria Carew, Bill Scott Carew, and Cynthia Carew; I am the mother to Mesa Spring Starkey and Aja Skye Starkey. We are all descendants of the Mescalero tribe. My father, William Lamont Carew has nourished a love for learning, and encouraged his children and grandchildren to obtain an education. I am embraced by my loving husband, Bill Starkey, as I lose and then find my way during this doctoral journey. I am, and have been embraced by many friends from the Flathead Indian Reservation who have shared their culture, values and beliefs, much of which I adopted during the 30 years I have lived on their aboriginal land. My mentors, Dr. Lori Lambert, Emily Salois and Corky Clairmont, have guided me on this research path. Because of my ancestors and their promise to culture, family and to the creator, I am blessed with life.
Defining Place-Based Imagery

A working definition of ‘place-based imagery’ was developed in a pilot study that I conducted (Carew, 2016). Findings included six themes; (1) ‘Place’ is where I am nourished and renewed, (2) ‘Place’ means having a sense of ancestry, (3) ‘Place’ means cherishing the next generation, (4) ‘Place’ holds memories of the past and future dreams, (5) ‘Place’ is sacred, and (6) ‘Place’ means knowing a particular landscape. In the pilot study a mnemonic was developed to understand, PLACE (i.e., People; Land; Ancestry; Culture; Experience). The mnemonic was also used in this study and a definition was developed. Place-based imagery is making or creating meaning of symbols, shapes, colors and designs, related to P-People, L-Land, A-Ancestry, C-Culture, E-Experiences that may foster, awaken and/or deepen one’s connection and understanding of self and a sense of place.

Similar to the results of the pilot study, described above, Deloria Jr. and Wildcat (2001) described place as “one’s relationship of things to each other” (p. 23). Deloria Jr. (2001) stated that knowledge and understanding comes from our relatives, or “beings we have relationship with and depend on in order to live” (p. 23). Wildcat emphasized that power is generative and is transmitted through the relationships one has in this world. Moreover, one’s worldview has deep roots in tribal traditions. He reminds us of the linkages and ancestry we carry as he expressed, “We live among relatives” (Wildcat, 2017, September). This was also reflected in my grandmother’s words to me, “You are here because of the one’s that have come before you” (personal communication, M. Coria, 1978). I began to understand and appreciate how the obstacles my relatives overcame made my personal journey easier. My grandmother referred to the animals,
plants and spirits as our relations. Prior research has indicated that a “sense of connectedness to one self, family, community and the natural environment (Mohatt et al. 2013, p. 452) may act as a protective factor in regards to substance abuse, and suicide which are prevalent in Native American communities (Allen, Mohatt, Beeher, & Rowe, 2014; Mohatt et al. 2013).

**Description of the Native American Moccasin, the Cultural Symbol**

*Figure 2. The Paper Moccasin; the Cultural Symbol. Three-dimensional, paper moccasin. 9 x 12 in. canvas board. Artist, Co Carew*

In the pilot and this dissertation study, a moccasin, the traditional footwear worn by Native Americans was the cultural symbol used as a framework to illuminate the research participants’ lived experience and relationship to their community, family, culture, ancestry, identity, and geographic location. Traditionally, moccasins are crafted from elk, deer, caribou and buffalo hides. Historically, the materials and construction of the moccasin was designed for use in one’s respective environment. For example, an elk hide was used for the sole of a moccasin used in the Southwest because the land has sharp rocks and spiked plants. A deer hide is often used for a traditionally constructed
plains moccasin. The sole is soft due to the soft nature of the earth in this region. The moccasin also symbolizes “ties to our native world, our ancestors. It ties us to the animals that gave its life for us. It ties us to the land” (personal communication, October 24th, Corky Clairmont). To me, the moccasin reflects the steps of life, moving forward with intention, with the creator by one’s side.

Research participants in both the pilot and dissertation research study crafted a moccasin from paper and decorated it with collaged colors, shapes, designs, symbols and images. Cultural stories and imagery, elicited through the art making process, was data used to understand themselves in relation to their cultural knowledge and “ancestral way of knowing” (Kovach 2009, p. 94). Art making was used as a way to encourage conversations, group story sharing to capture an authentic expression of the participant’s embedded cultural knowledge through imagery. McNiff, (2014) suggests that “art-making as a primary mode of enquiry by the researcher” (p. 259) is a valid research method and allows the research participant to communicate with imagination and imagery. Carolyn Kenny (1998) a music therapist and Indigenous scholar suggested that “the sense of art is an important aspect of our experience, a sense that can help us to survive and thrive” (p. 1) as aboriginal peoples.

The Research

This dissertation study was designed to follow cultural protocols, and community interests and needs, which is congruent with tenants of Indigenous research methodology (Chilisa, 2012; Kenny, Faries, Fiske, & Voyageur, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2001) and ABR methods (McNiff, 2013) framed the research design. Additionally, a critical pedagogy of ‘place’ (Greenwood, 2013) influenced the
researchers understanding of a sense of place. The study examined the following: (a) the use of the mnemonic ‘PLACE’ (People; Land; Ancestry; Culture; Experiences), as a rubric to examine participants’ place-based imagery (i.e., images, symbols, shapes, colors and designs); (b) the usefulness of ‘place-based imagery’ as a catalyst for participants’ to remember, restore or reconnect to themselves and cultural knowledge, shared through storytelling (c) the use of expressive arts to foster healing and wellness in Native American communities.

**Rationale: Health Disparities in Indian Country**

Montana’s governor, Steve Bullock, signed an executive order to establish a state office of American Indian Health to research and develop a plan to mitigate health care disparities in Indian country (Mt. Exec. Order No. 06-20150, 2015). The executive order stated that the “average life span for Native Americans in Montana is 20 years shorter than non-Indians” (p. 1), and that Native Americans suffer from higher rates of cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory illness at higher rates than non-natives. According to the results from the 2014 report, National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) substances were used at a higher rate by American Indians and Alaska Native (AI/AN) compared to non-Natives, ages 12 to 17 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). The data showed that AI/AN had greater cigarette use 16.8% versus 10.2%, were more likely to have used marijuana, 13.8% versus 6.9%, and non-medical use of prescription type drugs were higher, 6.1% versus 3.3 %; while alcohol use was 17.5% versus 13.5% compared to the population at large. According to a 2016 report, Suicide in Montana, suicide rates among Native Americans aged 15-34, was 2.5 times higher than the national average for that age group (DPHHS, 2016). Rates of
suicide among American Indian males 15 to 19 years old were also 2.5 times higher than non-native males the same age, 32.2% versus 12.6%. In the 2011, Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 6.5% non-Native students, versus 11.9 % Native students, grades 9 thru 12, reported that they had attempted suicide one or more times during 12 months before taking the survey (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2011). Much of the disharmony currently occurring in Indian country can be linked to the Federal Indian policies that resulted in the loss of Native language, customs and cultural practices, and loss of aboriginal land (Brayboy, 2005). Thus, finding ways to mitigate these high health disparities in Indian country is vitally important to the wellbeing of Native Americans.

A Critical Pedagogy of Place

Knowing oneself through the multiple dimensions of place, is a critical facet to understanding oneself and may act as a protective factor in the light of high health care disparities among Native Americans and their communities (Allen, Mohatt, Beehler, & Rowe, 2014). Therefore, making meaning of a sense of place through an Indigenous lens, may promote a discovery of one’s authentic self. Cajete (2004) suggested that one’s relationship to the environment, to myth and to traditional arts, establishes a foundation for one to discover one’s “trueface, (character, identity and potential) one’s heart (soul, creative self, true passion), and one’s foundation in discovery to one’s work, vocation, all part of the circle of life” (p. 23).

Greenwood, (2013) suggests that a critical pedagogy of place asks that we examine our relationship to ‘place’ in order to understand ourselves at a deeper level. This approach may respond to the colonization process that silenced the voices and stories of Indigenous peoples (Chilisa 2012; Lambert, 2014; Smith, 1999). Greenwood
urges educators to take action in response to the colonization process and engage in the following critical inquiry:

What needs to be restored, maintained, transformed, or remembered is, therefore, as much a project of self-discovery as it is one of discovery of place. The point of a critical, place conscious education is to discover/recover/reconstruct self in relation to place (p. 99).

‘Storywork’, Understood Through Artistic Expression

Art making and meaning making of imagery was a requirement in the Expressive Arts Therapy Doctoral Program curriculum at Lesley University. As I reviewed journals, papers and artwork, the Native American fancy shawl illustrated in watercolor, metal, in a performance piece, with written interpretations were incorporated into projects completed to fulfill course requirements. The artwork that I created of the Native American shawl and my interpretation steered me to the concept of ‘Storywork’ an Indigenous research methodology (J. Archibald, 2008). The reflective art-based practice deepened my understanding of this Indigenous research methodology. In alignment with McNiff’s (2014) theory of art-based studies, artistic enquiry “generates unexpected and unplanned insights and outcomes arguably in sync with life in the world” (p. 3). The following discusses storywork principles reflected through imagery and my personal story.

I used images of the Native American shawl as my cultural symbol to illustrate an understanding of the storywork research principles. The shawl, an important representation of my cultural heritage and community connections, symbolizes respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, wholism, interrelatedness and synergy, the seven
principles of Indigenous storywork (J. Archibald, 2008.) These principles form the basis of the conceptual framework that frames this research project. The two illustrations below demonstrate the artwork I created during the Arts Apprentice course that I completed at Lesley University as part of my doctoral study.

Figure 3. The Embrace of My Grandmother’s Love. Watercolor on paper, 10 x 10 in. Artist, Co Carew

In 1983, I visited the Flathead Indian reservation to attend a powwow, a Native American cultural celebration. I was greeted by the sounds of a Native American drum, colorful ribbons on shawls, draped over shoulders, swishing to the drum beat while children, young and old women, danced to the spirited rhythm. A beautiful older woman, Joan Arlee, invited me to dance with the circle of women. After telling her that I didn’t know the steps to the fancy shawl dance, she said, “You know how to dance, you are a dancer.” She said, “Follow me.” She held out her hand, took off her shawl and draped it around my shoulders. For over 20 years, Joan Arlee, shared the beauty of friendship and cultural, spiritual practices. Even though she is now deceased, she continues to support me in my life. Three years ago, she visited her niece in a dream. Joan said to her niece, “Hey, that shawl that you made does not belong to you, the shawl belongs to Co.”
Salisha, her niece spoke to her uncle, a Salish spiritual leader, and told him about the dream. Her uncle said, “Co is going on a journey and she should take the shawl with her.” Salisha told me about the dream and gifted me with a beautiful maroon shawl, decorated with long ribbon fringes. Two days later, I received a letter from Lesley University, stating that I had been accepted into the Doctoral Program in Expressive Arts Therapy. The photo below shows the fancy shawl that was gifted to me by Salisha OldBull.

![Image of the fancy shawl](image)

*Figure 4. The Gift of the Fancy Shawl in 2014. Artist, Co Carew*

‘Storywork’

Indigenous storywork, and Indigenous research methodology, was developed by J. Archibald while she listened to her Cree Native American elders (J. Archibald, 2008). Lessons about ecological cultural knowledge, culture, values, beliefs and the centrality of relationships were embedded in the stories. Lambert (2014) discussed that one’s self-location prompts the researcher to examine their relationship to the community, and “how the informants or participants and the researcher have formed a relationship with the story, or how each individual interprets the story” (Lambert, 2014, p. 18). Cultural protocols and practices were also shared during the storytelling process. The following
discusses how I have joined and contextualized ABR and Indigenous research methodology into this study, illustrated with my artwork.

*Figure 5.* Native American Shawl; Pre Doctoral Studies. 8 x 10 in. Color pencil.

**Synergy**

The ribbons on the shawl, shown above, represent the relationship between the research question, research paradigm, methodology, researcher and most importantly my responsibility to the participants and the community. Like the ribbons tied to the end of the shawl, I feel connected to the people, to the land and have a sense of “relational accountability” (Wilson, 2008, p.99). J. Archibald (2008) discussed synergy which “grows out of the actions of interrelatedness and synergy is formed by the storyteller, the story, the listener and the context in which the story is used” (p. 6). Chilisia (2014)
discussed the importance of “relational ontology” (p. 115) which directs the researcher to foster community-based relationships and include a knowledgeable community member in the research design.

In many Indigenous communities, cultural/artistic advisor who are part of the community are recruited to assist the researcher to build relationships among the researcher, research participants and the community (Chilisa, 2012). The cultural/artistic who agreed to be part of this study was Corky Clairmont, an elder from the Salish community, and an artist. He provided instruction about cultural protocols, answered questions related to cultural sensitivity issues and instructed the culturally based art experience. He also assisted in the formation of the analysis process. Corky will be referred to as the cultural/artistic advisor throughout this document.

Because this dissertation research project was on the Salish and Kootenai Indian reservation, the tribal lands of the Salish, Kooteani and Pend d'Oreille peoples, their cultural protocols were practiced throughout the research process. Participants were alumni or former students from Salish Kootenai College. The president of Salish Kooteani College welcomed the participants. In accordance with Native American cultural protocols, Corky, offered a prayer. Food and beverages were served. The day before the research project occurred, the room, and the art materials were blessed. I dedicated a prayer, asking for guidance. I conducted a traditional smudging ceremony, to bless the room, art materials and to give thanks to the creator for the current day and to be guided and blessed during the experience. I gave thanks to creator for the opportunity to work with Native peoples using art making, meaning making of the symbols, shapes, colors and designs, expressed through storytelling.
Respect, Responsibility

J. Archibald (2015) recognized that research in Indigenous communities has not been conducted respectfully. Smith (1999) stated that disrespectful research practices have occurred in Indigenous communities because the framework has been led “through imperial eyes” (p. 68). Conducting research using Indigenous and ABR methods allows for an authentic representation of the lived experience of participants, thus research creation and knowledge creation respects one’s cultural knowledge (Wilson, 2008).

Fundamental to this understanding of accountability, is that the research has to demonstrate “respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action) at every level of the research process” (Wilson, 2008, p. 99). The experience with the researcher and the participants is now part of the community’s experience and this experience has the potential to define individuals and the community. Foundational to the research process is the reflective query to oneself as the researcher, “who am I and who am I accountable to” (Shawn Wilson, personal communication, October 22, 2016). Wilson suggests that one ought to look at one’s environment, and critically question whether or not the researcher, is fulfilling one’s role in one’s community.

The ABR has been an interest to many community members, therefore, I have been asked to lead art making at the tribal home sites, cultural centers, powwow grounds and at other community colleges. I have also conducted one-day workshops and have received approval from accrediting boards to offer one-day course for academic credit. These courses have been integrated into the Social Work curriculums at both Salish Kootenai and Blackfeet Community Colleges.

Reciprocity
The shawl represents a reciprocal relationship between the person who gifts the shawl; often to recognize a birth, graduation, special event, or an accomplishment. As the receiver, I understand the specialness of the shawl and receive it and take care of it with reverence. Similarly, storywork emphasizes respect to the storyteller, the story and the listener, which becomes a reciprocal process. Also, the research becomes a story related to the community in an understandable manner (Lambert, 2014). Like the shawl, the story is a gift and the information sharing is a reciprocal process.

**Interrelatedness-(Relationality)**

Wilson (2001) described the importance of examining one’s relationships, from an Indigenous perspective in terms of a relational understanding to the land, to one’s ancestors and “future generations who have originated in and have returned to the land” (p. 91). He defined this concept as the relationship one has with the (a) environment/land (b) people (c) cosmos and (d) ideas or “relationality” (p. 80). Wilson (2008) further emphasized the importance of the community and ‘relational accountability’ in the research process. Knowledge is gained with the support of the community, through story telling. Thus cultural knowledge, as transmitted through storytelling is a gift that is owned by the community. Respecting the storyteller and the interpretation is critical to nurturing and valuing the relationship between the storyteller, story and the lessons learned from the story. Brayboy, (2005) illustrates this understanding of the interrelatedness between the story and relationships.

Hearing the story means having a relationship with the story and the teller, and knowing that there is value to the story. The stories are the guardians of
accumulated knowledge within communities: …for many Indigenous people, stories serve as the survival of our communities” (p. 427).

Relationality, was discussed by Kovach (2009) as she expressed this concept in regards to research. Indigenous research methodologies share two “interrelated characteristics with other qualitative approaches (e.g., feminist methodologies and appreciative inquiry” (p. 32). These qualitative approaches focus on the positive, identifying inner strengths, dreams, and hopes. This approach has the potential to reclaim cultural stories of a community to create awareness, fuel transformation and change in positive ways through co-creation (Cooperrider, 2010). According to Cooperrider, the research question must foster (a) Focused inquiry-based topics (b) an allowance of the full voice to emerge through dialogue and conversations (c) use of storytelling, image and metaphor (d) unconditional positive regard (e) “encourage a collective vision of the future” (p. 9).

**Wholism, Reverance**

Indigenous peoples view the world in a holistic way, encompassing culture, spirituality, Native knowledge, ceremonies, language, and a transference of knowledge through oral traditions (Kovach 2010). Cultural knowledge relates to the stories, geography, culture, language, and history of a place (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). How the researcher shares the knowledge or findings in collaboration with research participants is as important as the research project. An advisory team, called “Qe qs ʔamncuti” which is a Salish word meaning “Coming Together” was formed in 2014 to guide a separate research project. The same advisory group agreed to help with this dissertation study and consisted of Native American elders, and faculty members from Blackfeet and the Salish
Kootenai College. The elders who are Salish, Kootenai and Blackfeet advised and instructed me on cultural protocols and were available to guide and respond to issues related to culturally sensitive materials. The advisory group helped guide and holistic approach of the entire project, from design, to analysis. One of the elders stated “We are happy to be represented with these images and stories, instead of what typically is shown throughout the country” (Unnamed Elder, personal communication, November 4, 2017).

