

# **Indigenous Identity Development through Sport**

by

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## **Abstract**

Physical activity, games, sport and youth have a rich history within Indigenous communities, but that is not reflected in academic literature. For years, scholars wrote about Indigenous communities and people and not with them. Aspects of everyday life, such as physical activity, games and sport were seen as trivial and often marginalized. By listening to the narratives of Indigenous youth we get an understanding of the complexities of their lives. Research for, by and with Indigenous communities is growing. This thesis examines the idea of Indigenous identity navigation through sport by using an Indigenous research methodology, the strengths approach, the framework of two-eyed seeing and a community based participatory research strategy. The method for collecting data was through individual interviews and a traditional Indigenous talking circle. The research question and interview questions were developed with the community-based research assistant. Participants/Coresearchers took part in individual interviews that examined the impact that the Anishinabe Pride basketball program has had on their lives. The use of a talking circle was instrumental in providing a space for Indigenous voices to be heard and in confirming understanding gained through individual interviews. A separate discussion was held with Jackie Anderson, the creator of the Anishinabe Pride program, after the analysis of data to confirm results. Three themes emerged through data analysis: education, culture and community. While each theme is distinctly different, each also interconnects within the Anishinabe Pride program. Through the use of oral narrative, co-researchers shared stories and experiences of the Anishinabe Pride program and the impact it has had on their lives. It is these narratives that help define what Indigenous identity navigation looks like through the lens of the Anishinabe Pride basketball program.

## **Acknowledgements**

The completion of this Master's degree comes at an unprecedented time. The coronavirus pandemic has affected all areas of our lives, including sport. At first, all sports were cancelled and eventually professional sports teams started to participate in "bubble" situations or arenas with zero fan attendance. Slowly youth sports have started to come back in various situations and places. Basketball being a sport that involves a lot of close contact has not started back up. As we wait for vaccinations to become more readily available and coronavirus numbers to decline, I like many others, can't wait for youth basketball programs to start back up.

Sport has always been an important part of my life. I have enjoyed many different sports over the years and felt that this has had a huge impact on my life, not only as an athlete, but also as a coach and teacher. I feel that sport has taught me so many lessons over the years and that those lessons were essential for the completion of this Master's degree. Attempting to complete this part-time has at times been challenging. It is always in the back of my mind and there is always something that needs to be done. Not just for me, but also for the stories of the Anishinabe Pride and the Indigenous youth that were part of this study. Lessons of perseverance, hard work, and determination were fundamental when it came to the completion of this thesis. I knew that I had to continue to push through to completion as I had an obligation not only to myself and my family, but also to the people who allowed me to be a part of their lives. The people whose stories were enmeshed with my own and who enriched my own life journey.

During the writing of this thesis, my favourite NBA team the Toronto Raptors won an NBA championship. It was the first year of a new coach at the helm. Nick Nurse, the Raptors coach, was able to win the championship partly because of his unconventional coaching style and willingness to try different things with coaching. What many people didn't talk about was

the Raptors coach before Nick Nurse. Dwane Casey was the Raptors coach from 2011 to 2018. He was a very successful coach, winning 320 games and finishing first place in the Atlantic division, four of his final five years. The year that he was fired, he was actually the coach of the year in the NBA and had set a franchise record for wins in a year. Nick Nurse was a part of Dwane Casey's staff as an assistant and he was a part of Dwane Casey's winning culture in Toronto. Nick Nurse benefitted from the foundation that Dwane Casey set in Toronto.

I started this thesis with Dr. John Freeman as my supervisor, but he was more than that. When I was trying to figure out which faculty I should apply to for a graduate program, John met with me to discuss options. He worked with me on my application to the Faculty of Education, introduced me to students, became my advisor and then eventually my supervisor. He helped me develop my focus in a concentrated area for this thesis and walked me through the ethics application and revisions. To me, John was Dwane Casey, he set the foundation for success and even though he wasn't able to see the completion of this thesis through, I wouldn't have been able to complete it without him. John's sudden death was a shock to all who knew him and left a hole in the Queen's academic community. I am forever indebted to John for the work that we did, but also for the friendship that we developed.

After John's death, I approached Dr. Jamie Pyper to become my new supervisor. Jamie's specialty was not in Indigenous research, but like Nick Nurse he was able to try new things and learn with me. He continued the work that John and I had started and helped me refine my focus, particularly around data analysis and coding. Meetings that Jamie and I had were precious and his valuable input has shaped this thesis in more ways than he can imagine. Jamie's eye to detail has been vital and I appreciate his patience as this journey took longer than I had imagined.

Jamie has continued to walk me through this process and I value his analytical mind, but also his heart for helping me understand and bring out the narratives of the youth involved in this study.

Every coach needs an assistant coach, for Nick Nurse his top assistant coach was Nate Bjorken. He was influential in helping to shape who the Toronto Raptors were during that championship run and has since gone on to become a head coach with the Indiana Pacers. Dr. Lucie Lévesque was the Nate Bjorken of this thesis. As my committee member and second reader of this thesis, her input was much appreciated. Her influence into helping me understand Albert Marshall's concept of two-eyed seeing and research with Indigenous communities around health is ground-breaking. I am glad to have Dr. Lévesque in my corner.

Every team needs a star player and for the Toronto Raptors, the year of the championship, the star player was Kawhi Leonard. He is arguably the player that put Toronto over the top and helped the team win a championship. In this thesis the star player is the Anishinabe Pride program, Jackie Anderson, the founder of the program, my community-based research assistant Raven and the youth who chose to share their stories with me. Without these four people, this thesis would not exist. It was Jackie who created, developed, implemented and found funding to run the Anishinabe Pride program; our conversations and friendship have helped shape what I'm doing in the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community. Raven has a huge heart for her community and has been important in developing and growing the Anishinabe Pride program. Her help with recruiting, organizing and logistics was important for this thesis to come to fruition. I will forever be thankful for Jackie and Raven's trust, hospitality and kindness. The youth who's stories that I was able to hear and be a small part of are the real deal. They live Anishinabe Pride every day and continue to focus on what they have been taught and what they know to be true.

Every team needs a driving force. Someone to push, encourage, and often tell it like it is. For the Raptors that championship season, it was Kyle Lowry. He was the longest tenured Raptor and was the point guard of the team. His leadership was an essential part of helping Toronto capture the first NBA championship outside of the U.S.A. My partner, Vanessa has been the Kyle Lowry for me. She has encouraged me to continue and offered suggestions to help me focus. At times, she has been an editor, a confidant and a sounding board. She had taken it on herself to explore and schedule writing retreats and days for me to be able to concentrate on completing this thesis. Without her help and support I'm not sure how I would have been able to finish.

Finally, every championship team needs a good bench. The players that don't start, but are able to come into the game and keep the standard of play at a high level. For the Toronto Raptors, the bench consisted of Serge Ibaka, Fred VanVleet, Norman Powell and OG Anunoby. Two of my greatest bench players were my children Victoria and Jonas. While not always encouraging, "Dad are you still working on that thesis?" they were always supportive. It's not easy to share time with something that they don't fully understand. My hope is that they see the importance that I place on education and that one day they can experience the life changing connections that I have been able to have through education. The rest of my bench is made up of close family and friends. Anyone that asked me how things were going, watched my children while I attempted to write, offered encouraging words and support. I appreciate the thoughts, words, and time. The love and support is cherished.

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## **Definition of Key Terms**

Nine key terms are necessary to understand the context of my research: adolescents, colonisation/colonization, community, cultural identity, ethnicity, identity, identity formation, Indigenous and two-eyed seeing.

### **Adolescents**

Within the context of this research, the definition of adolescents is congruent with the Canadian census term, “youth.” According to the Canadian census, youth are under age 25 (Health Canada, 2010). Psychologists often explain adolescence as the beginning of puberty and continuing until social independence (Steinberg, 2014). For this study adolescents covers the ages of 10 to 24.

### **Colonisation/Colonization**

Colonisation is setting up a community in another land, state, or country with connections to a parent community, state, or country. This definition can be quite problematic because it negates the fact that there may have been inhabitants there already, thereby causing a strained relationship, often one of dominance by the colonisers/colonizers. A more accurate description would be “the conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods.” (Loomba, 2015, p. 20). In Canada, the term “settler colonialism” is often used to describe “the decimation and/or ghettoization of native inhabitants along with the takeover of their lands” (Loomba, 2015, p. 24).

### **Community**

Within this study I use the term *community* in four different contexts: Indigenous community, community of interest, the geographic community and community as a central theme with this research. With the exception of community as a central theme, these communities are in constant flux with each other. Indigenous community refers to a group that

has a sacred history, language, place/territory and a ceremonial cycle (Holm, T. et al., 2003)

Within the community of interest section this connects people based on similar interests. This could mean the Anishinabe Pride program, the overall basketball community that the Anishinabe pride play in or even the University of Winnipeg Collegiate. The geographic community refers to the neighbourhood that the members of the Anishinabe Pride come from. Finally, community as a central theme within this research, examines the role that community plays in the lives of those that participate in the Anishinabe Pride program.

### **Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity is explained as an identity that is “reflected in the values, beliefs, and worldviews of [a people]...Those who belong to the same culture share a broadly similar conceptual map and way of interpreting language” (Weaver, 2011, p. 240).

### **Ethnicity**

Allen G. Johnson describes ethnicity as “a shared culture and way of life, especially as reflected in language, folkways, religious and other institutional forms, material culture such as clothing and food, and cultural products such as music, literature, and art” (Johnson 2000, p.109). Within the context of this research, ethnicity is a state of belonging to a social group that has a shared cultural way of life.

### **Identity**

According to Chrysochoou (2003), “identity constitutes a particular form of social representation that represents the relationship between the individual and others (real or symbolic, individuals or groups)” (p. 227).

### **Identity Formation**

Identity formation refers to the identity development process as outlined by Jean Phinney (1989). Phinney developed a three-stage continuum to explain identity formation: unexamined ethnic identity (diffused or foreclosed stage), ethnic identity search (moratorium stage), and ethnic identity achievement (achieved stage).

### **Indigenous**

In this research study, Indigenous refers to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as outlined by the Canadian constitution. Under section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982, Aboriginal People are defined as “Indian, Inuit, and Metis” (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/>). Within the Canadian context, “Indian” is now generally replaced with the term First Nations ([www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)).

### **Two-Eyed Seeing**

The Mi’kmaw concept of Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing) is a framework for joining knowledge systems. It was first described by Mi’kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall in 2004. He explains it as “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all” (Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall., 2012 p.335).

## Prologue

I have had the privilege of spending the past 17 years working in the Kenhteke Kanyen'keha:ka community as an educator. I have witnessed trauma in the lives of my students and seen it manifest in various ways. I have also seen strong, resilient, determined and proud students that are changing their lives despite a history of intergenerational trauma. During that time, I have also been able to acquire my health and physical education specialist qualification and coach many different sports, teams and groups. Sport, games and physical activity had a beneficial effect on my life growing up and have been one of the ways that I have witnessed students' lives impacted positively.

Sport, games and physical activity have a rich past within Indigenous communities. The life lessons that they teach can be used in many areas of our everyday life. Lessons of hard work, determination, resourcefulness, patience, accountability, trust, teamwork, persistence, passion, attitude, strategy, pride and commitment are just a few of the life lessons I was taught and attempt to pass on to students that I coach. One of the greatest aspects of sport, specifically within Indigenous communities, is that of healing. I have seen this play out countless times in students over the years. Sport, games and physical activity offer a vehicle to heal. Not just our physical bodies, but also our mind, emotions and spirit.

Over my short period working in the Kenhteke Kanyen'keha:ka community, I have witnessed a resurgence in cultural identity. With the introduction of various immersion programs, for babies right through to adults, the language is being reintroduced at all levels. There have been rites of passage ceremonies reintroduced, longhouse ceremonies and traditional food being reintroduced in the community through a seed sanctuary project. There has also been a traditional community wellness program and a justice circle initiative. A traditional focus of

learning on the land has been important with the building of a wetland project and the hiring of an education land and language director. The local elementary school has implemented daily outdoor education. The community has also seen the return of lacrosse programs, with youth house leagues all the way up to a Jr. B men's team.

It has been a goal of mine to develop cultural sports programs. I have tried various ways to weave culture and sport together because I believe that the two are not mutually exclusive. The life lessons that are taught through culture mirror that of what is taught through sport, games and physical activity. In the Kenheteke Kanyen'keha:ka community, people often greet each other with the words: Shé:kon skennen'kó:wa ken? Loosely translated it means: hello, are you at peace? I have tried to approach this study from that place of peace, skennen, a good heart and a good mind.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

To understand my research journey, first it is helpful to understand who I am and where I have come from. I have been called many things so far in life: son, brother, uncle, father, partner, husband, coach, student, motivator, friend, teacher, fire keeper, Métis, and many more. Those persons who know me best call me Jamie. I grew up in Kingston, Ontario as the third child of four to Bonita and Joseph McCourt. I was taught from an early age that hard work pays off.

My own journey as an Indigenous person encompasses my own cultural identity, its discovery and reclamation. I am a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario, while my ancestral roots are connected with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. Much of our Indigenous family identity was hidden for many years. A large part of Canadian identity at the time was connected to aspects of assimilation. When my French fur-trading ancestor married my ancestor from Rama, the decision was made to live away from the territory in the nearby city of Orillia. If a person was associated with Indigeneity at the time, they were viewed as inferior. My ancestors made the conscious decision to hide the fact that they were Indigenous.

For the past twelve years, I have been on my own journey to discover what it means to be Indigenous and more specifically Métis. I have been seeking Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding. Through help from my great uncle and my own research, I was able to trace our family lineage and uncover our family history as Métis people. I also discovered that, while the decision to assimilate and hide our ancestral lineage was my family's, there was a lot of negative sentiment from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians toward mixed-race couples at the time when my ancestors married.

My upbringing was largely a product of the ancestral decision to assimilate. Schooling was critical in our household and seen as the best avenue to success. My father graduated from

high school and immediately began working. My mother left high school to work in her father's store (only much later did she return and finish her high school equivalency). As young parents (four children in five years), work was a necessity for our family to survive. My father passed up his opportunity to attend college so that he could make money for our family. The same would not be the case with my siblings and me. We were constantly pushed in school and challenged around the kitchen table to finish school work to the best of our ability. The hard work paid off, and I eventually found myself as a graduate of Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario. As a certified teacher, I began teaching on the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community 17 years ago.

My partner, Vanessa, had a different upbringing as a member of the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community who lived on the Territory. For her, Indigeneity was celebrated and was an important part of her everyday life. Growing up on "The Territory," Vanessa learned the Kanyen'kéha language and participated in Kanyen'kehá:ka singing and dancing. Cultural traditions and stories were shared. Vanessa understood and accepted her cultural identity. Education was emphasized and celebrated in Vanessa's home. She was constantly challenged to do her best academically.

Our family (including our two children) represents a blend between Vanessa's and my upbringings. We actively choose to engage in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. We participate as a family in the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community Longhouse ceremonies, rites of passage ceremonies, and various Mohawk immersion programs. Our family actively seeks cultural teachings. In the non-Indigenous communities, we choose to participate in basketball, hockey, swimming, soccer, football, gymnastics, acting and music lessons. We celebrate our

family's religious heritage by attending the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship. Through all of these endeavours, we continue to support and encourage each other's educational journeys.

I navigate in multiple worlds on a daily basis. My Indigenous identity has become a major part of who I am and grounds my epistemology. As an educator of Kanyen'kehá:ka students, I try to encourage my students to be proud of their history, culture, and past traditions, while I help prepare them for a world that sends the opposite message. Just as I was taught so many years ago by my parents, education has become the avenue through which I attempt to change the world. This balancing centres my research.

### **My introduction to Anishinabe Pride**

In the year 2014, two occurrences happened that shaped this study. One was that I was accepted into the Masters of Education program at Queen's University and the second was that I was able to participate in my first North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Regina, Saskatchewan. I was coaching the under-19 men's basketball team that represented Ontario. At the time, I was also coaching women's basketball at Loyalist College in Belleville, Ontario and I was attempting to recruit basketball players to attend Loyalist College. This led me to watch a lot of basketball at NAIG that July. I noticed that the Manitoba basketball teams were all very competitive and I went to speak to a member of their basketball program. I was told that a lot of their success had to do with the Anishinabe Pride program and I was given the number of their NAIG basketball director, Jackie Anderson.

I called Jackie to ask her about some of the players on Team Manitoba that I was interested in recruiting to play college basketball for me. While we were talking, she explained to me that a number of the players on Team Manitoba had played for the Anishinabe Pride program. This was a club basketball program that Jackie and her husband Marty had started. It

was a unique program that also incorporated mandatory cultural components. At the time, I was running a Steve Nash Youth Basketball program in the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community and I was attempting to incorporate cultural components as well. The more that I talked with Jackie, the more interested I became in understanding the various parts of the Anishinabe Pride program.

