RESILIENCY OF A PEOPLE
A HAUDENOSAUNEE CONCEPT OF HELPING

RESILIENCY OF A PEOPLE:
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By

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the impact of traumatic experiences of colonialism, government policies, genocide, racism, discrimination, oppression, residential schools, etc. that have affected Aboriginal peoples' lives for many generations. These traumas have compounded into many layers of grief and loss. Aboriginal people have not had the opportunity to grieve, heal or recover from their pain and suffering. It has left communities, families and individuals in states of deprivation, apathy, powerlessness, and hopelessness. First Nations communities are faced with devastating conditions and high rates of suicide, alcoholism, violence, family breakdowns, drug addiction, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, etc., all symptoms of much deeper underlying problems. Each Aboriginal person, family and nation accumulates and carries the pains and trauma from the generations before, not knowing how to abolish or recover from this emotional, psychological and spiritual wounding.

This research highlights the importance of cultural knowledge, practices and connections to the land in assisting Aboriginal people in recovering from generations of trauma, loss and pain. The research focuses on the Six Nations Iroquois/Haudenosaunee people of the Grand River. It also explores the cultural teachings of the Iroquois/Haudenosaunee and how social work and counselling practitioners are using traditional Haudenosaunee/Iroquois knowledge as a foundation to their practice in helping Iroquois people recover from the generations of trauma, pain and loss. As a result of this research, a cultural model for social work practice has been produced to assist practitioners in their helping role and work with Aboriginal people.

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Introduction

Since the first contact with Europeans over 500 years ago, Aboriginal[1] peoples have endured horrific experiences as a result of colonization. Aboriginal people have withstood attempts to extinguish or assimilate them into the dominate society (Hill, 2002; Churchill, 1995). Such efforts were carried out by representatives of England and France who ignored and broke original treaty agreements and denied indigenous peoples inherent rights in order to gain control and ownership of the land and resources within North America (Hill, 2002; Churchill, 1995). Christian missionaries partnered with the Canadian government to implement policies of assimilation (Hill, 2002; Churchill, 1995). Native peoples were persecuted and killed for practicing their cultural traditions. They were driven from their traditional territories to live in poverty on reservations with very little hope for the future (Hill, 2002). First Nations children were taken away from their families and communities to live in residential schools; there they were taught to despise their cultures, languages, families and traditional ceremonies (Anderson, 2000).

These are a few of the countless indignities that have been inflicted on Native American peoples, thus producing agonizing effects on the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being of Native people. As part of this onslot, many

[1] The term Aboriginal is widely used in Canada to refer the ancestors of the original people who first occupied the North American continent. This term encompasses the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. Throughout Canada, First Nations people represent over 500 different groups who are diverse from one another in language and culture. In the United States, they refer the original occupants to North America as Native American Indians or Native Americans. For some First Nations peoples the term Indian is offensive (Barber ed., 2001, p. 967; Brave Heart, 2003). However, some Native Americans writers will use the term "Indian" within their literature to emphasize a political point. This paper will incorporate the following terms: Aboriginal, First Nations, Native American, and Native people when referring to the original people of North America.

First Nations peoples have succumbed to believing and internalizing the oppressive messages and incidents that have been imposed by the colonizers (Freire, 2000). Such experiences have resulted in Native peoples experiencing feelings of loss, insecurity, hurt and anger. Some individuals and families find it difficult to fit into the dominant society that tends to discriminate and marginalize people of difference. In the same instance, others find it difficult to go back into their communities of origin (Anderson, 2000). It appears that each person and family that accumulates and carries the emotional pain and trauma from the generations before (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995), and have not had the opportunity to recover from the psychological effects of this compounded trauma. While there has clearly been persistence and resistance, (Lee, George, McGrath and Moffatt, 2002) in the face of the colonial effort, it has left many Native peoples in helpless states of apathy, dispossession, powerlessness, and hopelessness (Hill, 2002), contributing to devastating health and well being of Native populations who are suffering from incidences of suicide, alcoholism, drug addition, HIV, violence, family dysfunction, poverty, addictions, heart disease, diabetes, accidents, high rates of mortality, lack of employment, mental illnesses, homelessness, etc. (Warry, 2000). This next passage shares a community member's perspective regarding the trauma that has impacted on his community.

> I think everyone of us needs to...understand…the history of Canadian social policy, the Indian Act and all of the different things that have been written for us. I think when you learn...the historical impacts...it creates an understanding of who we are today. It's very simply amazing that there are any of us here, that there's any of us alive today is really amazing when we look at all of those impacts. So, [it]...teaches us that the hard lives that we see in First Nations communities, throughout Canada…we're still seeing our people drinking, taking drugs, killing ourselves, and

> involved in violent crimes, rapes, incest, welfare, jail,...are factors of that history. But what we learn is that this is not who we are as a people. We learn that this is who we've become, and that in itself is so powerful to understand because for many of our people we don't know any different. We grow up seeing all of this stuff for all of our lives. For many of our people we grow up thinking that this is all that we are that this is all that we can ever be. We can never change, we can never go anywhere. It's so powerful for our people to learn and understand that this is not who we are but, that this is who we've become. We don't learn that stuff to be angry, we don't learn that stuff to be mad and say, be angry at the white man or the government or all these things. Yeah, they've had roles and they've created a lot of these things for us, but you don't learn those things to build that fire, that hatred for that. You learn it to understand. What can we do about it now, what can we change now? If we can't change that history, we have to accept it, that's the reality. That's what our ancestors had to deal with, that's what they had to face. It's almost like we have to grieve it. To say, okay that's reality. We can't change it, accept it and move on. It's something that you never ever forget, and you never get to a point where you feel totally great about it. Because it's always going to be sad, but you get to a point where you can accept that, it was the reality of our ancestors. This is our reality now, but it doesn't have to be the reality for our children (2004, D. Thomas interview).

Through my personal and professional experiences, I understand the impact of generations of traumatic experiences on First Nations people. I have witnessed the results of alcoholism, addictions, family violence, suicides, deaths, mental health illnesses, poverty, etc. in my family and within my community of Six Nations. This led me to wonder if Haudenosaunee[2] culture always had ways to help our people in overcoming the emotional and psychological pain, grief and loss associated with such experiences. I know from my work with First Nation students at McMaster University having an understanding of cultural practices, indigenous languages, ceremonies and a

[2] "The People of the Longhouse," also known as the Iroquois or Six Nations of New York State or Ontario, Canada. The following Native American nations are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscaraora (Cornelius, 1999; George-Kanentiio, 2000). "The word Iroquois is said to be of Algonkian origin; it is believed to mean 'snakes,' referring to the silent manner in which the Haudenosaunee struck at their enemies (George-Kanentiio, 2000, p. 9)."

connection to the family and land plays an important role in maintaining good health and well-being among the students.

I have been able to assist and support Aboriginal students while they maintained their cultural beliefs and practices, and pursued a post secondary education. It is through this work that I learned a lot about the foundation of cultural knowledge and practices of Haudenosaunee people. This brought me to wonder about the importance of cultural practices in recovering from generations of trauma. As a professional, I felt my personal experiences as a Native person related to a common understanding in working with Native people. Yet, I felt inadequate at times because I did not grow up on the reservation nor do I speak an Aboriginal language. In my attempts to assist and help Native students, I tried to approach my practice from a cultural perspective. I implemented a cultural practice that I saw my grandparents use when people came to visit. It was an honour for my grandparents to have people talk and visit, each morning they would prepare a big pot of homemade soup and fresh baked bread. As a child I would hear the conversations, stories and laughter in the kitchen. When I looked back on this experience I realized that I witnessed something very powerful, and yet so simple. Whether my grandparents realized or not, their generosity and caring contributed to promoting good health and well-being of those who came to visit, as well as my family. Starting in 2001, I brought this concept to McMaster University and created "Soup Days". I would make a big pot of homemade soup, and bring along items to make sandwiches, a variety of fruit and some cookies for any student who was hungry. This initiative was very success among the students. Afterwards, I found out that many of the

students would eat during their time at school so they could save what little money they had to pay their bills or feed their children. This made me wonder about how other Haudenosaunee social workers, counsellors and traditional helping practitioners were implementing cultural knowledge and practices into their work.

The primary focus of this study was based on three main questions: (1) How are Six Nation people existing through the effects of inter-generational trauma? (2) What is the importance of cultural practices, languages, connection to the land and traditional ceremonies in assisting Haudenosaunee people to recover from generations of trauma and pain? (3) How are Haudenosaunee practitioners integrating traditional indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into the work of helping those who experience the inter-generational effects of trauma?

By exploring the historical incidences of the Six Nations Haudenosaunee, we begin to understand the cultural resistance and resiliency as a way of surviving and protecting the culture of a people. Duncombe (2002) defines cultural resistance as a refusal to accept the social, political and economical structures of a dominant society (p. 5). Therefore, the attempt to resist creates a spectrum that ranges from the individual survival to the rebellion of a people in fighting for their rights and identity as a distinct culture (p.7). The next passage elaborates on the continuum of cultural resistance and what possible outcomes may result from the efforts of those opposing the dominant culture.

> Survival is the point at which cultural resistance is merely a way to put up with the daily grind and injustices of life while holding on to the semblance of dignity. Rebellion is where cultural resistance contributes to political activity against the power-that-be. Results of this resistance may

> range from suffering repression to forcing meaningful reform, yet all of this occurs within the framework of the dominant power. And revolution…is the complete overthrow of the ruling system and a time when the culture of resistance becomes just culture (Duncombe, 2002, p. 7-8).

Applying Duncombe's (2002) concept of cultural resistance to Native Americans and their struggles in overcoming the dominant control, many will find themselves at varying points within the spectrum. At one end of the spectrum, the cultures of Native communities have survived through the secret practicing of traditional ceremonies that were prohibited by the government; Native families would hide their children from the Indian Agent so they would not have to attend residential schools; or some individuals would not comply in registering for Native status ordered under the Indian Act. At the other end of the spectrum, Native peoples have historically rebelled through wars and attacks as a way to retain traditional territories, resources and rights encroached on by the government and settlers.

In the present day, Native peoples have survived having endured many generations of treats and frustration and have maintained their cultural identities as a distinct people in North America. The following quotation by Battiste elaborates on the survival of Indigenous people through cultural resistance.

> ...one of the ironies of Indigenous struggle: it is the actual process of struggle that makes us strong and committed and that helps us to consolidate why we are struggling. That is, struggle constantly forces us to identify and review what we stand for and what we stand against (Battiste ed., 2000, p.210).

One of the most nationally recognized Native rebellions that took place in 1990 was the Kanehsatake Mohawk Standoff (Alfred, 1995; Obomsawin, 1993; York &

Pindera, 1991). This standoff was the breaking point of over two hundred and seventy years of Mohawks resisting and fighting for their inherited rights, ancestral lands and sovereignty as a nation of people (Obomsawin, 1993). Unfortunately, the image the general public received via media was that the Mohawks were fighting to stop the development of a golf course. This was true, yet, what was not understood were the centuries of oppression, genocide, colonialism, discrimination, racism, etc., endured by the Kanehsatake Mohawks by means of the Canadian government, and the people of Oka.

It may seem as though Native people have succumbed to a level of assimilation and acculturation within the dominant culture; this much may be true. Yet, Native people have transformed within their cultures by maintaining ways of upholding their distinct identities, ancient philosophies, and the integrity of their beliefs. This is not to say that Native people have not been affected in traumatic ways on a personal or community level. Native children who attended residential schools continue to suffer and internalize the abuse (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) and oppression they have experienced. Unfortunately, their traumatic experience has been passed on to their children.

The next section will briefly review the historical evolution of the Six Nations Reservation illustrating the traumatic experiences that have displaced and altered the social structure of the Haudenosaunee. This will also exemplify the efforts of cultural resistance in maintaining the traditional culture of the Haudenosaunee.

Six Nation's History

For many generations, the history of the Haudenosaunee has been shared through an oral tradition. The ancient form of recording and passing down history through stories has been a very important aspect in building and maintaining relationships among the Haudenosaunee people. In more recent times, the stories have been written down in books to be preserved for future generations (Barreiro & Cornelius, ed., 1991; George-Kanentiio, 1995; Mitchell, 1984; Thomas, 1994; Parker, 1990; Schoolcraft, 1992; Wallace, 1997). The history of the Haudenosaunee explains many phenomenona regarding the creation of the earth, the reciprocal roles and relationship with natural environments, the spiritual beliefs and cultural values, as well as teaching lessons regarding the challenges of life. For the Haudenosaunee, historical stories are very real and tangible within the culture. Many of the older people or individuals who learn the history begin by telling the story of Creation.

I will share the story of Creation as I remember it being shared with me. The story begins with a pregnant woman known as Sky Woman. This woman lived in the sky world with her husband. One day she became curious about an opening that was located by a tree in the sky world. As she looked down into the hole she lost her balance and fell into the openness of the sky. She was caught by a flock of geese and then set upon a turtle's back. The animals were curious about this woman, and when they learned she was pregnant with child they wanted to help create a place for them to live. The animals decided to attempt to bring soil from the ocean's bottom. Many died in their attempts.

However, a muskrat was successful in grasping a small portion of dirt, which was placed on the turtle's back. Sky Woman stood up and began walking around the turtle's back. Each time the surface grew larger and larger forming the earth's surface. After the earth was formed, Sky Women gave birth to a daughter. After her daughter grew, she was impregnated by the west wind and gave birth to twin boys. The boys were referred to as the good and evil twins. The good twin was known as our Creator. He created beautiful and good things on earth. His twin brother, who was mischievous and evil, created the opposite of what was good and beautiful. This created a balance of good and evil in the world.

Haudenosaunee people were created shortly after the formation of the world. It is told within these stories that the Creator created four colors of people (red, yellow, white and black). He placed each color of people in different parts of the world with specific teachings and languages that respected the earth in that particular area.

The Haudenosaunee people were among the many nations of Native people set upon the North American continent. The Haudenosaunee traditional lands expanded beyond the boundaries of State of New York into areas of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Ontario and Quebec (George-Kanentiio, 1995). It is told to us that the Haudenosaunee possess one of the world's oldest democracies known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Johansen, 1995). The Confederacy is a spiritual and traditional based governing and social structure known as The Great Law. The Peacemaker brought the Great Law at a time when many Native people were at war and not getting along with each other. The purpose of The Great Law was to provide a structure to unify and to "...use the mind to

create peace, power and righteousness (Mohawk, 1986, p. xvii)" among nations of people. The Confederacy primarily consists of the five nations, the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca nations, as well as the Tuscarora, Tutelo and Delaware nations who have not completed their acceptance into this structure. The ambition of the Confederacy is to carry through on the tenets of the Peacemaker, the "...goal of society which the Peacemaker envisioned was one in which human beings are loving and caring and interacting in a positive way on the emotional level and in which collective rational behavior and thinking was possible and desirable (Mohawk, 1986, p. xvii)." The Peacemaker recognized that our minds may at times become clouded by emotional pain, rage and despair. The story tells of how the Peacemaker helps an Onondaga leader, Hiawatha, through the grief and despair he experienced from the death of his beloved daughters (Mohawk, 1986).

It is said that Hiawatha would wander through the forest weeping, and that the Peacemaker met Hiawatha at a small lake (Mohawk, 1986). Here is where the Peacemaker soothed Hiawatha's anguish by "[s]peaking directly to Hiawatha's despair and his hopelessness, the Peacemaker uses soothing words and sincere caring to wipe away the tears from his eyes and remove the lump from his throat. He unplugs the ears and restores Hiawatha to a whole man, so that he can see, talk and use his mind (Mohawk, 1986, p. xviii)." As a result of this compassion and love for another, the condolence ceremony was created as a model to help our people transcend through the grief and despair we may experience from great losses. This ceremony was created to

help the people through the grieving process when a chief died and a new chief is put in place within the Confederacy (Mohawk, 1986).

These stories and literature do not provide a timeframe of when these events among the Haudenosaunee may have happened. This is not to say that the oral tradition of story recording among the Haudenosaunee was not a valid way to keep and share our historical accounts. The opposite is true. The system of storytelling establishes and maintains human relationships. It is only after having contact with early European settlers that written documents recorded information about the Haudenosaunee. Such records were kept by explorers and missionaries, which indicated that the Iroquois numbered in the hundreds of thousands (George-Kanentiio, 1995). Below is a quote that describes what the first settlers may have witnessed.

> European explorers, fur traders and missionaries noted our communities were fairly large, consisting of hundreds of people living in longhouses sometimes over 300 feet in length. Around these towns were hundreds of areas of fields planted with the staples of corn (with fields up to eight miles in length), beans and squash but also including large apples and peach orchards (George-Kanentiio, 1995, p. 61).

It is at this time when the Haudenosaunee people began to formulate agreements and treaties with sacred wampum[3] made into belts illustrating such agreements. One example is the Two Row wampum belt, which exemplifies the agreement between the white settlers and the Haudenosaunee. It is said that each group would honour and respect the way of life of each other, while maintaining a relationship of friendship.

[3] Wampum is made from quohog clam shells located along the shores of the Atlantic coast. "Quohog shells are valued because of their hardness and purple and white coloring. Purple beads are said to remind the Iroquois of the gravity of life and their responsibilities to the coming generations. White wampum beads symbolize the good mind and its love of peace and hope (George-Kanentiio, 1995, 46-47)." The Haudenosaunee make small tubular beads from the shells, which were strung together to be used in ceremonies and record important events such as treaty signing (George-Kanentiio, 1995).

As more and more settlers came to North America, they brought diseases that were unknown to many Native people. As a result, many Haudenosaunee people died because they did not have the immune system to fight such illnesses. In some incidences, Native people were purposely given blankets that were infected with small pox and other diseases. While the Haudenosaunee tried to remain in peaceful relationships with the British and the French, they were forced to fight to sustain their territory (Benn, 1999; Richter, 1992; White, 1991). By the mid 1700's, the French and English were dividing the Iroquois apart from each other in the French and Indian Wars (Benn, 1999; Richter, 1992; White, 1991). The Confederacy remained neutral, whereas nations within the Confederacy took a stand to fight for the treaties and agreements that were in place. In the late 1700s the events leading to the American Revolution were taking place. This again forced the Haudenosaunee to make alliances with either the Americans or the British. While the Americans were fighting to establish their independence, the Haudenosaunee were not able to fight for their inherited rights or their land (Benn, 1999; Richter, 1992; White, 1991). The Revolutionary War separated the Confederacy into two groups. One group of Haudenosaunee followed Joseph Brant into Canada, while the other group remained in New York States suffering the destruction and trauma of the Americans destroying Iroquois villages for settlement (Benn, 1999; Richter, 1992; White, 1991).

In 1784, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant was granted a tract of land in Ontario, Canada by Sir Frederick Haldimand as restitution for their losses in the American Revolution. This resulted in the Haldimand Proclamation of 1784. The agreement

granted land six miles on either side of the Grand River, from the mouth to the source (Weaver, 1978). Brant brought approximately 1,843 Haudenosaunee and others (Nanticoke, Creek, Cherokee, etc.) to take refuge (Weaver, 1978). It is said that many of those who traveled to this area were already influenced by Christian religion.

