

SCRI 2020 Conference

Wiisokotaatiwin: An Indigenous Methodology to Foster Decolonization Through Physical Activity

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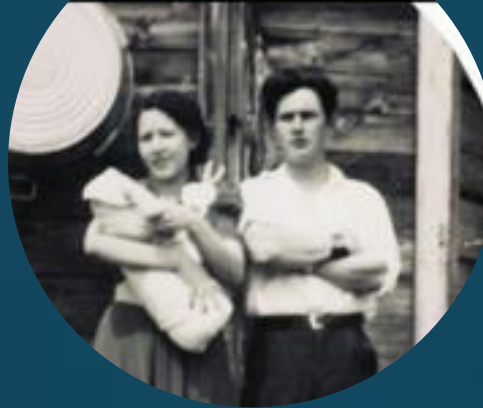
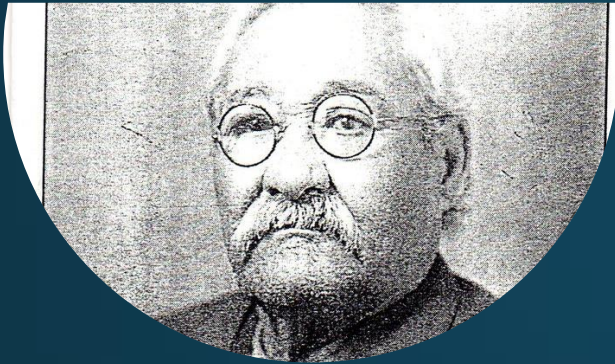
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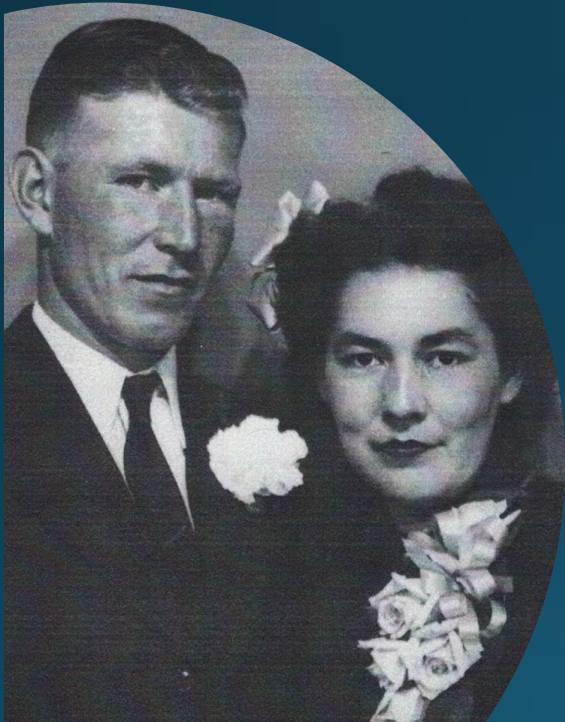
About Me

- Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan, Lake Nipigon, Robinson Superior Treaty Territory
- Unceded Algonquin-Anishinaabeg Territory, Ottawa
- Indigenous health, wellbeing, and physical activity scholar
- Indigenous ways of being to regenerate our ganandawisiwin/good health
- Role of physical activity in personal decolonization





"Stories are meant to heal" R. Wagamese



Wiisokotaatiwin (Gathering Together for a Purpose)

-An Anishinaabeg linguistic concept I learned from Naicatchewenin First Nation (2008, Masters Thesis)

-Anishinaabeg research methodology: 'bringing people together for a purpose'

- Guided critical consciousness-raising/dialogue and an applied physical activity
- 1st iteration: urban Indigenous women + kettlebell workouts (2016)
 - Odawa Native Friendship Centre, UAHLP
 - Book: *Indigenous Feminist Gikendaasowin (Knowledge): Decolonization through Physical Activity*. Palgrave MacMillan (forthcoming this fall)



What did it entail?