### **Thinking about the impact of Indigenous identity**

Understanding Indigenous identity is not something that I alone have had to grapple with. Due to continued attempts at colonisation, many Indigenous youth have questions about their own Indigenous identity. Within the context of colonisation of the Indigenous people of Turtle Island, there have been many complicit players. Individuals, institutions, legislature, and education have all had a crucial role in the colonising of Indigenous people. Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin (McLachlin, 2015) and Justice Murray Sinclair (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. 2015, p.5), have both described the government run residential schools as an attempt at cultural genocide.

Various Canadian legislation, policies, and practices, including, the Indian act (Canada, 1985), residential schools, Indian day schools, interference from child welfare agencies, the sixties and millennium scoops, combined with environmental dispossession (Richmond & Ross, 2009), land reclamations, absence of Indigenous perspectives in educational institutions, and racism experienced by Indigenous individuals and communities has led to a “denigration of identity” (Kirmayer et al. 2007, p.79). Indigenous youth are experiencing an identity crisis, wondering how they fit into both their Indigenous world and a colonised Canada (Barker et al., 2017; Chandler, 2013; Hallet et al., 2008).

## **Rationale**

Deficits-based research highlights the dysfunction within Indigenous communities, including abnormally high suicide rates, high incarceration rates, increasing gang related activity, and excessive use of alcohol and drugs (Barker et al., 2015; Elton-Marshall et al., 2011; Kirmayer & Valaskakis, 2014). The leading cause of death among Indigenous youth is suicide and self-inflicted injuries (Pollock et al, 2018). According to statistics Canada, from 2011 to 2016 the suicide rate for self-identifying Metis people was twice as high as the non-Indigenous rate, for First Nations people the suicide rate was three times the rate of that for non-Indigenous people and among Inuit the rate of suicide was nine times higher than in the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2019). The Centre for Suicide Prevention attributes these increased suicide rates to colonisation. “The effects of colonization and governmental policies of forced assimilation continue to cause acculturative stress and marginalization amongst the Aboriginal population” (Suicide Prevention Resource Toolkit, 2013, p. 3). According to Elias et al., governmental policies, colonisation and forced residential schools have led to a “loss of culture, language, traditional values, family bonding, life and parenting skills, self-respect, and the respect for others” (Elias et al., 2012, p.1561).

The above dire statistics offer a negative and incomplete perspective on the lives of Indigenous youth. Despite years of attempted assimilation, many Indigenous youth are not only surviving, but are thriving. Having a strong cultural identity can serve as a buffer to the effects of colonisation and intergenerational trauma (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Good et al., 2021; Kirmayer et al., 2003). Community initiatives that connect Indigenous youth with culture have been proven to impact the overall well-being of Indigenous youth (Critchley et al., 2006; McIvor et al., 2009; Snowshoe et al., 2015, 2017; Tighe & McKay, 2012).

Physical activity, games and sport play an important role in our everyday lives. Throughout our lives everyone is exposed to some aspect of physical activity, games and sport. This could be as simple as playing at recess, moving around your workspace or as complex as being a part of an elite sport program. These three areas have the ability to offer a context for identity formation in youth (Bruner et al., 2017; Coakley & Donnelly, 1999; Donnelly & Young, 1988; Holt et al., 2020). Physical activity, games and sport are also used for socialization (Rees, 1986; Smith, 2010) and there has been a connection to social, psychological, health and academic benefits (Bailey, 2006; Coakley, 2009; Green, 2012; Hartmann, 2008; Lau et al., 2004; Lipscomb, 2006; Lubans & Morgan, 2008).

Physical activity, games and sport within an Indigenous context can offer a space to develop a cultural identity (Critchley et al., 2006; Downey, 2018; Dubnewick et al., 2018; Tighe & McKay, 2012). According to Dubnewick et al (2018), physical activity, games and sport promote pride, cultural knowledge and develop personal characteristics (confidence, respect and belonging), and develop a foundation for movement. Traditional activities have the potential to offer Indigenous youth a sense of connection and inclusion.

Physical activity, games and sport have a rich history within Indigenous communities, but the academic literature on it does not reflect this. It has been argued that this is because the world of academia has not made space for Indigenous people (Forsyth & Giles, 2014), particularly in this subject area. There is even less literature when dealing specifically with Indigenous youth (Kana'iaupuni, 2005; Mayeda et al, 2001). While this is beginning to change, research is badly needed in the area of physical activity, sport and games with, for and by Indigenous communities. Academics have been requesting more research be done with Indigenous youth in the area of physical activity, sport and games (Bruner et al., 2016; McHugh et al., 2015; Schinke

& Hanrahan, 2009). This research will add to a badly needed and now growing area of academics.

Indigenous people are recognized as the fastest growing demographic in Canada of which 44% are youth, 25 years or under (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Within non-Indigenous communities, only 28 % of the population fits into the 25 years and under category. Between 2006 and 2016, the Indigenous community in Canada grew by 42.5%, this is more than four times that of the non-Indigenous population over the same period (Statistics Canada, 2017a). The average age of the Indigenous population in 2016 was 32.1 years compared to 40.9 years of age in the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2017a).

As a result, more attention needs to be paid to the Indigenous youth population. In particular, our hope was to explore the role that sport can play in offering youth part of the stability that Elias and colleagues (2012) argue has been stolen from them. Tradition, culture and family are all components of the Anishinabe Pride program. In discussions with Anishinabe Pride director Jackie Anderson and the Community-Based Research Assistant (CBRA) the study topic stemmed from an interest in examining their program and the impact that it has had on members. A lot of discussions happened around the idea of Indigenous athletes navigating in a non-Indigenous setting and what it means to be Indigenous for youth today. We then moved to discussions of Indigenous identity and what contributes to healthy identity for Indigenous youth including helping Indigenous youth with “tools” to ground themselves. Discussions of Elders, medicine walks, naming ceremonies, art, offering thanks, healthy relationships, sweat ceremonies, and gifts were some of these topics. The Anishinabe Pride program was excited to review their program through the voices of players it had impacted.

It is also important to note that the Anishinabe Pride program is exclusively supported by fundraising; findings from this research will be useful to inform future funding proposals for the program.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the effects of a grassroots Indigenous basketball program on the identity formation of eight Indigenous adolescents involved in the program by listening to their own voices. The initial research question developed with the Anishinabe Pride basketball program was: From the perspective of eight Indigenous adolescent participants, to what extent does the Anishinabe Pride basketball program aid them in forming their identity? The research question and purpose were revised by adhering to a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach.

During this study, I explored Indigenous voices through the use of an Indigenous research methodology that focused on a strengths perspective. I utilized the CBPR approach, including a Community-Based Research Assistant (CBRA). Within Albert Marshall's theory of two-eyed seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Hatcher et al., 2009), I examined traditional ways of knowing and accessed Jean Phinney's (1989) stages of ethnic identity formation to explore the potential benefits of community programs. I was particularly interested to explore how the program could aid in identity development and what that might look like for Indigenous youth as related through their voices.

## **Conclusion**

Unlike past studies that sought to identify the negative aspects of Indigenous communities or programs, this study proposes a strengths-based exploration of Indigenous identity navigation through Anishinabe Pride, a grassroots community-run basketball

development program. In exploring the program, and talking with its volunteers, coaches, and players, this study aimed to identify the positive aspects of the program that helped to aid in the identity development of the Indigenous youth involved in the program.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Background: Indigenous people in Canada and colonialism**

Individuals, institutions, legislature, and education have all played a part in the colonisation of Indigenous people in Canada. This is important to understand when looking at current research with Indigenous communities. The Canadian constitution act of 1982 recognizes Indigenous people in Canada as First Nations, Metis and Inuit (Constitution Act, 1982). According to the 2016 census data, there are 1 673 786 Indigenous people in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017a). This accounts for 4.9% of the total population. From 2006 to 2016 the Indigenous population grew by 42.5%. That is four times the number of the non-Indigenous population and it is currently the fastest growing demographic in Canadian society. There are many factors involved in the population growth rate of Indigenous peoples, some of which are: increased life expectancy, high fertility rates, changes in census data collection, higher self-identification rates, as well as, changes in the legal system, namely Bill C – 31 and eventually Bill C – 3, which would affect the legal membership of First Nations women as defined by the Indian act (Hurley & Simeone, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2017).

Within Canada, the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 and the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869 were early illustrations of the paternalistic relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples (Hurley, 2009). These two laws would eventually be combined into the Indian Act of 1876 which gave power to the federal government in all areas of First Nations peoples' lives (Hurley, 2009). The Indian Act allowed the federal government to bypass the rights of Indigenous peoples as outlined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Royal Proclamation of 1763, 2017). The Indian Act gave the federal government control over Indigenous land, language, education, culture and rights.

In 1920, a continued act of assimilation policy came in the form of an amendment to the Indian Act. In 1920 it became mandatory for every Indigenous child between the ages of 4 and 16 to attend a residential school. Then in 1933, another amendment gave the principals of the residential schools legal guardianship over all Indigenous children that attended their school. Children were removed from their homes by force and sent to residential schools where many faced physical and sexual abuse until the last school closed in 1996 (Dion Stout & Kipling, 2003). Canadian legislation was used to ban Indigenous peoples from participating in their traditional ceremonies, allowed students to be physically reprimanded at residential schools for using their traditional language and, from the 1960's through to our current date, permitted child welfare agencies to remove Indigenous children from their homes and place them in foster care at obscenely high rates (Roberts, 2004; Sinclair, 2007a; Trocme et al. 2004; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004).

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin of Canada's Supreme Court, in a speech on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2015, described the relationship between Canada and its Indigenous people as one that included cultural genocide (McLachlin, 2015). Two months later on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, Justice Murray Sinclair delivered the findings from the Truth and Reconciliation commission and also used the term cultural genocide to describe Canada's goal and use of residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (b). 2015, p.5).

Canada's history of colonisation of Indigenous peoples has mainly occurred through attempted erasure of their Indigenous identity. The Canadian legislation as outlined above, the Indian act, residential schools, Indian day schools, interference from child welfare agencies, the sixties and millennium scoops, combined with environmental dispossession (Richmond & Ross, 2009), land reclamations, absence of Indigenous perspectives in educational institutions, and

racism experienced by Indigenous individuals and communities has led to a “denigration of identity” (Kirmayer et al., 2007, p.79). The erosion of understanding of who Indigenous people are, on both an individual and community level, has forced Indigenous people to continue to find ways to strengthen their traditions, language, land, culture and identity.

### **What is identity?**

Identity is often explained as how we understand who we are and our representation of that to the world around us. Xenia Chrysochoou (2003) explains this when she writes “identity constitutes a particular form of social representation that represents the relationship between the individual and others (real or symbolic, individuals or groups)” (p. 227). This idea about the way in which an individual relates to oneself and those around them becomes a starting point for this study on Indigenous identity. Due to the continued attempts of Indigenous identity erasure via colonisation, it is important to understand the different facets of Indigenous identity and how it can be strengthened.

### **Identity Formation**

In researching how identity is formed, I found it difficult to find Indigenous perspectives on the topic. That is not to say that they don't exist, but that it is more probable that space has not been given to these perspectives in the academic world. Much of Indigenous knowledge and understanding was traditionally passed down through an oral tradition and it is important to acknowledge that. Even though I may not see it or understand it, there may be an Indigenous identity formation perspective at play within the Anishinabe Pride program.

Within mainstream knowledge or ways of knowing, researchers have used three main theories in understanding how identity is formed: social identity theory (Lewin, 1948; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner 1979), acculturation theory (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 1986; Gudykunst &

Kim, 2003; Kramer, 2000), and identity formation (Phinney, 1989, 1991, 2008). These theories set the lens for how identity is analyzed in this thesis.

Social identity theory seeks to explain identity as a result of social and group connections. Lewin (1948) focused on the idea that an individual's positive self-esteem is connected with a strong sense of group identification. Tajfel and Turner (1979) took this idea a step further and reasoned that, if individuals were a part of a group, group membership would lead to an increased sense of belonging. This idea can become problematic when researching minority/ethnic groups that may feel disconnected from the majority group because of "conflicts in attitudes, values, and behaviors" (Phinney, 1990, p. 501).

Acculturation theory posits that identity only becomes important when you have two or more cultures or ethnic groups. Within this school of thought, the focus is on the minority/ethnic group and how this group is connected/disconnected to the dominant culture. Acculturation distinguishes among four diverse acculturation strategies (Berry, 1997): assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. In assimilation, individuals choose to interact with other cultures and refuse to maintain their original cultural identity. With respect to separation, individuals seek to maintain their original culture, while, at the same time, ignoring the host culture. Regarding integration, individuals try to continue an interest in both their traditional culture and the cultural groups around them. Finally, marginalization takes place when individuals choose to avoid both their original culture and interactions with outside groups. The idea of cultural conflict seems to be a driving force within acculturation theory. Acculturation theory identity formation then becomes an understanding of "how such conflicts are dealt with at the individual level" (Phinney, 1990, p. 502).

Phinney (1990) combines elements of social identity theory (social interactions) and acculturation theory (cultural conflict) because “identity is dynamic, changing over time and context” (p. 502). Identity formation, as outlined by Jean Phinney (1989; 1990), explores individuals’ ethnic identity changes and their associated developmental processes. Using Erikson’s (1968) idea of ego identity formation and Marcia’s (1980) ego identity model, Phinney (1989) focuses on three stages of identity formation. These stages consist of: the unexamined ethnic identity (the diffuse/foreclosed stage), the ethnic identity search (the moratorium stage), and ethnic identity achievement (the achieved stage). In the diffuse stage, individuals have limited awareness of their cultural identity or their ethnic background. Individuals in the foreclosed stage understand that they have an ethnic background, but have yet to explore their cultural identity. Feelings about their background may be positive or negative, depending on social situations. Persons in the moratorium stage show evidence of ethnic exploration but are often confused about their ethnicity and its meaning. Finally, the achieved stage relates to exploration of ethnicity with a clear meaning and acceptance of that ethnicity. For this study, I used Phinney’s stages of ethnic identity formation to examine Indigenous adolescents’ identity development through a culturally-based basketball program.

For Phinney (1991), there can be a connection between ethnic identity and self-esteem. When individuals seek to identify with both their own ethnic group and the mainstream culture, they generally have the strongest psychological outcomes. Phinney (1991) recognizes four components to consider when analyzing self-esteem and ethnicity. First is the evaluation of the group in society (positive versus negative) and whether or not members of the ethnic group associate with negative stereotypes/evaluations. The second component relates to feelings associated with one’s group membership, particularly the acceptance or rejection of one’s own

ethnicity. The third component focuses on interest in and knowledge of one's ethnic group. Self-esteem may be positively influenced by taking an active role in learning about one's ethnicity. The fourth component is commitment and is broken into two areas: foreclosed or achieved identity. Foreclosed identity commitment focuses on commitment that results from parents or significant people and does not involve any type of searching about ethnicity. In contrast, an achieved identity commitment is one that has been initiated by the individual through an independent search based on a personal decision.

It is important to note that Identity formation is not the same thing as positive youth development. Where identity formation examines how an individual constructs their identity and how they represent that identity to others socially, positive youth development is a strengths based concept that examines youth from the perspective that they have resources that need to be developed instead of problems that need to be solved (Lerner et al., 2005). Advocates of positive youth development explore characteristics of individuals and social environments that can be used to aid in positive developmental change (Lerner & Castellino, 2002).

### **Identity Formation through Sport**

Games, sport and physical activity play a major role within culture. From early games played with the family to meticulously organized elite sports programs, the role that games, sport and physical activity play in our everyday lives is extensive. Everyone is exposed to games, sport and physical activity to some degree. Whether this exposure is through family, friends, community, or schools (physical education programs), games, sport and physical activity are often used for socialization (Rees, 1986; Smith, 2010) and identity development (Bruner et al., 2017; Coakley & Donnelly, 1999; Donnelly & Young, 1988; Holt et al., 2020). It is also understood that games, sport and physical activity have many social, psychological, health and

academic benefits (Bailey, 2006; Coakley, 2009; Green, 2012; Hartmann, 2008; Lau et al., 2004; Lipscomb, 2006; Lubans & Morgan, 2008).

Experiences with sport participation vary depending on intensity and duration. Due to varying levels of participation, individuals can begin to associate as athletes, with a sport, a specific athlete, a team, with physical activity in general, or with a sport as part of a national identity. Games, sport and physical activity can become part of a person's understanding of who they are.

Erik Erikson's (1950) work, *Childhood and Society*, demonstrated that, during adolescence, individuals often go through a form of identity crisis. During these formative years, youth often try out different identities depending on social interactions. For youth involved in sport, part of their identity is connected to the role of athlete. Coakley and Donnelly (1999) explain that the depth of that identity is dependent on "their talent, their social relationships and whether those relationships continue to reaffirm their athletic identities, and the stage in their athletic careers" (p. 54). While Erikson understood that social interactions help form a youth's identity, Coakley and Donnelly would argue that it is the extent to which those interactions continue to reaffirm that identity and its connection to sport.

