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Triadic Model of Connectedness with First Nations Foster Children and Caregivers in Canada

by

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Dedication

This culminating project is dedicated to the Indigenous foster children and their families who participated in my study. I acknowledge the Indigenous communities that welcomed me and taught me about their extensive worldview and culture.

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exceptional doctoral cohort, Melanie, Jessie, Huma, and Kai.

Abstract

This study was conceived as a part of a reconciliation process in Canada, which alludes to the journey of healing between the settlers and Indigenous people in a constructive manner (Gray-Smith, 2017). This practice-led research study presents a triadic model of connectedness with First Nations foster children and their Indigenous caregivers in Canada. The term *triadic art therapy* refers to the involvement of an interpersonal dyad in joint art-making sessions with an art therapist who is attending to their cultural connectedness as a third element in their relationship. This necessary focus on cultural relatedness challenges *settler* art therapists to reframe the Western construct of attachment with its Indigenous parallel, which is connectedness in the broadest sense of the word (Carriere & Richardson, 2009). The central construct of connectedness emerged from the study's art-based research design that illuminated Indigenous culture through symbolic expression and story-telling. The researcher conducted the study in an Indigenous locale of northern Manitoba with four dyads of children (ages 4–8) and their non-biological Indigenous parent or guardian who met in a short-term triadic art therapy program created for the research.

Art-based research methodology enlightened different aspects of connectedness, including holism, culture, spirituality, nature, family, and the impact of colonialism in both past history and present reality. Additionally, the researcher incorporated anti-oppressive practice into the study design, emphasising the need for therapists to understand the meaning of the colonial history and impacts on current reality in Canada when working with Indigenous people. The historical issue of separating Indigenous children from their family and culture to place them in a residential school, and, more recently, to foster care is discussed and connected to the importance

in triadic art therapy with respect to allyship, cultural humility, and awareness of ecocide.

Equally important was to include Indigenous-based research, which brings in concepts of

respect, reciprocity, and relationality (Wilson, 2008). The study also involved an Anishinabe

helper who provided insightful and spiritual guidance to the therapist and the dyads

and was a connection to local cultural traditions. The study concludes that when First

Nations community members have opportunity to take responsibility for their healing processes

and initiatives, they can bring about change.

Key Words: triadic art therapy, connectedness, attachment, indigenous, anti-oppressive practice,

storytelling, art based research, reconciliation

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Prologue

When I started on this journey, my desire was to deepen my knowledge and experience of working with First Nations foster children, and specifically through use of art therapy methods. Over time I had been experimenting more and more with new modalities that I thought would best help my clients. But in the process I had lost my way with art.

I knew that it would be hard to conduct research with Indigenous people, especially because I am a *settler* and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous people has been a painful one that is only recently moving toward reconciliation. I was originally born in Israel and immigrated to Canada 20 years ago. Thus, I did not grow up with Indigenous people and was not truly aware of their history with Canada's settler population. My first introduction to Indigenous people was when I started practicing art therapy, as they were the majority of my clients. Back then, I thought I knew. But in reality I didn't really *know* Indigenous people's culture and history.

A professional event brought me into awareness of all that I did not know. I had been invited to write up case studies for Lucille Proulx's book, *Strengthening Emotional Ties Throughout the Lifetime: Attachment Informed Art Therapy*. I wrote about my dyadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and their biological and/or foster parents. In the process, I reflected on the fact that I had always encouraged foster children's communication with their biological parents while thinking of important cultural values of collectivism and relationality. Hence, I also considered the difficulties for the children and foster families.

The major issue that my clients were facing seemed to be attachment, which thus became the focus for my research. Consequently, in individual art therapy sessions with Indigenous

foster children, I began to use materials that symbolized attachment, asking them to imagine safe places and working with art activities to give them a sense of support and connection. Then one day, a foster mother arrived with 7-year-old foster son's to attend his sessions, having recently moved to a shelter from her home. With his mother present, the child's behavior completely changed, and in a positive direction I had not seen before. He engaged in all the art activities. Observing this change, I had the insight to study how dyads of foster parents and children engage in art therapy with an emphasis on attachment.

Recently, I re-read my case studies in Proulx's book and was stuck by the fact that they were so focused on attachment that they missed a crucial element: the Indigenous perspective and the culture that informs it. I understand now that I was *culturally blind*; I had not even considered how Indigenous clients might view what I believed would be helpful or effective. I had not asked for nor included information about their historical background of oppression from colonization, and its impacts. Instead, I had presented Indigenous people as victims and, based on my ethnocentric training, had held them responsible for their situation.

About a year before I conducted my study, I continued along this research journey by writing a peer-reviewed article entitled, "Gaining cultural competence through alliances in art therapy with Indigenous clients." The article marked my slow progress in exploring the notion of cultural competence. Writing gave me an intellectual process to helped me understand oppression and my role as a settler. My insights made me eager to spread the word about what I was discovering to other art therapists who worked with Indigenous people. But my emotional knowledge had not yet developed and I remained blinded.

During this time of emerging insight, I also taught a course on attachment-informed art therapy with my mentors Lucille Proulx and Michelle Winkel. I only briefly mentioned to my students the concept of *connectedness*; my hesitation was due to a growing feeling that I didn't know enough about what it involved. Later I would gain direct experiences with and knowledge about connectedness as an Indigenous term, leading me to understand its importance in the reconciliation and decolonization process that settler art therapists must be a part of.

I began building relationships, that became the structure on which I began the shift from thinking I knew something to recognizing true *knowing*. Because social workers are the professionals who actually take children from their homes to be fostered elsewhere, they have a big impact on the child's life. Art therapy workshops were created professional working alliances with the social workers in a creative and dynamic setting. As I aligned with these committed others, I realized that I could play an important role in the reconciliation process; I could be an ally to Indigenous people. I could advocate as well as work with them to discover what they felt would be best in terms of help.

I had been struggling with doubt that I was qualified to research a topic that, the more I learned from Indigenous people and their culture, the more I realized I knew so little about. But the process of *allyship* helped me understand and led me onto a new path — and eventually to where I am today. I started to develop a new art therapy model while also focusing on educating others about the value of art therapy for Indigenous children and their foster parents. However, I could not contribute to any dialogue without taking into account the intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous people. I needed to learn about the Indigenous culture and history, which led me to my next steps along the path.

I was fortunate to participate in a conference with the theme *Indigenous Roots of Expressive Arts Therapy*, where I also conducted a workshop on dyadic art therapy for professionals. My goal was to advocate to change the way Indigenous foster children are attended to in art therapy. I found myself giving voice to the need to center art therapy on Indigenous culture while helping the children develop a connection to their caregivers. No longer limited to the idea of attachment between child and caregiver, my concept had changed to embrace both the Indigenous child's identity within attachment to their people and surrounding environment.

My next step in my journey was aimed at putting my concept into action in a series of workshops for Indigenous youth centered on connections to their identity and culture. We shared vital reflections about their names and cultural symbols that carried awareness of identity, belonging, relationships, and traditions. Soon after, I was invited by a friend, who is a residential school survivor, to go with her to her reserve to share her story. Her traumatic life experience opened my heart. Listening to my friend's personal narrative about the history of residential schools and foster care was deeply meaningful for me and helped me understand the worldview and oppressive histories that are part of being an Indigenous person. Mirrored back to me was the need for my responsibility in the process of healing from the colonial wounds.

This awareness changed everything. I created a pilot for dyadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and biological or foster parents on a reserve. In gratitiude, I worked with the community to integrate Indigenous cultural values with the involvement of an Indigenous Elder who advised me and offered teachings and a guided pipe ceremony to the dyads. This preparation laid the ground work for my study, which took place in a distant

community setting. It was the beginning of my understanding of social activism as reconciliation, which is a life-long journey into cultural humility I have only just started. Throughout this process, I have greatly benefitted from the generous gift of Indigenous mentoring, without which I could not have proceeded with ethical integrity. My Indigenous mentors patiently clarified, explained, and discussed anti-oppressive practice with me, helping me integrate my mind and my heart and spirit. As Dr. Graveline said, "I see your journey, but it's really been *our* journey." This is the challenge of reciprocity, to which I am in debt and must commit to sharing both broadly and equitably.

Preface: Caring for the Leaves

Falling leaves are crashing down from the trees above,

Rustling through the wind, scattering through the cold breeze,

Falling onto the frozen ground in an indistinguishable pattern.

But, just as the breeze begins to pick up,

Mother Earth's warm touch cradles the fall,

Carrying them safely into her welcoming grasp.

The leaves in the above poem represent for me the Indigenous foster children I work with

who have become disconnected from their culture and people because of a crisis. The poem

arose as part of an experience I facilitated with local social workers who explored this sense of

disconnection via a metaphorical art activity. Working in groups, the participants chose a leaf,

decorated it as a symbol of cultivation, attached it to a branch to represent the family, and

connected the branch to a tree that symbolized the larger community in which the family is

situated. Then I complicated the process by asking a select few participants to move to another

group, which physically simulated the experience of the disconnection and the feelings of

newcomers entering a new place. When sharing their responses to the art activity, those who had

moved out of their earlier groups said that they did not like the change; they already had started a

relationship with their group and felt sad and angry when asked to leave. When these

professionals joined a new group, some of them said that they felt alienated or as if they did not

belong, while others felt welcomed and easily integrated into the new group.

The group's creation of the "foster care tree" (Figure 1) in this activity illustrates the

process and cultural concept of connectedness in the Indigenous cultures of First Nations people

of Canada as discussed by the First Nations social workers. They affirmed that one spiritual way

to care for and nurture the foster child, and to support the child's attachment needs, occurs

through ceremony and blessing. In the figure below, blessing is expressed in the incorporation of

the feathers and positioning of the uplifted figures being supported by the tree and facing the sun.

The cultural value of giving children autonomy is illustrated by the hand of the carer that does

not touch the leaf.

Figure 1: Foster care tree, "Groundwater"

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This study was conceived as a part of the reconciliation process in Canada with the purpose of revitalizing the interpersonal relationships between the settlers and Indigenous people of Canada and on a broader level with government agencies, in accords with the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Gray-Smith, 2017). The reconciliation processes used in my study include a decolonization practice of learning about, acknowledging, and experiencing Indigenous history and culture, as well as the oppression experienced by Indigenous people through the process of colonization. Reconciliation is acting in an anti-oppressive manner, which can be seen throughout my research; it starts with an intra-personal process and continues with a new art therapy model I will be presenting.

I began to identify my research topic from reflection on my many experiences of hearing foster children crying for their mothers. I am a settler art therapist and clinician working with Indigenous foster children who show signs of having attachment insecurities. For this practice-led study, I proposed to implement *triadic art therapy* for Indigenous foster children and their Indigenous caregivers to help promote healthy attachment. The term *triadic art therapy* refers to the involvement of an interpersonal dyad in joint art-making sessions with an art therapist who is also attending to their cultural connectedness as a third element in their relationship. The necessary focus on culture challenges the non-indigenous art therapist to reframe the Western construct of attachment with its Indigenous parallel, which is connectedness in the broadest sense of the word (Carriere & Richardson, 2009). Triadic art therapy in this research project centers on the relational values of Indigenous culture, specifically those

embraced by local First Nations people in Winnipeg, Manitoba; in this approach connectedness also means that of the therapist, who comes as a learner and not as an expert.

Common to many Indigenous cultures is the influence of ancestral ways of life on their community's governance and their connection to the land (Williams, 1990). According to Hart (2010), an Indigenous researcher from Fisher River Cree Nation (Manitoba), an Indigenous individual's knowledge can only be perceived as relational and based on interpersonal relationships and relationships with the cosmos. As their art therapist, my aim is to help children construct an attachment to their foster parents in order to re-connect with their families and community of origin. However, as I discovered in my research, the concept of attachment must be re-constructed if the therapist is to be effective in her therapy work and in allyship. In Indigenous cultures the term *connectedness* is preferred to attachment because it also encompasses the community and the natural environment (Carriere & Richardson, 2009; McCormick, 2009). In contrast, attachment theory, as defined in Western psychology, has commonly considered only two figures in the primary relationship: the caregiver(s) and the child (Carriere & Richardson, 2009).

In my review of current research on art therapy treatment for foster children in general, and Indigenous foster children in particular, I found a deficit of information about the cultural component of attachment and related treatment. The implication is that the success of the child's placement may be particularly at risk when placed with non-Indigenous foster parents if the cultural impacts are not known or are not taken into consideration. Therefore, I proposed to investigate cultural considerations for art therapy practice with the Indigenous population in Canada and within the local system of care in Manitoba, and to examine the effectiveness of a

culturally-appropriate approach to attachment-informed art therapy with a focus on connectedness. To center my study on cultural competence and humility, I incorporated principles and practices from anti-oppressive and Indigenous research methodologies. My overall goal was to assist the Indigenous foster children in their process of healing and development of resiliency, and to raise awareness of the importance of integrating Indigenous cultural values into their care.

Clarification of Standpoint

Settler. I believe that we are all immigrants unless we are Indigenous. However, Lowman and Barker (2015) challenged Canadians to understand that there is a settler problem that requires attention, not an Indigenous problem. As a non-Indigenous person who immigrated and settled in Canada, my standpoint is that of a settler art therapist. In the context of power dynamics between the nation-state of Canada and Indigenous nations, the meaning and acceptance of the term *settler* as an identifier is significant in trying to change these relationships. Therefore, in my research and this essay I intentionally use the term "settler" to signify that I am aware of the violence perpetuated through colonialism in Canada and its effect on contemporary political, economic and cultural life in our country. Thus, I am taking responsibility for and making a personal commitment to the process of changing the relationship, which supports decolonization (Lowman & Barker, 2015).

Indigenous research direction. Originally, I intended to use video with participants to gather feedback about the sessions as part of my research method; however, this method felt intrusive when I attempted it in my pilot study. Hence, my standpoint was also complicated by my choice of research design and out of consideration for the Indigenous participants. I didn't

use an Indigenous research method, but I aimed to follow its orientation and values. For

example, I incorporated the intent to address the challenges of marginalized people and to center

the study on an Indigenous worldview (Tamburro, 2013), which alludes to how a person or

group interacts with their environment, such as the surrounding land, animals, and people. This

cultural holistic perspective draws upon the Indigenous peoples' worldview, their place in it,

and their experiences (Hart, 2010). In addition, the process of decolonization was implicated in

the study and involved disclosure, understanding, and recognition of the Indigenous history in a

cultural and political context (Kapitan, 2018). It was a study with people rather than "on" people.

Importance to The Field of Art Therapy

My research is important with respect to increasing the knowledge base on which a

model of *triadic art therapy* can be developed and utilized with Indigenous foster children and

their caregivers. Therefore, the study by necessity has been grounded in cultural competence that

was informed by alliances in art therapy with Indigenous clients, and Indigenous mentors and

cultural informants. I proposed to answer the following research question: How does a settler art

therapist approach attachment when working with Indigenous peoples? Similarly, how does a

triadic approach to art therapy that connects a dyad to the surrounding culture impact or change

the Western construct of attachment?

From this study a foundation for art therapy practice with Indigenous foster children may

be established for the profession that (a) affirms the importance of the foster parents'

involvement in the foster child's therapy and how art therapy helps facilitate this involvement

and potential connectedness opportunities, (b) contributes to a ethical commitment to cultural

competence on te part of art therapists, c) promotes the benefits of art therapy services via

dissemination of the results, and d) affirms that when First Nations community members have

opportunity to take responsibility for their healing processes and initiatives, they can bring about

change. With respect to the latter, it is important to demonstrate the effectiveness of cultural

humility toward First Nations in art therapy as a step toward gaining recognition from social

agencies and public policy makers/analysts and access to improve the work with foster children

and their caregivers. Thus, I hope this research will impact foster children, foster families, the

social work system, the field of art therapy, and the fields of attachment theory and psychology

more broadly.

The Practice Context: Triadic Art Therapy

With Indigenous Foster Children and Their Caregivers

An old man was walking in a lush green forest. Rummaging through thickets of thorny bushes

and bundles of prickly branches he discovered a lost path. He marked this path as sacred,

naming it Path to the Bright Sun. The old man continued on this Path, which took him to a broad

tree that would provide enough shade for him to rest under. There, passersby would gather and

listen to stories he told about his journeys and the teachings he had learned along the way.

[Reflection from the story "The old woman's cat" (see case 2, session 1)]

I am an art therapist working in Winnipeg (Manitoba, Canada) with Indigenous foster

children and adolescents primarily in individual art therapy treatment. I have seen first-hand a

need for improved cultural understanding and sensitivity when working with Indigenous peoples.

As a settler therapist I must be aware of the history of oppression that my Indigenous clients

have endured. I empathize with the anguish and pain of trauma and destruction of the

Indigenous peoples' culture and family systems across the generations. Growing up as a Jew in

Israel, I have experienced intergenerational trauma personally, particularly as it relates to armed

conflicts and war, and know feelings of being persecuted and tortured, along with the fear,

helplessness, and isolating experiences of becoming a refugee. Despite my minority status as an

immigrant Jew in Canada and deeply empathetic understanding for my Indigenous clients, as an

art therapist often I am viewed by them and their family members as an outsider —both

implicitly and explicitly — because I have different traditions, worldview, and an accent that

calls attention to my difference. Gerlach (2008) observed that non-Indigenous professionals

working with Indigenous families may represent to them the dominant society and the oppressive

power structures it contains. Therefore, there is always a potential for conflict with non-

Indigenous health care providers due to historical mistrust (Partridge, 2010).

I feel the resistance that Indigenous people transfer to me consciously and unconsciously;

I want to be an ally but know that people may be suspicious of me. According to Washington

and Evans, (1991) an *ally* is a person who is a member of a dominant, privileged, or majority

group, who supports and works to end oppression of those who are marginalized due to race,

gender, sexuality, or other identifiers. Mulling over numerous challenging experiences in my

practice led me to recognize that learning about Indigenous society through cultural training,

dialogues with Indigenous Elders, Indigenous mentoring, and direct contact with communities,

can enhance my role as an ally. "Elders in Aboriginal communities are those recognized and

respected for knowing, living and teaching the traditional knowledge. They see the world

through the eyes of the ancestors and interpret the contemporary world through lessons passed

down through generations" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996, p. 3). Fostering

relationships with Elders in particular offers potential for greater learning and understanding as

they are both community advisers and healers; they also can provide guidance from their their

deep knowledge about the community's ethical mores and standards.

In my practice, especially over the last two years, I initiated what I termed *triadic art*

therapy sessions for foster children and their caregivers as an intervention that interrupted my

previous practice of only meeting with the child individually, which is more typical in my

agency. Dyadic sessions with the child and either non-Indigenous or Indigenous foster parents,

biological parents, or grandparents, became triadic when we placed an explicit focus on cultural

connection as a vital element in the therapeutic alliance. Grounding my theorizing in my own

practice history, I have often witnessed this connection; I reasoned that art is a cultural

expression and an accessible form of non-verbal communication that would bring parent and

child closer together and encourage affective attachment (Plante & Bernèche, 2008).

Additionally, I noticed that children in triadic art therapy cooperated better with art activities

than their peers in individual therapy. I assume this observation is related to the integrated

experience of structure, to the caregiver's encouragement, and/or to the child's desire to please

their caregiver. The interaction within the triad also has helped children to be physically

expressive, drawing closer to their carers through games and art activities. The triadic model fits

the Indigenous worldview, where healing happens in community rather than in isolation and this

may contribute to the childrens' cooperation when more people are involved.

Furthermore, communication with Indigenous grandparents has helped me develop a

better, more accurate cultural perspective and understanding of the children's art and behavior.

Importantly, support from my Indigenous mentor, Dr. Fyre Jean Graveline, who shared her life

experiences with me, has helped me develop my growing understanding of Indigenous peoples'

challenges and strengths. For *settler* therapists, I believe it is essential to work in reciprocal

collaboration with an Indigenous mentor, co-therapist, or clinical supervisor for cultural-specific

guidance and knowledge-sharing, and to inform insights related to client behavior and language

that are associated with Indigenous cultures. Such collaboration contributes to the trust and

connection the art therapist builds with Indigenous clients and builds authenticity and credibility

into the triadic approach.

The Local Child Welfare Context (Manitoba)

According to the Government of Manitoba website, single persons or couples from any

ethnic, racial, or cultural background, with or without children, are eligible to become foster

parents (Manitoba, n.d.). However, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015a)

recommends that resources be provided to child welfare organizations to keep the family

together if it can be done safely and within a culturally-appropriate environment. The most

common reasons that Indigenous children are referred to therapy in Canada are that they have

been diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome, have moved frequently from one foster home to

another, have experienced physical or sexual abuse, or have attachment issues with their

caregivers (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015a).

In my experience in Manitoba, an art therapist usually will work with a foster child who

arrives at the appointment with a driver. The driver is assigned and not part of the foster family,

which is just one example of the many ways the foster family typically is not directly involved in

the child's therapy. The participation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous foster parents, biological

parents, or grandparents in art therapy may support these parents and caregivers in gaining the

knowledge, experience, and confidence they may need to help their foster children achieve

connectedness. Their involvement also affords an important opportunity to enhance the

Indigenous child's experience of culture, such as drawing traditional images, storytelling, and

bringing a traditional food. For my study, I posit that involving and supporting caregivers in

triadic art therapy will enhance trust, communication, and nurturing. Caregivers can help make a

positive change in the foster child's well-being by learning new skills and affirming existing ones

for managing tough situations and experiencing other ways to communicate through expressive

arts. Moreover, I assert that the dynamics of the triadic art therapy session can foster secure

connection and problem-solving skills.

Need for the Practice-Led Study

Attachment-informed and culture-specific approaches in therapy treatment among other

methods, can support Indigenous foster children to develop a secure base provided they are

adapted to an Indigenous construct of attachment. Art therapy as an experiential practice can

help to model positive attachment to the children through the relationship with the therapist.

However, because attachment theory is a Eurocentric or Western construct, there is a need to

explore and understand attachment as Indigenous people's connectedness and, in so doing,

evaluate the assumed universality of attachment theory. Connectedness, in this regard, is more

expansive than attachment and involves the extended family, community, culture, and the natural

environment that was often overlooked in the past, as well as to the caregiver and the therapist.

The children's system of care should take into consideration their culture and home

support when providing services. Specifically, non-Indigenous therapists cannot practice

ethically without local knowledge of the Indigenous peoples they work with and, I would add,

Indigenous mentorship. Such knowledge must be locally grounded and specific to their

(Indigenous) history, the effects of intergenerational trauma when present, and barriers to the Indigenous practice known as the "circle of caring" that is traditionally modeled within the family and the community (Howell-Jones, 2005; Vivian, 2013). My desire is rooted in allyship, which means to see that these children, their foster parents, family, and communities receive greater support and understanding than is currently the norm. According to Howes (1999), caregivers' warmth and sensitivity responses to distressful situations can assist children in creating positive attachments; thus, participation of the child's primary support in the therapy session can support key goals. Supporting the foster parents through their participation in their foster child's therapy may help in building trust and ensuring that the child's foster home is safe and nurturing.

The need for practice knowledge to address the limitations of foster care relates to the separation of Indigenous children from their family and culture. Canada's Child and Family Service agencies need to be assessed in terms of their effectiveness regarding preventative care rather than solely in response to a crisis. Foster placements may be lacking in cultural understanding and in understanding of children's attachment issues. Additionally, the Indigenous foster child may not know their own early childhood history and cultural identity. Therapists need to have extensive knowledge of the foster family, the foster child's background, the dynamics between them, and the handling of the temporary and unpredictable nature of foster placement.

Currently, as a settler art therapist, I work with First Nations foster children who have experienced trauma and have acute attachment needs. Most of these children have behavior issues that appear in art therapy, such as refusing to engage with prepared art materials and

searching instead for different items, or not showing guilt or regret for their violent behavior. These behaviors may relate to medical symptoms, which I must be cognizant of, given the impact of the colonization on Indigenous health. My intervention for the children encourages them to express themselves through art making. According to Vivian (2013) and Muirhead and De Leeuw (2015), in Indigenous communities information about art and its creation may be passed down through oral tradition. Revitalization of this cultural practice not only can foster artistic creativity but also feelings of reconnection to the child's Indigenous identity. Finally, expressive art can serve as a positive resource for Indigenous children and nurture their resilience, particularly when treatment is grounded in the values of Indigenous culture (Muirhead & de Leeuw, 2015), such as a deep relationship to nature (Vivian, 2013).

This study sought to contribute to the knowledge base by identifying factors that contribute to art therapy being more or less effective for the Indigenous foster child when a foster parent is present. To address the need for practice-led research knowledge, I examined:

- How *triadic art therapy* as an intervention can strengthen the relationship between foster children, foster parents, the art therapist, and the environment.

- How cultural competence issues (e.g., a therapist's lack of knowledge about the Indigenous role in Canadian history) can be expected to surface in such art therapy treatment, necessitating the development of cultural awareness, sensitivity, and humility of the art therapist, as well as adaptation of treatment.

- How the value of *connectedness* (an Indigenous worldview of attachment) with Indigenous foster children supports their needs.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

My research encompasses a cross-cultural perspective; I am an Israeli immigrant with Canadian citizenship who works with foster children of Indigenous backgrounds as well as with foster parents who may be Indigenous, Canadian, or Filipino. Working in a culturally diverse environment always requires considerations of other cultures, which is an area I have focused on in my studies. However, there is also an invisible component to the *triadic art therapy* approach: Child Family Services (CFS) determines the duration and placement of foster children. This reality leads to uncertainty in both the child's perspective on their future and their relationship with their foster parents and caretakers. The literature review I have compiled focuses on the strengths, resilience, and the revival of the Indigenous culture. This knowledge contributes to the development of a framework for triadic art therapy that will help re-introduce the child to their cultural connection and to their environment and can help them experience re-attachment.

Western Systems of Care for Indigenous Children in Manitoba

The woman had been a mother of six children. One after another, as each child reached the age of three, they were taken away from her. The mother never knew why this had to be and as time passed, she felt the winter winds gnawing at her heart. Whenever the wind settled, she was left with a painful silence that left her feeling empty inside. Reflection from the story "From heart to heart" (see Case 3, Session 1).

For the sake of safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, the system of care in Canada uses an interventionist approach (Farris-Manning & Zandstra, 2003). Children who have been separated from their birth family experience a great deal of stress; this makes it vital to

place them with another family who will accept them as their own. To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, the purpose of CFS is to support families in need. There are several provincial laws that aim to accomplish this goal, such as 'The Child and Family Services Act' legislation, which administrates a province's programs and services for children and adolescents. The Authority Determination Process (ADP) is used to identify which of the CFS authorities will provide services for the child and family; this process is done through an interview of the adult members of the family and enables the families to choose the relevant CFS authority (there are four categories and several CFS agencies in each). The ADP recognizes that the families have the right to choose their authority, focuses on cultural understanding, and aims to provide reliable and timely services (Province of Manitoba, 2017).

According to Statistics Canada (2017), the census of 2011–2012 enumerated about 83,000 children (1.4% of all children in Canada), aged 0 to 14 years, who were living without their biological or adoptive parents. These children were living in one of the three following settings: (a) in a skip-generation family, meaning with one or two grandparents and without a parent present (32,505 children); (b) with other relatives, such as an older sibling, an aunt, an uncle, or a cousin (22,610 children); or (c) as foster children in private foster homes (28,030 children). Manitoba had the highest percentage of children aged 0 to 14 years who were living in a foster family (5,070 children). In 2011, 17% of the total population in Manitoba were Indigenous people, and 85% of all Manitoban children in foster care were Indigenous children (Statistic Canada, 2017). Unfortunately, there appears to be no available statistics about the percentage of Indigenous children who had Indigenous foster parents and what percentage did not.

Foster children often experience significant placement disruption, which can contribute to emotional-behavior problems that can perpetuate a cycle of placement instability (Smith, Stormshak, Chamberlain, & Bridges Whaley, 2001). Constantly having to adapt to new caregivers can contribute to attachment difficulties. According to Farris-Manning and Zandstra (2003), disruption may be caused by variations in legislative guidelines from province to province, a shortage of places for children in care to live, and child protection workers carrying case overloads. Therefore, approaches to care must consider children's rights and family preservation, and foster families must be seen as part of a professional team.

The CFS system, which has been described as interventionist, is problematic with respect to Indigenous families' culture and identity. Based on my experience with Indigenous foster children and their caregivers in Manitoba, I believe that CFS needs to be modified to be more family-welfare oriented, rather than focused solely upon child protection (Plummer, 2001). Moreover, as Blackstock and Trocmé (2005) observed, the approach to Indigenous child welfare has to address larger community issues, such as intergenerational trauma resulting from experiences at residential schools and the promotion of social change to address violence against women and children, which are common occurrences in society as a whole, as well as on and off reserve.

Foster Children

The past and present colonialism in Canada has left marks on the quality of life of Indigenous people, which appear in my work with children in foster care who have frequently experienced poverty and violence. They often seek safety (as I illustrated in Figure 2) from having to struggle with a history of neglect and/or mistreatment by their caregivers that resulted

in being removed from their homes. They grieve for lost relatives and close friends and may be disorientated from the loss of their homes, from multiple foster care placement transitions, and from interaction with

Figure 2: My reflection, "Finding a safe place" (case 2, session 6)

numerous systems of care (Lawrence, Carlson, & Egeland, 2006). In my experience, foster children who have been traumatised may have more difficulties in communicating their emotions and become frustrated and exhibit aggressive behavior outside of the therapy session. In addition, these children must to adjust to a new environment, which can sometimes involve not only fitting into a new home but also a new or entirely different culture.

These negative, inescapable experiences can impact the children's neurobiology, with one consequence being long-lasting developmental impairment (Gomez, 2013). According to Sedlak and Boadhurst (1996), foster children have elevated incidences of physical, developmental, and mental health concerns that often go unaddressed. Phillips (2003) specified that these children share some issues with the general population, including attachment disorder. In some cases, children may be attached to their parents but are removed from their home

anyway because of concerns for their safety and well-being, or according to Trocmé et al. (2001) many of child welfare apprehensions are a result of impoverishment.

Foster children may experience misperception of their reality when they lack information about their biological family or have information that is not clear to them or that stems from visits with their biological family. Lee and Whiting (2007) included these misperceptions as part of "ambiguous losses" in foster care that are typically of three types: family members may be (a) physically present but psychologically absent, (b) physically absent but psychologically present, and (c) in transition (p. 417). These situations can cause the children to not be able to process their grief nor attach to a caregiver; young children may be at risk, as a result, for relying on their imagination because they do not know what is real. Missing familial information also can aggravate feelings of disempowerment and helplessness for these children (Lee & Whiting, 2007). From my art therapy practice experience working with Indigenous foster children, this literature underscores how essential it is for a therapist to be aware of the specific information of each child's family history and culture, since each child is unique with their own life story. This information can help both the children and the therapist understand their situation better and therefore be more likely to progress in therapy.

Relationship Between Children and Their Foster Caregivers With Biological Families

According to Chateauneuf, Turcotte, and Drapeau (2018), who conducted a study in Quebec City, Canada, foster children usually are allowed to meet with their biological parents during supervised visits. Thus, they mentally belong to two families and may develop ambivalent feelings toward each that cause confusion and stress. Such ambivalence also may extend to their identification with two cultures. In addition the researchers found that foster parents usually are

aware of the birth parents as important to the foster child's life. When foster parents and biological parents are in conflict, the children often become stressed and uncomfortable (Baker, Mehta, & Chong, 2013; Chateauneuf, et al., 2018; Nesmith, 2013). It is important that during contact and visits that supervisors are aware of the dynamics between the two families (Triseliotis, 2010, Chateauneuf et al., 2018). Foster parents need tools to help them explain to children why they are in care and to help them speak with the children about their birth parents (Murray, Tarren-Sweeney, & France, 2011). A further concern that I have witnessed in my practice is that many foster parents don't have any contact with the biological parents or Indigenous culture. In the absence of contact or in unsupervised parental visits, the children later talk about disparaging comments made about the foster parents or listen to foster parents stereotyping and comments about biological parents. Foster parents also have to deal with an increase in difficult behaviours immediately after parental visits as well as the children's feelings when the biological parents don't show up as planned.

Relationship Between Foster Children and Foster Parents

According to Bonnell (2016), it is crucial for the foster parents to be aware of the foster children's history in order to know what may trigger them and to better accommodate their needs. Children entering foster care can have difficulties bonding with their new family because of their negative experience at their original home and/or from other previous placements. Foster children who carry negative memories from their past experiences may also carry misconceptions and negative expectations of the new family; thus, the bonding with the new family may take more time than expected. These children are challenged to develop trust with their new family and to learn new adaptive behaviors.

The foster parents' feelings of anxiety about change that accompanies a new child coming into their family also can affect the child's feelings and behavior. It is challenging for the foster family to create a sense of belonging for foster children when the children desire to go back to their home. Non-Indigenous foster parents especially need to consider the historical context of Indigenous communities when accepting the responsibility in caring for Indigenous children. It is also important to be aware of the primary cultural values of the Indigenous people, such as the acceptance of multiple caregivers in child rearing, traditional ceremonies, and spiritualism (Muir & Bohr, 2014), discussed later in this chapter. A cultural barrier between the caregivers and children can put inordinate stress on the child and their biological family and become a challenge in their relationship. CFS offers cultural programs for these children, such as pow-wow dancing, to help connect them to the Indigenous culture, but fails to provide help for the parents with cultural competency (Brown, 2008).

Art Therapy With Foster Children

In my search for relevant literature I found two art therapy texts that specifically address treatment for foster children. Because they represent a cornerstone in the scant professional knowledge that has been published on the topic, I examined their contents closely. The first text, edited by Betts (2003), presents expressive arts therapy with adopted and foster children in the U.S. and includes cultural considerations and ways of working with foster and adoptive families. In my own practice, half of the children I work with stay with their foster families as permanent wards (which is similar to adopted children) until the age of 18. Some of the authors in Betts's book describe the experience and treatment for adopted children (i.e., the foster child permanently staying with a new family) that nonetheless offer important insights that apply to

working with foster children. Other forms of expressive arts therapies (e.g., music and drama therapy) mentioned provide insights that can be incorporated into the art therapy treatment.