In 1786, Brant built the Mohawk Anglican Chapel to show their continued alliance with England (Weaver, 1978). Despite the strong and relentless pressure from missionaries to convert the Haudenosaunee people to Christianity, the longhouse cultural religion has remained strong and is still practiced by many of the traditionalists within the community (Weaver, 1978). In the early 1800s, a Seneca Prophet by the name of Handsome Lake was given an important message for the Haudenosaunee people through a vision (Mitchell, 1984; Parker, 1990; Thomas, 1994). This message is known as Gaiwiio or the Code of Handsome Lake. It stresses that if the Haudenosaunee are to survive the onset of white people, they are to follow the ancient teachings, ceremonies and customs of their culture (Mitchell, 1984; Parker, 1990; Thomas, 1994). The message preaches against the use of alcohol, accumulation of wealth and power. Handsome Lake's message did not totally reject all white values. One value that he recognized was the need for education in strengthening the Haudenosaunee nations. Handsome Lake offered hope to the Haudenosaunee people through the Gaiwiio, especially at a time which seemed so difficult in maintaining a collective consciousness.

After Joseph Brant and the Haudenosaunee settled along the shores of the Grand River, Brant began to sell areas of the land to the white settlers. In 1847, the Canadian government created the reservation system and placed all Haudenosaunee people of the

Grand River onto a smaller tract of land. This reservation is known as the community of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory[4]. This is the only Iroquoian community which represented of all six nations of the Haudenosaunee (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora) located in one area. Despite the displacement of the Haudenosaunee onto the reservation, the Confederacy chiefs continued to oversee the governing structure of the Haudenosaunee. In 1924, the Canadian Federal government ordered the RCMP to raid and take over the Council House of the Confederacy Chiefs in Ohsweken. The Federal government began to enforce the Indian Act[5] upon the Six Nations Haudenosaunee by placing a government elected Band Council to take office and administer and control the affairs of Native people (Weaver, 1978). After the federal government took over Six Nations and placed an elected council in charge of governing, the Confederacy continued to uphold their role and status as the leaders of an autonomous and sovereign nation of Haudenosaunee people.

In 1834 the Mohawk Institute was established as a Native residential school in Brantford, Ontario (Graham, 1997). Those who attended the Institute referred to the school as the "Mush Hole", the reason being that oatmeal and corn mush was served more than once on a daily basis. The roles of residential schools were to civilize and assimilate Native people into mainstream society. The school acted as an agent in

[4] Six Nations of the Grand River Territory is consider one of the largest populated (approximately membership of 18,000 status members) reservation in Canada. It is located in southwest Ontario, near the city of Brantford, Ontario.

[5] Under the British North American Act of 1867 and the Indian Act of 1876, the Canadian government is responsible for all of the affairs Indian, and exercises total control over Indian people and their lands (Little Bear et al., 1984). "After years of legislation to control Aboriginal peoples, the Indian Act of 1876 entrenched their position as wards of the government (Graham, 1997, p. 8). The elected Band Council is directed by the Indian Act and is an extended structure of the Federal government, which controls many aspects of Native people lives such as: education, law enforcement, health, welfare, housing, employment, etc.

teaching trades, domestic skills and farming to the Native children. The school reflected the intent of the Indian Act of 1786 which suggested that "...Indian problem was to be solved through assimilation of Indians into a lower dependent class and the vision of education changed to the training of domestic servants and hired hands (Graham, 1997, p. 39)." Native children that attended residential schools such as the Mohawk Institute, encountered physical and corporal punishment, emotional abuse, cultural abuse and poor living conditions.

Physical and corporal punishment was administered to children who broke rules. Many of these children did not know the rules until they were severely beaten. If a child spoke their Native language or ran down the hall, did not wash properly, talked to their siblings, did not draw a picture correctly, etc. they were strapped with a belt (Graham, 1997). Some corporal punishment was even more severe, where children would be bound in an isolation cell or had the cat-o'-nine-tails used on them (Graham, 1997). In 1914, the Six Nations Council had concerns because so many children were running away from the Institute due to the poor food and abuse they suffered (Graham, 1997).

The standards of physical conditions that Native children endured were very low. Many Native children indicated that the food was bad, they ate mush everyday, did not have eggs or meat, and once a year they got milk (Graham, 1997). The conditions of the buildings and where the children stayed were dilapidated, filthy, unsanitary, infested with cockroaches, etc. (Graham, 1997).

In addition to the physical abuse and deprivation, Native children experienced emotional abuse from "...extreme loneliness, lack of caring, the lack of love,...lack of

sensitivity and awareness that small children might have feelings (Graham, 1997, p. 35-36)." Many of the children who attended such schools did not understand why they were taken away from their families or communities, and why they could not communicate or interact with their siblings. Many times when an adult did take interest in them it led to sexual abuse. Additionally there was cultural abuse where children were not allowed to speak their Native language, participate in cultural practices, keep their hair long or wear their Indian clothes.

Graham states that "Much of the quality of treatment of children of the Mohawk Institute…received – low standards of education, hard work, the poor quality of the food, the rigid discipline, the confinement, the lack of recreation etc. can be ascribed to their lower class and/or orphaned status, and powerless position in the system (1997)." This form of education and treatment of Native children continued until the Mohawk Institute was closed in 1970 (Graham, 1997).

This section provided a brief overview of the history of the Haudenosaunee which included a description of some of the traumatic events experienced by the Haudenosaunee on the Six Nations reservation. In addition, actions of resistance and natural phenomenona have been highlighted to illustrate the strength among the people and within the culture. Inspiration for the resiliency within the culture begins in the Creation story. Sky Woman persevered to form the earth with the help of the animals, as well as giving birth to her daughter. Because she endured and confronted many hardships, many ceremonies and traditional teachings were developed to honour the lessons and gifts that were presented. This is also true with the perseverance of the

Haudenosaunee through their deviant behaviour in preserving ceremonies and traditional practices when it was prohibited by law. Another example is how many Native children resisted the attendance of residential schools by running away to return to their families and communities.

The stories and teaching that are told within Haudenosaunee culture are to offer community people hope, strength and vision. Interestingly, it seems that spiritual phenomenonas evolved at times when the Haudenosaunee people were enduring very painful and traumatic incidences. It is this time that the Haudenosaunee are reminded to seek strength from the culture. An example of this is with the coming of the Peacemaker. He was born at a time when Haudenosaunee people were very destructive within their lifestyles. The Peacemaker brought the teachings of the Great Law to show the Haudenosaunee that there was more meaning way to live life through peace. Another example is when Hiawatha came to spiritual understanding of the teachings to help people through the condolence ceremony by his painful losses and grief. Another spiritual phenomenon was when Handsome Lake received the dreams and visions of Gaiwiio (how the Haudenosaunee are to live according to their ancient teachings and customs) at a time when the collectiveness of the Haudenosaunee was weak and breaking down from the impact of colonialism and wars. The natural or spiritual phenomenons are different forms of resistance and resiliency that are presented at a spiritual and cultural level to offer the strength and hope to Haudenosaunee people.

This section presented a contextual understanding of the challenges and struggles that Haudenosaunee have endured throughout history. Native people have endured a lot

of traumatic experiences through many generations without having the time to heal and recover from such loss, pain and grief. The next section will review the literature pertaining to the impact of trauma in relation to culture, as well as exploring the social work interventions that have been developed to help Native people in overcoming such experiences.

Literature Review

The literature review will provide a theoretical foundation to understanding the social, psychological and spiritual effects of colonialization on First Nations peoples. The review will begin by exploring terms associated with trauma experienced by a group of people that appears to be transmitted inter-generationally and/or across history. In particular, the concepts of "ethno stress", "survivor syndrome", "post traumatic stress disorder", "historical trauma" and "unresolved grief". The terms explain the process and consequences endured through many years of oppression, genocide, assimilation, and acculturation experienced by Native peoples. In addition, these concepts help clarify the underlying emotional, social and mental issues and problems that are at the core of the hurt, loss, grief and anger felt by most Native people. The second part of the literature review will explore the counselling interventions that have been developed to assist Aboriginal people in recovering their health and well-being by cultural means.

In the early 1980's, the concept of 'ethno stress' was developed by Native practitioners Diane Hill, Bob Antone and Mike Meyers. The term describes the stress reaction experienced by Native people who were not allowed the opportunity to participate within their culture due to the impact of colonization, acculturation, assimilation and oppression within their communities. As a result, this suppressed the social and cultural growth and development of Native individuals and communities. Those suffering from 'ethno stress' often possess thoughts and feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness within themselves, the people around them, and in their environment (Hill, Antone & Myers, 1980). To overcome such a reaction, the authors suggest a

process of re-humanization involving the revitalization of cultural beliefs and practices as a way to liberate and improve an individual's out look on life. Activities such as learning to care for yourself, help others, getting involved in the community and reflecting on the positive empowers the individual to promote self healing and increase a positive awareness of self and community (Hill, Antone and Myers, 1980).

One of the earlier concepts to explain the effect of trauma on people was coined by a psychiatrist, William G. Niederland (1988). The concept 'survivor syndrome' was developed to describe the severity of multiple symptoms experienced by survivors of concentration camps and traumatic neurosis (Niederland, 1988). According to Niederland, 'survivor syndrome' was characterized as: "...a depressive mood with morose behaviour, a severe and persevering guilt complex, somatization, anxieties and agitations, and personality changes (Niederland, 1988, p. 45-52)." The literature (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Duran et al, 1998) regarding Native Americans describes similar characteristics of symptoms with Native Americans who experienced trauma such as wars, massacres, residential schools, etc. Niederland stresses, to help the survivor through the symptoms of trauma it is important to incorporate individual and group therapy. In addition, Niederland stresses the process of re-experiencing the trauma in psychotherapy sessions will help the client gradually through their anxiety, guilt and numbing experiences associated with the trauma.

The concept post traumatic stress disorder was officially recognized as a psychiatric diagnosis in the Diagnosis and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition (DSM-III) by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 (Wilson & Raphael,

1990). As researchers and scholars further explore more into the theoretical and clinical aspects of post traumatic stress disorder, the definition evolves. The definitions in the DSM-III-R (1987), DSM-IV (1994), and the current DSM-IV-TR (2000) issue have been updated to coincide with evolving and ongoing research (Wilson & Raphael, 1990). In the Social Work Dictionary (1991), Barker defines "post traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) as:

> A psychological reaction to experiencing an event that is outside the range of usual human experience. Stressful events of this type include accidents, natural disasters, military combat, rape and assault...Individuals may react to these events by having difficulty concentrating; feeling emotionally blunted or numb; being hyper alert and jumpy; and having painful memories, nightmares and sleep disturbances (Barker, 1991, p.177).

However, Wilson & Raphael (1990) recognizes that despite the extreme growth and recognition of PTSD, "...there is still a lack of knowledge about the theoretical understanding of the complex forms of interactions between (1) the nature of the stressor, (2) the personality attributes and coping processes of the person, (3) the psychobiological mechanisms affected by trauma, and (4) the cultural responses to those who are victimized (Wilson & Raphael, 1990, p.1-2)." There has been an abundance of material written about the concept of post traumatic stress disorder in relation to survivors of wars, soldiers who participated in wars, the Jewish Holocaust, natural disasters', trauma and abuse on children, adolescents and women, etc.

Laurie Leydic Harkness (1988) examined the inter-generational transmission of post traumatic stress disorder onto the children of survivors in her work, Transgenerational Transmission of War-Related Trauma (Leydic Harkness, 1993). Her research explored the impact of children's social, intellectual, affective, behavioural

functioning and competence in relation to a parent's experience and symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (Leydic Harkness, 1993). Leydic Harkness elaborates on the generational transmission of trauma and grief onto the family dynamics and relationships in the following quotation.

> These studies have clearly shown that the psychological reverberations of traumatic events can affect other family members. In other words, if massive trauma has produced psychopathology in a generation of parents, many of their offspring may also suffer from emotional disturbances and psychiatric symptoms. These symptoms may be the result of genetic predisposition from the child's identification with the parents and/or dysfunctional family structure (Leydic Harkness, 1993, p.635).

Leydic Harkness' research goes well beyond the immediate effects of trauma on the individual and/or family who have experienced the initial incident. Her research confirms that intergenerational trauma has psychological, social and emotional effects on the health and development of children in following generations. The trauma contributes to the manifestation of dysfunction within the family system and also generationally.

Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran's (1995) research focuses on an indigenous perspective of the psychological effects of colonialism and genocide. The authors argue that Native people have had a long history of cultural knowledge that has been used over generations to overcome many problems and issues experienced by Native communities. By coining the term "post-colonial psychology", Duran and Duran attempt to recognize the seriousness relating to the "...acute and chronic reaction [Native Americans] have to genocide and colonialism (p. 6)" over generations of time (1995, Duran & Duran). This is not to justify a western perspective and practice on the Native experience. The authors are trying to open a door and bridge the gap between traditional cultural knowledge and

western knowledge and practice. The authors divided their book into two sections, the first focuses on understanding the differences of world views, while highlighting Native American perspective. The second section discusses the clinical approaches in overcoming prominent issues faced within Native communities. These include: alcoholism, assessment and treatment of families and children, suicide and community approaches to deliver services to Native people (Duran & Duran, 1995). Duran and Duran elaborate on these areas to provide practitioners with the tools and strategies in understanding and supporting Native Americans as they acquire knowledge about balancing their cultural systems with current day issues.

Thomas J. Ball (1998) research evolved from Duran and Duran's theory of "post-colonial psychology," he completed his Ph.D. dissertation examining the theoretical framework of "Post Colonial Stress Disorder" among Native Americans (1998, Ball). Ball describes Post Colonial Stress Disorder as "...a special type of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) that is a result of colonization of Native North America and is unique to Native Americans (1998, Ball, p.14)." The study involved qualitative research and the results illustrated that all members within a Southwest tribe in the United States experienced various levels of trauma. Some of the participants suffered from either full or partial PTSD symptoms (1998, Ball). Native women who experienced levels of crime, domestic violence and abuse, had higher symptoms of PTSD then Native men (1998, Ball). Unfortunately, Ball does not offer an explanation for this result. However, he does focus on a group of tribal members who did not experience any direct trauma, yet they suffered the same symptoms of PTSD. Ball concluded that generations of colonization

and genocide contributed to the symptoms and high levels of PTSD among the tribal members (1998, Ball).

Similar literature regarding Native American post traumatic stress disorder discusses it as a psychosis or mental illness. Authors such as Robin et al, 1996; Mason et al, 1996; and Gagne,1998, explore the cumulative effects of trauma in relation to high rates of psychiatric disorders listed in the DSM, such as alcoholism, depression, anxiety, etc. (Robin et al, 1996). The literature reviews the historical events (wars, massacres, boarding/residential schools, 'sixty scoop', relocation to reservations, etc.) endured by Native Americans, and concludes that the psychosis, mental illness, unresolved grief, etc. (alcoholism, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, etc.) are indicators of post traumatic stress disorder (Robin et al, 1996; Mason et al, 1996; Gagne, 1998). To overcome PTSD, some of the authors (Robin et al., 1996) stressed the acknowledgement of historical trauma, and listed Native post traumatic stress disorder as a subcategory to PTSD (Robin et al., 1996). It was also concluded that further quantitative research, culturally sensitive diagnosis and assessment tools, and community rehabilitation models be developed to extend individual treatment programs (Robin et al., 1996). Another group of authors (Mason et al., 1996) explored the "...nature and extent of trauma among Indian and Native people, from latency-age children to middle aged adults (Mason et al., 1996)." They presented empirical data from four studies on the outcome of PTSD as serious psychiatric illness among Native Americans. The results identified the importance of Native American ceremonies in healing individuals who suffered from PTSD (Mason et al, 1996). The following quotation elaborates this point.

> The ceremony seeks to return individual balance and harmony. The patient must actively believe in the treatment and carries most of the responsibility for the cure, as opposed to passively following treatment prescription for which the physician is responsible...There is a substantial social function to the healing in which the extended family, clan, and surrounding community members actively participate, as opposed to being limited to the nonexistent social aspects of scientific healing practices (Mason et al., 1996, p. 275).

Other literature discusses Native American PTSD from a sociological viewpoint, emphasizing the dependency that colonialization has created among the James Bay Cree First Nation (Marie-Anki Gagné, 1998). Gagné outlines the layers or tiers of historical trauma that have been transmitted from one generation to the next. "One should also remember that First Nations citizens suffer not only from the effects of dependency and colonialism, but also from being considered by many as second-class citizens. Racism plays a major role in elevated rates of anxiety disorders among Natives (Gagné, 1998, p. 369)." In order to assist Native Americans through the layers of oppression, the literature stresses that practitioners attain cultural sensitivity and involved aspects of culture within the treatment process (Gagné, 1998, Mason et al., 1996; Robin et al., 1996). One of the final conclusions Gagné elaborates is for changes in government policies and for more control to be returned to Native communities to handle their own affairs (Gagné, 1998).

Prince (1985) who studied the impact of trauma on first and second generations of Jewish Holocaust survivors explored how the affects of trauma were passed on to the children of the second generation. His research resulted in the completion of his Ph.D. dissertation, "The legacy of the Holocaust: Psycho historical themes in the second generation (1985)," as well as an article titled, "Second Generation Effects of Historical

Trauma (1985)." Prince does not define the term "historical trauma" in his article. However, he does define cumulative trauma as;

> ...the historical imagery provided by the parent and by other cultural processes are mediated by interaction with normative developmental conflicts, family dynamics independent of the Holocaust, variables of social class, culture, Jewish heritage and immigrant status. While the transmission of the trauma is an important consideration in the study of children of survivors, it is secondary to coming to terms with the nature of Holocaust imagery (Prince, 1985, p.27).

Prince's research examines two generations that have been affected by one traumatic experience by focusing on the nature of trauma on the survivors (Prince, 1985). While he states that the transmission of trauma is an important issue, it is secondary to coming to terms with the nature of the holocaust trauma (Prince, 1985). His research produced the concept of "psychic numbing" which encompasses underlying emotions of horror, anger, fantasy and guilt experienced by both the parents and the children. Prince concluded his research by elaborating the complexity of cumulative trauma on the relationships and the level of communication between the children and the parents within the family (Prince, 1985).

There has been very little research written on the issue of historical trauma, particularly focussed on the experiences relating to the Native people of North America. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) developed the concepts "historical trauma" and "historical unresolved grief" in her PhD research responding to the lack of literature relating to the traumatic experiences endured by many Native communities. This culturally responsive model is a framework that will assist Indigenous people to revitalize, restore and rebuild the psychological well-being of individuals, families and

communities who experience the inter-generational trauma and unresolved grief from historical events. Brave Heart-Jordan focussed her research on the traumatic experiences of the Lakota Nation. She explored the impact of the 1890 Massacre at Wounded Knee, the relocation to reservations, and the effect of boarding (residential) schools leading to the near destruction of a nation, as well as the dramatic impact on the Lakota people. The term "historical trauma" is defined as a "...cumulative trauma but emphasizes that the trauma is multi-generational and is not limited to one life span…(1995, Brave Heart Jordan, p. 6)." She elaborates on defining cumulative trauma as a "...collective and compounding emotional and psychic wounding over time, both over the life span and across generations (1995, Brave Heart Jordan, p. 6)." This definition may sound similar to Prince's concept of "historical trauma", but Brave Heart-Jordan states that the concept of "historical trauma" in her research was manifested and introduced independently from Prince's literature (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995). Brave Heart-Jordan's research primarily viewed the notion of historical trauma encompassing many traumatic events and experiences that lapsed over generations of time. Both Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) and Prince (1985) agree that the transmission of the trauma from one generation to the next had a psychological impact on the second generation's functioning. However, Brave Heart-Jordan focused on the psychological and emotional affects of numerous trauma and losses among First Nations people, which started and continued after the first contact with European settlers.