### **Physical Activity, Games, Sport and Indigenous Research**

Physical activity, games and sport have a rich history within Indigenous communities in North America. Traditionally, physical activity, games and sport have been used to teach within Indigenous communities about survival. While some aspects have at times been associated with violence, such as lacrosse as a substitute for war (Cohen, 2002), it also has had the ability to strengthen communities in positive ways. Traditional physical activity, games, and sport were assets that promoted traditional values (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013), spirituality, or medicine

(Culin, 1907). This helped to develop all aspects of an individual. Before colonisation, traditional physical activity, games and sport were an important part of Indigenous peoples' lives (Hall, 2013; Heine, 2013). Heine (2006, 2007) explained that traditional physical activity, games and sport were highly influenced by life on the land and often focused on skills needed to survive. Those skills often included endurance, strength and agility. Through European colonisation there was a distinct attempt to erase traditional activities and this included physical activity, games and sport. As with many aspects of Indigenous peoples lives, Europeans saw traditional physical activity, games and sport as "savage" and they soon became forbidden, banned or outlawed as "part of the broader assimilative agenda in Canada" (Forsyth, 2007, p.108). With the introduction of the Canadian residential school system, came the introduction of Euro-Canadian sports and games (ice hockey, baseball, etc). These games became a way to continue the assimilation of Indigenous children into the "mainstream" Euro-Canadian culture (Forsyth, 2013).

While the tradition of physical activity, games and sport within Indigenous communities is rich, the literature on Indigenous physical activity, games and sports is not. Some attribute this to the lack of space given to Indigenous people in the world of academia (Forsyth & Giles, 2014). This has been changing in recent times. The idea of researching *with* Indigenous people and communities has begun to see a shift away from the standard of research *on* Indigenous people and communities. This is discussed in more detail in chapter three, methodology and methods.

Within Canada, the majority of researchers who have engaged with Indigenous communities around the topic of health and physical activity have used a deficit perspective (Paraschak, 2013a). This perspective analyzes perceived negative aspects of Indigenous

communities. Through the deficit perspective, researchers begin by identifying “problems or barriers” (Paraschak, 2013a; p. 230) within Indigenous areas of sport and health, then seek out solutions from experts. Often these experts – who are typically not Indigenous - do not fully understand the issues that various Indigenous groups face and inadvertently continue advancing a colonial practice of assimilation.

The deficit perspective does not allow for an understanding of the situation. It reinforces to non-Indigenous Canadians that there is a problem by emphasizing what is not working while ignoring the positive strengths of the community (Paraschak, 2013a). Any current practices that may be beneficial and could be strengthened thus get ignored. This perspective can often cause an “us versus others” mentality (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 231). It does not look at the overall picture of a situation, which has a specific history and context.

In contrast to the deficit perspective, the strengths perspective (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014; Saleebey, 2009) begins from a place of hope. This lens is “the flicker of possibility that can ignite the fire of hope” (Saleebey, 2009, p.7). Strengths perspective principles encompass:

(1) every individual or group under discussion has strengths, (2) their challenges have also been opportunities to generate strengths, (3) the upper level of their capacity to grow is unknown, (4) ‘experts’ help by collaborating with them, (5) every environment is full of resources, and (6) all relationships must include caring, caretaking and an appreciation of context. (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 234, summarizing Saleebey, 2009)

Within the strengths perspective, the “solution” becomes collaborative ways in which researchers and participants explore situations of what is already working and how to enhance that process.

Paraschak and Thompson (2012) analyzed government reports, policies, a national survey, and other research to determine the major strengths of Indigenous people in relation to

physical activity. They compiled four specific areas that should be examined when dealing with Indigenous research, physical activity, and health: “a holistic approach towards physical cultural practices; strong family and community bonds; two-eyed seeing; and a commitment to self-determination” (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014, p. 234). Both Saleebey’s (2009) six principles of strengths perspective and Paraschak and Thompson’s four identified physical activity strengths within Indigenous communities parallel my Indigenous Research Methodology, as outlined in chapter three.

Brant Castellano and Reading (2010) explain that Indigenous people demand control over the research processes. They use the term “researching ourselves to life” (p.3) to demonstrate the value that research has for Indigenous people. This idea is extremely important when it comes to how research is translated. With Indigenous people having control over research it allows for their voices to be heard in a correct way. A continued shift in Canada with Indigenous sport research has been to listen to Indigenous experiences and voices. Documenting Indigenous experiences and voices offers Indigenous people a space in the world of academia and seeks to affirm Indigenous peoples and communities, while documenting Indigenous stories.

With Indigenous peoples recognized as the fastest growing demographic in Canada, it is also important to note that it is the youngest. According to the 2016 Census, Indigenous youth 25 and under represent 44% of the total population, compared to twenty-eight percent in the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2017b). This is important to recognize because youth are a huge part of the Indigenous population and the benefits are numerous when it comes to physical activity, games and sport. Benefits to youth include: improved bone density, lower blood pressure, and reduced adiposity (MacKelvie et al., 2003; MacKelvie et al., 2004; Nielson & Anderson, 2003; Ness et al., 2007). With Indigenous youth specifically, non-physical benefits

that are connected with physical activity, games and sport include: overall wellbeing, confidence, self-esteem, coping skills, positive understanding of achieved success, and leadership skills (Critchley et al., 2006; Hawkins & La Marr, 2012; Rodriguez, 2012; TeRito, 2006; Tighe & McKay, 2012). There is also evidence of a strengthened cultural connection among Indigenous youth who participate in physical activity, games and sport (Critchley et al., 2006; Tighe & McKay, 2012).

Physical activity, games and sport offer an opportunity to bring together communities and individuals. Within the context of Indigenous research on physical activity, games and sport, Dubnewick et al (2018), argue that traditional activities offer youth opportunities to make connections to Elders and the land. In their view, physical activity, games and sport promote cultural knowledge and pride, develop personal characteristics (confidence, respect and belonging), and build a foundation for movement (Dubnewick et al., 2018). Traditional activities have the potential to offer Indigenous youth a sense of connection; participants often refer to traditional activities as ‘our games’.

Paraschak (2013b) writes that current Canadian sport policy still affirms a mainstream hierarchical model that puts traditional Indigenous activities at a disadvantage, particularly when it comes to resources and funding. Paraschak (2013b) describes the inequality in the power relations of the people who have the opportunity to define what sport is, how sport structures operate and how resources are distributed. Often times traditional physical activity, games and sport do not fall under the umbrella of what Canadian institutions define as sport. McHugh et al. (2013) argue that cultural activities should be recognized as sport. They use the idea of traditional dance to illustrate their point. Dubnewick et al (2018) found that sport research that has begun to incorporate Indigenous perspectives has seen a shift and has started to acknowledge that traditional knowledge and values play an important role in deepening sport opportunities for Indigenous youth. This doesn’t change the fact that sport in Canada is often viewed through a

Eurocentric lens within research and funding circles, which leaves Indigenous youth with fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful physical activity, games and sport.

To help build sport opportunities for Indigenous youth, it is important to examine and move past the typical Eurocentric definitions of sport. Paraschak and Thompson (2014), explain that historically, there really was no distinction between sport, physical activity, active living and traditional games for Indigenous people. All of these things were important to Indigenous peoples' everyday life and survival, and all of these are important aspects of a wholistic healthy lifestyle. Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport (Canadian Heritage, 2005) acknowledges that traditional games play an important role in allowing Indigenous youth to engage in sport activities that reflect their unique culture. Even with this knowledge, now, 16 years later, we must redefine what sport means for Indigenous peoples, with their own voices, so that Canadian sport policy and funding more accurately reflects and applies to the lives of Indigenous peoples. These ideas were also echoed in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (a). 2015); in Call to Action #90i, to support the reconciliation process, it is recommended that there is a need for "community sport programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities" of Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015, p.10). It is essential now more than ever to follow up on this recommendation and allow Indigenous youth opportunities to access physical activity, games and sport in a context that reflects their lives.

The process of youth development provides opportunities for young people to have "a healthy, satisfying, and productive life as youth, and later as adults, because they gain the competence to earn a living, to engage in civic activities, to nurture others, and to participate in social relations and cultural activities" (Hamilton et al., 2004, p. 3). Part of youth development is

having access to physical activity, games and sport. Academics are starting to understand that the experience of Indigenous youth, as it relates to physical activity, games and sport needs to be explored and understood. McHugh et al (2019), conducted a *Meta-Study of Qualitative Research Examining Sport and Recreation Experiences of Indigenous Youth*. Their findings identify that Indigenous youth “articulated a deep understanding of the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual benefits that can be experienced through their participation in sport and recreation” (p.46). In examining this study, it is clear that Indigenous youth understand the importance of physical activity, games and sport in their own lives. This becomes even more evident when McHugh et al. (2019) outline emotional benefits from physical activity, games and sport and report that a common term used by Indigenous youth when describing their experiences with sport and recreation was “fun and happy” (p.46).

Physical activity, games and sport play an important role in the overall development of Indigenous youth and it becomes more impactful if it is connected to their culture. In the findings outlined by McHugh et al. (2019), they examine the connection between sport, recreation and culture. It’s explained that Indigenous youth describe how “traditional activities or those activities that are somehow connected to their culture could provide a unique opportunity to enhance the sport and recreation experiences of youth” (p.47). This connection to the culture offers the opportunity for Indigenous youth to see themselves and their community as an active participant in physical activity, games and sport.

### **Anishinabe Pride**

The Anishinabe Pride basketball program out of Winnipeg, Manitoba is one example of a way that Indigenous tradition, language, land, culture, identity and pride are being reintroduced and re-enforced in the community. This youth basketball program uses the sport of basketball to

reinforce and oftentimes reintroduce youth to their Indigenous heritage and way of life. While the Anishinabe Pride basketball program doesn't use a traditional sport, the program infuses an Anishinabe pedagogical approach that incorporates traditional teachings and ceremonies into the program. Examples of this include: medicine walks, naming ceremonies, seven grandfather teachings, sweatlodges, etc.

Past ideas about research on Indigenous communities are coming to an end. Academic institutions and scholars are slowly coming to the realization that Indigenous individuals and communities have unique perspectives and strengths, that don't need "solutions" from outsiders. The Anishinabe Pride program is one of these communities. Using traditional knowledge and practices, the Anishinabe Pride program seeks to empower youth through connections to tradition and sport.

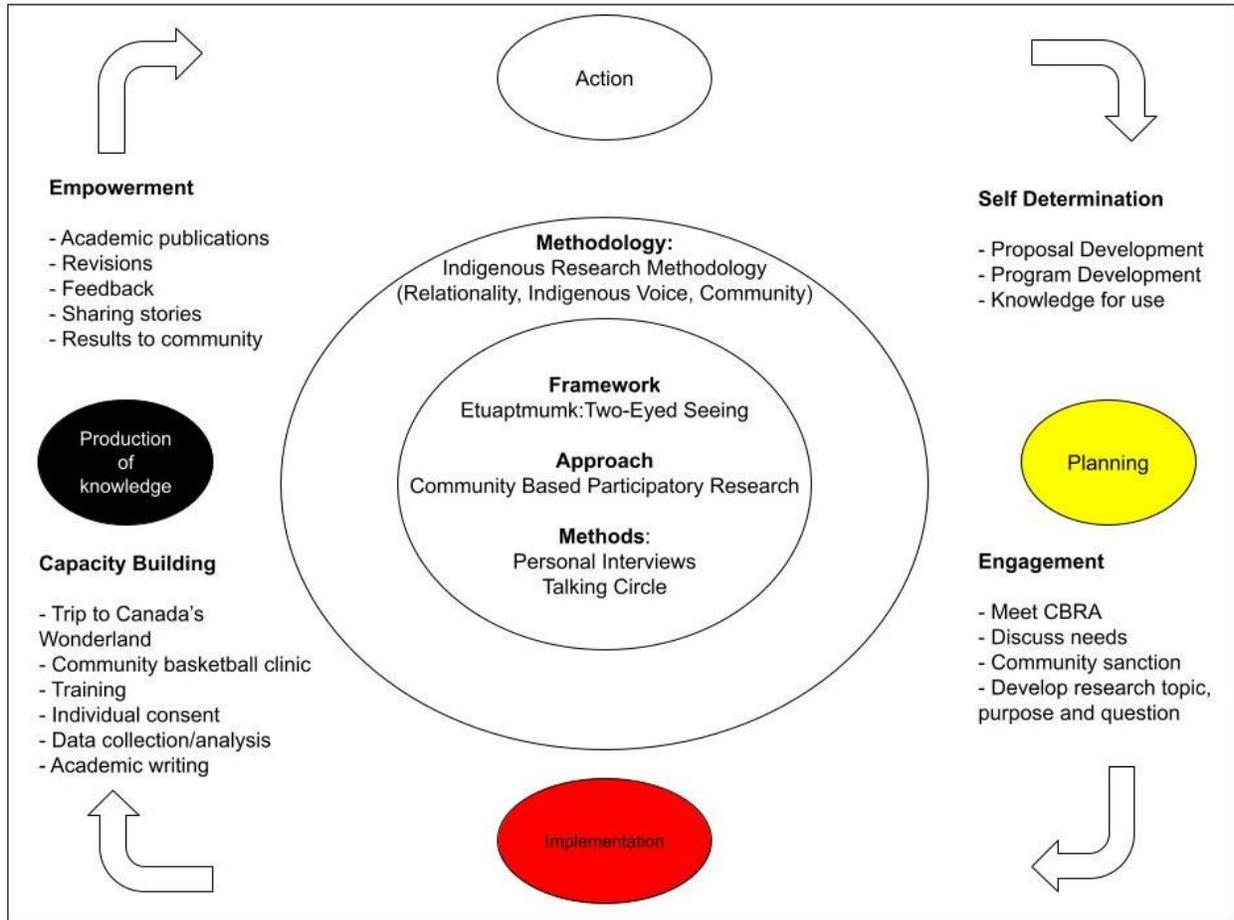
### **Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods**

The graphic in figure 1 aims to illustrate the interconnectedness of an Indigenous research methodology with the framework of Etuaptmunk - Two-Eyed Seeing and the Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach. All of these impact the methods that were decided with the Anishinabe Pride community. This illustration is an adaptation from Jacklin and Kinoshameg's (2008) Wikwemikong Community Needs Assessment Research Model.

In the Figure 1 illustration, I use the medicine wheel to help explain the process of CBPR. This process starts in the east, the yellow stage and begins with planning and engagement. This is where you begin the journey, meeting with the community, figuring out needs and what the community would like the research to be based on. Next we move to the south, the red stage. This stage is about implementation and capacity building. The focus is on establishing relationships, identifying participants, consent, data collection and analysis. In the west stage, connected with the colour black, is the production of knowledge and empowerment. This is about dialogue with the community, creating revisions, sharing stories and academic publications. Finally, the last stage is connected to the north and the colour white. Here we see the focus shift to action and self-determination. Here the knowledge learned from the study is used for and by the community that it came from. In this study, the knowledge is returned to be used for funding purposes, through written proposal and for the Anishinabe Pride community to use for program development.

**Figure 1**

*An illustration of the interconnectedness of an Indigenous Research Methodology, Framework of Etuaptmunk - Two-Eyed Seeing and the C.B.P.R approach*



### **Elaborating on An Indigenous Research Methodology**

To study Indigenous identity and voices, I feel that it is essential to understand and connect an Indigenous research methodology within my work. Dr. Jelena Porsanger, an Indigenous scholar, explains the purpose of developing a specific methodology for Indigenous research in her work titled: *An Essay about Indigenous Methodology*:

The main aim of indigenous methodologies is to ensure that research on indigenous issues can be carried out in a more respectful, ethical, correct, sympathetic, useful and

beneficial fashion, seen from the point of view of indigenous peoples. (Porsanger, 2004. pp. 107-108)

Indigenous researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) similarly argues that an Indigenous research methodology moves away from the problematic colonial Western ideas of research that seek to remove knowledge from person, place, and context, to instead develop methods of research that are affirming of relationships, communities, and Indigenous ways of knowing. In examining Indigenous research methodologies (Battiste, 2000 & 2013; Brant Castellano, 2004; Cajete, 2000; Lavallée, 2009; Porsanger, 2004; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson, 2008) I found that three themes emerged: relationality, Indigenous voice, and community.

### **Relationality**

The important understanding about the theme of relationality is that the researcher and the research participant have a specific relationship. In Shawn Wilson's (2008) book, *Research Is Ceremony*, he explains that the relationship between the researcher and the research participant is one that must make a difference in the life of the participant. This perspective is evident when he writes "research is not seen as worthy or ethical if it does not help to improve the reality of the research participants" (p. 37). Gregory Cajete (2000) writes about relationships as the cornerstone of Indigenous education: "Indigenous education is, in its truest form, about learning relationships in context. This context begins with family. It extends to the clan, to the community and tribe, and to all of the world" (p. 183). For Cajete, it is relationships that allow us to become complete. As a consequence, Elders are viewed with such reverence because they are closer to being in a stage of completeness (Cajete, 2000).

