

PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF RESILIENCY AMONG NATIVE AMERICANS

by

Mary K. Laungayan

Liberty University

A Dissertation Proposal

in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand what resilience factors, if any, contribute to the reversal of adverse reactions to intergenerational trauma, in Native Americans. The study will attempt to use the data collected to determine an implementation of support that will build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit Native American Children. The theory guiding this study is the resiliency theory, which conceptualizes positive variables that guide behaviors in individuals who have been exposed to historical trauma and experienced, Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs) (Zimmerman, 2013). Using an exploratory qualitative design, this study worked to gather data from the Lower Elwha community, a Native American Tribe along the coast of Washington State.

There has been a growing interest in the study of Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs), and the part that resiliency plays in individual outcomes. However, these studies have not been applied to the Native American population and have not accounted for historical generational trauma. For this study to represent Native American peoples as a larger population, we considered the differences in how the S'Klallam tribal members viewed trauma and the severity of their experience. Data was collected from three S'Klallam tribal bands along the coast of Washington state. These bands consist of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, James Town tribe, and the Port Gamble tribe. The collection process included in-depth interviews using Conceptual Mapping Task (CMT).

Keywords: Resilience, ACEs, generational trauma, culture, historical trauma, Native American, S'Klallam.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study first to my Creator and Lord Jesus Christ. It is His guidance that brought me to the journey of research in the first place, and He continues to walk with me through the entire process.

I also dedicate this study to the Klallam tribal members of Lower Elwha, the S'Klallam tribal members of James Town, and Port Gamble who welcomed me into their homes and shared with me their stories. Thank you for the honor of entrusting me and allowing me to hear your voice.

Finally, I dedicate this study to my husband Arsenio, and all my family who allowed me the time and space to finish, even when they did not understand what I was doing. As I finished each milestone my family was there to cheer me on and encourage me to keep moving forward. I could not have asked for more.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the time and effort that Dr. John King put into helping me achieve my goals with this study and introducing me to the Conceptual Mapping Task (CMT). This technique helped to make my study more culturally relevant. CMT also made the experience of interviewing much more interesting. Dr. King encouraged me to continue moving forward with the study, advised me to step by step, and provided endless resources to pave the way on this doctoral journey. I would like to thank my reader, Dr. Tony Ryals, who had to read page after page to make corrections and give his expert opinion on what should be added or subtracted from the study.

I also want to acknowledge my sister Debbie, who began her doctorate journey before I did. She was a very valuable resource and an encouragement. When I was not sure what the next step of the process should look like, she shared with me what she was doing. She also invited me to sit in on her virtual Dissertation defense. I am proud of her and thankful for her help.

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List of Abbreviations

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Contextual Mapping Task (CMT)

Family Resilience Inventory Tool (FRI)

Framework of Historical Oppression, Resilience, and Transcendences (FHORT)

Klallam – Shortened from S’Klallam by the Lower Elwha Band

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

A phenomenological study was designed to examine the lived experiences of Native Americans, who have experienced historical and epigenetic trauma (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of this study was the problem that exists between experiencing historical trauma, which leaves its imprint on the genes, resulting in symptoms that interfere with the quality of life for the Native American population (Burrage, et. al., 2021). This phenomenological study examined the experiences of Native Americans who have suffered from adverse childhood effects. It attempted to determine what factors build resilience and aid the reduction of disruptive symptoms among the Northwest Coastal Salish tribes. A phenomenological study allowed the researcher to focus on the personal experiences of the S’Klallam people, through culturally appropriate procedures. This provided them with the opportunity to voice what they have been carrying for generations and make the information from the stories available as data.

Background

The connection between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma has been at the forefront of many trauma studies and covers many different areas in which an individual may carry a residual effect from these experiences into their adult years (Ranjbar & Erb, 2019). The ACEs questionnaire was created as a tool for investigating areas that might contribute to negative intruding thoughts and behaviors that an individual may struggle with as an adult (Ranjbar & Erb, 2019). The questions cover many areas that apply to the general population, but do not take into consideration experiences that may have happened to a specific people group. Since the ACEs ten-question scale does not cover areas of concern such as Historical Trauma, studies must examine more thoroughly the individual cultural aspects that may contribute to ACEs (Anda et

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al., 2020). Additionally, the tools that have been developed to determine the ACEs score claim to have the ability to determine the adverse effects of trauma and place a score on the trauma that was experienced (Ranjbar & Erb, 2019). Scoring this questionnaire without any idea of how to build the resilience needed to navigate these experiences can lead to frustration and depression. This phenomenological study conducted among the S'Klallam tribe intended to find the links to resilience through an in-depth interview process.

Problem Statement

Historical trauma has had a long-term effect on the Native American people. Much of the trauma they have experienced has challenged their ability as individuals and as a community to cope with everyday life, attempting to take from them their very identity, language, and culture (Burnette, et. al., 2019). These events have left them to deal with their mental health struggles in silence, because these atrocities were never addressed. Although Native Americans have been able to successfully rise above the trauma and pain they experienced, many have turned to substance abuse and experience other symptoms of mental health disturbance that have spanned generations (Allen, et. al., 2017).

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the study of Adverse Childhood Effects (ACEs), and the part that resiliency plays in individual outcomes. The problem is that these studies have not been applicable to the Native American population or culture. In addition, the ACEs scoring does not include questions that can gauge historical epigenetic trauma, and therefore it has not been accounted for in the data. (Gone, & Kirmayer, 2020). For this study to represent Native American individuals as a larger population, it considered the variances in how the different tribes view trauma and the severity of their experience (Tolliver, et. al., 2020). It

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also examined the connection of the individual to their community and the development of resilience factors.

The few studies that have been conducted to determine ways in which the Native American community can build resilience have been limited to large tribes that live on the plains (Brockie, et, al, 2015). Although these tribes have suffered in many ways, their experiences differ from the trauma that the coastal tribes experienced. Their cultural values and practices differ due to their location and connection to the land (Douglas, 2021). To be an effective study, each tribal area must have the opportunity to examine its needs, values, culture, and experience in a way that is as unique as they are.

Situation To Self

This researcher has lived on the Lower Elwha reservation for close to 30 years, in the Pacific Northwest, and more specifically on the North Olympic Peninsula. While living in this area, I have watched family after family struggle with addiction, domestic violence, along with mental and physical illnesses. Yet, even when facing the difficulties and challenges of trauma, many have demonstrated resilience. This struggle is not limited to the S'Klallam people but affects it also includes surrounding tribes. Living in this area, has given me an understanding of how the smaller tribes are often overlooked, and thus struggle with finding resources to build the strength of their nations.

For the past 14 years, I have been a teacher for the tribal Head Start. I have watched as children, as young as 3 years old, have come into my classroom carrying more trauma than many adults outside of this tribal community. The ability to help build resilience in the lives of Native American Children is crucial. However, studying young children, directly, may prove harmful,

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so this study focused on the elders and their offspring, who are young adults. My hope is that this study will begin to bring awareness to the patterns of resilience that are found within the Native communities of the S'Klallam tribe.

An area that has not been explored among the Native Tribes, who are working to develop their resilience, has been the role of faith (Elwha, 2019). The S'Klallam people traditionally believe in creation and worship one God, the Creator. They have, however, suffered greatly at the hands of those who called themselves Christian and were placed in boarding schools, similar to the ones that have had their atrocities brought to light through the media (Elwha, 2019). Exploring how this trauma has affected their ability to turn to faith, was significant to the understanding of strengthening resilience. My hope is that the elders and their offspring will be able to draw some connections to their ability to thrive despite the traumatic experiences that their communities and family faced. By using their faith in the Creator and the identity they find in their culture, this will open a greater avenue of true resilience for generations to come.