Unfortunately First Nations peoples were judged for their way of life (Churchill, 1995; Duran & Duran, 1995; Ball, 1998; Hill, Antone & Myers, 1980; Robin et al, 1996;

Mason et al, 1996; Gagne, 1998) and intentionally removed and killed to gain access to their land and resources. The settlers provoked wars, massacres, colonization, genocide, takeover of land and environment, the use of alcohol, inter-marriages, missionaries, imprisonment, abuse and violence, residential schools, prohibiting ceremonies, relocation onto reservations, disease, etc., among the First Nations people (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995; Duran & Duran, 1995; Ball, 1998; 1980, Hill, Antone & Myers). This resulted in compounded layers of pain, grief and loss contributing to the underlying psychological wounding that has been passed on from one generation to the next generation (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995). "Forty-four percent of the Native people who consulted a psychiatrist...were suffering from a grief reaction of one kind or another (Brant, 1990, p. 535)." Brave Heart-Jordan's research identified similar percentages of Native people seeking professional help. As a result, she defined the term 'historical unresolved grief' to describe the emotional, psychological and spiritual loss among Native Americans. Below is a definition of 'historical unresolved grief'.

> The mourning resolution is incomplete and the grief is manifested in various symptoms which may include prolonged signs of acute grief, depression, substance abuse, and somatization...Lakota unsettled bereavement is prominent, significant, and results from generations of devastating losses that have been disenfranchised through the prohibition of indigenous ceremonies as well as through the larger society's denial of the magnitude of genocide against American Indians (Brave Heart-Jordan,1995,p5).

As a result of these two concepts, Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) developed a social work intervention based in the traditional practices and knowledge of the Lakota. The intervention was an intense and stimulating process to regenerate and heal the historical grief that lies deep within a person, family or community (Duran et al., 1998). The study

took place in a sacred area known by the Lakota as the Black Hills in South Dakota. For the Lakota people, the connection to the land and the natural environment is an important aspect in the healing process. It is also important for this intervention to combine Lakota cultural methods and ceremonies such as smudging, sweat lodge, 'releasing the spirit' ceremony and a 'feast for the dead'. Brave Heart-Jordan's training and education as a social worker is integrated through her social work skills with group and individual counselling. She used a psycho-educational approach, applying the concepts of social support, the stages of grief, etc. to assist participants through mourning the losses of and healing from the generations of trauma and grief (Brave Heart-Jordan, 1995). The results of Brave Heart-Jordan's study concluded that "100% found that the intervention helped them with their grief resolution…Ninety-seven percent felt they could now make a constructive commitment to the memory of their ancestors…All respondents felt better about themselves after the intervention…(Duran et al., 1998)." Brave Heart-Jordan's (1995) research supports the fundamental importance in using Native cultural knowledge and methods as a foundation in social work practice for Native people. It also demonstrates the resiliency which exists within the Native culture.

While literature about the traumatization of Native Americans continues to be limited and concealed within texts and journals, there is a need for further research which attests to the devastating effects of oppression, genocide and colonization experienced by Native Americans. It is also important to highlight the understanding of cultural context, sensitivity and interventions that are essential in helping Native Americans in overcoming the generations of trauma. The next section reviews some of the literature

focusing on interventions that guide practitioners in helping Native Americans through experiences of historical trauma, unresolved grief and/or post traumatic stress disorder.

There has been a great deal of literature written about Native Americans as clients in the counselling field, most are written from a Euro-centric perspective (Heinrich et al., 1990; Herring, 1992; Thomason, 1991). The literature acknowledges the limitations and the lack of Native practitioners in the counselling field (Heinrich et al., 1990; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994: Wade, 1995). The main focus of earlier literature was to provide information to non-Native practitioners regarding the cultural differences between Native American and mainstream dominate culture (Heinrich et al., 1990; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994: Wade, 1995). The articles provide information about cultural values (respect for the environment, non-competitiveness, non-interference, little or no eye contact, etc.) and beliefs (collectiveness, importance of children, traditional ceremonies, etc.), to assist non-Native practitioners in helping Native people through the problems and issues (poverty, alcoholism, poor housing, lack of employment, depression, etc.) they face in their daily lives. The literature encourages non-Native practitioners to obtain an understanding of Native Americans, and expand their skills as counsellors (Heinrich et al., 1990; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994; Wade, 1995). One author argues "...that current counselling paradigms do not include the necessary skills for effective results with Native American clients (Herring, 1992, p. 35)." Some of the interventions for non-Native practitioners to use include: the involvement of family (group/family counselling, go to client's home), building and/or involving resources from the community (Elders, traditional healers, community organizations, etc.), and understanding the use of cultural

practices (sweat lodges, smudging, vision quests, etc.) in helping Native Americans (Heinrich et al., 1990; Herring, 1992; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994; Wade, 1995). Herring suggests that if the non-Native practitioners are to successfully work with Native Americans they need to establish linkages within the Native community, emphasize the Native values, recognize and reflect nonverbal behaviours, develop nonverbal communication skills, and incorporate family and group techniques (1992).

Practitioners have gone beyond the dominant paradigms of social work to create interventions that will better assist Aboriginal peoples (Morrissette et al., 1993). One such intervention found in the literature is called 'resistance knowledges'. This therapy is "...based on a recognition of the spontaneous resistance of aboriginal persons to the various forms of oppression they have experienced...Therapist may conceal or suppress this resistance by encouraging victims to view themselves as persons with various psychological problems...to reclaim this history of personal resistance (Wade, 1995, p.168)." This involves the social worker and Native client identifying the parallels between historical traumas and resisting the oppression they experienced. The social worker becomes an ally with the client. On the other hand, the social worker must illustrate expertise and authority with the client through methods of questioning and storytelling (Wade, 1995). While this approach may work with some Native people, with others it may continue to restrain and oppress if not used properly.

It is important for social workers to understand that some interventions can be sensitive to Aboriginal issues and problems by incorporating an understanding of Aboriginal values and beliefs into their work with Native peoples (Heinrich et al., 1990;

Herring, 1992; Thomason, 1991). Practitioners using these interventions may do so with good intentions. Because these interventions are entrenched in the dominant ideologies and methods of mainstream culture, the results in overcoming issues may be restricted (Duran et al, 1998; Morrissette et al., 1993). By not having a historical understanding of the generations of trauma and grief, practitioners may not be addressing the underlying issues of identity, pride, and community (Duran et al, 1998; Morrissette et al., 1993). In the last ten to fifteen years, Native academics and professionals have increased in the social work field, therefore producing culturally appropriate interventions which stress cultural knowledge and practices from an Aboriginal perspective (Brant, 1990; Morrissette et al., 1993; Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996; Duran et al., 1998). "While culturally sensitive services advance awareness of issues in the Aboriginal community in the context of involvement with an ethnic minority, culturally appropriate service integrates core Aboriginal values, beliefs and healing practices in program delivery (Morrissette et al., 1993, p. 101)." Yet, for many generations Native people have survived without social work by providing help to each other through cultural knowledge and healing practices. In some incidences, Native people practice their ceremonies in secret. Cultural and healing practices were maintained by Elders and/or people who dedicated their lives to continuingly learning and sharing the cultural knowledge and healing practices to help the community. In many Native communities, seers or visionaries are important people who possess the gift of visions and/or dreams to help guide Native people to find purpose through their cultural knowledge and practices. It was not until the late 1970's when Native people were allowed to openly carry out

ceremonies without punishment. Such visionaries as Handsome Lake (Haudenosaunee prophet) encouraged "...cultural revitalization as a way of counteracting the devastation of colonialism and its effects (Duran et al., 1998)." Many effective therapies and interventions have been developed by integrating and reviving traditional cultural teachings in social work practice with Native people (Duran et al., 1998).

One cultural teaching that has been used in a number of literatures is the medicine wheel teaching. This teaching is based on a circular framework and is divided into four sections (Morrissette et al., 1993, Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996, Gray et al., 2001). The base of this teaching represents a continuous process in restoring balance and harmony within one's life (Morrissette et al., 1993, Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996, Gray et al., 2001). The literature represents slight variances in how the medicine wheel teaching is presented, depending on the origin of the author. For example, Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996) present the medicine wheel teaching from a Cree First Nations world view. This perspective involves the overlap of different size circles within each other. Morrissette et al. (1996) literature and model is similar to Nabigan and Mawhiney presentation of a cultural model, however the Morriessett et al. model is based in Anishnabe teachings. Most First Nations teachings are based in the natural cycles of the environment.

Haudenosaunee teachings are not presented as circles or medicine wheels. The difference is that Haudenosaunee people work their way from the earth to the Creator, acknowledging everything in between. While there is an abundant amount of information regarding the history and treaties of the Haudenosaunee, unfortunately, there is no literature on the social interventions from a Haudenosaunee cultural perspective.

In reviewing the literature from an Aboriginal perspective, I found many articles that illustrate the process of helping a Native individuals, family and community through the use of a medicine wheel. Interestingly, the authors presented varying processes that honoured an Aboriginal worldview and yet, used this tool to work through the impact of colonialism, problems and issues (Morrissette et al., 1993). The literature discussed the importance of inter relating the strengths and weakness of the clients experience to assist them through the process of healing and recover. In using such a model, the practitioner will integrate questions or activities to help the client respond and move through the process. The activities may involve attending ceremonies and cultural practices or questioning that will help the client develop a narrative to assist in releasing thoughts and emotions associated with the trauma and grief (Morrissette et al., 1993, Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996, Gray et al., 2001). The medicine wheel framework is a flexible and holistic process that illustrates the interconnectedness between the client and what they are experiencing (issue or problem). As a practitioner and client use this empowering tool, the client is self reflecting on his/her thoughts and behaviours for change. Native social workers and practitioners are recognizing the strength of connecting cultural knowledge and traditions to their social work practice. "Programs that have succeeded are programs that have utilized indigenous epistemology as the root metaphor for theoretical and clinical implementation (Duran et al., 1998)."

Peter Elsass (1992) discusses cultural resiliency that occurs as a result of the promotion of values and practices within a cultural context which helps members adapt to reactions of trauma. Through his research with indigenous peoples, Elsass explains how

indigenous cultures develop and maintain strategies for their cultural survival. The dominant culture views indigenous people as being dissonant and resistant to what is being forced upon them. Yet, this is a way to resist, to survive and to preserve a cultural identity. Elsass (1992) comments on the psychology of indigenous people's survival; "...culture's ability to survive is contingent on being able to develop a shared body of knowledge, a matrix or web of individual relations...The basis for a matrix of survival is the shared development of a body of knowledge, which gives a form of solidarity and inertia to the group. This shared knowledge binds the strong forces which exist in large groups into a shared concept (1992, Elsass, p. 176)." An example of such a survivial matrix would be the Lakota nation's initiative in creating the 'Mending the Sacred Hoop Ride'. This Ride is a Lakota ceremonial journey on horseback which retraces the experiences that led to the 1890 Massacre at Wounded Knee. For the Lakota Nation this initiative brought the people to a collectiveness based in healing; it developed solidarity among the Lakota based on their own cultural knowledge and practices. Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) also contributed to the cultural resiliency of First Nations by defining the trauma and the emotional and psychological response (historical trauma and unresolved historical grief) as a foundation in forming interventions based on the collectiveness, cultural knowledge and practices.

In reviewing the literature, it provided an understanding to the underlying emotional, social and mental issues that are experienced as a result of the trauma associated with colonialization, genocide, assimilation and acculturation experienced by Native peoples. Unfortunately, Native peoples have had very little opportunity to heal or

recover from the generations of hurt, loss, grief and anger associated with the long history of wars, massacres, residential schools, government policies, the Indian Act, relocation to reservations, oppression, racial discrimination, etc. This continues to have a dramatic impact on Native communities with high rates of depression, mental illness, suicides, family violence, child and woman abuse, sexual abuse, alcoholism and addictions, violent deaths and accidents, etc. In exploring the intergenerational issues of trauma it was important to examine the literature relating to the counselling interventions that have been developed to sensitize and acknowledge the differences that exist from a cultural perspective among Native peoples. Non-Native practitioners are attempting to gain perspectives and understanding from their work with Native clients. Native practitioners are researching and developing innovative strategies that incorporate the cultural teachings and practices into their work with Native clients. This contributes to the cultural revitalization and resiliency of First Nations peoples. Unfortunately, the literature did not produce any information regarding cultural interventions of the Haudenosaunee people.

The next section, will explore the results of interviewing Haudenosaunee practitioners and their use of cultural knowledge and practices as a foundation in their work with Haudenosaunee people.

Methodology

When choosing a method to use in this study, I felt it would be important to have an understanding of the cultural knowledge from those who practice it on a daily basis. A quantitative method would provide the concrete data to support and validate the use of cultural methods in social work. Yet, this method of research would not provide an insight into philosophies, values and beliefs of the Haudenosaunee people. At the time of this study, there was no research pertaining to Haudenosaunee cultural interventions in social work and there was very little information regarding the Native approaches to counselling. I felt that a qualitative method would allow this study to explore a contextual and in-depth understanding of Haudenosaunee people and how cultural practices can be useful in social work/counselling methods.

There are many methods of qualitative research. Each method follows a process which guides the researcher through a final analysis, where conclusions are made from the data collected. In my consideration for this study, the following research methods emerged: grounded theory, phenomenology and ethnography. I first considered grounded theory which is based on collecting the data at different points within the study and analyzing the changes that occur. As a result the researcher constructs a theory that is grounded from the data produced (Morse & Richards, 2002). Maria Brave Heart-Jordan (1995) used grounded theory in her study with Lakota practitioners. This method measured and supported her hypothesis regarding the impact of historical trauma and issues of unresolved grief among the Lakota people. The study also acknowledged the

importance of using cultural methods in social work practice, by measuring the emotional reactions before and after counselling treatment. Due to the short timeframe of my study and the lack of resources, I chose not to replicate Brave Heart-Jordan's study.

I considered phenomenology as a possible approach for this study, because it's based on people's experience with the world. It explores human behaviour in the "...context of relationships to things, people, events and situations (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 45)." Using this method the researcher will gain an insight into an individual's interpretation of a particular phenomenon which has affected many people lives, thus, validating a "...moment when things, truths, or values are constituted" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 44) within an occurrence. An example of this research method would be applicable in recording and validating Native people's experience with residential schools. It would seem that this research method would be useful in documenting the experiences of Native practitioners; however, it does not seem to consider the cultural context which is a foundation to helping among the Haudenosaunee.

Ethnography seemed the best research method for this study, because it is known for its in-depth, contextual, holistic, and reflective means in exploring a cultural group's behaviours, beliefs and assumptions (Morse & Richards, 2002). Morse and Richards (2002) define ethnography as a research method.

> Ethnography is based on the theory of culture, with the assumptions that cultural beliefs, values, and behaviours are learned, patterned, and may change...the [researcher]...needs research designs and strategies for eliciting cultural beliefs and values that are implicit within the culture and strategies that enable the identification, comparison, and contrasting of those characteristics (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 148).

When conducting an ethnographic study, the literature points out that it is important for the researcher to gain an understanding of the cultural group through interactions with daily activities, eating the same food, living with the group, possibly wearing the same clothes (Morse & Richards, 2002). Barker defines ethnomethodology as a "...scientific study of the way people of different ethnic orientations learn to understand things, especially society's structure and organization. The...[Researcher] considers the individual's cultural, stages of life cycle, ideology, social status, and unique experiences (Barker, 2003, p. 148.)." This is referred to as an outsider getting an inside look at the people and their way of life. Interestingly, Morse and Richards (2002) argue that the best approach of this research method is by researchers who would be considered as outsiders who are observing and participating with the culture. They state that this allows researchers to compare and contrast the cultural group to the dominant culture (Morse & Richards, 2002). However, I would differ with Morse and Richards. As a community member conducting this research, I believe that some of my community participation has allowed me a deeper understanding of the work that the participants do within the community. For example, I interact on a daily basis with many people and events within the community. Throughout this research, I have maintained contact with community people and Elders to ensure my understanding of the cultural knowledge, structures, experiences, etc. that are presented within this research.

An important factor in this research is that my cultural background is of Haudenosaunee and Algonquin ancestry. I am a status band member of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory in Ontario, Canada, in which this study is taking place.

Morse and Richards (2002) discuss that because cultural assumptions are based in values, beliefs and behaviours of the particular cultural group used in the research, the researcher should not be of the same cultural background (Morse & Richards, 2002). If the researcher shares the same cultural background, the literature points out that it would be difficult for the researcher to objectively observe the values, beliefs and behaviours of that cultural group in a non-biased manner (Morse & Richards, 2002). In some incidences this may be true. Yet, this may be an advantage of the author to be able to attain participant's trust and involvement, as well as, in-depth knowledge and responses to the questions asked in this research. Many issues and debates have arisen regarding 'insider verses outsider' cultural research (Smith, 1999). Linda Smith, a Maori researcher, explored this debate in her book, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. In the following quotation, she explains and warns indigenous researchers about the risks and benefits associated in conducting such research.

> Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position. The outsider 'expert' role has been and continues to be problematic for indigenous communities. As non-indigenous experts have claimed considerable acceptability amongst their own colleagues and peers, our voices have been silenced or 'Othered' in the process. The role of an 'official insider voice' is also problematic. The comment, 'She or he lives in it therefore they know' certainly validates experience but for a researcher to assume that their own experience is all that is required is arrogant. One of the difficult risks insider researchers take is to 'test' their own taken-for-granted views about their community. It is a risk because it can unsettle beliefs, values, relationships and the knowledge of different histories (Smith, 1999, p.139).

As a researcher who is a member and lives within the community, I found conducting research within my community challenging and rewarding. My biggest challenges were to work across the boundaries and represent the cultural context of the Haudenosaunee people working within a western framework. "While indigenous researchers are trained to conform to models that are provided to them, indigenous researchers have to meet these criteria as well as indigenous criteria which can judge research as 'not useful', 'not indigenous', 'not friendly', 'not just'. Reconciling such views can be difficult (Smith, 1999, p.140)." It is important for the indigenous researcher to establish and maintain respect, trust, humbleness, patience and reflexiveness as a community person and as a researcher. The greatest honour that I received was the participants feeling comfortable and trusting enough to share their wealth of knowledge with me.

This qualitative research method was chosen primarily to collect and articulate the cultural experiences relating to the helping professions of Haudenosaunee (social workers, counsellors and traditional practitioners) who work with the Six Nations community. The purpose of this study was to understand how practitioners integrate cultural knowledge into their methods of helping service users. It must be noted that the professionals who were interviewed, did not discuss the personal stories and/or experiences of their clients. I was granted approval to conduct this research by Six Nations Ethics Committee and McMaster's Research Ethics Board.