Within Indigenous research, relationships are not just examined between individuals. There is a growing understanding that the relationships that we keep also help define who we

are, including our values and ethics. Thus, Indigenous understanding of relationships entails place, including the environment and the cosmos. As Wilson (2008) writes, "Knowledge itself is held in the relationships and connections formed with the environment that surrounds us" (p. 87). The interconnectedness of relationship is additionally explored by Cajete (2000): "Living in a sea of relationships. In each place they lived, Indigenous peoples learned the subtle, but all important, 'language of relationship'" (p. 178). It is these various forms of knowledge through relationship that give way to a specific Indigenous voice.

### **Indigenous Voice**

Indigenous voice encompasses epistemology, ontology, and affirmation of Indigenous ways of knowing. I have chosen to combine these aspects because they are interconnected and interwoven. An Indigenous epistemology is wholistic in nature and connects individuals with the world around them (Battiste, 2013). Lavallée (2009) describes this epistemology as the "interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe" (p. 23). Sinclair (2007) elaborates on the idea of an Indigenous epistemology: "The greatest mysteries lie within the self at the spiritual level and are accessed through ceremony" (p. 28). The Western idea that science and metaphysics must be separated to offer valid knowledge is being challenged through Indigenous research (Battiste, 2000; Brant Castellano, 2004; Ermine, 1995; Wilson, 2008).

The use of Indigenous ontologies in helping to define an Indigenous methodology is paramount. Indigenous ontologies are described as "the nature and relations of being, and of reality" (Porsanger, 2004, p. 111). Within this context, Indigenous knowledge is based on three specific areas: Traditional knowledge, Empirical knowledge, and Revealed knowledge (Brant Castellano, 2000).

Traditional knowledge has been handed down more or less intact from previous generations...Empirical knowledge is gained through careful observation... Revealed knowledge is acquired through dreams, visions, and intuitions that are understood to be spiritual in origin. (Brant Castellano, 2000, pp. 23-24)

With this understanding of knowledge and where it comes from, Indigenous research seeks to affirm Indigenous voices and connect with these various forms of knowledge through traditional Indigenous methods.

### **Community**

For Indigenous people, knowledge, language, tradition, and culture are all tied back to the community. The idea that the community is greater than the individual is one that resonates with Indigenous peoples. Therefore, decisions should always be made to benefit the whole community. This same idea holds true for Indigenous research. With Indigenous research, there must be a positive connection to the community and an opportunity to bring the research back to the place and people where it originated. Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) explains the significance of the connection to the community in that "whatever is done by the researcher must be hooked to the community; the Indigenous research has to benefit the community" (p. 168). The idea of community as helping to shape research is expanded on by Battiste (2013):

Each community will have its own stories and understandings of how they have come to live in the world, and what they value as to how to live in the world. This ultimately shapes their humanity, their spirituality, and their heritage. (p. 75)

All Indigenous communities are different and must be seen as unique. If the goal of Indigenous methodology is to affirm Indigenous voices through traditional knowledge, based around relationships, then that research must help the community from where it came.

## **Conclusion**

In Indigenous methodologies, the themes of relationality, Indigenous voice, and community are constantly embedded. While I chose to examine these themes individually, I believe that they are fused together within the greater context of what Battiste (2013) calls a "life journey." It is these life journeys that are then connected to make communities and realities. These communities and realities provide opportunities for research. In this context, the researcher and the participants join together and continue to strengthen their connected life journeys.

## **Methods**

### **Framework: Etuaptmumk - Two-Eyed Seeing**

The Mi'kmaw concept of Etuaptmumk, Two-Eyed Seeing, is a framework for joining knowledge systems. This framework has been influential in shaping this thesis. Etuaptmumk was first described by Mi'kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall in 2004. He explained it as "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all" (Bartlett et al., 2012 p.335). Within this thesis, I have combined both Indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing with the goal of examining identity formation within Indigenous youth. This framework also aligns with a decolonizing and an Indigenous Research Methodology (Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

### **Approach: Community-Based Participatory Research**

The **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)** approach was first introduced by Kurt Lewin (1946) as a way to examine social justice issues. One of the key components of

CBPR is that the community partners, in conjunction with researchers, identify a research need in the community and then they work through the research process together (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). This process allows the research participants to have ownership of the research process because it is an issue that is important for their community. CBPR has to include reflection, dialogue, and action (Kirby & McKenna, 1989).

### Research Setting

For this study, “the community” refers to the Anishinabe Pride Basketball Program. The Anishinabe Pride basketball program is run out of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It offers numerous skill camps and league teams for Indigenous youth aged 10 to 19 years. The values of the basketball program are focused on the sacred seven grandfather teachings, represented as seven feathers on their team uniforms. The sacred seven teachings promote understanding and awareness around: respect, truth, humility, courage, wisdom, love, and honesty (Chartrand, 2017). I first found out about the Anishinabe Pride basketball program when I was in Regina in 2014 for the North American Indigenous Games. I noticed that the Manitoba basketball teams were all doing quite well. I spoke with a member of team Manitoba. This person directed me to Jackie Anderson, the creator and director of the Anishinabe Pride basketball program. I gave Jackie a call and asked her about the program she was running because I ran a similar program in the Kenhteke Kanyen’kehá:ka community. We discussed how her program incorporates Indigenous teachings. Over the years, we have continued to talk and message back and forth.

Professor of Indigenous Education and researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues for an Indigenous Research Methodology because she believes it moves away from the problematic colonial Western ideas of research that remove knowledge from a person, place, and context and to develop methods of research that are affirming of relationships, communities, and Indigenous

ways of knowing. CBPR is consistent with this methodology because it aims to enact change at the local level by keeping the knowledge learned through research in the community.

It is important to take a moment to discuss the research setting. The Anishinabe Pride program runs out of Winnipeg, Manitoba and during the summer of 2017 I travelled to Winnipeg to conduct research with the Anishinabe Pride program. In using CBPR, it is necessary to identify and work with a community-based research assistant (CBRA). I discussed with Jackie Anderson the possibility of her or someone that she knows acting as the CBRA. It is important to have someone in this role who understands and works within the Anishinabe Pride program so that she or he can help with any logistical issues. It is important for the participants' comfort to have the CBRA be someone that they know. It was recommended to me (from Jackie) that I should contact Raven Boulanger and discuss with her the possibility of being the CBRA. Raven was an original member of the Anishinabe Pride program and is actively involved in the program. She has been in a leadership role now for the past six years and has discussed taking over all aspects of the program from Jackie. After discussing what the role would consist of, Raven accepted my traditional offering of tobacco to show her acceptance of the offer.

### **The Topic, Purpose, and Question**

After identifying the CBRA, the next step was to jointly develop the research topic, purpose, and question. In discussions with the Anishinabe Pride director and the CBRA, the topic stemmed from an interest in examining their program and the impact that it has had on members who have gone through or were currently in the Anishinabe Pride basketball program. Our discussion focused on ideas of understanding what it means to be Indigenous and examining what that means for the youth of their program. We discussed healthy relationships and identity and how the Anishinabe Pride program was trying to help reinforce traditional values and how

they applied in today's world. They wanted to help the youth of their program develop a bundle of tools that could help them deal with issues that youth face. There was talk about Elders, medicine walks, naming ceremonies, art, offering thanks, healthy relationships, sweat ceremonies, and gifting. The Anishinabe Pride program was excited to review their program through the voices of players who had taken part in it.

This topic was one that I also found interesting as I was running basketball programs (The Steve Nash Youth Basketball Program) in the Kenhteke Kanyen'kehá:ka community and I was looking at methods to incorporate Kanyen'kehá:ka culture into the program. I wanted to connect students' cultural lives with the game of basketball and it seemed that was exactly what was happening with the Anishinabe Pride basketball program.

In consultation, we decided that the purpose of this qualitative study should be to examine the effects of a grassroots Indigenous basketball program on the identity formation of eight Indigenous adolescents involved in the program through listening to their own voices. We focused on identity formation because we were interested in hearing the participants' narratives about Indigeneity and their understanding of who they are. Many of the members of the Anishinabe Pride program came from inner-city Winnipeg and did not have connections with traditional teachings, land, language or culture. For many of them, the Anishinabe Pride program became a starting point to learning about their Indigenous identity. Our hope was to listen and learn from the members of the program to see what impact the program had on their everyday lives. The CBRA and myself discussed having between six and ten participants for this study. We decided eight participants would be a reasonable number. In discussions, we reasoned that six participants might be too few and that ten might be a challenge to recruit. At first, we were not sure what kind of interest there would be for participation in this study and we also knew that

time would be limited in Winnipeg, where the interviews would take place.

The research question that was designed for this study was: From the perspective of eight Indigenous adolescent participants, to what extent does the Anishinabe Pride basketball program aid them in forming their identity? This research question was agreed upon because we thought it would allow the participants an opportunity to discuss (with varying levels) the impact of the program on their lives and their understanding of who they are as Indigenous individuals.

### **Identifying Research Participants, Recruitment and Data Collection**

After receiving ethics clearance from Queen's University's General Research Ethics Board (GREB), see Appendix A (GREB Ref #: GEDUC-858-17; TRAQ #6021121), the next step was to identify research participants. The recruitment method used was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a "nonprobability sampling strategy where participants are selected based on their accessibility and/or proximity to the research" (Bornstein et al., 2013 p. 361). Convenience sampling is seen as a culturally relevant approach because it is open and inviting of everyone. This aligns with an Indigenous research methodology that seeks to be inclusive of all. According to Jager et al. (2017), within developmental science, convenience sampling is the norm. Over a five year period (2007 – 2011), they examined five prominent developmental science journals and found that 92.5% (p.16) used convenience sampling.

In this study, the CBRA approached current and former members of the Anishinabe Pride program to see if they would be interested in becoming involved in this study. The only requirements that we had for participants was that they had to self-identify as Indigenous, have participated in the Anishinabe Pride program and be within the youth age category of 16 to 24. In this particular context, we easily reached the goal of eight Indigenous adolescents who had participated in the Anishinabe Pride basketball program. Throughout the recruitment and data

collection stages, seven points of engagement with participants occurred as outlined below and expanded on in the data collection stages section:

1. I met with four potential participants at the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) in Toronto (July 2017).
2. I spent the day at Canada's wonderland with four of the study participants (July 2017).
3. I met with four other potential participants in Winnipeg (August 2017).
4. I conducted seven interviews in Winnipeg (one participant had to go to her home community for a funeral and submitted her interview responses in writing).
5. I conducted a traditional talking circle that was facilitated by an Elder who worked with the Anishinabe Pride program.
6. I ran a basketball clinic for members of the Anishinabe Pride basketball community in Winnipeg.
7. A one on one interview took place in November of 2019 with Jackie Anderson.

### **Data Collection Stages**

The first stage of data collection took place in Toronto during July of 2017 when I first met with the CBRA, and she accepted my tobacco tie as a traditional agreement and signed our confidentiality agreement, see Appendix D. At this time, I also met with members of the Anishinabe Pride program at the North American Indigenous Games, as part of recruitment. While this may not seem like it is important in the collecting data stage, it is essential when collecting data through an Indigenous Research Methodology. Relationships are key and it is important for participants to understand the researcher, their perspectives and the purpose of the study. At this time, we were able to read the recruitment script together, as well as the Letter of Intent/Consent Form (LOI/CF). The LOI/CF included the purpose of the study, an understanding

that all identities would be kept confidential to the extent possible in the collecting and reporting of data, and the withdrawal procedures. Two methods were used to solidify the participants' agreement in the study, a traditional acceptance of a tobacco offering and a signed consent form.

The second stage of data collection took place the day after I met the first four participants. When the CBRA was looking for a driver for team Manitoba members to go to Canada's Wonderland, I volunteered and was able to spend the day with the four participants, as well as two other basketball players and two coaches from team Manitoba, and a player from Team Ontario that I coached. We were able to connect in Toronto and this set the foundation for what was to come in the study. It was paramount that the participants in the study understand me not only as a researcher, but also as an Indigenous person and a support.

The third stage of data collection took place in August of 2017 when I flew to Winnipeg and met with four more potential participants. We read the recruitment script together, as well as the Letter of Intent/Consent Form (LOI/CF). The potential participants used two methods to solidify the participants' agreement in the study, a traditional acceptance of a tobacco offering and a signed consent form. This is important in the data collection stage because Indigenous research and data collection is about relationships.

The fourth stage of data collection occurred while I was in Winnipeg over three days in August of 2017. During that time I recorded seven interviews with participants. The participants were compensated with a \$10 gift card for the interview. I then transcribed all of these interviews verbatim. I completed the transcribing portion of the data collection stage by the end of October 2017. These interviews yielded forty pages of double-spaced data.

The fifth stage of data collection was in the form of a traditional talking circle. The talking circle protocol was developed with the Elder that was facilitating, the CBRA and me. The

talking circle was led by an Elder and involved coaches, parents, participants, and me. The talking circle was as an opportunity for those involved to discuss the Anishinabe Pride program and the role it played in their life. It was not mandatory for participants involved in the interviews. The talking circle provided those involved to have a voice and share their narratives around the Anishinabe Pride program. The talking circle took place in a community center and involved traditional smudging before. The talking circle was recorded but it was never transcribed. It was a method to confirm themes that emerged from data analysis. Participants that took part in the talking circle were compensated with a \$20 gift card for their time during the two-hour talking circle.

The sixth stage of data collection was in the form of a basketball clinic that I ran for the Anishinabe Pride players while I was in Winnipeg. This occurred after the talking circle at the community center. Relationships are a key component of an Indigenous Research Methodology and this section of data collection allowed me an opportunity to get to know my participants at a deeper level. I explained various techniques and drills, but I also asked questions about how they were doing and their lives in general. Another key component of an Indigenous Research Methodology is giving back to the community and this allowed me an opportunity to give back some of my knowledge, as a college level basketball coach in the OCAA (Ontario Colleges Athletic Association). I ran the participants through specific drills that I would run with my college basketball team and I finished the clinic with a discussion about coach expectations for college level basketball players. Giving back to the community is also a part of CBPR and this clinic gave me an opportunity to share some of my knowledge with the Anishinabe Pride community.

The seventh and final stage of data collection was a one on one interview with Jackie

Anderson. This interview occurred in November of 2019 after I had completed the data analysis. This interview gave me an opportunity to check in with the Indigenous community, the Anishinabe Pride program, that I was researching with. I wanted to make sure that I was not misrepresenting the Anishinabe Pride program and this interview allowed me the opportunity to verify my results with the person who created the program. I also asked Jackie if it was alright if I could put our conversation into the discussion section of this thesis, to which she agreed. This is fitting with an Indigenous Research Methodology, which seeks to keep relationships at the forefront of all research. This interview was then transcribed and incorporated into the section titled: Discussion.

## **Interviews**

All of the interviews that were conducted took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba during August of 2017, over a three-day period. Any participants that had not already gone over the LOI, were read the LOI/CF and consented with both signatures and an acceptance of a tobacco tie. The LOI/CF can be found in Appendix A. It was agreed that a traditional talking circle would still be used. The interviews generally lasted less than a half hour. Some interviews were conducted outside at a local park, some interviews were conducted in an office building and one interview was conducted in a participant's home.

The questions for the interviews were designed with the Anishinabe Pride program, through Jackie Anderson, the CBRA and me. The nature of the questions dealt with the participants' understanding of identity and attempted to provide opportunities for participants to identify what aspects of their life and the Anishinabe Pride program contribute to their identity. We also explored questions that examined aspects of their life or the Anishinabe Pride program that may have hindered their identity development. The interview pre-amble, questions and

prompts can be found in Appendix B.

In discussions with the CBRA it was decided that we would keep the traditional talking circle and participants would have an opportunity to discuss their stories around the Anishinabe Pride program. The talking circle was not mandatory for the participants, but more than half of the participants chose to attend. The talking circle also included an Elder, administrators, parents, coaches and other players that were not active participants in the interview process. The traditional talking circle was facilitated by the Elder and incorporated a talking feather, which indicated who was talking. I went through a talking circle protocol, see Appendix C, and let those involved know that the talking circle was being recorded but that it would not be transcribed.