Purpose Statement

A phenomenological study was designed to examine the lived experiences of Native Americans who have experienced historical and epigenetic trauma (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of this study is the problem of experiencing historical trauma. The trauma of this nature leaves its imprint for generations, resulting in symptoms that interfere with the quality of life for the Native American population (Burrage, et. al., 2021). This phenomenological study examines the experiences of individuals who have suffered from adverse childhood effects. It attempts to determine what factors build resilience and aid in the reduction of disruptive symptoms among the S'Klallam tribes. This phenomenological study allowed the researcher to focus on the personal and collective experiences of the S'Klallam people, through culturally appropriate

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procedures. This provides them with the opportunity to voice what they have been carrying for generations and make the information from the stories available as data.

The purpose of this study was to examine problems Indigenous people face in real-life scenarios and give a voice to the experiences of their past. This study looked for areas of resilience that are unique to the Indigenous population, of the S'Klallam tribes, of the Olympic Peninsula. The study used the data collected to determine the implementation of support and build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit not only Native American Children, but all children. A Qualitative research perspective was designed to study these issues in their natural settings and interpret the phenomena, making it possible for transformation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The use of conceptual mapping aided in determining how resilience can be supported and what that might mean for Native American Children in the future, specifically the S'Klallam tribe.

This study works to understand what resilience factors contributed to the reversal of the adverse reactions to epigenetic trauma in Native American children. For this study, epigenetic trauma is defined as historical trauma spanning generations that has imprinted itself in the genetic code, which interferes with the quality of life, among the Native American people. The guiding theory of this study is the resiliency theory. Resilience theory conceptualizes the positive variables which guide behaviors in individuals who have been exposed to historical trauma (Zimmerman, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Childhood adversity can result in behavioral and physical biological imprinting upon gene expression within the DNA (Jiang et al., 2019). Understanding the link between adversity

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and toxic stress is essential for children of any age. Research proves that good communication within families contributes to resilience (Burrage, et al., 2021). Yet very few studies have been done to determine what role it plays for indigenous people, and studies that have been done do not take into account the role of community resilience.

Native American populations, living on reservations, have the potential to offer a wealth of knowledge concerning resilience factors and the reduction of violence and problematic behavior in young adults in their communities. Yet, the history of Native American people has been largely colonized and taught from a Euromerican perspective (Wood, 2018). To determine how best to build resilience, the cultural aspect of the individual must be examined for understanding.

The Resilience Theory helped determine what framework to evaluate for this study. Resilience theory is a strength-based approach to understanding the phenomenon and its relationship with chronic stressors. It allows the researcher to focus not only on the problem but on the strengths that allow solutions to surface (Park et al., 2021). Resilience is a character trait that helps the individual adapt or restore equilibrium after experiencing a traumatic event. Thus, resilience is key to finding solutions to the lived experiences of the Northwest Coastal Salish tribes.

Research Questions

This study was meant to discover what factors of resilience are malleable and able to be adapted to help in behavioral interventions that serve as a buffer when traumatic or stressful events occur in children of the S'Klallam tribe. To do this, the research questions and interviews

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examined the lived experiences of costal Native Americans in Washington State, specifically the S'Klallam people.

Gathering answers to these questions during in-depth interviews primarily included the Conceptual Mapping Task (CMT). CMT includes 4 phases that include gathering information, a face-to-face in-depth interview, creating the map, and reflecting on the map that was created from the participant's story. The process of each phase includes member checking, within the same interview, and creates an environment where participants are involved in the study, by helping to map their own responses. Including participants in mapping their own responses increases the accuracy of data collected and limits the traumatic exposure of reliving experiences that might cause pain to surface (Impellizzeri et al., 2017).

1. Research Question 1. "What are the lived generational traumatic experiences of Pacific Northwest Native Americans and their children?"

This question is designed to determine the symptoms that are typically caused because of the intergenerational trauma experienced by the community. It need to be broken down using the CMT for participants to draw connections to the symptoms and the trauma.

2. Research Question 2: "What factors contribute to the severity, length, and continuance of negative symptoms from intergenerational trauma?"

After looking at the symptoms that are a result of intergenerational trauma, the next step is to determine the length of time that these symptoms have occurred and how they may have been passed down to the next generation.

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3. Research Question 3. “What are the resilience factors that contribute to the diffusion of intergenerational trauma among the S’Klallam tribes?”

This primary question was intended to determine what specifically contributes to the coping mechanisms that some participants have, as well as where they may be lacking in coping skills. The idea behind using CMT is, once again, to allow participants to draw their own conclusions about their own strengths and the coping mechanisms that have worked for them. The hope is that when these connections are made the participants will be more purposeful with the use of the skills identified by bringing to light the ways they successfully build resilience.

Summary

Since the three research questions were designed for open-ended responses from the participants, a qualitative study using the CMT was conducted. The study required that the researcher to help participants examine problems that Indigenous people face, in real-life scenarios, and give a voice to the experiences of their past. The study will use the data collected to determine an implementation of support and build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit Native American Children. This study has significance, as qualitative research interpretation of phenomena studied in the natural environment, makes it possible for transformation (2018). The use of Conceptual Mapping Task, in the in-depth interviews, will aid in determining how resilience can be supported and what that might mean for Native American Children in the future.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This study researched resilience factors and how they may contribute to the reversal of the adverse reactions of epigenetic trauma in S'Klallam families. A review of current literature provides understanding regarding the need to define, build and implement resilience among the Native American community. This chapter will explore the theory of resilience as it relates to the transference of trauma. The second section will review literature that explains generational trauma, and its relevance to historical trauma. The chapter will go on to determine if there is evidence of resilience factors that can aid in reversing the effects of historical trauma. The literature reviewed will also demonstrate the gap in the studies concerning Native Americans, revealing the need for further studies (Pu, et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Resilience Theory

Resilience theory examines the response process that both individuals and communities have to adversity and trauma. The factors that enable individuals to survive, recover and thrive during times of stress and pain are at the center of this theory. This theory examines the factors that allow individuals to go beyond their expected strengths and abilities and find success using coping skills, strong character traits, and supportive resources they can access. Attributes that influence resilience include self-esteem, adaptability, determination, perseverance, and flexibility to change (Ledesma, 2014).

Genesis of Resilience

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The fields of psychology, psychiatry, biology, developmental psychopathology, human development, medicine, epidemiology, and even management have evaluated the resilience theory to determine its role in coping with stress, and adversity. The ability to successfully recover from trauma and challenges of life, aids in healthy development and reduces the negative effects of challenges and threats (Ledesma, 2014).

In the field of social science, studies of resilience investigate the strength with which an individual can use traumatic experiences to build their strength. It looks for the differences between those who can rebound, and those who remain stuck in the negative impact of the phenomenon (Ledesma, 2014).

Development of Resilience Theory

The Resilience theory conceptualizes the positive variables that guide behaviors in individuals who have been exposed to historical trauma. The focus of resilience in research is a shift from determining the risk factors and symptoms of mental disease to an emphasis on positive factors that can fight adverse childhood trauma. Researchers who concentrate on resilience will look for ways to enhance strengths that reside within the individual and resources within the community that can help deposit resilience. These promotive factors help to encourage ways that individuals can overcome crisis and trauma, when faced with adversity (Zimmerman, 2013).