As a contributor to the text, included Phillips noted that because foster parents may feel excluded from the art therapy process, the art therapist might encourage them to initiate some basic art-related activities at home. As an example from my practice, I sent art journals and crayons home with the foster child to encourage her/him to draw and have the foster parent more involved in the child's therapy process. This technique requires instructions for the parents to ensure private and safe drawing spaces for their children.

Another contributor to the volume is Hurwitz (2003), who examined hyper-vigilance in foster children as an indication of trauma. Hyper-vigilance is a pronounced sensitivity to external stimuli (often confused with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder). As an example, a child might react to noises with pronounced fear and attribute them to monsters or bad people, which they might depict by drawing a human figure with extra eyes and ears. In my practice, I have observed that children can confront their fears by drawing or playing with figures that resemble a fight between good and evil. These activities can be an expression of traumatic experiences through this interaction, and the normal stage of child development of their cognitive and emotional growth.

Hinz (2003) contributed a discussion of the development of trust as vital for "unbonded" children, which can be a lengthy and sometimes frustrating process for all involved. She recommended building trust through the rules of the art therapy process, the use of art materials, and through maintenance of consistency, all of which can help create a predictable and safe environment for the child's exploration (illustrated in Figure 3). However, there are also informal

elements of the therapy process, such as the exploration of materials, which helps children create trust in and through the artistic process, as they have the freedom to choose what most appeals to

Figure 3: My reflection, "Playhouse" (case 2, session 5)

them. A balance between structured and unstructured directives in the therapeutic process enables the child to develop trust and also a sense of control.

Stepakoff (2003) suggested a bibliotherapy treatment for children in foster care, which engages a child through storytelling. This method aims to help them better understand their own life stories. Stepakoff contributed a case study of a child who transitioned from foster care to adoption, and noted how it is very common for children to blame themselves for being in care, which often results in silence and stigma. Through bibliotherapy, children develop their identities by grounding them in a life story that is meaningful to them. I perceive such storytelling, which is an Indigenous way of healing (Archilbald, 2008), as verbal communication to break down silence and a means of developing an identity to confront the stigma they may feel.

Layman and Hussey (2003) described the use of music therapy with adopted and foster children to help them reduce their levels of anxiety, to make them feel more secure, and to

develop trust. The authors noted that many abused and neglected children experience a fear of

abandonment and rejection, which can be lowered by nonverbal interaction, such as playing

music. Engaging with music at home may provide an opportunity to increase the level of

intimacy between child and caregiver to lower their defences. Art activities can have some

similar effects in helping children express themselves non-verbally.

Finally, Miller (2003) studied internationally adopted children and the use of metaphors

to integrate personal and cultural identity in sand play and storytelling. They have to confront a

collective cultural stigma regarding adoptive and foster systems, which affects the children's

perspectives of themselves. The author recognized two themes that the children struggled with,

which are separation unexplained by the family and "existential sorrow" (p. 257) derived from

their feelings of rejection. These children may have experienced loss or trauma in their preverbal

stage of early development; hence, they were unable to process their grief, which becomes a

roadblock to growth. Miller suggested that it is important to separate the feelings of loss and on-

going sorrow. Theoretically, this observation sounds logical, but in practice it may be difficult to

distinguish the two themes. In working with the children on their current experience of loss and

trauma, a patterns in their behavior may emerge that as indicative of the existential sorrow that

they keep carrying.

The other text about expressive art therapy for foster children was edited by Hendry and

Hasler (2017) in the UK. This text focuses on complex trauma and supports the involvement of

caregivers in their children's therapy as part of the healing process. Hendry (2017) described an

art therapy treatment of *developmental re-parenting*, a concept he defined as the caregivers'

regression to the time in the child's life where the primary attachment relationship was damaged

in order to form healthier neural connections. Her work is informed by trauma theories developed by Siegel (2001), van der Kolk (2005), and Perry (2009). Hendry's approach does not fit an Indigenous perspective, however, as it stresses the Western construct of parent-child as only involving two people and an art therapist as an expert, and it ignores the historical trauma that the dyad may or may not share.

Hasler (2017) discusses the issue of caregiver's secondary trauma in particular, which are symptoms experienced by foster parents that develop in concert with those of the traumatized child, such as hypervigilance. The risks of secondary trauma are high and need to be recognized.

Guy and Topalian (2017) contributed a chapter to this text on dance/movement therapy in attachment work. The authors paralleled their approach with Perry's (2015) neurosequential model of health-supporting practices that he asserted are the mechanisms of art therapy's effectiveness with traumatized individuals. Specifically, art and expressive therapy techniques support healing when they are "repetitive, rhythmic, relevant, relational, respectful, and rewarding" (p. xi). Each of these component practices serve a neurological function in the healing process of traumatized children (Perry, 2013). Similarly, parental positive or negative behavior, such as love or neglect, can exert a somatic influence on the child. Mind, body, and emotions are interconnected, and any change (whether caring or abuse) can affect these three domains (Guy & Topalian, 2017). An example in my art therapy sessions is an activity in which a child is directed to make repetitive and rhythmic, up-and-down brush strokes coordinated with breathing. I noticed that this activity may help the child regulate her body, becaming more relaxed and cooperative in the creative process and during the rest of the session.

Potgieter Marks (2017) suggested the method of eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (as described in Shapiro, 2011) to offer children with complex trauma bilateral stimulation of brain functioning to improve outcomes. The author also posited that when children repeat certain behaviour, such as drawing the same pattern over and over, they may be stuck at a certain stage of trauma processing or are using this schema as an attempt to get out of their crises. Similarly, I have found that the use of tapping alternately on opposite shoulders as bilateral stimulation (Shapiro, 2011) with children and drawing with both hands at the same time engage children and relax them. Potgieter Marks (2017) added that feelings of safety provided by their caregivers and the ability to regulate their emotions are fundamental to children's progress in the trauma process. This argument supports the triadic art therapy model, where the child, parent, and therapist can simultaneously take part in mindfulness activities.

In her chapter about music therapy for attachment and trauma, Hasler (2017) noted research that suggested rhythmic activities can help in treating trauma-triggered anxieties (Perry & Gaskill, 2014). Raising and reducing slight anxiety through rhythmic games, such as "peek-a-boo," can build the child's ability to predict and eventually to trust the caregiver's repeated reactions. The process of repeating patterns of activities can also be replicated through art activities. For example, in a mirror game of drawing on paper, the child or caregiver can take turns leading by drawing a line or a shape on one side of the paper, while the follower copies it. Taking turns teaches the dyad sharing, self-regulation, patience and predictability, which compliment the Indigenous world view of collectivism and respect.

These two texts that collect research and practice descriptions of expressive arts therapy with foster children comprehensively cover a number of key aspects of art therapy and other

modalities, validating many of the methods that I have used in my practice. From them, I was able to increase my understanding of the dynamics that occur in the sessions, although they were much less useful to me as I started to shift my work as my cultural capacity grew. Perhaps more importantly, the incorporation of expressive arts ideas from these and other texts was important to my study with Indigenous people, given that part of their cultural expression is based in dance, music, and storytelling. This literature affirms the value of preparing the caregivers, which enable them to help support the children and foster their feelings of safety. Moreover, as a therapist, I see my role is to advocate and educate others to be more sensitive about any stigmas surrounding foster children.

Cultural Consideration in Art Therapy With Indigenous People in Canada

Introduction: Cultural Competence in Art Therapy

A critically important component to my work as an art therapist with Indigenous children is cultural competence. According to George, Greene, and Blackwell (2005), cultural competence refers to the provider being able to apply care, knowledge, sensitivity, and skills in an appropriate or culturally congruent manner in interactions with diverse others. Therapists must be aware of how their own power, privilege, and cultural context intersect with those of others. Recognizing such biases is important in understanding cultural differences (George at el., 2005). However, gaining cultural competency is not a singular accomplishment but an ongoing, life-long process built on awareness, knowledge, and skills (Sue & Sue, 2013; ter Maat, 2011) adapted to the particularities of culture, local political environment, and/or changing contexts. Kapitan (2015) asserted that art therapy is, at base, a cultural practice that will by necessity involve cultural differences between therapists and their clients. By extension, I see cultural

competence as an opportunity to incorporate social activism into art therapy practice because it shifts attention beyond clients' struggles and toward structural changes that will impact the larger community as well (Junge, Alvarez, Kellogg & Volker, 2009). As I have grown in cultural competence, my practice now entails advocating for clients with social workers, the government, and my local community, and presenting clients in a positive light to create a base of understanding of their issues. In the big picture, it is important to note that all of our clients' struggles also affect us (Junge et al., 2009). The social activist's lens is necessary in making changes relating to anti-oppressive practice to prevent harm, through our word choice and expression (e.g., not imposing our ideas on the clients); ensuring clear avenues of communication, which helps to develop a relationship; and encouraging the larger population to be mindful of the language they use in their day-to-day interactions with Indigenous people and the implications it may have.

Historical Trauma

Bear's beady eyes scanned the lake floor for its prey. There was a single fish, alone in the waters. With its sharp claws, almost at once Bear thrashed in the water to capture what was rightfully his. Blood spurting from all directions, Bear's teeth tore into Fish's flesh, dripping down its mouth. The Shore family gazed at this display with horror. They ran to the cabin for shelter, locking the doors. But two of the children ran the wrong way and got lost in the deep forest. [Reflection from the story: "The turtle way" (case 2: session 2)]

According to Brave Heart (2003), one cannot understand the culture and cultural experiences of Indigenous people in Canada without also knowledge of historical trauma, defined as the significant collective and intergenerational emotional and psychological damage

experienced by a specific cultural group, such as displacement and relocation of Indigenous peoples in North America. Experiences of historical trauma can be exhibited by several succeeding generations who are impacted but haven't directly experienced the trauma stressors themselves. They may carry their elders' and ancestors' trauma through symptoms of depression, self-destructive behavior, anxiety, low self-esteem, and anger. As a means of numbing their pain, some people become involved in self-medication and substance abuse (Brave Heart, 2003). Women who drink alcohol while pregnant pass the trauma onto their children in the form of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, which I have seen among the Indigenous foster children with whom I work. Their biological mothers may have used alcohol to numb the effects of depression, poverty, and lack of familial supports through the generations, discussed below.

Residential School System and Intergenerational Trauma of Indigenous People

> *Black tornado twisted ferociously through the eerie, greenish-grey sky, leaving the*
>
> *village in a panic, with almost no time to escape. It wove a deadly path like a seething rage of*
>
> *old storm gods, uprooting houses and flinging bodies in the air to plunge to their death. Pain*
>
> *and loss filled the community, leaving people broken and in despair.*
>
> [Reflection from the story "The three brothers' survival" (case 1: session 1)]

The history of European colonization has impacted generations of Indigenous people in North America and across the globe, and its oppressive results persist today. After years of helping European settlers adjust to the "New World," Indigenous people in Canada were subjected to, among many other forms of violence, a pervasive, forced process of assimilation that began in 1850 and continued into the late 1990s. Assimilation methods included forcing Indigenous children into residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a) that

aimed to "Christianize and civilize" them (Partridge, 2010, p. 46). Indigenous children were separated from their families and traditional cultures, and were prohibited from speaking their native language or practicing their ceremonies (Muirhead & de Leeuw, 2015; Partridge, 2010). The children were regularly subjected to verbal, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse; when they returned to their communities as adults they felt alienated from their cultural traditions, often becoming isolated and unable to fit into either Indigenous or mainstream societies (Partridge, 2010). Such a process of assimilation can cause individuals to lose their sense of belonging and their identity, which I have likened to feeling like an unrooted tree. Chief Derrick Henderson talked about the long-term effects of residential schools and how they all relate to the absence of love, stating, "if we knew who we are indigenous people, we wouldn't be doing these things" (April 27, 2018, personal communication).

Generations of Indigenous children were taken from their homes and communities by the government's child welfare authorities and placed in residential schools or settlers families. This potentially traumatic process forms a critically important context for understanding concerns about the current ways in which Indigenous children are fostered. Often, Indigenous children in their formative years were removed without warning, as an act of "welfare," and were fostered or adopted out into non-Indigenous families. Child welfare studies (Frideres, 1998) have described the long-term psychological effects of this practice, suggesting that many Indigenous children grew up in a "cultural vacuum" (Menzies, 2007, p. 371), void of Indigenous traditions, which carried over into subsequent generations. Without their cultural roots and knowledge of traditions that bound their collective identity, children grew into adults who parented children of their own in an environment of potentially pervasive detachment and feelings of emptiness.

Similarly, children experiencing physical and sexual abuse may perceive it to be a normal part of childhood and/or perpetuate the dynamic when they become parents (Menzies, 2007).

In April 2018 I had an opportunity to learn about the effects of the residential schools and foster care policies when I travelled to Sagkeeng, a reserve in Manitoba, to hear personal narratives of Indigenous people who had experienced them first hand. One survivor of this experience said that he and other children were called on only by number, rather than by name; their identities were erased. "I had no feelings, I was just frozen." As a therapist, I was deeply moved by their accounts that brought to life the emotional and felt reality of the trauma. Thus, I discovered that I could not contribute to any dialogue about art therapy without first taking into account the intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous people relating to residential school survivors and foster care. It is impossible to ignore the fact that taking children from their parents cannot be anything other than a painfully traumatic experience, both for the individual parent and the community that loses its future and generational connection. Contemporary problems of the social welfare system can be traced to it, which is a continuation of the same impacts as the residential school system before it.

According to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2006), trauma can be transmitted from one generation to the next when its effects are neither recognized nor dealt with. Thus, the Indigenous crisis is also Canada's crisis and we all need to take part in the process of reconciliation. As a therapist, it is also important to begin taking responsibility for learning about the Indigenous culture, without which I cannot practice ethically and competently.

It was only after the 1970s that Indigenous peoples, through the National Indian Brotherhood of Canada, were able to successfully challenge and reduce federal control over

Indigenous education (Partridge, 2010). As the damage from the Canadian government's social policies became more known to the public, awareness of the collateral damage led to an examination of the various and pervasive forms of trauma and attachment difficulties experienced by many individuals, as well as identity, parenting, and family system deficits (Menzies, 2007). Linklater (2014), in her book *Decolonization Trauma Work* claimed that, whereas colonialism has inflicted much damage on the Indigenous people systemically, it also interprets the resulting collective trauma as a personal failing rather than as an abuse of government power. In finally acknowledging these historical facts and policies, rather than blaming the victim, there may be renewed opportunity for reconciliation and for Indigenous peoples to reconnect to their roots and cultures.

Resilience From an Indigenous Perspective

John and Vera stopped in their tracks. Moved by the sight, they cast their eyes to the sky in gratitude for Turtle's spiritual presence. So thrilled and amazed by this creature's sudden appearance, Vera had to pick it up, admiring it as if Turtle were a fine piece of jewellery. As Vera moved her hands across the turtle's shell, to her surprise she saw the markings of a map that she was sure would lead the family to their lost ones.

[Reflection from the story: "The turtle way" (Case 2: session 2)]

Resilience is the ability to recover from adversity and maintain well-being in the face of further hardship (Robertson & Cooper, 2013), which may take time and experience to be developed. Linklater (2014), an Indigenous author, wrote that the existence of strong, vital Indigenous communities is a testimony to their resilience. Cultural and spiritual resources contribute to connections within the family and larger community, and to their well-being. I have

noticed, however, that in some situations Indigenous people need helpful supports to connect to their cultures as well. In addition to trauma their difficulties may be due to past and current stigma, as some of their cultural practices were once viewed as unacceptable and even made illegal by earlier Canadian governments. The version of the Indian Act that existed from 1884–1951 in Canada was part of an effort to assimilate Indigenous people into the dominant Western culture. For example, the potlatch ceremony was banned (Burgess-Waldram, Herring, & Kue, 2006) and other ceremonies were made illegal (Bracken, 1994), although some Indigenous people continued these practices in their communities in the face of opposition.

The Indigenous researcher Partridge (2010) described her world view, which she shares with many Indigenous peoples and cultures, as a circle. Both a symbol and archetypal form, the circle illustrates how life evolves within its deep connection to the natural world. According to Gerlach, (2008), in many First Nation cultures, relationships are ideally viewed as taking place within a circle of caring for one another. Therefore, children are ideally cared for as part of a larger, interdependent extended-family structure.

This traditional value has been compromised for many Indigenous families whose generational experiences with the residential school system, and resulting alienation from their communities and traditions, continue to exert an influence on parenting and family life (Gerlach, 2008). Taking children from their homes created anguish and upheaval and broke the circle of caring; subsequently, the child became "lost" to their culture, community, and the ties that bind one generation to the next. Therefore, it stands to reason that overt efforts on the part of the care system and the families involved toward returning the child to their cultural roots may mend the circle and help in the healing of both individuals and the Indigenous community as a whole.

The Indigenous people's way of connecting and interacting with all forms of life, with respect and free will, promotes their strengths (Vivian, 2013). For example, in my practice, there are foster children who have participated in sweat lodge ceremonies with their grandparents along with other culturally relevant activities. This involvement becomes a significant part of the children's way of life and their identity and gives them a sense of belonging. According to Ivanova and Brown (2011), such cultural activities strengthen the family's relations and connect them to Indigenous traditions. As appears in Vinkle (2012), Indigenous knowledge involves physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental aspects of life. Spirituality is presented and interwoven into daily experiences, along with gratitude to the Creator. I perceive this spiritual practice as contributing to a meaningful life, "to be in a ceremony, [is] to feel better about themselves, it's about healing inside to make the difference outside." (D. Henderson, April 27, 2018, personal communication).

The Indigenous worldview of relational, collectivist, and communal ideas can assist Indigenous foster children to feel more secure and can help build resiliency for their communities. However, there may be disparities regarding beliefs, language, and traditions between the Indigenous foster families and their foster children; one should not assume that all Indigenous placements are or will be culturally congruent. For instance, differences between those who live on the reserve and those living in an urban area (Bird, 2015; Daniel, 2011) can create tensions. Therefore, a therapist needs to explore and learn each client's particular background and tradition in order to give the best treatment, which include identifying the community, location, and some of their practices. This knowledge can be integrated into the communication in therapy. There are also non-Indigenous foster families that may enter into the

circle of caring. From my experience, many non-Indigenous foster parents take their foster

children to events and activities that promote the child's Indigenous culture, which often take

place in local Indigenous community centers.

Additionally, Bird (2015) asserted that it is important that social agencies choose foster

parents who are skilled and committed to working with foster children from different cultures.

Therefore, to achieve a trans-cultural care system (which includes non-Indigenous therapists,

social workers or foster parents working with Indigenous children), it is important to

develop cultural competencies that serve as a foundation for an effective and ethical

practice (Brady, 2015). This goal requires cooperation between all parties of the care system;

however, it may be perceived as not feasible due to financial or time commitment constraints, for

example, for education or culturally-based activities.

Through another promising project that raises awareness of the connection between

culture and resiliency, art therapist Carpendale is currently collaborating with a working group of

Indigenous individuals, settler allies, art therapists, the Kutenai Art Therapy Institute, and its

faculty and community members to develop the *Groundwater Initiative*, an Indigenous-centered

art therapy education program that will address decolonization and reconciliation. This initiative

will support both the training of Indigenous art therapists and further cultural consciousness

within the profession of art therapy (M. Carpendale, personal communication, February 19,

2018). This and other such initiatives support my assertion that the values of Indigenous cultures,

communities, and spiritual traditions need to be transferred to foster children and adapted to their

current lives as well, all the while taking into account the social and political realities that exist

within the world at large. I believe that it is important for a therapist to support the foster

children in feeling connected to a family as a circle of care integrated with *triadic art therapy* and bearing cultural considerations in mind.

The Value of the Arts for Indigenous Well-Being

In many traditional Indigenous communities, the arts are an integral part of daily life. Indigenous people may be involved in activities such as feasting rituals, dancing, and beading, as well as in cultural expressions of ceremonial practices, identity, and lineage. The processes associated with the creative arts are perceived as protective factors for individuals and communities from illness (Archibald & Dewar, 2010; Muirhead & de Leeuw, 2012). The Aboriginal Healing Foundation developed a position paper entitled "Art and Wellness: The Importance of Art for Aboriginal Peoples' Health and Healing" (Muirhead & de Leeuw, 2012). Its mission is to advocate for self-determination and cultural revitalization as a means of healing intergenerational trauma and legacies of sexual, spiritual, mental, and physical abuse (The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, n.d.). The paper underscores the significance of Indigenous cultural pride and the importance of creating community connections with respect to expressive arts programs involving art forms, such as singing, dancing, carving, ceremonial rituals, basket making, knitting, and weaving. Muirhead and de Leeuw (2012) described the use of art as a holistic approach to healing, highlighting cultural expression as vital for identity, communication, support, and revitalization. Because artworks are visible and tangible, they demonstrate the skills and achievements of the artist, strengthening self-confidence and pride. As a therapist seeking to connect with the culture of Indigenous people, with whom I am working, I sometimes explicitly use art practices that children and caregivers can continue at home as a means for gaining some tools that can be transferable to their daily life.

Archibald, Dewar, Reid, and Stevens (2010) asserted that the combination of traditional healing, spirituality, and expressive arts offers holistic support. "Traditional Native healers or shamans draw upon a vast body of symbolism passed down through the centuries... Myths, prayers, songs, chants, sand paintings, music, etc., are used to return the patient symbolically to the source of tribal energy" (p. 32). Use of symbols is in the language of art therapy as well; according to Jung (as cited in Case & Dalley, 2013) they are "the natural mode of psychic expression… symbols are channels for unconscious processes to become conscious" (p.132). Archibald et al. (2012) studied several programs that help promote resiliency for Indigenous people, such as dance workshops for youth, theatre activities, drumming, and singing. According to the researchers, these programs were found to help participants gain confidence and pride and created new social connections that were experienced as more beneficial than counseling. However, the effectiveness of expressive arts programs might also raise some doubts for participants when contrasted with the use of art as a treatment modality. Art psychotherapy may feel alien or ineffective to participants if it is disconnected from traditional activities and their links to culture, the latter of which offers a more positive connotation.

Another study, conducted by Ferrara (1999), explored emotional expression, specifically with Cree and Naskapi communities. She affirmed that artworks and dreams were viewed as both a sacred and spiritual experience. In her study, participants shared their dreams during a traditional and ceremonial ritual. They perceived that the sacredness of personal expression is often beyond words and best shared through rituals, customs, and rites of passage. Art and dreamwork, as an Indigenous method, may be important to integrate into the work with Indigenous clients, but only with the community's support and authority.

In my practice, I often experience Indigenous foster children and adolescents depicting their biological or foster family both verbally and non-verbally. Art making helps them to express their desire to unite with their family. Even Indigenous adolescents who present with low energy and depression frequently become animated after the process of art making. Some of these youths were able to forget about their concerns during the creative process, as art making offered both distraction and catharsis (De Petrillo & Winner, 2005).

Sand play is another artistic technique that encourages communication while holding the values and practices of Indigenous culture. The sand tray has its roots in Jungian psychology and its emphasis on symbols and archetypes. Kalff (2003) described sandtray as the production of miniature "worlds" that seemed to be halfway between that of dreams and the consciously created structures and forms of art. In my studio I have seen my clients use sand trays to create of narrative scenes that hold their life stories and emotions. According to Labovitz-Bolk and Goodman (2000), natural archetypal symbols such as sand and water connects and grounds people to the earth. Tactile sensations associate to body, mind, and spirit. Sand play can facilitate regression or lead to emotional reparation. In the context of the "circle of caring" the experience can connect the child to what was lost, to the symbols of culture and identity, and to the spirits of animals, dream images, and ancestors. Because the sand tray is experienced as a safe and contained space, clients can recreate both their inner and outer worlds through imagery, and to develop self-confidence and feelings of autonomy (Labovitz-Bolk & Goodman, 2000). I have observed that when foster children are moved between different homes, they often relocate their play objects from one sand tray to another or between different containers. They also bury toys, as though expressing their grief and loss.

The sand tray vividly illustrates a process that may align with Indigenous traditions; given the history of colonial subjugation of Indigenous communities, art therapists cannot presume cultural competence based solely on the premise of shared affinity to the arts. McNiff (1988) asserted that "if we look at the past and healing practices of indigenous cultures, there is considerable evidence that creative expression and healing belong together" (p. 6). In this statement he validates art therapy by connecting it to the healing practices of Indigenous cultures, which he positions in the past. This idea that art therapy is "Indigenous" in its practice (McNiff, 1988) is common among art therapists yet problematic. Art therapists who work with Indigenous people need to experience their culture first-hand in order to build trust and create safety. Kapitan (2015) argued that the interaction of direct cultural involvement with critical self-reflexivity is the bedrock on which culturally sensitive art therapy unfolds. It is also important to shift one's cultural frame to value Indigenous family and community life and to pro-actively incorporate these aspects into the therapy session, along with ongoing communication with the caregivers of the children.

Art Therapy With Indigenous People

Because many Indigenous people utilize traditional arts and find them essential to their life and well-being (Archibald, Dewar, Reid & Stevens, 2010), art making as a relational form of therapy may find acceptance within their communities. However, according to Hocoy (2002) "art therapy cannot be assumed to be a universal construct" (p. 141). Cultivating an awareness of its limitations in this respect can help prevent a therapist's unwitting imposition of dominant cultural values and practices on excluded social groups (Kapitan, 2015). Additionally, non-Indigenous art therapists cannot themselves facilitate traditional Indigenous healing techniques

with their clients, as that would assume appropriation and be disrespectful. However, art

therapists can involve Indigenous mentors and healers in the therapy, with the client's permission

(Vivian, 2013). It is important to note that a settler art therapist's appearance or way of speaking

can trigger resistance or be experienced as oppressive, due to the therapist's identity or role that

may represent inequality to the client, as related to historical and current trauma, rather than a

pathway to resilience. Hence, it is important for settler art therapists to gain understanding by

actively and directly experiencing the Indigenous worldview through consultation of an

Indigenous Elder, community leader, or mentor. Presentations and workshops through

professional conferences and educational institutions, as well as participation in Indigenous

traditional ceremonies, provide additional opportunities to learn from Indigenous cultures and the

reconciliation process. Art therapists need to learn Indigenous peoples' history and trauma in

order to better understand their worldview.

   The following contributions to the discourse offer innovations for Indigenous-focused art

therapy and have enriched my own art therapy practice. First, a shift in care has occurred from a

previous focus on historical hardships to current views on resiliency. According to Hill (2008),

the Indigenous Canadian Healing Movement (ICHM), which began in the 1980's, initially

addressed alcohol dependency, followed by mental health concerns that were an outcome of the

residential school experiences. ICHM also developed effective programs that addressed

decolonization, which can be either a public and/or a deep personal process (Tuhiwai-Smith,

1999). It included "reclaiming and revitalizing Indigenous heritage and knowledge… as [it] is

reclaiming land, language, and nationhood" (Battiste & Youngblood-Henderson, 2000, p. 13).

Hill (2008) noted that the ICHM's aim is to illustrate the necessity of returning to the healing

traditions of Canadian Indigenous cultures such as sweat lodge and healing circle, which not only serve to empower but also and connect with new understandings of their identity that are grounded in cultural tradition and values. These programs also have recognized and worked to remove non-Indigenous imposed social stereotypes. Goodman et al. (2017) described healthcare inequalities as a result of racism and offered as an example the negative stereotypes associated with Indigenous people that derive from common mainstream assumptions about alcohol and drug addiction and poverty. The authors noted that Canadians' attitudes and behaviors toward Indigenous people have been based on destructive colonial views and a lack of critical education about Canada's actual history.

Secondly, there are some Indigenous art therapists who have worked with Indigenous clients and utilize knowledge of familiar cultural elements in their practice to foster trust, resiliency, and self-respect. Archibald et al. (2012) conducted a research study with 10 First Nations participants (ages 20–50 years) that focused on building these capacities through the creative arts. The researchers concluded that residential school survivors had missed the act of playing as children; games and creative expression helped participants regain a sense of imagination and bodily freedom, while also dispersed traumatic sensations through physical reverie. With this guidance, I have learned to combine games or a playful attitude with artmaking; this encourages clients to engage and create while playing, for example, the scribble tag game, where we play tag with crayons on a sheet of paper and draw squiggles together.

Vivian (2013), an art therapist of Inuit heritage, has created an Indigenous art therapy model that features the *medicine wheel* as the construct for healing. This model communicates healing holistically while also presents a circle divided into four separate but interconnected

segments that signify different forms of teachings (Valerie, 2015, Lavallée, 2009). In Vivian's

model, the medicine wheel engages a person physically (through art materials), spiritually

(through connections with nature), emotionally (through creative expression), and mentally

(through mindfulness). It is not authoritative in intent but embraces an open and trusting

relationship in which the art therapist learns from the clients. During the art-making process, the

role of the art therapist is to serve as a guide and companion (Vivian, 2013).

Art therapy based on Western psychology, which is commonly practiced, can benefit

from an Indigenous approach because it helps practitioners gain a better understanding of a large

demographic of clients in Canada. In addition, Indigenous-centered art therapy can broaden

knowledge within the discipline. However, even when embracing this perspective, art therapists

need to make sure they remain culturally sensitive and anti-oppresive. Through self-reflexivity

(i.e., examining the self-in-the-moment with particular attention to how one is actively

constructing meaning; Kapitan, 2015) and self-reflection on one's own biases (Vivian, 2013),

they can work together with Indigenous people in an open and person-centered focus on their

clients' needs.

Similarly, Tayler Schenkeveld (2017), a Métis researcher, integrates the Indigenous *seven*

sacred teachings into art therapy sessions, which is used by some Indigenous peoples as an

educational and healing tool. The seven teachings are: respect, love, courage, honesty, wisdom,

humility, and truth. As values they reconnect Indigenous clients with their culture and help in the

construction of cultural identity.

On community and societal levels in Canada, Graveline (2014) is regarded as a leader in

educating Indigenous and settlers art therapists and has published two books on transforming

adult education and healing from an Indigenous perspective. Her Indigenous art therapy practice

is called HeART (2014) and incorporates the medicine wheel at its core. There are four elements:

a) respectful relations (e.g., becoming an empathetic role model), b) embracing spirituality (e.g.,

traditional ceremonies), c) valuing interdependency (i.e., being open to collective wisdom), and

d) acknowledging the need to walk our talk (e.g., deepening and sharing the therapist's personal

journey). Graveline asserted the need for a wider field of practice, working with not only

individuals and families, but also using art therapy skills to challenge systems and organizations

to change.

Finally, art therapists who work with Indigenous people must acknowledge Indigenous

philosophies, beliefs, and cultural practices, while dismantling stereotypes and reframing the

negative impacts of colonialism (Sasakamoose, Bellegarde, Sutherland, Pete, & McKay-

McNabb, 2017). The above examples of Indigenous traditional methods practiced by Indigenous

art therapists have been woven into art therapy treatment and demonstrate models that have been

successfully accepted by the Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous art therapists must appreciate

the strengths and resilience of the Indigenous peoples in the face of historical injustice. My hope

is that specialized art therapy training programs will be developed to qualify Indigenous art

therapists and develop greater cultural humility among non-Indigenous art therapy practitioners.

This creates an opportunity for art therapists to become part of the reconciliation process leading

to transformative social inclusion of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Eco-Art Therapy with Indigenous Children

Eco-art therapy is another approach that can connect to the Indigenous worldview and its

values and therefore should not be overlooked. In my work with Indigenous children I have

adopted an ecologically-focused art therapy practice inspired by Canadian art therapist

Carpendale (2008). I have found that a focus on the environment aligns in particular with

Indigenous interconnectivity with nature. I continually integrate and use nature symbols and

objects in my practice and encourage Indigenous children with whom I work to relate to their

environment through the use of natural art materials, such as felt, sand, and little rocks.

Carpendale (2010) noted that when we as humans become more aware of ourselves and of others

we feel a more positive relationship to the environment. The rhythm of breathing demonstrates

reciprocal interaction (Figure 4) between all-natural organisms on the planet (Carpendale, 2010).

Examples of eco-art therapy in practice involve the use of artmaking in natural settings, incorporating natural materials and metaphors in the art therapy room, mindfulness practices of nature, and art rituals or ceremonies
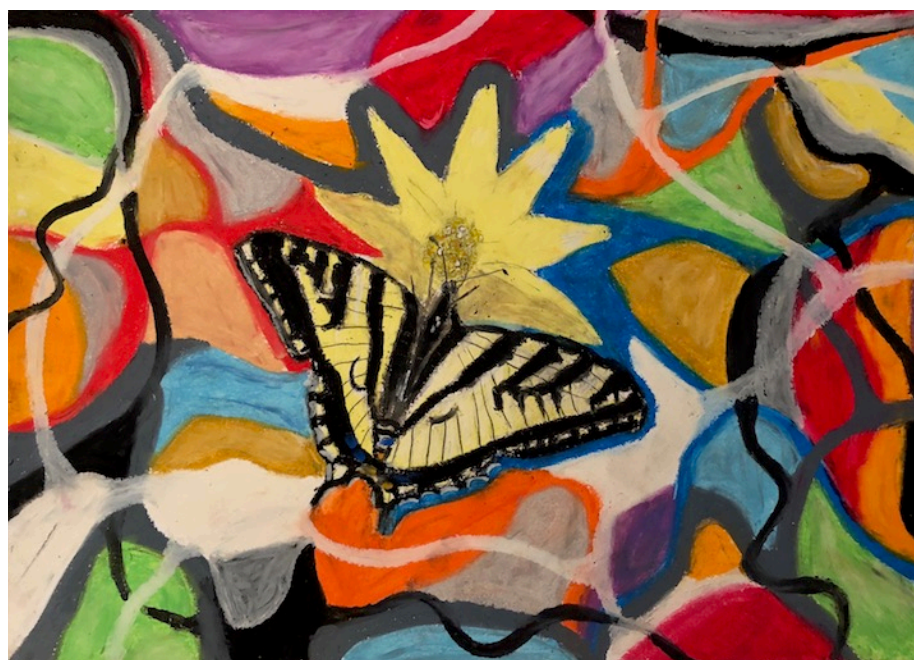
Figure 4: My reflection, "Reciprocity" (case 1, session 4)

(Kopytin & Rugh, 2017; Sweeney, 2017).