### **Talking Circles**

Talking circles are traditionally used with all ages as a way of acknowledging all voices in the circle. Circles are sacred within Indigenous communities, with talking circles traditionally for "teaching, listening, and learning," while also emphasizing "knowledge, values, and culture" (Running Wolf & Rickard, p. 39). The protocol for the talking circle was developed between the main researcher, the CBRA and the Elder conducting the circle. Through co-development, the Indigenous community had a voice in all the stages of research. The talking circle protocol emphasizes the importance of respecting the views, stories, and privacy of all the participants involved and seeks to focus the narratives that are shared within the group. The talking circle also provided an opportunity to affirm the tradition of oral narrative among Indigenous people. Once the talking circle was concluded, the narratives were analyzed for themes and cross-referenced with the CBRA who felt that everything that was identified was acceptable. The goal of the talking circle was to cross-reference data analysis from individual interviews through a

traditional method based on oral narratives.

## **Data Analysis**

The qualitative analysis method that I used was the constant comparison method. This method was associated with Grounded Theory, initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and modified by Lincoln and Guber (1985) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Grounded Theory and the constant comparison method is consistent with an Indigenous research methodology (Castellano et al, 2000; Holm et al, 2003; Kovach, 2019; Little Bear, 2000; Wilson, 2008; Wilson et al, 2021). Using Strauss and Corbin's concept of coding, I applied three steps:

1. Open coding, which is "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (p. 61). This coding consisted of analyzing the interview transcripts and highlighting anything that was connected to the research question.
2. Axial coding is "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences" (p. 96). This coding entailed examining the open codes for similarities and then grouping those similarities into categories.
3. Selective coding "The process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (p. 116). Selective coding involved analyzing the axial codes for connections and creating themes based on those connections.

When analyzing the interviews, I began by looking at each interview on its own. I went through the separate interviews and examined them using the research question. I identified open

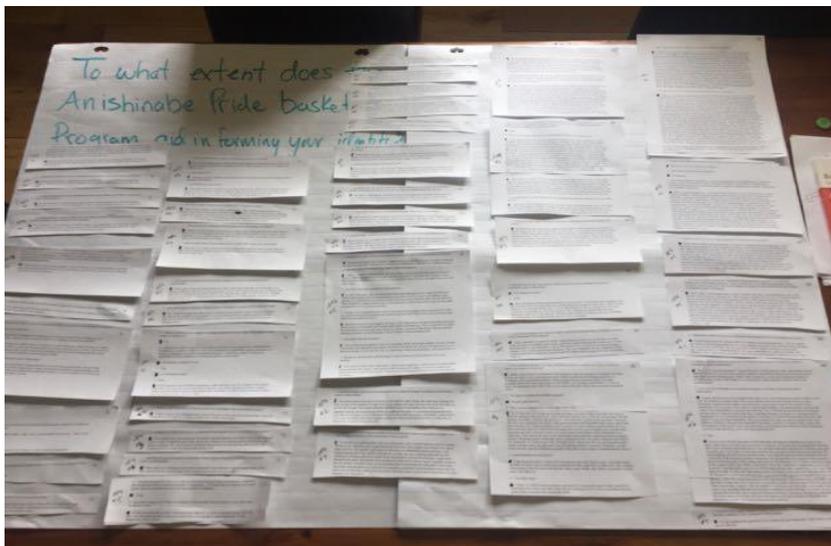
codes from each interview and combined them to make one data set. I did not listen to the talking circle audio recording until I had established themes through data analysis of the interview transcripts. Once those themes were established I went back and listened to the talking circle to verify the themes established through data analysis.

I analyzed the data using a five-step process, which is outlined below.

1. I examined all participant transcripts and highlighted anything that pertained to our research question: From the perspective of eight Indigenous adolescent participants, to what extent does the Anishinabe Pride basketball program aid them in forming their identity? I used this set of data as our open codes. I coded 45 open codes and I choose to create a system that identified from AP1#1 (1) (Anishinabe Pride interview one, code number one, overall code number one) all the way to AP8#7 (45) (Anishinabe Pride interview number eight, code number seven, overall code number forty-five).

## **Figure 2**

### *Open Codes*

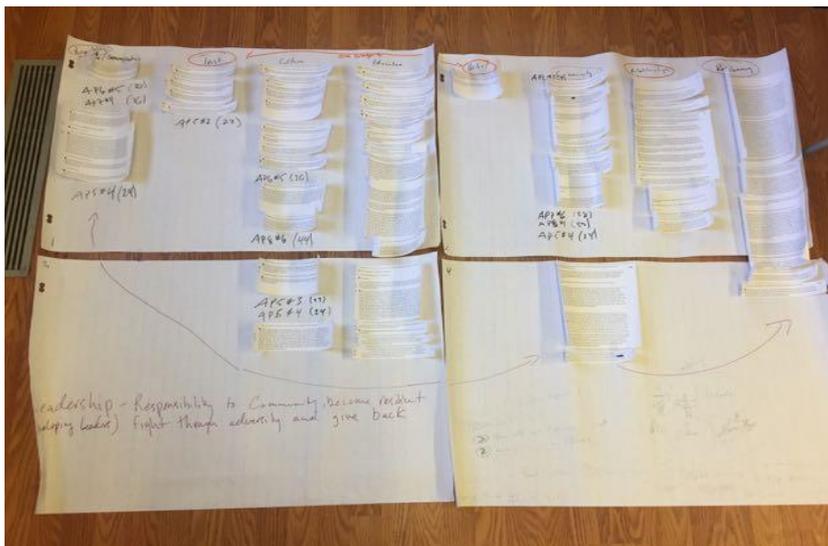


2. I then went through the open codes and began to combine codes into categories (Axial coding) that were connected. From this process, I identified eight distinct categories:

Responsibility, Trust, Culture, Education, Belief, Community, Relationships and Resiliency. Trust and Belief were very similar and I combined those two categories. The following three categories; Culture, Education, and Community were discussed by all of the eight participants. (See Appendix E: Coded Categories).

**Figure 3**

*Organizing Coded Categories (Axial codes)*



3. In closer examination, the categories of Responsibility, Trust/Belief, Relationships and Resiliency all fit closely with the category of community. These were then combined and it created three major themes (Selective coding) that impacted the identity formation of participants in the Anishinabe Pride basketball program: Culture, Education, and Community. (See Appendix F: Coded Themes).
4. I then went through the oral narratives of the talking circle and listened to the stories that were told by the various individuals involved in the Anishinabe Pride basketball program. All three themes were discussed from various perspectives; coaches, parents, and players.

5. Finally, I discussed the results with Jackie Anderson, the creator and director of Anishinabe Pride, in a phone conversation to get her feedback. Jackie agreed with the findings and also elaborated on the idea of relationships. At the core, the Anishinabe Pride program is about relationships with the self, others and the community. This is outlined in our highlighted conversation in the discussion chapter.

After completing the five steps I reviewed and verified the findings with my supervisor, Dr. Jamie Pyper. In our reviewing process, Dr. Pyper and I discussed the notes I had taken and the actions I used to verify the results. Our discussion included the importance of the talking circle and how it included more voices than just the participants in the individual interviews. In the verification process, I listened to the talking circle and took notes, which enabled me to reconfirm the themes that had been established in the individual interviews. In addition, the talking circle provided various perspectives that had not be discussed in the interviews and these perspectives added clarity and depth to the research.

Finally, Dr. Pyper and I discussed Indigenous Research Methodologies, voice and relationships and how the one on one interview with Jackie Anderson was a method for verifying themes. I transcribed our conversation and made notes on the connection between the established themes and what we talked about. Dr. Pyper and I then examined the idea of including the one on one interview with Jackie Anderson in the discussion chapter as it aligns with an Indigenous Research Methodology, highlighting Indigenous voice and relationality.

### **Giving Back to the Community**

Giving the research back to the community is an essential component of an Indigenous research methodology. The knowledge is not that of the researcher, but it belongs to the participants. To share this knowledge with the community, I have had discussions with Jackie

Anderson about the results. One goal of this study is for the Anishinabe Pride program to use this study to outline the importance of their program to various provincial funders. As a highly subsidized program, the Anishinabe Pride program is constantly completing applications for and from various funding agencies. One major goal is to use the data and results for the application process. Another opportunity for the research to be beneficial to the community is through the participants themselves. As stated by AP7, “I’m gonna build a program like Anishinabe Pride.” These results offer the participants a chance to see various aspects of the program that they might not have thought about and as they move forward and create similar programs the results can offer a blueprint of what it takes to be successful. Finally, it was a privilege to run a clinic in Winnipeg with the Anishinabe Pride youth and discuss future options and expectations as post-secondary athletes.

### **Photovoice**

Photovoice is a data collection method that was discussed with both the CBRA and the participants. Photovoice is a data collection method introduced by Caroline Wang that seeks to give voice to those who have traditionally been marginalized (Hurworth, 2003). This data arts-based collection method pairs well with an Indigenous Research Methodology. Traditional art has been seen as an expression of language, storytelling, lineage, spirituality, cosmology, relationship, basic needs for survival, and an individual’s truth (Hammond et al, 2018; Lambert, 2014; Wilson, 2008). Traditional art enables there to be a connection with Indigenous persons and everything around them. Due to the living distance between the participants and me time constraints, and inconsistent access to participants, it was decided in consultation with the CBRA that photovoice would not be feasible to use within this research. It was decided that a traditional talking circle, which was originally part of the photovoice data collection method, would still be

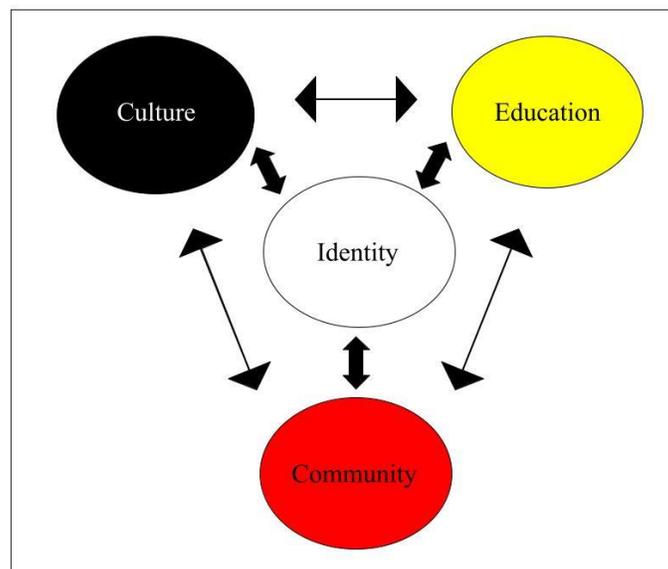
used as a traditional method that could be used to verify individual interviews.

## Chapter Four: Results

Analysis of the data in this study led to three major themes about the influence to participants' identity formation with respect to their participation in the Anishinabe Pride program. The three key themes that emerged from the data analysis were 1. Education, 2. Culture, and 3. Community. From the narratives explored through the individual interviews, these themes were constantly evident within the participants' lives, and aspects of these themes were visible within the Anishinabe Pride program (Figure 4 illustrates my conceptualization of the inter-relatedness of these themes). In figure 4, I use the Anishinabe teachings of the medicine wheel to illustrate connections between the emergent themes and identity. Even though I chose to explore these themes individually, it is important to note that each of them is vast, multi-layered and interconnected. Each theme has an important role to play in the development of the participants' Indigenous identity.

### Figure 4

*My conceptualization of the inter-relatedness of the themes in identity formation for participants in the Anishinabe Pride program.*



The medicine wheel teachings are vast and multifaceted. The colours have connections to many aspects: the day cycle, the season cycle, the life cycle, sacred medicines, elements, directions, personal balance and wellness. Like the medicine wheel, the four components of figure 3 are all interconnected. Each theme, has equal importance to the achievement stage of identity development. I have represented this through the use of equal circles and two-way arrows. Within the medicine wheel teachings, the final stage is represented by the colour white or the Elder stage. It symbolizes nearing the end of our journey on earth. In my conceptualization, I have used the colour white to connect with identity achievement. This represents an end of a journey so to speak. The understanding, acceptance and realization of their Indigenous identity.

### **Education**

Education, in the context of this thesis study, is represented by two main ideas. The first is a Western concept of education as understood in its simplest form as learning in the classroom and is seen through various forms of “schools” (mainly elementary, high school, college and/or university). The second idea focuses on a Non-Western idea of education and examines traditional Indigenous ways of knowing. This second concept of education will be explored at length in the results section titled “Culture.” Both educational ideas play a key role in the Anishinabe Pride program and both of these concepts of education are seen in the context of a process.

All the individuals within this study identified Western education as an important element of their experience within the Anishinabe Pride program. The theme of education was also emphasized across different interview responses and half of the individuals elaborated on the theme of education multiple times in their interview. In analyzing the individuals’ responses, it

seems that navigating the dominant Canadian education system is vitally important for reaching their desired outcome within a Canadian context. While it appears that instilling the value of education is a goal of the Anishinabe Pride program, it is important to note that athletes within the program do not all begin with the same ideas and value with respect to education.

Individuals examined their own ideas on the importance of education and explained where they started from and how their values involving education were shaped within the Anishinabe Pride program. There were three distinct starting points when referring to education:

1. Importance of education was stressed in the home and also valued by the individual for success.
2. Importance of education not stressed in the home, but the individual had a strong sense of educational importance.
3. Importance of education not stressed in the home and not valued by the individual.

The first starting point has education as an important family value and is stressed in the home to the participants. The athletes grow up with a sense that education has power and thus is necessary for achievement in life. This is evident when I asked participants if their value on education had changed since becoming a member of the Anishinabe Pride (AP) program. One respondent replied, "...well everyone knows that education is like very important" (AP7). Another participant simply said, "No. My parents did a good job. Go to school, do your homework." (AP8). Finally, a third member of the pride program stated, "I'm not sure, I don't think so." (AP2) insinuating that they already had a high value on education from family.

The second starting point comes from a place of self-direction. This idea of self-direction is fueled by the thought of proving people wrong. The catalyst for this idea came from an

interview response where the participant stated, "...everyone's doubted me, like oh he probably won't graduate. So I've just really strived to graduate and just always have" (AP3). This motivation to prove people wrong, spills over into all aspects of education, including attendance. This motivation became clear later in the interview with the following statement: "Never really like not wanted to go to school. I've always been there and always hated missing school" (AP3). This individual believes education has a purpose and finds motivation through achieved success when there are negative opinions from others.

The third place where individuals may start from, within the context of this study, is with a more negative outlook on education. With this outlook, education is not stressed in the home and the individual consequently does not have a positive value of education. That became apparent when one adolescent was asked if their value on education had changed since being a member of the Anishinabe Pride program. The participant stated, "I could really care less for school. I ditched a lot. I ditched a lot to play basketball honestly...I only went to school for the basketball season and then I just stopped going after that." (AP6).

While the emphasis on education is a cornerstone of the program, it is considering the third starting point that indicates the Anishinabe Pride program has had the strongest impact within the theme of education. The individual, AP6, who said they, "...could really care less for school" later spoke about the program coordinator and a coach who sat down with them and expressed concern and the importance and need of education. This individual spoke about how the program coordinator would call every day to check in and make sure the student went to school and would often pick the student up and drive him to school. This individual's whole value of education changed because of the Anishinabe Pride program. His changing value of education is clear when later in the interview he states, "Now I'm learning that education is the

most important and education has to be the first priority at all times and basketball comes next” (AP6).

While the concept of valuing education was explored in a one on one conversation, it is also a theme that is constantly brought up in the Anishinabe Pride program. The value of education was explained numerous times from different individuals. An Anishinabe Pride participant explained in an interview, “...it’s like learning new stuff every day. You wanna learn new stuff cause you get more exposed to stuff, but like in the program you learn all about learning...stayed in school mostly cause of the program” (AP1). Another individual spoke about workshops that were hosted by the Anishinabe Pride program. This participant stated, “...the workshops they talked to us about important things in life and how you can push far and be who you want to be, even though it seems hard to do. So that helped me a lot in school” (AP4). Others in the program spoke about higher learning and their desire to play basketball at the next level (college/university): “I learned through the Anishinabe program that education is very important, to get to the next level too” (AP7).

Finally, individuals discussed educational connections that were developed through the Anishinabe Pride program. The Indigenous Math Leadership program was mentioned by many participants, as was the Sacred Seven program and the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports Achievement Center (WASAC); the WASAC is a non-profit organization that seeks to remove barriers for Indigenous youth, in the area of sport, recreation and culture. The Sacred Seven program is a mandatory program for any first year Anishinabe Pride player, and the program examines the sacred seven grandfather teachings. One of the strongest education connections that the Anishinabe Pride program has is with the University of Winnipeg Collegiate’s (UWC) Model School program. UWC is a private high school located at the University of Winnipeg. The UWC

Model School program is one that subsidizes the education of its students and offers opportunities for traditionally under-represented populations in post-secondary institutions. Five of the eight participants that I interviewed had experience with the UWC Model School program.