Resilience is tied to the ability to self-regulate. If individuals can build more skills in this area, they will also develop their own resilience which can outweigh their circumstances (Blair & Raver, 2016). Evidence points to a connection between poverty and the early development of the brain which allows for cognitive function. Science has shown that the brain has plasticity within the area of executive functioning. These higher-order executive functioning skills are

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needed for success in school and adulthood. Therefore, studies have been conducted with the idea of helping to intervene in any deficits that poverty may have caused through early intervention. The scientific community has determined that toxic stress affects physical health, mental health, and the development of brain function in a negative way. The type of toxic stress due to poverty is responsible for lifelong challenges (Blair & Raver, 2016). Studies have shown that severe poverty can result in a developmental delay of up to 4% (Blair & Raver, 2016). The shaping of brain processing begins early in life, so there is a need for early intervention and prevention planning (Blair & Raver, 2016). This is important to note, because historical trauma also results in toxic stress and has the potential to delay development. Preventing this type of unnecessary delay is one important reason that the studies need to continue in this area.

Research suggests resilience aids in building protective factors that help fight against the symptoms that lead to suicide (Allen, et al., 2021). Community connection is one of the leading factors that contributes to this building process (Allen, et al., 2021). Protective factors are identified as components that prevent symptoms of mental and physical illness, outside of the individual, and protective mechanisms are the characteristics, inside of the individual, that help them succeed. Information on what values help build these connections among Indigenous people need to be collected, to gain more understanding of what it will take to help secure resilience. Protective factors include the continuity of culture, which is found to be significant in building resilience (Allen, et al., 2021).

Although character traits play a part in resilience, resilience theory is based on a process that consistently changes throughout development. Studies on resilience evaluate systems such as communities, families, and institutions to determine their role in supporting the capacity for positive development in the face of trauma and adverse experiences (Yates et al., 2015).

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In order to move beyond the individual to the community, especially when it comes to Indigenous culture, resilience theory must also integrate a structure that will adapt to the context of the culture it is evaluating. In other words, the structure used must be culturally appropriate. The current studies we have available on resilience conceptualize a European viewpoint, and until recently other cultural groups have been overlooked. The evaluation of resilience among other people groups and specifically for this study, the Native American population, is significant. It can help to identify ways to build upon and support skills that are culturally appropriate, as well as of value to the tribal community (Yates et al., 2015).

The Resilience Theory helped to determine what framework to evaluate for this study. Resilience theory is a strength-based approach to understanding the phenomenon and its relationship with chronic stressors. It allows the researcher to change their focus from the problem to the strengths that allow solutions to surface (Park et al., 2021). Resilience helps the individual adapt, or restore equilibrium, after experiencing a traumatic event. Thus, resilience is key to finding solutions to the lived experiences of the Northwest Coastal Salish tribes.

Protective & Risk Factors

Resilience consists of both protective factors and protective mechanisms. Protective factors are identified as factors that prevent symptoms of mental and physical illness outside of the individual. While protective mechanisms are the factors inside of the individual that help them succeed. Since protective factors are important to preventing serious mental health symptoms, such as suicide, it is important to continue to work towards understanding what these factors are, for each group of people. This is significant since suicide among Native Americans has become a public health crisis. In fact, it has been discovered that resilience aids in building

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protective factors that help fight against the symptoms that lead to suicide (Allen et. al, 2021).

Therefore, continuity of culture is significant in building resilience.

Past studies that focus on the risk factors of grief, and the dangers that these risks pose for the individual's mental health, have shown that there is a need to incorporate more of the strengths of an individual, and build on them when facing grief or loss. Developing protective factors may not only help deal with grief, but it may allow individuals to thrive in spite of grief. Three areas that stand out in studies where individuals successfully navigated their grief. These areas were personal resourcefulness, a positive perspective on life, and the support that is received in their social setting. This is an important piece of information because it explains why there may be a lack of resilience in some of the Native American population who struggle to find connections in their own communities. They may feel that there is no support within their own community because they were torn from their families and communities and weren't able to establish resilience factors due to the ongoing trauma.

Those who have been torn from their families and communities, may struggle to find this connection, which may affect their ability to access resourcefulness within themselves.

Understanding this, as the information was analyzed in a study, might point researchers in the direction of a promising intervention plan. A phenomenological study was used to examine the lived experiences of Native Americans who have experienced generational trauma (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of this study focuses on historical trauma which leaves its imprint on the genes, resulting in symptoms that interfere with the quality of life for the Native American population (Burrage, et. Al., 2021). This study will use the experiences of individuals who have suffered from ACEs and attempt to determine what factors build resilience and aid in the reduction of disruptive symptoms. A transcendental phenomenology approach can best provide

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the avenue to analyze rich, detailed information gathered from individuals concerning the social problems the Native American population faces (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Related Literature

Attachment Theory

The interconnectedness of social, cultural, mental, and physical health is essential for individuals. Each of the components of interconnectedness needs to align for children to grow into healthy adults. When one of these areas is neglected, another area will suffer. For example, when attachment is disrupted, individuals will struggle to find connection, and this may affect their ability to access resourcefulness within themselves. For this reason, there is often a lack of resilience in the Native American people who have experienced ongoing trauma. The absence of support within their own community, the loss of being torn from their families, and the atrocities inflicted on them by those who live among them, have damaged their ability to build attachment (Machin, 2014).

In the 1950s John Bowlby, worked on the theory of Attachment after treating children who suffered emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Bowlby concluded that these maladjustments occurred as a result of not bonding securely as infants with their mothers. He identified the need for infants to be close to their caregivers and receive appropriate responses to their needs to feel safe and secure attachment (Mcleod, 2023).

Secure attachment allows children to feel as if they can trust their caregivers, their environment, their community, and the world around them. Children and adults who have built secure attachments experience less anxiety and explore the world with more positivity and curiosity, because they believe their needs will be met and that they are worthy of love (Mcleod, 2023).

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When attachment is disrupted, individuals will struggle to find connection, and this may affect their ability to access resourcefulness within themselves. For this reason, there is often a lack of resilience in the Native American population who have experienced ongoing trauma. The absence of support within their own community, the loss of being torn from their families, and the atrocities inflicted on them by those who live among them, have damaged their ability to build attachment (Machin, 2014). The interconnectedness of social, cultural, mental, and physical health is essential for individuals.

Direct transference of trauma occurs when offspring of survivors identify vicariously with their parents suffering. It could also occur when children assume responsibility for their parents' suffering. Indirect transference occurs because of parenting styles and the breakdown in communication. Since the transmission of trauma leads to disruption between the parents and the next generation, the author uses the lens of Attachment Theory to evaluate the depth of transmission from one generation to the next. The study further shows that a spiritual relationship with what they refer to as a "Higher Power", can aid in healing from trauma because it builds new and secure attachments, increases coping mechanisms available to an individual, and changes the way they look at the world (Doucet & Rovers, 2010).

One of the key theories used to evaluate this type of trauma is the attachment theory. When an attachment is strengthened, social maturity can begin a restoration process (Doucet & Rovers, 2010). Since those who claimed to be from the Church caused great suffering, among the Native American people, researchers need to be cautious as to how they present Biblical principles and the relationship with Jesus Christ, which will help to bring healing from the trauma that they have endured. However, the power of healing through a relationship with Jesus Christ should not be overlooked or dismissed. Researchers need to be open to the direction of

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the Holy Spirit, by listening both for the doors the Holy Spirit opens and the needs of the hour that are presented by the individual. Since many Native Americans consider themselves to be spiritual people, research may reveal areas where they are open to building this relationship with their Creator (Doucet & Rovers, 2010).