Eco-psychology themes relating to Indigenous culture.

Eco-art therapy derives from eco-psychology and its focus on the relationship between the human psyche and the natural environment as a means of helping people relate to one another. The basic premise acknowledges that the well-being of the Earth's eco-systems is basic to human survival, and disruption of this balance can impact our very existence (Fisher, 2013; Rozak, Gomes & Kanner, 1995). Eco-psychology interweaves "the sensitivity of therapists, the expertise of ecologists and the ethical energy of environmental activists" (Brown, 1995, p. xvi). This means being aware of and advocating for the greater eco-system as connected to care. For instance, one might deliberately use recycled materials in therapy as a reminder and means of saving, restoring, and creating. Graveline (1998) stated that "the modern language of ecology makes 'new' the Traditional worldview" (p. 20) and includes the need to connect to communities and revitalise individuals' relationship to earth as mother. Fisher (2013), a psychotherapist, emphasized the Indigenous peoples' lifestyle as rooted in the natural world rather than separate from it. Overall, thus, there is a need to re-establish the reciprocal relationship between the human psyche and nature to cherish and respect rather than dominate it. Through my engagement with the Indigenous people I have noticed that their language often is filled with metaphors from nature, which may indicate their comfort in and connection to nature as an authentic expression of well-being.

The Importance of Attachment with Indigenous Foster Children

Attachment-Informed Art Therapy With Indigenous Foster Children

The Indigenous value of connectedness – whether to one another in community, to people and spirits past and present, to the circle of caring, and/or to nature and the circle of life – is conceived in therapeutic treatment by the caregiver, therapist, and nature (as material or

metaphor) as attachment. Attachment-informed therapy is based on a comprehensive Western theory of human development essential to behavior and relationships, without which clinical disorders may arise (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Attachment-informed art therapy, as developed by Proulx (2017), approaches the client with a lens on attachment with art therapy as the intervention woven in. As an art therapist working with children who experience attachment trauma, I have relied for several years on this approach, combining the creative process with attachment theory in sessions with caregivers and foster children. However, as a lens on practice, I have had to unpack and re-think attachment as it may or may not support Indigenous clients.

Attachment Theory

Attachment in early childhood was particularly relevant to my study, as most of the First Nations foster children that I see in therapy have endured physical and verbal abuse since they were born. Many of them also have been affected prenatally based on such predictors of attachment difficulties as maternal depression, alcohol and substance abuse, social support (Nieto, Lara, & Navarrete, 2017). It is important to draw attention to how this situation relates to a broader picture that includes the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma of the Indigenous people under colonization, where "cumulative waves of trauma and grief that have not been resolved within the [Indigenous] psyche and have become deeply embedded in the collective memory of [Indigenous] people" (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. iii).

According to Siegel (2015), "attachment is an inborn system in the brain that evolves in ways that influence and organize motivational, emotional, and memory processes with respect to significant caregiving figure" (p. 91). Bowlby and Ainsworth were the leading researchers of attachment theory (Bretherton, 1992; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Bowlby (1988) developed

attachment theory within Western psychological constructs of the nuclear family, defining it as the primary connection between a child and a caregiver. He wrote that attachment behaviour occurs when an infant becomes close to another person on whom they are dependent for survival. In children this person may be perceived as better able to cope with the world and an object for emulating that behaviour.

Bowlby's attachment theory grew out of the primarily British psychoanalytic school of object relations and from ethology, which is the science of animal behavior to study human social organization. The bonds of attachment with their caregivers support children in being able to explore the world around them while feeling secure, having their needs adaptively met by caregivers in a variety of circumstances. An attachment relationship between the child and his/her caregiver becomes elaborated into the child's *internal working model*, which is a framework or template for understanding the world, themselves, and others. Bowlby understood attachment to be a survival function in the infant and young child that provides the basis of healthy coping later in life (Bowlby, 1988).

Ainsworth (1990) posited that children who feel secure will use their caregivers as a basis for the exploration of their social and physical environments, for example by climbing up to sit in their caregivers' laps for both emotional connection and for gaining a new vantage point. According to Bowlby (1988), the mother or other attachment figure serves as a safe haven during times of stress or fatigue. According to Dozier, Stovall, Albus, and Bates (2001), if caregivers have not experienced secure attachment themselves, as appears in the case of children who were taken from families and placed in Canadian residential schools, they may have difficulty forming a fulfilling relationship with a child. In therapy I have found that I can encourage the

development of attachment for such challenged caregivers and children through metaphorical activities and games that involve physically appropriate touch.

Although Bowlby (1980) considered caregiving in terms of a child's mother and did not extend his theory into non-biological and extended family relationships, he viewed responsive and sensitive caregiving as that which enables the child to develop social competencies, empathy, and emotional intelligence, and to learn how to interact with other people. Bowlby identified three attachment style groups: secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-anxious-ambivalent. Main and Solomon (1986) later added a fourth group known as disorganized. Foster children frequently are seen as fitting into this latter category; they have often experienced abuse and neglect and/or have mentally ill or addicted parents (Cyr, Euser, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van Ijzendoorn, 2010), who may be experiencing the ongoing ill effects of colonialization including multiple traumas and self-medicating (Brave Heart, 2003). Hence, establishing connections with others is not only a critical part of the foundation of infant development (Shore, 2014), it is fostered by all caregivers who can provide safety and security for the child.

Western attachment theory has subsequently been linked to neurological development (e.g., Hass-Cohen & Carr, 2008; Franklyn, 2010; Schore, 2003a, 2003b; Shore, 2014), which is a domain of investigation that is providing increasing evidence-based research for attachment theory and on-going development of clinical tools and techniques. Although the focus of my study centered on attachment from the perspective of culture and environment, it is helpful to have a foundational understanding of the effects of trauma on the brain, described below, because of common profiles of the children with whom I work, such as the issue of anxiety.

The Impact of Trauma on Attachment

Van Der Kolk, (2014), a psychiatrist, researched attachment, neurobiology, and developmental trauma in people who were exposed to "chronic interpersonal trauma" in childhood (p. 359). He described how trauma produces physiological changes in the brain that affect individuals' behavior, including their internal alarm system, stress hormone levels, and hyper-vigilance. Trauma is deeply connected to the part of the brain that communicates physical activities of the body and embodies feelings.

Another brain researcher, Schore (2003b), defined the individual's attachment system as the "interactive regulation of states of biological synchronicity between organisms" (p. 115). Bonding involves somatically expressed emotions intertwined with one another's bodily rhythms (Sroufe, 1996); for example, mirroring each other's facial expression (illustrated in Figure 5). As with children who have experienced unsuccessful attachment as a result of early relational trauma, the development of the right hemisphere of the brain is is believed to be reliant on the quality and quantity of relational experiences a child will experience, which enables resilience. Neglect during infancy results in a diminishing of the right hemispheric of the brain structure;

Figure 5: My reflection, "Mirroring" (case 1, session 6)

conversely, the right hemisphere of the brain grows in response to the relationship with the primary caregiver (Rotenberg, 1995; Schore, 2000). This growth is believed to be responsible for the foundational development of the empathy, compassion, and interpersonal reciprocity functions of the child (Schore, 2012), as "all human interactions… occur within a relational context in which essential nonverbal communications are transmitted…" implicitly (Schore, 2014. p. 395).

Attachment Theory as Applied to Art Therapy

Art therapy is a field that offers excellent tools to help repair children's early relational trauma, strengthen the functions of their right hemisphere, and integrate bi-hemisphere functions through engagement in both the creative process and with the caregiver and therapist. These tools involve verbal and non-verbal communication; dynamic interaction between the child, caregiver and the therapist; as well as shared sensibility. Such interactions have the potential to generate qualities of empathy, affect regulation, attunement, and understanding of the children's behavior on others (Shore, 2014). The art therapist also supports attachment by providing a safe and consistent setting where the child and caregiver have freedom to play and create together outside of normal, daily routines. Significant to the feelings of safety that are necessary for such creative work is the therapist's ability to attune and adapt to the clients' needs (Franklin, 2010; McSwain Mann, 2015; Proulx, 2017).

In therapy, attachment work aims to create experiences missed in the child's early relationships (Ludy-Dobson & Perry, 2010; Malchiodi, 2014). This might include art making with soft materials to symbolize infancy, like cotton balls and feathers. Materials and activities can also be used to symbolize feeding (e.g., cornstarch mixture to make goop), attachment (e.g.,

gluing pieces of colorful papers onto boards), and a secure base (e.g. the frame of a paper) .

Other activities might involved positive touch (e.g., hand drawing) and eye contact. Art materials

can encourage tactile activity, like sand and slime (Proulx, 2013). All of these activities are

thought to stimulate underdeveloped neural pathways through sensory-relational experiences

(Hass-Cohen, 2008) and can be adapted to diverse cultural needs as well.

Triadic Art Therapy with Foster Children and Foster Parents

The *triadic art therapy* approach that I have developed in concert with my practice-led

research study leverages the relationship between a dyad (in this case foster children and their

foster parents) and art therapist as an active third partner, with a focus on connection to the

culture. In contrast to some individual therapy approaches where a transference relationship

between the therapist and the child facilitates attachment and repair, in parent–child dyadic

psychotherapy, relations between the caregiver and child are available for repair (Kaplan, Harel,

& Avimeir-Patt, 2010). This focus acknowledges an Indigenous worldview that asserts an

individual's sense of self is formed from their relationships with others (Weinberg, 2011).

Meeting with foster children together with their foster parent in therapy accords with Indigenous

relationality values (Graham, 2002), and provides an opportunity for building their on-going

relationship, in contrast to the temporary relationship formed with a therapist. However,

therapists can sometimes offer a relationship of constancy with children when they are

transferred from one foster family to another.

Among approaches that are believed to be most effective in dyadic (as well as triadic)

therapy, the attitude that the therapist projects should be one of understanding, support, and non-

judgmental regard (Hosea, 2006; Regev & Snir, 2014). Kramer (1971) noted that the therapist's

direct involvement in the creative process during the session may also foster positive feelings of

accomplishment and validation for the dyad. According to Sun-Reid (2012), the goal of the

therapist is to help the foster parent understand the meanings behind the foster child's behavior

and volatile or other emotions, and to encourage the foster parents to become attuned to the

child's needs. In addition, the therapist should support and assist foster children in understanding

the intentions of their foster parents and to clarify for the children the limitations and

responsibilities of their biological family, which also exerts an influence on the family system.

The therapist assists the children in reducing trauma symptoms and supports them in their

grieving process (Sun-Reid, 2012) while modeling the same behavior to foster parents to be able

to help in the child's healing process.

The pictures that are created in art therapy are tangible and therefore may be an important

means of communication in both dyadic and triadic work. Artworks often function as symbolic

language and effectively release many repressed feelings more directly than words (Hass-Cohen

& Carr, 2008; Malchiodi, 2014; Proulx, 2003). Of course, when working with children, art

therapists always need to consider their developmental age and adapt to it (Proulx, 2003;

Malhiodi, 2014, Regev & Snir, 2014).

Based on my practice, *triadic art therapy* is a structure that, because it focuses on the

here-and-now relationship enacted in the therapy room with the therapist's facilitation, has

several particular benefits. Firstly, it can shed light on and help the foster parent understand the

foster child's behaviour in both the familial and cultural context. Secondly, facilitation leads the

parent to support the child, which can be physically in the process of creating culturally-

appropriate art and emotionally by listening to and talking with the child from a place of cultural

strengthening. Thirdly, the structure may improve the dyad's familial communication with the therapist's reinforcement in real time. For the foster children, participation in this structure can give them an important outlet to express their feelings and thoughts to caring adults, build their communication skills, learn to express their needs to their foster parents, and help construct their capacity for self-autonomy. The addition of attention on the child's culture furthers these capacities, particularly with respect to identity. In my practice, the child and parent create art or play together as equal parties rather than in the hierarchy of adult and child. This egalitarian approach fits the Indigenous worldview; "there is an equality among all persons and species, and that everything shares in the environmental balance of life equally" (Dumont, 2005, p.7). Depending on the activity and the caregiver and child's dynamics, in some cases the dyad works on the same artwork together, and in other cases each of them works on their own art independently, both of which support processes of attunement and attachment.

Finally, in triadic art therapy, as with other formats, the children's artmaking may express both negative and positive aspects of their relationship with their caregivers. The advantage is that the caregiver is present in the session to receive and process this information and learn to take it into account in their communications with their child. Such information may aid the therapist in strengthening the dyad's connection, and the child's creativity can be a tool to help them through difficulties (Shore, 2011).

Overarching Themes of Dyadic Art Therapy Work and Implications to the Study

Although there is some published information about dyadic art therapy (i.e., art therapy that involves parent-child dyads working in therapy together), little knowledge is available with respect to its use with foster children, and there are no publications about dyadic art therapy with

Indigenous children that I could find. Available literature about dyadic art therapy is from art

therapists in North America, Israel, the UK, and South Korea. Dyadic art therapy has been

utilized with infants to adolescents, as well as work with children with and without attachment

disruption, and work with a single or group dyad. Relevant to my study, the foster children I see

usually don't have a lengthy history of relationship with their foster parents and often have

attachment issues. Children who have been moved several times, as a result of placement

failures, often refrain from becoming attached to their caregivers as self-defense from the pain of

having to separate from their new families once again (Centre for Parenting & Research, 2006).

Dancette-deBresson (2016), a Canadian art therapist, conducted a review of literature on

dyadic art therapy. She noted that its use seems to be increasing, due to greater familiarity with

attachment theory with children and the impact of attachment on their behaviour (Taylor Buck,

Dent-Brown & Parry, 2012). Moreover, she found that art therapists see a need to involve other

family members in the child's treatment in order to directly influence their ways of interacting.

By working together with the caregivers, therapists can develop a new pattern of communication

that can be reinforced at home (Dancette-deBresson, 2016; Waller, 2006). This finding supports

my thinking that the caregiver can continue the attachment pattern developed in the therapy, and

more consistently, when reinforced in the session. For instance, in my clinical work, while

creating art together, one dyad learned to work more cooperatively during a play-dough activity,

after which the child asked to interact again in this activity at home, which was reported to be

enjoyable. Learning new attachment patterns is relevant for Indigenous parents/caregivers who

were in residential schools as their displacement affected their own attachment and

connectedness to family, community, culture and environment and they did not learn through

example how to rear children in a loving and supporting way. A relearning of how to relate to and bond with children can be a key in healing some of the intergenerational trauma caused by residential schools (Bourassa, 2010).

Proulx (2003) outlined several interventions with infants and preschoolers using through parent–child dyad art therapy, which she based on attachment theory and neuroscience. She approaches the parents as active participants in the child's treatment, as focused on facilitating the young children's emotional regulation. She also emphasized sensory stimulation with their interactions as contributing to brain development. Her work has given me a perspective on what the children I see in therapy might be missing in earlier stages of their development. In a subsequent text Proulx (2017) described her development of attachment-informed art therapy as a foundational framework that may be applicable to all ages and people who are in difficult relationships with others. The author considered adaptation as a critically important part of brain and memory development. Adaptation via the creative process in art therapy means the individual can make use of non-verbal ways of connecting with past experiences and new ways of responding to them (Perry & Szalavitz, 2008).

Of particular relevance to my study, Plante and Bernèche (2008) conducted a study of dyad art therapy groups with the idea of strengthening the emotional ties between Canadian parents and their school age-children living in poverty. The authors observed that the participant caregivers feared being judged and the possibility of losing their children to CFS, which alludes to the history and current reality of children being taken from homes (i.e., because of neglect) by the social agency in Canada (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005). These fears can cause anxiety, especially for Indigenous clients, taking into account the colonial history and current

socioeconomic realities for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Brave Heart, 2003). Plante and Bernèche (2008) identified a quality of intersubjectivity between the dyads they observed, which according to Cortina and Liotti (2010) is the unspoken communication and sharing between two subjects "at intuitive and automatic levels" (p. 410). Intersubjective experiences in shared art making increased the dyad's understanding of each other's perspective of their personal experience; such new awareness and experiences may cause constant internal changes (Buirski & Haglund, 2001; Plante & Bernèche, 2008). The therapist maintains an open attitude during the therapy by operating at two levels, as both an observer and a subjective participant. Both the concept of intersubjectivity and the dual role conform to the holistic approach of the Indigenous culture relating to the value of oneness and interconnectedness between individuals (Shroff, 2011).

Israeli researchers Regev and Snir (2014) described dyadic art therapy as a model for effective parenting for school-age children with childhood relationship disturbances, although they did not mention attachment issues. Their work involved parents who make their own decision about going to therapy. In contrast, clients in my practice are referred by a social service agency, and I notice the difficulties of some foster parents to participate, as they feel it is not their decision. For example, one foster parent was chose not to participate in any activity, saying she was too tired. Her reluctance, while entirely appropriate from the standpoint of colonization, could in turn, influence her foster children's behavior and progress in therapy, as well as her own confidence in the therapist's abilities or purpose. Another aspect of the authors' of Regev and Snir's model is mentalization through art making. Mentalization is the ability of an individual to understand oneself as well as others' behavior regarding subjective states and mental

processes (Fonagy, Moran, Steele, Steele & Higgit, 1991; Fonagy & Target, 1997). The authors

asserted that the creative process helps both the parent and child to mentalize their relationship

(e.g., feelings and beliefs), in contrast to addressing conscious issues. An Indigenous worldview

mentalization process might be understanding how the connection between self, people and the

environment functions, which is a more comprehensive perspective.

In a later report, Regev and Snir (2015) identified child and parent dyadic objectives

based on interviews with art therapists working with dyadic art therapy. Some of the therapists

said that they usually invite the dyad to interact through play and creating art in the session to

reflect on their relationship at home. The therapists often help the dyad to analyze their

interactions, by verbally and artistically reflecting on their process of artmaking. For example,

the dyad can discuss the reasons for their actions; their feelings before, during, and after the

process; where do they feel the emotions in their body; what would they do differently; and ways

to experience changing roles. The therapists reported that they ask the clients to reconstruct their

joint creative process, by looking at their art and their relationship in new and different ways.

The therapists also lead the clients to check the power relations of their relationship in the current

situation. For example, they will explore who is the leader in their dyad. This approach doesn't

conform to the Indigenous worldview, however, which focuses on egalitarianism, which is

preferable when working with First Nations families. This aligns with Indigenous worldview of

respecting and learning from all ages, everyone as a teacher and a learner, on their own journey

together (Jen Vivian personal communication, March 20, 2019).

According to Regev and Snir (2015), dyadic art therapists provide the parents with

information about the child's developmental stage as well, which helps the parents understand

the needs of their children. One of the therapists observed that supporting the caregivers in an accepting, empathetic, and non-judgmental manner is similar to a "good grandmother transference" (Stern, 1998 p. 186), which could translate into "Elder." These findings illustrate ways in which the therapist holds the space for the dyad to work on their relationship.

Gavron (2013), an Israeli art therapist, presented an innovative art-based assessment called the Joint Painting Procedure (JPP), which is used for evaluating the relationship between school age children (without disruptive attachment) and their parent. This method involves the parent and child painting together on the same sheet of paper using five structured steps that evolve from each participant creating on their own to their collaboration on the same paper; this "allows examination of the dynamics of change in the parent–child relationship as the partners move from individual creation to joint work" (p.17). JPP would need to be greatly modified if utilized with Indigenous foster children, because the procedure doesn't consider the trauma history of many Indigenous people, nor does it conform their world view. For example, one of the essessment parameters looks at the motivation and investment of the dyad in their joint art work, based on the path painted between the child and the caregiver's areas of the pictures that are assumed to represent personal spaces. When they connect the path to the rest of the picture and paint it in contrasting colors, they get a high score in their assessment. However Indigenous people might paint a spiritual connection instead, with a very different configuration that could be misinterpreted. This brings up the issues of cultural validity of assessments, which extends beyond art therapy and into the idea of diagnosis itself. Indigenous worldview has a much different take on what the Western concept of diagnosis could mean.

Gavron (2013) explored the implicit and explicit domains of the joint artistic creation,

drawing from Stern (2004), who saw the present moment as a mentally perceived form of

"implicit knowing" (p. 101) that is nonconscious but capable of conscious and verbal reflection.

Whereas the implicit domain includes attributes such as body-language, sensations, and hidden

or implied affects and words, the explicit domain involves such characteristics as symbols,

verbal expression, and reflective consciousness. The implicit knowing of an individual is

comprised of the most important information about an interpersonal relationship, which is

significant to the examination of the connection between child and caregiver. The explicit

information about the dyad's communication is not enough to understand its dynamic; the art

therapy process encourages creative expression that reveals thoughts and feelings through visual

and verbal reflective representations (Stern, 2004; Gavron, 2013).

Mutual regulation is the process of regulating emotions and behaviors between the dyad

through artmaking. This is an implicit process but can also involve the explicit process of verbal

reflection. For example, playing in the sand might relax the child and effect the oral and physical

interaction between the dyad in a positive way. Related to my study, as a cross-cultural art

therapist there is another aspect of the implicit knowledge, which is cultural understanding. The

dyad may have knowledge that they are not able to share or express and they may or may not be

aware that there is a gap in settler understanding. This is explicit information for the dyad, but it

is implicit for the therapist. F.J. Graveling (March, 15, 2019, personal communication) noted:

> Likely Indigenous people will assume that the therapist does not understand Indigenous
> culture unless you make it clear what you do know. But it is also likely that the
> Indigenous person will not confront the therapist with this knowledge as it is taken for
> granted that the gap exists and basically there is little to be done about it as the power
> differential exists, especially for those in therapy due to outside referral by authorities.

Another issue of implicit knowledge relating to Indigenous people is the level of trust they have with the therapist. Due to historical mistrust engendered through ongoing colonial processes, and the role that therapy has played in that, progress in building trust in the therapeutic process can contribute to more explicit information becoming availble. In addition, ally practioners who are cross culturally aware could help contribute to building the trust of their Indigenous clients.

Gavron and Mayseless (2018) discerned several significant therapeutic processes that occur through the transformative process of the JPP. One process involves pleasure and fun as they are used during and after the session; artmaking and the use of symbolic metaphors bring about new joyful non-verbal communication Gavron & Mayseless, 2018; (Regev & Snir, 2014). The setting of dyadic therapy is different than the daily dynamics between parent and child, as in therapy the child receives the full attention from the caregiver (Kerr, 2015). This can help children who have experienced trauma, in that sometimes they lose the belief that they deserve to be happy (Richardson, 2015).

Another process is the mutual bidirectional effect that occurs during JPP, where the dyads have an effect on each other with their communication, which changes their behavior (Gavron & Mayseless, 2018). The implicit interactions in the process may relate to reciprocity, an important value in Indigenous' beliefs of giving and receiving equally (Kovach, 2009). However, mutual bidirectional effect might be impeded for children who have experienced trauma, as they may need lengthy time to process it. Positive change in the dyad's relationship are sometimes slowed

down when the foster parents need to focus on their own trauma, or on their children's defiant behavior.

Gavron and Mayseless, (2018) also describe mentalization, which is a reflective functioning. This process synthesizes non-verbal communication, such as sensory and body movement and also some verbal expression when exploring the process (Bat Or, 2010; Bucci, 2011). The process of expressing feelings may be ethnocentric as in many cultures expressing emotions is discouraged or limited to only within the family or family home. Indigenous people, who were in residential schools where they were not allowed to express their emotions, may pass on this pattern of withholding their feelings through generations (Gerlach, 2008; Partridge, 2010). In addition, the constract of priorizing mentalization, rather then only verbal communication may fit with Indigenous cultural value of holism and belief in the four directions of mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional connection (Archibald & Dewer, 2010). Lastly is the topic of mutual recognition, evolving from the process of mutual regulation, which may involve destruction and repair of recognition; the dyad both works together and acknowledges the self and the other's separate worlds (Benjamin, 2005). This process may be accepted within Indigenous culture with its value of coming to know the other in exploration of similarity or differences and relatedness (King, 2011). Gavron and Mayseless (2018) concluded that to achieve positive change in the dyadic therapy treatment, it is most effective to use all of these processes in the session because of their mutually reinforcing effects.

Henley (2005), a U.S. art therapist, worked with attachment disorders in post-institutionalized adopted children. He cautioned that if the caregiver is present in session, it is important that the therapist not be felt as competing with them. I usually address this dynamic by

encouraging the caregiver and child to lead me in the session so that we learn from each other in an equal way. Henley also noted the importance of recognizing who is the child's attachment figure, which may be either the biological or foster parents. In triadic art therapy, the overall aim is for the child to gain connectedness to the caregiver, therapist, environment, and also to their relationship to the biological parents that is always implisitly in the room.

McSwain Mann (2015) examined parent–child attunement in dyadic art therapy with school-age children who had secure attachments, with the goal of addressing anxiety and/or adjustment through a process of "visual dialogue" (p. i). The author defined attunement as "the feeling of being felt" (p. 30) in a reciprocal relationship. From her data the author identified several elements of dyadic art therapy. One of these is sacred time and space, which refers to the special time that the parent and the child share in therapy, in contrast to the quality and quantity of time they may spend together in daily life. McSwain Mann stated, "the liminal nature is important, as this concept relates to ritual processes and rites of passage" (p. 93), which extends to a triadic approach. Another essence is the idea of the therapist as a *hostess*, that is, in a decentered role while the dyad is central. The therapist-as-hostess cultivates the therapeutic environment for the dyad. In contrast, although I am the facilitator of the therapy session with Indigenous people, I understand that from their perspective we are all located in the center and have the opportunity to influence each other in our own distinct and connected ways.

Systemic awareness and influence is an essence of dyadic art therapy that perceives the dyad as a subset of the family (McSwain Mann, 2015). Family issues arise in therapy involving siblings and grandparents who together form a "multigenerational dimension of the essence of systemic influences" (p. 108). Clearly this concept is applicable to the Indigenous value of

extended family and holism where everybody and everything is connected. "Within our

Indigenous ways of knowing we recognize that we are related to everything in creation that we

are connected and depend on one another" (Nyman, 2014, p. iv).

McSwain Mann conceived of her role in facilitating dyadic art therapy as that of a *Greek

Chorus*, as like the role of an echo or a translator of a play; she alluded to the therapist, parent,

child, and the art as all reflecting in concert with the therapeutic process. The echo as an

important part of the communication in the therapeutic setting as a way of understanding a

phenomenon. I would encourage all the parties to reflect as a collective process and to be aware

that changing or reinterpreting the words can change the meaning of things. Another essence

that fits well with what I have learned from Indigenous participants in art therapy is an

orientation of play of playfulness and serious fun that integrates the seriousness of therapy and

the joyful experience of the creative process. "Despite destructive European impact, it (humor)

has persisted as a tool of survival, resistance, and the maintenance of identity" (Duncan, 2014, p.

iii).

Unlike other practitioners who have described attachment in dyadic art therapy, McSwain

Mann articulated the essence of connection and disconnection that has direct bearing on my own

approach with Indigenous clients. She locates connection on the "meta-level, meaning the

overall feeling of connectedness of the session… and at the more micro-levels of smaller

moments within the session" (p. 109). There are different types of connections between the dyad

to attend to, such as body language (nodding) and verbal communication (e.g. consulting each

other). The phenomenon of disconnection in the dyad conceptually links to the cultural and

historical perspective of the Indigenous community. Although Western psychology evaluates the

process of disconnection as rooted in attachment difficulties, an Indigenous lens views it as a

result of harmful societal and historical processes of colonization. For example, in a dyad

artwork created by a 9-year-old girl and her foster father, the girl depicted a "peek a boo" game

that was reminiscent of an infant's intense stage of forming an attachment. In contrast, in the

grandfather's contribution to the artwork showed an eagle flying away from the exploding

volcano on an isolated piece of land surrounded by water. Perhaps he sees his role as protecting

her from danger, to help the girl leave this place rather than attach to it. The caregiver

perspective in this case may reflect the colonial history in Canada.

Finally, the essence of bridging back to real life utilizes tools and insights from the

therapeutic process to integrate into daily life. The involvement of the parents in dyadic sessions

enables them to understand the process of art therapy. For Indigenous clients and participants in

art therapy the need for bridging takes on the larger importance of sharing from their worldview,

which is an act of empowerment in the familial and social context, as well as learning from their

experience in the sessions to carry into daily living.

Taylor-Buck, Dent-Brown, Parry, and Boote (2014) conducted consensus research with

art therapists who were surveyed on the basic elements they utilized in dyadic art therapy.

Participants described the role of the art therapist is as a "container" and a guide during the

session and the role of artmaking as a help to the children to feel both autonomous and

connected. I have found, however, that artmaking may not be utilized until both child and parent

are ready to engage. For example, younger children may need more individual play time before

engaging with dyadic activity. One foster mother chose to create her own art while her five-year-

old foster child played at the doll house; only then were they both ready to create together.

Taylor-Buck et al. described the dyadic art therapist as the "relationship's therapist" (p.170), which from the Indigenous perspective includes the relationship of a larger circle of people within the community, nature and environment (Carriere & Richardson, 2009).

Hendry and Taylor-Buck (2017) discussed three approaches to dyadic parent-child art therapy that present a more diverse picture of the role of the caregiver in therapy, depending on the child's needs. The first approach is child-led with the caregiver as a helper or witness. The session is non-directive with the caregiver present as an observer of the child's process and practicing model of the therapist's sensitive interacting with the child. The second approach is "joint engagement" (p. 120), meaning child and caregiver making art together, followed by a reflective discussion about their creation and interactions while working together on it. The third approach is "narrative coherence" (p.120) that aims to enable co-creation of meaning about the child's life events and develop understanding of the child's life journey thus far. In Indigenous culture, storytelling is also considered as a way of knowing (Caxaj, 2015). "Stories take on their own life and become teachers" (Frank, 2008, p. 690). This approach requires advance preparation between therapist and caregiver to focus on areas of concern. All of these approaches facilitate caregiver sensitivity and reflective functioning in both participants with the therapist's support (Hendry & Taylor-Buck, 2017).

Lastly, Shin Choi and Park (2015) presented a study about a South Korean mother and school-age child who explored their troubled relationship with art in dyadic therapy. Notably, the study introduced to the literature a different cultural perspective of narrative inquiry. The narrative approach afforded the therapist to share some of her own related experiences in order to increase insights into the therapy process. To support an Indigenous perspective, the therapist

would need to facilitate an atmosphere of narrative sharing equally within the dyad and therapist interactions, rather than in the hierarchic structure of therapist and client roles (Archibald, 2008; Blackstock, 2008).

The above over-arching themes of dyadic work support attachment-informed art therapy; however, most of this literature does not address cultural differences. To adapt dyadic art therapy to an Indigenous model, I found it necessary to include the art therapist as a third partner, centering on cultural connection, and named this adaptation *triadic art therapy*. Whereas dyadic work focuses on strengthening attachment between child and parent, triadic work aims to strengthen connectedness between the child, caregiver, therapist, and the surrounding family, environment, and culture. The review of the above literature nevertheless sharpened my understanding about what does and does not apply for the particular population of my practice and research. For example, the ideas of assessment and examination of power relations in therapy can be problematic components of therapy based on non-heirachical cultural values. As a settler therapist I am aware that acknowledging power dynamics is critical in working with Indigenous peoples in child welfare in particular, and important in the AOP process as well.

To appropriately adapt dyadic work to my study I needed to consider the impacts of trauma and Indigenous history in Canada. I also needed to accept that there may be no common background history between the child and caregiver, that foster families don't usually come to therapy on their own free will, and that caregivers might be fearful about cooperating with the social agencies who could take or have taken children from their homes. The themes discussed above emphasised for me that in triadic work must include these realities as well as Indigenous values, especially interconnectedness and holism.

Reframing Attachment Theory as Connectedness in Working With Indigenous People

Problematic assumptions about the universality of attachment theory exist, given that the

literature in support of attachment theory is rooted in the mainstream of Western psychology

(see, for example, Baylin & Hughes, 2016; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Although Mesman, van

IJzendoorn, and Sagi-Schwartz, (2016) stated that attachment theory may "claim cross-cultural

validity" (p. 852), a few researchers dispute this claim, having critiqued the ethnocentrism of

Western attachment theory (Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake & Morelli, 2000; Quinn & Mageo,

2013). Rothbaum et al. (2000) asserted that the basic concept of attachment theory is

not applicable in all cultures.

Current attachment theory notes that infants attach to a primary caregiver as a survival

strategy; however, the sensitivity and behavioral repertoire of the caregiver is dependent on the

cultural norms (Yeo, 2003). Three main hypotheses about attachment theory have been described

through the Japanese culture's perspective (Rothbaum et al. 2000; Mesman, at el., 2016). First is

the maternal *sensitivity hypothesis*, which relates to the way the caregivers attune and respond to

their children's signals (Ainsworth, 1990); this function intends to promote the child's

independence and self-expression (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). In contrast, Japanese parents are

culturally expected to develop a dependent relationship with their children; it is impossible to

explore sensitivity when the children don't usually separate from their parent (Takahashi, 1990).