Figure 6. Art is Ceremony (View 1). Mixed media on canvas 9 x 12 in. Artist: Co Carew
Art Is Ceremony: Personal Epistemology Revealed Through Imagery

The piece of artwork illustrated in Figure 6, was created while I instructed the Indigenous art making experience for this research project. I thought it would be helpful for the participants to see me create art alongside of them. I continued to add symbols, colors, shapes, designs, photos and found objects to the artwork throughout the duration of this art-based, Indigenous study. As I reflected on this piece, I became aware of the stories and traditions shared by my grandmother as I saw her use her sewing and medicine making skills to raise her five children. She was very proud to say that all five of her children lived with her, graduated from high school and learned English. The art-making experience helped me to ground myself to my cultural knowledge and to myself. The following is an artist statement I developed for this piece of work.

I know myself as an Apache, Scottish, Irish woman because of the contributions of my grandmother and the women who came before me. This moccasin has imagery that honors my grandmother and the contributions of her way of being. My grandmother lived a full rich life, and provided for her family with the threads and weave of fabrics sewed to mend, reworked to make beautiful garments. The pink large flower continues to show-up in my artwork. Recently, my mother told me that the familiar image was found on the large flour sacks that she reconstructed for dresses, table clothes, and kitchen towels. The images of corn represent the sacred use of this plant in our ceremonies and the grain that fed all of my relatives. A black and white photograph of my grandmother, mother, my first-born daughter, and myself was collaged onto the tongue of the moccasin. I included fabric, buttons, thread and large pink flowers transferred onto beautiful silk fabric to illustrate the commonly used materials that my grandmother used.
She made threads and fabric come alive in her small corner of her living room, referred to as her “workshop.” She would arrange the materials on a handmade wooden table, say a prayer, think good thoughts of the person the article was created for, and remember that creator was the perfection found in this world. This artwork also reflected the holistic nature of the research process, which encouraged personal self-discovery. Discussion of this artwork and my personal reflection will be explained throughout this document.

This dissertation study was predicated on an Indigenous worldview, particularly as it relates to Indigenous research protocols as outlined above. The research question and design for the study emerged from my personal art-based reflections as well as the research process and findings that emerged from the pilot study. This process brought me back to my learning process modeled by my Native American grandmother as she created art. She had a process and cultural protocols that were used while she created and demonstrated her art-making practices. As I reflected on her practices and process, she demonstrated and embodied grounding oneself to a sense of place.
CHAPTER 2
Literature Review

“You can learn from the land, just listen” (Narcisse Blood, Ki’naksapo’p personal communication November 9, 2014).

The Land, a Sense of Place and Art as a Way to Heal

A sense of place is positioned within the dialogue of resiliency and psychological well-being and may act as a protective factor in the face of high health disparities found in Indian country (Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry & Allen, 2011). Native Americans have been historically affected by forced colonization imposed by federal Indian policies that have contributed to the destruction of the culture. Tribal communities have been working to revitalize Indigenous language, as well as cultural and spiritual practices. A brief chronology of the colonization process of Native Americans, sense of place, and the importance of Indigenous knowledge are key topics that will be addressed throughout this literature review. This review is directed by the research question: What is the relevance of ‘place’ in relation to psychological well-being among Native Americans?

Historic Perspective, the Colonization Process

Understanding the relationship of land to Indigenous peoples is the cornerstone to understanding the importance of place as a source of bodily and spiritual nourishment, and acts as a source for grounding (Cajete, 1999). A discussion of the colonization process as it occurred in the United States and the impact on Indigenous communities is critical to this discourse. Juneau (2001) examined the colonization process of Native Americans, while documenting federal Indian policies, categorized by themes and time periods. The treaty period, prescribed policies to relocate tribes to areas sometimes
foreign to their aboriginal lands, established boundaries; in return, provisions of education and health care were promised. From 1887 to 1934 aboriginal lands of Indian tribes were extinguished and Native peoples were forcefully removed and relocated to reservations. Between 1887 and 1934, the U.S. federal government took over 90 million acres of reservation land and opened these lands to homestead settlement (Juneau, 2001).

The federal boarding school error, an important chapter in the continued relocation of Native Americans from 1879 until the early 1970s, was a continuation of colonization. Boarding schools were located both on and off the reservation. The first and most notable boarding school was the Carlisle Indian School located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Children were removed from their families and homeland in order to “assimilate Indians into mainstream culture” (American Indian relief council [AIRC], n.d. para. 18). The school, operated by the Federal Government, opened its doors in 1879 and closed in 1918. Other boarding schools, both on and off the reservation, operated until the 1970s. The removal of children from their families impacted the cultural foundation of an Indigenous way of life, and severed the transference of knowledge and way of life to future generations. The effort by Col. Richard Henry Pratt to “Kill the Indian, and save the man” (AIRC, n.d. para. 18) was holistically attempted until 1978, with the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act giving parents legal right to “deny their children’s placement in off-reservation schools” (AIRC, n.d. para. 18).

The early 1930s to 1953 is referred to as the tribal reorganization period. Most important to this time period is the 1932 authorization of the Reorganization Act by the United Stated Federal Government. The Act was passed in order to slow the process of land allotment to homesteaders and “repair the economic and spiritual rehabilitation of
the Indian race” (Juneau, 2011, p. 36). Even though forced acculturation occurred, today Native peoples continue to survive and practice their cultural and traditional practices. According to the 2010 Census Brief, a total of 2,932,248 Native and Alaskan Natives were documented that year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). The federal Indian policies that paved the path for Native peoples to assimilate culturally, to a dominant Western society, almost destroyed the culture and race. Repercussions of these policies are wholeheartedly felt in many reservation communities as well as urban areas where high numbers of Native American peoples live.

**Indigenous Well-Being**

The history of forced assimilation, violence, and the disappearance of a traditional way of life, continues to be notable as data show the adverse health disparities affecting Native Americans today (Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008). Duran, Firehammer and Gonzalez created a psychological approach that recognized this cultural destruction, and referred to it as *soul wounds*. The authors reasoned that the historical pain that has occurred in individual lives, families and in cultural communities need to be addressed in order to bring about *soul healing* (p. 289). Thus, attending to the “sociohistorical context” (p. 290) in the healing process for Indigenous peoples, can inform and provide important data to the mental health professional. Healing from *soul wounds* to *soul healing* explores and examines suffering through a cultural lens, referring to this as developmental “liberation psychology in Indian Country” (p. 290).

Even though intrusions by the federal government occurred, language, history, ancestry, traditions, values, and beliefs continue to exist for many Native Americans because of the rich transmission of cultural knowledge through oral stories, language, and
the arts (Engel, 2007). Culture can be seen as an asset to the healing process and can help repair historical trauma rooted in the colonization process (Allen, Mohatt, Beeher, & Rowe, 2014). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) discussed the importance of identifying one’s “positive individual personal traits and positive subjective experiences” (p. 1) to improve one’s quality of life.

Juneau (2001) argued that tribal nations have a distinct and unique culture, therefore interventions that reflect the culture and traditions of the people ought to be developed based on the attributes that continue to flourish within these communities. G.V. Mohatt et al., (2004) studied the lifestyle of Alaskan Natives who have lived a healthy drug and alcohol free life, to determine the cultural processes that influenced this lifestyle. This study has been informed the development of culturally based interventions. As these same researchers continued their inquiry to culturally effective culturally appropriate practices, the concept of the importance of *place* (Allen, 2011; Allen et al., 2014; G. V. Mohatt et. al., 2004; N. V. Mohatt et al., 2011) emerged for these scholars as they continued to work within this Indigenous community. Many Indigenous peoples worldwide support the idea that the threads of a traditional cultural lifeway are held within in its landscape (Cajete, 2004; Engel, 2007; Gruenewald, 2003a; Garcia, 1983).

**Indigenous Ways of Knowing**

Place is the cornerstone to understanding an Indigenous worldview (Lambert, 2014). Oral histories, origin stories, cultural knowledge, symbology, and imagery encompass an Indigenous way of knowing, or Indigenous knowledge. Brant-Castellano
Traditional knowledge, as described by Brant-Castellano (2000), is knowledge that has been handed down through generations, including origin and colonization stories. Stories about encounters with the spirit world, animals, history of the geographic landscape, which includes “battles, boundaries and treaties” (p. 23), as well as one’s ancestry, are imbedded in this discourse. Wisdom from Native elders is highly respected, and within these stories instruction of values and beliefs are imparted. The author defined *empirical knowledge* as “knowledge gained through careful observation over extended time” (2000, p. 23). She defined *revealed knowledge* as knowledge acquired through dreams, visions and intuition, acknowledging it as also a valid and important source of knowing. Maurial (1999) further defined Indigenous knowledge as “local, holistic and oral” (p. 63). Ritenburg et al. (2014) asserted that the cornerstone of Indigenous research “offers evidence of revealed, holistic, and experiential knowledge embodied in our personal and collective histories” (p. 70).

**Culture and Place Hold Meaning**

Kovach (2009) outlined standards essential to incorporate into a Native American curriculum. Essential topics include an in-depth, well developed, and researched sense of history and place. The stories from an Indigenous lens may be quite different than the stories shared or authored by non-tribal or non-Indigenous peoples. Tafoya (1997) described the essence of storytelling as a ceremony. She urged those who tell stories to “wet it with your breath. You give it life, just as when you give water to a seed it

Physical, cognitive, and emotional orientation of a people is a kind of a ‘map’ they carry in their heads and transfer from generation to generation. This map is multidimensional and reflects the spiritual as well as the mythic geography of a people (p. 46).

Garcia (1983) described having a sense of place as one’s feeling of being “tied to the earth” (p. 38) and being in a world in which one is at home. Meyer (2003) characterized the relationship between culture and place through the lens of Hawaiian epistemology, or what she termed “Hawaiian philosophy of knowledge” (p. XVII). She further described Hawaiian art practitioners as “cultural practitioners, their very lives are extensions of land and history” (p. 310). Throughout her work, she posed a quintessential question to her audience: “What are you doing to protect the landscape?” (p. 300).

Croft, an Aboriginal woman from Southwest Queensland in Australia defined the land that she is from as country. She described her country as “ancestral belonging place” (Croft, n.d. para. 1). She described Narron and Balonne rivers as “rivers of life, like an umbilical cord connecting one to land: to our laws and beliefs” (Croft, n.d. para. 1). Croft holds a doctorate in visual arts, is a researcher, and uses art as data through the creation of mud maps depicting sacred places and ancestry that records the past and present journeys of specific Australian landscape. She is a survivor of the aboriginal stolen generation, which was Australian government’s process of removing aboriginal children from their biological mothers and placing them in foster homes or institutions.
throughout the country. According to Croft “art making has helped me reclaim my identity as an Aboriginal woman and inspire others toward personal healing and transformation” (Croft, nd. Para. 1). According to Warcon and Fredericks (2009) the use of uses traditional Aboriginal design elements and art making materials derived from elements found on the land, such as clay, ochre, and oxides helps to convey her cultural story. The use of cultural symbols illustrates research data. Traditional aboriginal art products known as “mud maps are used to display and disseminate research data in aboriginal communities” (Lambert, 2014, p. 34).

Ritenburg et al. (2014) described Indigenous knowledge found within the context of Maori proverbs, specifically the relationship to and importance of land. They wrote: “He wahine, he whenua, e ngaro ai te tangata. It is women and land that provide nourishment and sustenance and without them, humanity is lost” (Ritenburg et al., 2014 p. 67). The Maori, the Indigenous peoples of New Zealand, have a strong connection to place and cultural landscape.

While living in New Zealand for a year, I quickly learned the manner in which one introduces oneself with a traditional introduction known as a Mihimihi in the Maori language. A traditional introduction has elements that speak to one’s ancestral land, one’s ancestry, tribal and family affiliation, and, lastly, one’s birth name. This practice of the Maori’s cultural protocol helps solidify the importance of land, ancestry, and self-location. Furthermore, Bishop (2008) described the importance of relationships, by honoring and legitimizing the cultural practices held by the Maori. He further asserted that “culture counts,” (p. 445) and in the research framework of Kaupapa Maori, one’s culture, ancestry and place are part of the “sense-making and knowledge generating
processes of the culture” (p. 457). Greenwood (2013) asserted that it is vital that opportunities become available for Indigenous peoples to “remember, recover or restore, change or transform” (p. 99) the stories of the past, restore and revitalize past accounts, and unlock the silenced voice to unearth and learn one’s indigenous ways of knowing.

**Indigenous Research as a Transformative Approach**

Within the Indigenous worldview, storytelling is highly regarded to transmit historic, instructional, and cultural knowledge. Indigenous researchers (Bagele, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Wilson, 2008) have argued that acknowledging and hearing the silenced voice are fundamental aims in research in Indigenous communities. Numerous authors (Archibald, 2008; Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Brandt, 2008; Cajete, 1999) reinforced the importance of grounding oneself in one’s culture and learning ancestral stories, as they have many teachings woven within their distinct syntax. Many stories held by Indigenous peoples are sacred and need to be held with respect in a way that will in turn cultivate a respectful practice that honors the family, the tribe, and the community (S. Windchief, personal communication, March 11, 2016).

Lambert (2014) developed a conceptual framework delineating specific themes important to Indigenous research methodologies. She posited that the “story and storyteller or informant are keys to knowledge” (p. 16). She used a spider web to illustrate this conceptual framework, with the shape of a heart in the center of a web, defining Indigenous as, “From a place, your place. Your heart and voice. Tribal and cultural specific. Your voice and your passion” (p. 220). She encouraged researchers working in Indigenous communities to address the following inquiry while developing and implementing their research: (a) question whether or not the community identifies
with the research agenda as an interest or need (b) community involvement and collaboration (c) question whether or not the research will empower the community to move past historical trauma to recovery.

Smith (1999) described an Indigenous research agenda that included a pathway to “heal, decolonize, transform, mobilize and recover the physical, spiritual and psychological, social collective well-being of a people” (p. 117). As the researcher continues to work within the framework of an Indigenous paradigm, relational accountability needs to be kept at the forefront as researchers demonstrate “respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action) at every level of the research process” (Wilson, 2008, p. 99). This theme was also echoed by McNiff (2011) who encouraged research students to consider their topics with the following questions: “What are you going to do? Why? How can it be of use to others?” (p. 391).

Throughout history, Indigenous peoples have been removed from their ancestral lands, their cultural lifeway has been torn apart, and much of recorded history and events do not represent the story that Indigenous people acknowledge as their own. It is vital to incorporate Indigenous epistemology rooted in a sense of place, history, and culture to introduce the research and design the approach with a holistic and respectful frame of mind.

A Pedagogy of Place

Placelessness, place attachment, and place identity have all been concepts used to describe a ‘sense of place’. One of the first authors to discuss place and its relationship to one’s human experience was Edward Relph, a humanistic geographer. Relph (1976) asserted that ‘place’ holds meaning as a result of a one’s relationship to a space on an
experiential level. He wrote, “to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place” (p. 1). He directed his inquiry to question how “places manifest themselves in our experiences or consciousness of the lived-word, and with the distinctive and essential components of place and placelessness as they are expressed in landscapes” (p. 7). Relph spoke about the same construct at a symposium in Sydney, Australia and distinguished a place as having a unique and distinct quality that separates it from another place (Relph, 2014).

The concept of place identity evolved from Relph’s (1976) original work and is understood as one’s human experience and identity that is in part due to a relationship with the geographical context of one’s surroundings and experience in the environment. It is theorized that a person’s attachment to place is a significant part of identity formation and is a contributing factor in human psychological development. Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff (1983) clarified that place identity has attributes including “ideas, feelings, attitudes, values preferences, meanings and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day to day existence of every human being” (p. 59).

Gruenewald (2003a) simplified the discussion and framed the pedagogy of place by organizing concepts into five categories, which included the perceptual, cultural, ideological, ecological, and politician dimensions of place. He simplified the framework further, asserting that an understanding of place is key to understanding the “nature of our relationships with each other and the world. Placed-based education strengthens the ties one has to others and to the landscape in which one lives” (p. 622). Gruenewald (2003b) acknowledged that historically, lands and people have been harmed due to the
colonization process. Therefore, a critical pedagogy of place aims to (a) identify, recover, and create material spaces and places that teach humans how to live well in their total environments (reinhabitation); and (b) identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places (decolonization).

A later model developed by Gruenewald (2013) extended this discourse as he defined “place-conscious inquiry and action” in relation to colonized communities. The query includes the following questions: (a) What needs to be remembered? (b) What needs to be recovered or restored? (c) What needs to be changed or transformed? (d) What needs to be created? (p. 99).

This particular inquiry seems to dovetail with the framework of Indigenous knowledge as researchers collaborate with communities to “discover, recover and reconstruct self in relation to place” (Gruenewald, 2013, p. 99). Knowing something of the history of a people in terms of their colonization story, as well as their cultural origin stories that are deeply rooted in their relationship to the land, is important to learning and perhaps forming new understandings. Smith (1999) addressed the importance of acknowledging the past to heal and move toward decolonization:

Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. 

To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of the access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis for new ways of doing things. (p. 3)

Low and Altman (1992) introduced a definition of place attachment as a person’s emotional connection to a place that is built on one’s individual or collective experiences that is “culturally shared emotional/affective meaning to a particular space or piece of
land that provides the bases for the individual’s and group’s understanding of a relation to the environment” (p. 165). This theory rests on a subjective phenomenological construct that is expressed by Hashemnezhad, Heidari, and Hoseini (2013) as the “spirit of a place” (p. 7). Place attachment relies on both emotional and cognitive processes and is embedded in a cultural milieu whereby “cultural beliefs and practices link people to place” (p. 165). This theoretical construct is important to this discussion as specific cultural aspects of one’s attachment to place or ‘sense of place’ holds a cultural significance. Fundamental to this conversation is links of place, illustrated through symbolic links, which include: (a) genealogical links (b) economic links (c) sense of loss or dislocation of community (d) narrative links (e) cosmological links through religious, spiritual, or mythological relationship, and (f) links to special cultural events. In short, place attachment is the “symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land” (Low, p. 162) among a group or individuals, giving a shared understanding of its relationship to land and people.