Attachment and the need to build a strong and lasting bond that allows an individual to feel safe and develop a sense of belonging is said to be a universal need. Attachment theory focuses on the relationship between child and parent, but it fails to recognize the cultural link within the family systems that can be significant to the child's health and attachment as they mature in their community. A full understanding of the damage that has been caused by the removal of Indigenous children from their family system and community is just beginning to be studied with attachment in mind (McLeod, 2023).

These new studies add to the attachment theory of the past to include not only the attachment between the parent and child, but an entire attachment system that is applicable to the cultural perspectives of the Indigenous population. The unique connection, which is specific to the culture of each population, plays a significant role in an individual's sense of identity, connection, and belonging. Looking at attachment through the lens of cultural relationships in the community will help to identify protective factors that build resilience (Choate et al., 2022).

Spiritual interventions are one specific way that attachment can be built up within those who are trauma survivors. Jesus himself was sent to bring healing by binding up the broken-hearted, setting the captives free, and releasing prisoners from their darkness (Isaiah 61:1). A form of spirituality can be found in most cultures. The idea of praying for, or with, someone of faith for healing, is generally accepted as a positive experience. It may stimulate healing, allowing a deeper work to be done within each individual (Doucet & Rovers, 2010). Like many

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Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) refer to the adversity that children experience throughout various stages of development and the responses that these experiences evoke. Some of these experiences are traumatic and ongoing, while others are sudden and isolated. These experiences can potentially stall or disrupt the development process. ACEs are a result of risk factors that accumulate in an individual's life. When risk factors are compounded, and development is delayed individuals may be unable to cope with the symptoms that arise. Risk factors can be offset by support and resources within the life of an individual or the community in which they reside (Yates et al., 2015).

According to Brunzell's research, 40% of all children have experienced trauma of some type that disrupts their daily lives and ability to self-regulate. This destabilization leads to complications in learning and interacting with social groups. The skills that increase resilience should be considered when studying the historical trauma that Indigenous people have gone through. Skills that bring healing to traumatic experiences should be explored to determine one's cross-cultural boundaries and offer ways of increasing life satisfaction (Brunzell, et al., 2015).

Within the current literature, there has been an affirmation that trauma experienced in early childhood has a significant influence on the health of a child, even when PTSD is not present. The emerging information concerning the transmission of epigenetic changes in the DNA/methylation profile points to the severity that trauma can have on a child. When specific genetic responses are inherited in children, they are more likely to experience severe health crises and symptoms of disruption that last a lifetime (Nugent, et al., 2015). It is encouraging to note that just as trauma has a negative impact on a child's life, resilience can work to change the profile in a positive way. If preventative measures are put in place early in life, these measures

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have the potential to bring restoration, strength, and healing (Nugent, et al., 2015). To address this issue, research needs to initiate studies that examine how preventative measures already present can support needed changes, build resilience, and increase protective factors within the Native American community.

Exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), can be connected to risky behavior and mental health issues in children and in adults. The earlier a child was exposed to ACEs, the more risk there is of developing symptoms of depression and other mental health issues. In one study, data was analyzed and collected from Native Americans living on reservations, located on the plains, using an online anonymous survey. This survey evaluated 6 areas of adverse childhood exposure (Brockie et al., 2015). Of those who responded to the survey, 78% reported that they experienced at least 1 ACE and 40% had experienced at least two. As the ACE score rose to 4 or more, the symptoms that individuals reported increased in severity. Suicide attempts rose to 37%, while 51% reported abusing more than one substance, 55% experienced symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and 57% reported symptoms of depression. Historical trauma, abuse, and neglect need to be combatted within this population. Since the results of studies cannot be generalized, interventions need to be individualized for different Indigenous people groups and culturally based (Brockie et al., 2015).

Stress factors that cause significant changes in an individual's lifestyle, such as nutrition and psychological illness, can affect areas of learning, memory, and genetic makeup. Epigenetic modifications and physical interaction can cause changes within the DNA (Jablonka, 2016). These modifications are shown to be because of traumatic impact. This stress is not limited to the trauma that individuals experience directly; it can be transmitted and passed down genetically (Jablonka, 2016). According to research, 40% of all children have experienced some type of

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trauma that disrupts their daily lives and ability to self-regulate. This destabilization leads to complications in learning and interacting with social groups (Brunzell, et. Al., 2015). Often these changes are a result of traumatic life experiences, and they can cause variations in genes. Epigenetic gene variants are caused by toxic stress, abuse, and neglect that are connected to (ELA) Early Life Adversity (Hanson & Nacewicz, 2021). Researchers determined that brain development is affected by ELA and that DNA methylation is modified due to adverse stress exposure. These modifications may also leave children genetically vulnerable. This vulnerability can last into adulthood (Brunzell, et. Al., 2015).

There is a need for culturally appropriate evidence-based intervention plans that work among the Indigenous population. For trauma prevention and treatment to be effective it must include cultural values and appropriate interventions that line up with these values. Changes in the intervention process need to occur to ensure that Native American communities can successfully facilitate their healing process (Gameon & Skewes, 2020).

An anonymous survey determined a relationship between mental health and adverse childhood effects (ACEs), among Native Americans living on a reservation. Results showed that there was a significant increase in mental health issues as ACEs increased. With each additional ACE, participants experienced a 37% increase in suicide attempts, drug use increased by 51%, PTSD increased by 55%, and depression rose to 57%. These results showed that an accumulation of traumatic experiences significantly impacted the mental health of the participants (Brockie, et, al, 2015).

ACEs Questionnaire. This questionnaire contains 10 questions that are designed to determine the amount of trauma an individual suffered and the adverse score that correlates with

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that trauma. It does not account for the collective intergenerational trauma that is experienced but will allow participants to become aware of their score and consider what resilience factors may have contributed to the successful navigation, in life, despite these risk factors.

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** ...Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? **or** Acted in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** ... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? **or ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**...

Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? **or try** to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

4. Did you **often** feel that ...No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? **or** Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

5. Did you **often** feel that ...

You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? **or**

Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?

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7. Was your mother or stepmother: **Often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? **or sometimes or often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **or ever** repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?
10. Did a household member go to prison? Yes No

The Family Resilience Inventory (FRI)Tool. The FRI tool can build, strengthen, and support resilience. The inventory is also able to address risk factors of depression that are interconnected with the protector factors (Burnette & Figley 2016). The concept of historical oppression is a framework that Burnette developed was intended to explain the disproportionate victimization that Native Americans face. This concept is meant to expand upon the idea of historical trauma in order to include the oppression that Indigenous people still experience today. Additionally, this study sought to combine the framework of historical trauma and resilience to find a solution to the problem of violence against Indigenous women.

The idea behind this framework is to include strengths and resilience in order to recover from and reduce the violence that Native American women experience. As a result of ongoing trauma and oppression, Native Americans experience high rates of mental health issues including depression.

The culturally grounded framework of historical oppression, resilience, and transcendence (FHORT) combined study methods to gain data from two Southeastern tribes.

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Looking at the risk factors and the protective factors through the lens of a relevant culturally grounded theory, the data examined the connection between historical trauma, depression, and resilience among Native American families.

Burnette conducted a study in a way that mixed both qualitative and quantitative methods to prove the association of symptoms that stemmed from oppression. As with other studies of this kind, the variables cannot be generalized, and more studies need to be conducted to determine the values and protective factors for each people group (Burnette & Figley 2016). Looking into ACE's, historical trauma, and resilience factors using the Conceptual Mapping Technique tool can help to develop this idea for the Pacific Northwest Salish tribes. This is important because if resilience can be built, it can become the path to wellness.