Second is the social *competence hypothesis*, whereby children who feel secure develop positive

social and emotional competence (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Japanese parents encourage their

children to consider the benefits of being part of a group instead of focusing on the needs of the

individual (Peak, 1989; Hofstede, 1984). The third hypothesis is the *secure base,* whereby

children are able to explore their environment and easily adapt to changes when they feel secure

(Ainsworth, 1990; Bowlby 1988); this exploration process leads to the positive result of

individuation (Rothbaum et al., 2000). However, in Japan the direction for the child is toward

dependency and interdependency; the children rely on their caregivers and are not encouraged in

their exploration of their environment (Rothbaum et al., 2000).

These hypotheses can also be critiqued in the context of Indigenous cultures that define

self-determination as a major factor in childhood development. An open, non-hierarchical

approach to child rearing encourages children to freely engage their environment and learn from

both their experiences and mistakes. People with a diverse range of difference are generally

accepted into the community rather than diagnosed and labeled with mental illness. Children are

encouraged to connect with nature and the Creator, and they may gain knowledge and awareness

about a danger situation by observing adults (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, January

16, 2019). Caregivers in the Indigenous culture are known for shared parenting as a value in

which multiple caregivers are responsible for a child's development and wellbeing (Neckoway,

Brownlee, & Castellan, 2007), and a form of permissive parenting that doesn't impose

restrictions on the child's self-autonomy (Benson & Haith, 2009). According to Neckoway et al.

(2007), children are viewed as gifts from the divine or Creator in many Indigenous cultures.

Parents are not held responsible for disciplining their children; instead, they observe and provide

an inclusive space for their lived experiences. Mainstream culture might interpret these parental

approaches as unresponsive and lacking in care (Neckoway, et al., 2007), which unfortunately

sometimes contributes to children being taken away from their families. Thus, Indigenous foster

children have particular risks of losing the connectedness aspect of their culture, not only

because of intergenerational trauma, but also from lack of access to such culture-based developmental values as growing up with multiple caregivers. The restoration of their communities may help restore their attachment to their families and culture (Yeo, 2003).

In my efforts to become culturally competent, I learned that in the Indigenous culture in which I work the term *connectedness* (illustrated in Figure 6) is preferred to attachment, as it also encompasses attachment to the community and the natural environment (Carriere & Richardson, 2009); that is, the interconnected interrelated web of existence. Carriere (2005) found connectedness and health to be a key factor for First Nation adult adoptees. This link with land, birth family, community,

Figure 6: My reflection, "Connectedness" (case 3, session 7)

and ancestral knowledge encompasses connectedness and results in feeling comfortable within one's self and also within one's surroundings. In her research Carriere noted that loss of spirituality is a significant occurrence among First Nation adult adoptees. Traditionally, Indigenous spirituality is integrally related to the mind, heart, and body and can facilitate healing; spiritual practice can include prayer and rituals.

Carriere (2005) maintained that adoption may bring about disruption of environment that affects the adoptees' health, and even if the adopted home is positive the adoptee may have an underlying sense of loss. Brodzinsky and Schechter (1990) distinguished between attachment and assimilation: Children may emotionally bond to the adoptive family, but also withdraw and question their situation (Brodzinsky, 1993; Carriere & Richardson, 2009).

Kinship is a structure that involves responsibilities and commitment that are critical to the child's development. Indigenous people define kinship as wholeness within an interconnected circle of family and the natural world and thus providing balance in daily life (Carriere & Richardson, 2009; Littlebear, 2000). The kinship system has been eloquently described: "plants, animals, and humans are related, and each is both a producer and a consumer with respect to the other, in an endless cycle" (Youngblood Henderson, 2000, p. 257). According Carriere and Richardson (2009), this circle of kinship that is inclusive of the natural world is sacred and clearly extends beyond the Western idea of the nuclear family. Therefore, returning children from settler foster homes to their Indigenous communities is critically important to children's health and a positive development within the community (Carriere, 1999). Yeo (2003) also noted the strong connectedness between the Indigenous sense of self resulting from kinship bond and community. Support of the link between connectedness and Indigenous cultural identity can help turn "longing into belonging" (Carriere & Richardson, 2009, p. 49). This spiritual transformation helps Indigenous children cope with racism and other social challenges they may face outside their home community.

This critique of the literature in light of difference-centered perspectives and terminology was significant to my study and learning from Indigenous people. Connectedness may be

achieved when art therapy focuses on the children's bond with their caregivers, therapist, nature, art materials, and Indigenous ceremony in cooperation with community cultural helpers. I see attachment theory as contributing some basic knowledge for working with a dyad. However, with cross-cultural clients I have learned to be more self-reflexively aware of any ethical dilemmas that may arise from my own cultural assumptions, keeping in mind that there are different conceptions of attachment and many different approaches to raising children. Thus, I assert that the therapist can reinforce, reinterpret, or broaden the concept of attachment by taking into account a particular view of what attachment means in multiple contexts, including psychologically, interpersonally, neurologically, culturally, and spiritually. As the therapist gains more insight regarding Indigenous culture, their interpretation and understanding of what occurs during the dyad's session may become transformed, more effective and appropriate for the clients' needs regarding the values of relationality, reciprocity and respect (Wilson, 2008).

Conclusion

The literature on attachment-informed art therapy in general and dyadic work with foster children in particular is supported by several researchers on parent-child and attachment theories. There is more research about dyadic work with children without attachment difficulties, and hopefully, my practice-led study will expand the knowledge base about working with children who have experienced trauma and have attachment problems. Complex issues with Indigenous foster children are often strongly related to intergenerational trauma as a result of on-going colonialism and need to be considered to understand the significance of connectedness. Moreover, as a settler therapist it is vital to imbed cultural humility into art therapy practice.

Most importantly, by exploring attachment theory through cultural lenses, I have had to encounter the ethnocentric assumptions that had long influenced my clinical work, finding evidence that attachment theory is not universally applicable to human development. In addition, there was no research that I could locate about dyadic work with Indigenous foster children and their caregivers; the literature also was silent on dyadic work relating to Canadian's colonial past and present history. Therefore, my adaptative journey from dyadic work to a triadic art therapy approach, which focuses on a comprehensive relationship between the caregiver, foster child, therapist, and the environment, aims to build on the work of others by incorporating Indigenous voices and an explicitly cultural lens.

CHAPTER 3. METHODS

The woman wandered in the forest and

witnessed the movement of the trees,

the shape of the rocks, shells, twigs, and sand.

She listened to the wind and animals.

Then she heard the voice of the earth, gloomy and hurt.

Respectfully, learning from the people of the land,

she plants with them seeds of hope.

(— Self-reflection on the study process)

Introduction

My study was practice-led in that it was conducted from field experience and grounded in a critical examination of community, culture, and societal issues that affect clients and current/future practice (Kapitan, 2018). I sought to systematically investigate, observe, and document what occurs in the dyadic art therapy process with Indigenous foster children (4-12) and their foster parents, and its extension to a triadic approach that incorporated the art therapist as a third partner with a focus on cultural connectedness. The research is relevant to settler art therapists in its aim to expand knowledge and understanding of parental involvement in art therapy, dyadic approaches to art therapy, and the roles of attachment/connectedness and culture in parent-child dynamics.

I chose a participatory inquiry design that was informed by local Indigenous cultural values, practices, and worldview. Methods were grounded in an anti-oppressive perspective, arts-based research, and narrative inquiry, accompanied by Dr. Graveline, an Indigenous researcher

mentor. The study also included participation and input from a ceremonial leader, who served as

a spiritual guide for the dyads and provided oversight and a connection to local cultural

traditions. I consulted Indigenous social workers in the community on how best to involve an

Elder in my program, and they referred me to their social worker colleague, who is

an Anishinabe helper in the community with experience working with families.

In this chapter I will describe methodologies, the participants, data collection and analysis

methods, the triadic art therapy procedures, session descriptions, and interview with a

community spiritual guide. In addition I will present my data analysis, which is comprised of

triadic art therapy case samples I selected from 24 art therapy sessions with the foster children

and their caregivers to illustrate the shift in perspective that these art responses and storytelling

produced and the values I learned from the Indigenous community. Lastly, I will present the

ethical considerations for my study design and chapter summary.

Methodology

Anti-Oppressive Practice Research

Anti-oppressive practice (AOP) requires necessary knowledge and political awareness

that regards research participants as self-determined subjects rather than objects to research; that

is, as people (McLaughlin, 2005; Kapitan, 2018). The term *anti-oppressive* refers to *difference-*

centered and critical practices (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). AOP is distinguished by its research

orientation that critically examines all relevant components of a study within the power dynamic

of social structure and status, what is considered the norm, and why (Kapitan, 2018).

Because I am an immigrant and settler art therapist, I initially felt that I could relate to the

minority group of my practice. Moreover, although I came to a new country as an educated adult,

I still encountered bureaucratic and technical obstacles that were emotional challenges for me. In

addition, my contextual history with the Jewish Holocaust, afforded me an understanding of the

meaning and experience of an oppressed and powerless social group. While I was contemplating

how my study's participants might relate to me in a research context, particularly as they

occupied very different social locations in comparison to me, I came across a story by Ansloos

(2018) that described his own experience as a researcher. His words spoke to what I was going to

have to suspend, put out, and receive from the Indigenous community as I moved out of my

comfort zone and into *not knowing*. He suggested that both the researcher and participant need to

"listen with wonder" (p. 7) and continued:

> As I try to listen to the land of muddy waters, at the fork of the Assiniboine and Red
>
> River, I remembered that indigenous people have been living at the intersections of
>
> exclusion and belonging for a long time. The muddy waters remind me that the journey to
>
> justice is rarely a clear path, rather it is one that often feels chaotic, like churning red
>
> currents railing against the soil. (p. 7)

AOP research methodologies center the study on the participants and provide procedures

that allow them to be heard. In particular, AOP critiques the influence of the researcher who is in

a dominant position of power and considers both the process and outcomes of the study with

respect to social justice, the possibility for resisting oppressive acts, structural disadvantages, and

critique of the existing conditions of marginalized groups (Kapitan, 2018). Art therapy practice

and AOP research both value the inquiry process itself as a means of healing and bringing about

change. As I grappled with my research agenda, I found it necessary to change my original

selection criteria from settler foster parents to Indigenous foster parents so as to not perpetuate

colonization. This change interrupted my dominant assumptions and enabled me to interact with

Indigenous people appropriately, to learn ways to involve the community in the therapy process.

According to Kapitan, it is important to critically consider all choices and decisions in research

design in the direction of best serving the interests of the participants. She asserted that the

purpose of AOP research is for the researcher to first follow the epistemological principles of the

practice, and to yield power in support of the participants to create changes in their communities.

Thus, my design involved the participants in a participatory process of sharing their first-hand

experiences, difficulties, and the impacts on their daily life, which offered an opportunity to

voice their concerns on relevant issues (Kapitan, 2018). The logical next step, then, is to help

create a venue for these voices to be heard to create social structural change (F. J. Graveline,

personal communication, March 15, 2019).

AOP research examines power relations between the knowers, the known, outside

researchers, and external institutions and ideologies as integral to the research process (Kapitan,

2018; Rogers, 2012). Rogers (2012) summarized four dimensions of power relations that have

bearing on AOP and my own research journey. Firstly, in "the behavioral view of power" (p.

869), an imbalance of power relations exists between parties, where the more powerful parties

leverage their power over others in terms of decision making. An example of an AOP corrective

action for this first power dimension would be to have a mutually agreed upon decision-making

process in use throughout the entire study. Secondly, there is the "non-decision making view of

power" (p. 869), whereby the researchers and commissioners of research (the decision makers)

predominately determine what will be researched and the public is not able to give input (non-

decision makers). An example of an AOP corrective act for this power dynamic is to involve

Indigenous community members as art therapist mentors to help devise and engage research

topics. Thirdly, the "hegemonic view of power" (p. 869) refers to how researchers display

dominance through a hegemonic system of beliefs and ideologies that lead to oppressed groups

accepting their status as "oppressed" and the researcher's status as "expert," creating a hidden

imbalance of power relations. An example of an AOP corrective act is to position researchers at

the same level as the participants, which in this study was the other two parties in the triadic art

therapy study process. Fourthly, the "post-structuralist view of power" (p. 870) refers to a de-

legitimization of oppression and oppressive groups, which enables oppression to continue, since

the post-structuralist belief is that all concepts are constructed. Examples of an AOP corrective

act would be to explain oppression and the current power relations to other art therapists and

their clients (Rogers, 2012) and to develop reciprocal acts of allyship. In my study, instead of

seeing Indigenous clients in my office in the city as I would normally do, I left my location of

professional power and traveled to a remote reserve to directly connect with the children and

their caregivers in their community setting. In this way I entered the study as an outsider and

had to adjust to the setting; I also facilitated their participation by trying to minimize disruption

to their daily life. According to Rogers (2012), overcoming power relations can be achieved

through collaboration, recognition of oppressive acts, and becoming a social activist.

Arts-Based Research

Eisner, an art education theorist, developed the methodology of art-based research

(ABR), which has application to art therapy (Kapitan, 2018). McNiff (1998, 2011) defined ABR

as an artistic means of systematic investigation in which art functions as the researcher's method

of inquiry. Leavy (2015) described ABR as "a set of methodological tools used by researchers

across the disciplines [of expressive arts therapy] during all phases of social research, including data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation" (2015, p. 24). Artistic methods of research may be particularly appropriate in Indigenous cultures that support expression through the use of symbols, rituals, and performance of cultural knowledge.

Kapitan (2018) noted that much ABR in art therapy actually exists along a continuum of arts-based and arts-informed research. The difference between the two is that arts-informed research does not necessarily involve participants in artmaking (Rolling, 2013), whereas arts-based research engages the creative process of art making by examining "the processes, products, proclivities, and contexts that support this activity" (Sullivan, 2005, p. 84). According to Kapitan (2018), the main purpose of ABR is to utilize "the transformative power of art practice in knowledge construction" (p. 235). Similar to art therapy practice that includes non-verbal communication between client and therapist, in ABR the researchers may use creative processes that holistically involve their own senses and somatic responses to the data, as well as a means for presenting a study's results (Kapitan, 2018; Moon & Hoffman, 2014). Such holistic involvement is a process that is shared with the Indigenous interconnected worldview, and therefore was an important consideration in the design of my study.

ABR researchers often gather and analyze data by using the improvisational thinking and metaphoric language of the artistic process, which is a distinct difference from the numerical language of quantitative research and the logical verbalization of qualitative research (Kapitan, 2018). In my interaction with Indigenous clients and their families these intuitive interpretations of behavior often emerged as positive when creating art, whereas the same behavior might be experienced as challenging in daily life situations, for example in controlling emotions. Thus, I

chose to explore the dyad's artworks and their behavior during the study's sessions as important

sources of data and engaged these data through reflective writing responses that took the form of

narrative story-writing/storytelling and therapist artmaking that aimed to synthesize cognitive,

emotional, and unconscious meanings of the participants' and my relevant experiences.

The Three R's of Indigenous Methodology

Wilson (2008) postulated three R's of Indigenous methodologies, which are respect,

reciprocity, and relationality. "Respect is more than just saying please and thank you"; the values

of respect include appreciation and integrity (Steinhauer, 2002, p. 86). For example, in my study

I learned from my Indigenous mentor how to change my clinical language to write in an anti-

oppressive manner, to focus on equality and humanity. Populations and groups of people are not

just labels, they are human beings. I also learned to respect the community's culture through

active listening and participating in their ceremonies. Specifically, this teaching impacted me

personally throughout my study, as when I presented tobacco as a gift to the elders. I wanted to

make sure I was not disrespecting them; however, this invariably led to feelings of

embarrassment and anxiety as I was not sure what to do, felt vulnerable, and had to sit with self-

doubt about my approach.

Reciprocity is about the relationship of giving and taking. This includes accountability,

responsibility, and respect towards those we work with. Particularly, when researchers are given

the gifts of Indigenous methodology and find useful results from their studies, they are obligated

to reciprocate in meaningful ways that give back to the communities they have worked with.

They must embrace accountability. Moreover, presentation and representation of information

should show respect to the communities and demonstrate care and a sense of responsibility for

everyone involved. For example, although I conducted the research study and recieved

knowledge and experience from the Indigenous communities I worked with, I concurrently gave

back as an ally by teaching and furthering the anti-oppressive approach in art therapy and

research. I understood that reciprocity meant extra effort on my part, even in small acts like

bringing the community a dinner I had prepared. Importantly, throughout this research I always

kept anti-oppresive methodology foremost in mind. I am committed to continue to give back in

dissemination of the study and contribute something of value to the Indigenous participants so

they are also rewarded by this experience.

Relationality extends relationship of individuals with people, land, the

cosmos/spirituality, and ideas, where all the parts stand in relation to one another (Wilson,

2008). For instance, in my study I worked on building a relationship with the therapist, the child,

and the caretaker in a non-hierarchical, equal way. This approach strengthened relationship

between the three parties with an intention and focus on connectedness. Additionally, as the

therapist, my research journey involved the transition from expert to an involved human being

who cared about strengthening relationships. I also incorporated an Anishanabe helper to lead a

prayer, perform a smudging, and to perform ceremonies that supported connection to their

ancestry and their spirituality. To strengthen the community's awareness of their relationship to

their land, I incorporated nature into the sessions and worked in their own environment on the

reserve. This component impacted me profoundly, as throughout my study I thought about my

own family and community as sources of empathy and connection with one another. This

practice also helped me disconnect from my Western biases and become more open to and

responsive toward other approaches and ideas.

Narrative Inquiry and Storytelling/Story-Writing

Stories are the glue that binds us together in communities… stories that further reinforce

our experience and sense of connection with one other. And from this connectedness comes

stories that heal. (Lewis, 2005, p. 107)

Narrative inquiry is defined as the study of experience approached and understood as a

story (Clandinnin & Huber, 2010). Because story functions as a practice of cultural transmission

of values and connectedness, like ABR, narrative inquiry was appropriate for achieving my study

aims. Personal narratives involving cultural and social meanings contribute to the inquiry as they

are collected, told and re-told, contemplated, analyzed, or re-interpreted by participants and

researchers. Narratives may consist of oral and written stories and artworks. One role of the

researcher may be to highlight the important aspects of the participants' narratives and share

them for further meaning (Kapitan, 2018). To extend this idea to my study participants, I adopted

the researcher role of listening with presence to the participants' stories as an anti-oppressive

practice of valuing their authentic and generational tradition. The telling of and listening to

stories, of course, should be conducted in a respectful, responsible and ethical manner (Kapitan,

2018).

Narrative research has a dimension of vulnerability and uncertainty that involves

listening to difficult stories and experiences without fitting them into preconceived

interpretations of their meaning, which in my study was another AOP and Indigenous research

practice I had to learn and practice. The stories people tell are significant to them and an

important means of self-care (Clandinin, Caine, & Lessard, 2018). As a non-Indigenous person

who engaged an AOP lens, I realized that any narrative method could be bi-directional: I could

not recognize other cultural knowledge in my study without first engaging my own story and ways of thinking. I also needed to recognize and embrace the differences between Western and non-Western ontologies. For example, from my Western perspective, I have been conditioned to perceive nature as an observer rather than as one interdependent part of nature, whereas the Indigenous viewpoint is one of interconnectedness (Caxaj, 2015; Kovach, 2009). Another difference in these two views of reality is the construct of time: The Western focus is on the immediate as compared to an Indigenous sense of time that is cyclical and environmentally oriented (Castellano, 2008, as cited in Caxaj, 2015).

Kovach (2009), who self-identified as Nêhiýaw and Saulteaux, noted that Indigenous storytelling has been passed down through generations to preserve knowledge about the people and their belonging in the world. Indigenous oral cultural stories are usually related to the teller and convey personal meaning. Kovach identified a focus on relationships and content that includes the collective's teachings, medicines, and practices. In oral cultures moral lessons are integrated within the narratives, which the listener discovers and explores beyond the immediate while often identifying with the storyteller (Piquemal, 2003). Storytelling supports justice, truth, and Indigenous autonomy (Caxaj, 2015), as the tellers receive validation of their stories and their being in the world. Because a story is considered a method and a means to convey and contain traditional knowledge, the researcher needs to have an understanding of cultural epistemology (Kovach, 2009).

The narrative methodology that I designed into my study focused on the connection to nature in the dyad's art and communication, as well as to the researcher and vice versa. Even though there is a cultural dichotomy between nature and human in my background, I readily

accepted nature as a means for bridging ideas between me and the Indigenous dyads and culture, and I also focused on nature in my self-expression as researcher and art therapist.

Participants

Target Population and Sample

The target population for my study was Indigenous foster children and their Indigenous foster parents in triadic art therapy. I planned to sample four dyads in a short-term triadic art therapy program created for this research. This required conducting the study at the CFS office on a reserve in Manitoba, a 3-hour drive from Winnipeg where I live. The Indigenous social workers of that community referred foster children who fit my selection criteria based on their need for service. The social workers contacted the children's foster parents by phone. Selection criteria were that participating children were Indigenous residents of the reserve between the ages of 4–8 who were being fostered by a non-biological Indigenous parent or guardian. Children were referred based on the social workers' assessment of attachment issues, separation anxiety, trauma, or/and grief. To avoid any disruptive transitions from participation in a short-term program, the children either were currently in individual therapy or starting individual therapy (with a settler therapist and an Indigenous social worker) after my study ended. Participating foster parents in the dyads agreed to join their foster child in triadic art therapy. As with therapy, at any time the participants could choose to withdraw from the study.

As a professional art therapist and registered social worker who is affiliated with CFS, the triadic art therapy program was consistent with my scope of practice and took into consideration the therapeutic concerns and treatment goals of each participant in the same way I would for any regular therapy. However, I chose not to involve any current clients in the study

because asking them to participate in my research after I had already started to work with them could disrupt their therapeutic process and harm their trust in me. Furthermore, as an AOP decision, I wanted to offer the triadic art therapy program as fully reciprocal and therefore I volunteered these services pro bono and without compensation.

Data Collection Methods

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

A month prior to the beginning of triadic art therapy, I met with one of the social workers at the agency from the reserve, to explain my plan and to discuss potential foster children and foster parents who could be part of my program and research. I communicated via phone with four foster mothers, resulting in three families that agreed to participate. A few days prior to the start of the art therapy program I came for a "treatment preparation" as I would in a regular therapy treatment, whereby I met with the social workers to collect demographic information about the children. I used the standard "Under 18 Fact Sheet," completed by the child's social worker regarding the following information: the child's age, grade in school, symptom check sheet, main concerns, and the answers to "What are your main concerns regarding your relationship with the child?" and "What are your thoughts on why this child is in therapy?" The social workers reported their information based on the family's concerns and goals. On the preparation day, I also met the Anishinabe helper to plan with her a spiritual intervention of smudging and prayer. Smudging is the traditional practice of cleansing the "mind, spirit, heart, and body" (Graveline, 1998, p. 63). The practice involves burning of sacred medicines; the smoke enables the body's release of "negativity and be receptive to healing" (Graveline, 1998, p.

63). In addition, "smudging has many effects on the individual and collective psyche" (Cahill &

Halpern, 1992, p. 41).

Later that day I met the foster parents (each of them separately) in order to get to know

them. I listened to their narrative of their relationship with their foster child, asked for their input

and provided them with information about the study. In addition, I invited the social workers,

Anishinabe helper, and the foster parents to complete and sign a consent form (Appendix A).

Consent was explained to parents and children as well as the intention for the sessions to be

regular therapy sessions with the goal of working on therapeutic issues. I informed them that all

information would be kept separate from their regular Protected Health Information. Session

notes and artworks were not to be shared, shown, or used by anyone other than me and my

dissertations advisors (bound by the same limits of confidentiality) for the sole purpose of

validating findings and observations. I spoke briefly with the social workers after the sessions

ended to ascertain the status of the child regarding continued therapy.

The participants consented to attend a triadic art therapy program of eight sessions, 60

minutes each, that took place over the course of two weeks. Additionally, a last session of 90

minutes taking place in the beginning of the third week as a joint session with all of the dyad

participants. The session consisted of a farewell party and informal ceremony that celebrated all

of foster children and their foster mothers.

I informed families that I would be using the art created in the sessions to collect

information, and therefore I kept photographs of the artwork. The study design was reviewed and

approved by the Mount Mary University Institutional Review Board prior to implementation.

Triadic Art Therapy Procedures

Data were collected from three sources: (a) the triadic art therapy sessions, which involved the foster child and caregiver in joint art-making sessions with a focus on cultural connectedness; (b) an interview with an Anishinabe helper who served as a cultural informant and participant in ensuring culturally appropriate processes were followed; and (c) therapist-generated art and story-writing that served to generate more in-depth understanding of the theme of connectedness and relevant intuitive information from the dyads.

The art therapy program and study procedures were designed in two phases. First, in preparation for the first session, the Anishinabe helper, who wore traditional clothing for the ceremony, joined the dyad and therapist in the room and offered a smudging and a prayer with them. This ritual, which communicated the Indigenous community's approval and valuing of the work the dyad was about to begin, also established a connection to the cultural component that was crucial to the triadic approach. Then followed eight triadic art therapy sessions during two weeks with each of the three dyads of foster child and foster parent who had agreed to participate. The frequent number of sessions was necessary in this short period of time, because they took place in a remote community and enabled me to be available and flexible about the timing of the session and communication with the participants; another option would have been to spread the sessions over four weeks.

Art therapy room, materials, and interventions. We worked together in a large room at the CFS Indigenous Child Welfare agency, which had a long table with many chairs around it. There was one wall with several windows that looked upon the outdoors. On the other walls were pictures that had a cultural component and hanging branches of dried sage. I placed basic art materials, such as oil pastels, markers, paper and glue, on the table. I put all the other

materials in bags so as to not distract the children, and to allow them to focus on the suggested

activity. I offered materials and described techniques; the dyads engaged with the activities and

led me relationally into their process, through their play, chosen materials, and dialogue. I kept

most of their artworks in paper boxes for the purpose of privacy, but their 3D artworks were put

on a shelf, as well as ones with wet paint to dry. The participants were invited to take home their

artworks at the end of the program. Although one parent stated that she didn't know how to

create art, they all cooperated well with the artmaking and play.

For this study, the triadic art therapy model included two phases; the first was triadic

work of eight sessions, and the second was group work. In Phase One, I introduced a variety of

art materials and techniques to each dyad, which emphasized simplicity and play. These gave us

options to choose from and also the opportunity to work together or beside one another while

creating individual or dyadic pieces. In addition, each material and technique could be used in

different ways. Activities included hand tracing, kinetic sand play, creating with modeling clay,

painting, and creating with natural materials. Some of the specific activities were a scribble

tag game, sticky paper, mirror drawing, goop, and creating a sculpture of a birds' nest (see

Appendix B). The triad also practiced mindful techniques for relaxation in the beginning and

ending of each session, such as a 'butterfly hug' (Luber, 2013) at the beginning and a breathing

method called 'over-energy correction' (Gallo & Vincenzi, 2008) at the end, which created

session rituals.

In Phase Two, which ended the study program, the proposed therapeutic group activity

was one of decorating branches as a symbol of identity and putting them into a bouquet, which

implied connectedness. Participants were the four dyads and the Anishinabe Elder, who led the closure ceremony consisting of the smudging and a prayer in their original language, Anishinabemwin. The ceremony took place at the CFS agency; it included a meal as my gift to the participants, and traditional "moose smokies" made by the Anishinabe helper, which is usually served after a feast. Afterwards, each dyad received a certificate and each child got a gift. The ceremony was conducted during the last session, which was longer than usual and was about 90 minutes.

Anishinabe helper interview. Prior to the ceremony described above, I met with the Anishinabe helper to present my model and discuss the procedure for the ceremonies. After a few days of working with the dyads, I conducted an hour-long interview with the Anishinabe helper for the purpose of requesting her presence as a community leader, her teaching me the community's worldview, and her consent to be an active part of my program. I asked open-ended interview questions that were informed by my experience thus far of conducting art therapy with the three dyads with respect toward their culture and traditions on the reserve. In addition, I asked the following three questions:

1. What type of ceremony could meet the needs of these dyads and why?

2. What is the meaning of the ceremony for these children and their caregivers?

3. How do you consider "attachment" from the perspective of an Indigenous elder?

The Anishinabe helper (who requested that their name and interview data would be kept anonymous and confidential) agreed to lead the ceremony for each dyad, which included smudging and a prayer. She taught me that the smudging was not only cleansing for individuals

physically through breathing in the smoke, but it also cleansed their minds and spirits. She said

that most of the children usually like the smudging and they will copy the adults' behavior when

given the opportunity. The connection through the smudging for children, who are considered

innocent, creates an opportunity for a strong connection between the material and spiritual

worlds. She also explained that when reconnecting to spirituality, the prayer and the words are

used to help bring forward the healing the children and their family need. She taught me that the

prayer is a pleading for help from the higher power, saying "I myself, I'm emotionally attached

to the prayer that I did." In addition, the Anishinabe helper said that she perceives attachment

from the Indigenous traditional way of life in that it is focused on the well-being of the child. She

also instructed me to see the spiritual awakening in her community as an "emotional attachment

to who you are, and to try to find that."

Data Analysis

Therapist-Created Art and Story

My data analysis method, which I refined through exposure to the Indigenous worldview

and research mentoring, was consistent with the ABR principle of improvisational reflexivity

that utilizes art as "a reflexive system for thinking and responding." The researcher allows

"intuitive responsiveness and transient ways of knowing to come into consciousness and be

performed through embodied action" (Kapitan, 2018, p. 215). Accordingly, ABR data analysis

may be carried out holistically by responding in art and storytelling ways that reveal and amplify

meaning.

My focus began with the eight sessions of triadic art therapy with three individual dyads

of foster children (ages 4–8) and their caregivers, and the final group session of the three dyads. I

organized notes from each dyad into a case narrative that included the artwork produced by the

child and caregiver in the session and its description and reflection. For data analysis, I reflected

on each session by creating an art response and a narrative in the form of a story. After the eight

sessions were completed, I then read the case narratives, studied my art and story responses, and

conducted another reflection to synthesize the results from the art-based and narrative inquiry.

My art responses were created as oil pastel pictures drawn on white paper (9"x12"). I

chose oil pastel because it allows the artist to have control but also can be smeared and made

more fluid. For each art response, I focused my attention on the topics of attachment and

connectedness as I had experienced them in the session through the participants' behaviors and

artworks. "The creative process is an ecology that depends upon the full spectrum of our

resources" (McNiff, 1998, p. 81); therefore, as a guiding focus that helped me prepare for my

response to each session, I asked myself the following questions:

- What do I see in the child's art?

- What do I see in the caregiver's art, what themes arise in their artwork?

- How does the child connect to their caregiver?

- How does the child connect to other family members?

- How does the child connect to their community?

- How does the child connect to nature?

- What is the meaning of the dyad's verbal and non-verbal communication?

- How did I feel in the session as a facilitator and triadic participant?

Next, I wrote and drew my free associations about that session, embracing the idea that

"anything truly novel and significant comes through unwatched, unintended" (McNiff, 1998, p.

33). Aware that I had received gifts of teaching and presence from the Indigenous community, I searched within for reciprocal images that most respectfully and accurately conveyed my feelings and thoughts. I also thought how I felt presently as I reflected back on the experience, based on the notion that "everything that we perceive and feel potentially contributes to the creative process" (McNiff, 1998, p. 91). I chose to draw a naturalistic figure in the picture and then continued filling the background with lines and shapes in an abstract, intuitive, and spontaneously manner. Throughout this process of art making, I felt fully present in the moment and engaged in a meditative state, carefully allowing the imagery to surface as a communication and indication of the tacit information contained in the triadic art therapy alliance. My initial intention was that the figure in the pictures would represent the dyad and the Indigenous culture, and the background signify me as a participant, therapist, observer, researcher, and artist. However, as I learned and took in the teachings being offered, it became evident that the figure and background represented all of us in relationship, which was congruent with an Indigenous perspective.

As a systematic research method, these art responses allowed a process of focussing on the data I had collected and encountering and critiquing the insights that surfaced and produced understanding (Sullivan, 2005). My writing of reflective stories followed from the art responses and served to activate reflexivity to "work against existing or taken-for-granted theories in order to see the data in new ways" (Kapitan, 2018, p. 223). The stories functioned to synthesize the session notes, clients' artworks, and my artistic responses. The stories also integrated themes that I had experienced in my previous work with Indigenous children and their caregivers. Story writing was appropriate to my research question because of its close connection to the oral

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cultural traditions that were part of the Indigenous context I was working within. More than a research method, these stories were a vivid means of connection that brought me into relationship. Cajete (1999) elaborated that:

> Stories keep listeners aware of the interrelatedness of all things, the nature of plants and animals, the earth, history, and people's responsibilities to each other and the world around them. Storytelling, like myth, always presented a holistic perspective, for the ultimate purpose is to show the connection between things. (p. 131)

Although I positioned myself as a narrator who is outside of the picture, I also found myself including in these stories ideas from my life that became woven with the clients' life experiences. As appears in Indigenous culture, "in oral tradition, stories can never be decontextualized from the teller. They are active agents within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon" (Kovach, 2009, p. 1669). Creating the pictures, I drew upon associations and understandings from within the dyad's situation and or relationship. Writing the stories, I connected to nature through rich descriptions of the landscape, animals, and plants. My role as a therapist was also being storied, both in their focus on healing and individuals' resilience and my learning of Indigenous ways, which modeled for me how to share learnings in a creative, dynamic, and interconnected process. This process was one of connecting ideas, exploring, understanding, and explicating in one continous cycle.

Ethical Considerations

According to Plummer (2001) "to live an ethical life is a process of decision making in situation, drawing from culture and history, and not a pattern of just 'following rules'" (p. 227).