*Genealogical links* refer to the historic relationships that people have to the land based on family and/or community. In Native American communities the idea of ‘place’ is important because history is written within the stories that are related to the landscape. Stories related to aboriginal hunting and fishing grounds, food and medicine gathering, as well as ceremonial grounds, are referred to as Indigenous knowledge Cajete (1999). The stories of one’s ancestors are shared in relation to stories of the landscape Lambert (2014). Economic links are fostered through one’s relationship while working in a particular place or actually working the land.
Third, loss or dislocation of a community have been aspects of Low’s definition of *place attachment* and incorporates cosmology, pilgrimage, and narratives or stories of a place which originate in family or origin stories that are not written and are passed down orally from generation to generation (Low, 1992). He added *Cosmological place attachment* to this discourse referencing the “mythological or the culture’s religious and mythological conceptions of the world” (Low, 1992, p. 170) which refers to a land base, the spirit world, beliefs, origin stories, legends, myths, relations to ancestors and gods which are actually a manifestation found in the land.

Finally, Low (1992) and Cajete (2004) described the importance of cultural events and pilgrimages to *place attachment*. Low (1992) suggested that the “idea of the place and its religious, spiritual, or sociopolitical importance lingers on for years” (p. 173). An example of a Native American pilgrimage can be elucidated as tribal members from the Bitterroot Salish tribe, located in Montana’s Northwest corner, visit the ancient Medicine Tree in the Bitterroot Valley. The Medicine Tree is a beautiful pine tree where the Salish peoples and elders travel to pray and tell stories of history and the forced relocation of its people from the Bitterroot valley, located approximately 100 miles south of the current Flathead Indian reservation. The stories, which are told yearly, ground the Salish peoples and connect them to their homeland, lost to forced relocation (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2012).

**Montana’s Cultural Landscape and Relationship to Place**

On the Salish Kootenai Indian reservation, where I have worked and lived for over 30 years, genealogical and historic cultural stories and information referring to the land are steeped in the songs, ceremonies, and stories of origin and colonization. These
narratives are important as they impart a timeline of events, which often correspond to the season and the ecology. As Low (1992) asserted, “these narrative-based forms of place attachment further reinforce the genealogical aspects of attachment” (p. 168).

According to J. Archibald (2008) oral traditions “still live and the written tradition is growing within it” (p. 29).

As discussed earlier, Low (1992) explained how genealogical, family, and historic ties link individuals to a place, which may be tied to cultural practices. Genealogical place attachment also occurs due to loss of a place, often due to relocation, “exile, disaster, resettlement, or urban redevelopment” (p. 169). A landscape that is connected to family ties are encoded in language and cultural practices. Moreover refugees or individuals who have been exiled have a strong sense of longing to return to their homeland, thus “loss or destruction of place is as powerful an attachment as its presence” (Low, 1992, p. 169). Manifest destiny, promulgated by the Doctrine of Discover, proclaimed that “non-Christian peoples have no legal right to their land and territories, affirming the right of European nations to acquire legal title to those lands” (Montana Office of Public Instruction [OPI] 2012, p. 6). This time period is referred to as the colonization period, which occurred between 1492 and the 1800s (OPI, 2012). This same legislation allowed the Federal Government to either purchase or take lands from Indian tribal governments (Juneau, 2001).

As discussed above the aspects conveyed by Low (1992) with Salish, Kootenai and Blackfeet Native American elders, a deep sense of sadness and mourning accompanies the stories. Emily Salois, a colleague, Native American scholar, and elder, discussed how she was present during the Blackfeet tribal council meetings and listened
to conversations by Blackfeet elders who expressed their deep sorrow about the sale of Glacier National Park, which is known as the “backbone of the world, or the church” (E. Salois, personal communication, November 18th, 2015). Chief White Calf, the last Blackfeet chief, agreed to the sale of Glacier National Park because his people were starving and dying; in return the Federal Government agreed to an economic treaty agreement for repayment to the Blackfeet tribe. In 1903, Chief White Calf died in Washington D.C. while fighting for the repayment of the land to the Blackfeet Nation. To this day, the Federal Government has not honored the treaty with the Blackfeet Nation.

Even though this happened more than 100 years ago, people still have memories of elders discussing the lingering debt and hardship that pushed the decision to sell the “Backbone of the World” to the Federal Government. The memory stays fresh because emotions of sadness and remorse are tied up in the landscape that is seen from every corner of the Blackfeet reservation (OPI, 2012). In these instances, viscerally located in the narratives of the community but inadequately reflected in research studies, place links a group of people to history and emotion.

Even though relocation of a people has transpired within families and tribes, the stories of the past emerge during cultural ceremonies, wakes, funerals, and ceremonies for naming and puberty rites. Often within these origin stories, connection to the land and the cosmology are shared in a spontaneous fashion. I often come away from these ceremonies thinking, “I never knew this, or now I know who this story is about, really.” I recently learned that my aunt and mothers’ names were changed when they entered elementary school. Again name changing was part of the colonization practices that
occurred to Native American people. Names are important because they hold the lineage of a people and are a map back to a rich cultural origin. Decolonization is to unearth the silenced voice.

**A Sense of Place as a Protective Factor**

This literature review is directed by the research question: (1) How does Indigenous art-making and stories cultivate an understanding of a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’? (2) How does a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’ and stories lead one to remember, restore or reconnect with one’s cultural knowledge and to oneself? This section will outline some attempts researchers have made to understand the relationship to place, specifically as a protective factor.

Hatcher and Stubbersfield (2013) conducted a systematic review to investigate the relationship between a sense of belonging and suicide. The studies that were selected for review had to meet at least two criteria: participants had experienced suicidal ideation and the study used a measure for a sense of belonging. Over 22 databases were selected and 108 papers were reviewed, though only 16 studies ultimately met the inclusion criteria. The sample population included U.S. college students, and the studies reviewed were from the United States and Australia. The studies that were reviewed suggested that there was a relationship between a sense of belonging, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts. The studies confirmed that “people with a low sense of belonging were more likely to have suicidal thoughts or a history of suicide attempts” (p. 434).

In Hatcher and Stubbersfield’s (2013) review of the literature, an array of definitions was discovered to define a sense of belonging. Among them, the authors referenced the New Zealand Maori tribe’s definition of a sense of belonging, which is
deeply embedded in their world-view and includes “whakapapa (genealogy), whenua (land), and whakawhanaungatanga (the acknowledgement of whakapapa as the framework that connects people to one another, to generations past and future, and to the wider environment)” (p. 435). This article justifies the relevance and importance of incorporating cultural concepts to frame and define belonging.

Hill (2009) investigated the relationship between a sense of belonging and its connection to suicide. The research participants were all Native Americans, 18 years and older ($N = 453; n = 336$ women, $n = 117$ men). Participants who were ages 25-44 years (46%) represented the majority of the sample, followed by those aged 45-64 years (31%), and those who were 18-24 years (12%). Sixty-eight percent of the participants had a high school education or less, 21% had more than 4 years of college and 11% had completed college or graduate school. Data were collected about the prevalence of participation in traditional Native American cultural practices. Forty-six percent to 58% of the participants stated that they participated in powwows, feasts, giveaways, naming ceremonies, sweat lodge ceremonies and memorials. Eighty percent reported that they felt a connection to their community and life satisfaction.

Twenty percent of the participants in Hill’s (2009) study had thoughts of committing suicide while 7.8% of participants had attempted suicide in the past. Of importance, 80% of the participants reported feeling culturally connected, and there was a statistically significant relationship between a sense of belonging and suicidal ideation ($r = -0.203$, $p < .01$). The findings support that a “sense of belonging has a negative association with suicide ideation” (p. 1). Most important is that a sense of belonging was bolstered by active engagement in the community and involvement in cultural based
activities. The fact that this study selected participants from both urban and reservation settings, and that the analysis was not disaggregated according to participant’s environment is a short-coming. It would be noteworthy to see how the data differ between reservation and urban participant responses.

According to Wexler and Gone (2012) suicide among Native Americans is closely associated with “social disorganization, culture loss, and collective suffering” (p. 80). Factors that have been closely tied to well-being include family “community empowerment, connectedness, family cohesion, and cultural affinity among Native people” (p. 80). The authors suggested that suicide is often viewed as a response to psychological pain, but in the contextual framework of Native Americans it is in response to a larger psychosocial system. They theorize that suicide can be in response to social injustices, historical trauma and collective suffering due to persistent deaths in the community.

Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry, and Allen (2011) examined the concept of connectedness as a culturally based protective factor, to decrease the risk for suicide and substance abuse. Connectedness refers in this study to “interrelated welfare of the individual, one’s family, one’s community, and the natural environment” (p. 444). The authors developed a 12-item assessment instrument, the Awareness of Connectedness Scale (ACS) to assess Alaskan Natives holistic feelings of connectedness to one’s family, community, and the environment. The scale was further grouped into four separate subscales to test for validity. The participants \( N = 284 \), ages 12 to 18 years, completed the ACS online, by responding to statements that probed the interrelatedness between “self, family, community, and natural environment” (p. 446). Respondents were asked to
indicate whether or not they agreed with statements related to the concepts discussed above and a relationship of “reciprocal well-being or ill effect” (p. 446). A four factor analysis was employed to explore associations between the ACS and four subscales with 12 questions related to the subscale (a) self (b) family (c) community and (d) natural environment. Cronbach’s alpha was employed for the 12 item ACS and was calibrated at .85 for the full-scale and subscale scores. The awareness of individual consisted of 2 items (\(\alpha=.54\)), the awareness of family subscale consisted of two items (\(\alpha=.54\)) the awareness of community subscale consisted of four items (\(\alpha=.80\)), and the awareness of the natural environment consisted of four items (\(\alpha=.72\)). “Alpha coefficients for the 4-item subscales were computed and were in the conventionally acceptable range, but alphas for the 2-item subscales were lower (.54 and .61)” (p. 452).

In short, the ACS was developed to assess how one feels connected to a “web of reciprocal relationships” (p. 451). Important to this study is that the scale can be used to develop evidence-based treatment programs that are designed with tribe-specific, culturally based interventions to ensure culturally responsive outcomes. The limitation of this study is that it is not generalizable to other Native American youth, because each tribe is distinct and unique in their culture and community. It holds promise in that it measures a multidimensional construct that is in alignment with one’s Indigenous knowledge, values, and environment. Critical to this study is the inclusion of the Awareness-Natural Environment subscale to the Awareness of Connectedness Scale (ACS). The four items that were included in the ACS were: (a) feeling connected to nature, (b) respecting nature like family, (c) mistreating nature, and (d) coming from and returning to land. This study is fundamental to the importance of defining and then
understanding place through place-based imagery as described by Native Americans from various tribal groups.

Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) conducted a systematic review of the literature to define place identity, which, when examined had many nebulous and varied definitions. Proshansky (1978) clarified relevant factors of place identity and included, “those dimensions of the self that define the individual’s personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values and goals” (p. 155). The researchers categorized their findings as follows: (a) dimensions of self-extension, places are experienced cognitively, (b) environmental fit, characterized by fitting into or being part of one’s environment, having a sense of belonging (c) place self-congruity, meaning that the individual feels that the place complements the values and one’s personality, (d) emotional attachment typified by one’s “strong emotional bonds or positive affect towards places” (p. 24). They created a 10-point scale for assessing place identity.

The sample for the study by Droseltis and Vignoles (2010) included 141 adults ($n = 41$ men, $n = 100$ women), where the mean age group was 36 years and two months, ($SD = 12$ years, 8 months). The majority of participants ($n = 127$) identified as Caucasian, while the remainder identified as Hellenic Nationals. Secondly, the study examined the relationship to place, based on the correlation between one’s social and symbolic links to satisfaction of psychological needs and motives and place identification. Participants were asked to identify ten places that they felt they were linked to in some way. The responses were diverse and included planets, continents, counties or states, islands, cities geographic locations, buildings or venues, rooms or the
home environment, and historical or imaginary places. Out of the 1408 places provided, 1199 were categorized as places where participants had actually personally experienced. 464 were places where participants expected to go in the future, and 58 were imaginary. A series of multilevel confirmatory factor analysis was employed to test whether the four dimensions could be distinguished.

Important to this study is the association between satisfaction of psychological needs and social symbolic links. Secondly, delineating processes associated with place identity was constructed. Four of the six social links were robust and predictors of all three dimensions of place identity; self-extension/attachment, environmental fit and place-self congruity, was higher with those places where associations occurred due to one’s involvement in economic, narrative, spiritual and special events. In addition, both genealogical links and loss were significant predictors of self-extension/attachment, but not with the other two categories, environmental fit and place-self congruity. To review, self-extension/attachment was defined as “those places which participants experienced as part of themselves” (Droseltis & Vignoles p. 31). Environmental fit is defined as an individuals’ subjective sense of fitting into or being part of their physical environment, and place-self congruity is the way in which that place complements the values and personality of the individual. Findings supported that satisfaction of psychological needs and motives facilitated relation to place identification. Social and symbolic links also facilitated the relation to place identification. The above analysis showed that specific processes occur within the construct of place identity. One of the most important aspects of this study was the differentiation between place attachment and place identity.
The limitations of the study are that varied social environments including ‘home’ or ‘work’ environments were not included. The inquiry of participant responses in these environments could result in varied responses especially when assessing satisfaction of psychological needs and motives, and social and symbolic links. Secondly, the study assesses a limited participant group, primarily Caucasians.

Casakin and Elliot (2012) examined the relationship of place identity to cultural metaphors and how these contribute to place identity within a Mexican community, located in the Lower West side community of Chicago. Four locations were chosen because of the significance to members in the neighborhood and the high number of murals depicting Mexican images embedded with cultural metaphors. These images were the artifacts that elicited responses that were examined in the qualitative study. Two groups participated in the study: second generation Mexican immigrants \((n = 15, M_{age} = 28\text{ years}, \text{age range: } 20-45\text{ years})\) who reported having a strong sense of their culture and connection to their neighborhood and Whites, \((n = 10, M_{age} = 26\text{ years}, \text{age range: } 18-40\text{ years})\) who reported being less attached and less identified with the neighborhood. Participants were recruited through purposive and random sampling on site at one of the four locations (three Mexican restaurants and a supermarket) in a predominantly Mexican neighborhood in Chicago. The purpose of the study was to determine place identity in part due to the imagery displayed in the location.

Three restaurants and one supermarket were the locations chosen to conduct open-ended interviews because of the high number of murals found within these environments (Casakin & Elliot, 2012). Interview data were categorized using codes related to psychological needs and motives, which included nine subsets: self-esteem,
continuity, distinctiveness, self-efficacy, belongingness, meaning, aesthetics significance, control and security. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data. Themes related to place identity were used and responses were categorized according to identity principles prescribed by Vignoles et al., (2006) and Low (1992). Thematic responses of the Mexican participant group were found in all eight categories except control and security. Among the White group, distinctiveness, self-efficacy, and aesthetic satisfaction were among the themes most often coded. Despite cultural differences the aesthetic quality was described as “inspiring, attractive, full of meaning, pleasant feelings, and pride” (p. 156).

Identity principles as described by Low (1992) including social, symbolic genealogical and economic links, spiritual significance, to special events and sense of loss were variables incorporated within the study (Casakin & Elliot, 2012). The Mexican participants stated that they had strong feelings of “belongingness” (p. 159), while the White group reported that the Mexican imagery in the murals made the neighborhood appealing and therefore elevated the economic status connected to the particular neighborhood. The Mexican participants identified all but sense of loss as important to their relationship to social and symbolic links to places and place identity. The White group identified economic links as important to their relationship to social and symbolic links to places and place identity. This study was significant to researchers examining a sense of place as the imagery and qualitative data clarified place identity as defined by Low (1992). Generalizability is limited, though, because of the specific geographic location that was assessed focus of the study.
Expressive Therapies: A Healing Pathway

There is a dearth of studies that demonstrate the use and impact of art therapy in Native Americans communities. The following section synthesizes extant research that incorporates the use of culturally based art therapy techniques and examines a sense of place, sense of belonging, and suicide prevention.

Silverman, Smith, and Burns (2013) investigated the impact of a two-day arts-based symposium that aimed to encourage reflection and dialogue, and ultimately create a sense of inclusiveness, while gaining insight about suicide. The multicultural group ($N = 18$), comprised of members from the Inuit, Mohawk, Jewish, Christian, Baha’i, South Asian Canadian, Senior Citizen, and Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered and Questioning (LGBT) communities, participated in the study to explore the effectiveness of expressive arts as a way to promote suicide awareness. The data that were gathered consisted of audio-recordings, theatre, and photos of participants and the art work that they produced. The findings of the case study showed that the engagement in art making offered a non-threatening environment to explore one’s emotional state through the use of symbols and metaphors.

Themes that emerged from the qualitative data elicited through art making included safety, enjoyment, the importance of time given to reflection and dialogue, and how collaboration with the multicultural group encouraged new awareness (Silverman et al., 2013). The multicultural themes were of interest in regard to the cultural beliefs and values that shape one’s understanding of suicide. For example, the Baha’i echoed the importance of forgiveness, the South Asian group repeated themes of the importance of being happy and not being a burden to society, while the Jewish group noted both that to
commit suicide is to sin and that a ritual does not exist to honor one’s life. All participant
groups stated that the act of committing suicide and suicidal ideation was seen as taboo.
Family members who had lost a loved one due to suicide felt judged and stigmatized and
were frequently asked about their role in the suicide process, which made them feel
responsible for the death. Hiding emerged as another dominant theme in regard to one’s
feelings about and reactions to suicide across all represented cultural groups.

The specific narratives discussed by the various ethnic groups mirrored the
cultural beliefs and values found within the cultural paradigm (Silverman et al., 2013).
Second, isolation was a dominant theme that arose, and was defined as “the incapacity to
be authentic” (p. 221). Finally, the case study revealed that the predominant feeling of
isolation seemed to be broken by both witnessing other people and hearing their stories,
thus “connectivity” (p. 7) seemed to be the predominant theme that of narratives that
were collected.