To obtain research a sample, the community was informed of the study through a distribution of flyers *(please see Appendix 1)* and informational letters *(please see*

Appendix 2) posted at various organizations. Unfortunately, there was no response to the request. Using a purposeful sampling technique, I initiated contact with potential participants who were known to provide helping services to people in the Six Nations community. A total of eight participants (four women and four men) agreed to participate in the study. Two male individuals were unable to continue with the study due to a heavy workload, family responsibilities and community duties. A total of six Haudenosaunee individuals were interviewed for this study, four women and two men.

Each meeting was held in a comfortable informal setting chosen by the participant. Four of the six interviews were held in a home and it was important for me to follow proper indigenous protocol when visiting or having visitors in a home. In Haudenosaunee culture, it is important to offer the hospitality of food and beverages (non-alcoholic) to guests when visiting a home. Also in the Haudenosaunee culture, it is important for visitors to take the time to sit and talk with those in the home, prior to discussing any business. Because two of the interviews were conducted in an office/work environment, it was just as important to take time to sit and talk with the participant prior to beginning the interview.

When it was time to discuss the study, I explained the purpose of the study and the importance of ethics approval. I provided a copy of the interview questions *(please see Appendix 3)* and had the participant sign the consent form *(please see Appendix 4)*. All participants were told that any of the communication that was shared with the researcher is confidential. The participant was also told that the interview would not identify them unless they agreed on the consent form to be identified with their name

associated with their response. Four of the participants wanted to be identified, the other two participants agreed to participate in the interview and not be identified for personal and/or professional reasons. Therefore four names are associated with quotations cited in this thesis. The researcher explained to all participants they may refuse to answer any questions and may withdraw at any time. If any participant decided to withdraw from the study at anytime, their wishes would be respected and the information would not be used. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

Each interview followed in a semi-structured format. Before the interview began, the researcher asked and was granted permission to tape-record the interview. Each participant received the same list of questions to guide their responses. In most interviews, the participants answered more then one question at a time. When this occurred, the researcher used questioning probes to assist the participant in elaborating on their responses in particular areas. Three of the six interviews lasted approximately one hour (1). The remaining three interviews lasted for approximately an hour and a half (1½).

Upon completion of the interview, the researcher offered a small bundle of Indian tobacco, a "thank you" card and twenty-five dollars. In traditional practices among many First Nations people, Indian tobacco is offered to an individual to acknowledge the wisdom and truth that was shared. Indian tobacco is considered a sacred and honourable medicine. To offer Indian tobacco at the beginning of a conversation is to ask the person and the tobacco for help. When Indian tobacco is offered at the completion of a talk, it communicates honour and respect. In this particular study, which is focussed on

Haudenosaunee knowledge and practices, it was important for the researcher to follow traditional cultural protocols in acknowledging each individual with Indian tobacco. It was also important for the researcher to acknowledge the participant's gift of time, a "thank you" card and a small gift of money was given to each participant. Two of the participants wanted to give back the twenty five dollars. I suggested that they should keep the money and/or donate it. Both participants donated each of the twenty-five dollars to a youth program in the Six Nations community. Participants were informed, prior to the interview that if they chose to withdraw during or after the interview, the information collected would be destroyed and the participant could keep the Indian tobacco, the "thank you" card and the twenty-five dollars.

All data was transcribed, for the two interviews where the participants choose not to be identified, the researcher coded the transcribed interviews to ensure confidentiality. After the interviews were transcribed, each participant was given a copy of their transcribed interview for their review, approval and keepsake.

Findings and Analysis

The focus of this section is to reflect the voices of those who work closely with Haudenosaunee individuals and families. The practitioners who were interviewed shared their experiences, frustrations, and how they receive hope and strength from Haudenosaunee knowledge and culture. While practitioners personally understand the generations of trauma that have touched so many Aboriginal peoples lives, they are no different from the people with whom they work. The one thing that stands out is the motivation, love and compassion they hold for Onkwehonweh[6] people. They find ways to teach and remind us of who we are within the teachings of Haudenosaunee culture.

A number of themes emerged relating to the depth of pain, grief and dysfunction in people's lives. Practitioners discussed how they incorporate their understanding of the Haudenosaunee culture into social work. The first theme relates to the importance of practitioners knowing the history of the people and the impact it had. The interviewees indicated that past traumatic events and experiences continue to have a detrimental impact on generations of Aboriginal people. The lack of this knowledge has led to the weaknesses and failings of westernized social work practice.

The second theme identified was the cultural resiliency of the Haudenosaunee, which has existed through many generations. By incorporating Haudenosaunee philosophy and practices into social work practice, practitioners are providing hope. The

[6] In the Haudenosaunee languages, Onkwehonweh means "original people of North America".

final theme relates to the future of social work in the Haudenosaunee community of Six Nations, comments are referred to governmental and social policies, and future research.

Western/Euro-centric Impact on Aboriginal people

All the interviewees discussed the negative impact that western Eurocentric perspectives and approaches have had on Aboriginal peoples. In early contact, we did not realize that we were different from the European settlers. They talked about the losses and the oppression experienced by First Nations peoples and still felt today. "...[T]o our leaders we were something. And then all of sudden we could not understand why we were nothing to [European settlers], because we did not realize that they were different from us (S. Buck, 2004)." The trauma and grief that has existed for so many generations has become a common denominator among Aboriginal people. Native people have lost or put aside many of their Aboriginal concepts, an example of this is the importance of collectiveness in the survival of the group. This next quotation reflects the impact of colonialism, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, etc., on the breakdown of collectiveness within Aboriginal communities.

> ...in terms of that real loss of community,...where we all took care of each other versus this individuality of making sure that I get paid, making sure that I'm being taken care of... I think where that really comes from is from residential schools...Children's Aid, when they used to do the abductions, [it]...created that separation from community to individual. ...[T]hey pulled those individuals out of their community and when they sent them back, they sent them back as individuals, and so over time,...how can you learn to take care of other people when you're taught only to take care of yourself? Right, so the last few generations now, we've had a lot of those people that have come back to the community and we've really lost that awareness and caring, for everyone, you know, making sure that grandpa down the road has something to eat, we just forget that grandpa's even there (D. Thomas, 2004).

All the interviewees have talked about how Aboriginal people have become disassociated with their past, due to the grief, pain and loss connected with it. We don't realize that the devastating past of our ancestors has such a great effect on our lives today.

> …taking away the language, the wars...residential school, sexual abuse, [etc.]…I really believe that...we carry it in our blood...from generation to generation. That's what connects us...as an Indian people. Because we know about that oppression...we have been stripped of our culture and identity...I think most definitely when [service users] come in…they are affected by it. But they don't realize it at all (J. Burning, 2004).

The historical trauma and its intergenerational effects continue to impact the lives of the Haudenosaunee people today. The next section will examine the weakness of western social work practice among the Haudenosaunee.

Weakness of social work practice with Aboriginal people

Two thirds of the respondents believed that western counselling alone does not work for Aboriginal people. They expressed that western counselling was a slow process and could take Aboriginal clients only so far. This quotation reflects the overall thoughts among the interviewed practitioners regarding the differences between a Haudenosaunee world view and a western approach to counselling.

> …we go to western counselling we are only looking at the person, the individual self-esteem that exists in us… [In Haudenosaunee,]...our collective self-esteem informs our individual self-esteem, because we belong some where. Once we know where we belong, then we can move within those boundaries. But if we don't know where we belong in our cultural collective self-esteem, then we don't have boundaries then we don't know we are lost…[W]e could work a lot faster if we had a form of our own counselling, the way we work to help (S. Buck, 2004).

The literature that is written about Native Americans or Aboriginal people in counselling, discusses the cultural differences relating to values, beliefs and behaviours in

working with this population (Heinrich et al., 1990; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994: Wade, 1995; Brant, 1990; Morrissette et al., 1993; Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996; Duran et al., 1998). The intentions of the authors are good in producing such literature, yet, the information positions social workers as having an 'expert' role in knowing about Native Americans/Aboriginal peoples (Heinrich et al., 1990; Thomason, 1991; Paniagua, 1994: Wade, 1995). What I find missing from the literature, and what half of the participants talk about is the importance of a collective self-esteem and a sense of belonging within the group. This collectiveness of the whole supports the foundation of beliefs, values and principles of Haudenosaunee culture. When an individual does not have a strong foundation or sense of being within their culture, it is like they don't know their role or how to act with other members. This concept is true among the Haudenosaunee people; the collectiveness is a foundation that defines the position of the individual within the group. If an individual is experiencing a problem, this has a ripple effect on all people within the group. The group is resilient enough to reorganize themselves, as well as support the individual who is going through a difficult time. This is explained by a practitioner in the next quotation.

> ...when it came time to plant the garden - everybody went to plant the garden because everybody knew that if we didn't go and plant the garden then there would be no food for everybody - not just no food for me. [I]f I didn't go plant the garden, say if I was sick then I knew they would plant the garden and feed me. [S]o the reciprocity that existed was very much a part of the community (S. Buck, 2004).

According to the practitioners, helping an individual or family contributes to the collectiveness of feeling good about taking care of their own. This contributes to the overall self-esteem of individuals within the group, and the group as a whole feels good

about helping. That is why it is important for social workers to work together with the client's family, relatives and community. This form of helping gives positive feelings to the family and community working to help one of their members. In the same instance, the individual feels supported, loved and encouraged, which helps them in overcoming their illness or the problem they are experiencing.

Two of the participants who were educated with a Bachelor Social Work degree, shared their views on the weakness of practising social work among their Haudenosaunee community. They explained that one of the main drawbacks is that social work theories are predominately from a western world view. One practitioner explains the difficulty he/she has in using social work theory with Haudenosaunee clients.

> ...[B]eing able to identify what is this cognitive behavior, what are the socio-economical situations coming into a person's situation. To me, I don't utilize those languages...when I shared this with my professors at university they said,...'you may not put it in those western contexts, but it relates back to it.' I bring it into my own ways with the different teachings that I have, so it's quite different...(Interviewee II, 2004).

Western social work theories and concepts tend to separate, categorize, label and analyze the help we are providing to a person or family. Western social work also has separate theories and approaches when working with individuals, families and communities. For each area, the theory is based in a language (concepts) and process that assesses the problem, categorizes it and comes to an almost predicted solution. The problem with this method is that it is a different world view. As one interview participant explained, "...people receive cultural knowledge a little bit easier...than if I were to pull out a theory and start talking about that. They're able to grasp...[the cultural knowledge that]...I'm teaching them ...(Interviewee I, 2004)." The four remaining practitioners

agreed with the two social workers about the use of western knowledge in helping. A traditional practitioner provided her views of western approaches in working with Haudenosaunee people.

> ...too many times we follow just a western model…those ones with traditional knowledge have been pushed out of the way in order for these western minded healers to come in with,...counseling practices... [No traditional knowledge] is utilized because maybe they don't know culture,…traditions,...[or] the history. It's just as well, you give a pill for that and pills for this...and expect them to get over it. …[W]e're not addressing the pain or the hurt or the memories....[from our perspective] (N. General, 2004).

As a society, we put a lot of importance on western knowledge and the models created. All of the interviewees said in one way or another that some aspects of western social work do not work well with Haudenosaunee people. In some incidences the people who use western methods and theories may create more harm than good when working with Aboriginal peoples. From Native perspective, non-Native people have not had the opportunity to learn, "…it's not that they're racist, it's not that they really have any hatred for First Nations peoples but there is just a tremendous amount of prejudice and ignorance but it's based upon,…they've just never had the opportunity to learn…(D. Thomas, 2004)." The next section will explore the strength and the importance of culture in helping Haudenosaunee people.

Cultural Resiliency – A Foundation for Haudenosaunee Social Work

Haudenosaunee and other Aboriginal peoples have faced many horrendous experiences that continue to have a dramatic impact within current day communities. However, it is the strength and belief that Haudenosaunee people have for their cultural knowledge and practices which continue to uphold them as a people. It is important to go

back and understand the strength our ancestors have carried and passed on to us through their love and compassion for us. We are not victims. Those are ideas that have been internalized in our thoughts and behaviours as a result of the generations of oppressive efforts by Euro-centric people (Freire, 2000). All the participants felt very strongly about having Haudenosaunee as a base in social work practice. Sadie Buck reminds us that we are a strong and loving people.

> ...we weren't victims. That is why we have such strong women... because we did not teach our children to be victims. We were such a strong...and happy people. And even in our teachings it says that...the Creator put us here to be happy. Where does it come in where we are not happy? It comes in at contact period. All the things that we had...clashed, we did not know how to deal with...because we never existed without love...we always had 'Ganohkra Sra'...."love amongst us"...we did not understand...what alcohol did,...what dysfunction was, and what possession was. In western society the man owns everything...We did not have that concept (S. Buck, 2004).

For those Haudenosaunee practitioners who are continuously living and learning their languages, culture, and traditional practices, there is a struggle to preserve this knowledge that has so much meaning to their people as a whole. They understand the importance of sharing with others. Jane Burning, a traditional counsellor, elaborates on the struggle to ensure that our knowledge continues to be passed on to future generations.

> ...I'm so respectful of our culture…the chiefs and the clan mothers. I don't want to do anything out of disrespect. And it seems that I've seen our people so guarded, so protective, and not wanting to share what we have. ...[W]e've been...plagiarized...in text books and things...a long time ago it would be nothing to see a non-Native man sitting in the long house at ceremony, but then they would take the information and write it in the book and you know make money off of it; and so, I can understand why our Elders look so hard at it and are so protective of it. I think that's what I'm learning,...that there is not much time left (J. Burning, 2004).

Jane talks about not having a lot of time left to pass on our knowledge; this is true. It is sad to know that those who possess the knowledge of Haudenosaunee languages, culture and practices are leaving this world and taking this knowledge with them. For many older people who have witnessed and experienced the exploitation of our culture in textbooks and in museums, they have become fearful and protective. Yet, there are many people within the Six Nations community who are finding ways to preserve and help Haudenosaunee people in learning their traditional knowledge and language through community healing programs and circles, singing societies, etc. In this next passage, Sadie Buck shares the importance of cultural-determination in overcoming the generations of trauma that Haudenosaunee people have experienced.

> We're coming to the point...that we have to fix that...because if we don't then we will lose ourselves…we have to take those old things from our culture, that we had all along…that have survived all those years and have created the "love among us" and…the "compassion among us." All those values and respect, created,...re-implement,...or reconstitute that in our people. If we have to go and create a western model of something, then that is what we have to do. Because so many of our people are lost and hurting and that is why 'Gendohnot' (compassion), and…'Ganohkra Sra' (love among us) comes back in…(S. Buck, 2004).

Many people in the Six Nations community have recognized the importance of traditional knowledge, language, and cultural practices in helping the Haudenosaunee people.

All the interviewees had some level of understanding of at least one of the Haudenosaunee languages. Two of the interviewees were fluent in Cayuga and Seneca, while the remaining four interviewees consider themselves learning the language. All the participants shared phases and words in their language, as they translated their language into English, I could sense the nurturing, caring, compassionate and loving ideas that

reflect the Haudenosaunee philosophy. Language is a very important component in the cultural resiliency of the Haudenosaunee people. Those who can speak fluently exist in small numbers. While there are a number of efforts at Six Nations to increase the level of language fluency (language immersion schools from grade school to adult education), this does not seem enough. In this next passage, Norma General speaks on the importance of language and its connection to the land and how it relates to our lives.

> …language is giving us a sense of place because it identifies if we're of a different nation; it talks about the land and being on the land. You know that's where you come from; it's your relative… When you use language…it clicks everything into place and you know you're secure. …Language to me is a living entity and it comes alive when you taste it and when you see it…you feel it within your body… So, once you have language you can understand how health and environment all are part of one, there's nothing separate in language because when you talk language it affects your mind. You're seeing the way that you feel, even in your physical self, and it makes you complete within your spirit (N. General, 2004).

The next section examines how practitioners are using cultural knowledge in their practice of "helping".

Cultural Knowledge in Practice

All the interviewees stressed the importance of using Haudenosaunee knowledge and culture as a foundation and a framework for social work practice among the Haudenosaunee. While talking with one interviewee, she shared her understanding relating to the stories of the Peacemaker bringing The Great Law of Peace to the Haudenosaunee people. She told the story of Tahadaho;

> …his mind was not good because as a young boy he was a healer and he helped people. He had this gift at a very young age,…he worked with his gifts and people would come and see him… His community and mother got frightened of his gifts and so they had taken him way up on a hill and

> they left him there, all by himself as a young boy. He had so much abandonment and so much grief that this is what make his back have crooks…and have the snakes in his hair because he didn't have a good mind. Anyone that has that amount of abandonment and grief, would be that way…They say in the story, how they could hear him crying out his evil words in his voice and that was pain, it was pain that Tahadaho was crying out…It wasn't until the Peacemaker said, when we (a collective group of chiefs) go to him, you will show him nothing but love. I want you all to look at him with love in your eyes and in your heart. When all of those chiefs from each nation and Jogosaha, our first clan mother, had gone to Tahadaho, they had so much love in their hearts that the crooks were removed, and the snakes started to fall out of his hair...they removed all that stuff from him (J. Burning, 2004).

This story is about how the Peacemaker brought the chiefs and the first Clan Mother together in forming the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca). This governing structure for the five nations was based in a spiritual context. Yet, this story is filled with so much more information about human behaviour and human response to difficult experiences. In this story, Tahadaho faces issues of abandonment and isolation from his family and community. This resulted in a deep grief, anger, mental and emotional anguish which transformed his physical appearance into snakes in his hair and crooks in his back. It also affects the ability of his mind and body, to be active and in a good place. The Peacemaker saw beyond the physical, mental and emotional distress Tahadaho was encountering, and healed his wounded spirit through the collective love and compassion of the chiefs, Clan Mother and the Peacemaker.

This story illustrates to practitioners the depth and effect that relationships have on Native peoples' lives. The existence and survival of Native peoples depends on the unity of the family and community. This philosophy extends to the health and well-being

of individuals, family and community. Another interviewee talks about the "collective self-esteem" of the group and the importance of involvement of everyone in the group to participate. Self-esteem is developed through belonging to a caring community who are proud of their heritage and have placed meaning in their world through sharing and love. Yet, if there are people who are sick or disabled, they can depend on the group to ensure they are taken care. While these practices and knowledges are very ancient, a few interviewees are incorporating their understanding into their practice. They have indicated a high rate of success in the overall health and well-being of their Haudenosaunee clients.

Another cultural practice that has assisted Haudenosaunee people in recovering from the trauma, grief and pain endured over generations of colonialism, genocide and oppression are the words of Condolence. Earlier in this thesis I described the story of Hiawatha and the overwhelming grief he experienced by the death of his beloved daughters. The Peacemaker saw how Hiawatha's mind had become clouded and his body unable to function because of the pain and grief. The Condolence Ceremony was developed to help people through this process through the love, caring and compassion for another. This next quotation reflects similar responses of two interviewees as they discussed the impact of this particular ceremony, and the importance of language and cultural knowledge in healing.