Family Connection

Responsive care can help to bridge the gap for those in poverty, helping them learn to regulate their stress levels. This type of care can be done through parenting as well as through classroom-based intervention. Future research needs to incorporate how to help teachers and parents develop the type of responsiveness that is required to reduce toxic stress due to poverty as well as other effects of this type of stress (Blair & Raver, 2016). Research in this area could lead to prevention techniques, support, and even education for those who are secondary caregivers.

A study was conducted to determine how the next generation of Holocaust survivors felt about the possibility of transgenerational trauma transmission. Children who experience open, loving, communication with their parents were able to deal with the transmission of trauma better than those who remained silent about the trauma (Braga, et. Al., 2012). To determine how they are affected researchers used a Grounded theory approach to conduct interviews concerning

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their experiences, what they meant to them, and how they dealt with the symptoms they experienced. The study revealed positive results. They found that even though transgenerational trauma can be transmitted by parents, resilience patterns and protective factors can also be transmitted. Since this qualitative study cannot be generalized for all people groups there is a need for further testing within different contexts. For this reason, a study within the Native American community is appropriate to discover the patterns of resilience that not only have been passed down but built upon (Braga, et al., 2012).

Community Connection

Suicide is one of the major concerns among the Indigenous population of Canada. The suicide rates among Indigenous youth in Canada are beyond the national average and the methods that they have employed to help with prevention are ineffective at best. Conventional colonial interventions not only do not work, but also are resisted due to historical trauma. Westernized prevention plans, include treating the individual and the trauma they experienced. Cultural treatment should consist of treating the family, the community, and the First Nations population they represent. The need for a culturally based intervention plan for suicide and trauma is of paramount importance (Burrage, et al., 2021).

Researchers must seek the help of the community in which they serve to determine what trauma they faced and what approaches will be culturally appropriate for their population. To do this, more research needs to be done in different areas because tribal communities are sovereign and unique to their own nation. Thus, they differ from one another in what they value and what areas will benefit them (Burrage, et al., 2021).

Indigenous healing cannot be completed through individual treatment alone. Healing requires the restoration of the culture that has been taken. For researchers, this information is

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significant and can direct how programs are developed and shaped (Burrage, et al., e 2021). Individuals on reservations experiencing historical trauma present with a high risk for symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, alcoholism, suicide, and addiction. Historical trauma among Native Americans has been determined to be an intergenerational trauma. As a result, secondary trauma has been transmitted from one generation to another, causing mental health symptoms and complications to endure. Substance abuse or self medicating is one of the many symptoms that plague Native American communities that suffer from traumatic experiences. As new events spring up and the public is made aware of the abuse that occurred within these communities, there is an increasing need to determine how often and to what severity the community faces thoughts about the loss and fear concerning these past events (Burrage, et al., e 2021). There is also a need for those outside the community to have opportunities to learn from these lived experiences so the community can make needed changes in their approach and attitudes.

Indigenous communities who experienced trauma need to be treated as a whole, rather than focusing on individual needs alone. For example, the forceful removal of Indigenous children from their homes, and placement of already traumatized children in boarding schools where they were victimized, stripped of their identity, and connection to their families and culture, is a community-wide issue that should be addressed as such. Family and culture are the traditional values and pathways that Indigenous communities seek to recover after such tragedies. When there is balance within the community, connections are made that help bring restoration to the family and life satisfaction to the individual (Burrage, et al., 2021).

Communication within families is a key aspect of building resilience. Open communication between parent and child is essential to their mental health. Studies that focus on healthy family communications, in Indigenous communities, must also measure the disruption of

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communication that was due to forced assimilation and boarding schools, which forbid tribal languages (McKinley & Lilly, 2021). An understanding of how connective restoration occurs in Indigenous communities is necessary for any prevention, healing, or restorative program to have an effect on this population (Burrage, et al., 2021). The gaps in this understanding demonstrate the need for further studies in individual Native American communities.

Effective early treatment plans should consist of treating the risk of suicide as a family, rather than treating the individual alone. It is important to note that there is a great deal of stigmatism within the social aspects of the Native American culture that suggests reaching out for help is not acceptable (Shaw, et al., 2019). To reduce this barrier when researching within this population, the researcher needs to include a cultural framework that includes a community approach (Shaw, et al., 2019).

Community connection has been identified as one of the keys to building and developing protective factors. Connection to the community is a significant factor in working to heal from trauma. Yet, community connection is often overlooked in studies and programs. Community connection is especially important for healing in ethnic groups such as the Latino and Native American populations. Historical trauma and displacement have disrupted community connections in many ethnic populations. This connection needs to be restored for healing to begin (Schultz, et, al, 2016).

The Klallam tribe is attempting to rebuild community connection through the development of language and cultural programs. Even though these types of programs have been implemented, there is still a disconnect within the community and this causes division that leads to risky behavior and ultimately, more trauma for this community. Research needs to be

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done to determine where the gaps are in community connection and how restoration and prevention can be successful (Schultz, et, al, 2016).

Historical Trauma

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is an area of growing interest in the study of resilience. The problem is that these studies have not applied to the Native American population and have not accounted for historical trauma. To address the problems that Indigenous people face, advances in mental health research must move towards an ethical cultural understanding. Although trauma is a common occurrence across the land, researchers need to be aware that the struggles that apply to the Native American population due to trauma are distinct and unique to their population. Research must also be open to see areas of resilience, where they occur and how they can be built upon with conceptual clarity. (Gone, & Kirmayer, 2020). An accurate representation of Native Americans as a larger population must consider the differences in how specific tribes view trauma and the severity of their experience (Tolliver, et. al., 2020). It must also examine the connection of the individual to their community and the development of resilience factors.

Historical trauma has had a long-term effect on Native American families. Much of the trauma they have experienced has challenged their ability as an individual and a community to cope with everyday life, taking from them their very identity, language, and culture (Burnette, et al., 2019). These events have left them to deal with their mental health in silence because the atrocities were never addressed. Although some Native Americans have been able to successfully rise above the trauma and pain they experienced, far too many have turned to substance abuse and experience other symptoms of mental health disturbance that have spanned generations (Allen, et al., 2021).

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For this study, epigenetic trauma is defined as historical trauma spanning generations that have imprinted itself in the genetic code, interfering with the quality of life among the Native American people. Disparities that interfere with daily life include poverty, substance abuse, and grief that result in a higher rate of mental illness, and an increase in suicides (Brockie et al., 2015). Once the acts of historical trauma have crossed generational boundary lines, then the term we use to refer to the trauma is transgenerational.

Impact of Trauma on Native American Youth

Suicide among Native Americans has become a public health crisis. This is especially concerning when it comes to Indigenous youth (Allen, et al., 2021). The public health system has wrestled with the crisis of Indigenous youth suicide, but in the past scientists and providers have sought to solve this epidemic using conventional colonial solutions that are inadequate. As a result, there is now a focus on prevention through the development of protective factors (Allen, et al., 2021). There is a need to define what protective factors look like within this population, and what cultural values play a role in the application of these attributes. These factors cannot be generalized for every population, and this leaves a gap in areas of culturally specific populations. To close this gap further, studies need to be done which include different cultural groups. For this reason, the Northwest Coastal Salish tribes need to be provided the opportunity to study their own values which guide their protective factors (Allen, et al., 2021).