A limitation of this study was that only 18 participants from eight different
communities (and only a few adolescents participated) in this study. The study could be
enhanced with the inclusion of African Canadians, Muslims, and adolescents in the
participant group. The case study, however, suggests that the use of expressive arts and
the cross cultural themes that emerged from the two-day training were a promising
approach to exploring suicide. The study is important because limited research has
focused on the effectiveness of art therapy across cultural groups.

Archibald, Dewar, Reid, and Stevens (2012) discussed the healing impact of
cultural arts, which included drum-making, beading, singing, and drumming, in fostering
well-being among First Nations people throughout Canada. Their qualitative research
focused on the various arts based interventions offered by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) between 2007 and 2009, and the benefits and challenges of these activities. Participants in 104 of the AHF funded projects received a survey, with open-ended questions inquiring about how often creative arts were incorporated into healing programs, and associated benefits and challenges. Responses of 22 mental health workers, elders, and program coordinators were coded, and themes were developed.

Arts-based activities were categorized into “creative arts and healing and creative arts in therapy” (p. 4). Program workers identified the perceived benefits as “growth in self-esteem, skill development, reduction of stress/tension, openness and creativity” (p. 9). The stated benefits in the “creative arts in therapy” category included “release of emotions/memories, initiate/support healing, self-awareness/self-knowledge, tradition healing/restore balance and shared experience” (p. 13). While there was not a clear differentiation of responses from participants as opposed to program workers, the findings nevertheless suggest that culturally appropriate arts-based activities are widely used in the healing process of Aboriginal people and have the potential to help “Aboriginal people regain their collective strength” (p. 2).

Expressive arts are thought to allow communities to give voice, through story, to heal from tragedies that impact them. Brandt (2008) asserted that community arts have the potential to cultivate four different kinds of purposes: (a) to educate and inform people about themselves and the world, (b) to inspire and mobilize individuals and groups, (c) to nurture and heal people and/or communities, and (d) to build and improve community capacity. This author described how community arts can be used as a research method. Fundamental to this process are collaboration, creative artistic
practices, critical social analysis, and commitment. A collaborative project sparks creative ideas, issues, talents and strengths and narratives from participants, which become the data to be critically analyzed to empower or mobilize the community for social action. Creating a sense of safety is important to this process as participants explore their “histories, identities, struggles, and hopes” (p. 355). The strength of a facilitator is also vital to the process as unknown factors will emerge from the collective experience. The qualitative data that is generated from the art work can be analyzed and synthesized. This sort of community participatory art-based activity may have the power to engage and elicit responses to community problems, which are often difficult to discuss. McNiff (1998) echoed the importance of creating a safe environment for research using artistic expression. Fundamental to the research purposes is a clear structure that needs to be clearly defined and implemented. He wrote, “If I am to take risks with creative expression and 'trust the process', the overall environment must generate a sense of purposefulness” (p. 147).

Mohatt et al. (2013) discussed a unique community arts intervention designed to bring awareness to and reduce the stigma of suicide. Workshops designed to facilitate storytelling and collage art making, and a final installation of a large mural and storytelling website attracted over 1,200 participants. The authors explain that the overarching goal of community art is to allow participants to talk about challenging and difficult issues and to “challenge people to think about our common humanity” (p. 200). The project had a natural flow in that images imbedded in the mural were derived from stories that were told during the storytelling workshops. An example of this was an illustration of a small child throwing a life vest into a roaring body of water. Images of
loved ones were painted on patches of a quilt that were held by images of people or their loved ones holding onto a part of the blanket.

The project described by Mohatt et al. (2014) is known as a *community recovery framework*, which recognizes both the need and importance of community healing, and that reconciliation can occur with members who have also brought harm to the community. The strength of this project was the process, which drew people together to share and explore suicide. The limitation of the community based art intervention is that a discussion of effectiveness, efficacy, or any sort of evaluation was not shared. The research project could be assessed by implementing the, Assessment of Connectedness Scale (Mohatt et al., 2011). Interviews or self-report measures could be implemented in order to evaluate the degree to which individuals felt a stronger sense of connection to self, family, community and natural environment by participating in the art experience. Awareness and community action have potential benefits and healing factors within the scope of most communities. Through community arts-based experiences, the goals are to learn from others and to establish that all people are one humanity.

Grandbois and Sanders (2009) examined the variables that bolster resiliency from a cultural perspective. They conducted a qualitative study using a traditional storytelling method to gather life stories about the supports Native American elders relied on in times of distress. Eight tribal members, five men and three women, ages 57 to 83 participated in this study. Participants reported that they drew strength from their families, relatives, tribal communities, the earth, and the “oneness they feel with all creation” (p. 572,) as well as from their legacy and the stories of “survival passed down by the ancient ones” (p. 572). In short, resiliency lies within the tapestry of the community, and is dependent
upon relationships and the lifeway and cultural landscapes of Indigenous peoples. The strength of this study is the incorporation of culturally consonant methods for gathering data. Second, the inclusion of Native American elders as research participants is invaluable as they have history and personal experience to draw from in order to authentically respond to questions about resiliency. Expressive arts therapy has been an avenue to make meaning of symbols, shapes, colors and metaphors. McNiff (2009) referenced the arts as having the potential to capture the “universal physiological and psychological qualities of human experience” (p. 104).

**Summary**

A combined understanding of pedagogy of place, place conscious inquiry, and place identity were summarized throughout this literature review. The intent of the review was to gain an understanding of the relationship of place to understand cultural identity and attachment. Second, the literature suggests the efficacy and acceptability of art-based interventions as they relate not only to Native Americans, but also to Indigenous peoples around the globe. This discourse is important as one seeks to develop interventions specific to Indigenous peoples and incorporate Indigenous knowledge as part of the solutions that these individuals and their communities already hold. These strength-based qualities need to be highlighted to draw out embodied cultural themes and integrate these elements with the expressive arts. Furthermore, historical trauma is critical to address in Indigenous communities, as doing so is pivotal to the healing process. The arts are a promising approach to healing the fractured foundations of Indigenous cultures (Archibald et.al, 2012; Croft & Fredericks, 2009;
Meyer, 2003; McNiff, 2011) in an effort to decrease health care disparities and increase well-being.

Though few academic studies exist, the findings in the literature justify the need of culturally embedded art-based interventions specific to Indigenous communities. More research regarding the acceptability and validity of art-based interventions in Native American communities is necessary. A sense of place is positioned within the dialogue of resiliency and psychological well-being. Strength based narratives encompassing cultural elements of genealogy, origin, dislocation, and cosmology may authentically be elicited through art making experiences grounded in placed based imagery. As Mohatt et al. (2011) suggested, place may act as a protective factor in the face of high health disparities found in Indian country. Critical to this conversation is the research and development of interventions that are culturally congruent with Indigenous peoples and the communities in which they live. Strategies to heal from historical trauma and measures to mitigate suicide and suicidal behavior while recovering Indigenous knowledge may be found through creativity and the beauty found in art making, art production, and the artwork of Indigenous peoples around the globe.
CHAPTER 3

Method

Overview

Art-based and Indigenous research methods were used to explore how Indigenous art making and stories might cultivate an understanding of a sense of place through ‘place based imagery’. Further, the study explored how ‘place-based imagery' and stories could lead one to remember, restore or reconnect with one’s cultural knowledge and to one’s self. The researcher found that ABR and Indigenous research methodology offered protocols and processes that could be applied to this research allowed for an authentic expression of self through the art products and stories related to the artworks. This chapter discusses the methods used in the study, demographics of the participants, procedure, and a culturally appropriate analysis process that privileged relationships.

McNiff, therapist, writer, artist and researcher, referred to ABR as making artistic expressions and art products as a primary mode of inquiry within the research process. (2013). ABR threads art expressions and practice throughout each step of the research process (Einstein, & Forinash, 2013; Leavy, 2009; McNiff, 2013). Weber (2008) stated that a major factor in ABR is the ability of images to evoke “visceral and emotional responses in ways that are memorable” (p 47). Art-based expressions offer the possibility of illuminating a “different ways of knowing” (Weber, 2008, p. 43). A common thread that art based and Indigenous research share is the emphasis on relationships (Kossak, 2013; Allen, 1995) and relevance (Kovach, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Wilson, 2001). These two aspects have directed this study whereby the researcher held herself accountable to the research participants, advisory committee, and to the community during every step of
the research process. Allen (2012) described the power of relationships in art-based inquiry as a “joint endeavor between one’s own soul and the soul of the world” (p. 14). Kossak, (2013) described important attributes such as empathy, “deep listening, a willingness to hold and give space” (p. 22), as vital elements in artistic inquiry. Lambert (2014) highlighted the importance of engaging in research that is relevant to the participants and to the community in order to help move the community forward, from historical trauma to community healing. Relevancy is an important aspect in Indigenous research methodologies as the study is place based or “tribal and cultural specific” (Lambert 2014, p. 220). The fundamental basis for research in Indigenous communities is to acknowledge and hear the silenced voice, empower the community and meet community needs (Chilisia, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Lambert, 2014; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). The following describes demographics of the participants, procedure, and a culturally appropriate analysis process that privileged relationships.

**Participants**

Students and former alumni of Salish Kootenai College (SKC) located on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Northwest Montana were invited to participate in a one-day workshop titled, “Understanding oneself through expressive arts.” The workshop was advertised via word-of-mouth and through e-mail correspondence. Eleven participants attended the workshop ranging from 23 to 60 years old. The research participants were members of the Salish, Kootenai, Pend d’Oreille, Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Blackfeet tribes. All participants were given a sketch book, oil pastels, #2 pencil, packet of acrylic paint, eraser, small ruler and a 9 x 12 in. artist canvas in order to make art after the workshop. A $25.00 gas voucher was also given to each participant.
cover the allowable travel expense to attend the workshop. The National Institute of Health (NIH) awarded monies for the supplies and travel expenses. The workshop was held in a large room in the art building at the Salish Kootenai College, a remote rural community site. Art materials including mixed media paper, acrylic paint, stencils, stamps, decorative papers, oil pastels, a variety of glues and an artist canvas, were available for participants to engage in art making. A separate table was available with a sample of art supplies for the researcher/instructor to demonstrate collage and other art techniques. Chairs and tables were set up in a semicircle for the art-making and discussion sessions.

**Demographics**

All participants in the study had taken courses or were currently enrolled in a program of academic study offered at SKC. Two participants worked as Wildlife Biologists. Three SKC alumni worked at SKC as instructors and or with student success. One faculty member had begun her first quarter in a Master of Arts at the University of Montana. Two alumni worked in mental health related fields. Of the three students, one was a senior in Wildlife and Fisheries, one was a senior in business, and the third was a senior in Life Sciences. The researcher used numbers to denote each participant instead of initials or names in order to protect anonymity. Table 1, delineates age, gender and tribal affiliation of the eleven participants.
Table 1.

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=11)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Student/Alumni</th>
<th>Tribal Affiliation</th>
<th>Degree/Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Northern Cheyenne</td>
<td>Treatment Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Life Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Blackfeet</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Student support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Salish/Crow</td>
<td>SKC Instructor/1st year Art School @ UM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Wildlife Biologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Wildlife Biologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Blackfeet</td>
<td>Non-declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Wildlife and Fisheries Science Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Blackfeet</td>
<td>Non-declared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 11</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>CSKT</td>
<td>Social Work/Salon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes (CSKT)
Informed Consent

The principal investigator completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), required by SKC’s institutional review board (IRB). The researcher also applied for and received approval from Lesley’s IRB. Corky Clairmont, worked as the cultural/artistic advisor, throughout the entirety of the study. An informed consent, and art release was signed by each participant before the start of the workshop (see Appendix A and B respectively). The consent form informed participants of the purpose, procedures, risk and or discomforts, benefits, confidentiality, and consent or right to withdraw from the study at any time. Corky Clairmont, read the consent form to participants and they were invited to ask questions regarding the study. The researcher was available to respond to questions and further discussion about the process and protocol.

Procedure

The following text describes the steps of the procedure.

1. Participants situated themselves in a semi-circle and engaged in a guided visualization. Participants were asked to quietly focus and tune in to their surroundings. They were asked to reflect upon an image of a landscape. They were asked to keep this landscape in mind and reflectively think about how the land tells them something about their ancestry, origin stories, oral stories, culture, family, community, a feeling of home, an understanding of where they came from or where they are going? They were encouraged to write or draw on a mixed media sketchpad, the words, symbols, shapes or designs that emerged from this exercise.
2. After the guided visualization, a discussion about the Native American moccasin, the traditional footwear used historically throughout North America, was described. Participants constructed a three-dimensional moccasin and decorated it with a variety of art materials which depicted images of a sense of place. Though the researcher demonstrated a Salish style moccasin, students were not limited to constructing or decorating the moccasin according to a moccasin style of their choice. The moccasin was chosen because the construction, beadwork and decorative features often reflects a family emblem or tribal affiliation. The moccasin is also a clothing article worn as part of the traditional regalia used during powwows or other tribal ceremonies. It also symbolizes the “path that one has traveled to get to one’s place today” (F. Finley, personal communication, October 9, 2015).

3. The participants were instructed to draw, paint or collage, symbols, shapes, or designs on to the paper moccasin to illustrate one’s ancestry, origin stories, oral stories, cultural identity, family, community, images of the landscape or other images depicting an understanding of where they have come from.

4. At the completion of the moccasin making experience, the artwork was shared among the participants during a group discussion, which was facilitated by the researcher.

5. Each completed decorated moccasin was photographed by the Art department Chair of Salish Kootenai College, and sent to the researcher via e-mail.

6. Schoology, an on-line learning platform, was used to display the images. Light box, a tool on Schoology offers a feature where the user can hover over each 2 x 2 in. colored photo, and the image becomes displayed over the width of the screen. A reply button at the bottom of the image assists individuals to write their thoughts in a text box.
Participants viewed the entire collection of all of the participants’ artwork and responded to their own individual artwork with a written story that explained the colors, shapes, symbols and designs they used to reflect their ‘sense of place’. The written stories and imagery were the data used to be analyzed.

7. The researcher constructed a moccasin and began decorating it alongside the participants during the one-day workshop. The moccasin was personalized with colors, shapes, symbols, and designs that depicted her sense of place. Imagery was embedded onto the artwork throughout each step of the research process. The piece was completed seven months after the one-day workshop.

8. The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor created response art, viewing each of the photographed images. Twelve different colored art pastels and a 32 x 22 in. white Lenox paper were the materials used for art-making. Art responses can be found in the analysis section of this document.

9. Eleven colored moccasins and respective themes or Sqélixw Cuuts’ (way of knowing) was printed onto a 24 x 36 in. wooden-framed canvas poster. The poster was designed using Adobe In-Design Creative Suite. The poster was displayed at an exhibition whereby the community and Qe qs ̓yamncuti (advisory committee) could view the poster with the respective findings of the study (see Appendix C). The Qe qs ̓yamncuti group also had access to individual 8.5 x 11 in. colored photos of the moccasin images and respective stories.

10. A 24 x 36 in. colored paper copy, with all 11 images and the respective themes were given to each research participant in order to member check used during a follow-up meeting.
Response Art Approach

The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor developed an approach to respond to individual, photographed images of the artwork constructed, by the research participants. The prompt that was used to guide the experience is as follows: “What are The Images Saying, As We Create Response Art?” Chalk pastels and a 32 x 22 in. Lenox paper were the art materials used to create visual art images in response to the participant’s artwork. A timer was used to keep track of the five-minute timeframe that was allotted by the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor to respond to the artwork. The following describes the step-by-step process that was implemented to further understand meaning of the participants’ artwork.

Step 1 - Using Adobe Photoshop, the researcher scaled and adjusted the light contrast to sharpen participant’s images.

Step 2 - The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor each had a colored copy photo of the participant’s artwork, as well as the supplies listed above. The participants’ imagery was viewed for several minutes; a timer was set for five minutes, and art responses were created. Artistic images were created from the viewed images; spontaneously images of varied colors and designs emerged. At the completion of the art response, the researcher and the cultural/artistic advisor discussed their experience and wrote short descriptions of their respective experiences. The images and responses are in the result section of this document.

The Development of an Analysis Process

As the researcher continued to analyze the data for over six months, she found that the original plan to employ Creswell’s (2013) qualitative analysis approach did not
truly represent the written stories and respective artworks that participants created. She realized that an Indigenous research protocol was needed to fully understand the process. The following discusses the integration of Indigenous and ABR methods and the analysis approach that was utilized to analyze the data. It was the researchers goal to clarify and make visible the multi-layered Indigenous way of knowing imbedded in text and the art images. The researcher turned to Indigenous research scholars since they have recognized oral traditions as an avenue to gain insight, and knowledge through the research process (Bishop, 2008; Kenny, 1998; Kovach, 2010; Lambert, 2014; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

Regarding Indigenous methods, Kenny (2004) writes, “stories can answer hard questions, teach behaviour, purge emotions and put order into the world” (p. 20). Kovachs’ conversational method (2010) honors an Indigenous oral tradition approach, as the story characterizes ways to “share knowledge” (p. 1). She also emphasized that the cornerstone of understanding an Indigenous paradigm is to understand Indigenous approaches are experiential in nature. Thus, learning and knowing are complex processes, “our doing is intricately related with our knowing” (p. 1). Stake (1995) advises the researcher to not solely find a method that fits the research study but to make the process explicit for future researchers, privileging “good thinking” (p. 19). It is the goal of the researcher to make explicit the process and rationale for the devised analysis process so that other researchers can replicate the method if it fits the research approach.

The researcher had initially employed narrative inquiry, a research approach that draws upon the lived experience of the research participants understood through story (Barton, 2004; Polkinghorn, 1988). This research method was employed in Australia’s
Aboriginal communities because it is considered a “relational methodology” (Barton, 2004) congruent with Indigenous research methodology. The researcher had begun to analyze the written stories using open coding, (Saldana, 2018) whereby themes and subthemes were developed. Saldana (2013) refers to this approach as “Themeing the Data” (p. 177). The researcher also intended to use Clandinin and Connely’s (2000) three-dimensional inquiry space (p. 54) whereby the stories are understood through the lens of the past, present, future and the place where one’s experience had occurred.