> So, when they do that ceremony and you understand the language and you feel what they're saying, it's so powerful that you know. You just feel like someone is physically cleansing you, wiping your eyes - wiping away your tears, clearing out your ears, and giving you that water. You can feel it. So, it brings forth all of those feelings and you realize you know, that this is part of the process, that's been always there. It's what we always

> have done, re-birthing and regeneration. To me, that is already there in our whole system. But language is again, the most powerful element. It is the core of who we are and once people are able to connect to that, then we would have that active in our community. Being able to know that a part of life is just the pain, but we have the tools in order to take care of it so it doesn't become overwhelming where we can harm people that are close to us [or ourselves]. It's...again in the teachings of The Great Peace, and in the Great Law. Which is part of Condolence, to remember the principles and to how we talk with each other and how we care and help with each other, those are the healing things (N. General, 2004).

For some Haudenosaunee people who are experiencing this deep level of grief and loss, it may be important for the individual, family and community to be nurtured through a process of Condolence. Yet, all the interviewees strongly agreed that it is not the place of the social worker to be conducting ceremonies with their Native clients. Ceremonies have a time and a place within the community. Sadie Buck expressed that the client has to make that decision to attend ceremony. In a counseling session, the social worker can discuss ideas pertaining to ceremonies, The Great Law, the Code of Handsome Lake and how these aspects impact social situations. If the client wants to go to ceremony, the social worker can put them in touch with people who will inform them about what will happen during the ceremony, which door to go through, what kind of food to prepare, etc.

Half of the interviewees, expressed that they will use forms of smudging during their counseling sessions. The rest of the interviewees felt that the social worker or counselor is imposing ideas or beliefs onto the client by smudging[7]. One interviewee expressed that a client should wait a year before involvement with ceremonies. During

[7] Smudging is a form of cleansing negative energy from the physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual entities of an individual or group of people. Some Native cultures will use plants such as sweet grass, sage or cedar. The plants are ignited with match (fire) and lit to produce smoke. The smoke is swept over the person's being by using their hands or an eagle feather.

this year, the social worker or counselor could explore the reasons a person would involve themselves in ceremonies, along with discussion of possible insecurities, fears, etc. After that year, if the client wants to be involved with ceremonies then it would be the client's choice and responsibility to approach the people who can guide them to ceremonies.

It's important for social workers, counselors, or anyone in leadership to understand the power dynamics within the helping relationship. In most cases, when a client comes to see a social worker or counselor they are in a vulnerable place needing help and support. They look to the leader as the expert. Half the interviewees acknowledge the awkwardness they feel when they are referred to as an expert in helping. This next passage elaborates on the responsibility of social workers or counselors when working with clients. It illustrates the need to be mindful of the power and the dangers of moving too quickly with clients.

> I think there is a danger when somebody says, 'okay I need help. I'm going to a counselor.' When this happens, the person's mind is open… I believe it is the responsibility…of the counselor...to take care of their mind, because they trust you. And if you put something in there, that's too much for them or they don't understand the context, then you are playing with their mind. You're taking their mind, you're not helping them come to it themselves (S. Buck, 2004).

Allowing the person to come to a realization themselves is central to helping. All the interviewees discussed the importance of having the knowledge of the community. As social workers and helpers within the community, they are aware that they will not provide for all their clients' needs. By having this awareness and knowledge, they can help their clients gain many resources to help them through what they are experiencing.

In Haudenosaunee teachings, the idea of power is in collectivity of the people. "As Haudenosaunee people, we're relationship orientated. Everything in our culture is relationship orientated (S. Buck, 2004)." When making decisions with the people it is important for everyone to be thinking with a 'good mind' for the welfare of the people. At the beginning of ceremonies, meetings or gatherings of people, a speaker will open with the Thanksgiving Address. By listening to the words we become humble in thinking about everything that is around us and the roles of each in creation. We are reminded about the responsibilities to the Creator, to the earth and to people. It is so important to be grateful and not to take these things for granted, as explained by one of the interviewees.

> …you give thanks to mother earth and what you're planting. You take care of those plants and then you harvest them. You are able to use them in ceremony in a way to help, our family and our people. I'm always learning so much from experiencing first hand from working with the land and our connection to the land. It's hard to describe but it's so important for our health and well being…it also meets our spiritual, physical, mental and emotional needs (Interviewee II, 2004).

It is important for our minds to be in a good place that will benefit our health and well being. It is said within the oral teachings, that if we take for granted the medicines, the trees, the animals, the waters, etc., they will leave us because they will feel that we don't need them.

The environment has always been important to the Haudenosaunee people, it is also very important in the helping process. Many Haudenosaunee people refer to the natural environment or the land, as the "bush". One of the interviewees talked about the importance of the "bush" in Haudenosaunee culture.

> I go in the bush a lot…it really puts your mind in a different place…that one action alone, that's part of our culture. The bush does not care, the ground does not care…All it cares is about you. It's the very core of your being. It cares about you. You can eat in there, you can find good water in there…it gets rid of bad energy [from you]. In the bush you [have to be careful of how you act and]…think…because you will get slapped in the face (S. Buck, 2004).

All the interviewees discussed the importance of using the land when they are working with their clients. Some practitioners hold workshops (parenting, life skills training or canoeing trips) in the bush, while others organize activities (such as strawberry picking or gardening) that involve the client in doing something while they are having their counseling session. One interviewee discusses how they have their grieving or emotional release counseling sessions upon the land, and how healing it is for the client. This next section will discuss the importance of knowing ourselves to help others.

Knowing Ourselves to Help Others

Most of the interviewees became social workers, counselors or traditional practitioners because of the hardships they endured and learned from, while others grew up in a traditional Longhouse family that has followed these teachings throughout their lives.

> I think the work that I do in the social work field is taking me a few years to narrow…I have been in social work for the past 15 years. But probably for the past three to five years…I have been really focused on Haudenosaunee and…where they come from, and looking at the healing that they carry generationally (J. Burning, 2004).

All the interviewees stressed the importance of knowing themselves, their identity, language, etc., before helping other people. "Social workers are aware…they have to love themselves before they can help other people. It is about finding the inner-peace,

and…the connectedness with the Creator (J. Burning, 2004)." It is also important to be aware of our natural gifts that we have to offer. One practitioner who is Oneida, Bear Clan expresses, "I'm probably most natural at helping…that's me being really who I am within our culture…it's not about our condition, it's about passing [our teachings] on, sharing (Interviewee II, 2004)." In many Haudenosaunee communities, it is important to know your connections with your family and relatives, clan and nation. By having this knowledge, practitioners can help their clients find their place within the culture. The individual is not alone. If they are confronted by a problem they can go their relatives, clan or nation for support. Having this understanding of support and guidance, is maintaining a sense of self care and nurturing by the people who love us.

For most of the interviewees self care is about awareness of who they are and finding ways to care for themselves. In this next passage, this interviewee shares feelings on the importance of caring for one's self in the work that they do.

> …how effective can you be when you're tired, when you're exhausted, when you have nothing else to give. So, it's important to take care of yourself in order for you to help others…I think that it's very important, whether going to ceremonies,…longhouse,…do your own medicines or…taking that time for yourself…it's easy for me to help someone else, but it's darn hard for me to start working on and dealing with my own things (Interviewee I, 2004).

Some people may think that self care is only focused on the individual, to some extent that is true. However, if we are approaching self care in a holistic manner, it is important to be aware of everything around us, to consider the impact of outside forces and how it affects our well being.

> …you need to take care of yourself in that whole manner of everything around you…You actually have to look at what is outside of the

> self...what's going on around me, going on around my house, what's going on with my family, what's going on in my community that can be bothering me...I don't think that we can look at just ourselves for the well being because, there are so many different layers, like an onion...There are so many areas and layers outside of that self that makes us who we are. Having us look at everything around us and saying, 'Okay, how can I get better,...keep myself better, and have those good thoughts.' (Interviewee I, 2004).

In many cases, outside factors are out of our control. What we do have control of is how we think about and how we react to those outside forces. If we have taken care of our bodies, mind and spirits, then we will react in a positive constructive way.

This next section discusses the role of government and social policies in the traditional approaches to helping the Haudenosaunee.

The place of government and social policies in Traditional Approaches to Haudenosaunee Helping

For many generations, the government has implemented many policies that continue to control the lives of Aboriginal peoples. The Indian Act is one policy of the Canadian federal government that defines who is Indian and if they can live on a reservation. In many Aboriginal communities, this policy has taken away a traditional system of identity, roles and responsibilities within family, clans and nations. Another government policy that was implemented was the mandatory attendance at residential school. The goal of this policy was to acculturate and assimilate Native people into mainstream society, often by training them as servants and labours. In the 1960s, social work played a role in carrying out child welfare policies that resulted in the 'Sixty Scoop', where Native children were taken away from their families and communities and

placed with non-Native families. Sometimes Native children were sent as far away as Europe.

These are a few policies that have had a negative impact on Aboriginal people's lives. There are some policies that are attempting to correct the faults of the past, such as the Reparation of Ceremonies and Bill C-31. Up until late 1970s, it was against the law for Aboriginal people practice their ceremonies. The Indian Act extinguished the rights and status of Native women who married non-Native men, and granted non-Native women who married Native men all rights and status as a Native person. In 1983, Bill C-31 attempted to correct this error by allowing Native women and their children to regain their status.

Many policies and funding formulas today are based on needs illustrated through demographics and socio-economic statistics. In this next passage, Darren Thomas elaborates on the impact of policies determined at a national level that do not address the underlying problems that exist in Native communities.

> …you can certainly talk about the suicide rate, the murder rates and the incarceration, alcohol, drugs,…they have those readily available so many of those people that make…government-level decisions are basing [their plans] on that information. So, how they really think about us is that we're a people who lack passion, who lack a desire for a better life, who lack motivation to do anything with this world. …I think part of the problem in First Nations communities is that it has been designed top-down (D. Thomas, 2004).

Sadie Buck shares her point of view for the need of policies that are culturally specific to the problems that Native people endure.

> I believe that is part of why we don't have any cultural specific models developing. There is no push that identifies the need…It's assumed…that it's all the same for everybody…An Indian who is alcoholic looks the

> same as a white person who is alcoholic. They go to the bar; they drink, so it's the same. But, the reasons that they got to be [that] way are different...Changes need to be made at the national policy level...also at the academic level...(S. Buck, 2004).

Out of the six practitioners interviewed, four practitioners are working independent from any agency or organization. Four of the six practitioners are attempting to create new practices incorporating old traditions methods and concepts that have been practiced within Haudenosaunee cultural. Jane Burning shares her perspective of working as a private traditional counselor.

> I just love being here because I'm not in a box. I'm not in the system,...having to follow the policy and procedure of agencies. We're just here and our only boss is the Creator, and we listen to him. He guides us, and we just come from a place of love and respect (J. Burning, 2004).

There are downfalls in working in a private practice. If a practitioner does not have the proper credentials such as a university degree, their practice may not be sanctioned and will not be funded by the government. For a traditional practitioner who attempts to offer counseling services within their community, it may be harder to gain a clientele base that can afford to pay services. Native people do not have to pay for health or counseling services. In Jane's counseling practice, clients have to pay an hourly rate to obtain services. However, in this next passage Jane shares her views of helping despite the financial restrictions on her clients.

> Our people need to be seen by a Native traditional person. Sometimes they can't afford it. But if someone was to come here and you can see them in that pain, we're not going to say, hold on a minute do you have your fee? We work with them anyway (J. Burning, 2004).

Norma General also shares a similar her point of view to Burning, it is important in to have our people as practitioners within the Six Nations community. They understand the

history, the pain, losses and grief from a personal level. Many practitioners have experienced the similar circumstances and have found a way to heal and recovery from the emotional turmoil. The practitioners are working in the community they have the knowledge, compassion, experience and sensitivity to help our people through the healing process.

One of the interviewees discussed the difficulty of having a standard set of policies or practices that would acknowledge the diversity among nations and meet the need of particular Aboriginal communities. This practitioner also discussed the difficulty western social work has in supporting cultural practices, medicines and/or ceremonies in helping people through difficulties. Some practices may be unethical from a western perspective, whereas in Aboriginal practice, this standard of practice is very ethical.

A number of years ago, Sadie Buck told me that Native people did not need social work a long time ago. For the longest time I did not understand why she would say such a thing. It was not until I realized she was referring to the fact that family and community provided the necessary help through the concept of visiting. This connection to other people had such a positive impact on their lives. When relatives or family members came to visit, they would visit for a few weeks or months. Each would share their news, stories, teachings, etc., while engaged in their daily activities. Sharing was what helped people. Because of the fast-paced lifestyle we live now, we do not visit the way we used to; and consequently, we do not have the time to help and heal through every day conversation. In this next passage, Darren Thomas shares how he is attempting to bring back old concepts of helping in his practice.

> ...when you talk to our people...our grandfathers and grandmothers, aunties and uncles, they know what we need to get done. But it lacks funding, [and]...resources.... We try to do what we can with what we've got... It doesn't take money for you to have people over and sit and visit with them, does it? Why don't you come down here, I'll get the people together, you come and visit with them...just getting different people from the community together and sitting around and maybe having a potluck (D. Thomas, 2004).

It is very important to have resources and policies at various levels that will support the cultural methods, philosophies and practices of helping from a Haudenosaunee perspective. Doing so will support the cultural resiliency of Haudenosaunee people through sharing their ancient knowledge, self-determination and vision.

Discussion

This next section will elaborate on the major themes that evolved from the findings and explore more why these issues are important in working with and for Aboriginal people. The second part of this discussion will examine a cultural model that I developed to assist practitioners in their understanding and work with Haudenosaunee and Aboriginal people.

Western/Euro-centric Impact on Aboriginal people

The Haudenosaunee people have suffered a long history of emotional and psychological pain, loss and grief through the impact of European perspectives and values that have been imposed through: colonialism, government policies, genocide, racism and discrimination, oppression, relocation to reservations, residential schools, and prohibition from practicing ceremonies and traditional customs, etc. This has resulted in many issues and problems arising within Native communities from a deep level of wounding. Through my understanding and experience with this theme, I realize that a large portion of the general public does not know the overwhelming impact that each incident has on the collectiveness of a people, as well as the impact it has had at the individual level. I have included a quotation by Darren Thomas, who shares his views regarding the trauma on Haudenosaunee people.

> ...the historical impact of that trauma has really resulted in a loss of our identity in modern times. In 2004, our people lack the awareness of who they are and the richness of our teachings. I am not talking about the religious practices of today but, the sense of identity and values that our original teachings gave us. This gives us courage and strength to live through each day. I think when we look historically at the generations of

> trauma our people have gone through; it really has affected us today (D. Thomas, 2004).

Many people don't thing that colonialism, genocide, assimilation, acculturation, etc. continues to impact Native people today. Colonialism was a collective way in gaining control of the land base, resources, and political rule of North America by European settlers. Once they possessed the power, they began to implement many ways to extinguish, eliminate, assimilate and acculturate Native people. Many Native people were taken from their traditional territories and forced onto reservations to live in poverty, with no resources or opportunities for employment. In addition, they were not allowed to practice their traditional ceremonies or customs. All of these incidences have accumulated over many years of abuse, and have been passed on to the next generation to perpetuate ongoing oppression within a culture.

Government, in partnership with churches, introduced residential schools as one method to eradicate the "Indianness" from Native people and civilize them into mainstream society (Graham, 1997). Children were abducted from their parents and communities by Indian agents, who were enforcing government policies (Graham, 1997). Some parents reluctantly surrender their children to the authorities, because they were so poor they could not provide even the most basic needs for them. The following quotation by Norma General elaborates on her views of the damaging effect residential schools had among Haudenosaunee people.

> …with the onset of residential schools came the fear of sexual abuse or assault. So, our people became afraid to embrace because of what had happened to them in school. If they were sexually abused, they were afraid of touch and they are not able to move that out of their mind because it's there all the time. They can't talk to anybody because they've

> been told not to talk about their experience. You would think that after all this time they would say, well this is what happened to me in that school and be very angry about that. Those feelings are set in them from the beatings that they went through. To me, it's like, they had to comply. I always think of it as someone trying to squeeze a whole person under the crack of the door or through the rollers of a washing machine. When that person comes out the other side, they are flat, empty and lifeless (N. General, 2004).

Unfortunately, not many people understand what Native peoples have endured in the last five hundred years. First Nations peoples have been fighting to maintain their inherited rights as unique and individual nations upon this North American continent. In doing so, they are preserving their cultures, languages and traditions that are foundational to their existence, while trying to remain autonomous within this world. The next passage discusses the differences between world views.

> …Native American world view is one in which the individual is a part of all creation, living life as one system and not in separate units that are objectively relating with each other. The idea of the world or creation existing for the purpose of human domination and exploitation – the core of most Western ideology – is a notion that is absent in North American thinking (Duran & Duran, 1995, p. 15).

Generally, public views are based on text books that are biased by western euro-centric perspectives that generalize and stereotype Native peoples. I believe the interviewees are stressing the recognition and implementation of Aboriginal knowledges, histories and worldviews as equivalent in status to the western euro-centric perspectives.

Social work practice with Aboriginal people

Social work offers practitioners the tools and skills to work with people through the use of theories and interventions. This section will explore the strengths and weaknesses of social work theories in terms of working with Aboriginal people. The

theories that will be reviewed will be: transgenerational theory; family systems theory; narrative therapy; cognitive-behaviour theory; solution-focused theory and feminist theory. These theories have been chosen to reflect similar concepts that have flowed through this research.

Transgenerational theory is an approach which examines or assesses the history, patterns, structural influences and experiences of the family. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2000) explain that "[t]ransgenerational approaches offer a time-sensitive, historical perspective to current family living problems by attending specifically to family patterns over decades (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000, p. 165). In one sense, this theory supports the inter-generational concept of historical trauma expanding over a long period of time in defining the effects and patterns developed by an individual and/or family. Another theorist, Stuart Lieberman (1979) defines the transgenerational approach as;

> a dissection of the transmission of family culture in its broadest sense from one generation to the next encompassing those patterns, styles, customs, secrets, myths, and problems which determines the uniqueness of a family…[It]…focuses on the dimension of time within family systems in an attempt to catalyse the present through the use of the past…[It]…connects the present nuclear family quandary with the past as far back as four or five generations, as well as to the living past in the form of the present extended family (Lieberman, 1979, p. 14).

While transgenerational theory takes into consideration the nuclear and extended families, it does not take into account nor does it relate to the collective experiences of a cultural group into its assessments. Even if a social worker goes back four or five generations, would they know that the family's Native ancestors experienced genocide or colonialism? A mainstream social worker may have a general understanding of Native

history, but using this theory does not take into consideration the larger issues that trickle down into the family and the individual. Examples may be a Native relative who died from smallpox disease in the early 1700s, or the takeover of traditional lands for the settlement of European settlers. While this theory considers the customs, stories, myths, etc., relating to a family, it does not address the issue of cultural sensitivity.