The UWC Model School provides Anishinabe Pride athletes amazing educational opportunities. With access to professors, tutors, and the University of Winnipeg resources, the Model School students are being prepared to take their education to the next level. One participant explained, “I was selected to go there [the UWC Model School] and they help you a lot with tutoring...teaching you the value of education...they really did prepare me for university.” (AP8). Another respondent stated, “Anishinabe Pride program got me into the U.W. Collegiate. I wouldn’t have been able to go to the Collegiate without the Model School program” (AP7). This same participant elaborated on her answer by explaining, “the Model School program gives opportunities for like inner city youth to go to a private school that, and get that next level education” (AP7).

Within the Anishinabe Pride program, the valuing of education is paramount. The program focuses on understanding the education system and how to navigate it, thus allowing participants in the program more options through education. Regardless of the athletes’ educational perspective starting point, after time within the Anishinabe Pride program they all seem to finish with an idea that education will help get them to where they want to be in the future.

### **Culture**

*“If you don’t know where you come from, how do you know where you’re going? If you forget where you come from, you’ll never get to where you want to be.” Jackie Anderson*

The importance of culture is one that permeates through the entire Anishinabe Pride program. The importance of culture is even represented in the image of the seven feathers

(representing the seven grandfather teachings) on the front of the team uniform. Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a specific group and in the context of the Anishinabe Pride program includes: language, traditions, ceremony, traditional knowledge, connections to the land, Elders and community. It is important to understand that culture for the Anishinabe Pride program is often expressed through traditional Indigenous ways of knowing or a Non-Western idea of education.

Every individual within this study identified *culture* as an integral component of the Anishinabe Pride program. When analyzing participants' responses, the theme of *culture* was often stressed multiple times by individual people. It is this theme of culture that drives the program and enables participants to have a sense of connection or belonging. Even with the cultural theme being emphasized, it is important to consider that all the individuals in this study come from very different places of origin. For some, their cultural connection and Indigenous identity is something that has been stressed in their home from an early age. For others, they don't know who their own home community is, let alone their traditional language, traditions and ceremonies. And there is a myriad of people in-between these two points (individuals who have varying understandings of traditions, language, ceremonies and who they are as Indigenous people).

There are many aspects to the cultural component of the Anishinabe Pride program. One of the most influential is the Sacred Seven program. The Sacred Seven program is a mandatory course for any first time Anishinabe Pride participant. It involves weekly meetings that focus on the seven grandfather teachings. Each teaching is given its own day to discuss what the teaching is and how it is evident in an individual's life. This becomes a major factor in Indigenous identity formation for members of the Anishinabe Pride because of its real-life application. The seven

grandfather teachings are: wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth. The program utilizes local Elders and often focuses on learning through a traditional Indigenous model (talking circles, art-based learning, land-based learning, relational learning, etc).

When I asked the participants about the role of the Anishinabe Pride program on their identity, every individual spoke about the cultural impacts of the program, specifically through the Sacred Seven program. One participant stated “Probably the biggest role. Honestly, biggest role in my life” (AP6). Within the context of this research, I am able to identify three major goals of the cultural component of the Anishinabe Pride program that are directly related to Indigenous identity formation:

1. Help Indigenous athletes gain an understanding of who they are as an Indigenous person.
2. Help connect who they are as an Indigenous person in today’s context.
3. Help connect who they are as an Indigenous person to the game of basketball.

The first goal of the cultural component of the Anishinabe Pride program is to help Indigenous athletes gain an understanding of who they are as an Indigenous person. They help individuals navigate what it means to be an Indigenous person, where they are from, their traditions, language, and ceremonies. This first goal was emphasized when one participant stated “learning more about my culture really helped...like it’s really about yourself. You’ve got to balance everything at once and they really just helped balance everything” (AP3). Another participant explained “They try to teach you, who you are as a person, like your culture” (AP8). This same individual responded later that “It made me accept myself more, like my culture” (AP8). This process of understanding and accepting who you are is not one that happens overnight. One participant explained the learning journey as “we can learn about culture each day” (AP2). The focus here is that it is a daily process of developing knowledge, understanding and identity.

The second goal is one that seeks to connect the individual with who they are as an Indigenous person to the current world around them. The value of how traditional teachings apply to today's context is one that resonates with Anishinabe Pride athletes. One Anishinabe Pride athlete explained the process of the sacred seven program when explaining, "we used to have workshops that focused on one teaching like honesty and wisdom and we would talk about those things a lot" (AP4). Another participant explained the influence of the sacred seven program on his daily life: "We talk about our culture. We learn a lot about our culture. We learn how to use those teachings in everyday life, in a good way" (AP6). This participant later elaborated on these ideas, stating:

"That's had a big impact. Those seven teachings, I want those to be shown in my everyday life. I lean towards showing that I guess... That's the way I want to live my life. I want to live my life based off those seven teachings and just show it." (AP6)

Finally, as the Anishinabe Pride program is also about basketball, the cultural component also seeks to connect Indigeneity to the game of basketball. This connection is not something that is specifically emphasized, but one that is incorporated within the general idea of connecting to the world around them. When discussing the role that the Anishinabe Pride had in developing identity, one participant stated "Definitely the sport and culture aspects of my identity. Like connecting all my cultural things into my actual basketball" (AP7). This idea that culture and basketball can (and should) connect is explained in further detail when this same athlete explains "Anishinabe Pride taught me to keep my cultural aspect instead of losing it just playing basketball. I wouldn't be as developed as I am right now without having my cultural aspect" (AP7). Athletes are taught that connecting culture to the game helps to reinforce who they are as Indigenous athletes.

The cultural component of the Anishinabe Pride program seeks to provide athletes with experiences (physical, emotional, spiritual and mental) that will shape and strengthen who they are as Indigenous people. It is these experiences that enable athletes to deepen their understanding of Indigenous culture and how that applies to their specific life. As Jackie Anderson, the program coordinator, says “You can’t be a better athlete if you can’t learn to identify with who you are and be able to have relationships with others.” Developing an understanding of who you are as an Indigenous person and that culture is not decompartmentalized from the rest of life, including basketball, is a fundamental part of the Sacred Seven and Anishinabe Pride program.

### **Community**

Community is the heart of all things Indigenous and it holds a special place within the Anishinabe Pride program. The entire program is based on community: reaching out, developing, making connections, and giving back. I heard participants say time and time again that the program is not just about basketball and that sentiment is what sets this program apart. At its basic form this program is about trust, belief, and relationships; about having relationships, developing relationships, recognizing positive and negative relationships, and the impact that someone has on someone and the impact that one can have on another human being.

Before examining the Anishinabe Pride program through the lens of community, it is important to understand the neighbourhood community that the majority of these participants come from. What these athletes are exposed to on a daily basis can have a profound impact on their identity and their core values. There is a need to discuss and understand the negative influences that are a reality for the athletes of the Anishinabe Pride program. There were three specific areas where negativity was evident for the Anishinabe Pride athletes that I interviewed.

The negative influences that these athletes dealt with on a regular basis were: financial constraints from low income households, gang life (including violence and narcotics), and racism.

### **Negative Influences**

Financial constraint due to low income is a point that was stressed from participants that I met with. In trying to help me understand his daily life, one athlete stated “It’s just all negative. It’s like most of our players, we were all inner-city youth kids. We all had it rough, financially, whatever at home” (AP6). This idea that their options are limited because of finances is a reality for many of these youth. The other basketball programs in Winnipeg cost anywhere from five hundred and fifty dollars to well over a thousand dollars (and the majority of those other program costs do not include travel costs). Another athlete also noted that “growing up we could never really afford the elite teams. I know there was an opportunity for me to go to one, but...it was just really ridiculously expensive” (AP8). When the entire family income is used to pay for food and shelter, these other basketball programs are not an option.

Gangs and narcotics are an ongoing issue within the city of Winnipeg. Pressure to join gangs is a reality for many inner-city youths. As they try to develop and understand their identity, gangs provide a group that is willing to accept them and also help financially through the selling of illegal narcotics. Some participants in this study have family members that are involved in street gangs and various forms of illicit activity. One participant stated “The communities that we’re around, it’s all negative right. Drugs, like, bad case of gangs, all that” (AP6). He expressed that someone can’t escape it, it is constantly all around them.

Racism is an influence that more than one participant discussed. The racism that was experienced did not come from the neighbourhood community (as it was largely Indigenous), but

from within the basketball community. In one interview, one participant expressed “We would always face racism in games. Really bad racism, like some girls would not even hold back” (AP7). Players experienced racism from players on teams they were competing against, as well as parents from the teams they played against. The same Pride player (AP7) felt that the other high-level basketball teams didn’t believe that the Anishinabe Pride team deserved to be playing at that level. She explained this statement when she said “their programs were just super focused on race...we were a team full of native girls right and inner-city kids...we couldn’t afford to play with this high-level program or high paid programs. So, Pride gave us that opportunity and what we get back is racism” (AP7).

Another participant stated that playing on the team was her first experience with racism when she said “before that I never really experienced any racism” (AP8). This same player spoke about not giving into the racism. She explained “there was a lot of racism that we experienced on the team. But we stayed proud, like we didn’t feed in to it and you know I think having each other there...I guess we just felt really proud of who we were” (AP8). It is important to note that even though the players were dealing with various forms of racism, they took strength from each other and the Anishinabe Pride program.

### **The Community**

The sense of community of the Anishinabe Pride program is one of the most important components of the program. Three aspects that form the basis of the community focus of the program emerged from the data. These aspects include: relationships (forming, maintaining and identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships), positive connections with an Indigenous community (including Elders and role models), and giving back to the community.

The first aspect is that community is based on relationships. Players establish relationships with coaches and leaders. These relationships do not just happen. It takes time to establish and maintain relationships and these relationships are built on belief and trust. This was evident when one participant commented “they’re like hard coaches and they believe in you and believe you can do it...and they push you to do your best” (AP2). The Anishinabe Pride program not only stresses the relationships within the program, but also at home. One athlete indicated this when he stated “They made it clear that relationships are really important...they made it clear that family was key and then friends” (AP3). Within the Anishinabe Pride program developing and maintaining relationships is important for a person to be a member of community.

One important feature of developing and maintaining healthy relationships is also being able to identify when or if a relationship is or has turned negative. The Anishinabe Pride program actively works with youth to help them understand what positive and negative relationships look like and the impact that can have on someone. This part of the program is administered through the Sacred Seven program which is a mandatory program for the players. One player identified that it “helped me see unhealthy things...and not positive things in relationships or friendships” (AP2). Another participant explained it as “through Sacred Seven...we were taught about healthy/unhealthy relationships with others, the community, and oneself” (AP5). The influence that relationships have, can be life changing. This influence is examined when one athlete explains “They made me understand more about community and different types of relationships. What they can do and how relationship with someone can impact you and them” (AP4). She didn’t differentiate between positive and negative relationships here, simply the significance of having relationships.

The second aspect of community was fostering positive connections with an Indigenous community. This is really about connecting Indigenous youth with Elders, mentors and a support system. Due to colonisation, racist Canadian policies, residential schools, Indian day schools, the sixties scoop, and continued intergenerational trauma, many Indigenous inner-city youths are unsure about traditional culture, languages, land, nations and ceremonies. The Anishinabe Pride program helps these youth navigate this area through the connection of various Elders, mentors, ceremonies, and traditional knowledge and practices.

Within the Anishinabe Pride program, athletes make connections with various Indigenous leaders. Through the Sacred Seven program, athletes are exposed to the sacred seven grandfather teachings and allowed to experience various ceremonies and traditional teachings. It is these connections that offer Indigenous youth an opportunity to learn about and experience traditional ways of living, that some might never have access to. The Anishinabe Pride program allows Indigenous youth a space to not only explore, but also to see and talk with Indigenous mentors who have been in similar situations and understand what they face on a daily basis. This was made evident when one participant stated “You just gotta have relationships to be a better person, cause you need people to help you” (AP3). It is these developed relationships with Indigenous Elders and mentors that allow Anishinabe Pride athletes an opportunity to have continued positive connections within their community.

A number of athletes elaborated on connections they had made and what community cultural events had an impact on them. One participant stated “We go to sweats [sweat lodge ceremonies], a bunch of little places. We go medicine picking” (AP6). Another athlete explained his learning when he said “I didn’t know about all the ceremonies...I didn’t know about the Elder giving you a name and I never really knew anything about any of that until I went there”

(AP3). The sweat lodge ceremonies seemed to resonate with the athletes I interviewed; one participant reinforced this idea when she explained “We went to sweats and they taught us about the seven teachings and the stories behind them, it helped me learn about my culture” (AP2). The positive community connections through Elders, teachers and role models allow the members of the Anishinabe Pride program to continue to grow and develop their Indigenous identity through knowledge and example.

The final aspect that forms the basis of the community component of the Anishinabe Pride program is the idea of giving back. This part of the program is mainly demonstrated through volunteering and community work. The goal of this aspect of the program is to help youth develop their self-confidence, leadership skills and establish them as role models for younger youth. During a talking circle, the Elder explained being in community as living out the sacred seven teachings every day. The Anishinabe Pride program provides opportunities for its athletes to give back to their community and fulfill the idea of living the sacred seven teachings.

One of the (mandatory) volunteer opportunities that the Pride program offers is its kids’ camp. I call it volunteer because the athletes do not get paid in any way and I call it mandatory because it is expected that as a member of the Anishinabe Pride (and Sacred Seven program), one will help run the basketball camp for younger kids. This basketball camp runs at various times throughout the year (spring, summer and fall) and usually takes place on Sundays and runs successively over a number of weeks. Helping to run the camps resonated with the athletes that I spoke with. Athlete AP7 explained “Anishinabe Pride program definitely focuses on volunteering and community work...Even little things like running basketball camps for kids” (AP7). At these camps young kids start to see these athletes in another light. They see what is

possible with hard work and determination. These athletes start to become mentors to young kids, leading through example.

Another opportunity that offers Pride athletes a chance to give back is in the sacred seven program. The sacred seven is a mandatory program for first year athletes in the Anishinabe Pride program. It focuses on the seven grandfather teachings and how those are applicable in today's world, as well as how one can live those teachings out on a daily basis. I have already discussed the impact of the sacred seven program on the Pride athletes, but often athletes who have gone through the program come back to help teach aspects of the program afterwards. This was evident when one participant explained about volunteering with the Sacred Seven program. He explained "When I became of age where I didn't have to do the program anymore, I decided to help out teaching the program to other Pride youth" (AP5). Having opportunities for Pride athletes to give back to their community allows them a safe place to develop self-confidence and leadership skills.

I identified earlier in this section that financial constraints can often provide a barrier for inner city Indigenous youth. One way that the Anishinabe Pride program gives back to the community is through Jackie Anderson (the program developer) and her funding for the program. Jackie has made it her goal to apply for subsidies and grants to offset the cost of the program for its athletes. Jackie's work allows the athlete and their families financial freedom and an opportunity that they might not normally have to play high level basketball at little to no cost. One participant explained this when she stated "it was pretty much created for young Indigenous athletes to have that passion for basketball and can't really afford all the prices" (AP8). She expanded on this later when she elaborated on Jackie and how the funding worked, she stated that "she [Jackie] writes proposals and then if it gets accepted, she'll receive so much amount of

money and then that's used for the program" (AP8). She explains that financially the Anishinabe program is really focused on "trying to relieve that stress" (AP8).

Relationships, positive connections to the Indigenous community, and giving back are all key elements of how Pride is influencing the community around them. Pride athletes understand that importance and influence of the program. The influence of the Pride program was made clear when one participant told me "The Pride program makes this community more positive. It influences us kids to want to be better kids" (AP6). Another Pride athlete stated that "everyone should be volunteering and put time into your community and know (kids especially) the people around you" (AP7). This same athlete let me know that she has a plan for the future, "I kinda want to live somewhere else when I'm older, that's my goal. If I move somewhere else I'm gonna build a program like Anishinabe Pride" (AP7). For the Anishinabe Pride athletes, community means living the Sacred Seven teachings every day, and in doing that they make their community stronger.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

### A Conversation with Jackie

In Shawn Wilson's (2008) book "Research Is Ceremony", he explains Indigenous research in the following way, "Research by and for Indigenous peoples is a ceremony that brings relationships together" (p.8). Wilson's idea of relationality explains that for someone to understand the research they must first understand the researcher and those involved in the research. The research should strengthen and develop relationships. It is with this idea, that I begin this discussion chapter with Jackie Anderson, the creator of the Anishinabe Pride program. The following is a conversation that Jackie and I had around the Anishinabe Pride program. My hope is that you, the reader, get a better understanding of who we are, and thus, better understand the research that has taken place. I have chosen to use a different font, as well as to single space the text. The intent in doing so is to help the reader distinguish between our conversation and the rest of the discussion chapter.