As the researcher analyzed the data using qualitative research practices; coding, counting the number of times words were repeated, labeling specific words into categories and subcategories, (Creswell, 2013; Barton, 2004; Polkinghorn, 1988) she found that the meaning of the stories changed when the story was synthesized into two or three words. She reviewed the analysis process of other scholars using Indigenous methods and found that they too had a similar dilemma.

In 2014, the researcher had conducted a research project whereby participants created artwork and stories about their experiences of hope. She worked with Dr. Tom Cavanaugh, a researcher using Indigenous research methods and together they worked on the analysis of this ABR project. They used the following prompt, “We need to live with the data” (personal communication, May 12, 2014), to understand the lived experiences of the participants. This meant that art images and respective stories were hung on every empty wall in the office. The researchers developed themes and sub-themes utilizing qualitative analysis methods. Four years later, the researcher reached out to Cavanaugh and he spoke about his dilemma to analyze qualitative data in a culturally appropriate manner. In short, the qualitative analysis approach directs the researcher to separate the
content into small segments or codes. He discussed that his analysis approach had evolved and is called “experiencing the data.” In short, the researchers are asked to respond to the data with a simple question; “What is the data telling us?” (T. Cavanaugh, personal communication, April 2, 2018). He also pointed to a study conducted by Indigenous scholars, Hallet et al. (2016) whereby they discussed challenges they had while employing “thematic analysis” (p. 2) as described by qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). When doing so, the overall meaning of the story seemed to get lost. The research team led their inquiry while viewing qualitative interview data. The inquiry question posed was, “What touches your heart as you listen to this person’s story?” (Hallett et al., p. 6).

The researcher was also informed by the work of Dr. Michael Munson, an Indigenous scholar. She described the difficulty she had while employing prescriptive qualitative approaches to analyze data for her 2017 dissertation study, Nkʷuwilš: Becoming One Through SqelixʷEducation (M. Munson, personal communication, March 2, 2018). She discussed that the meaning of the stories, told to her by Native American elders, were lost as they were separated from the story and storyteller during the coding and theming process. Munson (2017) developed a new approach because of a lack of published methods that specifically considers a collective analysis process. She analyzed the data from a holistic manner and used longer entries and direct quotes to represent the stories of the Salish peoples. She identified these ideas as “Key understandings, Nkʷuwilš: Becoming One Through SqelixʷEducation” (Munson, 2017, p.1).

These valuable conversations steered the researcher back to review comments from her research journal, made by the Qe qs yəmncutiuti, research advisory group. One
of the Native American elders stated, “the artwork and stories are the language of the heart” and “this project brought the participants back to themselves” (E. Salois, personal communication, November 2, 2018).

The researcher turned to Aspen McCormick, a fluent Salish language speaker and Frank Finley, a Salish cultural specialist, to translate the concept of holistic knowing from English to Salish. They both discussed the word, “Sqélixw Cuuts”, which translates to “human; person; Indian and is a combination of two words; sqeltč-meat and st'ulix-land; meat of the earth” (Pete, 2011, p. 327). The word “Cuuts” translates to “a way of doing something; one’s mannerism; one’s gift from creator” (p. 691). Finley, explained that this word denotes knowing oneself in relationship to the land, the water, the birds, one’s relatives and one’s cultural values and beliefs (F. Finley, personal communication, April 3, 2018). The Salish speakers emphasized the Salish belief that one’s way of knowing guides one’s behavior.

These discussions led the researcher to review the data through a culturally relevant lens. From the stories and images, that were created, the researcher analyzed the participants’ knowing from a holistic/collective space. Secondly, the researcher reflected on the idea that the images and stories expressed the “language of the heart” and as an Indigenous researcher, the analysis process and a discussion of the findings should respect this language of the heart. The researcher developed the following questions that were used to guide the analysis process:

1. What are the art images and narratives telling me, as they are the language of the heart?
2. What are the research participants ‘ways of knowing’, communicated with stories and imagery?

The following describes the analysis approach that emerged while reviewing 40 pages of written texts and images, making meaning of artwork and stories, using an Indigenous frame, as they are the language from the heart.

**Analysis Using an Indigenous Framework**

The decorated moccasin and their respective stories as well as the response art from the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor were the data used to understand ‘place-based imagery’ and their understanding of a sense of place. The imagery of local places depicting landscapes ancestry, culture, and various experiences illustrated powerful messages. Discussions that emerged in connection with each image helped clarify and make visible each participant’s understanding of ‘a sense of place’. Participants were asked to incorporate color, shapes, symbols and designs on their paper moccasin to illustrate their understanding of a sense of place.

The sequence presented here delineates the data analysis process used to elaborate and find a deeper meaning of the mnemonic practice developed during the pilot study, ‘Place’ (people, land, ancestry, culture, experience), (Carew, 2016). A colored copy of a high-resolution photograph of the collaged moccasin was printed on an 8.5 x 11 in., 24 lb. weight paper.

1. In order to protect confidentiality, the researcher numbered participants’ images and narratives respectively.

2. The stories written by the research participants were printed on an 8.5 x 11 in. paper. Research notes that recorded the participants’ stories about their artwork,
shared during the group discussion accompanied the written descriptions from the participants. The photographed image and written descriptions explaining the colors, shapes, symbols and designs, which illustrated a sense of place, were placed side by side in a notebook. This exemplifies the idea of “living with the data” which means that the researcher is fully engaged with the data (T. Cavanaugh, personal communication, March 1, 2018).

3. The written narratives were colored coded according to the mnemonic (a) P-people; purple, (b) L-land; green (c) A-ancestry; red (d) C-culture; orange and (e) E-experience; blue. Other ideas were considered as they emerged from the research experience.

4. All of the images and color-coded narratives were laid out on a 12-foot table in order to view the artwork as one collection.

5. The researcher reviewed the images and written stories using a cultural lens which reflected the participant’s responses, as ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ (holistic/Native way of knowing).

6. In order to member check, the researcher met with the participants and reviewed the written stories, research notes and a 24 x 36 in. paper poster, with the all of the moccasins and ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ displayed. The participants had an opportunity to add or revise their story.

Art response, the Method

The researcher created artwork that reflected imagery portrayed by the participants to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of research participants. Art therapist Bruce Moon (1997) stated that he created response art to
“deeply understand the lives he touched as an art therapist and to acknowledge the ways he [had] been touched as well” (p. 29). Creating response art was a new experience for both the researcher and cultural/artistic. The researcher searched the literature to gain insight about the process. She found that a specific step by step approach that would align with the study was not detailed in the literature. The approach that was used is described below and a discussion and images can be found in the results section of this document.

The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor developed an approach to respond to a photographed image of the artwork constructed by the research participants. The researchers viewed an 8 x 11 in. photographed image of each participant’s moccasin. Chalk pastels and a 32 x 22 in. Lenox paper were the art materials used to create visual images in response to the individual collaged images. A timer was used to keep track of a five-minute timeframe that was allotted by the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor to respond to the artwork. The following describes the step-by-step process that was implemented to return to the participants’ artwork.

The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor each had a colored copy photo of the decorated paper moccasin as well as the supplies listed above. The researchers studied the participants’ imagery for several minutes. A timer was set for five minutes, and the researchers responded artistically to the image. At the completion of the art response, the researchers discussed their experience and wrote a short description of their respective experiences. A discussion about the response art can be found in the analysis section of this document. Photos of the participants’ artwork as well as the written responses
created by the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor can be found in the results section of this document.

**Analysis of the Art Responses**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) emphasized that the analysis of narratives suggested, “An inquirer composing a research text looks for the patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes or across an individual’s experience and in the social setting” (p. 132). Arts-based research analysis does not adhere to a specific analysis practice in order to make meaning of artistic expression similar to the Indigenous approach discussed earlier in this chapter. Leavy (2015) stated that as researchers engage in the artistic process they can cultivate their aesthetic awareness, ability to “observe, reflect, and create” (p. 264). She also emphasized that participating in the creative process, researchers can foster an “artistic way of knowing” and from this perspective, researchers can “discover and represent meaningful patterns within the complex phenomena” (p. 264). Leavy discussed that including artistic responses in a research study could augment the “intimacy of relatedness between researcher and participants” (p. 264). This could result in deepening an understanding of the participant’s world and make meaning of their unique way of knowing. Leavy’s directive assisted the researcher and cultural/artistic to view the art responses and then write about the experience. Emotional feelings, visceral reactions and an overall sense of connectedness to the research project were noted. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) encourage qualitative researchers to look for “narrative threads” (p. 3) from the overall impressions that emerged from the data. The researcher and cultural/artistic advisor generated written responses after creating response art. These written descriptions were analyzed by the
researcher, looking for “narrative threads” (p. 3) to guide the inquiry. (See the researchers written responses and response art imagery in the result section of this document).
CHAPTER 4
Results

Data Sources

The sources of data that were used in this study include, (a) an Indigenous art making experience and respective descriptive stories about the imagery (b) art responses and written descriptions created by the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor and (c) field notes taken during the Qe q’amncutiuti (advisory committee) meetings. The research questions that were posed are the following: (1) How does Indigenous art-making and stories cultivate an understanding of a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’? and (2) How does a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’ and stories lead one to remember, restore or reconnect with one’s cultural knowledge and to oneself?

Analysis using an Indigenous Lens

An Indigenous framework was used to make meaning of the stories and images, in an attempt to holistically express the participants’ understandings that emerged as a result of the moccasin making art experience. The stories and images were analyzed using a cultural lens, ‘Sgélixw Cuuts’ (holistic/Native way of knowing). Nine concepts emerged which the researcher has referred to as, ‘Sgélixw Cuuts’ as a result of examining the art images and narratives. The ‘Sgélixw Cuuts’ were developed from the exact words the research participants used in order to convey and present a broader, deeper understanding.

The following illustrates the analysis process of the data from the 11 research participants. A photographed image of the collaged paper moccasin with the respective story is presented. The ‘Sgélixw Cuuts’ are numbered and written in bold font under
each of the participant’s illustration and written story. The entries were selected to progress with the mnemonic and each participant had one or more ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ presented. Stories were expressed with cultural symbols, illustrating the participant’s relationship to people, land, ancestry, culture, and experiences, highlighted with specific headings above the ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ (way of knowing). Nine ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ emerged as a result from the art-making and storytelling experience. They include the following results from PLACE (People; Land; Ancestry; Culture, Experiences) using the mnemonic practice:

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ (holistic/Native way of knowing)

People
1. I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner.

Land
2. Read the landscape. Images of place helps connect and ground oneself.
3. Culture and the land is my sense of place.
4. The land is alive, and we are its voice.

Ancestry
5. Grandmothers inter-generationally transfer knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural traditions and ground a sense of place.

Culture
6. Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture. These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.
7. Nothing is perfect. Creator is only perfect and imperfection in my artwork reminds me of my humanness.
Experiences

8. Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

9. Creator smiles upon us as we fulfill our purpose and walk in balance.

Eleven Native American students and alumni from the Salish Kootenai College, who are tribal members from Blackfeet, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Salish and Kootenai Nations living on the Flathead Indian reservation participated in the study. The Native American moccasin was the cultural object used to create a multimedia art piece used as a catalyst to express and reflect traditional cultural knowledge rooted within this cultural symbol. The cultural symbol assisted the participant to communicate one’s understanding of ‘place’, which may strengthen an overall sense of wellbeing (Mohatt, et al, 2011). The following images and written impressions developed by the participants illuminated their way of knowing in relation to a sense of place. The prompt used by the researcher was the followings: “Please incorporate symbols, colors, shapes and designs that reflect a sense of place for you”.
Photographed Images of the Three Dimensional Decorated Paper Moccasin

Figure 7. (Participant 1) In My Corner.
The image above was created in response to the moccasin art making experience. The research participant inserted an image of her grandmother, photos of her children and a tipi. She stated that the colors represented her grandmother and the paisley colored image in the far left corner of the painting, which symbolized her grandmother being in her corner.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 1: I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner.

My image represents my grandma, and what she means to me. She is my sense of place. She is home. She is comfort. She is love. She is my motivation and inspiration. She has been in my corner since the first day of my birth as well as the birth of my children. She has always been there for me and with me. I put a little wild on my piece as well and this reminded me of my grandma encouraging me to take chances. The butterflies represent when she helps dust me off when I fall and sends me back on my way because she knows I cannot stay, as much as she may want me to.
Figure 8. (Participant 2) Guide and Flow.
The image and stories that arose from the art making experience illustrates two themes. The participant described her understanding of ‘flow’ and her felt experience. She described feelings of being relaxed and confident. She also expressed the importance of mentors, (Salish Kootenai faculty) and how they have supported her with her academic journey.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 1: I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner.

Here at SKC, there have been several mentors that have helped me succeed in school and towards a career.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 8: Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

I find that when I’m in the flow of things, I am relaxed and feel confident. I feel settled. I like the gold because it helps me feel happy. I put images on my moccasin that represents my mentors who help me pull the picture together, every step of my way.
Figure 9. (Participant 3) Family is Everything.

The image and the story exemplify the importance of family to participant #3. He incorporated images of the horse, the tipi and the feather which illustrated his culture, and his homeland, Browning which is located on the Blackfeet Indian reservation.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 1: I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner.

I put family on my moccasin because family is everything to me. I also love hip hop. I put the image of the tipi on the moccasin because this is who I am and my culture. The horse ranch is symbolized here because it is what my family loves to do. We have a lot of acres of ranch outside of Browning and this is what I call home.
Figure 10. (Participant 4) Always Flowering.

This participant shared her experience during her annual reunion with her eight sisters. During the group discussion, she described the technique used to make the origami flower, which symbolizes the folds of her family. The origami flower was used for the tongue of her moccasin. She explained how the flower symbolizes blossoming and coming alive when they are all together.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 1: I flourish, explore and make mistakes when I have someone in my corner.

I put an image of my sisters on my moccasin. All eight of them are my support. We are there for each other in so many ways. We laugh, we cry and spend an entire week together every year.
Figure 11. (Participant 5) My Sense of Place is My Culture and the Land.

This participant shared about herself in relationship to the land, culture and her felt sense of place. She said very little during the group discussion but discussed quite a bit about herself and the meaning of the moccasin in her written story.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 3:  Culture and the land is my sense of place
My sense of place is my culture and the land. I used the imagery of my surroundings, which are mountains, valleys and waters. My mind went to blues and greens. There are bright green triangles on my moccasins in different areas to represent the mountain landscape that I have close connection. Blue is the next color that seems to serve as highlights in our natural environment, both in the land and in the sky-scape. The other colors that are special to me in a spiritual context are yellow and red. They have brought me guidance in this way and feel a sort of strength associated with them.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 7. Nothing is perfect. Creator is only perfect and imperfection in my artwork reminds me of my humanness.

Shapes: At first, I attempted to begin with some sort of organized design. But then realized that it would take me hours to complete something in this format. So, I chose to go with uneven designs and kept in mind that my late aunt Joan would tell me that nothing is perfect, and that creator has a way of showing us this in our work. I used red triangles to represent my Crow heritage and heart shapes to represent my struggles in life. Also, to remind me of having great heart in the commitments I make in life.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 8. Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

My sense of place is my culture and the land. These are the two key factors in what has motivated me to obtain a formal education and maintain sobriety. I believe that a strong connection to my sense of place is what has given me strength to have faith in my own abilities to seek accomplishments with, or
without, praise. That sense of place is what has allowed me have security and the
notion to reach for more and to never give up on my goals in life.

Figure 12. (Participant 6) Camas People.

This participant discussed her relationship to her grandmother and culture.
During the small group discussion, she spoke about the heel design, specifically fringed
in the style used by Salish peoples. The fringe heel was historically used to cover up the marks made by the footprint, leaving marking of small thin lines on the ground. She described her relationship to her grandmother and the importance she played in transferring cultural knowledge to her. A photo of the participant’s children, with imagery depicting their respective Native American names, expressed images of the natural environment. She also discussed how the natural environment is important to her as a wildlife biologist and overall well-being.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 6. Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture.

These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.

- Blue for the water and the sky.
- Purple for the Mission Mountains in the afternoon light.
- Green was used for the color of leaves on trees and plants, and brown for the earth.
- Gold was used for the color of fall leaves, especially on the quaking aspen tree.

I chose the heart in the bottom of the moccasin for a grounded heart that is the earth and is within us. The small white circles are to symbolize some protection stones that had been gifted to me by a friend with whom I have a cosmic connection. The Black Capped Chickadee is one of the birds that I love and notice in nature whenever they are around.

The small circles are the protection rocks. The cut out feathers, again to symbolize an element of the natural environment. The squiggly lines at the bottom of the moccasin symbolize worms to me. They are the color of earth to represent being grounded. Worms make all higher life possible. The moccasin
fringe represents fish skin. I like to catch and eat fish. When I first moved back to the Flathead Reservation as I was growing into an adult I didn't know many people. I spent most of my time with my dog out driving around and fishing. The bitterroot and camas symbolizes this area and the Salish and Qlispe (Pend d'Oreille) tribes. It means "camas people" and was a major food source for our people and the symbol is frequently featured throughout our reservation.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 5. Grandmothers inter-generationally transfer knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural traditions and ground a sense of place.

My paternal grandmother was one of the last full blood Qlispe people here. I miss her and try to embody who we are and our place here in all parts of our world.

It makes me excited and happy to see it in nature.
Figure 13. (Participant 7) My YaYa.
This participant discussed her relationship to her grandmother and culture. During the small group discussion, she described her relationship to her grandmother and the importance she played in transferring cultural knowledge not only to her but to her daughter as well. Her grandmother embodied the Salish people and help ground a sense of place for her. She discussed her connection to wildlife, the natural environment and hoped that she could be a voice for her. She also shared how the natural environment, her culture and her ancestry are important to her overall well-being. Finally, she shared how the moccasin making experience was healing to her “soul” as she was grieving the passing of her “YaYa” (Grandmother-Salish language).