Due to Indigenous history of genocide, violent colonization, removal of children from their homes, generational trauma, and deeply problematic research that has been conducted on Indigenous populations without their full participation and consent, there were several ethical considerations that I needed to undertake in the design of my study. Chief among them was my attempt to consistently adopt an anti-oppressive orientation and values that demanded active self-reflexivity (Kapitan 2015) and cultural humility centered on an Indigenous worldview (Tamburro, 2013). Moreover, cultural restoration involves disclosure, understanding, and recognition of the Indigenous history in a cultural and political context (Kapitan, 2018). Therefore, over many months and long before I conducted the study, I engaged in every available opportunity to learn and understand the local culture and to personally experience talking circles, ceremonies, and direct engagement with Indigenous peoples and communities outside of my usual practices. Throughout the study, I continued to consult with an Indigenous art therapist mentor and Elders to critically examine any and all ethical issues relevant to my study.

I am aware that as a settler researcher and a member of the currently dominant culture, and with an identity as a doctoral student, I was and continue to be in a position of power. Therefore, it was imperative that the participants had the right to have control over the information they voluntarily provided, including access to clinical notes. Additionally, they could withdraw any information from the actual inquiry findings (Ball & Janyst, 2008). As part of the AOP research, the researcher has a political mindset toward values of equity, independence, and justice. The validity of the research rested upon morality and fairness throughout the whole study (Kapitan, 2018).

Through my choice to use narrative research in the study, I was obligated to find new examples rather than repeat examples from the past; for instance, creating my stories instead of analysing the sessions conveys deeper ideas and allows the readers "to return home feeling that they 'know' the pain of oppressed people" (Murad, 2010, p. 167). This principle relates to a hegemony found in much academic research that "persists in objectifying indigenous people as passive subjects of research rather than as people with inherent power and collective rights in deciding how research should be developed, carried out, analyzed and reported" (Moodie, 2010, p. 818). As some examples in which I feel I was successful, I involved a community helper in my study, I followed the three R's of the Indigenous values (e.g., respect, reciprocity and reltionality), and I avoided using the word 'the' when presenting people. I also needed to be alert to the narratives in my study and the subjectivity of the teller, as "both researchers and participants may be tempted to construct stories that misrepresent experience, smooth facts into more acceptable story line, or promote their own agenda" (Kapitan, 2018, p. 205). Therefore, although I did not involve the dyads in all the decisions regarding the research, I consulted two Indigenous art therapists during each part of my study and accepted mentoring to ensure I was taking an ethical stance. This was a process of learning from their personal stories while being referred to new readings, and encouraging me to move into challenging experiences that prepared me and helped me understand the full context of what I was attempting to do.

I verified that the participants understood the informed consent they agreed to. I also did not publish the whole interview, as requested by the Anishinabe helper. In addition, my stories reflected my personal arts-based research process and were not taken from any Indigenous

narratives. With this decision, I did not put myself in a position of narrating the experiences of

Indigenous participants.

With regards to ABR and ethics, I pondered the query brought up by McNiff (1998), who

asked, "how would you like to have another person authoritatively describe what 'you mean?'"

(p. 184). I usually encouraged the participants to talk about or "narrate" their own artworks,

while I reflected back or echoed their responses to make their voices central in meaning making.

Another approach that can be used is to personify the artistic image by extending to it respect as

a living being and giving it a voice, which increases empathy towards the art (McNiff, 1981,

1998). Similarly, Moon (2015), suggested actively dialogueing with the art image, as "an entity

to be talked with and listened to rather than talked about" (p. 80). These processes of engagement

helped me journey into meaning making, responding to a participant's cat made out of clay, for

example, as though it were a real animal to be played and interacted with.

As a further ethical concern, Barone and Eisner (2012) offered that arts-based researchers

can attempt, "in an artful manner, [to] directly or indirectly address unequal power relationships

prevailing within a culture" (p. 122). The art-based researcher is expected to be sensitive to

ethical and political issues that may arise in all creative and artistic processes of the inquiry. For

example, in my study, I problematized the status quo of taking children out of their home

through my engagement with social workers and the foster families. The creative process in my

study brought this issue forward and continues to compel me to share it with the public. The

artist and researcher must understand that making art is a process of discovery and therefore be

willing to be transformed in such a process (Barone & Thomas, 2012). As I journeyed through

this research process, my transforming awareness and growing cultural humility was marked in

the artworks I created: Where in my earlier images the backgrounds look like puzzle pieces, in the later art work, they are more flowing. I see now that at first the research was all about trying to piece together very different ideas. Later, everything moved toward integrative understanding.

Summary

The three methodologies designed into my research –AOP, ABR, and narrative research– were important to this study journey and a necessary part of the longer-term, societal process of reconciliation with Indigenous people. ABR can partner with Indigenous people to build knowledge and connect to their culture by using metaphoric language and diverse forms of artmaking. Artistic works encourage improvisation, provide oppprtunity to create meaning, and strengthen one's identity; but they also can be an expression of decolonialization, aid the reflective process, and offer a powerful tool to promote social change (Capous-Desyllas & Morgaine, 2017). Personal narratives are embedded in culture, values, and social life; therefore, the researcher must prepare and become familiar with and respectful toward that knowledge, making sure that any act and expression does not perpetuate oppression. Finally, as an act of reconciliation, it is important for cross-cultural researchers to take the time to create reciprocal relationships that reach beyond their comfort zone and assumptions about people and their community. As I will share in the following chapters, researchers must re-define their own mindsets and share equitably with participants, which hopefully will lead to greater equality in their relationship.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Introduction

In this chapter I share the results of my study of the triadic art therapy approach with three dyads of First Nation foster children and their caregivers at a First Nation reserve in Manitoba, Canada. The sessions explicitly incorporated Indigenous culture into the therapeutic alliance; hence, each dyad's initial session started with a prayer and smudging that was led by an Anishinabe helper from their community. Each dyad experienced 7–8 art therapy sessions and culminated with a group art therapy session that brought together all three of the dyads. The group session ended with a prayer and smudging. My research question were: How does a settler art therapist approach attachment when working with Indigenous peoples? Similarly, how does a triadic approach to art therapy that connects a dyad to the surrounding culture impact or change the Western construct of attachment?

To address these questions, I responded to information from each session with analysis that was performed through art and story-writing, which surfaced tacit and intuitive information about the triadic therapeutic alliance of parent-child-culture and generated a felt sense of connectedness in me as their art therapist. Art-based research and narrative inquiry, thus, provided a lens from which to reframe the construct of attachment to align with the Indigenous context and worldview.

In this chapter, I will present artworks, analytic impressions, and stories from selected triadic art therapy case examples with the foster children and their caregivers to illustrate the shift in perspective that these art responses and storytelling produced and the values I learned from the Indigenous community. Attachment is re-constructed in the study within the themes of

holism, culture, nature, spirituality, family, community, and colonialism's past and present reality. Each of these themes are discussed in turn to conclude the chapter.

Triadic Art Therapy Case Examples

As with each of the following examples, I will first describe their art experience, then present my reflection on their artwork, followed by my own art response, the story I wrote from it, and the insights that surfaced as themes from an Indigenous perspective on attachment that constructs it as connectedness. I created my art response first, which visualized the dyad's artworks and behavior. My stories came afterwards, at the point where I needed to self-reflexively expand my perspective while synthesizing relational information from the triadic art therapy program. The stories connected me to stories told by the participants, my previous work with First Nations clients, and the Indigenous history and cultural teachings I was learning.

Myeengun and his Foster Mother, From the First Session

The caregiver and foster child's artwork. Myeengun (a pseudonym) was a 7-year-old boy who experienced triadic art therapy with his foster mother. In the first session, they traced each other's hands and drew a picture together (Figure 7). Then they drew a few objects on the shapes of their hands. Myeengun's foster mother drew images of a house, grass, sun, and a cloud inside the outline of her hand. In her second tracing of her hand she drew a little girl. Inside the outline of his child's hands, Myeengun depicted himself standing on the grass between two trees, with a sun and a cloud above him. In outline of his other hand he drew himself playing on the computer in his house, which he placed on a grass baseline with the sun above.

Taken together, I could see that the child had copied or repeated the images of house and sun from his foster mother in his own pictures, as if to mirror or express a relationship. As all three of us considered their artwork, I suggested that they

Figure 7: Myeengun and his foster mother's art (case 1, session 1)

might draw a symbol or metaphor for the connection they saw between the images in the shapes of their hands. Myeengun replied that they should draw another hand for this. In this third outline of a hand he drew his three brothers standing beside each other; they have a bubble above their heads as if they are talking. In her third hand Myeengun's foster mother drew a lake, three birds flying, two trees, four music notes, and a sun.

Reflection on the caregiver and child's activity. For each art response of the dyad, I focused my attention on the presence or absence of attachment, and the qualities that I had experienced in the session and in the artworks they produced. For Myeengun and his foster mother, I saw elements of nature in their pictures, which connected them to the outdoor environment. The three brothers who talk to each other imply attachment in the family. Drawing The many elements drawn inside the small frame of the hand create more possibilities for

attachment and connectedness. Perhaps the little girl who is standing alone or is lonely inside the

frame of the hand in the foster mother's picture is asking for connection to her daughter or

connects to the mother's experience of when she was little, whether attachment to unconscious

early memories or possibly trauma. I saw the image of the house as an attachment to safety and

basic needs. I considered that copying the foster mother's picture might be an expression of the

child's intuition or felt sense of his need to connect. Perhaps copying is how he learns from an

adult in his life, which is a time honored traditional Indigenous learning style, to learn to do by

copying a mentor or Elder (F. J. Graveline, personal communication March 15, 2019).

Therapist art response. When I study my artistic response to the dyad (Figure 8), I see

that I have drawn the hands of the child placed on the hands of the caregiver. There is an image

of a house in one of the caregiver's hands. One of the child's hands holds an image of two trees

standing on the grass; his other hand holds an image of a sun.

Reflection to my art response. In creating these art images in response to the dyad I focused on physical feelings of attachment and the interaction I had witnessed between

Figure 8: My reflection, "Nature-home" (case 1, session 1)

the dyad through their hands. The foster mother's hands hold the child's hand in a reciprocal

relation of giving and receiving, which alludes to an Indigenous value of maintaining equilibrium

within the world (Kovach, 2009). The symbols I added express connectedness to nature: for

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The story of "The three brothers' survival". Gazing intently on Figure 7 (detail),

Figure 8: My reflection, "Nature-home"
(case 1, session 1)

Figure 7: Roy and his foster mother's art
(case 1, session 1)

which Myeengun named "The Three Brothers," I wrote the following narrative:

There were three middle-aged brothers, all tall, dark men with rough skin and sturdy

postures. Although their frames suggested that

they were intimidating characters, their

welcoming smiles and kind eyes revealed the

softer qualities of their inner child. The three all

lived together on the prairies, which spanned

acres of grasslands, quiet and desolate with

grass that was turning yellow and dry from a

harsh summer that brought little rain. They

resided in small houses built from dark wood
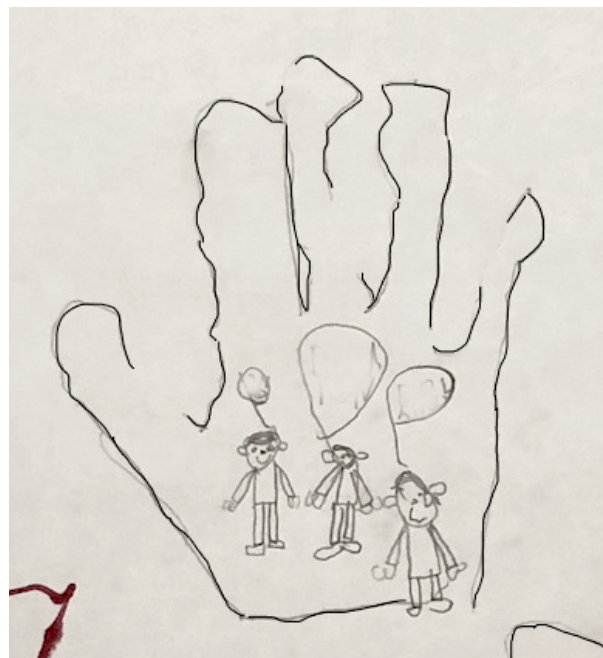
Figure 9: "The three brothers" (case 1, session 1)

and placed along the prairie ground, as if dancing together atop the horizon. Together, they

formed a quaint little community.

Minjarra was the eldest and known as the "philosophical one" of the three. Bright and

very introspective, the eldest sat on his wooden stool with his curious brows raised, always

thinking and sharing his opinions about life with his other brothers. The other two brothers were

Monaro and Yarran. Monaro, who was the middle brother, was the kindest and most physically

gifted of all the brothers, as he was very athletic. He would always help out around the

community with physical tasks, such as chopping wood or carrying supplies. Monaro was also

very much in touch with his surroundings and knew the way around all of the outdoor trails like

the back of his hand. The youngest of the brothers, Yarran, was great with words. A natural-born

leader, he carried himself with confidence, and was the most social of all the brothers.

One summer morning, Minjarra felt the wind getting stronger, warning the town folk and

his brothers to be careful. The sky suddenly darkened and a whirling spiral appeared in the

distance, indicating that danger was near, though nothing came to pass that day. Then, a week

later, a black tornado twisted ferociously in the eerie, greenish-grey sky, leaving the village in a

panic with almost no time to escape. Tornado wove a deadly path like a seething rage of old

storm, uprooting houses and flinging bodies in the air, only to plunge to their death. Pain and loss

filled the community, leaving people broken and in despair.

The three brothers survived but they grieved their lost loved ones for many, many years.

One evening, the eldest brother spoke to the community, recounting the rich history of its people

and sharing his own life story from his time on this land. The Elder now had wrinkles on his

forehead and around his eyes and wore his grey hair long and braided. He talked to them with his

thick, deep voice. The sky had cleared and the storm died down. And the elder began to share his wisdom.

Therapist insights from the story. The story started with the three boys and ended with the community people and an Elder that came together in connectedness. There is attachment between brothers who live together and experience shared situations. Being together, they feel safe, knowing they all care for each other and are not alone. The contrast between the seemingly threatening physical appearance of the three brothers and their gentle natures in my story alludes to a stereotype about members of the First Nations community held by many settlers. In this story the brothers listened to and eventually became Elders sharing their wisdom, reflecting attachment to spiritual experience and cultural roots. As Linklater (2014) stated, "learning about spiritual experiences can expand our connections within Creation. In some situations, it can challenge our assumptions and transform our knowledge constructs" (p. 48). Here the Elder shares his wisdom so that each person can perceive it in relation to their own lives.

Spirituality seems to me to be expressed in this story as metaphorical language that stands beyond the daily circumstances. The topic of grief appears as, upon reflection, I connected emotionally to the personal narratives I heard from the foster parents, including that of a close relative of one of the foster parents who died early in the program. There is bereavement, but it is not solely on the personal level. Expanding my perceptions, , I could not know the grief of Indigenous people without trying to understand the past and present Canadian colonialism that has occurred (Spiwak, et al., 2012). To explore cross-culturally the perspective of a collective experience (Walker, 2008) is different from the Western approach of looking at grief as an

individual experience (Spiwak, et al., 2012). Lastly, connectedness to emotions is another quality

from triadic art therapy, as the story elevates emotions for those who hear or read it.

Namid, From the First Session

The caregiver and children's artwork. Namid (pseudonym) was a 4-year-old girl who

participated in triadic art therapy with her foster mother and, during the first session, the

mother's 2-year-old biological granddaughter. The mother traced her own hands and then

Namid's hand. I traced the hands of the granddaughter, while Namid traced one of her own

hands. Thus, seven hands were drawn together on a single paper (Figure 10). The two hands of

the granddaughter are

green, Namid's two hands

are brown and her foster

mother's two hads are

yellow. There is one

additional hand, Namid's,

that is drawn with no

color inside.

Then Namid drew

a cat (Figure 10) with the

help of her foster mother,

Figure 10: Namid and her foster mother's art (case 2, session 1)

and this image became the focus for the rest of the session. She drew red earrings and a necklace

on the cat and asked the adults to help her draw thick fur and big eyes. The cat is depicted laying

down. Because I saw that Namid's hands drawn on the paper did not touch the cat, I suggested

that both Namid and her foster mother draw something between the hands to show how they were connecting to each other. Namid decided to draw a closed shape with green marker. Her foster mother began but did not completely fill in her traced hand with yellow while she talked to Namid about the cat and drew a few images in pencil on the left side of the picture. There are three people depicted, one with a jacket, an animal, and possibly a dog, and a wavy line that looks like a snake or a road (to keep her 2-year-old granddaughter busy, Namid's foster mother had traced some toys).

Reflection on the caregiver and children's activity. Studying the art piece, I see that the girl and the green cat are connected. As an attachment, this connection is physical and tactile, and also mental in that the cat seemed present in her thoughts that day. The appearance of seven hands and a cat implies connectedness to family. A mental attachment is further suggested in the symbol of a closed shape, as well as in the quality of their verbal communication. The people drawn by the foster mother may express her attachment to family and community. Finally, the four of us worked together on the picture, which implies connectedness.

Therapist art response. In the art image I created in response (Figure 11) I, too, drew a cat in the center of the picture with red earrings and a necklace. Two hands of a child and two hands of the caregiver reach toward and surround the cat, but they do not touch it. The four hands are holding the cat uon a green rectangular shape. The two hands of the other child are absent. In the colorful background there are white shapes that repeat the shape of the cat's eyes.

Reflection on the art response. Compared to the picture created by the dyad in the session, I see that I have moved the cat from the margins to the center of the picture. I also added the hands as a symbol of the activity I had chosen that day for the dyad's focus, which represents

my settler's way of thinking and not the child's preference. Had I simply followed the child's needs and direction, I believe that I would have drawn only the cat as the center of the picture. Instead, I gave the cat a boundary to surround it

Figure 11: My reflection, "The green cat" (case 2, session 1)

and hands that aimed to protect or touch or pet her, as if to express my desire for the dyad's attachment as a secure base. The white circle eyes that are repeated in the background shapes, however, may be a metaphor for the eyes of people as a community that surrounded us.

The story of "The old woman's cat." Namid's attention to the cat (Figure 12; a detail) inspired me to write the following story:

An old woman was walking in a lush green forest. Rummaging through thickets of thorny bushes and bundles of prickly branches she discovered a lost path. She marked this path as sacred, naming it Path to the Bright Sun. The old woman continued on this Path, which took her to a broad tree that would provide enough shade for her to rest under. There, passersby would gather and listen to stories she told about her journeys and the teachings she had learned along the way. Locals walked along the once-lost trail on their way to the Storytelling Circle Tree,

where they discovered the

pleasure of inhaling

nature's finest fragrances.

Pure fresh scents of pine

trees and the earthy,

wholesome soil refreshed

them while they listened

to the old woman's tales

Figure 12: "The cat with the neckless" (case 2, session 1)

of wisdom.

The old woman would meet the people under the tree every afternoon. But one day as she

sat solemnly under the tree's cool shade, a grey cat stumbled by and climbed slowly onto her lap,

as if seeking attention. The old woman welcomed the cat with open arms and petted her soft fur

gently. Startled, the little cat trembled and tightened at her touch, and opened big, frightened

eyes. But the longer the cat stayed in the old woman's arms, the more comfortable and loved she

felt. So the cat began coming every afternoon to visit the old woman, and enjoyed her company.

One day she made the cat a loving gift of a smooth, heart-shaped necklace carved from red stone.

The cat played with her necklace and followed the woman home.

Therapist insights from the story. My story reflects an emotional bond between the cat

and the old woman; the necklace she received may be a physical and spiritual symbol of that

attachment and love. The story centers on the Indigenous tradition of storytelling that both

reveals and revives their path that others have attempted to damage through colonialism

(Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). There are many symbols of spiritual attachment in

this story, including the path, sun, the Elder teaching, storytelling, circle, and nature. As

connected to spirituality, what is illustrated is the positive process of initiating new ways.

Gathering people to listen to an Elder teaching connects them to community. In addition, there is

a connection to nature through the senses, including smell (e.g., "inhaling nature's finest

fragrances"), listening to the "wise tales," seeing natural surroundings, and following the "Path

to the Bright Sun."

Daanis, From Session 1

  The caregiver and the child's artwork. Daanis (pseudonym) was an 8-year-old girl

who engaged in triadic art therapy with her foster mother. They began the session by tracing

their own and each other's

hands. In their picture

(Figure 13), there are two

sets of hands. The child

drew a heart on each of her

hand images; for the right

hand she drew a ring and a

bracelet. Daanis's foster

mother wrote on her hands'

images "Daanis' family"

(that writing is erased to

Figure 13: Daanis and her foster mother's art (case 3, session 1)

preserve anonymity) and "grandkids." She also drew a campground in the background, as the

family was camping that week. The picture depicts a large plot of grass and three flowers that are

red, purple, and blue, each with one petal. An image of a sun is placed directly above the smaller

flower and there is an image of a camper vehicle that appears to be moving from the left to the

right side, as indicated by an arrow. The mother then drew the red line between their hands to

connect them, saying that she was always connected to Daanis. They both decided to title the

picture, "Family Camping."

Reflection on the caregiver and child's activity. The dyad's artwork has two focuses:

one is the family camping and the other is the connection between the hands. I see elements from

nature in the dyad's picture that illustrate attachment to nature and spirituality. The foster

mother declared that she was connected to Daanis, while the beads in the bracelet are a cultural

reference that presents the connection of many individual elements threaded together. Isee that

the beaded bracelet is attached to the hand, as well as to the ring, to denote a physical

attachment. Although Daanis's image of the heart may relate to surgery she had when she was

little (and the same heart symbol appeared later in all her artworks), the heart is also a common

symbol for love. Because her foster parents supported her during the time o fher surgery, her use

of the symbol here may refer to their strong emotional connection.

Therapist art response. In my response to the session, drew a thread that the winds

around and connects one hand to the other hand (Figure 14). The hands don't touch each other;

instead the thread serves to connect them. I recalled the dyad's theme of the camping place and

the sun and placed them in the background behind the two hands. These elements are small as

compared to the hands, which suggests that they are both far away from the hand and perhaps

cradled by them. The child's hand in my art response has an image of a heart in the middle of her

palm and a ring on her middle finger.

Figure 13: Daanis and her foster mother's art (case 3, session 1)

Reflection on the art response. When I notice the hands' position, I become aware of giving

and receiving, which expresses attachment in the value of reciprocity, an essential principle in

Indigenous

community (Kovach,

2009). In the

background of this

foster child and

caregiver dyad is the

theme of camping

that connects them.

As a place in nature

where Daanis and

Figure 14: My reflection, "The connection hands" (case 3, session 1)

her foster mother

were staying with their extended family, another level of connectedness is expressed.

Figure 15: "The girl's bracelet"

The foreground (hands) and background (camping) are connected in my art response, as
(case 3, session 1)

Figure 15: "The girl's bracelet"

if the hands are gently resting upon or supported by a natural relationship. However, my original
(case 3, session 1)

intention was to make the hands central. This holistic yet inclusive focal point captures my

experience of the dyad that reflects their Indigenous worldview. The red thread that connects the

two hands is reminiscent of a playful string game between the two hands; the heart on the girl's

hand expresses the emotion in which she holds and and is held. Beyond the personal, the art

work also alludes to an Indigenous perspective of the color red, which has been used in

Figure 14:

Indigenous art to express blood, whether in refe

settlers (Solway-Windspeaker, 2010) or the blo

The story of "From Heart to Heart". The physical attachment of the bracelet to the

girl's hand (Figure 15, detail) caught my attention in

creating the following story.

One winter day, a woman passed away. The

snow was lightly falling, while the cold land slept

below it. The woman had been a mother of six

children. One after another, as each child reached the

age of three, they were taken away from her. The

mother never knew why this had to be and as time

passed, she felt the winter winds gnawing at her heart.

Whenever the wind settled, she was left with a painful

silence that left her feeling empty inside. Now she had

Figure 15: "The girl's bracelet"
(case 3, session 1)

finally passed away, her death leaving behind a gaping hole of pain and suffering upon the

tundra floor while her spirit began to wander, trying to find a place to rest. The spirit of the

mother writhed in the cold snowy sky, always seeking home, until it came upon a warm trail of

smoke from a nearby campfire. The spirit curled around the smoky warmth, breathed it in, and

came back to life in the body of a baby girl named Sol.

Winter turned to spring, and Sol's family marked the blessing of her arrival into the

world with a special ceremony to greet her. How she sparkled and glowed in her newborn

clothing! Noticing this, they called her the newborn miracle. As she grew older, Sol's dark, wavy

hair grew ever longer. Her eyes were bright and deep, but she was a quiet child, and the silence

that hung about her was lonely. Every year, Sol traveled with her family to the many cultural

ceremonies of her people. There she would receive bracelets made of round, wooden beads, all

connected by one string. Later, Sol would play with the bracelet, feeling the smooth wood

touching and caressing her skin. The girl who was not so little anymore felt carried by a strong

connection: she knew the bracelet was a part of her, of who she was, and this knowledge filled

her soul with something newly born within her. This energy pushed her to grow stronger, to

become a better person, to love and to heal. Sol the woman wore the bracelet to always guide and

teach her the importance of her community's traditions. Sol spread this message to her people

and shared the wisdom of the sacred bracelet that touched her soul.

Therapist insights from the story. The story, written from reflection on the dyad's and

therapist artworks, synthesized meaningful data to reveal the presence of a spiritual attachment to

ancestors; this method of meaning making is the teaching that I received through that process. As

a woman passes away, her spirit "came back to life in the body of a little baby girl." A physical

connection appears in the bracelet that is attached the hand and its "wooden beads all connected

by one string." The bracelet functions in the story as a symbol of a spiritual drive, which has

cultural value; the collection of many beads on one string symbolizes a community of people

who function cooperatively. According to Phinney and Chavira (1992), within an individual's

identity a collective identity can be a source of strength. The strengths of Sol's personal identity

evolved over time through her engagement with her community.

Namid, From Session 2

The caregiver and the child's artwork. Four-year-old Namid and her foster mother

created a sculpture of a nest in their second session of triadic art therapy (Figure 16). Two toy

birds are placed on fabric scraps that function as a blanket and pillow, and rest in turn on a pile

of needle leaves supported by a piece of wood. To reinforce and hold the nest together, I suggested that they use some white glue for the nest. However, Namid's foster mother

Figure 16: Namid and her foster mother's art (case 2, session 2)

declined the idea and their nest broke apart a few times while creating it. Later I wondered if

perhaps I should have suggested clay or some other natural element instead to join together these

earth-based materials. Inside their nest sculpture, the little bird figure is placed as if it is playing

with the other bird. Namid decided to bring toys for the two birds and so she added the toy bears

to the nest. Her foster mother thought that the bears could be a danger to the birds, so she added a

turtle (it does not apt the birds with the turtle

spirit.

**Reflection tant element in the triadic

therapy session wasdyad to create an

Running head: Th [text obscured by image]

attachment to natu [text obscured by image]

leaves to the nest, [text obscured by image]

Attachment appea [text obscured by image]

mother protector [text obscured by image] as

attracted to the sy [text obscured by image]

protective spiritua [text obscured by image] he

bears are smaller than the birds.

Figure 16: Namid and her foster mother's art (case 2, session 2)

Therapist art response. In my art response to the session and the dyad's nest image

(Figure 17), I created a

picture that shows two

birds standing on the

same branch, which

forms part of a turtle's

shell. The birds are

both supported by and

held within the

encompassing image of

the turtle. The birds

face each other and are

Figure 17: My reflection, "Togetherness" (case 2, session 2)

shown looking into each other's eyes. The turtle is depicted as walking, and his head is up.

Reflection on the art response. Because of its central place and appearance of holding

the elements within it, I view the turtle as representing a therapy setting that holds and facilitates

the interactions between the child, caregiver, and therapist. It may also express the holding

environment of Indigenous values guiding the session. The branch serves as a connector element

for the dyad to stand upon. There is an expression of attachment in the birds through their eye

contact as well as body language. However, this interpretation may reflect my lens as a settler art

therapist and more of a Western cultural value than that of an Indigenous worldview. Whereas I

might see the mother–child gaze as evidence of connection, an Indigenous person might see a

direct eye to eye gaze as a challenge, given the differences in power and authority between the

two individuals. In addition "the eyes are the 'window to the soul' and eye contact is considered

disrespectful" (Caron, 2006, p. 19). Additionally, my intuition in this case led me to focus the

foster mother's choice of imagery, the turtle, rather than the child's choice, the bear, as my

intention was to explore the cultural perspective from the foster mother's point of view.

The story of "The Turtle Way." On a cold summer morning, the Shore family was back

at their summer cabin beside a beautiful, blue lake. The cabin was surrounded by big, wide oak

trees and small, dark bushes with pink berries. There was a soft breeze in the air that the parents

John and Vera were enjoying. They were relaxed, sitting on the porch and watching their six kids

play on the bright blue waters of the lake. Suddenly a strong gust of wind came up, bringing

chills to their skin, shuffling leaves, and breaking branches. They heard a loud series of thuds

from behind the trees. What could it be? A dark figure appeared from behind the bushes, rustling

through the leaves. The wild beast had the rough brown fur, sharp claws and teeth of a bear. It

quickly jumped into the water to hunt his breakfast for the day. Bear's beady eyes scanned the

lake floor for its prey. There was a single fish, alone in the waters. With its sharp claws, almost

at once Bear thrashed in the water to capture what was rightfully his. Blood spurting from all

directions, Bear's teeth tore into Fish's flesh, dripping down its mouth. The Shore family gazed

at this display with horror. They ran to the cabin for shelter, locking the doors. But two of the

children ran the wrong way and got lost in the deep forest.

The children did not return. The family grieved their lost children for years. With

saddened eyes and worry in their heart, they would pray to the Great Creator to bring back their

children. Time passed and many summers came and went. The Shore family were back at the

lake again. As they settled into their cabin home, they heard a little loggerhead shrike bird

tweeting, filling their hearts with its joyful voice. The family listened with their hearts, finally

comforted and familiar with all that surrounded them, despite many years of feeling out of place

in the cabin home that reminded them always of the loss of their children. Little Bird was calling

to them and as it flew off the cabin's wooden porch, they decided to follow. There she was!

Look! Little Bird flapped its beautiful grey wings, with their white, fluffy feathers. She flew

gracefully through the blooming trees. Now, another loggerhead shrike bird appeared and joined

her on the journey, flying in easy synchrony. The family followed along, walking quickly to keep

up with the birds. They marveled at Little Birds soaring through the treetops. Looking up, they

saw the sky, and took in the fluffy, white clouds —like fresh cotton balls.

Little Birds flew and the family followed into tall grass where Turtle slowly ambled.

Seeing a good place to land, Little Bird softly stroked Turtle's back with its feet. One of the

children yelled, "Mom! Dad! Look, Look, a turtle!" John and Vera stopped in their tracks.

Moved by the sight, they cast their eyes to the sky in gratitude for Turtle's spiritual presence. So

thrilling and amazed by this creature's sudden appearance, Vera had to pick it up, admiring it as

if Turtle were a fine piece of jewelry. As Vera moved her hands across Turtle's shell, to her surprise she saw the markings of a map that she was sure would lead the family to their lost ones.

The family accepted the gift of the map to navigate them toward their destination. They prayed with gratitude every morning and every night to the Great Creator for the power and hope given for the journey, in appreciation for Mother Earth, the Sun, and every living being that surrounded them. So they walked: from forest to the prairie, and later still to the mountains that transformed their landscape. Deer and Squirrel ran along beside them. Weeks passed and they came to a bright space, the noon Sun shining upon their arrival. Their lost children came toward them; they had always been waiting for this moment. Little loggerhead shrike birds filled the air, cheeping and dancing in flight. Squirrels jumped between the trees. The family held close their beloved boys and felt united again.

Therapist insights from the story. Among the many elements of attachment that I am aware of in the story, I sense the physical, bodily attachment to the wind ("strong gust of wind came, bringing chills to the skin"). A person can't see the wind itself, but does see its effects; therefore, the wind can be felt as a spiritual connection. Likewise, the turtle is a sign of a spiritual event and the Little Bird a significant spiritual guide. According to Myers (1997), animals are viewed as "instructional guides," who are "sources of information relating to various biotic elements," (p. 34). Spiritual connection also appears in the actions of praying and giving gratitude the Great Creator. The gratitude to the nature implies strong connection to nature as does the presence of the bear, which is a significant spiritual being to many First Nation people. Schenkeveld (2017) identified courage as associated with the bear and part of the Seven Sacred Teachings:

We can learn this teaching from the bear. Although gentle by nature, the mother bear will

become ferocious when her cubs are being threatened. In order to overcome obstacles in

our lives we must meet them with the same intensity and passion of the mother bear. (p.

52)

However, the appearance of the bear in my story also carried aggression, which deepens

its meaning with respect to the family's enduring attachment to past and present colonialism. The

children who were lost vividly connects to the painful history of children being taken from their

homes to residential school and by social agencies. Although the bear in the story is attached to

its prey as a natural phenomenon, the "monster bear stealing children" is an image found in

northern Manitoba/Saskatchewan stories to teach children not to stray too far into the woods and,

by extension, not to stray too far into the White world as well (F. J. Graveline, personal

communication, January 31, 2019).

The story of reconnection between the family and their lost children strongly reflects

connectiveness as a cultural value, both as a necessity and for restoration. When one has lost

something beloved and later gets it back, the reconnection to what was lost may feel different

and transformative as well. One learns to be more careful, more appreciative, and needing to give

back what had been missing. "The family held close their beloved [return] boys and felt united

again." Finally, there is the connection between the family and the little bird. This seems to

symbolize hope, belief, and the possibility of a new path.