Another theory that is parallels an understanding of Native family structure is "family systems theory." This theory is based on the inter-relatedness and dynamics of the family. "From this natural system perspective, chronic anxiety is transmitted from past generations, whose influences remain alive in the present, as families grapple with balancing togetherness and the self-differentiation of its separate members (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000, p. 169)." Practice based on this theory assists individuals and family members to understand and address the various dynamics and relationships that exist in the family system. Social workers use tools such as genograms; timelines; photo review to explore the family history, crisis and patterns (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2000). While this concept can be very helpful in understanding the dynamics of family, I find genogram very limiting in analyzing the interconnected relationships within a Native family and/or community. The genogram and timeline presents very flat and linear perspectives of the family. Anderson (2000) presents a circular framework that overlaps the relationships of immediate and extended family *(please see Appendix 5)*. The following quotation elaborates on Anderson's indigenous model of the family.

> Children sit at the core of every traditional society; they are the heart of our nations...The elders sit next to the children, as it is their job to teach the spiritual, social and cultural lifeways of the nation. The women sit next to the elders and the men sit on the outside. From these points they

> perform their respective economic and social roles, as protectors and providers of the two most important circles in our community (Anderson, 2000, p.158-159).

Relationships are a very important factor in many Native families--the importance of visiting the relatives and hearing stories of the past assist in connecting the past with the present, to ensure support for the future. This Indigenous model can help practitioners illustrate to individuals and/or families the traditional structures that support an Aboriginal worldview and explain how western ideology and colonialism have fragmented this perspective. It can also assist in rebuilding the lives of individuals and families, while strengthening our communities and nations.

Another approach that respects and complements the oral tradition of Native people, is narrative theory. This approach is based on the exploration of solutions through re-storying an individual and/or families problems. This process can be very liberating to individuals, by "...deconstruct[ing] and reauthor[ing] problem-saturated stories into stories of competence and courage (Buckman et al., 2001, p. 281)." I believe this theory functions well on a miro-level with an individual. However, my concern is what happens when an individual and/or family is impacted by much greater forces over which they have no control. While having considerable impact on the individual, the marginalization or oppression that Native people experience in mainstream society can not be deconstructed and re-authored as a solution-focused story by one person. I believe this would be setting the individual into unattainable fantasy.

Miuchin (Laird,1998) shares the same concern, he "...wonders whether postmodern theory is rescuing us from having to face the evils and hopelessness in the

world around us, reducing our concerns to the individual story, when the plot of these stories is often dictated by powerful forces outside the interview room Laird, 1998, p.34)." Laird (1998) also cautions us in using narrative theory with cultural groups who have experienced oppression by political forces. He says;

> Our personal and family narratives are shaped and constrained by larger cultural narratives that provide the possibilities from which we can choose to make meaning. When these narratives are "problem-saturated"...,invisible, and/or unjust, or simply narrow and constraining, they can, most benignly, inhibit the ways individuals can make sense of themselves and their experience. More lethally, they can influence the development of shameful, defeating, and even deadly self-narratives (Laird, 1998, p.28).

I agree with both Miuchin (Laird,1998) and Laird (1998). Practitioners do have to be careful in using this theory because it could cause more harm than good. Another point that Laird (1998) expresses is the responsibility to speak for oppressed and marginalized groups. He says, "...we need to add our own voices when those larger cultural discourses do not fairly represent the experiences of our clients and do not allow their stories to be heard (Laird, 1998, p. 34)." I agree that Aboriginal people need support from the non-Native population. However, I would caution non-Native practitioners to not take ownership of Aboriginal issues, culture and/or experiences. This only contributes to the misrepresentation that Aboriginal people face within the media and in society.

Cognitive-behavioural theory is a model that is based on the relationship between a person's thought and behaviours. The following definition explains cognitive theory as an "...emphasizes the influences of beliefs about self and the world on behavior and emotional states, and behavioral theory focuses on the environment conditions or stimuli that induce and maintain behaviors (Regehr, 2001, p. 165)." I believe this theory

complements the cultural tenets of the Haudenosaunee. When the Peacemaker came to the Haudenosaunee and shared the Great Law, he envisioned a peaceful and caring society. This was attained by the means of having a "good mind," which would reflect in positive behaviours of its member. An example of bringing the minds to a good place is through the Ganohónyohk or Thanksgiving Address *(see Appendix 6)*. We bring our minds together to acknowledge and be grateful for each part of Creation.

In working with Native people from a cognitive-behavioural approach, I see many limitations. This theory addresses the symptoms of the problem and not the root causes. As explained earlier, many problems Native people have are the results of much deeper issues. I believe it is important to have an understanding of the underlying causes and how they may contribute to presenting issues. For example, in treating a Native person experiencing alcoholism, depression, and family difficulties, the practitioner may focus the treatment only on alcohol counselling. This approach may help the Native person for a while, but if the practitioner were to explore deeper into the individual's past, they may find out that this Native person experienced many levels of abuse through the attendance at residential school.

Another limitation to this theory is that it does not discuss cultural issues. Behaviours in one culture may be insulting to another. An example of this would be Native people avoiding direct eye contact with practitioners. From a cognitive behavioural approach, the practitioner may think the Native person is being resistant. The opposite is true; in an Aboriginal culture, the patient is showing respect to the practitioner.

Solution-focussed theory determines that "...individuals are unique and have the rights to determine what it is they want, the task of the practitioner is to identify strengths and amplify them so that clients can apply these "solutions" (Corcoran, 2001, p.326)." I believe this theory has good intentions and will work with many Native people. However, it does have limitations. It does not consideration additional information regarding the individual or family, unless it is focused on solutions (Demer et al., 1998). It also does not consider societal influences and/or oppressive structures (Dermer et al., 1998, p. 241). By focussing mainly on how one is going to fulfill a goal, I believe it sets the client up to false expectations. The literature seems to impress that it would be the client who faults in not carrying through with the solution. The theory also masks the power differential between the practitioner and the client. By referring to the client as visitor, customer, etc., it is labelling the client according to classification of their purpose.

The last theory I review for this section is feminist theory based on the ideologies and respect the Haudenosaunee have for their women. This theory is based on overcoming gender discrimination and gender role stereotyping (Barker, 2003). "Feminist therapists help clients maximize their potential, especially through raising their consciousness, eliminating gender stereotyping, and helping them become aware of the commonalities shared by all women (Barker, 2003, p.161)." Feminist theory has been criticised for its narrow perspective and its marginalization of women of different cultural backgrounds (Glassman, 1992; Lantz, 2001). I have respect for this perspective, however, I do not totally agree with the dichotomizing of gender. I do recognize that in mainstream culture, white men are considered the most privileged. I believe that aspects

of feminism have reconstructed itself into the very image they have opposed surrounding issues of paternalism and patriarchy.

In Haudenosaunee culture, men recognize and honour the roles and responsibilities women uphold upon this earth (Anderson, 2000). Just as women, recognize and honour men for their roles and responsibilities. From my understanding, there may not seem to be equality between the genders, but the one who carries the greater burdens (women) in life are upheld with a greater respect. This does not mean that either gender is greater or lesser. We are all human beings with responsibilities to each other and to Creation. In reviewing feminist theory, I would honour and respect my cultural views first, and convey them to both the men and women I am working with. I believe if I focused only on the oppression of women, it would not be helpful to either gender. In doing so, I would then become the oppressor (Freire, 2000). As Freire says, "...the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors...The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped (Freire, 2000, p.45)."

Cultural Knowledge with Social Work Practice

> It is true that much has been lost in the wholesale assaults on Indian culture during the past 500 years. But, the cultural roots of Indian ways of life run deep. Even in communities where they seem to have totally disappeared, they merely lie dormant, waiting for the opportunity and the committed interest of Indian people to start sprouting again...The tree may seem lifeless, but the roots still live in the hearts of many Indian people (Cajete, 1994, p.192).

This section describes the resiliency and strength that is prevalent within Haudenosaunee culture. Native people have endured so much pain, hurt, demoralization, loss, etc., from the imposition of western ideology onto their lives. By encouraging the promotion of cultural knowledge and practices, practitioners are supporting the vision and self-determination of Native people for future generations. The next quotation highlights the importance of therapy in re-establishing the individual and family through the culture.

> [For] Families who have suffered the loss of their traditional cultural system, treatment needs to focus on the restoration of their cultural system by recognizing the importance of their original cultural roots. Therapy also should emphasize restoration of the parent's basic confidence and ability to organize and lead the family, as well as enhance the establishment of a restored family identity secured within the ethnic/cultural identity of their own group (Tseng & Hsu, 1991, p. 206).

For the Haudenosaunee, the concept of collectiveness is based on the relationships and the consciousness of the people. "Our collective self-esteem informs our individual self-esteem, because we belong somewhere (S. Buck, 2004)." By having a sense of who you and where you belong upon this earth, contributes to the positive reflections an individual has about themselves and the group they belong to. Earlier in this discussion, I referred to the Ganohónyohk or the Thanksgiving Address. An understanding of the origins of Creation provides a sense of pride and self-esteem in knowing that our connection as Onkwehonwe (original) people is based on the love of the Creator.

The worldview of the Haudenosaunee has been socially constructed through the interconnections of relationships, values and principles. Values such as: respect, harmony, sharing, caring, generosity, equality, reciprocity, cooperative, non-judgmental,

responsibility, etc., as well as principles such as: the importance of children, community, family, the knowledge of the Elders, ceremonies, etc., sustain the existence of the Haudenosaunee (Anderson, 2000; Hart, 2001 & 2002). The next quotation elaborates on the views of collectiveness and the importance of children.

> Child-centred traditions never truly vanished within the collective memory of First Nations societies, and many tribes have already begun to recover–and flourish–as they restore their wise child-rearing ways. Aboriginal communities today know they face formidable challenges, but they also know that healthy, intact families are the cornerstone of self-determination. At the heart of the ongoing restoration of Aboriginal communities is their hope for the future: their children (Fournier & Crey, 2000, p. 327).

The structure of a Native community is a reflection of its values and principles (Anderson, 2000; Hart, 2001 & 2002). Children are considered a gift from the Creator and the heart of a nation (Anderson, 2000). They offer promise in sustaining the future, as well as, carrying forward the knowledge and traditional practices of the people (Anderson, 2000). It is quite important for all people to interact and have responsibilities for the children, "...producing life and raising children are understood as a creation of people, nation and a future (Anderson, 2000, p.170.)"

The older people possess knowledge and experience relating to the environment and the traditional cultural practices that respect and honour relationships among people, as well as, the spiritual and natural realms (Anderson, 2000). Women are considered the strength of the nation, because they have the ability to produce life (Anderson, 2000). In many Native communities, the bloodlines follow through women supporting the notion of a matrilineal society.

In most traditional Indigenous societies, knowledge is presented in many different ways, through the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual realms (Hart, 2002). Most people rely on receiving information in a physical sense, through smell, touch, hearing, tasting, and seeing. It is important to have a connection and/or relationship to the spiritual realm, ancestors and one another (Hart, 2002). In most societies, this is considered as intuition or a sixth sense. For Indigenous societies, "[k]nowledge is given through relationships and for the purpose of furthering relationships. It surpasses the intellectual realm, and lodges itself in the emotional realm, so I called it 'heart knowledge' (Holmes, 2002, p.40)." Below is a quotation from a Hawaiian Elder who shares her experience with heart knowledge.

> ...knowledge is not a personal achievement; rather it is conferred 'by God,' is related to others unseen, and exists beyond the earthly human experience. Here, Tutu Ohi'a discusses her grandmother: 'And she'd say, "We're going over there, to that house, to see that kupuna. She's not well." And I said, "How do you know?" And she say, "Because I had a dream last night." So sure enough, when we get that place, this kupuna is in bed' (Holmes, 2002, p.41).

In my practice with First Nations people, I use "heart knowledge" (Holmes, 2002) to assist me in helping the person beyond the physical sense. However, I need to mention, that not all First Nations people would feel comfortable with the notion of "heart knowledge" (Holmes, 2002). Sometimes, I will refer to this concept of knowing as a 'gut feeling,' which most people are comfortable with.

The transmission of history, patterns, structural influences and experiences are not the only entities that are passed on from one generation to the next. In the opinion of an interviewee, Native people are connected through blood memory. She says that we carry

our culture values and beliefs, as well as our traumatic experiences in our blood. That's what connects us as Indian people (J. Burning interview, 2004). The concept of "blood memory" (Holmes, 2002), speaks to the deeply rooted memory we carry in our being. It connects to our family, culture, ancestors and land (Holmes, 2002). The "...circular connection between people,...the gods, and the land is forged not by information but by blood and 'roots' (Holmes, 2002, p.42)." Deloria Jr. (1997) says for the most part that First Nations' societies are centered on the land. Because Native people's history inhabited North America, the landscapes have stories and experiences that are attached to the people on a physical, emotional and spiritual level. For most First Nations peoples, the connection to the land and natural environment is a healing experience.

I believe Condolence or 'Wiping the Tears' ceremony will help Native people morn the abundance of losses in their past (the ancestors and relatives who died as a result of colonialism, genocide, etc.) and in the present (loss of culture, identity, inter-generational trauma, etc.). Alfred shares the purpose of the Condolence ceremony.

> The Condolence ritual pacifies the minds and emboldens the hearts of mourners by transforming loss into strength. In Rotinohshonni culture, it is the essential means of recovering the wisdom seemingly lost with the passing of a respected leader. Condolence is the mourning of a family's loss by those who remain strong and clear-minded. It is a gift promising comfort, recovery of balance, and revival of spirit to those who are suffering.
>
> By strengthening family ties, sharing knowledge and celebrating the power of traditional teachings, the Condolence ritual heals. It fends off destruction of the soul and restores hearts and minds. It revives the spirit of the people and brings forward new leaders embodying ancient wisdom and new hope (Alfred, 1999, xii).

This ceremony was given to us by the Creator to help the living process loss of our loved ones. Native people have not had the opportunity to carry this forward when our

ancestors were being massacred or our lands were taken away; or, when our languages were being beaten out of us. I believe this ceremony will help us process our losses and nurture our way back to the people we are meant to be. Many Native people need to be nurtured back to who they are meant to be.

The development of a Cultural Model for social work practice

After reviewing the literature and findings, I began to think about visualizing a Haudenosaunee model of social work or helping based on the teachings that were presented in the findings. I remember a diagram Kim Anderson (2000) presented in her book A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood. The diagram, titled "Relationships" (p. 193), illustrates the overlapping connection between the individual, the family, the community/nation and creation with a series of circles *(please see Appendix 5)*. Anderson's diagram stresses the importance of relationships among Native people as a form of survival through the means of appreciating the Individual, Family, Community/Nation and Creation. The interconnections between all entities are important to the livelihood and the continued existence of all within the world. In the center of the diagram, is the Individual. It is important for the Individual to have an awareness of him or her self; doing so, will encompass positive behaviours that promote self care. By caring for the self, the Individual will learn to strive for inner-peace, which contributes to a good mind and heart. The Individual will feel a connection and/or a sense of belonging that expands through to the layers of Family, Community/Nation and Creation.

The next circle surrounding the Individual is the Family. The Family in Aboriginal societies plays an important role in the growth, development and support of its members. A typical Aboriginal Family does not only consist of the parents and children, but extends to include the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even close friends. In many Aboriginal communities the Clan system plays an important role in maintaining duties and responsibilities of cultural practices and ceremonies in traditional cultural societies. Clans are represented though the symbolism of animals (i.e. bear, turtle, wolf, eel, snipe, heron, hawk, beaver and deer) and are considered as extensions of the Family system from a Community/Nation level.

The next circle encompassing the Family and the Individual is the Community and Nation. This circle plays an important role in sustaining the collective identity and sense of belonging among the Family and the Individual. The Community/Nation consists of the social, political, spiritual and economic structures that govern and maintain the survival of the people within the Community/Nation.

The outer circle, surrounding all, is Creation. This circle represents all People, the Earth, Plants, Trees, the Waters, Animals, Birds, the Winds, Thunders, Sun, Moon, Stars, the Four Beings and the Creator (Barreiro and Cornelius, 1991). In the ceremonies and the cultural beliefs of Aboriginal people, Creation is honoured and respected for its roles and responsibilities that contribute to the overall existence of the natural environment. It should be noted that Creation can sustain and thrive without people. However, people can not exist without the entities of Creation.

Many Individuals and Families, who have endured generations of traumatic incidents, have not had the opportunity to recover from such traumas. Individuals have been overtaken by levels of emotional and psychological stress, loss, pain and/or grief that relates back to their experiences. Individuals and Families become disconnected and isolated because of the shame and low self-esteem they feel about themselves and their relationships. If they do not have ways to positively vent their thoughts and emotions, behaviours will reflect the underlying turmoil the Individuals are experiencing internally. As a result, they begin to seek negative outlets to numb the pain and/or gain a sense of control through the abuse of alcohol, drugs, addictions, suicide, family violence, woman and child abuses, etc. For Native Individuals, Families, and Communities/Nations who are experiencing the effects of "historical trauma" and "unresolved grief", a cultural approach or intervention is needed to understand, grieve, heal and recover the trauma they have experienced.

I have developed the following diagram to assist in understanding the cultural perspective, interconnections and relationships that reflect in the cultural knowledge, resiliency, self-determination, and vision that is foundational to the worldview of the Haudenosaunee.

A Model of Haudenosaunee Social Work

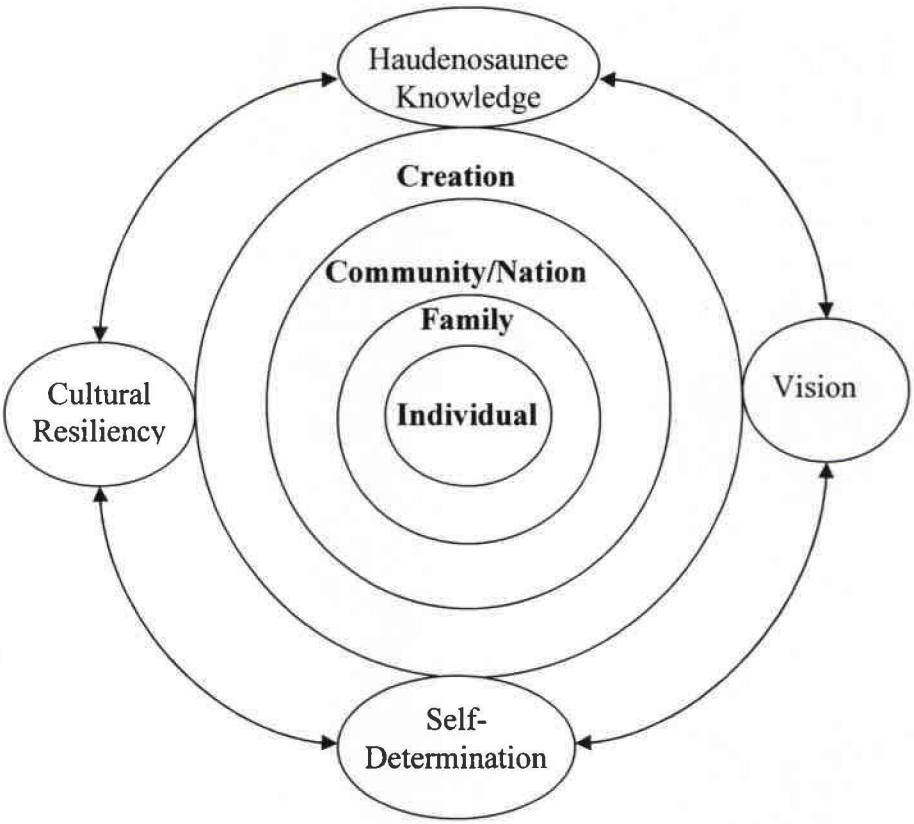

Diagram: "A Haudenosaunee Approach to Social Work" by Bonnie Freeman (2004).