*Jamie: The idea that I got from the whole program was about trying to create Indigenous leaders that are giving back to their communities. Does that seem like I'm on the right page?*

*Jackie: I think the initial component of Pride is about youth engagement and leadership, but it's really about teaching our kids about being in relationship with themselves first. Then being in relationship with others and then being in relationship with community. That leadership has to start within first. It's breaking down those different healthy components about being in relationship with yourself. That's our vision. The teaching component of Pride and of course, teaching basketball development, but the way we see it is that, as much as basketball is often the buy-in of the kids, basketball is going to be in their life for a short while. Where all these other teachings need to be with them forever. That's what we often see when our kids first come to Pride. Many of them are lost or not connected with their spirit or don't know who they are as Indigenous young people. Don't know a lot about their culture. Don't even know what it means to be in relationship with themselves, nevermind others and what healthy relationships look like.*

*There's almost like a natural way of how our first engagement is with kids. Focusing on our Sacred Seven teachings and then using each of those teachings and getting the youth to break down how they either currently use that teaching in their lives or how they're going to practice that teaching in their lives. Each week when we are with them, they come back and they share with us how over the last week they used respect, or wisdom, or courage. For many of them, they're just learning how to use those teachings, but they're also putting them into practice.*

*That's the first component of when we come together with our young people, its understanding and practicing those Sacred Seven teachings. Then we start breaking it down to being in relationship with oneself, looking at also breaking it down into what are unhealthy ways of being in relationship with yourself because they can start identifying that maybe using drugs, or using alcohol, or being a bully or even spitting on mother earth, how that disrespects mother earth. Learning about being mindful and reflecting on how those things are not healthy for their spirit. Then looking at what are some things that they can practice that's going to be healthy for them to be in relationship with themselves. Then we break it down into being in relationship with oneself and then we do the same thing with being in relationship with others and then we start looking at being in that relationship with community.*

*That's where we really start looking at ways that they can become young leaders in their community or in their school, with their peers and we have them practicing that when we start doing the kids camp in January for twelve weeks. Where we empower them to take the lead role in mentoring and being leaders to the younger generation.*

*Jamie: That's what a lot of them [the participants] talked about. A lot of them talked about looking at relationships with others and understanding the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. That really seemed to strike a chord with a lot of them. I can really see now the pattern of the self, the other and then community. A lot of them spoke about the community and the kids camp and being able to be leaders in the kids camp. Some of them also spoke about the Sacred Seven program and coming back and helping to teach the program after. Saying that even though they had aged out of it, they wanted to come back and still be a part of it.*

*Jackie: Then there's the ceremony part of it. We usually go from September to June. Weekly, we would come together to do the teaching portion and we would do the basketball skill development portion. Then we would do the Pride kids camp from January to April. May and June would be focused on preparing for ceremony. We would teach them how to make their own ribbon skirts or ribbon shirts. We would have our Elder coming in and teaching with them about the medicines. We're preparing them for their sweat lodge ceremony. Which typically happens in June. For most of them, that would be their first sweat lodge ceremony*

*where they would be prepared on what to expect and also on how to gift in order to receive their clan, their spirit name, their colours.*

*Jamie: When they talked about the cultural components, a lot of them spoke about medicine walks, the sweats, the naming ceremonies. A lot of those things really resonated with them.*

*Jackie: The other important piece is the importance of having partners and allies. As a result of the development of Pride, we have been able to secure very low cost gym space in the heart of the North end. We've been able to make partnerships with the UW Collegiate, where our kids are getting full four-year scholarships. Actually graduating high school and getting a scholarship to go to university when they complete it. We've had opportunities for our youth to travel. For example, in June, I helped a girl get into a student's commission conference that was happening in Ottawa. There was fifteen youth from across Canada that were selected. She ended up getting chosen and she went to the conference on mental health. Right now I have two of my older Pride youth. One is nineteen, he graduated last year and the other just turned twenty-five, both of them are actually in Peru right now on a youth internship. They went for four months and they're on the last month right now. So it's also about creating those partnerships and opportunities of capacity building.*

*Jamie: A number of the people I talked to about that, talked about the University of Winnipeg Colligate, the model school program, Indigenous math leadership program, Winnipeg Aboriginal Sports Achievement Centre and some of these connections that Pride had made already. You don't necessarily think of other things, like connections with people to be able to get gym space and things like that, but that is huge.*

*It was an interesting thing that they [participants] talked about, so I put it in there. Negative influences that they see, not necessarily from the Pride community but from the overall community. It was interesting because I had a couple of them talk about racism, but not within their own community but within the basketball community. A lot talked about not experiencing racism until they saw it through some of the teams that they played against.*

*Jackie: For the most part, a lot of our kids are being raised in a community with similar culture. Generally, our kids are from the north end. It's a very high number of Indigenous families and youth. You're kind of segregated into your culture or into your community, especially if you're living in poverty. You don't really have reason to go into areas or sections of the city. Then when you start playing basketball, unfortunately basketball leagues don't happen in the north end. It happens in the south end or other areas of the city where a lot of our kids have never been. Racism at the beginning when we first started Pride was gross. That's the only way I can describe it. It was very disgusting, some of the things that our girls had to witness. Names that they were being called, not only by*

*youth, even adults. It was really bad. It would be so easy for kids to just lash out. Through those teachings and resiliency and integrity, helping them understand not to hold on to the ignorance or lack of awareness or education of others. There were some situations that were pretty bad.*

*Jamie: Their perspective was really interesting. The ones that were there from the beginning. They talked about how it would've been really easy to give in to some of the racism stuff, but they were really taking pride in their team and being taught to take pride in who they were as Indigenous people. Really it was a situation that made us stronger because we were able to band together as a team and be able to go through something together that we probably should have never gone through.*

*Jackie: Marty [Jackie's partner] and I have to stand up for them by having those discussions at other levels. Our way of being solution focused was that we need to be engaged and involved at another level. That's when I was able to start that relationship with basketball Manitoba, which was just after the first NAIG [North American Indigenous Games] games I did in B.C. We produced some pretty strong and talented athletes at those NAIG games and basketball Manitoba recognized that and reached out to us and partnered with us. I eventually went on the board for basketball Manitoba. I sat as a board member for three years. It was to really be able to recognize them - the inner-city Indigenous youth. Things started to change in our community, but there's still silent racism that our kids are still faced with. The racism is still there, it's more silent now if anything, but it's there.*

*Jamie: Some things that you are doing are helping in terms of helping with Indigenous night with the Wesmen [The University of Winnipeg basketball teams] and all the work that you are doing in the community. I think you're right that there's those prevailing attitudes. You think older generations, but then that can get passed down to the younger generations.*

*Jackie: I'm not sure if this is the right word or not, but there is almost like a sense of privilege. When you're playing, you would know that. When you are a competitive athlete it's not cheap. That often becomes a barrier to some of our families, to encourage or support their kids to go to that next level because of the challenges of trying to keep up with the ability to afford something like that. If you don't have the partnerships or connections in the community or the ability to fundraise, it's sad. I'm looking right now, of all my former NAIG athletes or Pride athletes that have made NAIG for Halifax and how these families are really struggling right now to even try to get the payments in. Being told that if you don't get it in by this date then you're cut. It really hurts my heart to know that, you have to almost have a certain sense of privilege in order to even have that kind of opportunity.*

Jamie: *I think that is really at the heart of why you started the Anishinabe Pride program. To give these opportunities to people who wouldn't have had those opportunities otherwise.*

Jackie: *Like if there was Indigenous athlete funding specifically for some of these costs. Like even the travel costs if you're playing on a travel tournament team. Being able to buy proper footwear. There needs to be something like that, so that our kids don't get let down because our kids are dreaming. They're pushing themselves because they want to reach that goal, they want to reach their dream, but then when they get a little older and realize that all these doors are shutting because they can't afford it, they lose sense of their dream.*

Jamie: *A couple of the athletes talked about going to other programs and then came back to Pride. Just talking about how different the other programs were and how they didn't have the community, the connection and the check in. How that made Pride so different. These other programs were just strictly about basketball. It's an amazing thing to see how the program resonates with them, when they try to go somewhere else and see how different some of these other programs are.*

Jackie: *It's because it's all about basketball, coaches are only about teaching basketball. They're not recognizing the idea that if a kid comes in the gym and they're not participating as much as they normally do, they're not smiling as much as they normally do, they don't see that maybe there's something else that the kid might be going through at that time. With us, they become part of our family, so we know when something's going on. If we notice or recognize something on Facebook or with their posts, we're reaching out to them because relationships are way more important than making sure that they come and give one hundred percent in the gym and if you don't give one hundred percent then you're sitting on the bench. That's not our concept, it's about our kids. They say that they go through a lot of daily challenges and daily obstacles, they have to continue to push themselves to be resilient to overcome some of that or even have the pride to reach out and say "hey I'm hungry" or "hey my sole of my shoe is coming off, I don't have any other runners" or "hey I don't have a winter jacket." Its things like that or "I don't have a ride." You can't go to your coach in other programs here and tell them that and get the kind of response that they should be giving.*

Jamie: *When you were talking about, what do the people need, or how you're trying to really get to the heart of the need, one of the athletes spoke to how he didn't value education and how that became something that was huge for him. You calling and checking in. "Are you up?" "Have you gone to school?" "Do I need to pick you up?" "I'll pick you up and take you to school." Making sure that they are where they need to be.*

Jackie: *That's important. Education is the priority, basketball is only there for*

*awhile. This is about breaking that cycle and making sure that our young people get that education so they can be in positions of decision making. Making sure that voice is at the table. Being represented by Indigenous youth. That's why we look for those youth engagement opportunities. Like the student's commission of Canada. It's been a really instrumental partner for us in getting our kids involved at that level. Just planting those seeds for them. You see them now finishing high school and going to university. Their career goals are all making a difference. They are making sure that what they are striving for is to make a difference in our world, coming from an Indigenous perspective.*

*Jamie: For them, being able feel that they have that voice. I think it starts with that, then being able to reach their dreams and then being able to make a difference.*

*Jackie: Every kid when they are young says "I want to be a doctor, I want to be a lawyer, I want to be a nurse." Those are the main things when you are a kid. Then as you're being raised and going through those stages of your life you start to lose on those dreams because you think that you will never make it. You think that those are achievements that are too high. What we're seeing with our kids now is that they are pushing themselves to the top. I've got kids in business school, kids that are going through to be lawyers, nurses. They're not just going to school, but their even striving for their education to be higher.*

*Jamie: Then they are being able to live out some of those dreams. It also sets another round of possibilities for younger kids coming through because they can see people who have gone through and done things.*

### **Inferences**

This study sought to understand the extent to which the Anishinabe Pride basketball program aided in identity formation, from the perspective of eight Indigenous adolescents. In the context of this study, the Anishinabe Pride program had a significant impact on the identity formation of the athletes involved in the program. All of the participants discussed various elements of the Pride program and how those elements impacted them as individuals. Within the results section, I identified three major themes of: education, culture and community. The themes explain how components and aspects of the Anishinabe Pride program aided identity formation in a variety of ways for the athletes I interviewed.

For Anishinabe Pride athletes, the concept of identity is one that resonates with them in their daily lives. In discussions with Pride athletes, they described identity as “knowing who you are,” (AP1) “who you are as a person and where you stand. Your beliefs...Where you come from,” (AP2) “what people notice out of you is your identity,” (AP3) “Identity is everything. What a person is...What they do and who they are,” (AP4) “I think of culture, sport, spirituality and values,” (AP5) “the way people see you. I guess how you show yourself out to other people,” (AP6) “identity is the person you see yourself as,” (AP7) “How you see yourself in the world...Your values, your beliefs...I’d say like proud, young, Indigenous, independent woman” (AP8). For these Pride athletes they are aware of their beliefs, values and how they represent themselves to the rest of the world. These ideas connect with Xenia Chrysochoou’s (2003) explanation of identity.

In Chrysochoou’s (2003) explanation of identity, she posits that identity is a form of social representation. This representation is evident in the relationships between the individual and others. The relationship is about connecting with self and others, and is what emerges from the participants’ expressions about what drives the heart of the Anishinabe Pride program. Shawn Wilson (2008) examines the idea of relationship as it relates to an Indigenous ontology and epistemology. Wilson writes, “Thinking of the world around us as a web of connections and relationships. Nothing could be without being in relationship, without its context. Our systems of knowledge are built by and around and also form these relationships” (p.77). It is the relationships and their contexts that define our ideas. Within Indigenous communities, ontologies and epistemologies are intertwined and coexist together because of the relationships which define them. That is to say, how we understand a worldview and/or acquire knowledge is based on the relationships we have with ourselves, others and things in the world.

J.S. Phinney's identity formation (1989), posited three stages of identity formation: the unexamined ethnic identity (the diffuse/foreclosed stage), the ethnic identity search (the moratorium stage), and ethnic identity achievement (the achieved stage). The athletes that I spoke to from the Anishinabe Pride program had varying starting points when they joined the program. There were athletes that began at every stage of Phinney's three stages of identity development. In developing an understanding of their identity some began their journey in the diffuse stage, having little understanding or connection to their Indigenous roots or community. Others developed from the foreclosed stage. Here athletes had an understanding of their cultural background, but had left it mainly unexplored. In the moratorium stage, athletes showed clear exploration of cultural roots, but may be unsure of aspects of culture or cultural connections. Finally some athletes joined the Pride program already in the achieved stage. These athletes had grown up with an understanding that their culture was a main part of their life and they accepted that as part of who they were.

It was evident in the data that each participant had reached the *achieved stage*, even though various participants started at different stages. The participants were exploring who they were as Indigenous peoples with a clear understanding of meaning and acceptance. For some athletes this meant, learning traditional languages, for others it meant connecting with traditional ceremonies or dance, and for still others, it meant building an understanding of where their family came from and who they are as Indigenous people. This is an important finding because each participant openly discussed their idea of identity and it was evident to me that various athletes started and completed various stages of identity formation at different times of their lives, with the Anishinabe Pride program being a major factor. I believe that a goal of the

Anishinabe Pride program is to help program members reach the achieved stage of identity formation, however, it is important to note that they may not stay in the *achieved stage*.

J.S. Phinney discussed the connection between identity and self-esteem (1991), and demonstrated that individuals who were able to identify with mainstream culture and their ethnic group, generally had stronger psychological outcomes. This ability to identify in two cultural spaces is important because the Anishinabe Pride program uses basketball, a mainstream sport, as a means to help athletes learn or reinforce who they are as Indigenous people. Much of what the Anishinabe Pride program teaches is rooted in real life application. The appreciation that these athletes live in an urban setting, and must be able to understand and navigate what that means (as an Indigenous person) is vital to the program.

Part of this identification with mainstream culture is the partnerships that the Anishinabe Pride program has with various Western educational institutions and programs. In making Western education a priority within the program, the Anishinabe Pride program is helping their athletes navigate the mainstream education system that exists in Canada. The idea of traditional Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge coexisting is a concept that has been developed more through Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall's theory called Two-Eyed Seeing (Iwama et al., 2009). With this theory, Marshall explains that two-eyed seeing is really about bringing multiple perspectives to the table and allowing yourself to be open to different ideas and concepts. It then becomes a blending of traditional ways of knowing with that of Western ways of knowing.

A similar idea is explained by Shawn Wilson (2008) when he examines empirical knowledge and cultural knowledge. He states that he believes there is a place for both empirical knowledge and cultural knowledge, but when when someone starts to try and determine which one is "sounder" (p.58), one runs the risk of alienating the researcher. Wilson discusses that

within the world of academia, cultural knowledge has often been seen as less than empirical knowledge. His term “sunder” refers to the idea that oral tradition is somehow not considered as valid as written tradition. He argues that empirical knowledge and cultural knowledge can co-exist together and that for an Indigenous person “empirical knowledge is still crucial, yet it is not their only way of knowing the world around them” (p.58).

Connecting Indigenous youth with basketball, mainstream education systems, and cultural teachings reflect Albert Marshall, Shawn Wilson and J.S. Phinney’s theories. These ideas are multifaceted, yet I also believe they are interconnected. Marshall’s concept of two-eyed seeing, Wilson’s thought that cultural knowledge and empirical knowledge are both valid forms of understanding, and Phinney’s identity and self-esteem theory illustrate that individuals can benefit from both their Indigenous traditions and mainstream culture. The use of basketball, mainstream education, and cultural teachings, to help Indigenous athletes understand who they are, and how to navigate their worlds as Indigenous people provide a real-life example of these concepts in action. Furthermore, in my research, these concepts are also reflected in the goals of the Anishinabe Pride program (as outlined by Jackie Anderson in our interview). The goals of developing relationship to self, others and the community.

### **Limitations**

Within this research, the main limitation was found with the sampling. The sampling of participants for the research represented an underrepresentation of males in the research. The male participants only make up 25% of the population of members of the program of those interviewed. While this may seem as problematic, as a sample size would ideally include equal representation of genders, it is understandable. When the Anishinabe Pride program started, it was with limited funding and it was decided that the female program would be started first. The

portion of the program available for male athletes came later and thus there was more opportunity to discuss experiences with female athletes than with male athletes.