Daanis: From Session 2

The caregiver and the child's artwork. For 8-year-old girl Daanis and her foster mother, the second session also involved creating a nest together (Figure 18). A piece of wood was used for the base of their

Figure 18: Daanis and her foster mother's nest (case 3, session 2)

nest, on which Daanis drew red and purple stripes with markers. There are two pieces of small branches wrapped with wool and taped to the base, as well as a pile of needle leaves on which the toy bird is placed. Beside the bird are two attached pinecones. Then Daanis created a new

nest (Figure 19) that has a piece of wood, with needle leaves and a piece of wool yarn arranged in a circle on it. On this piece the

Playing with the birds, Daanis said the

Reflection on the caregiver a

together, I reflected that Daanis discon

that the bird was visiting the other bird

Figure 19: Daanis's new nest (case 3, session 2)

creating a new
one is akin to
creating a new
generation,
which is turn
relates to
attachment
between the
generations.
From my
Western

Figure 19: Daanis' new nest (case 3, session 2)

perspective, the imagery suggests to me the healthy process of separation and individuation.

From an Indigenous perspective, however, the imagery of leaving the nest can relate powerfully

to the idea or actual memory of children being taken from their home to a new place; this

imagery also reverberates with attachment to past and present colonialism of taking children

from their homes to residential schools and to foster homes.

Therapist art response. In the picture I created in response to Daanis's and her foster

parent's dyadic imagery and behavior in the session, I drew two geese flying (Figure 20). One

has a raised wing and the other's wing is lowered. I also drew two houses in the background of

the picture. The house on the left side of the picture is cut off and not whole. A smaller house is

placed further to the right side of the picture. The geese are depicted as flying between the

houses.

Reflection on the art response. The geese are flying parallel to each other, which

suggests attachment to me in the manner of being and functioning together. Then there is an attachment to the seasons, since birds naturally migrate to warmer places in the winter. Although the geese are leaving

Figure 20: My reflection, "Flying together" (case 3, session 2)

their home, they are guided by their attachment to their biological clock. I see that the two geese are flying between the houses, as if they alone are the element that connects both houses. Perhaps the image reflects the idea that foster children must "travel" between their biological parents' home and their foster home. This may be the essence of what the girl was communicating with her actions in creating another, separate nest and flying between them.

The story of "Migration." In the early days of summer beside a sunny lake, little grey goslings hatched from their shells a little at a time. Gently they pecked their way out. The egg shells were cracking, and a few heads popped out, taking in their first sight of the beautiful lake and, with eyes searching, waiting to find their Mama Goose. All around them were many tall bulrush plants and a few blue vervain flowers. Their clusters of gorgeous purple spikes seemed

to glow in the sunshine, warming in the cold air. Mama goose put the goslings under her wings where they could feel warm and secure. She looked for food for her little ones, their eyes curiously tracking her every move.

Then it came time for the goslings to learn to swim. Plop, plop, plop! They followed their Mother all in a line and into the clear blue water. As their feet and feathers weighed down in the water, they flapped their wings to the unfamiliar feeling. Their youthfulness drew them into exploring the water — all heads and beaks — while becoming acquainted with themselves and with each other. As they learned from Mama Goose, now the little ones began to search for food. They scrambled up to the edges of the lake to nibble on some tall grass. They dried off and felt Sun slowly turning. Feeling new impulses to follow Sun south, the curious little goslings began their first trials in the air. Flapping hesitantly, with jerky motions, their first efforts met with little success. They could only reach a low branch on a tree and fall down, but they tried again and again, fumbling through the air.

One morning a loud noise startled them. The air stood still with only a trace of smoke and the strong smell of gun fire. The family of geese heard footsteps of men approaching on the wet grass. Quickly the geese scurried away and into the water, splashing noisily, and bumping into each other in a panic. The air was humid and heavy; they understood that they were in danger. By drawing closer to each other they felt safer. But the loud noises continued until noon, with the sound of fear reverberating throughout the lake. When the booming finally stopped, the tension dissipated, and the geese gradually calmed.

By late afternoon of that same day, the geese heard the sound again, drawing closer. Suddenly a hunter appeared from beneath the thick flora. He was tall, with a full beard and

moustache, and wore a long, navy jacket. He walked carelessly towards the bank of the lake, grabbing many dead geese and shoving them into his bag in a hurry to depart. The family was so terrified it couldn't move. Finally, they could no longer hear the 's loud footsteps. The air was cold, and the sky cried tears of anguish for them. Moving with slow, heavy breaths, they could hardly pick up food to eat. Instead, the family of geese all bundled up together and as their bodies drew close and warmed each other, they felt more connected.

Watching the grey clouds and breathing the cold, tense air, yes, they knew they were ready to escape to the warmer place. Leaving an empty nest behind, they carried sentimental feelings away with them as they cried out with one last honk. Somehow they knew that it would not be their last departure and that they would return bigger and stronger the following spring. Turning south, they faced a long journey over mountains, treetops, and lakes that would go on and on until they finally made it to the warmer, sunny skies. They flapped their grey and black feathered wings and flew through the sky in their protective V-formation to guide them as they sang their songs in harmony and with excitement toward their destination.

Indeed, the next spring, a flock of geese covered the sky with grey, beating wings as they heeded their inner compass and were directed home. Despite the long flight, the many days of flying in blue sky with warm sun were rejuvenating. The geese finally landed, physically exhausted, on the last day as the sun set. But as soon as their webbed-feet touched their homeland, their spirits filled with a certain energy. Now at last they looked around the lake and listened to the frogs croaking, felt the quiet water, and breathed the aroma of the marshy vegetation. They were safe. They were home.

Insights from the story. The story portrays multiple attachments: of the geese to family,

to the group, and to the environment. It describes the bird's life experiences in nature as

connected to spirituality, and especially in the detail of the "trace of smoke" that is reminiscent

of the smudging ceremony as a healing ritual (Graveline, 1998). I am aware of emotional

attachment alluded to as well, in the geese leaving their nests with sentimental feelings. In

addition, I perceive the sense of physical attachment, for example, "their warm bodies got

closer" and they flew in a V-formation in the sky. Importantly, I notice that the story is told from

the geese's point of view; therefore, the hunter, who appeared in the life they described may

reflect not simply the act of hunting but the terrible memory of historical trauma and the

enduring impact of colonialism.

Namid, from Session 7

**The caregiver and the
child's artwork.** Four-year-old
Namid and her foster mother created
with clay in their second-to-last
session of triadic art therapy. Their
claywork (Figure 21) is comprised of
two tipis, a campfire, a drum, a heart,
a container, cookies, and a cupcake
that transformed into a mushroom,
which Namid's foster mother

Figure 21: Namid and her foster mother's art
(case 2, session 7)

created. The foster mother explained that people tell stories in the tipis. Then Namid added one

feather to each tipi, a pink one and a blue one, and

put seeds in the container. In their second piece of

claywork (Figure 22) her foster mother created a

figure of an animal, which Namid decided was a

cat. It has a red mustache formed from pieces of

feathers and a tiny scrap of blanket. Namid created

the blanket and put the seeds in the containers.

They talked about the care of the cat and about the

campfire, tipi, and drum.

Figure 22: Namid's art (case 2, session 7)

Reflection on the dyad's activity. The clay sculpture offers many symbols: of nutrition (i.e., cookies), care (i.e., a blanket for the cat), culture (i.e., tipi and drum), and music (i.e., drum). Like the nests in Daani's and her foster mother's stories, the two tipies seem to represent two families. But I also sense an outdoor atmosphere as I imagine the scents, sounds, and warmth of the campfire. I hear people in the tipis telling stories from an Indigenous worldview and history. The images are a rich expression of the cultural life in the reserve, which is connected to nature and to community.

Therapist art response. In my art response to the dyad's session (Figure 23), I drew a big drum and a small one, with two sticks that I drew tied to each other and resting on the surface of the larger drum. Strings tie the leathers together on the top and bottom of the drum. The drum is in the center, with pulsing black and white lines, and deep colors radiating from it.

Reflection on the art response. I see repetition and physical connection between the two drums, the two sticks, and the two sets of strings. I reflect that there may be a spiritual

Figure 22: Namid's art (case 2, session 7)

connection between the elements, as though the creamy brown colors are the earth and the leather strings tied to it are the animals and other beings. These strings are the connector: they connect what is above

Figure 23: My reflection, "Big and little drums" (case 2, session 7)

to what is below, which together create the instrument as a whole; connectedness in this expansive expression reflects an Indigenous worldview (Carriere & Richardson, 2009). The center is the drum, symbolizing music, rhythm, dancing, ceremonies, high energy—all of which are connected to culture and spirit. The large and small the drums symbolize the parent and the child. The drum mimics the heart beat that connects them and connects every thing.

The story of "Drums for the Heart"

It was a sunny afternoon on the riverside and the big old trees were swaying with the wind. A tall boy named Jordan was walking alongside the rippling river aimlessly. Distractedly, he walked closer to the trees and noticed a few brown squirrels playing and gnawing on some nuts. The sound of the little creatures nibbling on their acorns reminded the young boy of what was nibbling at his own conscience. As he sat down to watch the squirrels, his mind couldn't help but wander to his memories of a best friend who had passed away only a month before.

He felt a surging pain as he recalled the suffering that his best friend endured. The long nights, the sullen eyes, how weak and helpless he was at the mercy of his sickness. Now, all that was left was a black hole of emptiness, as Jordan reminisced on all the times that they had come to skip rocks and swim in the rippling river. But those times were over, they were all gone, and no matter how hard it was for Jordan, he would have to accept it. Jordan slowly stood up and then mindlessly climbed onto some nearby rocks. He looked down at the shadows of the trees, reeds, and bulrushes that were growing around the rocks, reflecting his own inner darkness. The sound of rushing water and falling rocks was all so familiar to him, triggering something inside him. Now he felt the river flowing violently past him, almost as fast has his racing thoughts. Jordan looked for solace in a quieter place on the riverbank. In his searching, he passed thick and tangled tree roots and small slippery black rocks.

In due time Jordan found a quiet spot where the waters calmed and time stood still. He gathered some stones and started skipping them over the shallow water. He watched carefully, as the ripples slowly grew bigger and then faded back into the rhythm of the water. Every time Jordan skipped another stone, he heard a kind of empty echo. Jordan paused for a second, taking in the sounds around him. He suddenly felt that he had to sit down— something about his surroundings brought on this sense of heaviness. Maybe it was the gloomy sky, as the dark clouds felt as though they were closing in on him. Regardless, there were no more stones to throw. It was cold. The grey, coarse rock that he sat upon sent goosebumps down his spine, chilling him to the bone. He was all alone.

But still he kept hearing the empty echo. It resonated throughout his body; he felt it to his core. It wouldn't stop. He'd have a moment of tranquil loneliness, but each time he heard the

sound it drew him back in. Rhythmically stealing his focus, and gradually getting louder and louder. Now it was pounding in his ears. But the sound had a sort of mystery to it— each echo called to him, as if inviting his soul to come play and follow its alluring pull. The sound reverberated in the trees. Jordan got up and headed towards the mysterious sound.

As he drew closer to the forest edge, now he noticed that what was calling him was really more than a sound; the vibration was recurring in rhythm and low musical notes. Through the thick, bushy fir trees, he knew he was heading into he heart of the dark forest where the music resided. Its source was hidden deep inside the trees. As Jordan traversed the tangles of branches, roots, and leaves, he realized that this was no ordinary sound. Closer now to the source, he stepped into a clearing where he was greeted by a circle of ceremonial drums.

Within the circle, he saw a mother and daughter sitting on a large log near the campfire, and playing the drums.The mother had a gentle face surrounded by long black hair. She was young, but her eyes showed that she'd been through more than her years. The daughter seemed like a younger version of her mother, with eyes filled with wonder and curiosity. Her little hands danced to the movement of the drums, learning from her mother, and glancing up at her with grateful admiration.

Jordan approached the campfire and joined them on the log, taking in the mother–daughter ritual, kinship and music, and taking in the night, appreciating the beauty of the music, the simplicity of the beat, and also the presence of the Spirit it drew from all around him. The upbeat of the music matched his beating heart. With the pulse of music, he could feel each note reverberating in every cell of his body. Now, his fingers joined in with delight, his fingers

tapping gently along, becoming one with the music and the new community and kinship he had discovered.

As the night went on, the drumming gradually died down and he grew more and more tired. He could feel the day had finally taken its toll on him. Eventually, his body softened, his eyes slowly closed, as he escaped to a peaceful slumber. Jordan lay there, his body flaccid and his mind resting, but the wonders of dreaming continued. An angel guarded over him, as he walked in dreaming down to the riverbank. His friend was lost to him, but he knew he would always be with him, always be watching over him. In time, he woke up, but the mother and daughter were gone. He was alone, yet he knew he would never be completely alone.

Insights from the story. As I reflected on the story, I became aware of Jordan's attachment to his memories and grief of the death of his best friend. Underneath this grief, I sense a connection of these feelings with those of his ancestors who had endured so many losses. Connectedness comes through his senses to the music, the vision he saw and continued dreaming, and his body's senses (e.g., "he felt each note and sound in every cell of his body"). The magic of the music and Jorden's dreams carry a deep spiritual connection. Strega (2005) referred to dreaming as an integral part of the Indigenous people's worldview, stating "dreams have long been a source of knowledge for Indigenous cultures" (p. 31). The story draws me into relationship with the importance of dreams. Indigenous adolescents often talked with me about their dreams and are eager to draw them; they are a valuable source for helping the teens develop meaning from their work in art therapy. Dreams also can help to process unresolved concerns, by thinking about an issue and looking to get answers through the dreams (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, January 24, 2019).

Figure 25: My reflection, "Two feathers"
(case 1, session 8)

Mye   t session of triadic art therapy with

sever   sticky paper collage and added

materials of felt, cotton balls, and feathers (Figure 24). My therapeutic intention was to offer soft

materials to connect to early childhood and feathers to connect with culture and nature. To create

the collage, first I taped the sticky paper to a bigger piece of paper, which created a frame.

Myeengun worked on the right side of the picture and created an image of a house. His foster

mother created

images on the left

side of a headdress, a

tipi, grass, clouds,

and a sun. Once

again, I saw that

Myeengun had

copied some of his

caregiver imagery for

his own, including

the headdress, the sun

Figure 24: Myeengun and his foster mother's art (case 1, session 8)

(big and square), and the clouds.

Reflection on the dyad's activity. The dyad's creative process could be described as one

of physically attaching materials. The traditional features, such as headdress and tipi, seem to

symbolize connectedness to their culture. As a large blue shape the house prominently draws my

eye to id, as if representing Myeengun's actual or desired attachment to a secure place. Elements

from nature surround the house, as if expressing the dyad's strong connection to their natural

environment. The elements of the First Nation culture that appear in their work seem to

symbolize feelings of pride of their identity, a sense of belonging to a community, and longing to

connect with their ancestors.

Therapist art response. In my response to their art and activity (Figure 25), I placed two

feathers that are

attached with a

wrapped thread and

beads on a colorful

background. I see

that the feathers are

the center of the

picture. They have a

rhythmic,

undulating texture,

which is picked up

Figure 25: My reflection, "Two feathers" (case 1, session 8)

in the background imagery; they are white with brown stripes.

Reflection on my art respo

conveyed in my response through th

be gently at rest with each other. Th

for their resting place. The thread is

Because feathers are usually used to direct the smoke in smudging, I reflected that in this picture

they convey attachment to culture, spirituality, and nature.

The story of "The Feathers." Master of the blue sky, the bald eagle spreads its black

brown wings wide as it soars upon the fresh, summer air. Waterfall rumbles in the distance while

nearby leaves rustle softly in the cool breeze. As it flies, Eagle spots a small brown mammal

skittering between the bushes. Eagle swoops down to snag its prey and then rises, flying over the

water and the tops of trees to search for its mate. Perched at the top of a big rock, there she was:

beautiful and welcoming, waiting to be greeted as she watched her mate fly toward her. He

draws nearer. She opens her wings and flies gracefully to his side. Now the two bald eagles are

soaring together through the sky, locking their talons together to perform their dance of

courtship. They enjoy each other's presence and soon it is time to head back to their warm,

homey nest in the very top of the nearest fir tree.

The two eagles are at home in their nest, protecting their eggs from intruders. Eagle is

alert and scans his surroundings protectively. While he takes in his surroundings, two of his

feathers loosen and fall. One falls slowly from his right side; the other follows from his left side,

dropping all the way down to the forest floor in exquisite balance. Feathers drift downwards, like

falling streaks of brown and white that absorb the grey puffs of smoke from a nearby bonfire.

The Fire's burning cedar branches to honour the Great Creator fill the air with a powerful smell.

Feathers continued their descent, spiralling down and finally landing on two separate rock faces

at the bottom of the cliff. Feathers rest on the cold rocks, hidden from Sun's warmth.

Then from afar a voice is singing. She appears as a young girl with a wide smile and

shining eyes. Girl climbs over the rocks in search of pretty things to catch her eye. As she feels

around the rocks and pebbles, to her pleasant surprise her hand touches a cold rock underneath a bush. Nestled beside it was a brown and white feather. Girl holds the light feather in her hand, feeling its soothing softness tickle her senses and causing her to loosen her grip, and drop the feather. As the brown and white streaks swiveled down to the ground, dancing in the air with a playful elegance, Girl watches with admiration, entranced by the moment, grabbing it before it can reach the ground.

Feeding her curiosity, she continues her search and to her joy she find another feather. This feather is identical to the first, as if it is its mate. Girl holds the two treasures in her little hands and brings them close to her heart. Filled with excitement from her discovery, she runs to tell her parents. Speechless, they see their child running toward them with two perfectly matched feathers, taking it as a sign that the Great Creator is gifting them with good fortune. They wrapped the two sacred feathers in a cloth to carry them home safely. That evening, when their daughter was in bed and about to drift off to sleep, they tell her the story of Eagle who traveled between the earth and the world beyond. They explained that this marvellous creature carries their messages and prayers to the Great Creator.

Insights from the story. From the story, I can sense a clear and constant connectedness to the natural world, to the culture, and to spirituality carried by the imagery of the eagle and its feathers. "Due to the height of their flight, eagles are associated with foresight and awareness, and with crossing from the physical into the spiritual world" (Legge & Robinson, 2017, p. 9). TI consider that the eagle is attached to its prey, through his eyes, his talons, and his hunger. But the eagle also is connected emotionally to its partner. I detect the smell of the burnt cedar that evokes ceremony and spirituality, as it does in the process of smudging (Cahill & Halpern, 1992). I feel

the dance of the eagles in their closeness and reciprocal relationship. The parents' bodies speak

in the language of strong attachment to their feelings when confronted with the mystery beyond

words. They connect mentally and spiritually through their gratitude and prayers. I see the little

girl as connected to the spiritual, natural world, who carried the eagle's feather from and to the

Creator.

Insights From the Therapist's Series of Artworks

The process of creating the art responses began with closely studying the dyad's pictures,

reviewing and reflecting on the session notes, and drawing from my own professional

knowledge, personal and asthetic knowing, and creativity. Importantly, all of the art responses

collectively represent something greater than an individual piece of art or an isolated idea. All

together, the art responses brought new insights to the research questions and performed an

effect (Kapitan, 2018) that transformed my understanding of the focal idea of attachment.

Firstly, my main intention for the picture's background was to create abstract art for ideas

to flow naturally, which leaves plenty of room for imagination to happen. Additionally, the

choice to use abstract imagery lets the focal figures in the foreground to roam freely among the

different colours, lines, and shapes surrounding them. The background also facilitated many

associations, as it can symbolize land, water, air, emotions, thoughts, and the spirit.

Taken together, the backgrounds consistently expressed a theme of connection, as the

lines almost invariably seemed to connect all the figures in the drawing together, which revealed

to me a felt sense of spirituality and interconnectedness that surfaced in my reflections on each

triadic art therapy session. They symbolized a holding space for the dyads in therapy and

therefore an embodiment of the persona of the facilitating therapist. Most importantly, the

shapes, lines, and colors of these backgrounds all went through a process of transformation, from my first picture to the last one. In the later pictures the lines have much more movement; they are integrating and winding around other figures within the picture plane, suggesting greater or increased connectedness. The abstract backgrounds place the naturalistic figures into a new, more imaginative environment for them, as though they exist within or between different worlds, in relationship and in communication with one another. Perhaps this element expresses the many levels of connection that were coming through, including the foster child's and the foster parent's worlds that must be traversed, the intrapersonal and interpersonal worlds, the historical past and the present that reflects it, or as conscious and unconscious realms together in co-existence. It can also symbolize two worlds of Indigenous and settler. Hence, this aspect of the *two* speak to their each having a distinct entity/identity yet are interconnected.

Secondly, the figures represented in these pictures also have significance in the research analysis, as they provide the more concrete and detailed aspects of the drawing. Bringing a central focus to the drawing, the figures and imagery especially highlighted the physical in their incorporation of nature, objects, and beings. Each figure in the drawings independently exemplified a unique personal connection to either the child, caregiver, or therapist. Each figure gives context to the background by bringing its own story and individual meaning to the observer. However, in totality every figure embodied a general theme of connectedness that unites all of the drawings together.

Thirdly, the drawing medium was oil pastel, which allowed me to have control of the image by its quality of being able to incorporate precise details, but also had a messy component

as pastels have a tendency to smear. This medium physically connected my hand and pastel to the paper, along with mixing different pastel shades and colors.

Lastly, there are overall insights that I have extrapolated from my art responses. For example, the theme of relationality was present in every piece, as everything connected with one another. Through my art my sensory, emotional, and intellectual attention was heightened, calling forth "all-at-once-ness" and discovery of what I didn't know I knew and to see with new insights (Kapitan, 2018, p. 215). I re-connected with the child and parent as I connected with the drawing figures that made personal connections. Tellingly, although lines connected the background to the figures, there was kind of a disconnect between the background and the figures because they were drawn in different styles. This idea of connecting two different styles of art really reminds me of two different worlds: that of the settlers and that of the Indigenous People. Although each world has its own beliefs and values, there universal concepts, similar to the lines in my artwork, that unite all people, such as relationality, respect, and reciprocity. In my own personal experience, I often felt disconnected from the Indigenous people I had been working with. Especially in the beginning, I truly didn't understand their culture and history despite my beliefs to the contrary at the time. Through this research, mentoring, and the experiences I received, I have strengthened my connections with Indigenous people. When I look at the pictures now, I can see so many connections. I can see the more abstract and spiritual ways that we are all connected, and how I and others can continue the process of truth and reconciliation more successfully.

Thematic Results

Connectedness and Holism

As described by Couture (2013), "The centred and quartered circle is a sign of wholeness, of inclusiveness of all reality, of life, of balance and harmony between… [human] and nature" (p. 83). The holistic circle is integral to the culture of many Indigenous communities in Canada, with its emphasis on balance and harmony in all aspects of the environment (Archibald, 2008). The shape of a circle — a closed form with no beginning or end — is often seen in nature and in the Indigenous culture. Everyone in the circle is given equal status (Cahill & Halpern, 1992). The physical form of the circle appeared often in the caregiver's and children's art and process, and in the images of the sun, face, eyes, flower, tire, nest, seeds, and wrapped branch. In my art responses the circle also was performed, as in birds' migration (Daanis, session 2) and in the meaning of safety to the green cat (Namid, session 1).

The sharing circle, also called *circle talk* (Graveline, 1998), is part of Indigenous tradition. People gather to sit in a closed circle and each individual has the opportunity to talk and to hear what others have to say, helping to facilitate or open up communication (Hill, 2008). Graveline (1998) stated that talking in a circle means "we are able to gain inspiration, renew personal vision and recreate a cohesive community." Some traditionalists believe that the Circle "contains recognizable power that defies superficial boundaries" (p. 131). The circle as a social structure offers a supportive, nonjudgmental atmosphere, to which it is believed the Creator and the ancestors contribute their guidance. Thus, people listen respectfully to others and energy is created by the spirit of those who gather to form the circle (Nabigon, Hagey, Webster & MacKay, 1999). In the triad sessions, art therapy was adapted to this form; for example, we were positioned around the table, which made open and equal communication easier. Additionally, in

the group session we participated in circle talk, where the participants shared their idea of their artworks in the end of the session.

As my Indigenous mentor taught me, "The circle is a metaphor for resilience, for change, stability and simultaneously, like the tree throughout the seasons, ever changing, yet the same" (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, January 31, 2019). Representing holism as the endless circle, the triadic approach supported connectedness as far more expansive than I first understood: connectedness is intergenerational, spiritual, and inclusive of family, community, and clan. For example, in the story "Migration" (case 3, session 2), there appears the natural infinite circle of the migrating birds.

The circle is maintained, in part, by reciprocity between and among all entities "to ensure an ecological and cosmological balance" (Kovach, 2009, p. 57). The reciprocal exchange of the hands – of the caregiver and the child – became a unifying metaphor, not only in the dyad's artworks but also in my art responses to them and as a teaching I am learning to embrace with cultural humility. For example, in my story "From heart to heart," Sol wanted to share "the wisdom of the sacred bracelets that had touched her soul." Reciprocity as an Indigenous value may link to mutual recognition in Western concepts of attachment, which also encourages individua development. From the Indigenous perspective, individual development within the collective helps keep the endless circle in motion incorporating the nature and community that are important to the Indigenous worldview (Neihardt, 1988).

The process of creating art often carried holism throughout the sessions, for example, an assembly of natural materials (for example, creating nest: case 2, session 2). Art materials can be used to connect parts to make a whole, such as when an image of a raspberry (Figure 26) was used to show how individual seeds make up one whole berry. Attachment from an Indigenous perspective can be seen in this way as attraction between elements and ideas, as everything is related and connected. The Medicine Wheel presents distinct entities of mental, physical, emotional,

Figure 26: My reflection, "Interconnectedness" (case 3, session 6)

and spiritual experience as being equal and as part of a larger whole. One part "cannot be the center but must instead learn to work in harmony with all other parts" (McCormick,1996, p. 166). In both the caregiver and child's artworks, and during the creative process of the sessions, these four elements were at times explicit as verbal and symbolic representation, and other times implicitly appearing in my reflections and in my research journey as a whole. An example is the drawing of the three brothers (Figure 9) who are depicted as physically proximate, mentally relating through their talk, emotionally expressive in their faces, and spiritually linked by their

fate. None of these qualities are separate from the whole; they all interact with each other.

According to Lavallée (2009), health involves balance between all four quadrants of the

Medicine Wheel and within life circles of family, community, and the environment.

Connectedness and Culture

The cultural component in this study involved the values of collectivism and

connectedness to family, community, clan, Indigenous nation, and the environment. Because

cultural connectedness emerged as a major component of the triadic art therapy model, I was

advised to incorporate a ceremony into the sessions by inviting an Anishinabe helper from the

caregivers' and children's community to participate. It was important for the children to meet

and be supported by a person from their community who offered them positive messages. Wilson

(2008) explained that "the purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge

the distance between aspects of our cosmos and ourselves" (p. 11). As a settler therapist, my

work could only proceed by requesting permission and support from the community, inviting

them into the process of therapy, and working together in reciprocity.

The significance of the Indigenous Elders was confirmed by their appearance in my

stories in which they shared their knowledge with Indigenous people by teaching from their own

experiences and through the tradition of storytelling. The process of sharing experience through

stories encourages people to listen to themselves and to others, and therefore create connections

with the inner self and that of others. In the story "The old woman's cat" (case 2, session 1), the

Elder created a new road that allowed people to access their spiritual and cultural practices,

which demonstrates the Elder's responsibility for her community (Stiegelbauer, 1996).

The foster parents created artworks that included many symbols of their culture, such as a tipi and headdress. Art making enriched the children's worldview through these explicit symbols and implicit knowledge conveyed through body language and emotional resonance. Working together within cultural metaphors also enabled caregivers to contribute to their foster children's cultural roots. Thus, at least from a Western perspective attachment to culture through the creative process afforded the children to be more aware of their identity and build their self-esteem in turn.

In addition, as discussed below, connectedness to nature is considered an important cultural practice. Participants experienced nature in culture through the use of materials and symbols that appeared in their artworks. They expressed interconnectedness to their ecosystem and, by extension belonging to all of mother earth.

Connectedness and Nature

Over time, my initial focus on attachment gave way to a more expansive construct as elements and descriptions of connectedness to nature continually occured in the caregiver and child's artworks and in my reflections on embodied interactions with people, animals, plants, and natural landscape. For example, "They flapped their grey and black feathered wings and flew through the sky in their protective V-formation to guide them…" ("Migration", case 3, session 2). I could easily imagine the bird flying freely, which became a metaphor for how I felt at that moment. Storied and artistics illustrations of nature supported the value of interconnectedness and unity where everything is related. The intersection, interconnection, and interdependence of individuals signifies the importance of their responsibilities toward the whole (Morrisseau, 1998).

Related to my art responses and storytelling, drawing and describing nature gradually led me to look at the numerous connections reflected in the experiences of the Indigenous caregivers and their foster children: of the leaves to the branch, between the bears' fur and the birds, and the eye to eye as a symbol of reciprocity and connection. Images of nature in my art came to life through the storytelling process of data analysis and brought about many messages of connectedness; for example, "the family of geese all bundled up together and as their bodies drew close and warmed each other, they felt more connected" ("Migration", case 3, session 2).

Animals are also ceremonially significant because of their teachings through the symbolic function. For example, the eagle's feather represents strength and wisdom. Flying in the sky, the bird is able to cross over from the physical to the spiritual realm. In the caregivers and children's artworks there is an attachment to small animals that the children could relate to and care for, such as Namid's cat (case 2, session 1). Engagement with the cat offered a positive, reciprocal connectedness between the child and the animal. Lastly, nature is central to spiritual attachment in the Indigenous worldview and specifically in the appearance of spiritual animals (Figure 27)

Figure 27: My reflection, "The Sacred Turtle" (case 3, session 5)

who function as protectors, me

sessions, many images of these

and the stories. Legge and Rob

Nations kinship systems; they

Connectedness and Spirituali

The ceremony that was

connectedness (illustrated in Figure 28) that included a prayer and smudging by an Anishinabe

Figure 27: My reflection, "The Sacred Turtle" (case 3, session 5)

helper. Because the
ceremony was offered
in both the first and
last sessions for the
dyads, it functioned as
a spiritual frame for
their experience.
Moreover, in the last
session the ceremony
included the entire
group of the dyads,
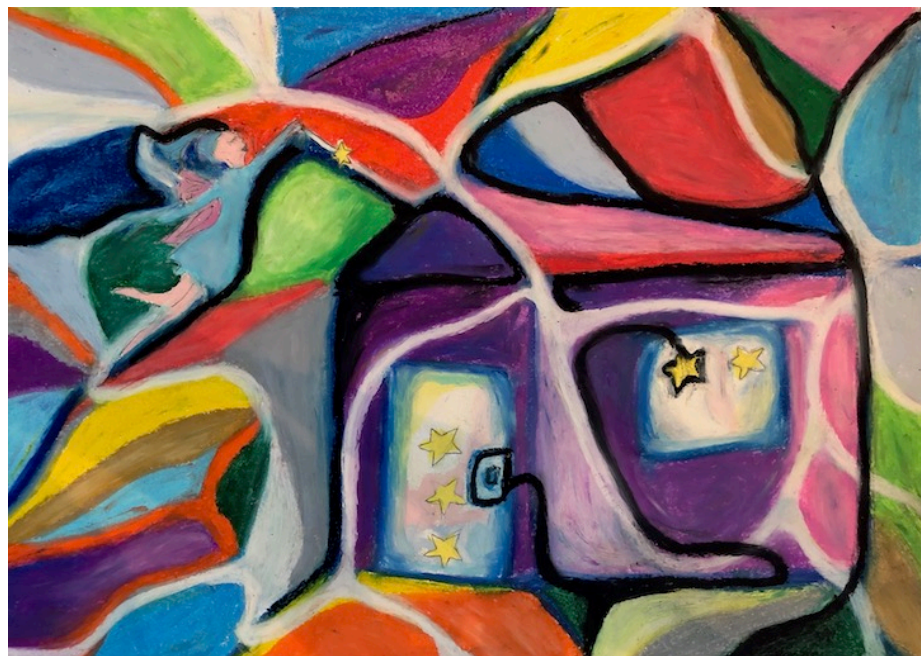
Figure 28: My reflection, "Spiritualism" (case 2, session 4)

which empowered the process in its collectivism and relationality. The smoke of the medicine

plants rises with the prayers to the spiritual world and to the Creator. The smudge symbolizes

cleansing of mind, body, spirit, and emotion (KiiskeeNtum, 1998). As it appeared in my story,

"From heart to heart" (case 3, session 1), the smoke conveyed spirituality, as beyond material life and an expansive attachment that is invisible and implicit:

> "The spirit of the mother writhed in the cold snowy sky, always seeking home, until it came upon a warm trail of smoke from a nearby campfire. The spirit curled around the smoky warmth, breathed it in, and came back to life in the body of a baby girl named Sol."

Spiritual connectedness to ancestors emerged in the storytelling, which Morrisseau (1998) described from his Indigenous worldview as "leading me to a greater awareness of another manner of living, a world where the ancestors still live, waiting and supporting us on this journey" (p. 1454). Intergenerational spiritual connectedness can strengthen family connections and relations, as well as affect an individual's identity, feelings of belonging, and self-confidence.

In the Indigenous tradition, I now understand the continuing relationship I the here-and-now with people who have died as connectedness. Representations of death appeared in the conversation between the sessions regarding family members who died. I depicted these images in my story, "Drums for the heart" (case 2, session 7), writing that "Now, all that was left was a black hole of emptiness, as [Jordan] began to reminisce all the times that they had come down to skip rocks and swim in the wavy river." This story conveys the person's grief and his feelings of pain. I also recall foster parents while in therapy mentioning their ancestors, as a matter of relying on their wisdom and as connected ceremony. I have learned that many Indigenous people "use their life stories and stories of their ancestors as a source of strength" (Bourassa, Blind,

Dietrich, & Oleson, 2015, p. 13). This connectedness with the deceased may link to a feeling of being cared by in the spiritual realm.