Intergenerational Trauma

Transgenerational trauma can be passed from parent to offspring increasing symptoms of stress. This stress can lay dormant until something triggers a response (Bowers, & Yehuda 2015). Studies on survivors of the Holocaust have shown that their offspring experience secondary traumatic stress. Transgenerational transmission of environmental stress causes

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changes in physical, behavioral, and cognitive functioning. These differences were observed due to genetic variants after their parent's traumatic exposure and postnatal care in early childhood. Studies, however, have been mainly limited to the role that maternal stress plays in the transmission of stress to the offspring and have not considered the connection between paternal stress and their offspring. This leaves a gap in the study results that requires further studies for those who suffer from symptoms of historical trauma (Bowers, & Yehuda 2015).

The second generation of survivors experienced a disruption in their life because of their parent's fear of the world around them and their attempts to prepare for disaster or trauma. Those who experienced this disruption reflected the trauma in a non-linear way in their own life (Braga, et al., 2012). Direct transference occurs when the offspring of survivors identify vicariously with their parents suffering. It could also occur when children assume responsibility for their parents' suffering (Doucet & Rovers, 2010). Indirect transference occurs because of parenting styles and a breakdown in communication (Doucet & Rovers, 2010). The Indigenous population that were sent to Federal Indian boarding schools or Canadian residential schools, they were never given the chance to learn how to parent from a community perspective. In fact, many didn't experience parenting from their own parents as they were institutionalized by the government.

There has been a rising awareness and interest concerning the need to deal with the emotional outcome of acts of violence, terrorism, and systemic forced removal of a people group from the region in which they live. However, there has not been enough investigation into the mechanics of how to deal with the long-lasting stress that has plagued communities, families, and individuals who have survived these events. As a result of not addressing these stressors, the phenomenon of generational trauma has become a growing phenomenon. This is trauma that is

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experienced indirectly and is passed down from generation to generation (Doucet & Rovers, 2010).

In one study conducted with participants from several reservations, half of the 306 participants reported that they experienced negative symptoms of distress due to the historical trauma they directly or indirectly experienced (Ehlers, et, al, 2013). In another study of the tribes of Rwanda, the research examined the experiences of 41 families. The study looked at adult females and their children to determine the effect that genocide had on the mothers and how much of that experience was passed down to the generation born just before or after the genocide. Although this study was done, regarding the transmission of traumatic experiences in the family environment after the genocide in Rwanda, it is significant to the study of American Indian peoples who have suffered in the same manner. The study of two generations after this event may provide helpful information to direct a study of the same magnitude among the American Indian population. The idea that children were actively involved in trying to make sense of the violence their families experienced, by seeking relationships with others who have suffered similar trauma, should be evaluated to determine if bonding with those who have suffered the same types of traumatic events increases the likelihood that the cycle will continue (Berckmoes, et, al, 2017). In both above studies, the historical loss was found to contribute to symptoms of anxiety and substance abuse (Ehlers, et, al, 2013).

It has been difficult to measure the symptomatology and loss that Native American population experience, and thus studies have been mainly focused on qualitative investigations. Recently, two different scales have been developed to measure the loss that Native Americans faced. One of the scales is the Historical Loss scale and the other is the Historical Loss Associated Symptom scale. These scales were designed to measure the past loss experienced,

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the symptoms they are experiencing in the present, and the amount of time they spend dealing with the thoughts and symptoms caused by the loss. Data collected showed that 66% of those surveyed were diagnosed with some type of mental health disturbance. Unfortunately, there is not enough data, nor enough studies to conclusively link these disorders to the trauma that the Native Americans have experienced. For this reason, more studies need to be conducted and the loss scales need to be evaluated to determine if they are applicable to other Indigenous people groups (Ehlers, et, al, 2013). These studies would be best done through those within the tribal community or by the tribes themselves if possible.

Faith and Culture

Spiritual connection and cultural connection are essential to wellbeing (Brockie, et al., 2018). The Creator and prayer are of great cultural importance among many Native Americans and can help them build resilience when included in a treatment plan. Researchers can use prayer as a buffer when investigating the mechanisms of resilience (Brown, 2016). Praying with participants who are open to prayer and praying for themselves to approach the study with understanding and a desire to learn from the participants can help encourage the resilience of both the participant and the researcher.

Generational Joy can reduce intergenerational trauma by cultivating faith through worship. The act of worship has the power to form and transform lives. In using songs of worship that articulate the love that God has for individuals and allow them to express their love for God, individuals build a connection between cognition and emotions. There is a link between worship and understanding the love of God. It is this type of love that helps to bring healing to individuals and communities on a holistic level. Cultural songs, which include drumming and singing can also lift the spirit and bring healing. These cultural practices should

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be included within the worship and allowed to flourish within their faith and community. This type of healing is needed for those who experienced trauma. Symptoms of trauma are often ongoing, but the healing power of true worship can lead to joy that is powerful enough to provide a resource for building resilience. In Native American communities, this may include incorporating the Native Drum and prayer songs within a time of worship (Craig-Snell, 2020). Other traditions should also be encouraged and included as an avenue of strength to foster strength within the tribal community.

Since colonization, the Native Drum has been banned in church settings and declared to be evil. The drum is something that has significance for healing among the tribal communities. Refusing this tool has caused damage among the Indigenous population and bringing it back into the church to worship God faces controversy and debate. However, the inclusion of the drum in worship and the direction of the Holy Spirit can be used as a tool for healing and restoration (Do Justice, 2022). Worship involves the whole being when it is done in truth, and thus it is a powerful tool for receiving healing from the Lord. When building resources that have the potential to build resilience, it will be good to look at activities with the potential to involve the whole being of an individual (Craig-Snell, 2020).

The White Mountain Apache Curriculum

The White Mountain Apache tribal community grew increasingly aware of the significant problem that historical trauma had brought to their communities and made a point to begin reviewing studies that would help their situation. The review of these studies revealed that protective factors within the Native American communities are necessary for the implementation of development. As a result, the White Mountain Apache Tribe created a curriculum they could implement in their own tribal school system (Cwik, et., al., 2019).

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The idea behind this curriculum is to connect elders and youth to make connections that will build a sense of identity and strength. These goals were intended to build resilience through the solidification of protective factors. This type of curriculum would take into consideration and focus on the culture of the population (Cwik, et., al., 2019).

To build relationships within the tribe and make sure that they were not offending the community, the tribal council was involved with the approval process of designing this curriculum. The involvement of community leaders and elders is essential for the integrity of the study, especially when it is done within a culturally specific population (Cwik, et., al., 2019).

There is not enough data to review the success of this program at this time and some of the cultural aspects of this curriculum will be limited to the type of tribe that it is studying. For this reason, there is a continued need for more studies within the Native American community (Cwik, et., al., 2019).

Unique Culture and Experiences of the S’Klallam Tribe

Way of Life

The S’Klallam people consider the land and the ocean essential and trust it to provide for their needs. Even today their schedule is often determined around the seasons to allow members of the tribe to fish, crab, dig for clams, hunt and, gather berries and other medicinal herbs. Cedar is still one of the most important resources. It is collected carefully from the trees using a process that will not harm these ancient trees. Traditionally, their main form of travel would have been by water using the dugout canoe. They would navigate the Pacific Ocean to trade with neighboring tribes. By tradition they lived in longhouses that were built to face the water signifying their dependence upon it (Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, 2023).