The following exemplifies themes that reflect her relationship to the land, ancestry, and her experiences of participating in the moccasin making experience.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 3. Culture and the land is my sense of place

The fringe of the moccasin represents our connection with the trees, water, land and wildlife as Native people, I was raised to respect wildlife and what they give up for us and try to pass that on to the students that I speak to.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 4. The land is alive, and we are its voice

The photo of the wildlife within the moccasin represents my job as a Native wildlife biologist, I feel that I have a special connection with wildlife and I am proud to be a voice for them. Finally, the flower in the corner, again somewhat of a traditional style flower that I thought of at the very beginning of class and thought it would look great against the black back drop. The colors on the edges I added at the end, because they were not finished, and I wanted everything to tie together.
‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 5. Grandmothers inter-generationally transfer knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural traditions and ground a sense of place.

My yaya has always been my inspiration, that’s why I tried to do an old time design for my moccasin (As I stated in class, sometimes what I have planned in my head at the beginning of my beading projects turns out different, I just go with it and let it lead me…I usually like the outcome). She has always been my teacher in making moccasins and gloves. I was always nervous but proud to show her my latest work, because I knew it made her proud! When I started, I was always ready for her suggestions or comments and teachings of the Salish way to do things. The last few years she would just tell me that I did a good job, which made me proud! I am very honored to be one of her grandchildren. I chose to use this photo of her because her strength is what I’ve always looked up to, this photo was taken when she was 92 years old and rode in the Ronan Pioneer Days Parade. I was very proud to have gotten to ride with her in her last parade! It was great hearing her stories of her growing up riding in the parades, from her traveling back east as a young child on the train to ride in the parades for the wild west shows…to her racing horses as a young teenager. Horses was her connection with my daughter, they were very close! My daughter says that she knows that she is never riding alone.
This research participant discussed that the moccasin shared a story, as she relates deeply to stories because she is a journalist. The colors she chose illustrated joy. This research participant is an enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe, and her given name translates to beautiful flower woman. She described that colors, shapes, symbols and
designs especially represent one’s culture. She also expressed that she felt a sense of healing and mindfulness during the art making experience.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 6. Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture.

These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.

As I thought of the opening of the project to close your eyes and imagine the sense of place of where I am or come from the two colors of blue and green came to me. The pink represents the wild flowers, something that brings me so much joy and happiness.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 2. Read the landscape. Images of place helps connect and ground oneself.

The green for the plants and the blue the water and the sky, both colors are the mountains and how I see what the mountains hold. The butterflies are the newness of life and the beauty of where I am from and who I am. The bird is a reflection of beauty and the songs that they carry where I am from.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 8. Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

Thank you for doing this project and the healing and mindfulness it brought me during these few hours.
Figure 15. (Participant 9) Free Spirit.

This research participant discussed how she suffered from severe anxiety when she was younger. She sometimes feels very anxious and then turns to art making to relieve her anxiety. She described that this experience was restful, and it helped her feel
calm. She enjoyed working with the watercolors and was fascinated by the variety of colors it could create with simple strokes. She discussed how symbols, shapes, and designs represent one’s culture. She felt especially fortunate to have visited many places outside of the United States and experience the cultures outside of the Flathead Indian reservation. Her images and written narrative described her connection to the land, and culture. She also expressed that the moccasin is an important symbol which illustrates home.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 6. Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture.

These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.

The moccasin itself I feel represents home. The colors I chose represent all the places I have traveled. I have been multiple places in Mexico, and Hawaii and appreciate the colors and shapes and patterns that are a part of their culture. I've also worked in Costa Rica where there are also bright colors in their culture, but the moccasin represents that although travel is a huge part of my life, I always return home to my roots. The crown represents a symbol that has kept showing up in my life. (Business, etc..).
Figure 16. (Participant 10) Off the Ledge.

This research participant created her moccasin image while she fitted to her actual foot. She talked about how she constructed the moccasin and that she fringed the heel in the Blackfeet style, or what she refers to as “niitsitapiis (real people) (original people).” She stated that she wanted to demonstrate her true self in the picture. She discussed that she chose to position the moccasin part way off the page as it symbolized her falling off the ledge of life. She stated that her life line was Jesus and she has felt his grace as he pulls her back to this life. Her written narrative and imagery illustrated her connection to culture and her ancestry.
‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 7. Nothing is perfect. Creator is only perfect and imperfection in my artwork reminds me of my humanness.

The image represents hip hop. I love hip hop music. I put a Blackfoot design on the moccasin because I am Blackfeet. I’m a Blackfeet woman and this is what you get! I put the top of the moccasin partly off the page signifying that I sometimes feel like I’m going off the ledge but I’m pulled back by setting into my love for God.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 6. Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture.

These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.

The whole art project represents me. At the bottom is my signature because I am an artist. The batman logo is showing my obsession with my favorite super hero of all time!! The fish represents Christianity, I am a firm believer that Jesus died for my sins (: he is always honored in my art, life, everything. You may be wondering who the lady is? Well one of my all time favorite hip hop icon Tupac Shakur had this tatted on his chest. I am afraid of tattoos so I will never get one, but if I did I would steal this one from him, its my fav! Wutang clan is another one of my favorite hip hop groups. I grew up listening to old school hip hop, I am so passionate about hip hop culture, its my culture as well, its apart of me!! If I had to make a whole collage about hip hop I would, but that’s not all of me... for the most part I am original, I am a child of God (: God so loved the world he gave his only begotten son to save me and forgive me for all my failures in this crazy world.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 9. Creator smiles upon us as we fulfill our purpose and walk in balance.
The moccasin represents me as a Blackfeet woman, I am only human, I am simple, I am original, the design on the moccasin is an old original ancient design from the niitsitapiis (real people) (original people) (first nations) and the tails on the end is to identify me as a female... as you can see the moccasin is worn, well that’s because I tried it on just to fit me so it is exactly me foot size, its not perfectly on the canvas because its me, a part of it is off the ledge, in life as an independent single Blackfeet christen woman I often fall off the ledge, I slip, I fall, but I always bounce back and stay grounded, because God so loved me!! He brought Jesus to this earth to suffer for and die on the cross only to forgive my foolish sins and I keep going, I keep walking, I keep planted because I am a daughter of a king, that king loves me. Without my God I am nothing, I fall, but with God I get back up. Glory to God.
Figure 17. (Participant 11) Coming Full Circle.

This research participant discussed how the imagery and narratives illustrate the circle of life. He feels that he has come full circle as he has returned to the Flathead Indian reservation, his homeland. He attended Salish Kootenai College, acquired a degree in Social Work and has worked in the field, specifically, child welfare. He also discussed how he has dreams to create a home for foster children where they can acquire knowledge of traditional ways of life. The circle illustrates the circle of life and walking in balance with the creator. He described his relationship his ancestry, and his experience of staying grounded and balanced by walking in the sacred four directions.
‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 8. Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

My moccasin design begins with the medicine wheel where spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental are represented to keep my future in balance.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 3. Culture and the land is my sense of place.

My goals are to help develop and create a foster/group home for children which includes self-sustaining practices of growing our foods, raising animals, practicing spiritual values, learning cultural foundations, and providing a safe and trustworthy environment for unlimited growth and self-sufficiency.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ 9. Creator smiles upon us as we fulfill our purpose and walk in balance.

If we can walk in balance as we fulfill this purpose, creator will smile upon us. I was a foster child and I feel like it has all come full circle for me. The painting is a circular flowing medicine wheel with plants to nourish us. I wanted to put animals, people, sweat lodge, computers, emotional emojis within it as well, but am not that talented with drawing, nor did I have the time. And of course, at the center would be me and my loving mate (wherever she is). Hehe!

Illustration of Findings

The watercolor image below created by the researcher illustrates the overall findings, using the shawl as the cultural metaphor. The knots secure the ribbon onto the bottom of the shawl, representing ‘relationality’, discussed in the introduction of this document.
Review with Research Participants

The researcher met with the research participants to review the findings of the research project. The research participants stated that the overall research project reflected three major cultural aspects; (a) the moccasin symbolizes a Qlispé, Sqélix, Niitsitapiis and Ktunaxa, way of knowing (b) place is our medicine and (c) art heals my
soul (a discussion of these findings will be expanded on, in the next chapter). The poster with the images and respective ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ can be found in (Appendix C).

**Researchers Artistic and Written Responses to the Participant’s Imagery**

The following illustrates artistic responses from the cultural/artistic advisor and researcher after they viewed each of the participants decorated moccasin artistically. The images shown in Figure 18 are the illustrations as a result of the response art. Written responses to the participant’s artwork, viewed as an entire collection are also incorporated in this section. The topics written in bold font, before several of the comments illustrate the “narrative threads” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 8) that emerged from the overall impressions as a result from engaging in the response art experience.

The following images were developed from the five-minute response art method technique described in the methods section of this document.
Images of the Five Minute Response Art to Participants Imagery

Response Art

Five Minute Art Response by Researcher and Cultural/Artistic Advisor


Corky’s Art Response.

Corky’s Art Response.

Corky’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.
Art Response by Researcher and Cultural/Artistic Advisor


Corky's Art Response.

Co's Art Response.


Corky's Art Response.

Co's Art Response.


Corky's Art Response.

Co's Art Response.
Art Response by Researcher and Cultural Advisor


Corky’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.


Corky’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.


Corky’s Art Response.

Co’s Art Response.
Art Response by Researcher and Cultural/Artistic Advisor


Figure 19. Participant’s Artwork and Art Responses by Researcher and Cultural/Artistic Advisor.
Written Responses by Researcher and Cultural/Artistic Advisor

The following are the written responses and the themes that arose from the response art by both the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor. The statements that are identified in bold font define the understandings that emerged from the written descriptions. The comments written by the cultural/artistic advisor emerged from viewing the artwork as an entire body of work. A final entry by the researcher is incorporated as she created artwork throughout the research process.

Researcher’s Written Responses

Understanding the participant’s experience. The art response helped me to take time to reflect on the participant’s art experience. I saw new colors, designs and shapes that I hadn’t seen before. Feelings of anger, sadness, awe, and deep compassion arose as I created the artwork in simply five minutes. Stories of loss, removal and growth sat next to images filled with bright colors, and imagery that reflected stories of joy, hope, love and dreams for the future. I felt very sad to hear stories about how at a young age, children were removed from their families. Now as adults, feelings of searching and growing into who they wanted to be and how they wanted to define themselves was an ongoing narrative. I could see the connection they had with the land, their ancestors, their culture, their world expressed through colors, shapes and designs. I cried once when I created art. A sense of coming home, re-engaging in the tribal community and cultural experiences seemed to be a recurrent theme.

Emotional release. I also had a feeling of emotional release, tension gone and the trauma stories that were shared seemed to dissipate. I noticed that I didn’t feel as shattered after being with a group in this intensive manner. I feel more connected,
grounded, and confident to work with others using this approach. Just think it was only five minutes.

Robust identity or wholeness. I also noticed that when I saw the participants in the community, I was able to separate them from the traumatic story they shared or illustrated in their artwork. I also said to myself time and time again, that this was only five minutes at that I do have the time to make art in response to clients’ stories, or after group work sessions. I realize that I can use this as a practice to release the emotions from the therapeutic experience. I can release so that I can start a new day with an inviting heart, fresh eyes, ears and attitude. I found myself with a sense of relaxing into the process of letting others to express in their own time and in a manner that made sense to them. I feel so much more grounded to myself and felt a deep connection to the participants. I also felt a great sense of confidence that I could continue to work in a therapeutic manner with others and take care of myself in the process. In short the trauma stories shared by the participants do not identify who they are as a whole person. The moccasin with photos of family members, animal images that represent their Indian names of themselves or of family members, are the ways in which I identify the participant, even though intimate, traumatic life stories, were shared.

Cultural/Artistic Advisor’s response.

The cultural advisor created a written description of his impressions of the art making experience is discussed below.

Understanding the participant’s experience. I interpreted this visual experience using color, shapes and abstraction to form images that express the feelings of what was presented by individual participants. I am not trying to analyze what the participant may
have been trying to say but my personal experience of what I might have seen in their work as related to my own experience. The interpretation of a work through the act of creating a new or other work involved personal choices of composition arrangement and temperament of line, shapes, and color.

**Artistic reflection feels safe.** This experience, responding to imagery, is a tool to self reflect in a safe manner. Putting something out there that others may respond to and feel something upon viewing is a courageous artistic privilege. There is no right or wrong answer. As children, we don't worry about judgment. As children, we make marks and add color because we like what's on the page. Problem solving, expressing emotions and releasing is and was for me a part of the art-making process.

**Moccasin Image and Written Reflections, Embodying the Research Process**

**Researchers Artwork**

The researcher constructed a paper moccasin that was personalized with colors, shapes, symbols, and designs depicting her sense of place. Imagery was embedded onto the artwork throughout the research process. The piece was completed seven months after the one-day workshop. The artwork and a written response to the artwork illustrated below, is titled “Art is ceremony.” The entry was written after reflecting on this piece of art, which was a response to the overall research experience.
Researchers Written Reflections

Art is Ceremony. This image depicts my relationship to people, land, ancestry, culture and my experiences that illustrate my embedded cultural knowledge and ways of knowing. Ten of my family members are dressed in their regalia. I tanned the buckskin, designed, stitched and sewed almost all of the garments shown. As I reflected on my notes and the entire experience, I was reminded of the time I spent with my grandmother. As a younger child, I sat next to my grandmother and prepared threads, fabric at her treadle sewing machine to create aprons and dresses out of old flour sacks. Attention to details and the specific steps of the process seemed similar to participating in a ceremony. Each step has a purpose; rhythm, balance and mindful action are essential.
This experience felt familiar to me and I valued the purposeful preparation before, during and after our art-making sessions. Each step of the research process was similar to this experience and significant, and new growth or new experiences grew from art making and the reflective practice. The title, “Art is ceremony” embodies my experience as a researcher.

Reflections From the Community Meeting

The reflections from the community meeting which included the Qe qs ĭamncuti (advisory committee) helped make visible important aspects of the research and the findings. Field notes were taken during discussion about the research project. The group had an opportunity to view individual images of the moccasins displayed on tables, mounted to a 4 x 4 in. standing frame. The 24 x 36 in. canvas wooden-framed poster with all of the images and preliminary written descriptions was also available for participants to view. Appetizers were served as well as sparkling cranberry juice and spritzer water. The three-hour meeting was opened to the public and was advertised using Facebook and with a poster (see Appendix D to view advertisement). The researcher discussed the research project and the moccasin making experience to the Qe qs ĭamncuti group and other attendees. One research participant spontaneously shared her experience as a research participant. She discussed the colors, shapes, symbols and design she used and the stories that emerged from her experience. She became very emotional while she described some of the images related to her grandmother. The following outlines the field notes that were taken during the community meeting.

Community Responses

The artwork and stories are a language of the heart.
This project brought the participants back to themselves.

I noticed the number of times the participants mentioned their grandmothers.

I love how we are portrayed as Indian peoples here using this moccasin.

Yes, yes. This really illustrated our Indian ways.

Everyone has stories; stories like blood, follow along lines of genealogy.

This is healing, as I know it.

This is moving toward hope.

This is about home, finding one’s place.

During the information discussion, the researcher noted head nods denoting affirmation. The group also laughed and visited about various happenings that were occurring in the community and in their lives.

**Summary of findings**

The outcomes that emerged from the moccasin making project, art response and the lessons learned from the community meeting are discussed as follows. A culturally based understanding of a ‘sense of place’ resulted from the moccasin making and storytelling experience. Perspectives relating to unwavering support, interconnection of culture and land, intergenerational knowledge transfer, deepened cultural knowledge, balance, and an understanding of a felt sense of place emerged.

Therapeutic attunement, emotional release, trust and risk taking, safe space, and seeing the research participant with a robust identity or wholeness were the themes that arose from the art response approach developed by the researcher and cultural/artistic advisor. The results from the community engagement included comments that reflected the overall research project. The comments made during the community engagement
meeting eloquently synthesized the overall outcomes of the research project. Comments included: (a) Artwork and stories are a language of the heart; (b) This project brought the participants back to themselves, were two of the more poignant responses that seemed to summarize the research project.

Findings from the research project suggests that an Indigenous arts-based and storytelling experience, grounded in ‘place-based imagery’ acted as a catalyst for one to remember, recover, deepen or reconnect to one’s cultural identity. As a result, a deepening understanding of a sense of self assisted in the healing process, moving from past traumas and strengthened an overall sense of well-being. Further articulation of the findings can be found in the discussion section of this document.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This study, "The Moccasin Project, Cultivating a Sense of Place," was grounded in Indigenous and arts-based research methods. An understanding of a sense of place was explored through an Indigenous art making and storytelling experience. The Native American moccasin was the symbolic cultural catalyst used to create a multimedia art piece. Descriptive stories reflected in the imagery, expressed cultural identity, spirituality, a holistic way of knowing and healing by the participants (L. Archibald et.al., 2012; Kenny 1998). The participants’ stories and imagery reflected the benefits of engaging in expressive arts to gain a deeper understanding of oneself, (Malchiodi, 2005; McNiff, 1998). Participants shared their painful memories of the past, while images of important people in their lives, a landscape in which they were connected, ancestry, cultural identity and hope for the future (Gerber, Templeton, Chilton, Liebman, Manders, & Shim, 2012) reflected a “holistic model of healing” (L. Archibald et. al., 2012, p. 7). This expressive art-based modality encouraged participants to communicate using metaphor, symbolism, colors, shapes and designs to remember, and deepen or reconnect to one’s cultural identity (Gruenewald, 2013; L. Archibald, 2012; Smith, 1999; Warson, Taikchiray, Barbour, 2013). A holistic understanding of a ‘sense of place’ was found to be an important element in fostering a sense of self and overall wellbeing (Mohatt, et al., 2011).