The Internal Circles - Individual, Family, Community/Nation and Creation

Aboriginal social structures are reliant on the interconnectedness of the roles and responsibilities and relationships relating to the Individual, Family, Community/Nation and Creation. As explained earlier, this contributes to the overall survival of the community or nation of people. As Sadie Buck stated in her interview, "the individual's self-esteem is based on the collective esteem of the group." When helping an individual

overcome the unresolved grief, pain and loss resulting from a long history of abuse, oppression and violence, it is important for the practitioner to involve the family and community in some aspect of the healing process. The Individual, Family, Community/Nation have also suffered from the breakdown of structures and supports. Through a collective healing process, the transformation evolves as each entity (individual, family/clan and community) rebuild and establish their relationships leading to the survival and unity of the whole.

Outer Connecting Circles - Haudenosaunee Knowledge

The inter-circles are surrounded by one circle that is connected to four areas. The top circle represents the cultural philosophy of Haudenosaunee people. This knowledge is based in the culture of the Haudenosaunee people. In this circle are the ceremonies and teachings that honour the earth, the plants, the sun and moon, the thunders, the spiritual beings, and the people; each has roles and responsibilities in helping and maintaining the existence of the Haudenosaunee. These teachings illustrate to each individual, family and community the way we are to conduct ourselves with love, compassion, caring, sharing, generosity, respect, kindness, etc., for each other. This circle is the foundation of this model.

Cultural Resiliency – Strength

The second circle (proceeding counter clockwise), is cultural resiliency. This circle illustrates to the community, families/clans and the individuals the cultural strength that has existed since the creation of the earth. It encompasses the stories of creation, the journey of the Peacemaker and the Code of Handsome Lake. Through these stories, the

experiences and events that have impacted the lives of the Haudenosaunee people are shared to remind us that we have the ability through our knowledge to get through the traumatic experiences that we have had to endure. Many of these experiences have led us away from our people and our culture. It is the blood memory that exists within our being, which reminds us of those connections that are a part of our spirits and well being as part of the Haudenosaunee people.

Self-Determination – Action

The next circle (located at the bottom of the diagram) is self-determination. This circle illustrates the action within our teachings and language. The language that represents our concepts possesses a great amount of action and description. It is through our language that we get a sense of the nurturing and loving actions we have for the people who are close to us, our mother earth, the natural environment, our spiritual helpers, etc. The Haudenosaunee is a sovereign nation that is created on the basis of democracy. Three tenets within the Great Law of Peace are expressed as: peace, power and righteousness. As a nation and a people we are to strive for harmony or peaceful actions among our people and other nations. Through this harmony or peace it exemplifies the power of a collective good mind. With the influence of the positive collective, we are able to strive for the justice and equality of all. We carry these teachings to maintain a good mind and a good heart in the relationship with our families/clans, communities, creation and our Creator.

Vision - Future

The last circle (on the right of the diagram) encompasses the vision and the future of the Haudenosaunee. In our teachings, it tells us how we are to think and behave in the present. It is said that our actions and behaviours will impact seven generations into the future. With this concept in our mind, our ancestors of seven generations ago, loved us so much that they prayed and suffered so that our present generation would have the culture, language, teachings and knowledge to sustain the cultural existence of the Haudenosaunee. The concept of vision and future is important for those who are experiencing a tremendous amount of grief and pain. It is easy to get caught up and lost in the emotional pain. When this happens people lose hope of the future. When this happens it is important to go back to the cultural knowledge that possesses the love and compassion for our Haudenosaunee people.

Reflection of the Research Process

My first reflection was the extremely short time frame to complete this study. In my research proposal, I planned to complete an analysis of the Six Nations public documents, demographics, etc., to examine the parallels between historical events and the impact of physical, mental and emotional illness and disease on the Six Nations people. This information would have provided empirical data regarding the compounded layers of colonialization, genocide and oppression over the generations that have had an impact on the health and well being of Six Nations members. This would be a good research project for the future.

A second reflection was the process in conducting this research during summer months. I went through lengthy and rigorous processes with both the Six Nations Council Ethics Committee and McMaster's Research Ethics Board in gaining approval from both committees, approval was granted on June 30, 2004. I waited two weeks with no response to the flyers. I would suggest for future studies with Native people, flyers are not a good tool to recruitment people to participant with a study. On the other hand, the flyers were an asset to inform the community about the research that is taking place. Also, I would suggest additional time is required in gaining approval from the appropriate committees and that a less active time of the year be considered.

My third reflection was regarding the process by which the research was carried out. I did try to incorporate indigenous methods (offering tobacco and an informal atmosphere with food – equivalent to visiting) that value the comfort of the participants,

as well as respect their expertise and knowledge. I conducted the research within a western format. For future research with Native people, it is important to allow the time to visit and connect with the individual. In some studies, the researcher is discouraged from establishing a personal connection with the individual and/or community they are studying. Yet in Native communities, the importance of relationship building is vital to community survival.

Unfortunately, Native people have suffered from many bad experiences with non-native researchers. I have had community people from Six Nations ask me if I knew anything about the research they contributed to in the past at McMaster. They told me that they never heard back from the researcher nor were given copies of the study. Also, many traditional people are upset about former researchers who attended and recorded sacred ceremonies. I believe it is important for researchers to be aware of these past negative experiences and research history in the community. I would suggest for future research projects that researchers be allowed the time with individuals and community people to establish trust. I would also suggest researchers take their time in establishing relationships. This will also contribute to building the trust within the community.

As a Native person conducting research within my own community, I have been confronted with many challenges. This has left me with a number of reflections. I reflected on my awareness that there are many experts within the community and this has deepened my respect for their work. I believe that I possess the knowledge of my Native community, valuable tools and skills. The information that was shared with me from the participants truly enriched my life from a personal to a profession level. I also realize

further that the information that I was gathering from the participants will benefit the community on a much larger scale. I think I would have been more comfortable in my research role if I had worked with a group of individuals. This collective effort would help everyone involved to enhance our research efforts. I would suggest that future researchers involve the community in the Participatory Action Research. This process would allow the community to determine their needs, how the study is to be conducted (including timeframes), how and where the results will be disseminated. I also recommend that researchers to recognize and convey the strengths that are prevalent within the community in order to support the community to create research initiatives that are useful

The fourth issue emerging from this research (and also is an important practice consideration) is the challenge of speaking and understanding the Haudenosaunee languages during the research process. During the interviews, all the participants incorporated Cayuga, Mohawk or Seneca phrases or words as they were explaining cultural methods of caring and helping the Haudenosaunee. All the participants translated the phrases or words into English for me. I was not brought up speaking a Native language or living a traditional lifestyle. It is important to know that this does not disqualify me as an Aboriginal person, helper or researcher just because I can not speak an Aboriginal language. However, it is important for the researcher to ask questions, and to listen to translations. There is a lot of knowledge in the stories, history and ceremonies. These stories have been shared in both English and in the Haudenosaunee language. The late Jake Thomas would recite The Great Law in English because he

understood that many of the Haudenosaunee people did not understand their Native language. Yet, he had such a great love and respect for the Haudenosaunee people and the importance of the teachings, that he offered this knowledge of Great Law in English so that they could benefit from those teachings.

I would like to stress that researchers not be afraid to clarify and seek additional information that will assist in understanding the information that is presented. I learned that Haudenosaunee language is very descriptive, animated and an action orientated, where the English language focuses on the noun (person, place or thing). By having this information, it helped me to keep in perspective the worldviews of the Haudenosaunee versus mainstream society and to attend more closely to the meaning of the stories and the ceremonies.

A final reflection arising from this study is the inadequate amount of literature in the area of historical trauma, the impact of unresolved grief and culturally appropriate interventions. Research helps to validate concerns within Native communities. It may seem that there are many challenges and/or protocols to meet while conducting research within Native communities. It is suggested to future researchers that they do not get discouraged by the process. For non-Native researchers, you must be mindful of the fact that Native people are at time where it is important that they take on the leadership roles regarding research within their own communities. This is not to say that non-Native researchers cannot conduct or take a leadership roles. I feel that it is important to have both Natives and non-natives working together for the betterment of the Native community. I suggest that non-Native researchers take the time to learn the history,

cultural values, beliefs, knowledge systems, practices, etc., to support and work with Native people. I have had the opportunity to meet and learn from many non-Native professors who have worked with Native people for most of their careers. These professors have greatly contributed to my learning and supported my efforts as a Native person in research. I strongly suggest to future researchers who are Native and non-Native, to seek out mentors who can assist and support you during the research process. For Native people who are becoming researchers and going back into their respected communities, do not be afraid to incorporate the cultural methods that respect the people and the knowledge they possess. Having an understanding of the people you are working with bring values to the research that is being conducted.

Implications for Social Work Practice

This section will be divided into three areas discussing recommendations for future social work practice, research and education with Aboriginal peoples.

Social Work Practice

This research points to the importance of developing culturally specific models based on the cultural knowledge and practices of the Haudenosaunee. All the interviewees expressed the weakness of using a western model of practice with Aboriginal peoples and how it is be important to incorporate the Haudenosaunee values and beliefs into the practice methods of helping. One example that was shared was 'going into the bush'. In most social work practices the counseling session is held in an office setting or at the residence of the client. By taking the Native client into the bush, the social worker is facilitating a connection between the client and the natural environment. This teaches the client to learn how to work through issues and problems within another context, thus gaining a possible new perspective in working through problems in a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual way.

What I would propose is that the social worker becomes familiar or trained in using the outdoors and the natural environment as a method of practice. By doing so, the social worker is teaching the client to connect with the land and with themselves.

Another proposed cultural method would be through the collective practice of healing. There are some grassroots initiatives that involve all ages of people working together to achieve a common goal. An example of such an initiative is the Unity

Ride/Run. The participants (all ages) used old ways of traveling on horseback, running or walking across the country and visiting Native communities. I had the opportunity to experience this collective healing journey in August, 2004. The Unity Ride/Run was considered a spiritual journey and traditional cultural protocols (offering tobacco, prayers throughout the day, carrying eagle feathers and staffs, etc.) were followed everyday. This adventure allowed me to experience the natural healing processes in connecting with land, the horses and other people. During the Unity Ride/Run, participants formed an extended support system that represented a family atmosphere. While we traveled during the day, everyone would work together to ensure that all participants arrived at the next location. In the evening, everyone worked together in setting up camp, cooking, watching the children, and caring for the horses. After the work was done, everyone would gather by the campfire to share stories from the past or recount the occurrences of that day. Beneficial not only to those who were traveling, communities that the Unity Ride/Run visited also benefited by coming together as a collective to welcome and host their travelers. During this time the old ways of visiting were implemented by sharing food, explaining the purpose of the Riders/Runners in visiting their community, and communicating news or stories from other communities.

The second recommendation in the practice of social work is to have an understanding of the Haudenosaunee concepts and practices when working with the people. By having an understanding of the concepts associated with the culture, practitioners can help convey values, beliefs and principles that are significant in the culture. The participants, who used the language during their interview, took the time to

explain what the word or phrase meant from a Haudenosaunee perspective. I found it very helpful and it enriched my understanding of the culture. I would recommend to practitioners to take the time to learn about the cultural practices, and philosophies that are the foundation of a Native community. Practitioners can gain this information through indigenous focused books, Indigenous Studies courses, visiting elders and community people. By having this knowledge, practitioners will enhance levels of trust and respect working in the Native community.

A third recommendation in practicing social work is to understand the history of the Haudenosaunee from a Haudenosaunee perspective. This would include the creation stories, the journey of the Peacemaker, the stories of European contact and the spiritual agreements made within the wampum belts (treaties). Know the stories that have been passed down from our experiences with wars, relocation to reservations, poverty, residential schools, imposition of the Indian Act, prohibition of our ceremonies, etc., all told and honoured from a Haudenosaunee perspective.

A fourth recommendation is to utilize more Haudenosaunee people in the development and implementation of social work practices that are culturally sensitive and appropriate to the community. It is important to recognize traditional practitioners who possess the language and cultural knowledge are experts within the Haudenosaunee community. It is crucial that traditional practitioners be financially compensated in the same manner as their counterparts with Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Work degrees.

A fifth recommendation is to have national, provincial and organizational policies and funding sources that support the cultural methods and practices of Aboriginal approaches to helping. Currently, there are a few organizations that are mandated to maintain the cultural approaches in the area of health: the National Aboriginal Health Organization and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The two organizations are very good examples of supporting community initiatives while advocating for changes at the federal and provincial level. At the community level, Native people have organizations that support the cultural practices.. Examples are the Aboriginal Health Centers, Native Friendship Centres, Native housing, etc. Unfortunately, for many Aboriginal organizations, funding is limited and they cannot address many of the needs within the Native community. This recommendation is important because it would provide policies that support the financial aspects to continuing and creating cultural interventions that are foundational in helping Native communities.

Social Work Research

The most important implication is the need for research on the cultural interventions used to facilitate healing from historical trauma and unresolved grief. This research would include a further exploration of the importance of collective cultural healing, the use of horses (animals) in healing practices, the emphasis and incorporation of a connection to the land and natural environment in social work practice. Additional literature is needed to guide practice.

A second recommendation is the support for additional research from a Haudenosaunee or an Indigenous perspective. I suggest the following areas for future

research. Explore the history of an Aboriginal community and how the unique history of one community has impacted the health and well being of its members. Also, there is a need for further research which highlights the strengths and weaknesses of social work practice among Aboriginal people. Explore the role of social work among Aboriginal people to see how Native practitioners negotiate their cultural role and their social work role within their practice.

A third recommendation is for an increase in Aboriginal researchers to conduct Aboriginal research that incorporates Indigenous knowledge and methodology as a standard of research practice. It is also important that Aboriginal communities have ownership over the results that are produced by the research and to participate in the decision about how the results will be shared and disseminated. Also, it is important to have Aboriginal researchers producing academic literature in conjunction with the community they worked with to ensure proper representation in journals, texts, books, etc.

A fourth recommendation is to have more research that positively illustrates the good qualities of Aboriginal people. Much of the literature that is produced focuses on the harmful and negative stereotyping of Aboriginal people. This image creates prejudices and maintains the level of ignorance relating to the issues and traumatic experiences that Aboriginal people have endured for generations. It also perpetuates funding to deal with specific symptoms rather than focus on the need for services that focus on collective identity and healing from a culturally sensitive perspective.

A fifth recommendation is to have a culturally sensitive and community involved ethical approval process in conducting Native focused research. This process would involve various people at different levels of the community. This group would be the gatekeepers for permission to conduct research that is being considered for the Native community. I highly recommend the community involvement in research endeavours, and research methods such as a Participatory Action Research that ensures the involvement of the community in designing, implementation, analysis and production of the document.

Social Work Education

The first recommendation is to have culturally produced and appropriate First Nations materials implemented throughout the core curriculum for all social work students in the School of Social Work. In most social work programs, the study of theories and approaches are segregated to focus on the areas relating to the individual, family and groups, and the community. From an Aboriginal perspective, it is important to understand how the individual, family/clan, and nation or community complements and supports each entity.

A second recommendation is to hire Aboriginal professors and instructors to deliver First Nations curriculum, and to financially compensate them at the same level as their university counterparts.

A third recommendation is to implement a community advisory/evaluation committee to review the curriculum, teaching methods and provide support to Native students. This component will enhance the experience of all students, as well as establish

networks and relationships with Aboriginal communities. This will create a trusting relationship with the possibility of future arrangements of research or community experiences for any student in the social work program.

The fourth recommendation is to have resources available to bring in traditional Aboriginal people and practitioners as guest lecturers to share their cultural knowledge and perspective of the helping practice, Aboriginal women's issues, socio-economic issues, limitation of policy, aspects of health and well being, etc.

A fifth recommendation is to have supports for Aboriginal students and faculty in the School of Social Work. The field of Aboriginal or Indigenous knowledge and practice is not fully supported by the academy. Students who take Indigenous Studies or Aboriginal focused courses in social work find the courses very challenging academically, emotionally and mentally. Native students in the social work program have a lot of knowledge to offer from a Native perspective. It is important for professors not to single out and expect Aboriginal students to talk about topics of Aboriginal issues when they come up. For the Aboriginal student, they may not have knowledge of the cultural group or of the issue being discussed. Also, it is important to support Aboriginal students because they are coming from a different world view than other students. Many times an Aboriginal world view will clash with a dominant view of the world. Some Aboriginal students will challenge and then be defeated by the professor who is presenting the information. Other Aboriginal students will harbour ill feelings and say nothing about the material to the professor. By having support for Native students, students have friendly people who care and advocate on their behalf. The same is true for

Aboriginal instructors. Many Aboriginal instructors feel that they are challenged by mainstream students and faculty regarding the way in which they present Aboriginal knowledge. In Aboriginal courses, it is important to have Aboriginal people share their perspectives, adding a personal perspective to the information that is discussed. In academia, information and knowledge is verified through research and literature. Interestingly, many non-native students and faculty members feel they possess more knowledge than the Aboriginal instructor because of their field on knowledge is based on scientific research. Aboriginal people acquire much of their knowledge through their relationships with the natural environment and the people around them. By having support for Aboriginal people in the university setting, they will be able to offer students another perspective into a different world view.

Conclusion

This research study explores the traumatic events that have resulted in generations of emotional and psychological wounding of Canada's First Nations peoples. Through examination of historical trauma, resistance and resiliency, we begin to understand the efforts that the Haudenosaunee have undertaken to protect their cultural knowledge, practices, and languages from being eradicated. This study also examines how Haudenosaunee practitioners are integrating their cultural knowledge into the work of helping those who experienced the inter-generational effects of historical trauma.

The research begins by reviewing the historical events from a Haudenosaunee perspective. The historical account explores the experiences that have led part of the Haudenosaunee to the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Such trauma as residential school, genocide re smallpox epidemic, colonialism, encroachment of land and resources, chid welfare re "the Scoop" – were events and incidents that directly impacted the wellbeing of the Haudenosaunee people.

The literature review explores theories and ideas that explain the immediate and generational impact of trauma on those experiencing wars, holocausts, massacres, and traumatic experiences. This review examines the following concepts: ethno stress; survivor syndrome; post traumatic stress disorder; post colonial psychology; and post colonial stress disorder. The primary focus is Brave Heart-Jordan's theory of 'historical trauma' and 'unresolved grief' as they relate to Native American experiences with colonialism, genocide, assimilation, acculturation, oppression, discrimination, etc. The

second part of the literature review examines the counselling interventions that have been developed to assist practitioners in helping Aboriginal people in recovering from the inter-generational impact of historical trauma.