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The Elwha River is of great importance to the S'Klallam people. In the 1900s the river was dammed to provide electrical power, but the salmon stopped spawning and decreased in number. This affected the S'Klallam people's way of life. Finally, in 2011, the dam was demolished, and the river began to return to its natural flow. This restored the ocean beachfront that belongs to the tribe. Along with fisheries, this removal worked to restore the flow of salmon from the ocean to the river (Elwha River Restoration, n.d.).

The main source of income among the tribal community is the jobs the tribe supplies and the fishing industry. Large fishing boats are equipped with tools that can bring in enough fish to earn an annual living (Elwha Klallam Historical Timeline, 2019).

Treaties

In 1855 Governor Stevens was the superintendent of Indian affairs for the territory along the straits of Juan De Fuca, Hood Canal, and the North Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. On January 26, 1885, he signed into law the Point No Point Treaty, which included 18 articles of agreement between the government and the tribes in these territories (Elwha, 2018). The consequences for the tribes who did not accept these terms and follow the law of the treaty were severe (Elwha, 2018). The result of these articles forced the S'Klallam tribes along with neighboring tribes to accept the terms of giving up land and resigning to settling on small plots of land reserved for them. As the value of the land increased in the Port Angeles area the Lower Elwha tribe was moved multiple times from one plot of land downtown Port Angeles to another just outside the city limits (Elwha, 2018). These portions of land are called reservations today. The Elwha Klallam tribe was given their final reservation allotment in 1933 in what is called Lower Elwha today (Elwha Klallam Historical Timeline, 2019). The Jamestown S'Klallam tribe bought their own land and would not participate in the treaty. This decision almost wiped out the

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tribe due to starvation. They could not receive any aid as they were not federally recognized as a tribe. They were not federally recognized nor given land other than the parcel a few families purchased together until 1981 (CoastView, 2023). The Port Gamble S’Klallam tribe was federally recognized in 1939 and lived on a reservation just outside of Kingston Washington, known as Little Boston (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, n.d.).

Article 1 outlined the order for the tribes to relinquish their right to their land and even the country that they occupied. Article 2 describes that the government will identify land that is reserved for tribal use only (Elwha, 2018). This section explains that only tribal members can live in such an area but that the president of the United States can put a neighboring tribe on land that was allotted to another tribe if he saw fit. Article 4 promised to secure the rights of each tribe to fish and gatherers as they had done in the past, with the exception of shellfish (Elwha, 2018). They were not allowed to take any shellfish from beds that were being cultivated by those who were considered citizens at the time. Article 5 states that the government will pay the tribes \$60,000.00 for their land over time and that the president has the right to determine where he thinks that money would be best spent on behalf of the tribe (Elwha, 2018). The Articles further required the tribes to claim dependence on the government of the United States and warned them that they could be relocated at any time if the President thought it in their best interest (Elwha, 2018).

In the Point No Point treaty, education was also promised to tribes. This is outlined in article 11 (Elwha, 2018). Most of the funds for the schools that would be set up by the government would come from the money that was to go to the tribes for the sale of the land (Newland, 2022). What the tribes did not understand, at the time, was that the children would not have a choice in attendance. They were taken from their homes and forced to live in

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government boarding schools, where they were not allowed to practice customs, wear traditional clothing, keep their long hair, or speak their own language. They were punished when they held onto to their culture in any way. As a result, the S'Klallam people almost completely lost their language and many of their cultural practices (Point No Point Treaty, 1855, 2018).

Boarding Schools

Many of the S'Klallam elders were children when they were taken by the government to the Chemawa boarding school (Elwha, 2019). These boarding schools sought to assimilate the Native American children into society by forcing them to leave behind families, communities, and culture. They used systemic military tactics within their boarding schools to alter their identity. The first thing they did was cut their hair, which is considered their strength and honor. They also forbid them to speak in their native tongue or celebrate their culture in any way. When these rules were broken the children were beaten, went hungry, slapped, and even locked in isolation. The older children were forced to condemn and punish the children who broke the rules (Newland, 2022).

From the beginning of America's founding President Washington advised that the Native culture be replaced and advised that the easiest and most cost-efficient way to do this would be through the education system. According to this plan, education was a weapon that would help keep white people safe and allow them to gain more valuable land. This plan was carried out in 1803, by President Jefferson (Newland, 2022). It still has rippling impacts on education, including the lack of trust in the government.

When working to enforce attendance at the boarding schools, Fletcher Cowart sent what he called an Indian task force to capture the children, both on the reservation and in the hills,

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where they ran to hide. Funding and subsistence were not given to any tribal member who did not send their children to the school (Newland, 2022).

Another tactic that was used, to break up tribal relationships, was the idea of assigning rooms, mealtime, and other group activities by size rather than by relationship, allowing for even more disruption from their culture and identity. In one year, they mixed over 31 different tribes together. In this way they were stealing and killing languages with the hopes of forcing English to become their common language (Newland, 2022).

Today the tribes are working to restore the language that was forbidden since the signing of the treaty. Using the recording of the elders the Lower Elwha tribe was able to develop a program to teach the language in the High School. They employ cultural teachers to go into Head Start, elementary and middle school to teach language and culture, yet there are very few fluent speakers left in the tribe (McBride, 2020).

Klallam Language

Although all three bands of the S'Klallam people speak a language known as the Klallam language, each has its own dialect. In addition to this, all the Coastal Salish tribes knew Chinook Jargon that allowed them to trade and celebrate with one another. The Klallam language has four dialects even though there are only three known bands of the S'Klallam tribe. The dialects are Elwha, Jamestown, and Little Boston Klallam. When tribes gather for a potlatch, they introduce songs that are unique to their tribes and families within each tribe (Klallam Language, 2022).

The written language uses a similar set of symbols as other Northwest Native languages. There are sounds within the Klallam language that cannot be written with the English alphabet and therefore are represented by a symbol (Klallam Language, 2022).

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When the Native American language act was signed into law in 1990 there were only eight remaining fluent Klallam-speaking elders. However, in the 1950s there were many recordings of elders speaking the language and telling stories. These have been used since 1992 to bring back an awareness of the language to the generations who did not have the opportunity to learn their language growing up (Klallam Language, 2022).

To bring the language back to life again, it is currently being taught at the High School as an alternative to the foreign language credit, in the elementary school cultural language teachers come in and share occasionally, and twice a week it is taught in class at the Head Start (Klallam Language, 2022).

Historical Villages

Several historical villages have been uncovered giving historians a better picture of what life for the S'Klallam people was like before settlers came. One of these villages is known as the Tsewhitzen (ch-WHEET-son) village. This village was discovered in Port Angeles harbour after 100 years of burial. The finding occurred when the state began working on building a bridge that would connect to the Hood Canal. The building project had to cease when 335 human remains were found along with 100,000 artifacts (Elwha Klallam Historical Timeline, 2019).

Tribal Journeys

The S'Klallam tribe has a connection to other coastal tribes including the Quileute, Makah, Quinault, Skokomish, Swinomish and even the Lummi tribe. To maintain relationships among tribes, tribal communities along the coast participate in a journey, each year. They paddle canoes through the Pacific Ocean from one tribe to another, until they reach the tribal destination that is hosting the celebration. They then present their songs, dance, memories, and gifts to one

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another. This is a significant part of their culture that had been taken from them and restored (Tribal Journeys Info, n.d.).