Findings

The moccasin making experience assisted participants to generate culturally based stories and imagery that were grounded in perspectives related to unwavering support, the interconnection of culture and land, intergenerational knowledge transfer, deepened
cultural knowledge, balance, and an understanding of a felt sense of place. Second, a definition of place-based imagery, which has not been defined in the literature, was developed. Findings from this study corroborated and expanded on the themes that emerged from the pilot study (Carew, 2014). Examination of research notes, stories, and the response art data assisted the researcher to develop the following definition of place-based imagery. Place-based imagery is making or creating meaning of symbols, shapes, colors and designs, related to P-People, L-Land, A-Ancestry, C-Culture, E-Experiences that may foster, awaken and/or deepen one’s connection and understanding of self and a sense of place.

Third, a step by step, response art approach, was developed which may help to mitigate secondary trauma. Finally, a culturally based analysis process was developed that recognized a collective understanding or Native way of knowing. The study showed that Expressive Arts is an effective intervention used with Native Americans to inspire strength based cultural stories and images that encourages self-understanding. A summary of how these findings corroborate with other studies, followed by a discussion of personal reflections, study limitations, implications for Expressive Therapies and recommendations for future research will be outlined below.

As discussed in Chapter 2, literature was reviewed with a focus on the Native American colonization process, Indigenous well-being, Indigenous ways of knowing, a pedagogy of place, place as a protective factor, and expressive therapies as a healing modality in Indigenous communities.

The research questions that framed the study are as follows:
1. How does Indigenous art-making and stories cultivate an understanding of a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’?

2. How does a sense of place through ‘place-based imagery’ and stories lead one to remember, restore or reconnect with one’s cultural knowledge and to oneself?

‘Place-based imagery’ encouraged the research participants to awaken or remember, recover, or deepen their understanding of who they are as Native Americans.

In addition, there was an assumption based on the literature review that understanding oneself through a cultural lens may potentially assist in the healing process, moving from past traumas while strengthening an overall sense of well-being (Allen, Mohatt, Beeher, Rowe, 2014; Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008; Kenny, 1998). Additionally, traditional cultural knowledge “elder, ethnic, and local knowledge” (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p.1) elicited with the use of a cultural symbol (the moccasin) was expressed through imagery. Similar to Herring’s (1997) study, expressive arts in Native American communities is familiar and is an essential part of life where “emotional, religious and artistic” (p. 1) understandings are communicated.

The research findings were examined within an Indigenous paradigm ‘Sqélixw Cuúts (a holistic/Native way of knowing). Using this framework, meaning making of the self-reflective written descriptions and imagery was analyzed using this Indigenous lens which led to the development of a definition of ‘place-based’ imagery and the understandings of a ‘sense of place’. Specific written statements from research participants captured their voices and further clarified their way of knowing. This section summarizes pertinent research findings aligned with published literature. A discussion of
the limitations and suggestions for future research and the implications for the field of Expressive Therapies and Indigenous research will conclude this chapter.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’- People. I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner. Unwavering support and a sense of being cherished was an overarching impression discussed by four of the research participants. The participants referred to faculty as mentors, from Salish Kootenai College, as well as relatives who offered them unwavering support. For example, four of the research participants referred to family members as their primary support. Research participant 1 stated that she could take chances as she was encouraged by her grandmother to leave the reservation to attain an education and that she would be available to “dust me off when I fall and sends me back on my way…” She discussed how her grandmother stepped in to raise her when her biological mother and father could not due to alcohol abuse. Participant 4 referred to her eight sisters as her support system. Research participant 3 stated, "I put my family on the moccasin because family is everything to me." Three of the research participants referred to faculty at Salish Kootenai College as they encouraged and helped them throughout their educational journey. Participant 2 referred to faculty as mentors and incorporated representational images onto the moccasin communicating that they have “helped me pull the picture together, every step of the way.”

Research conducted by (Grandbois & Sanders, 2009) found that the Native American participants reported drawing strength from families, relatives, and their communities during stressful times. Allen, Mohatt, Beehler, and Rowe (2014) conducted a study with 252 rural Yup’ik adults to examine factors that led to a sober lifestyle, which included abstinence, non-problem drinking, and alcohol abuse recovery. They
determined that three levels of protective factors are critical to sobriety and include, 'Yuum Ayuqucia' or individual protective characteristics, 'Ilaput' protective family characteristics, and ‘Nunamta,’ protective community characteristics (p. 107). Faculty and family members are the community from which the participants drew their guidance, support, and strength to achieve their goals.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’ - Land. Read the landscape. Images of place help connect and ground oneself. The concept of land and the relationship described through imagery and stories included images of the natural environment, descriptions of spiritual guidance and the interconnectivity between place and culture. The literature that aligned with the ‘way of knowing’ is discussed at the end of section 4 below.

Research participant 10 stated, “There are birds and floral designs that signify symbols of spiritual guidance and a sense of being grounded.” Participant 11 said, “I feel that I have a special connection with wildlife and I am proud to be a voice for them.” Participant 5 discussed the natural environment and imagery and expressed, “I used the imagery of my surroundings, which are mountains, valleys, and waters. My mind went to blues and greens. There are bright green triangles on my moccasins in different areas to represent the mountain landscape that I have a close connection.” Participants 9, 11 and 4 described the construction of the moccasin and the colors, shapes, symbols, and designs that they used to represent a connection to the trees, water, land, and wildlife. Participant 4 described using specific colors, blue and green as she imagined a sense of place. Participant 9 placed an image of the heart on the bottom of her moccasin to describe a "grounded heart”. Participant 11 described the squiggly brown lines drawn onto the
bottom of the moccasin, which symbolized worms, the color of the earth "which makes all higher life possible."

**Culture and the land is my sense of place.** Participant 5 stated, "My sense of place is my culture and the land." Participant 3 used imagery, and in his descriptive writings he described horses, tipis and the land which represented the “Blackfeet reservation which is what I call home.” Literature related to place and culture will be discussed below.

**The land is alive, and we are its voice.** Participant 6 used a stamp with a figurative bird and described that animals “carry a song from where they are from.” Participant 8 explained that the bird is reflective of beauty and the songs that they carry remind her of where she is from.

Smith (1999) explained that relationships established in "place, of land, of landscape of other things in the universe defines a people" (p. 74). Pihama (1994) argued that the Indigenous people from New Zealand, the Maori have been defined by images and a discourse led by non-Indigenous peoples. She described the historical and current struggle of the Maori to “gain a voice through which we may present our own images” (p. 240) and share stories interpreted by Maori authors. Croft, an Australian Aboriginal woman, removed from her biological family, engaged in art making to understand who she was and is today. She began to reconnect to her understanding of self while returning to her ancestral homeland. Through illustrations and descriptions she explained that a relationship to ancestral land is "like an umbilical cord connecting one to land; to our laws and beliefs" (Croft, n.d.). Lambert (2014) developed a conceptual framework to employ Indigenous research methodologies. She used an image of the spider web, and in
the center, she placed a heart shape to illustrate the central theme that ties nine other concepts together. The heart illustrates the location "from a place, your place, your heart and voice" (p. 220) and the researcher's passion for the project.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’-Ancestry. Grandmothers inter-generationally transfer knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural traditions and ground a sense of place.

Participant 6 referred to her relationship with her grandmother, with a painted picture of the camas flower. She described her grandmother as “one of the last full-blooded Qlispel people. I try to embody who we are and our sense of place similar to her.” She also stated that the bitterroot represents the camas people or the Qlispel people. Participant 7 talked about her YaYa (Salish word for grandmother) and the various aspects of her life that instructed and inspired her life. She described her grandmother sharing her traditional knowledge while teaching her to construct and adorn gloves and moccasins. She illustrated specific beadwork designs that were passed down to her by her grandmother. She discussed that she had to tear out seams and beadwork until the designs and fabrication she crafted were proficient. She stated that she has “always been my inspiration, that's why I tried to do an old-time design for my moccasin. I chose to use this particular photo of her because her strength is what I’ve always looked up to.”

She explained that the photo showed her 92 years old while riding a horse bareback in the ‘Ronan Pioneer Days Parade.’ She stated that she felt proud to be next to her grandmother, mother, and daughter, representing four generations. Participants 1 said that her grandmother "was her sense of place, she is my motivation and inspiration. She has been in my corner since the first day of my birth as well as the birth of my children. She has always been there for me and with me.”
Statements made by the participants aligned with the literature about the transfer of Indigenous traditional knowledge, stemming from Indigenous elders, who were often women. According to Gadgil, Berkes, and Folks (1993), Indigenous knowledge is a “cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs handed down through generations by cultural transmission about the relationship of living beings, (including humans) with one another and with their environment” (p.151). Kovach (2009) a Cree/Saulteaux scholar, described how her academic journey provoked her to learn and know her cultural self at a deeper level. She interviewed relatives and First Nation elders during her doctoral study and in turn, she learned about the values, beliefs and cultural traditions of her First Nations peoples. She claimed that storytelling or "narratives are the primary means for passing knowledge within tribal traditions, for it suits the fluidity and interpretative nature of ancestral ways of knowing" (p. 95).

Kenny (2004) published a research framework that highlighted the importance of women who participated in a community-based research project. The women in the study described how they would like to emulate their grandmothers as "keepers of the next generation in every sense of that word-physically, intellectuality, and spirituality" (p. 5). This precept of intergenerational discourse was highlighted in the holistic framework developed by Kenny, which honored the “past, present, and future including historical referencing” (p. 9). The Center for Alaskan Health Research found that stories of one’s ancestors describing one’s life experiences gave instructions to “teach a person about themselves and how to relate to their culture and tradition” (Allen et al., 2017, p. 9). Secondly, ancestor stories are important to foster a sense of understanding the past, recognizing difficulties one's ancestors experienced and the "ingenuity and cooperative
problem-solving strategies” (p. 9) they used to survive and live well. Herring (1997) articulated the relevance and importance that art forms is culturally based mode of “generationally transferring Native cultures and values over time” (p. 3).

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’-Culture. Patterns, colors, shapes, and symbols represent one's culture. These images remind me of who I am and from where I came. Nothing is perfect. The creator is only perfect, and imperfection in my artwork reminds me of my humanness. Nine of the research participants included images and stories referring to their cultural identity and cultural knowledge. During the group discussions and in the written narratives, participants described how patterns, colors, shapes, symbols, and designs hold significant meaning to them. For example, participant 9 said, "Patterns, colors, and shapes represent one's culture." Participants 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 described that the illustrations symbolized their culture, tribes or a specific location. Participant 11 illustrated this concept with a large circle next to his moccasin. He discussed the importance of his responsibility to pass on his traditional knowledge to the next generation. Participant 5 also discussed the notion of imperfection as she expressed, “nothing is perfect, and that creator has a way of showing us this in our work.” She described that the uneven designs in the artwork were a reminder that an error signified a cultural, spiritual value. Mistakes in artwork remind the art maker that the creator is singularly perfect and an error in her beadwork or the construction of other works of art may have errors.

These concepts matched study finding of attaining or deepening a sense of self through imagery. Freire (1985) discussed the importance of understanding one’s comprehension or one’s knowledge through their lived realities. According Freire,
literacy is attained by “reading the world” (p. 97). In short, decoding begins at understanding one’s relationship to the world in one’s situated place. Croft and Fredericks (2009) described how as an Aboriginal artist, Croft uses imagery to communicate her experience of displacement as an aboriginal woman, to recover and reconnect to her “history and memories” (p. 11). She also discussed the importance of weaving the past, present and hopes for the future to convey an "Indigenous identity, history, land, family, well-being, connections, and relationships" (p.11). Gerber et al., (2012) posit that knowledge of ourselves and that of others occurs because of our aesthetic knowing. In short, expressive arts are a form of language that helps to uncover and deepen one's understanding of how one sees the world (Allen, 1995; Dewey, 1934; McNiff, 1992).

'Sqélixw Cuuts'-Experiences. Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place. The experience of art making and images embedded onto the moccasin and respective stories seemed to encourage a relaxed, settled state of being which seemed to instill a sense of being grounded and balanced. Participant 2 described her state of being while engaging in the art making experience, "I find that when I'm in the flow of things, I am relaxed and feel confident. I feel settled." Participant 10 and 5 also shared similar sentiments referring to feeling secure which bolstered their strength to keep striving to accomplish their goals. Participant 8 noticed that she experienced a state of "mindfulness and healing" even though the overall art-making experience lasted a few hours. Participant 7 described the experience as "therapeutic for my soul by helping me through the healing process.” Participant 11 and
5 discussed the balance they feel when they align with the physical, mental, emotional and physical aspects.

‘Sqélixw Cuuts’-Experiences. Creator smiles upon us as we fulfill our purpose and walk in balance. Participant 5 reflected that attaining a balance increased her confidence and motivated her to reach for her goals. These understandings reflect Bruchac’s (1996) characterization of being in alignment with one’s purpose directed by how one lives life on earth. He suggests that kinship ties with nature, living with a sense of love for the earth “teach people who they are so they can become all they were meant to be” (p.75). Kossak (2009) an expressive arts therapist, explained that healing occurs when there is a sense of “connectivity, unity, understanding, support, empathy and acceptance” (p. 13). Further, he refers to this state as ‘attunement’ and elaborates that this phenomenon is the experience of feeling connected to oneself, the art making experience, the researcher, and with the others. Csikszentmihályi (1990) researched the aspects of an optimal experience. He described a state of consciousness or ‘flow’ as the essence of being fully engaged in an experience, characterized by a sense of timelessness, high concentration, a loss of self-consciousness where; “emotional problems seem to disappear and there is an exhilarating feeling of transcendence” (p. 1).

Lessons Learned From the Community Meeting

The responses shared during the community meeting helped to shed light on the findings of the research; they pointed out that a number of participants incorporated images or talked about their grandmothers. I had not noticed this information prior to the observations from the community members. I also felt like this opportunity allowed transparency of the research process and the overall findings. The feedback from the
meeting helped me refine the ‘Sqélixw Cuuts’. Secondly, I wanted to be as transparent about the research and the process. This allowed attendees to ask questions and make suggestions.

**Response Art, a Window Into the Research Process and therapeutic Attunement**

A second phase of the research was designed to understand and gain insight into the lived experience of research participants by employing response art during the analysis process (Fish, 2012; Moon, 1999). The researcher and cultural/advisor developed a five-minute art-making approach to artistically respond and reflect to participant’s images. The overall impressions include (a) understanding the participant’s experience (b) a sense of emotional release from the shared trauma story (c) robust identity or wholeness (d) artistic reflection feels safe.

The researcher found that the five-minute response art approach allowed for an emotional release from the distressful stories shared by the participants (Moon, 1997). For example, Participant 4 referred to a recent presentation that she conducted which described family separation due to residential boarding schools, and mistreatment that occurred at Twin Bridges, an orphanage in Montana. She included an origami flower and used it as the tongue of the moccasin. She said, “The flower symbolizes us growing and blossoming as a family.” Participant 1 acknowledged her grandmothers parenting involvement due to her mother’s alcohol abuse. She also incorporated images of her children a beautiful lake and cultural symbols. Participant 9 explained that he and his siblings were adopted due to “family distress” within their household. He also embedded images of a heart, the Native American medicine wheel, four cardinal directions, plants and a circle to symbolize that he has “come full circle.” Participant 5 acknowledged that
she had a “rigorous adolescence” due to alcohol abuse. She also described that her cultural involvement helped her recovery process. The researcher noticed that challenging difficult stories and symbols, colors or designs sat side by side with bright colors and images of family members, ancestors, landscapes and spiritual symbols. The imagery exemplified another view, therefore, embedding a different perspective of the participant into the researcher's mind. In short, the trauma story no longer is the only identifiable story that defines the person (Gerber, Templeton, Chilton, Liebman, Manders & Shim, 2012). This aspect is especially important as the researcher lives and works in a small community whereby paths often cross roles and relationships evolve.

In this next section, the writer/researcher will change the writing style from the third to the first person to write about the experiences of developing the ‘response art’ approach and the phenomenon that resulted. It is the goal of the researcher to connect with the reader and allow her voice to be heard and connect to her personal experience. Trust, risk-taking and therapeutic attunement were aspects that resulted from implementing this approach.

Trust and Risk Taking

This next section describes how Corky and I developed the response art approach to further understand the participant’s imagery and stories. We scheduled one day to develop and then complete the art response for each of the participants’ images. We completed the process several months past our first meeting. We began our discussion in a print room located on Salish Kootenai College campus. The scent of oil pastels and oil-based print inks were thick in the air. We had various sized papers and a variety of mediums to choose from. We viewed a colored copy of all of the moccasin mages,
printed onto an 11 x 17 in. paper. We sat together to discuss and make decisions as to how we would approach this next step of the research experience. The prompt was to engage in ‘response art’ to further explore and connect to the results of the research project. We sat silently for over twenty minutes. At some point, Corky and I realized that all 11 images printed onto the 11 x 17 in. paper and making response art to the collection of work was too much to take in; and I felt like my mind was cluttered. We stopped the process and decided that each of the images should be viewed separately. Using Adobe Photoshop, I scaled each image to fit onto an 8.5 x 11 in. paper and adjusted the light contrast to sharpen the images. I made two colored copies, one image for each of us. I enjoyed scaling and brightening the photos, and what seemed like an hour, took approximately seven hours to accomplish.

The second day, Corky and I sat quietly in front of each of the colored images for almost ten minutes. Corky picked up a copy of one of the photos and moved it to the east, south, west, and north. I emulated his movements by rotating the same colored image in the four directions. We decided to view the image for five minutes and artistically respond to it using colored chalk pastels on 32 x 22 in. white Lenox paper. The image below illustrates the art materials we used to create response art.
Figure 21. Response Art Supplies.