This study interviewed Six Nations practitioners, counsellors and traditional helpers toward gaining understanding of the cultural knowledge, practices and concepts of "helping" within a Haudenosaunee context. The findings highlighted: the weaknesses and failings of western social work practice; the cultural resiliency and knowledge as a foundation for Haudenosaunee social work; the importance of self care; and, the need for government policies to support cultural practice of helping. At the end of the discussion, a cultural model for social work practice is produced to assist practitioners in their helping role and work with Aboriginal people.

Finally, this paper reflects on the limitations and implications of this research in working with an Aboriginal community. As a researcher, the biggest challenge I confronted with was the short timeframe allotted to conduct the study, especially since this area of research is relatively new in academia. There is a great need for additional and innovative research and the development of cultural inventions from an Indigenous perspective. From a research perspective, I was challenged to uphold and respect the cultural values and protocols of the Haudenosaunee while adhering to the research ethics and guidelines of McMaster University. On a positive note, I was fortunate in having established relationships within my home community. I believe this contributed to the level of trust and knowledge that individuals shared with me, as well as, my comfort in seeking clarification of Haudenosaunee concepts when they were shared. I believe this

kept my mind focused in Haudenosaunee worldview so that I could accurately represent this knowledge throughout the research process and thesis writing.

If I had an opportunity to conduct another research project with Aboriginal people, I would highly recommend the following. First, learn and understand the history and culture of the Aboriginal group that you are working with. Secondly, I encourage the use of the Participatory Action Research model. This research method involves the community at every level of the research process; as it supports the empowerment and self determination process.

There are a number of recommendations in the *Implications* section of this research. I divided this area into three parts: *Social Work Practice*, *Social Work Research*, and *Social Work Education*. In the first section, *Social Work Practice*, I recommend the development of culturally specific models that are based in the traditional knowledge and practices of the Haudenosaunee people. To do so, it is important to have an understanding of the cultural practices and concepts that are foundational to an Aboriginal culture. Next, it is important to incorporate an intervention that stresses the collective process in recovery from generations of historical traumas and unresolved grief. It is necessary to utilize resources and to hire community people who possess this specific knowledge and ability to help. The last recommendation is to seek the support in policy development and funding resources to support the cultural practices of traditional helping methods and practices with Aboriginal people. With adequate financial resources, practitioners will have the opportunity to create and develop cultural practices.

In the section, *Social Work Research*, I highly recommend the need for additional research on cultural interventions to facilitate healing and recovery from historical trauma and unresolved grief. Indigenous researchers need to preserve the worldviews and perspectives of Aboriginal people in their research. It is also important to portray the realities and positiveness that exists in Aboriginal communities. I also recommend a culturally sensitive and community involved ethical and research process.

In *Social Work Education*, I recommend culturally produced and appropriate First Nations material that is taught by Aboriginal professors and instructors throughout the core of the curriculum. I also recommend to educational institutions, the implementation of a community advisory/evaluation committee to review the curriculum, teaching methods and additional supports needed for Aboriginal students. The last recommendation is to have financial resources in bringing knowledgeable Aboriginal people in as guest lecturers. This will enhance the relationships between Aboriginal people and the educational institutions, as well as provide students with valuable resources and role models.

I conclude with my final thoughts relating to this research and what I think readers should embrace in this thesis. In addressing Aboriginal people, it is my hope this document represents the Haudenosaunee culture and people in a positive way. I believe there is strength and power in the cultural knowledge and helping practices of the Haudenosaunee. It is important for Aboriginal people to have pride in our identity and celebrate the gifts that have been given by the Creator. I hope this document supports the self-determined efforts that are taking place within Six Nations and other Aboriginal

communities. Finally, it is my vision and hope that I have provided a valuable resource by capturing the voices and knowledge that constitute the collective consciousness of the Haudenosaunee.

For non-native readers, I hope this document offers an understanding into the cultural knowledge and practices that are foundational to the existence of Aboriginal people. I encourage you to know history from an Aboriginal perspective. To do so, is to raise awareness and begin the alleviation of oppression, discrimination and marginalization that many Aboriginal people experience. I also encourage non-native people to be supportive in advocating with Aboriginal people for the freedom, equality and justice for all people. Lastly, I hope that non-native people will encourage and support Aboriginal people to take leadership roles at all levels of the community. I believe Aboriginal people have many contributions that can be shared with mainstream society.

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Appendix 1 - Flyer:

Research Study
Looking for Haudenosaunee and First Nations People
who work in the Six Nations Community as
Traditional Cultural Advisors, Social Workers, Counsellors and
Social Service Workers
to participant in a study

The study will examine how Haudenosaunee (Six Nations of the Grand River Territory) and First Nations practitioners are integrating cultural knowledge and practices into the work of helping those who experience the emotional and mental effects of inter-generational historical trauma. It will also explore the resistance and resiliency of the Haudenosaunee in protecting their cultural practices, knowledge, and languages from being eradicated.

The interview is voluntary and will take approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours, and with your approval will be audio taped. Your responses will remain confidential and will not identify you in any matter.

This project has been reviewed by and has received ethics clearance through the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB) and Six Nations Band Council Ethics Committee. Should you have any questions or concerns about your involvement in this study, please contact the MREB at (905) 525-9140, extension 23142 or e-mail, ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca You may also contact Six Nations Band Council Ethics Committee at (519) 445-2201.

mailto:sammon@mcmaster.caIf you are interested in participating in this study please contact:

Bonnie Freeman, MSW Candidate/Researcher
Contact: (519) 445-0927, e-mail freemanb@mcmaster.ca

Appendix 2 – Information Letter

"Social Work Practice among the Haudenosaunee"
Research Study:
A Master thesis requirement in completing Social Work degree
McMaster University

June 30, 2004

The study will explore the importance of cultural practices, knowledge, connection to the land and language in assisting the Haudenosaunee recover from generations of problems/trauma. It will also explore how Haudenosaunee social workers/counsellors use cultural knowledge and practices in helping those who experience poor health and well being from generations of problems/trauma.

The research study will take place between June 30 to July 30, 2004. Should you decide to participate, and your participation in this research is completely voluntary. The interview will take approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours at the Six Nations community, also with your approval the interview will be audio taped.

The questions will cover areas such as:

- What is the importance of cultural practices, languages, connection to the land and traditional ceremonies have in assisting First Nations people to recover from generations of problems and pain?
- How are First Nations practitioners integrating traditional indigenous knowledge and cultural practices into the work of helping those who experience the inter-generational effects of historical trauma?

Please note that by agreeing to participate in this particular study, you are not consenting to participate in any other research study. In this research you have the choice to have your responses to remain confidential and will not identify you in any matter, or you can consent to be identified with your name and responses published in any of the literature produced. You are free to decline answering any questions you choose or you may stop the interview at anytime. All data will be kept in a locked cabinet and be stored at McMaster University in the School of Social Work for seven years (until August 2011), in compliance with the Canadian Freedom fo Information Act.

I may publish the findings and quotations in research journals, at this time I will continue to respect your choice of being identified or not. You may withdraw your participation from this research at any time. Upon your withdraw, all data will be destroyed immediately, with no questions asked.

This project has been reviewed by and has received ethics clearance through the Six Nations Band Council Ethics Committee and the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB).

Should you have any questions or concerns about your involvement in this study, please contact:

- Six Nations Band Council Ethics Committee at (519) 445-2201.
- MREB at (905) 525-9140, extension 23142 or e-mail, ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the researcher and/or the research, you may contact

- McMaster's School of Social Work Office, (905) 525-9140, extension 23795 or e-mail, socwork@mcmaster.ca
- Thesis Supervisor, Sheila Sammon, Associate Professor, McMaster School of Social Work, (905) 525-9140 extension 23780 or e-mail sammon@mcmaster.ca

Thank you in advance for your interest in this research study. I look forward in scheduling a date for your interview, and will be contacting you in the next few days to arrange a day, time and location.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Freeman, MSW Candidate/Researcher
Contact: (519) 445-0927, e-mail freemanb@mcmaster.ca

Appendix 3 – Interview Questions

1. Why did you choose the work that you do?
    - Are you aware of any cultural practices relating to emotional and psychological issues the Haudenosaunee people may of had during the contact of non-native people?
    - Is this practice different from today's helping (social work/counselling) practice? If so, how?

2. Can you define in your own words, what health and well being is from a Haudenosaunee perspective?
    - Do you know if there are words in the Haudenosaunee language that describes emotional and psychological health/well-being?
    - What are these words? What do these words mean?

3. What do you think is the cause of so many problems within the Six Nations Community, today?
    - Do these problems effect the mental and emotional health and well-being of the Six Nations community?
    - In your own words, how would you define generations of problems within our community?
    - Do you think the psychological and emotional health of the Haudenosaunee/Six Nations is connected to generations of problems/trauma? If so, how?

4. What is the importance of 'cultural practices' in the health and well being of the Haudenosaunee?
    - What is the importance of 'language' in the health and well being of the Haudenosaunee?
    - What is the importance of 'connection to the land' with the health and well being of the Haudenosaunee?
    - What is the importance of 'traditional ceremonies' with the health and well being of the Haudenosaunee?

5. Do you think the traditional practices help the Haudenosaunee recover from generations of trauma and pain? If so, how? If not, why?
    - Do you think we had health and well being problems prior to colonialism, etc? What were they and did they help the people?
    - Are there cultural practices and/or traditional ceremonies among the Haudenosaunee that help the people with emotional and mental health?
    - If so, can you explain what they are? Are they practice today?

6. Do you think there is a place for Haudenosaunee cultural practices/ceremonies in social work/counselling practices? If so, how?
    - Is there a place for Haudenosaunee language in social work/counselling practices?
    - Is there a place for Haudenosaunee connection to the land in social work/counselling practices?
    - Is there a place for Haudenosaunee traditional ceremonies in social work/counselling practices?

7. Do you think there should be social policies set within the government, to support cultural practices in the social work/mental health field? If not, why? If so, why?

8. How can we integrate Haudenosaunee knowledge and cultural practices into our social work practice to benefit the client?
    - Do you use western social work/counselling practices along with the traditional and cultural practices?
    - How do you find they fit together? Or should they be separate?

I. Do you have some examples that you could share regarding traditional and cultural practices in your work?
    - Do they integrate of both cultural practices and western practices?

9. How do you think this research could be useful to you in your work/practice?
    - Do you see any other places that this information could be useful or supportive?

10. Is there anything else you feel that I missed, that may be helpful?

11. After I type out your responses, would you like the opportunity to review the written transcripts to ensure that what you have shared was not taken out of context?

12. Do you have any other questions and/or comments?

Appendix 4 – Consent Form

"Social Work Practice among the Haudenosaunee"
Research Study
Bonnie Freeman, MSW Candidate/Researcher
Thesis requirement in completing Master of Social Work degree from McMaster University
Contact: (519) 445-0927
Thesis Supervisor: Sheila Sammon, McMaster School of Social Work
Contact: KTH 319, (905) 525-9140 ext. 23780
email: sammon@mcmaster.ca

The study will explore the importance of cultural practices, knowledge, connection to the land and language in assisting the Haudenosaunee recover from generations of problems/trauma. It will also explore how Haudenosaunee social workers/counsellors use cultural knowledge and practices in helping those who experience poor health and well being from generations of problems/trauma.

I understand that the audio-taped and note taking interview will take approximately one and half hours to complete. All data will be kept in a locked cabinet and be stored at McMaster University in the School of Social Work for seven years (until August 2011), in compliance with the Canadian Freedom fo Information Act.

Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. I may decline in answering any questions or I may stop the interview. I understand that some of the things that I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final report, and subsequent publications, but my name will not be associated with the text.

I hereby agree to participate in the above research:

_____ _____
Participant Signature Date

_____ _____ _____
Principal Investigator Signature Print Name Date

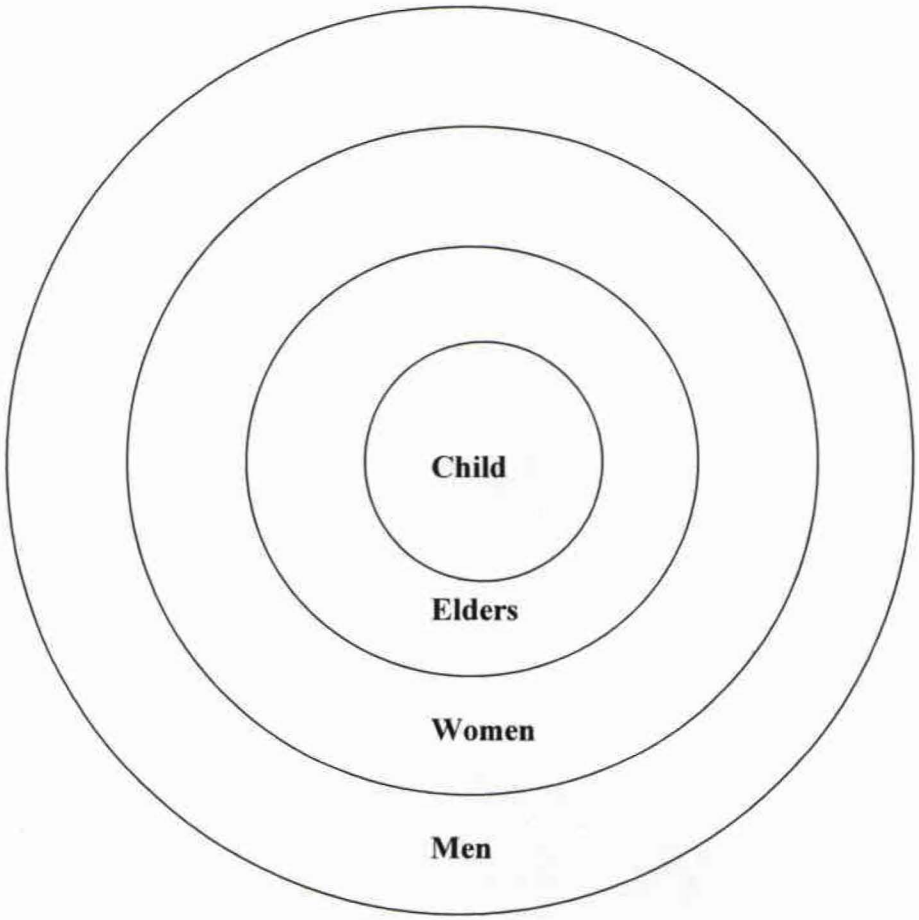
Identifying Consent

I hereby consent to be identified in the above research project. I understand my name and the information I provide will be used in the research report and may be directly quoted in the final report and subsequent publications and my name will be associated with the text. I also understand that I will approve the transcripts and sign off on the information I provide for this research. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty.

I hereby agree to participate in the above research:

Participant Signature	Print Name	Date
Principal Investigator Signature	Print Name	Date

Appendix 5 – Social Organization Diagram



The diagram entitled "Social Organization" is taken from the book *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* by Kim Anderson (2000), page 158.

Appendix 6 – Ganohónyohk, Thanksgiving Address

Ganohónyohk[1]

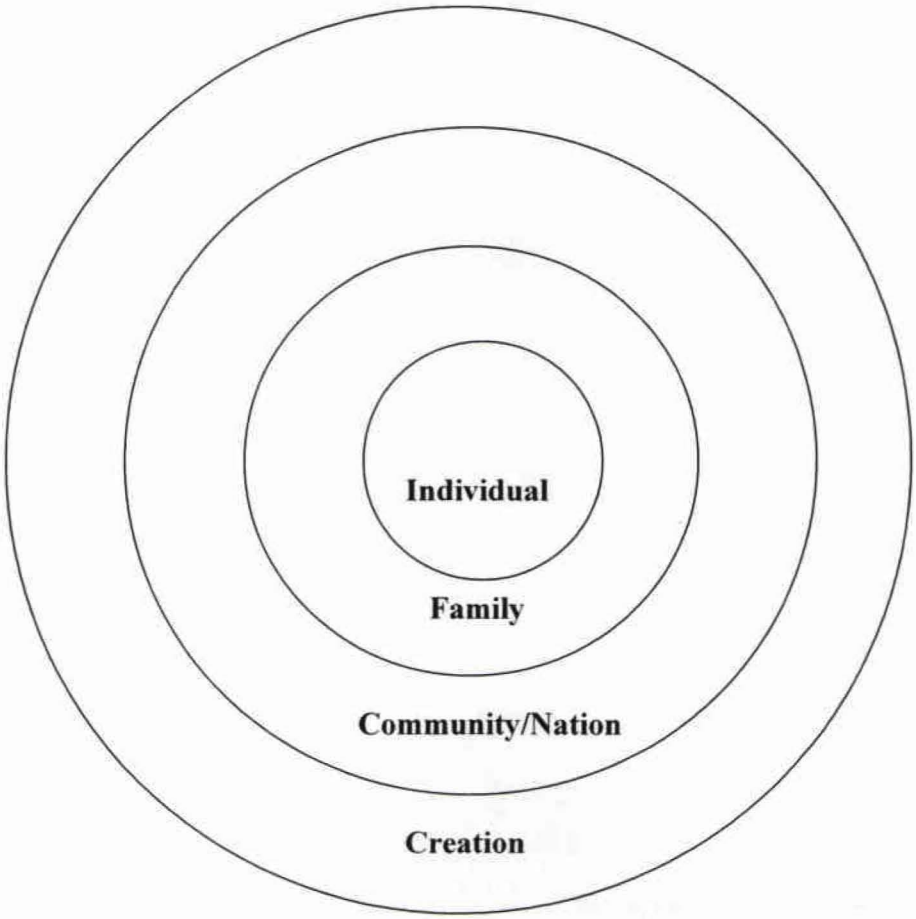
(Words Before All Else)

We offer our greetings to all our people
We offer our greetings to the Earth, our Mother
We offer our greetings to the waters of all rivers, lakes and streams
We offer our greetings to all the fish life
We offer our greetings to all root life
We offer our greetings to all the plant life (the green things)
We offer our greetings to all the different medicines (natural)
We offer our greetings to all the insect life
We offer our greetings to all the different foods
We offer our greetings to all the fruits and berries
We offer our greetings to all the animals (that are free)
We offer our greetings to all the bird life
We offer our greetings to all the tree life (big trees and young saplings)
We offer our greetings to the four winds
We offer our greetings to our Grandfathers, the Thunders
We offer our greetings to our Grandmother, the Moon
We offer our greetings to our Elder Brother, the Sun
We offer our greetings to all the stars in the sky
We offer our greetings to our spiritual leader, Handsome Lake
We offer our greetings to the four beings, the Messenger
We offer our greetings to the Prophets
We offer our greetings to the Creator (the Great Natural Power)

Netogyél' niyohtó:k ogwa'nigó ha'
Now our minds are as one

[1] The Ganohónyohk. presented on this page is used in the Indigenous Studies Programme. There are much longer versions of this speech in the Haundenosaunee language and can take at lease a couple of hours to recite the full version. Various lengths of this speech is used to begin everyday and every gathering of people, to bring our minds together as one.

Appendix 7 – Relationship Diagram



The diagram entitled "Relationships" is taken from the book *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood* by Kim Anderson (2000), page 193.