An attempt to mitigate this limitation occurred with the use of a traditional talking circle (Running Wolf, P. & Rickard, J. A., 2003). In the talking circle, eight males were able to share about their experiences with the Anishinabe Pride program. Male participation in the talking circle consisted of 62% percent of the population and included parents, athletes, Elders, a coach, and a facilitator. While the experiences of those in the talking circle are not exclusive to Indigenous youth, these experiences were used in analysis to confirm codes and themes identified by the youth participants in interviews.

Another limitation of this study came in the attempt to recruit participants. We only had three requirements: that the participants self-identify as Indigenous, that they have/had participated in the Anishinabe Pride program and that they be between the established youth age category of 16 to 24. We only had these three requirements because we wanted a study that would be inclusive. We did not specify how many years participants needed to be involved in the Anishinabe Pride program or how long they participants had played basketball. While this may not seem like a limitation, it can change the data set that you get as a researcher. Our youngest participant had only been involved in the Anishinabe Pride program for two years and was sixteen years old while our oldest participant had been involved for twelve years and was twenty-two years old. These experiences may be very different because one participant's journey was just getting started while another participant had been involved with the program for ten years and had many opportunities because of it.

A final limitation came in the form of the researcher's proximity to the community. While the Anishinabe Pride program is based out of Winnipeg, Manitoba, the researcher is based

out of south-eastern Ontario. While this is not a huge limitation, it hindered the actual face to face contact that the researcher had with the community-based research assistant and the participants in the study. Keep in mind that this study was done pre-Covid , virtual platforms like zoom or teams were not being widely used. This limitation was mitigated by emails, phone conversations, text messages and a Facebook group.

### **Future Considerations**

It is my understanding that this study represents a first in examining Indigenous identity formation through a mainstream sports program (basketball) in an urban setting, within the settler occupied country of Canada. This kind of study is exciting because it offers many opportunities and avenues for research within the field of Indigenous youth and identity formation to continue to be developed. Three considerations for further research within this area could focus on: 1. A framework for a similar culturally based sport program, 2. Research into the effectiveness of identity formation comparing traditional sport (lacrosse, etc.), non-traditional sport (rugby, etc.), or a non-sports related program and its effect on Indigenous identity formation, 3. A study, using the medicine wheel to examine the life journey of the Anishinabe Pride participants, or 4. A longitudinal study that re-explores the stories of the Anishinabe Pride participants of this study.

In exploring the Anishinabe Pride program, part of my goal was to examine the program to see if aspects could be applicable in the Kenhteke Kanyen'keha:ka community where I work. I run multiple basketball programs at the school that I teach at and a personal goal was to see if there could be a framework developed that I could use with the Indigenous students that I see every day. It is important to understand that Indigenous communities in this country have specific language, culture, and historical differences. If a framework is to be designed it must be

one that allows for those differences. For example, if I was to run a Kanyen'keha:ka (Mohawk) Pride program, the sacred seven program would have to be replaced with traditional Kanyen'keha:ka teachings. In this way the cultural component could continue to strengthen the Indigenous identity of the athletes involved.

Another area to explore would be the means to which the program is run and its effectiveness for Indigenous youth. In this respect, research could be done in the area of traditional sports/games versus non-traditional sports in aiding identity formation in Indigenous youth. This also opens up the idea of examining identity formation through non-sports related programming as well (drum circles, ceremonies, art classes, drama programs, etc.) in both the traditional and non-traditional fields.

The Anishinabe Pride program is an inclusive program and is open to non-Indigenous athletes as well. This study was examining Indigenous identity formation and we did not seek to interview non-Indigenous participants of the program. The themes that were generated were never cross-referenced with non-Indigenous participants to see if any resonated with their experiences. Non-Indigenous participants are still required to participate in the mandatory Sacred Seven cultural program and it would be interesting to see if the themes had a similar impact with non-Indigenous participants.

The medicine wheel teachings offer individuals an understanding of how they should live their lives. This could be used as a pedagogical tool for examining how Anishinabe Pride participants came to be involved in the program and their journey within it. Research and connections in various aspects of the medicine wheel could highlight aspects of the Anishinabe Pride program and help to continue to develop the program. This type of research could also help

to bridge the gap between funding agencies, traditional Indigenous knowledge and sport, helping to redefine classifications involving Indigenous culture, tradition and knowledge.

The Anishinabe Pride basketball program is a unique community. It offers its athletes an opportunity to develop as basketball players, but it also provides an opportunity to explore who they are as Indigenous people. In turning this research into a longitudinal study, the researcher has an opportunity to work with the participants to see if the Anishinabe Pride programs impact has continued over the years. This would give a more in-depth understanding of the extent to which the Anishinabe Pride program aid's identity formation in Indigenous youth.

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## Appendix A

### General Research Ethics Board Approval Letter



July 10, 2017

Mr. James McCourt  
Master's Student  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University  
Duncan McArthur Hall  
511 Union Street West  
Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-858-17; TRAQ # 6021121  
Title: "GEDUC-858-17 Indigenous Identity Development through Sport"

Dear Mr. McCourt:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GEDUC-858-17 Indigenous Identity Development through Sport" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies"). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is 'completed' so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form"). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at <http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html>; click on "Events"; under "Create New Event" click on "General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies". Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Stevenson".

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.  
Interim Chair  
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. John Freeman, Supervisor  
Dr. Richard Reeve, Chair, Unit REB  
Mrs. Erin Rennie, Dept. Admin.

## Appendix B

### Letter of Information and Consent Form

#### Study Title: Indigenous Identity Development through Sport

Dear Participant,

My name is James McCourt. I am a Master's of Education student at Queen's University, working under the supervision of Dr. John Freeman. I am asking you to participate in a research study examining sport and Indigenous identity development. To participate in this study, you must self-identify as First Nations (status or non-status), Métis (registered or non-registered), or Inuit. You must also be between 16 - 24 years of age and be identified as someone who is participating or has participated in the Anishinabe Pride program. While there are no direct benefits to you as a participant, study results will help inform how sport programs can impact Indigenous identity development.

If you agree to take part, I will first interview you for one hour (maximum) at a public location of your choosing. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. This interview will take place during the week of July 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup>. For your participation, you will be compensated with a \$10 gift card.

If you have completed the interview, the next step is a group training session that week around Photovoice. Photovoice is a research technique using participants' photos to help in their storytelling. The training session will take no longer than 1.5 hours. Compensation for the training session is a \$20 gift card.

After the training session, you will have four weeks to take pictures that illustrate the way in which the Anishinabe Pride program has impacted your Indigenous identity (about one hour). Do your best to avoid taking pictures of people who can be identified. If you are in one of your pictures, you will need to sign a consent to photograph form. If another individual can be identified in your photo, you will need to ask that person to sign a consent to photograph form.

You will be asked to choose photographs to help tell your story during a 1.5-hour talking circle that will be audio-recorded (and later transcribed) during the week of Aug. 13<sup>th</sup> to Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>. Only persons who have participated in the Photovoice training session and taken pictures over the four-week period are eligible for the talking circle. If you are unable to attend the talking circle, you may share your experiences through a 1.5-hour one-on-one audio-recorded interview. Compensation for the talking circle or one-on-one interview is a \$20 gift card.

The risks involved in this study are minimal. During the talking circle, you may feel uncomfortable or stressed because of the topics shared by others or your own sharing of comments. If you feel upset about something or want to leave, you may do so quietly or discuss with me afterward. There will also be an Elder on hand if you feel the need to talk with someone about what you are feeling. Another potential risk of this project is the sharing of your personal story in the talking circle. We always ask that what is shared in the circle stay in the circle, but

we cannot guarantee that someone will not tell your story outside our group. This possibility is important to know when sharing your story.

There is no obligation for you to say yes to take part in this study. If you choose to participate, you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. You can stop participating at any time without penalty. You may withdraw from the study at any time until the end of October 2017. However with respect to the talking circle, during the talking circle you may withdraw by leaving, after the talking circle is finished you may not withdraw your data from the talking circle. If you choose to withdraw, all photos and data will be destroyed or returned to you. You can withdraw by contacting the {Community Based Research Assistant} (email and phone number) or James McCourt ([8jam7@queensu.ca](mailto:8jam7@queensu.ca) or 1-613-484-7851).

I will keep the data securely in a locked cabinet to which only I have access for a minimum of five years. Participant confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible by replacing participant names with a pseudonym for all data and in all publications. The code list linking real names with pseudonyms will be stored separately and securely from the data. When in the field the Audio recording device and other data (hard copy and/or electronic data) will either be with me or locked in a secure room. While travelling the recording device and other data will be placed in my carry-on bag so that it may not get lost in luggage transfers. Co-researchers/participants will not be involved in data analysis. I will do all data analysis myself using standard procedures for thematic analysis. The individual interviews and the Photovoice talking circle will be transcribed and analyzed sentence by sentence until high-order themes emerge.

I hope to publish the results of this study in my master's thesis and academic journals and present them at conferences. I will include quotes from some of the interviews when presenting my findings. However, I will never include any real names with quotes, and I will do my best to make sure quotes do not include information that could indirectly identify participants. During the interview, please let me know if you say anything you do not want me to quote. Additionally, a Photovoice sharing time will take place in the fall, during a community celebration night or the University of Winnipeg's Indigenous night. You may want to take part directly in that celebration but it is not a part of the research. I will keep copies of all photos for this study and give you a copy of all of your own photos as well. For persons who gave permission for their photos to be used in my master's thesis, publications, conference presentations and the celebration, if the pictures have faces being shown, identification is possible.

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or [chair.GREB@queensu.ca](mailto:chair.GREB@queensu.ca).

If you have any questions about the research, please contact me, James McCourt, at [8jam7@queensu.ca](mailto:8jam7@queensu.ca) or 613-484-7851 or my supervisor, Dr. John Freeman, at [freemanj@queensu.ca](mailto:freemanj@queensu.ca) or 613-533-6000 ext. 77298.

This Letter of Information provides you with the details to help you make an informed choice. All your questions should be answered to your satisfaction before you decide whether or not to participate in this research study.

You can demonstrate that you want to participate in this research study in one of two ways. You can sign this agreement and/or, instead, you can accept a gift of tobacco. In accepting the tobacco and/or signing the agreement, you understand what we are asking for, have asked questions about the study and agree to participate. You have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw at any time until the end of October 2017. You have been given a copy of this agreement. You have been told that by accepting this tobacco or signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_ accepted tobacco as consent [researcher to check if participant consents in this way]

## Appendix C

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

*Pre-amble: This study is about identity development through sport. I will be asking you question around identity, your identity develop and connections to the Anishinabe Pride program. If at any time you feel overwhelmed or upset in any way, understand that our interview can end whenever you want it to. Also understand that if you want to stop participation in this study, the information shared belongs to you and will be returned to you (or destroyed) should you feel the need to discontinue.*

1. In your own words, can you explain what identity is?

Possible prompt: If they are unsure of how to answer, use the identity definition (found in key terms).

2. Which individuals have helped you become the person you are today?

3. Which events have helped you become the person you are today?

4. Which institutions have helped you become the person you are today?

Possible prompt: Definition of an institution.

5. Which individuals have hindered you from becoming the person you want to be?

6. Which events have hindered you from becoming the person you want to be?

7. Which institutions have hindered you from becoming that person?

8. How did you find out about the Anishinabe Pride basketball program?

9. At what age did you start participating in the Anishinabe Pride basketball program?

10. What role has the Anishinabe Pride program had in developing your identity?

11. How has the Anishinabe Pride program changed your ideas of community and/or relationships?

12. Has your value on education changed since you have become a member of the Anishinabe Pride program?

Possible Prompts

Indigenous: Aboriginal peoples of Canada as outlined by the Canadian constitution. Under

section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982, Aboriginal People are defined as “Indian, Inuit, and Metis” (<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/>). Within the Canadian context, “Indian” is now generally replaced with the term First Nations.

**Identity:** identity constitutes a particular form of social representation that represents the relationship between the individual and others (real or symbolic, individuals or groups).

**Institution:**

an organization, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program, especially one of a public, educational, or charitable character.

## **Appendix D**

### **Talking Circle Protocol**

[Note: Both the researcher (James McCourt) and the CBRA will be present during the talking circle. An Elder will also be available.]

During our Photovoice session, we discussed the idea of identity and what that means. In our one-on-one interviews, you shared with me aspects of your own identity development. I asked you to pick one picture to share with our group in the talking circle. I have asked you to tell your story through this picture. During this time, we will be using a talking feather. The person who has the feather is the only one who will be sharing their story. It is important to give respect to the person who is sharing. It is my belief that this circle is sacred and, as members of this circle, we must remember that what is shared today must stay within the circle. Your story is your own to share with others. You do not have the right to share other people's stories outside this group. If you feel upset about something or want to leave, you may do so quietly or discuss with me afterward. An Elder is available if you want to talk to someone other than me and [name of CBRA].

## Appendix E

### Confidentiality Agreement

**Project Title:** *Indigenous Identity Development Through Sport*  
**PI/Researcher(s):** James McCourt

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I \_\_\_[name of CBRA]\_\_\_ have read and retained the Letters of Information concerning the research project *Indigenous Identity Development Through Sport*.

I understand that maintaining confidentiality means that: **I agree not to reveal in any way to any person other than the PI/researcher James McCourt any data gathered for the study by means of my services as a Research Assistant and/or Transcriber.** I will comply with the requirements for confidentiality.

Upon the termination of the work assigned by James McCourt, I will return all confidential information and project materials to him. I will permanently delete copies from any electronic devices used for the purposes of completing the assigned tasks.

#### **Identification and Signature Indicating Agreement**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Contact Information:**

Questions about this agreement or the study may be directed to:

James McCourt, Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Kingston, ON K7M 5R1

Tel: 613-484-7851

Email: [8jam7@queensu.ca](mailto:8jam7@queensu.ca)

Or his supervisor, John Freeman

Tel: 613-533-6000 ext. 77298

Email: [freemanj@queensu.ca](mailto:freemanj@queensu.ca)

If you have any ethics concerns please contact the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at 1-844-535-2988 (Toll free in North America) or [chair.GREB@queensu.ca](mailto:chair.GREB@queensu.ca).

## Appendix F

### Coded Categories

Categories	Open Codes (Open Code #)
1. Responsibility	AP1#1 (1) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30) AP7#4 (36) AP7#6 (38)
2. Trust/Belief	AP1#3 (3) AP1#2 (2) AP2#1 (5) AP3#1 (10) AP5#2 (22) AP6#1 (26)
3. Culture	AP1#2 (2) AP2#3 (7) AP3#2 (11) AP3#4 (13) AP4#3 (18) AP5#3 (23) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30) AP7#3 (35) AP8#3 (41) AP8#5 (43) AP8#6 (44)
4. Education	AP1#4 (4) AP2#5 (9) AP3#6 (15) AP4#2 (17) AP4#5 (20) AP5#1 (21) AP5#3 (23) AP5#5 (25) AP6#7 (32) AP7#1 (33) AP7#5 (37) AP8#2 (40) AP8#7 (45)
5. Community	AP1#3 (3) AP2#2 (6) AP3#3 (12) AP4#1 (16) AP5#2 (22)

	AP5#4 (24) AP6#4 (29) AP6#6 (31) AP7#4 (36) AP7#6 (38) AP8#1 (39) AP8#6 (44)
6. Relationships	AP2#4 (8) AP3#5 (14) AP4#4 (19) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30)
7. Resiliency	AP6#2 (27) AP6#3 (28) AP7#2 (34) AP8#1 (39) AP8#4 (42)

**Appendix G**  
**Coded Themes**

Selective Codes (Themes)	Axial Codes (Categories)	Open Codes
Education	Education	AP1#4 (4) AP2#5 (9) AP3#6 (15) AP4#2 (17) AP4#5 (20) AP5#1 (21) AP5#3 (23) AP5#5 (25) AP6#7 (32) AP7#1 (33) AP7#5 (37) AP8#2 (40) AP8#7 (45)
Culture	Culture	AP1#2 (2) AP2#3 (7) AP3#2 (11) AP3#4 (13) AP4#3 (18) AP5#3 (23) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30) AP7#3 (35) AP8#3 (41) AP8#5 (43) AP8#6 (44)
Community	Community	AP1#3 (3) AP2#2 (6) AP3#3 (12) AP4#1 (16) AP5#2 (22) AP5#4 (24) AP6#4 (29) AP6#6 (31) AP7#4 (36) AP7#6 (38) AP8#1 (39) AP8#6 (44)
	Responsibility	AP1#1 (1) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30)

		AP7#4 (36) AP7#6 (38)
	Trust/Belief	AP1#3 (3) AP1#2 (2) AP2#1 (5) AP3#1 (10) AP5#2 (22) AP6#1 (26)
	Relationships	AP2#4 (8) AP3#5 (14) AP4#4 (19) AP5#4 (24) AP6#5 (30)
	Resiliency	AP6#2 (27) AP6#3 (28) AP7#2 (34) AP8#1 (39) AP8#4 (42)