Another way I animated spirituality in my story-writing is by giving thanks to the Creator. In the story "The turtle way," the family "prayed with gratitude every morning and every night to the Great Creator for the power and hope given for the journey, in appreciation for Mother Earth, the Sun, and every living being that surrounded them" (case 2, session 2). Additional, in the story "From heart to heart" (case 3, session 1), spirituality is displayed as powerful collective identity in an individual, where the bracelet made of beads symbolises spiritual connection between individuals, which is the feeling of belonging to one's family and community, as the "collective selves see group membership as central to their identity" (Kral, 2003, p. 8).

Another carrier of spiritual connectedness is music. The drum appeared in Namid and her foster mother's clay artwork (case 2, session 7), as well as in my reflective art and story. The sound and the rhythm of the drum evokes the heart beat and the voice, which may be individual or on a greater level, as expressed in the collective voice. The music, in the story above, positively impacted the person's emotional and spiritual state, hence it has the power to create a positive change for the person. Another connection to spirituality is the dream, which carries knowledge, conscious, and unconscious links to an individual's past present and future. In the Indigenous tradition and in therapy, dreams can offer interactive information that connect individuals with their spirituality and the larger realms of existence.

Spirit is also described in individuals' bodies, as can be seen in my story "The feathers (case 1, session 8); the parents experienced a spiritual moment when they saw the eagle's

(spiritual protector) feather. The spirit is an energy that lives in the body and interacts with the inside/outside world of the individual. Moreover, in the story "From heart to heart" (case 3, session 1), the wind carries energy as the spirit that embraces the woman who struggled, which is a felt spiritual connectedness.

Connectedness and Family

As described earlier, I first initiated art therapy with individuals, as was customary in my practice, and gradually felt that an essential component was missing. I was inspired by the idea of approaching therapy as a dyad of both child and caregiver, and with an aim to align therapy with the Indigenous worldview that centers on relationality. However, as I took in teaching from the Indigenous community and my mentors, I gradually understood the study's sessions as existing in a triadic relationship. The therapist, the child, and the caregiver must all work together, integrating their different viewpoints into a holistic experience. What is special and particular about this triadic relationship is that through this approach the therapist becomes part of the participants'community and this reciprocal relationship connects all three different parties into one unified triad.

Symbolic representations of siblings and other family members constantly appeared in the dyad's artworks. Writing the names of their family members on their pictures and even the word "family" was common in most of their artworks. One example of a family symbol is Myeengun's drawing that showed his connection to his siblings (case 1, session 1) as a secure base and support. On the same picture he also drew images of nature that extended his worldview of his connections.

When children copied the imagery, process, and behavior of their foster parents, at first I

saw through the lens of attachment; that is, as a way of attaching to their caregivers. In contrast,

some art therapists have been trained to view copying as an impediment to self-expression

(Anderson, 2016). For a foster child, copying can be an attachment strategy: "If I behave as he

does, I'll know what I'm expected to do in this relationship. Maybe if I use this template, I, too,

will feel more secure and my mother will love me again." However, copying may represent

something very different in the context of a traditional Indigenous process of learning from an

adult as a role model and from observation. Copying and similar behaviors may support or

reflect the development of attuned empathy and connection between a child, caregiver, and

therapist. The process of reconnecting to the family (illustrated in Figure 29) is an attachment

that is especially sensitive for Indigenous people and should take into account changes in the

family dynamic as foster children join a new home or return to their biological family. This seemed to be metaphorically expressed by Daanis (case 3, session 2) in her nest making, where she made her

Figure 29: My reflection, "Family" (case 2, session 8)

own nest and then imagined traveling back and forth between the nests.

Part of the attachment is processed implicitly, before and after the explicit process of physical attachment. As I put it in one of my stories, "The lost children came toward them; they had always been waiting for that moment" (case 2, session 1). So many mixed emotions and thoughts arise when waiting for something to happen.

Connectedness can also mean security; in families, adults and older siblings can take a protective role in relation to younger ones. However, the notion of caring and protection in Indigenous families may include many extended relationships that may biological or non-biological, bound by kinship or by some other significant identity. In my story "From heart to heart" (case 3, session 1), the goslings were under Mama goose's wings, yet the image of "Mama" may represent many nurturing adults. Another example relates to Namid's play (case 2, session 2); she brought new animal toys (bears) to the birds to play with, her caregiver responded by worrying that something bad might happen to the birds and suggested the turtle as a protective spiritual animal. This response might also express the caregiver's concern about therapy as an unknown environment involving the power of the dominant or colonizing authorities. In contrast, many Indigenous parents believe their child's freedom to explore their natural environment and to discover its risks is necessary when raising their children.

Connectedness to Colonialism's Past and Present Reality

Canada's child welfare system is one that "reflects white dominant mainstream ideas and ideals and it has historically been used on Aboriginal peoples in ways that conflict and are inconsistent with Aboriginal people's values and family traditions" (Crichlow, 2002, p. 88).

Colonialization has left its marks through generations and these markings appeared implicitly in

the dyads' artworks
and behaviors (Figure
30). Thus, it should
come as no surprise
that my art-based
analyses that
synthesized the
explicit and implicit
information embedded
in the sessions vividly

Figure 30: My reflection, "Challenges" (case 1, session 3)

revealed such colonization content. My stories included features of crisis in the forms of danger,

fears, and disaster, as well resilient ways of handling it. For example:

> black tornado twisted ferociously in the eerie, greenish-grey sky... [It] wove a deadly path
>
> like a seething rage of old storm, uprooting houses and flinging bodies in the air to plunge
>
> to their death. Pain and loss filled the community, leaving people broken and in despair
>
> (case 1, session 1)

In terms of connectedness, it is important to note that individuals may be attached to

painful memories and stories of Canada's colonial history, and these may become part of

people's psyches. This can be considered negative attachment that was forced on the individual

and the community. Canadian people cannot change the past and what happened, but settlers can

change their response to Indigenous people, support their self-resiliency, and work to dismantle colonizing systems.

One of the dyads' artworks illustrate a story about a bird that had to leave her nest (Daanis, session 2), which can be traced to the past and current colonialist reality of children being taken from their homes and sent to the residential schools. As seen in the dyad's interactions, connectedness to intergenerational knowing and current trauma was evident. An example is of the cat that needed to be nurtured (case 2, session 7), not solely as a reflection of the foster child but also symbolic of protection against disconnection to the culture and Indigenous community nurturance. For therapists, to help create a change of "negative connectedness" and trauma, their perspectives may need to be transformed—as mine has begun to be transformed—through cultural humility, and from individual healing of a foster child to community healing for all children.

In the foster child's situation, the biological parents' behavior cannot be understood without the therapist bringing to conscious awareness how they may be affected by the ongoing trauma of colonialism. This is why Dr. Koltex told me that in Manitoba, "when we treat Indigenous kids, we often ask the family if they have residential school experience and it put a whole different context to the problems that they suffer" (M. Koltex, personal communication, September 2018). By expressing unconscious feelings and thoughts in the form of a creative representation, Indigenous people can make their implicit knowing explicit. Acknowledging and releasing their feelings about it can be one way of healing.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

Rays of sun warm the naked tree
rising innocently from the earth
embraced abundantly by water
blooming gradually
along the bough
the gift of green
unified through the soil below
every leaf rustling
shining upwards
smell the new beginning
place spring in your heart

Introduction

This research study scrutinised: How does a settler art therapist approach attachment when working with Indigenous peoples? Similarly, how does a triadic approach to art therapy that connects a dyad to the surrounding culture impact or change the Western construct of attachment? As I will discuss in this chapter, my study found that attachment becomes transformed into the Indigenous construct of connectedness and holism, where the basic concept of attachment theory —drawn from Ainsworth's styles of infant-caregiver interaction—is not culturally appropriate (Rothbaum et al., 2000).

The results of my study identified connectedness within important values for Indigenous peoples, including holism, culture, nature, spirituality, family and community, as well as within connection to Canada's colonization, resulting in an ongoing struggle of having to cope with past and often current trauma. The study participants also presented signs of resiliency as supported by the Indigenous culture, in the practices of the holistic circle, relationality, ecological balance,

spirituality, collectivism, and the importance of family. Reciprocity and interconnectedness

between all organisms also appeared in triadic art therapy. Connectedness entails a relation with

the ancestors with respect to knowledge and responsibilities, and a relation with animals as

protectors and messengers. In regard to the child welfare system, whenever children are taken

away from their home environment, they may lose many of these important values that are the

basis for their well-being, which is why a therapy that explicitly connects them to culture as well

as to interpersonal relationships is so important.

I assert that the design of triadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and their

caregivers resonates with the Indigenous world view. To support this claim, I have organized the

results into a diagram that presents the aspects of connectedness (Figure 31). I describe the

diagrams below and follow with a discussion that contextualizes my results via a model of triadic

art therapy and an anti-oppressive perspective of the themes related to connectedness and the

core ideas found in the literature. The chapter concludes with a description of the study's

limitations and recommendations for future research and implications.

Aspects and Processes of Connectedness

Figure 31 elucidates aspects of connectedness that emerged from the practice-led study of

an Indigenous model of triadic art therapy with foster children and their caregivers. The therapy

intervention is comprised of artmaking within a facilitating environment of interconnectedness

between the foster child, foster parent, and therapist. I created the diagram to show the

relationship of these themes to other and to the traid of the child, the caregiver, and the therapist.

This diagram includes two different circles. The circle in the upper right-hand corner is

comprised of the study's six main themes related to connectedness: holism, culture, nature,

Nature   Culture

Connectedness in Triadic Art Therapy with Indigenous

Foster Children and their Caregivers

Oppression   Spirituality

Aspects of
connectedness

Holism

Nature   Culture

Family

Oppression   Spirituality

Nature

Nation

Community

Extended Family

Family

Triad

Social
Agencies

Triadic art therapy involves the Indigenous foster child and caregiver, the art
therapist, with an emphasis on culture, art making, and interconnectedness. This
Indigenous model of *Triadic Art Therapy* is based on principles described in
Archibald & Dewer, 2011.

Figure 31. Aspects of Connectedness

spirituality, family, and oppression that collectively represent connectedness. Firstly, holism is a

macro-concept that encompasses each theme of culture, nature, oppression, and spirituality; the

theme of family is placed in the center of the model. Family is central because knowledge,

experience, traditions, and values are passed down over generations and expressed holistically

through culture, nature, spirtuality, and oppression. As general concepts, these interrelational

themes inform the nested circle below and to the right side of the diagram.

   The large nested circle of concentric rings is based on the Indigenous art therapy holistic

healing principles articulated by Archibald and Dewer (2010) and Vivian (2013) and illustrates

the circle of beings that surround the triad. Connectedness in Indigenous culture, thus, includes

and expands from the family to the extended family, community, nations, and environment, all of

which are an integral part of nature. In contrast to Western conceptions of family, the Indigenous

extended family is not always land-based, biological, or having the same heritage, but

nevertheless is a crucial part of the child's life. Family means people with whom the child is

familiar and comfortable; the implication of this fact is that people who are connected to the

child in this way are not always recognized by the government as potential caregivers. In the

model the theme of family brings the six core themes together and connects them to the

concentric rings of nested circle.

   Lastly, the social agencies are represented in the digram as a triangle that enters into

model as an external force with sharp edges that can cut into and separate the different circles of

being. Because they are external, social services are not part of the whole system, nor integrated

into it. This triangle component nevertheless has a rippling impact on the children, their

biological and foster families, their communities, nation, and environment because, by taking

children out of their birth place as a matter of public policy, they become disconnected from all

of the six core themes identified as crucial to their development. Currently, social agencies do

not appear to be working cohesively with the circle of being. My hope is to see this element

transform into another circle in the model that is integrated and works together with the rest as

part of a holistic system.

The Anti-Oppressive Practice Perspective

> All discourse, whether universalistic and/or particularistic, must be subject to
> contestation, so that we are held accountable for the thinking that we articulate in our
> writings, and so that we do not reinforce much of the taken for granted assumptions about
> the world. (Sewpaul, 2007, p. 398)

Art therapists who have observed the experiences of domination and subordination in

their practice are ethically obligated to give them space, voice them, and share them with other

professionals (Strega, 2005). This requires, firstly, awareness and acknowledgement that the

dynamic is occurring and, secondly, the presence of mind to address oppression with the client,

which can open up discussion and reconcilliation. The therapist can also share knowledge about

historical and current colonizing structures and help relate them to their clients' and their own

lived experiences and knowledge.

To learn to become anti-oppressive as a perspective on my research journey, I had to

begin with how I had initially framed my research question (Kapitan, 2018). My intention of

examining my attachment-informed practice with Indigenous clients was problematic;

attachment is a Western construct and is different from the Indigenous worldview. Rather than

learning how to apply an Indigenous model to support Indigenous clients, I was going to impose

a dominant Western construct from my training that I assumed was correct, thus creating a situation that replicated colonialism. Choosing instead to engage my research as a journey of discovery, I was able to learn Indigenous principles that fit my clients' needs and contributed to the reconciliation process.

Having begun to transform my thinking and language, I chose different language in both my title and topic as an anti-oppressive act, whereby I reframed dyadic art therapy into triadic art therapy. The latter model created a relationship between the child, caregiver, and therapist that fit the Indigenous collectivistic worldview and was centered on cultural elements as ceremonies, nature, and community helpers.

My critical review of art therapy and closely related literature revealed another layer of oppression that required my consideration, in order to be true to the research participants in the study and my overall aims as a practitioner. I became aware that an ethnocentric inclination was evident throughout the literature published on the topic; most researchers had perceived the construct of attachment as universal to the human experience. Upon investigating attachment in relationship to the Indigenous worldview, I found that connectedness was a far better, more accurate construct. In my study, the concept of connectedness was found to be holistic and encompassing the themes of culture, nature, oppression, and spirituality, and with the theme of family central and relating to all the other themes. The term *connectedness* in Indigenous culture relates to all beings within the family, community, nations, and environment.

The aim of investigating a Western construct within an Indigenous population required cultural humility and willingness to interrupt my ethnocentric assumptions (Kapitan, 2015). I had to learn and practice not to impose Western ideas and interpretations on others, which is part of

past and ongoing colonization practices in Canada and elsewhere. For example, residential

schools were often viewed by the broader public as helpful; they were certainly not regarded this

way in Indigenous communities. Similarly, the social workers who remove children from their

homes are following public policy and often acting with the intention of protecting the children

from what they consider a "harmful environment." Hence, my desire to understand attachment

between Indigenous caregivers and Indigenous foster children led me to learn about their culture

and history, and thus did my focus shift to explore connectedness —not only between the

children and their caregivers but to their families, communities, nature, and spirituality.

In the design of the study, I realized that I needed to reach out beyond my training to

work and learn directly from an Indigenous community on the reserve, rather than expect these

families to travel on my behalf to an unfamiliar, often alienating urban setting. As a settler

therapist coming to the reserve, I appreciated their life style and tried to improve my

understanding of how their community functioned. I noticed the caregivers' patience with the

child's pace in therapy, their strong connection to nature that I don't share, from living in the

city, and their community life that includes traditional events of great meaning to them. During

the study, I resided in a small community close to the reserve for two weeks, which enabled me

to learn to adapt myself to the participants' pace and needs, especially with respect to

transportation, nutrition, and time.

An another anti-oppressive principle, I engaged with people from the community to help

me with the design of the triadic art therapy model and I welcomed their direct involvement in

the program I facilitated. An example was my preliminary consultation with the Anishinabe

helper who advised me to include ceremonies for each dyad separately before the art therapy

sessions began, after which she would leave the room so as to not breach confidentiality with the participants. I also learned from her certain techniques and materials that would be culturally appropriate, especially for the group activity.

Preparation for and on-going anti-oppressive practice throughout the study required my artistic self-exploration, education about Indigenous history in Canada, and greater knowledge about First Nations people and their culture. Hence, I went to circle talks at the University of Manitoba (illustrated in Figure 32) and met with Elders face-to-face to learn from their experiences of healing, so that I could proceed with respect and reciprocity toward the Indigenous communities. I traveled to meet and form relationship with people in two different reserves in northern Manitoba and also
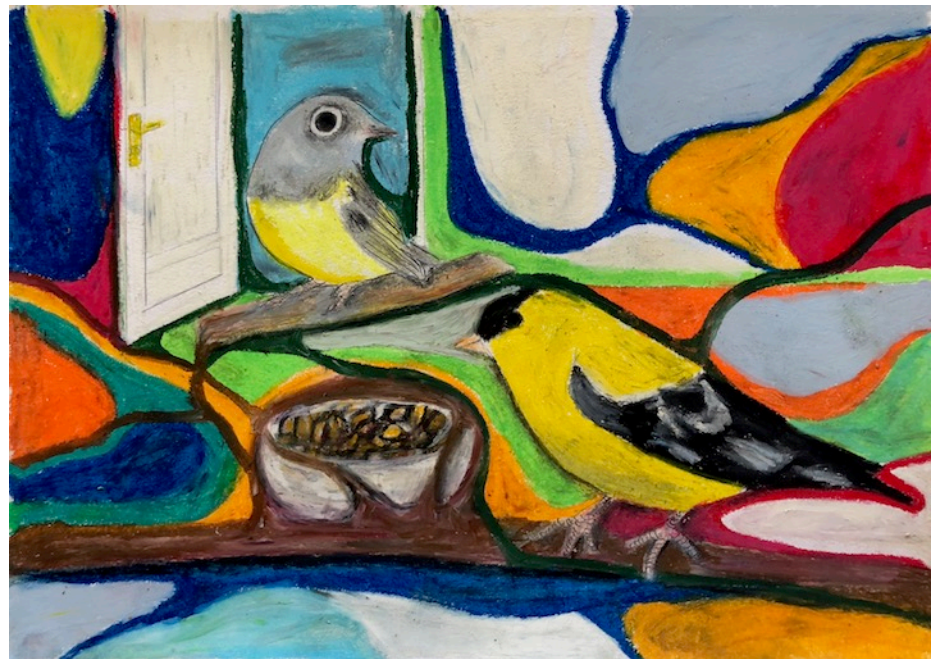
Figure 32: My reflection, "The open door" (case 1, session 2)

participated in their ceremonies and ate traditional foods.

To be anti-oppressive, the activities I designed into the triadic art therapy program required critical thinking with regards to their assimilationist and ethnocentric assumptions (Hocoy, 2011). For instance, I suggested specific art activities but always put other art materials

and toys on the table for the participants to choose from, thus communicating that there are many ways of working and I did not expect them to conform to my own as somehow better or superior. I also participated in some relational activities as an equal part of the triad, as when creating with clay. In addition, it was important for me to integrate their preferred topic of nature into therapy, both through the materials used (e.g., clay) and activities (e.g., bird's nest), since nature is an integral part of life on the reserve.

Graveline cautions that language choice and naming are political acts, and different terms "reference different underlying meanings and historical periods." She insists that "showing respect for Indigenous peoples, by using the current terminology, is an important issue for each of [us] to research and understand" (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, January 20, 2017). In the location where I worked, the people called themselves Indians, Aboriginal, and Indigenous people; however, I only used the term Indigenous. Respect was the main attitude that I chose to reflect as an outsider. For example, I brought the community helper an offering of tobacco, in keeping with her community's traditional way of showing respect. I noted that the people in the reserve were proud of their culture, such as traditional ceremonies like the pow wow dance as an act of spirituality and assembly.

My Indigenous mentors helped me to better understand their culture, and need for and practice of decolonization. For example, I first used the term *tribe*, assuming but not knowing its meaning. I later learned that "Indigenous people in Canada are recognized as belonging to self-governing nations… [and] consider "tribe" a pejorative term" (Methot, 2012, para 10).). In addition, the word "should" is part of a verb that communicates obligation, permission, capacity, and the language of judgment. Saying that one "knows their history" objectifies through its

implicaton of "us vs. them," and can be divisive. "Colonial history belongs to *both* Indigenous

and settlers" (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, February 20, 2019). I learned that it is

also important to interrupt common assumptions that state that the current situation in Canada is

"postcolonialism" (J. Vivian, personal communication, February 10, 2019), because forms of

colonizing power continue today. For example, racial extractivism "positions race and

colonialism as central to extractivist projects under neoliberalism and underpins how these

epistemologies are written into the economic structure and social relations of production and

consumption" (Preston, 2017. p. 356).

An example of "catching" myself in my ethnocentrism occurred in my exploration of the

portrait of the two birds looking into each other's eyes (therapist reflection art, case 1, session 2).

My intention was to show the child looking into his foster mother's eyes as a connection between

a baby and parent. However, it is not culturally expected for Indigenous people to look directly

into one another's eyes, and this is especially true for those with differences in power and

authority (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, February 20, 2019).

As an ongoing commitment to cultural humility, I must continue to endeavor to explore

my own biases and stereotypes, and always ask questions when confronted with unfamiliar

situations or behaviors. For example, I recall an incident when the foster parents and the Elder

who was invited into the session discussed trauma issues in front of the children. I felt a need to

protect them; as foster children they were already exposed to very difficult or disturbing events.

I also had a therapist's concern that, for some, trauma experiences might be perceived as normal

life. Likely this concern derived as well from a trauma of my own, contained in memory of my

family's stories of Holocaust survivors, "we walked on dead bodies as children and this was

normal for us" (Ester Weinberg, , personal communication September 16, 2016). When I took

my concern to Vivian, an Indigenous consultant, I explained that my intervention needed to

focus on resilience rather than the prolonged and extensive description of personal tragedy that

had been shared. Vivian responded that mentioning trauma in front of the children meant

addressing their past and present realities, which may prepare them for hardships that they may

encounter. She said that maybe their elders do this unconsciously or it may be a result of the

current lived reality in the community. Vivian suggested that I open myself to these possibilities

and ask what the concept of protection means to people living in this community, as well as to

investigate the origin of why the situation is the way it is (personal communication, November

20, 2018). I could also explore my "protective" impulse and countertransference relating the

above.

One of the main shifts as an anti-oppressive practitioner-researcher was my awareness of

the need to use appropriate language, as otherwise my facilitation could have had the effect of

coercion or imposition of expectations and actions coming from my power and privilege. For

example, I cannot present myself as an outside "expert" who came into an Indigenous

community to "teach" them. Rather I presented myself with cultural humility, as a learner on the

same level. "Communicating connections is challenging, where the divides are built right into

colonizers' English" (F. J. Graveline, personal communication, February, 22, 2019). In my study,

I embraced learning about the Indigenous culture from the community helper and from the

participants' stories. For example, a foster mother was excited to discover a shape of a turtle in

the middle of one of her handprints (case 3, session 5). This was significant for her and led to a

conversation about the turtle as a spiritual guide who carries truth and represents health and a

long life. I welcomed and accepted with empathy the excitement of the arrival of the foster

mother's spiritual guide. I was able to recognize the spiritual importance of the turtle, even

though I myself do not relate to it in the same way.

As another conscious decision, I added artistic images and narrative text to this

dissertation's format, which is a deviation from formal academic writing. Hence, as an AOP

researcher, I chose to follow from an Indigenous oral tradition with my use of animated story-

telling and nature themes. This was my way to both present my participants and represent them

only insofar as my own story-telling, so as to not be writing "about" them from my own point-of-

view. Lastly, All of these experiences relating to my AOP research are summarized in Table 1,

which presents a framework for examining power relations with respect to the types of powers

present, oppressive appearances, and anti-oppressive strategies.

Table 1. *Framework for Power Relations: Anti-Oppressive Art Therapy Research* (based on Rogers, 2012)

Modality	Form of Power	Oppressive Appearances	Anti-Oppressive Strategies
How is power experienced?	What kind of power?	How do you see what is being experienced?	What can I do about it?
First modality of power	*Behavioral* Controlling power Imbalance of power relations More powerful parties leverage their power over others in regards to decision making	*Research on Participants* Participants are objects Researcher's motives are more important than participant's values and beliefs Use knowledge and influence as a form of power	*Research with participants* Respect participants as contributing parties in the research Be mindful of participant's values and beliefs

		Research is performed on researcher's terms and not on participant's terms	Be open to knowledge and influence from Indigenous culture
		Researcher projects a dominant, biased lens of a Western approach onto the participant	Researchers and participants should define terms together
			Be mindful of biases and be open to other viewpoints
Second modality	*Non-Decision-Making* The public doesn't have a decision on what is being researched Researchers and commissioners of research predominately determine what will be researched	*Commissioners/ Researchers avoid discussing oppression in art therapy research:* Researchers do not choose debateable or sensitive research topics that could threaten them in some way Researchers do not discuss or recognize oppression within their fields of research	*Anti-Oppressive Research:* Discuss oppression in art therapy research Incorporate Indigenous ideologies into research Involve Indigenous community members as art therapist mentors in devising the research topic
Third modality	*Hegemonic* Researchers and oppressed groups accept the status quo Oppressed groups accept their status as an oppressed group and also accept the researcher's status as an expert Researchers display dominance in an unobservable way through a hegemonic system of beliefs and ideologies	*Dyadic Model:* Art therapist researcher is the expert and observes clients from a higher level Clients are an oppressed group and are treated as such by the researcher	*Triadic Model:* Researcher is positioned at the same level as the other two parties in the art therapy study process Researcher is seen as knowledgeable, but is also open to learn with the group in the process

Fourth modality	*Post-Structuralist View of Power*	*Cultural Blindness in Art Therapy Literature:*	*Define and Legitimize Oppression:*
	Power relations between researchers and participants are seen as constantly changing	Many Western therapy models in the literature mainly discuss the end results but lack an emphasis on the oppressive roots that contributed to this end result	Explain/examine oppression and the current power relations with other art therapist and their clients
	These relationships are influenced by culture, knowledge, and discourse	Colonialism is often ignored in literature of Western therapy models	Researchers learn and explore through intrapersonal experience
	This de-legitimizes oppression and oppressive groups, enabling oppression to continue to dominate		

Allyship

Watson (as cited in Gough, 1998), an Indigenous activist has been attributed as stating, "If you are here to help me you are wasting your time but if you come because your liberation is bound up in mine then let us begin" (p. 3). In other words, we are all relating and connecting together (illustrated in Figure 33), and every crisis and challenge in the human beings' ecosystem affects all of us. Supporting Indigenous health and wellbeing will not only affect Indigenous people, but all populations. If I really take in this profound understanding, it means I cannot work with Indigenous children as their therapist in the Western role of expert provider of a service; this work will only make sense by my relating to them as part of my and their extended family.

Moreover, I feel responsibility as a Canadian citizen to help create a better, more equal society for all. Marginalization toward Indigenous people in Canadian public policy includes

"depopulation, legal control, the use of ideology through religion, education, media, urbanization, and paternalism" (Nielsen & Robyn, 2003, p. 29). These policies have impacted Indigenous people's mental health

Figure 33: My reflection, "Togetherness" (case 3, session 4)

and are implicated in their disproportionally high rate of involvement with the criminal justice

system, both as offenders and as victims, and in the disproportionally high rate of Indigenous

children in the child welfare system in Manitoba and Canada. When I and other art therapists are

not participating in an active process of decolonization we are agreeing to the status quo of

colonization. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, "Within complex and ever shifting realms of

power relations, do we position ourselves on the side of the colonizing mentality? Or do we

continue to stand in political resistance with the oppressed… where transformation is possible?"

(Hooks, 1996, p. 48).

For settlers, to be a social ju   n on

Figure 34: My reflection, "Deep well" (case 1, session 7)

one's personal and professional rol   atize"

our own privilege and complicity i   005).

For me, allyship is a process of bec   s

cultures, learning about and from their world views and their oppression. As art therapists, we must continue to acknowledge and explore our own biases and stereotypes, rather than deny them. In my own case, I am aware that my biases about First Nations peoples that I carry may emerge unexpectedly, and will always threaten to impact my work explicitly and implicitly. The best that can be done is be open, self-reflexive and responsive when the biases become visible to me, and humble when others notice and call me to account for them.

In exploring my own cultural history as a Jewish person, I still encounter anti-Semitism and understand its negative impacts on me. I choose to relate to people with respect, honesty, and acceptance. I see the humanity in every person. I agree with Bishop (2015), who wrote,"I don't believe it is possible to become an oppressor without experiencing oppression nor become an ally without being involved in your own experience of liberation" (p. 92). I initiated this stance in my study when I reached out to Indigenous people in their territories and experienced their culture directly and relationally. Learning about their traditions and oppression was a liberatory process for me in turn, and moved me to start advocating for Indigenous people through many personal conversations with my family, friends, work place, and my community.

As an ally I need to consider myself part of a larger group—not to feed my ego but as part of a collective responsibility. Being a member of the dominant society, I am becoming more aware of my privileges (Bishop, 2015); I am able to succeed according to my privileged positions within the system, such as my socio-economic status and physical ability (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2012). Therefore, as a privileged person, I am choosing to take action against oppression. Having struggled with the colonizing policy of taking children out of their homes, I looked for ways that art therapy could support the children in staying connected to their families,

communities, and culture. I created a triadic art therapy model in their local community, to involve children and their caregivers and to focus, now more clearly than before, on connectedness and Indigenous values. I cherish the moment in this work when the Elder said "Tzafi is our sister." This connection was significant for me as I felt I was truly becoming an ally —given that only Indigenous peoples can deem a settler as ally. I am aware that the process of allyship is an active one, that it is also long lasting and "an endlessly unfolding struggle for equity" (Bishop, 2015, p. 103).

As appeared in Smith, Puckett, and Simon (2015), creating allyship is about creating relationships. Given the history of imposing Western ideas on Indigenous people, there is a real need to work on building trust. It is important for me as an ally to accompany Indigenous people— not lead them, but to work together with them as I did in my study. Part of decolonization is to conquer my privileged inner self, to rethink my professional education, and to listen to Indigenous people's views.

Cultural Humility

According to Mosher, Hook, Farrell, Watkins, and Davis (2017), cultural humility in therapy means developing a relationship with clients in which they are viewed as equal partners rather than help-seeking clients in need. Whereas cultural competency is a continuing process of building awareness, knowledge, and skills, the term *cultural humility* is less an achievement than a practice of being instructed in the relationship, such as mutually experiencing a process that foster emotional bonds. A culturally humble therapist asks, What is it like to be this client? What cultural aspects does this client regard as important? How do our respective cultural backgrounds

Figure 33: My reflection, "Togetherness" (case 3, session 4)

influence our interactions and ability to meaningfully connect and work together? (Mosher et al,

2017, p. 224).

The journey
of designing,
researching, and
writing the doctoral
study paved my
way toward cultural
humility. When I
first started my
study, my thought
was to investigate

Figure 34: My reflection, "Deep well" (case 1, session 7)

the topic of attachment through dyadic art therapy between First Nations foster children and their

non-Indigenous foster parent, emphasizing how therapeutic techniques like EMDR and

Theraplay with art therapy could be effective. I actively resisted and even ignored the cultural

aspect, thinking that I had the basic knowledge to work cross culturally with First Nations

people, and that as a non-Indigenous person, I could not engage a cultural viewpoint as my

research focus. It took me a year to make this shift, thanks to the support and directives of my

instructors, Indigenous mentors, and persistence with my own self-reflexive process.

Today, I see my resistance as an example of cultural blindness. Consequently, I began to

learn about and then directly experienced the Indigenous culture and transformed my way toward

allyship. I realized that in gaining some knowledge about one particular Indigenous culture, I

became aware of how much I did not and still do not know about Indigenous cultures and the

impacts of colonization historically and today. From this shift of study focus, I decided I needed

to back up and focus my work to only involve First Nations caregivers. I needed to facilitate the

program on a reserve where I would learn from my clients' worldview and see them in their own

community, rather than in my practice setting. On the road to cultural humility, I gained

motivation to learn from others and to conduct a critical self-examination of my own cultural

awareness (Mosher, et al. 2017). I explored and created new relationships with the First Nations

community and First Nations professionals at the health center and CFS on the reserve. These

new connections and knowledge helped me better understand the needs of First Nations clients,

which demanded consideration of their culture, community, and history in Canada.

I recall that when I decided to go to the reserve to conduct the study's program, I did not

get any support from my professional peers in my urban workplace. They told me that my

strategy would not work because people on the reserve would not show up consistently or would

not be interested in participating or being cooperative at all. These are both stereotypic

judgements, where the practical realities of attempting to provide service to severely traumatized

peoples with chaotic lives often not defined by the clock and calendar. Still, I felt confident about

my plan, knowing that there always are serious reasons for when people do not cooperate. For

example, after two weeks of the program, I would come in the morning as planned, only to

discover that one dyad could not make it for various reasons. So, I offered to return in the

evening and pick them up in my car. On the drive, I had time to get to know them better, which

helped develop our therapeutic alliance.

For the last session, I provide transportation for the dyad, and the caregiver came out from her house to tell me that she could not participate, it was "not a good day" for her. I could see it on her face; I believed her and understood her situation. I knew that she was in an emotional state that blocked her for that moment. Previously, I had seen her functioning well in the therapy sessions, relating to her foster child with all her heart. But in this instance she froze. I told her that she certainly did not have to attend, but also let her know what I had arranged for the group that day. She learned that I had coordinated with the Anishinabe helper to do the ceremony, had arranged dinner with a traditional food, planned that each child would receive a gift, and that they would all get a certificate. When she heard these details, she decided to come, saying she "was doing it for the child."

I have detailed this example to illuminate the challenge of this stressful moment for me as a therapist and a researcher. I did not want her to conform to my expectations just to please me. I was careful not to impose my ideas on her, and I was prepared to accept her refusal. I recognized and accepted her behavior and feelings and could see that her stress was blocking her participation. I could imagine how difficult it was for her to attend when her body and mind resisted her desire to cooperate. Maybe all she needed was some encouragement at that moment. Subsequently, during the drive to therapy, I patiently listened and supported her, hopefully giving her the feeling that I understood her situation and appreciated her effort. Knowing the colonial past and present situation, I centered my awareness on reaching out, trying to understand the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual states that seek balance in the Indigenous worldview. I became aware of and moderated my ego and engaged with respect,

curiosity, and a desire to truly understand. Thus, in this example, cultural humility means to embrace others with interpersonal respect.