A research note from November 9th revealed my feelings of doubt, uncertainty and the unknown; “I don’t know what I’m doing here, I’m glad I’m not alone.” As Corky and I engaged in this process, I began noticing the bright colors, culturally laden symbols, and other marks that I had not seen before. Weber (2008) described imagery and how their display can nudge conversations thus, “images can talk” (p.45). I felt like I wanted more time and at the same time, I felt a sense of accomplishment for achieving artwork in five minutes. I also felt so grateful that I had a colleague, by my side to engage into the unknown, to work side by side, taking risks and allowing for the unknown to emerge. McNiff (1998) has explored art making, and critically analyzed the
benefits, one of which is a deepened sense of knowing. He explains, “Art-based research develops from a trust in the intelligence of the creative process and a desire for relationships with the images that emerge with it” (p. 37). Corky described his experience as allowing reflection to occur and the process was a container to make visible the “tactile reality that can be felt, in a safe place, this takes one to a new place.”

**Therapeutic Attunement**

Attunement to participants’ artwork was essential in developing response art. Attunement, discussed by Kossak (2009) is an embodied experience one has as a result of being fully present and engaged in the therapeutic process. Expressive art therapists are encouraged by Kossak to become aware of the visual and sensory dynamics that occur between individuals, groups, and communities. He describes therapeutic attunement as “embodied awareness of rhythmic flow, and on mutual connections that occur when there is an intense process of deep listening, kinesthetic awareness, and deep attention to what is occurring in the moment” (p.15). In addition, researchers, Fish (2012), Kossak (2009), and Moon (1999) have determined that meaning making of sensory experiences deepens relationships with participants. Their premise coincides with the experiences that both Corky, and I had while engaging in art response.

As I engaged in the five-minute response art approach, I found that I began to understand and draw meaning from the participant's artwork in new ways. I noticed that I felt an array of feelings including empathy, sadness, and joy as well as feeling confident and encouraged. An entry from my research journal dated, February 5th, says “The art making allows others to express whatever they are ready to reveal in their own time and place. I know each participant at a deeper level. I felt a sense of letting go of the sad
stories after studying their images after responding artistically." Weber conveyed the importance of imagery in research as having the ability to "enhance empathetic understanding and generalizability" (p. 45). The visual expressions presented in the result section of this document illustrate the product of reflecting deeply, and visually talking to the artworks created by the participants. I found that using response art assisted me to create a five-minute therapeutic emotional release technique. This technique helped me release from my psyche, feelings of sadness, related to the distressful trauma stories. I had a renewed sense of the participants’ identity; therefore, I was able to view them with a more robust personal identity.

**Personal Artwork, Reflective of the Research Process**

**Personal Awakening and Discovery of Researchers Epistemology**

The image below is a photo of the moccasin that I constructed and decorated throughout this study. This photo is a second view of the moccasin described in figure 6. I placed a photo on the side of the moccasin with an image of 10 members of my family dressed in buckskin dresses, shawls and moccasins, our traditional regalia. I designed, constructed and decorated all of the traditional outfits. The photo was taken December 2016, during my daughters Nursing graduation ceremony. I included fabric, buttons, thread and large pink flowers transferred onto beautiful silk fabric to illustrate the commonly used materials that my grandmother used. She made threads and fabric come alive in her small corner of her living room, referred to as her “workshop.” She would arrange the materials on a handmade wooden table, say a prayer, think good thoughts of the person the article was created for, and remember that creator was the perfection found in this world.
As I reflected on the research experience I again was reminded about the complexity of the overall process. Aspects of the research process included creating the creative space, creating sacred space, listening, and reflecting and attending to the beginning, middle and end of the process. Shawn Wilson encourages the researcher to think about the research process as ceremony; there is a “beginning, middle and end to the process, just like ceremony” (personal communication, October 10, 2013). I noticed that aspects of ABR resembled ceremony. Attention to details and the specific steps of the process seemed similar to participating in a ceremony. Each step of ABR has a
purpose; rhythm, balance, and acute attention to the process, to the materials, to the people involved is significant. This experience felt familiar to me and I valued the purposeful preparation before, during and after our art-making sessions. Each step of the research process was important and new growth or new experiences grew from art making and the reflective practice. “Art is ceremony” was the final entry that I had written after responding to my personal artwork, deciphering and making meaning of the symbols, colors, shapes, designs and images embedded onto the moccasin.

These ideas corroborate with the tenants of ABR. McNiff (2008) described how meaning making was produced through art making and reflection. He suggested that trusting the creative process and the “intelligence’ (p. 37) that emerges can deeply inform the art maker. I personally connected to this concept as I realized that I most often decode my world through storytelling and images while drawing symbols, shapes and designs. Today, I find myself viewing images and making art, wondering about their embedded meaning. Lambert (2014) stated that the “researcher’s voice, culture, and story are heard” (p. 19) during the research process. Manulani Aluli Meyer (2004) described the significance of the cultural-practitioner’s work to create objects or artworks are significant and that their “very lives are extensions of land and history” (p. 31). Jung explored creativity and imagination as an avenue to understand oneself. He privileged the exploration of meaning making of symbols as an avenue to self-discovery. His work steered the artist and analyst to “recognize the cultural and universal aspects of a symbol” (in Chodorow, 1997, p.12). As I reflected on the embedded meaning, I began to understand my way of knowing or my epistemology; art is ceremony and a way of knowing. I credit my grandmother who taught me that art is ceremony.
Limited Literature of Expressive Therapies with Indigenous Communities

A goal of this research study was to explore the use and effectiveness of Expressive Therapies as a potential tool to heal from intergenerational trauma that has occurred in many Native American communities. A lack of published literature regarding the use of expressive therapy combined with storytelling with Indigenous populations is lacking. A study conducted by Archibald et al., (2007) concluded that creative arts offered healing benefits among First Nations peoples from Canada. Silverman et al., (2013) conducted a multicultural study whereby one Native American, a member of the Mohawk tribe represented the group. The voice of one Native American from a specific tribe is important but does not represent the thoughts and feelings of all Native American peoples in North America. Warson et al., (2013) conducted a study with Coharie tribal members from North Carolina to record the stories that emerged from viewing traditional plants, creating artworks and then through discussion the community shared and learned about the traditional medicinal uses of the plants with their community. Beyond these studies, the literature that links expressive arts, used as a healing modality with Indigenous peoples are not available.

Expressive arts, in particular, are an effective tool to elicit stories that are very meaningful to Indigenous communities (L. Archibald, 2007; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Lambert, 2014). Brayboy, an Indigenous scholar and educator (2005) suggested, “stories serve as the basis for how our communities work…and reminders of our individual responsibilities to the survival of our communities” (p. 427). Akagawa, suggested that place, viewed through an ecological lens weaves the dynamic processes of the land, and
our psychological wellbeing, "we are part of nature, we are all interconnected, heart to heart" (personal communication, August 3, 2015).

Study Limitations

In order to increase the dependability of this study, the outcomes and the investigative approach were clearly outlined throughout this document. The following describes limitations and potential biases. In addition recommendations for future expressive therapy interventions and recommendations are discussed.

The study cannot be generalized to other Native American tribes or to other Indigenous peoples for that matter. The research participants were Native Americans who have historically resided on the Great Plains of North America (native-net, 2015). An understanding of the landscape and the traditional knowledge and understandings that it holds is specific to each tribe. The moccasin used as a cultural symbol may be transferable as this is currently an important piece of the traditional cultural regalia worn today at powwows and during ceremonies. This cultural symbol was used in this study as a catalyst to awaken the emergent cultural stories. One cannot assume that the use of the moccasin as a cultural symbol would have the same impact for Native peoples from all of the 573 federally recognized tribes in the United States (U.S. Department of the Interior Indian Affairs, n.d.). However the use of a cultural symbol is an important variable to consider.

A second limitation of the study could include the relationship the researcher has had with members from this Native American community. The researcher has lived and worked on the Flathead Indian reservation for over 30 years and worked as a mental health provider and educator. The researcher knew or had worked with the participants
as an instructor or professional colleague, which may have biased the study. Additionally, the researcher developed and co-facilitated the moccasin making art activity, which may have biased the findings that emerged from the study.

Third, all of the participants either lived or had lived on their homeland or reservations. It would be interesting to see how the results differed if the study participants were Native Americans from urban or border town communities.

**Implications for Further Research**

The results from the research, which defined ‘place-based imagery’ grounded an understanding of a sense of place which led to self-discovery and an understanding of one’s way of knowing in the participants in this study. Place can be seen as a critical protective factor to face severe conditions of poverty, drug and alcohol use and abuse and high suicide rates afflicting most reservation communities. This study aligns with research conducted by Allen et al., (2014) who identified specific psychological characteristics of the Yupik, Alaskan Natives that help determine a meaningful and enjoyable life. One of the characteristics they identified is one’s awareness or a feeling connected in relation to the natural environment. An evaluation tool, using the ‘Sqélixw Cuúts’ developed into specific questions, used to make visible one’s understanding of a sense of place could be developed. For example, questions could be developed to provide an outcome measure in response to the art-based experience. For example, participants could respond to questions related to their connection to people, land, ancestry, culture and experiences because of their involvement in the intervention.

In future research, it might be useful to explore the transferability of this Indigenous research model to the other tribes on the six reservations in Montana. The six
reservations include the Blackfeet, Rocky Boy’s, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, and Northern Cheyenne. Each reservation houses a Tribal College whereby a workshop titled, "The Moccasin Project, an understanding of a sense of place" could be offered in each location. It would be fascinating to analyze the data and further corroborate the mnemonic of “PLACE” and examine the comparability of the ‘Sqélixw Cuúts (a holistic/Native way of knowing) translating this word to the respective living Native languages.

In addition, the response art method was one of the most fruitful outcomes of the study for the researcher. Working with people and in environments whereby distressful or traumatic events are disclosed, may leave a psychological wound in the psyche of the practitioner. A study could be conducted with other mental health workers to listen, observe and understand their lived experience while participating in the five-minute art response. This approach may have the potential to mitigate secondary trauma.

**Implications for Expressive Therapies to Decrease Health Care Disparities**

This dissertation study exemplified the strength of using expressive therapies, specifically a culturally sensitive construct to encourage an authentic, nourishing and enjoyable approach. The step-by-step approach that was described can be implemented and outcomes can be assessed. The study joins other published literature that uses expressive therapies as a method to heal from trauma and foster healing and well-being (Carey, 2006; Herring, 1997; Kossak, 2015; Malchiodi, 2005). It is hoped that this study can be used as a springboard to build evidence showing the relevance and feasibility of how expressive arts can be a catalyst to decrease health care disparities in Indian country.
In addition, this study has the potential to be used to foster culturally responsive approaches in schools and communities by leveraging place based art experiences rooted in ‘place-base imagery’. According to the Partnership with Native Americans (2017) the completion rate for Native American students who complete high school is 70 percent compared to a national average of 82 percent. More than 60 percent of U.S. high school students attend college while only 17 percent of Native American high school graduates attend college. This study has the potential to be used throughout many disciplines including Art, English and Social Studies to encourage a more culturally responsive curriculum that is meaningful, encouraged by one’s relationship to the people, land one’s ancestry, culture and experiences.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

The approach used in this research study allows for an authentic expression of self whereby tribal knowledge as a foundation can be aligned with one’s cultural voice. Encouraging the use of symbols, shapes, colors, and designs to tell a story of lived experiences and reshape or make meaning of the story through artistic expressions is healing. This research study demonstrated a relationally based model that expressed one’s dynamic relationship to people, land, one’s ancestry, culture, and experiences. It is hoped that a deepened sense of self, promoted by place-based imagery can help decrease health disparities in Indian country.
APPENDIX A

Doctoral Research Informed Consent
Cultivating a Sense of Place Through Indigenous Art

Principal Investigator: Co Carew, Doctoral Chair, Mitchell Kossak, PhD program in Expressive Therapies, Lesley University

You are being asked to volunteer in this study to assist in my doctoral research to further understand a sense of place described through an Indigenous artmaking experience and written narratives.

Purpose
During the four hour workshop, you will create a moccasin using a variety of materials that include mixed media paper, acrylic paint, stencils, stamps, decorative papers, oil pastels, a variety of glues and an artist canvas. Prior to the art making experience you will be asked to relax, and participate in a guided visualization focusing your attention to the land, and what you can see, smell, hear or feel. After the art making experience you will be invited to share the significance of the colors, shapes, symbols or designs you used to decorate the paper moccasin. This session will be referred to as ‘storysharing’. Four days after the workshop your artwork will be photographed and uploaded to a secure site on Schoology, SKC’S on-line learning platform. You will have an opportunity to write a description of the meaning and significance of the imagery you used to decorate your moccasin.

You will be personally interacting with myself as the principal researcher, Corky Clairmont, the co-researcher and participants in this group today. This research project is anticipated to be completed by September 20th, 2017.

I, ____________________________, consent to participate in your research study to understand a sense of place through an Indigenous lens.

I understand that:
• I am volunteering for an art making experience involving a guided visualization, ‘storysharing’ which will occur after the art making experience and four days after the workshop using an on-line learning platform. The workshop will last approximately four hours.

• Session materials, including artwork and written descriptions uploaded to the Schoology on-line learning platform will be kept confidential and used for purposes of course instruction, presentation and/or publication. If you would like to stay anonymous, please do not write your name or initials on your artwork.

• The ‘storysharing’ sessions may include verbal discussion about your present life, ancestry, origin stories, oral stories, cultural identity, family, community, images of the landscape and/or my understanding of where I have come from?

• The session may bring up feelings, thoughts, memories, and physical sensations. Therefore, possible emotional reactions are to be expected, however, I am free to leave the workshop at any time. If I find that I have severe distress, I will be provided with resources and referrals to assist me, and will not lose any benefits that I might otherwise gain by staying in the study.

• This study will not necessarily provide any benefits to me. However, I may experience increased self-knowledge and other personal insights that I may be able to use in my daily life. The results of the study may also help to endorse the use of Expressive Arts when working with Indigenous communities and to discover, remember, or reconnect to my cultural knowledge.

• I understand that my artwork and written descriptions will be kept confidential unless I write my name or add defining photos or images to the artwork. This information will not be used in any future study without my written consent.

• The researcher is ethically bound to report, to the appropriate party, any criminal intent or potential harm to self or others.

• I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequences.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Anonymity:
You have the right to remain anonymous. If you elect to remain anonymous, your records will be kept private and confidential to the extent allowed by law. We will use pseudonym identifiers rather than your name on study records. Your name and other facts that might identify you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. If for some reason you do not wish to remain anonymous, you may specifically authorize the use of material that would identify you as a participant in the experiment.

You can contact my advisor Dr. Mitchell Kossak at 617-349-8167 or email mkossak@lesley.edu or contact me, Co Carew Co_carew@skc.edu, with any additional questions. You may also contact the Lesley University Human Subjects Committee.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

a) **Investigator's Signature:**


Date  

Print Name  Colleen “Co” Carew

b) **Subject's Signature:**

I am 18 years of age or older. The nature and purpose of this research have been satisfactorily explained to me and I agree to become a participant in the study as described above. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation at any time if I so choose, and that the investigator will gladly answer any questions that arise during the course of the research.


Date  Subject's Signature  

Print Name

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Co-Chairs irb@lesley.edu at Lesley University, 29 Everett Street, Cambridge Massachusetts, 02138.
APPENDIX B

Consent to Use and/or Display Art

CONSENT BETWEEN: __Co Carew
and____________________________________.

Expressive Arts Therapy Doctoral Student

I, _____________________________________________, agree to allow Co Carew
Artist/participant’s name
Expressive Arts
Therapy Doctoral Student
to use and/or display and/or photograph my artwork, for the following purpose(s):

☐ Reproduction and/or inclusion within the research currently being completed by the expressive arts therapy doctoral student.

☐ Reproduction and/or presentation at a professional conference.

☐ Reproduction, presentation, and/or inclusion within academic assignments including but not limited to a doctoral work, currently being completed by the expressive arts therapy doctoral student.

If you wish to remain anonymous, please do not include any identifying information on the images.

This consent to use or display my artwork may be revoked by me at any time. I also understand I’ll receive a copy of this consent form for my personal records.

Signed _________________________________________________ Date
____________

Age________________________________________________________

Gender ______________________________________________________

Tribal Affiliation ____________________________________________

Occupation, program of study and year in school ______________________________

I agree to the following conditions in connection with the use of artwork:
I agree to keep your artwork safe, whether an original or reproduction, to the best of my ability and to notify you immediately of any loss or damage while your art is in my
possession. I agree to return your artwork immediately if you decide to withdraw your consent at any time. I agree to safeguard your confidentiality.

Signed __________

Date 9-14-2017

Expressive Arts Therapy Doctoral Student

There is a Standing Committee for Human Subjects in Research at Lesley University to which complaints or problems concerning any research project may, and should, be reported if they arise. Contact the Committee Co-Chairs irb@lesley.edu at Lesley University, 29 Everett Street, Cambridge Massachusetts, 02138.
APPENDIX C

The Moccasin Project: Cultivating A Sense of Place

I can explore, make mistakes and flourish when I have someone in my corner.
Land
Read the landscape. Images of place helps connect and ground oneself.

Culture and the land is my sense of place.

The land is alive, and we are its voice.

Grandmothers inter-generationally transfer knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural traditions and ground a sense of place.

Patterns, colors, shapes and symbols represent one’s culture. These images remind me of who I am and where I came from.

Nothing is perfect. Creator is only perfect and imperfection in my artwork reminds me of my humanness.

Flow is a relaxed, settled, restful and grounded experience; this is a felt sense of place.

Creator smiles upon us as we fulfill our purpose and walk in balance.
APPENDIX D
Understanding a Sense of Place Through Indigenous Art

ART IS CEREMONY
NOVEMBER 4TH, 2017
4:00-5:00 PRESENTATION
5:00-5:30 DISCUSSION AND EXHIBIT
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Cawdrey Studio and Gallery; 204 Wisconsin Avenue, Whitefish, MT

Contact: Co Carew, co.carew@gmail.com, for more information

Co Carew, Doctoral Candidate in Expressive Arts Therapy, from Boston’s Lesley University, and Corwin Clairmont, Salish artist, will present a research study titled, Understanding a Sense of Place through an Indigenous Lens at Nancy Cawdrey’s studio in Whitefish, Saturday November 4th, 2017.
REFERENCES


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