Results



Wiisokotaatiwin (First Iteration): Important Findings

- Was an important motivator for physical activity
- Created a community of women:
 - self-reported gaining **wholistic wellbeing**
 - feeling strong physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally, and enhanced self-confidence.
- Provided a welcomed counter narrative to the marginalization, racism, and the health disparities Indigenous women encounter
- Limitation: lack of land-based knowledge to foster wellbeing



Second Iteration

Adapting Wiisokotaatiwin from Urban to Land-Based: Anishinaabeg Elders' Land Based Knowledge Transfer Research Project, CIHR Funded 2018-2020

Working with an Advisory Committee and Elders' Council in Naicatchewenin First Nation, Treaty 3 Territory



Wiisokotaatiwin: Land-Based Focus

Asked Elders about the importance of land-based activities for Anishinaabeg health and wellbeing. What does this land-based knowledge teach us about wellness and healthy living?

3 main activities:

1) Guided by Elders to go out on the land 2) Sharing circles in the roundhouse to answer questions about health, wellness, importance of the land, physical activity etc.

Added goals:

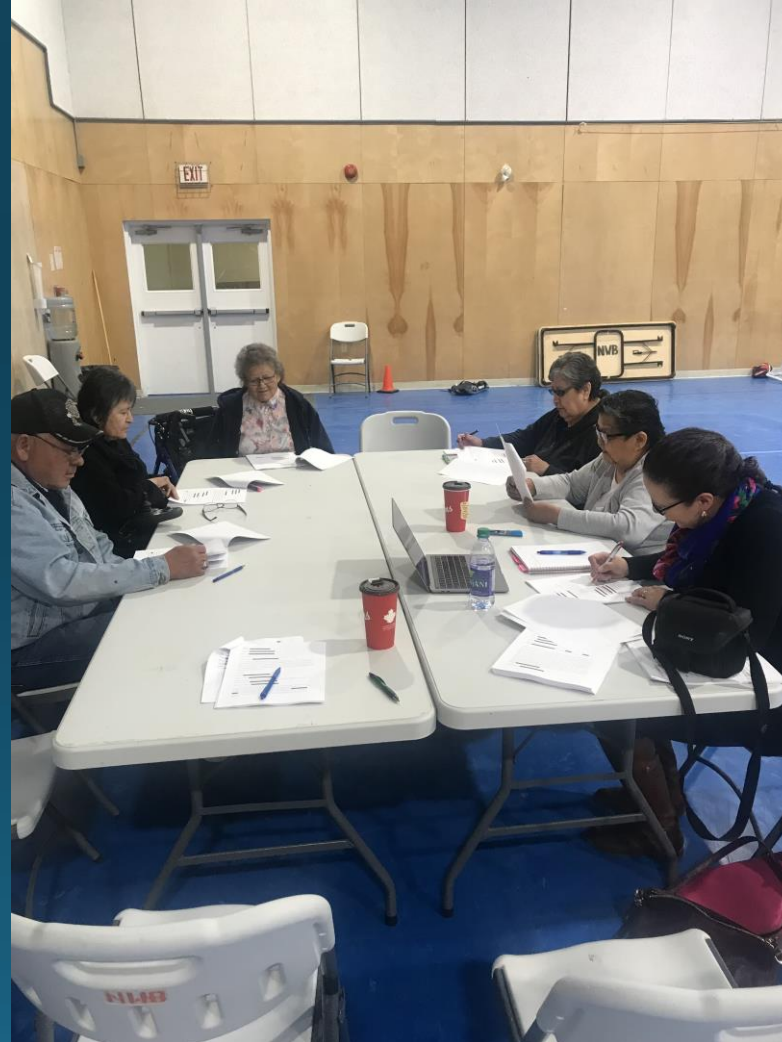
2) Community Sacred Stories: relational accountability in research

3) Stories of the Community Drums: direction from the Elders



Making Meaning of the Stories

4 main results: renewing the relationship to the community drums; importance of land-based activities; connecting with the land for healing; and Wiizhaandim



Wiisokotaatiwin: A National Project

Through my Canada Research Chair (2019-2024): Expanding Wiisokotaatiwin to a national research project

- Community mentors will implement Wiisokotaatiwin as a community decolonization tool using physical activity/critical dialogue with First Nation communities
- Goal is to better understand if Wiisokotaatiwin can be broadly implemented as an adaptable decolonization tool to ultimately foster individual and community health and wellbeing.
- Robust partnership conversations with Right to Play, Indigenous Programs

Contact Information

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