Ecocide

Hogan (1996) stated, "what happens to people and what happens to the land is the same thing" (p. 89). My study impressed upon me that the colonial history of Canada is essential knowledge that all therapists working with Indigenous people need to have. The traumatic impact of the colonial past and present situation in Canada, which has been well documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015a), has affected Indigenous people and all settlers, immigrants, and the ecological environment. Preston (2017) described the mass-extraction of natural resources in Canada as one illustration of the *settler*'s belief in an "inherent right to Indigenous lands and racialized labour" resulting in an "Indian problem'" (p. 370).

Because we are all connected in this universe, my standpoint is not only informed as a Canadian but as an observer of humankind's impact on the global environment. There exists a clear connection between ecocide and genocide (Crook & Short, 2014; Crook, Short & South, 2018). The structure of genocide relates to people and culture, in terms of collectivism, and takes away the strength of the group being oppressed. The damage done on the territory and ecosystem affects the people and perpetuates genocide (Crook, Short & South, 2018), such as when political forces support industrial mining (Crook, 2013). Indigenous people have a physical, cultural, and spiritual connection to their land, thus, when their land is damaged and taken away they are deeply affected as well (Levene & Conversi, 2014).

J. Vivian (personal communication, January 21, 2019) noted that ecocide can echo realities in the personal lives of people. Whereas I might assume as an art therapist that the use of

natural materials will evoke a positive connection to nature, I must interrupt this notion to also

consider the negative associations for First Nations individuals: "How does water play, or sand-

play feel for people in a community where they do not have any clean water to drink?" The

Indigenous language is deeply connected to the land. Experiencing other groups destroying the

lands, waters, and animals that are sacred have an unconscious and conscious impacts that mirror

the attempts to destroy culture and language.

   I understand Indigenous children's displacement and suffering as part of colonialism'

destruction and as a pattern that caused and continues to contribute to intergenerational trauma

(Blackstock, 2011; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a). In addition, the

process of taking the land is equivalent, on the macro-level, to taking the child out of their home:

<div align="center">

… Our selves… our children… suffered and continue to suffer

Through "well-meaning" efforts

To make us speak… Dress… Worship… live…

Like our oppressors.

Attempt to assimilate

So that the children and unborn

Will not suffer as they had… as we have.

This effort springs out of a Need to Survive.

We desire to be treated Humanly

Recognize… even when we adapt

To dominant cultural ways

We are often still Excluded… Despised

Ridiculed for our "Difference".

Despite the language of

"Equal rights"… "Multiculturalism"… "Inclusion"

We are Not included

</div>

(Graveline, 1998, pp. 16-17)

As I have stated elsewhere (Weinberg, 2011, p. 70), "connection to the earth includes a sense of dignity and belonging, a tolerance for diversity, and an ecological sensibility," while on the other hand, "part of the process of healing involves a releasing of emotions of guilt and shame, grief and despair, loneliness and powerlessness."

By respecting Indigenous healing as based on relational values and the importance of connectedness, this study supports the call for drastic changes in the welfare system of care to stop the painful cycle of removing children from their homes, their extended family, community, nation and the land base of their Ancestors (illustrsted in Figure 35). As such, the study contributed to one community's process of restoration – through relational values and emphasis on the interconnectedness between people, earth, landscape, animals, and plants. Eco-art therapy principles include use of materials, metaphors, and language from the natural environment (Carpendale, 2010), as well as elements of nature that played a large part in data collection and analysis. In this study results

Figure 35: My reflection, "Home environment" (case 1, session 5)

depicted wholeness between people and their environment.

Limitations

The purpose of this research was not to create quantifiable or objective truths about the Indigenous construct of connectedness. Rather, through the use of AOP, ABR, and narrative inquiry I attempted to facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the subject. Although appropriate for the study purposes, art-based methods are a subjective and therefore it is possible that my personal biases have influenced the results. To manage researcher bias, however, I systematically engaged in self-reflexivity and examined all meaning-making endeavors with an aim toward interrupting assumptions and engaging in the views and perspectives of others on the data. The triangulation of research methods, which includes researcher notes, participants' artworks, and professional supervision sessions, was also used. To understand or interpret the cultural and symbolic information, and to make meaning from interactive sensing and perspective-taking, I consulted two Indigenous mentors and university instructors to increase the contextual validity of my study. Were other researchers to replicate the study, they likely would get different results. Similarly, if I were to do the same study again, I likely would get different results as well because in social relations, communication is dynamic, fluid, and interactive.

Prior to collecting data, I prepared by reading the literature, which included discussion of the Indigenous value of connectedness. Therefore, it is possible that this awareness biased me to fit my data and analysis to confirm my assumptions. On the other hand, I was open to research on Western attachment theory, as well as to the evidence of the counterargument that did not position attachment theory as universal. Reframing attachment as connectedness involved personal exploration of my understanding of the worldview of the First Nations people that I

interacted with in my study. The result was the development of a practice-led model for triadic

art therapy that may be adapted to other settings and tested with larger studies in the future.

Another limitation was the relatively short time I spent on site during the study in the

First Nations communities. Certainly, it was enough time to create a short-term program and

gather needed data. However, it was only the beginning of my practice of allyship and deepening

understanding of the Indigenous worldview. Therefore, the findings should be approached with

caution before generalizing to any other setting, particularly one that includes Indigenous people.

In addition, although a small sample size is necessary to achieve rich data and to manage the

nuanced, multiple connections to ABR, it cannot support generalizations to a broader population.

In addition, the caregiver participants in the sample were all women; other genders might

produce different perspectives on the study questions.

There may also be limitations based in cultural blindness arising from my perspective as

a White middle-class woman. I worked closely with two Indigenous mentors and as a result have

progressed in my learning and experience with this particular Indigenous community during my

process of becoming an ally.

Moreover, my family background regarding intergenerational trauma and anti-Semitism

in Canada is relevant but cannot be compared with the situation the Indigenous people have dealt

with and are still coping with today, because there are major cultural differences.

Validation of and credibility in art therapy research is of course important; however,

validity in AOP is less concerned with external measures and more focused on adherence to anti-

oppressive research principles (Strega, 2005). I initially had intended to conduct my study by

utilizing Indigenous-based research methodology, including involvement of the participants in

the data analysis. I piloted a method of video-stimulated recall, which is a process of recording

the session and then watching it with the participants to get their feedback. I did not feel

comfortable using the video with the families and felt that the camera was intrusive and out of

alignment with what I already knew about Indigenous perspectives. Therefore, to be valid to

AOP principles, I gave up the idea of involving the participants as inappropriate. There are other

ways of involving my participants in the research process that I could have taken, such as asking

the dyads to write reflective stories about their sessions. However, I chose to work on my own

process as I am also considered a participant, as part of the triad.

Because this study did not use an Indigenous research method, the findings and their

integration into a practice model may present another limitation, as it did not actively involve the

participants as "co-researchers" into the research question, which is another way to engage with

people and explore their reasons behind their oppression (Kapitan, 2018).

Recommendations for Future Studies

A primary recommendation for future research relates to the study's anti-oppressive and

cultural perspectives. Were future researchers to replicate the study with a First Nations art

therapist co-researcher, an insider point of view on the value of connectedness and the

Indigenous experience would be possible and affirming. How an Indigenous therapist utilizes

the model and facilitates the dyad's process would be another valuable study focus. Integration

of Indigenous research methods could enhance the findings as well.

Additionally, it will be important to test the *triadic art therapy* model with Indigenous

families from different First Nations communities in Manitoba. I also would recommend

participation with the same group for longer period of time (e.g., one year) rather than only two

weeks of intensive treatment. Moreover, it would be interesting to conduct this research with families of different cultures, which might further verify attachment theory as not universally applicable.

Implications of the Study

My hope is that use of a *triadic art therapy* model with First Nations communities in Manitoba will contribute to the decolonization process, meaning that perspectives on healing practice could become more effective for the Indigenous people and for both Indigenous and settler art therapists. This process could lead to greater cooperation and respectful integration of effective ideas from both Western and Indigenous approaches. Triadic art therapy has potential to be adapted as similar models in other communities that address the culture and experiences of the Indigenous people and colonialism past and present impacts in Canada. Finally, I hope the model will encourage more art therapists to reach out to First Nations people on the reserve. Art therapy, if adapted in this way, could serve as a preventative health strategy with First Nations children and parents.

I am committed to disseminating the study results through multiple avenues while keeping the Indigenous principle of reciprocity foremost in mind. For example, prior to publishing in professional art therapy journals, I have been encouraged by my Indigenous mentors to share my art and stories in the community. As an ally, I will incorporate what I have learned into the advocacy committeeof the Canadian Art Therapy Association and art therapy services that serve, on their own terms, Indigenous people and communities. Lastly, workshops focusing on cultural humility may be another act of reciprocity by extending to professionals and other settler therapists the need for such a stance when working with Indigenous people.

Conclusion

In my introduction I wrote that I had generated the study idea from my many experiences of hearing Indigenous foster children crying for their mothers. Now, after reviewing my thoughts and insights, I realise that the First Nations foster children who came to my practice in Winnipeg for individual therapy were the inspiration for me to leave my comfort zone and expertise and to visit and learn from their community. My experiences on the reserve helped me

to acknowledge and understand that First Nations people have resilience and drive to make changes themselves (illustrated in Figure 36). Thus, my role has changed: I am to be a witness and support their process

Figure 36: My reflection, "Resilience" (triad group, session 9)

as an ally. This research emphasizes the empowerment of First Nations community members to take their healing process into their own hands and bring about change. As such art therapy, a process based on meaningful relationships, can be conceived of as part of their traditional circle dynamic of communication.

My study was personally meaningful encounter as it involved extensive research on Western theories and increased awareness and understanding of Indigenous knowledge. Coming from a Western perspective of attachment, I encountered my own biases, which made me culturally blind. From my experience, and as I learned more about Indigenous culture, this turned into cultural humility, from which I learned to I build and maintain relationships.

From the review of literature, I was exposed to the cultural differences between attachment theory and connectedness. The major theme of connectedness transformed the relationship between parent and child with its ecological, holistic, and spiritual aspects. Although I worked mainly with Indigenous people in regards to connectedness, it is clear that this same model can be applied to a broader population. Moreover, because the parent–child relationship is seen in attachment theory as a critical to children's well-being (Wang and Fletcher, 2016) due to the impacts of trauma on neurological development (Schore, 2003b; Van Der Kolk, 2014), the traditional Indigenous value of connectedness aligns with research evidence from attachment and neuroscience. The synergistic effect of the creative process of triadic art therapy contributed to holism and connectedness between Indigenous people and the environment which support their needs.

I think of the potential in Canada as a democratic country with many opportunities and resources for everyone. We can not ignore the seriousness of the difficulties and challenges facing Indigenous people as colonialization still exists in our language, concepts, and norms. This study was conceived as a part of a reconciliation process, both my own as a settler and for some First Nations people to be understood and their knowledge to be respected in light of their experiences that view me and other professionals with understandable deficits of trust. In this

light, I learned the importance of Indigenous mentoring as an important part of reconcilation.

My mentors guided me and helped me to understand the Indigenous worldview and gain a

transfer of knowledge that is vital to make changes with how to handle future research and to

work as art therapists in this field.

It was helpful to integrate the principles of respect, reciprocity, and relationality into my

study. They helped me open up to new ideas and think differently. They connected me to the

Indigenous mentors I worked with and learned from, as well as the Indigenous community, and

helped me better understand them and how they work. I also felt inspired to connect to my own

culture and community upon realizing the critical importance of relationality. At the same time,

throughout the study I faced my own challenges and obstacles. Originally, it felt like the study

was an endeavour for my own personal gain and interests, but it was also a big sacrifice for me.

It took a significant amount of my own time (specifically time away from my own family and

community), I exerted a lot of energy, and put much effort into supporting and accommodating

the needs of my participants in the study. However, respect, relationality, and reciprocity are not

separate aspects to deal with but are all interrelated and basic to a functioning community and

positive dialogue moving forward in reconciliation.

From this research I found that reciprocity was most impactful for me as I took into my

awareness where it prompted me to dig deeper into my intentions of my study and how I could

positively impact others with a practice model centered on Indigenous people. For their part, I

found that relationality seemed the most impactful concept as everything in their lives revolves

around a relationship. Within holism we are gifted with relationship with our emotions, other

people, our environment, spirituality, and ideas. Lastly, I found that respect is not just applicable

to a research methodology; it is truly a universal need that we all have in order to attain humanity and a quality of life.

This study process has been eye-opening. As a settler I do not want to make the same mistakes as colonizers. The imagery of ecocide, I have learned, extends to hegemonic research practice where research becomes a mining expedition of the Indigenous people, extracting knowledge as a means to earn a doctorate or advance a carer. I am grateful for the anti-oppressive approach that works with Indigenous people collaboratively and incorporates an appreciation for their physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional resources. In reciprocity I received the gifts of Indigenous research, experience, knowledge, and I gave back by advocating for Indigenous people's healing and resiliency, teaching, and facilitating awareness of AOP for art therapists, and disseminating the triadic art therapy model and the construct of connectedness. Moreover, incorporating ABR into my study allowed me to perceive that I was traveling on a journey that was aware of the process of decolonization and reconciliation as a visible and evident problem for settlers.

In my journey, I came to realise that cultural connectedness is an essential aspect of the healing process for Indigenous people and, indeed, for all people including myself. The Indigenous perspective of connectedness can contribute to greater development of the Western theory of attachment to include families, community, nature, and the environment. Based on my immersive experience, I call on art therapists to be part of the reconciliation process leading to transformative social inclusion of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Lastly, this study supports the need for major meaningful changes in the welfare system of care to stop the painful cycle of uprooting children from their inclusive home environment. As Dr. Cindy Blackstock stated,

"We don't want to raise another generation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children who have to recover from their childhoods when we could prevent that" from happening (Gatensby, 2019).

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APPENDIX A

Research with Human Subjects Consent Form (for elder)

Study of: Triadic model of attachment with Indigenous (First Nation/Canada) foster children and parents.

The term Triadic Art Therapy refers to the process of involving child and caregiver in joint art-making sessions with a focus on cultural connectedness.

Dear Research Participant:

I am currently a doctoral student from the Art Therapy Department at Mount Mary University. As part of my doctorate work I am conducting a research project on the use of art therapy with foster children (4-12 years) and their foster parents. The following is a request for permission for you to participate in my study for a 60-minute interview during phase 2 of my study.

My purpose for this study is to observe and illuminate attachment through triadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and foster parents.

Phase 1 of the study will include:

Smudging by the Elder with each dyad at their first session.
8 triadic art therapy sessions with each of the 4 dyads (foster child and foster parent).

Phase 2 of the study will include:

- An interview of an Elder (before the ceremony) about my study topic.
- Proposed therapeutic group activity for each dyad: creating a tree from art materials as a symbol of community.
- Participants: group of the four dyads of foster children and foster parents (from the previous phases) plus an elder.
- Ceremony will take place at the CFS agency and will include food and drumming and a certificate will be presented to each dyad.
- Number of sessions: one session for the group of the four dyads, 60-90 minutes.

I will be collecting information from the interview with you for my study.

The interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be produced. You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors. The transcript of the interview will be analyzed by Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg in a narrative approach.

However, the record will **not** be shared, shown or used by anyone other than the researcher, Tzafi Weinberg and her supervisors – Jen Vivian, Dr. Jessiline Anderson, Dr. Fyre jean Graveline or University instructor – Dr. Lynn Kapitan (bound by the same limits of confidentiality) in order to validate findings and observations.

   Also, I will NOT include any primary or secondary identifying information such as names, address, community, etc. All research records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet *and* in a locked room.

Data Processing and Coding:
- Final themes and findings will be grouped to look for patterns and to infer possible benefits and challenges for the process of engaging foster parents and foster children in art therapy as a dyad.
- This work may also further suggest implications for future research and possible findings that may benefit and help future families.

Risks/Benefits:

The following are possible risks and discomforts that may be reasonable to expect:
- Some imagery or questions remind people of memories that may stir up strong or unpleasant feelings.

The following are possible benefits that may occur:
- Your participation will contribute to a larger focus on cultural values in the healing process of Indigenous foster children.

Following this study, scholarly articles may be written and submitted for publication regarding findings and theory collected for the combined data of several sets of foster parent-foster child (dyad) art sessions. If you would like a copy once the work has been approved and published please contact the researcher Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg, BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW [phone number and email address].

Participation in this study is voluntary. Even if you give your permission to participate, you are free to refuse to participate at anytime. If you agree to participate, you are free to end participation at any time.

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me [phone number and email address] or my faculty advisor, Lynn Kapitan [phone number and email address]. You will be given a copy of this letter to keep for your personal files and records.
If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Mount Mary University, IRB Chair, Dr. Tammy Scheidegger [phone number and email address].

Sincerely,

<u>Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW</u>

Please indicate whether or not you wish to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning the form to Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg. Sign both copies and keep one for your records.

_____ I am willing to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____ I am **not** willing to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____
Participant Signature   Participant Printed Name

_____
                          Date

Research with Human Subjects Consent Form (for the social worker)

Study of: Triadic model of attachment with Indigenous (First Nation/Canada) foster children and parents.

The term Triadic Art Therapy refers to the process of involving child and caregiver in joint art-making sessions with a focus on cultural connectedness.

Dear Research Participant:

As some of you may know, I am currently a doctoral student in the Art Therapy Department at Mount Mary University at Milwaukee. As part of my doctorate work I am conducting a research project on the use of art therapy with foster children (4-12) and their foster parents. The following is a request for permission for the foster parent and her/his foster child to participate in my study.

My purpose for this study is to observe and illuminate attachment through triadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and foster parents.

The study consists of 8 art therapy sessions, which will include both the foster parent and her/his foster child. The sessions will occur much like a normal therapy session of sixty minutes.

The Elder will lead a smudging for each dyad at their first session.
The last session will be a joint session with all of the dyad participants and will consist of a farewell party and informal ceremony that will celebrate all the 4 foster children and their foster parents.
I will take session notes and pictures of their artworks, their artmaking process (without the faces of the participants) and of the ceremony session that will be with three more dyads of foster children and foster parents and an elder.

I will also be collecting basic demographic information from the following sources:
1. **Under 18 Face Sheet** filled out at onset of therapy, which will include your answers to the following: the child's age, grade in school, symptom check sheet, and your answers to the questions: What are the child's main issues? What are your main concerns regarding the foster parent's relationship with the child? What are your goals for the therapy? If you would like to review your answers or obtain a copy, please let me know.
2. **Case notes collected during the 8 triad sessions and group ceremony session**: which will contain information about what occurred in the session verbally, behaviorally, and artistically.

3. **Art Work:** I will also be using the art created in the session to collect information. In order to do so I would like to keep a photograph of the artwork. Images of the artwork may be included in final research documents and in future presentations.

Session notes and artworks will **not** be shared, shown or used by anyone other than the researcher, Tzafi Weinberg and her supervisors – Jen Vivian, Dr. Jessiline Anderson, Dr. Fyre jean Graveline or University instructor – Dr. Lynn Kapitan (bound by the same limits of confidentiality) in order to validate findings and observations.

Also, I will NOT include any primary or secondary identifying information such as names, addresses, schools, etc.
Also, all information will be kept separate from your regular Protected Health Information (PHI). All research records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet *and* in a locked room.

Data Processing and Coding:
- Final themes and findings will be grouped to look for patterns and to infer possible benefits and challenges for the process of engaging foster parents and foster children in art therapy as a dyad.
- This work may also help further suggested implications for future research that may benefit and help future families.

Risks/Benefits:

The following are possible risks and discomforts that may be reasonable to expect:
- Participants who are unaccustomed to creating artworks with another person may feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, or frustrated.
- Some imagery or questions may remind people of memories that could stir up strong or unpleasant feelings.

The following are possible benefits that may occur:
- This work is intended to fit within the context of the dyad's normal therapy process with Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg, and as such intend to offer therapeutic benefits in the same way the dyad might be feeling following regular therapy sessions with Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg.
- Gaining a deeper understanding for the foster parent's self, and her/his foster child's behaviour and feelings, and or her/his relationship with her/his foster child,
- The development of coping skills, insights, or tools related to the foster parent's relationship with her/his foster child and/or their mental health needs.

The project will be explained in terms that the foster child can understand and will be given the opportunity to participate only if he or she is willing to do so. Only I will have access to information from the foster child. At the conclusion of the study, the children's responses will be reported as group results only. Following this study, scholarly articles may be written and

submitted for publication regarding findings and theory collected for the combined data of several sets of foster parent-foster child (dyad) art sessions. If you would like a copy once the work has been approved and published please contact the researcher Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg, BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW, [phone number and email address].

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow the foster parent and her/his child to participate will not affect the services normally provided to the foster child by Tzipora (Tzafi)Weinberg. The foster parent and her/his child's participation in this study will not lead to the loss of any benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. Even if you give your permission for the foster parent and her/his foster child to participate, the foster parent and the child are free to refuse to participate at anytime. If the foster parent and foster child agree to participate, either of them is free to end participation at any time. They are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of the child's participation in this research study.

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me at , [phone number and email address] or my faculty advisor, Lynn Kapitan [phone number and email address] You will be given a copy of this letter to keep for your personal files and records.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Mount Mary University, IRB Chair, Dr. Tammy Scheidegger [phone number and email address] Sincerely,

Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW

Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow the foster parent and her/his foster child to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning the form to Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg. Sign both copies and keep one for your records

_____ I grant permission for the foster parent and her/his foster child to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____ I do **not** grant permission for the foster parent and her/his foster child to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____   _____

Signature of Guardian   Printed Guardian Name

(if there is more than one legal guardian please sign indicated that you have primary physical and legal custody) Please Circle YES NO I do have primary Physical and Legal Custody to consent to allow the child to participate in this study.

Initial here_____

_____
Printed Name of Child   Date

Research with Human Subjects Consent Form (for the foster parent)

Study of: Triadic model of attachment with Indigenous (First Nation/Canada) foster children and parents.

The term Triadic Art Therapy refers to the process of involving child and caregiver in joint art-making sessions with a focus on cultural connectedness.

Dear Research Participant:

As some of you may know, I am currently a doctoral student in the Art Therapy Department at Mount Mary University. As part of my doctorate work I am conducting a research project on the use of art therapy with foster children (4-12) and their foster parents. The following is a request for permission for you (foster parent) to participate in my study.

My purpose for this study is to observe and illuminate attachment through triadic art therapy with Indigenous foster children and foster parents.

The study consists of 8 art therapy sessions, which will include both the foster parent and her/his foster child. The sessions will occur much like a normal therapy session of sixty minutes.

The last session will be a joint session with all of the dyad participants and will consist of a farewell party and informal ceremony that will celebrate all the 4 foster children and their foster parents.
I will take session notes and pictures of their artworks, their artmaking process (without the faces of the participants) and of the ceremony session that will be with three more dyads of foster children and foster parents and an elder.

I will also be collecting basic demographic information from the following sources:
4. **Under 18 Face Sheet** filled out at onset of therapy, which will include your answers to the following: your child's age, grade in school, symptom check sheet, and your answers to the questions: What are the child's main issues? What are your main concerns regarding your relationship with the child? What are your goals for the therapy? If you would like to review your answers or obtain a copy, please let me know.
5. **Case notes collected during the 8 triad sessions and group ceremony session**: which will contain information about what occurred in the session verbally, behaviorally, and artistically.
6. **Art Work:** I will also be using the art created in the session to collect information. In order to do so I would like to keep a photograph of the artwork. Images of the artwork may be included in final research documents and in future presentations.

Session notes and artworks will **not** be shared, shown or used by anyone other than the researcher, Tzafi Weinberg and her supervisors – Jen Vivian, Dr. Jessiline Anderson, Dr. Fyre jean Graveline or University instructor – Dr. Lynn Kapitan (bound by the same limits of confidentiality) in order to validate findings and observations.

Also, I will NOT include any primary or secondary identifying information such as names, addresses, schools, etc.

Also, all information will be kept separate from your regular Protected Health Information (PHI). All research records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet *and* in a locked room.

Data Processing and Coding:
- Final themes and findings will be grouped to look for patterns and to infer possible benefits and challenges for the process of engaging foster parents and foster children in art therapy as a dyad.
- This work may also help further suggested implications for future research that may benefit and help future families.

Risks/Benefits:

The following are possible risks and discomforts that may be reasonable to expect:
- Participants who are unaccustomed to creating artworks with another person may feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, or frustrated.
- Some imagery or questions may remind people of memories that could stir up strong or unpleasant feelings.

The following are possible benefits that may occur:
- This work is intended to fit within the context of the dyad's normal therapy process with Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg, and as such intend to offer therapeutic benefits in the same way the dyad might be feeling following regular therapy sessions with Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg.
- Gaining a deeper understanding for yourself, and your foster child's behaviour and feelings, and or your relationship with your foster child,
- The development of coping skills, insights, or tools related to your relationship with your foster child and/or yours and your foster child's mental health needs.

The project will be explained in terms that the foster child can understand and will be given the opportunity to participate only if he or she is willing to do so. Only I will have access to information from the foster child. At the conclusion of the study, the children's responses will be reported as group results only. Following this study, scholarly articles may be written and submitted for publication regarding findings and theory collected for the combined data of several sets of foster parent-foster child (dyad) art sessions. If you would like a copy once the work has been approved and published please contact the researcher Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg, BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW [phone number and email address].

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect the services normally provided to the foster child by Tzipora (Tzafi)Weinberg. You and your child's participation in this study will not lead to the loss of any benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. Even if you give your permission for you to participate, you are free to refuse to participate at anytime. If you agree to participate, you are free to end participation at any time. You and your foster child are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of the child's participation in this research study.

Should you have any questions or desire further information, please call me or email me [phone number and email address] or my faculty advisor, Lynn Kapitan [phone number and email address]. You will be given a copy of this letter to keep for your personal files and records.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Mount Mary University, IRB Chair, Dr. Tammy Scheidegger at [phone number and email address].
Sincerely,

Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg BFA, DKATI, RCAT, RSW

Please indicate whether or not you wish to allow to participate in this project by checking one of the statements below, signing your name and returning the form to Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg. Sign both copies and keep one for your records

_____ I am willing to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____ I am **not** willing to participate in Tzipora (Tzafi) Weinberg's study on the use of art therapy with foster child and foster parent (Dyad Art Therapy)

_____   _____

Signature of Foster Parent   Printed Foster Parent Name

_____
Printed Name of Child   Date

_____
Signature of minor   Date

APPENDIX B

The following are the triad art therapy activities, which focus on creativity, connection and

nature.

Art therapy Activities

Proposed Therapeutic Activities	Materials	Directive for Participants	Therapeutic Intention/ Precautions	Connectedness Metaphors
Goop (Proulx, 2003).	One cup of cornstarch, ½ cup of water, and a container. Optional: figure toys, small rocks and dark paper.	Spread cornstarch in a container, touch it with your hands, feel its softness; pour water and mix the materials with your hands or with a spoon; play with the goop by pouring it between your hands. Optional: (a) add cups, toys or small rocks, (b) paint with goop on dark papers.	The softness of the cornstarch can symbolize babyhood; the goop may feel similar to baby food. The container signifies boundaries, safety, and containment; it encourages tactile stimulation (Proulx, 2003). Playing with figure toys encourages the use of imagination. Painting with goop aims to develop creativity, and is a playful, potentially messy, activity. **Precautions:** Discomfort with messiness.	Playing and pouring the goop between the hands is a way to communicate in that there is a physical touch and play with the dyad's hands. Rocks symbolize a connection to nature.

			Potential for regression.	
Hand Printing and Drawing. (from Theraplay; Booth & Jernberg, 2010).	Hand-cream, cornstarch, dark paper, and oil pastel/chalks.	Smear hand-cream on each other's hands. Print their hand(s) on the paper, by spreading cornstarch on the paper, then lifting the paper and looking at the hand print. Draw and decorate the paper with oil pastel or chalks.	Hand-cream and cornstarch symbolize soft material, as a reminder of first year of life. Hand printing is a tactile sensory activity that evokes self-awareness and validation of existence via the individual's hands. Drawing can encourage unconscious ideas to emerge. The paper symbolises a secure space. **Precautions:** Sensory concern: Can trigger sensory, memories of abuse.	Physical touch between the hands. Working on the same paper can evoke connection and cooperation.
Tracing hands and drawing Weinberg (chapter 3-4) in Proulx (2017).	Papers and pencils, markers, and/or oil pastels.	Trace their non-dominant hand, trace the partner dominant hand, draw inside their traced hands, draw between the hands a connection symbol, draw the	Self-awareness and validation of existence and realtaionship via each other's hands. Drawing can encourage unconscious ideas to emerge.	Physically touch between the hands. Working on the same paper may imply connection and cooperation.

		rest of the background.	The paper symbolises a secure space. **Precautions:** Can trigger memories of abuse.	
Scribble tag game (B. Tobin, as cited in (Carpendale, 2009).	Paper and pencils, markers or oil pastels.	Draw one's safe place on the paper; play tag with each other's pencils, using the safe place as a protected site.	Focuses on a secure base, and is a playful activity. **Precautions:** Potential aggression (Carpendale, 2009).	Tag symbolizes engagement and connection. Play encourages individuals to respond to each other (Carpendale, 2009).
Creating bird's nest (Based on Kaiser, 1996)	For construction: Two artificial birds, pieces of wood, dry leaves and seeds. For connection: glue, tape, clay, and strings. For decoration: markers or paint.	Create a nest with materials from the nature using connection materials and decorate it, freely play or create narratives with the birds.	The nest may symbolise home, safety, boundaries, protection, and relationships (Malchiodi, 2014). Seeds symbolise nutrition. **Precautions:** Home may not be a safe place with boundaries.	Birds' nest symbolises family. The two birds are metaphors for mother and child. Working on the same nest together can encourage cooperation. Connection to culture through storytelling.
Mirroring drawing game (Malchiodi, 2014).	White paper (18" x 24" or 18" x 12"), coloured pencils, oil pastels, pens or markers	Draw a line in the middle of the paper, take turns with one person drawing a line or shape on one side of the paper and the other person drawing the same	A 'taking turns' activity teaches the participants patience and respect for one another. The participants observe each other's process.	The participants "echo early infant imitative dyadic learning associated with reciprocal movement" (Rubin, 2016, p. 374).

		outline on the other half of the paper.	Drawing can encourage unconscious ideas to immerge. **Precautions:** Frustration with one's drawing ability.	Encourages communication.
Modeling clay	Colorful modeling clay, cardboard (8"x12") to work on, toothpicks and popsicle sticks.	Each creates with modeling clay on a board, then connect the two boards together with tape to create single picture.	Encourages tactile stimulation and creativity. **Precautions:** Sensory concern.	Connection to the dyad's art and ideas.
Taping recycled material (Weinberg, 2011)	Recycled materials, tape, white glue. Optional: paint markers and stickers.	Tape and glue recycled materials and create an together image. Optional: paint and draw the object.	Encourages tactile stimulation, and creativity. This is a process of reconstruction and reparation. **Precautions:** Younger children may need help.	Physically connection materials. Recycled materials allude to ecology, nature, restoration, and reconstruction relationship (Weinberg, 2011)
Kinetic sand	Container, kinetic sand toys, small rocks.	Free play	Encourages tactile stimulation, storytelling, and play, as well unconscious ideas to emerge. **Precautions:** Parents may not feel comfortable.	Connection to nature through the materials. Connection to culture through storytelling.

Sticky paper (Proulx, 2003).	Transference wallpaper framed with masking tape, felt in different colors, sparkles, feathers, and small cut pieces of colored paper and thread.	Glue materials onto the sticky paper.	Encourages tactile stimulation and creativity; the paper symbolises a secure space. **Precautions:** Difficulties to stick the elements. Potentially messy.	Working together on paper encourages cooperation. The sticky paper symbolizes attachment.
Clay	Clay, cardboard to work on, clay tools, toothpicks, and popsicle sticks. Optional: seeds.	Freely make sculptures and play.	Encourages tactile stimulation; clay symbolises earth. **Precautions:** Sensory issues. Potentially messy.	Creating together and playing. Connection to nature through the material.
Creating a river with cards, and drawing it	'The River' cards (Salpeter, 2011), paper, oil pastel or paint.	Choose 5 to 7 cards and create an image of one's river. .	Encourages the use of imagination and creativity. **Precautions:** The idea behind the activity might be too abstract for younger children.	Connection to nature. Physical connection to the cards.
Decorating paper leaves and branches	Branches, cut paper leaves, wool, tape, oil pastel, and markers.	Decorate leaves and branches, coil the branch with wool, attach the leaves to the branch, put the branches together	Encourages self-identity and group work. **Precautions:** Working in a group	Cooperation and mutual learning. Connection to the branches by putting them together.

		as a bouquet, present the artwork to one another.	participants may compare their creation with others negatively.	Sharing circle is a connection to the Indigenous culture.
3-Person parts game	Papers (8"x11" or 18" x 12"), markers or oil pastel.	Fold the paper in thirds take turns by first drawing legs on the bottom third then covering the section and exchanging papers, followed by drawing a body in the middle third, exchanging papers and drawing a head on the upper third of the paper; finally, open the paper fully and connect the parts, and decorate the image.	A 'taking turns' activity teaches the participants patience and respect; drawing a person can relate to one's identity. **Precautions:** Can trigger memories of abuse, frustration with drawing ability, and frustration wth another person drawing on one's art.	Connection of parts in the drawing can symbolise connectedness. Interactive activity between participants.