The tribal journeys began in 1989 when Emmit Oliver, who was the state's supervisor for Indian Education, decided to include Native American representatives in the centennial celebration in Seattle Washington. Oliver invited tribes from all over the Pacific Northwest and Canada to participate in the celebration and was even able to convince Governor Gardner to invest in the carving of eight canoes. Up until this time there had been no canoes in the Pacific Northwest because the canoe was part of a cultural tradition that had been forbidden. This first journey became known as the Paddle to Seattle (Paul, 2019).

The paddle to Seattle was such a healing event that the First Nations leader from British Columbia, Frank Brown, returned the invitation to the tribes present and encouraged them to continue the tradition by paddling to Bella Bella in 1993. From that point on the tradition began building momentum and the culture of the potlach was revitalized as each tribe took its turn hosting a journey (Paul, 2019).

Potlatches

Potlatches are traditional celebrations where the host tribe invites other tribes to join them in a time of dancing and giving. The chief of the tribe with the biggest house would host the event and give away gifts to everyone who attended the ceremony. Tradition states that the giving of gifts reflects the character of the Creator who gave us breath, the earth, and everything on it to bring us joy (Thornton & Thornton, 2003)

To reach a destination for a potlatch tribes would paddle the ocean in canoes. When arriving at the destination they would wait in their canoe until they were granted permission to

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come ashore. When the host responded by singing a welcome song the canoes were allowed to come ashore onto the beach (Thornton & Thornton, 2003).

During a potlatch the host tribe dresses in their best regalia. Regalia included cedar hats, button blankets, button vests, painted drums and rattles and anything else that the tribe made for the tradition of dancing and singing in celebration (Thornton & Thornton, 2003).

Fish Wars

The treaties that were made with Northwest Native Americans and Governor Stevens in 1855, ensured that the tribes would keep their fishing rights and be able to fish in all the places they were accustomed to (Learning for Justice Staff, 2023). This was important because the Native Americans would not have signed the treaties otherwise. Fishing was essential to Native Americans for sustenance and commerce. Fishing was even more than this for the Natives in the Pacific Northwest because it was considered a sacred right given to them by the Creator (Learning for Justice Staff, 2023).

In 1941, the Supreme Court ruled that the state did not have the right or authority to interfere with tribal fishing that was protected by a federal treaty, but this was ignored by many states, and they began to require all the Native Americans to have a license before fishing. (Learning for Justice Staff,2023).

In 1945, a 14-year-old from the Nisqually tribe, named Billy Frank, went to an area that was named after his family to fish, as was his tradition and was guaranteed in the federal treaty. The state game wardens were waiting in bushes looking to arrest Native Americans who were exercising their treaty rights. Instead of having the opportunity to bring food home to his family, he was arrested along with all the fishermen that came down to *Frank's Landing* to fish. This began a 30-year battle of what became known as the Fish Wars. The total disregard of federal

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treaty laws, by the state police, created an environment where the Native Americans determined they would have to protest the treatment to protect their rights. To do this they began organizing times when they would fish together as a demonstration. Each time that they attempted to fish dozens of police officers would be sent to arrest just a handful of fishermen. *Frank's Landing* became the focal point of many of the demonstrations during this time (Learning for Justice Staff, 2023).

As the war lingered on the violence increased and in 1970 the war turned a corner when Native Americans in the camps tried to protect themselves from raids by hiring armed guards. Law enforcement responded to this encampment by rushing to the camp in riot gear. The tactics they used included throwing tear gas and beating the Native Americans with clubs. In all, 55 Native Americans were arrested along with 5 youths. When it was over the officials bulldozed their fishing camp (Learning for Justice Staff, 2023).

Media brought awareness to the struggle and the war was brought to court as the U.S. Justice Department brought a lawsuit against Washington State, Judge George Boldt was given the case. Originally, he was angry that he had to listen to a case about Indian fishing rights, but he spent time reading all the documentation, including treaties that were made for each tribe in the area, and he came to a very unpopular decision for many in the state of Washington, but it was a great victory for Northwest tribes. He concluded that the fishing restrictions which was imposed on the Native Americans were unlawful and that Native Americans did not threaten fishing resources. What is known as the Boldt decision gave tribes rights to 50% of all the fish in the areas that they usually fished and allowed them to manage their own fisheries. This victory for the Northwest tribes inspired Native Americans across the country to fight for their treaty rights (Learning for Justice Staff, 2023).

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Cultural Differences Among Tribes

There are more than 570 Federally recognized tribes within the United States, and many more small tribes that are not recognized. Each of these tribes are unique to the population they belong to, yet they are broken down into 10 different regions. There are unique differences in the values of tribes within each region, which cannot be fully addressed in this paper (Douglas, 2022). These tribal regions include the Arctic, Subarctic, Eastern Woodlands, Southeast, Southwest, Great Basin, California, Great Plains, Plateau, and the Northwest Coast (Federal Register, 2023).

The tribes along the coast of the Pacific Northwest are known as the Coast Salish tribes. The Klallam tribe is part of the Coast Salish population. The tribes along the Northwest Coast lived in a way that reflected the land around them. They valued the water, salmon, and all that is in the rivers and ocean. Living in Longhouses built upon the coastal shores allowed fishing to become their main source of livelihood. Along with fishing, shrimping, crabbing, and digging for clams, they hunted elk and deer for provision. Animals that were hunted were used for both food and clothing (Elwha.org.).

Much of what was valued by the elders of the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, was lost due to European colonization, disease, and forced assimilation by the government. What little is passed down today was recorded to hold onto the wisdom and oral stories of the elders who were the last to speak the language fluently. Traditionally the S'Klallam people believe that they were created from the hands of the Creator and hold a specific site on the river sacred, claiming that this was the place the Creator formed the first of their tribe. They also tell stories of a time when their people experienced a great flood and were warned by the Creator of how to prepare for survival during the days in which the flood waters would cover the earth (Montler, n.d.).

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The Coastal tribes of the Northwest were hunters, gatherers, and fishermen. The land provided everything that they needed to survive and thus the coastal tribes were among the few tribes that were not nomadic. They were able to build homes that were stable and secure and did not need to make them light and moveable like the tribes of the plateau, plains, and basins. The S'Klallam built homes in different areas along the Olympic Peninsula and moved from one home to another as the seasons changed. Longhouses in the Pacific Northwest are also referred to as plank houses. Unlike the homes of the nomadic tribes that were only able to house one family at a time the homes of the coastal tribes housed more than 30 families at one time and were built with wooden planks and were permanent structures. Living in such a close community creates an interconnection between tribal families and places a value on the community rather than on the individual alone (Britannica, 2023).

The stationary lifestyle of the tribes of the Northwest Pacific coast made it possible for Native Americans to create large carved artwork such as totem poles. Totem poles were used to tell stories of family history or events and were considered important to each family. Since most of the other Native American tribes were nomadic and needed to be ready to move continually, the artistic focus would be expressed through the clothing and things that were worn in ceremony and dance. This placed a greater value on headdresses and garments for tribes who were nomadic (Britannica, 2023).

Travelling along the Pacific Northwest coast was different from that of the nomadic tribes. The Coast Salish tribes travelled the ocean waters in dugout canoes made of one large piece of wood that could hold many people at a time. This was their main way of visiting other tribes in the area and trading with them. They could also use the canoes for fishing and whaling. Travelling by canoe was not limited to coastal tribes but other tribes that used canoes made small

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ones out of bark or animal skins that could only hold a few people at a time. Even the way the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest travelled showed how they lived in community and held its value high.

S’Klallam Bands

To address the needs of the community, the research needs to go to the communities and explore the lived experiences of the S’Klallam families in their own environment. The three bands of the S’Klallam tribe have been spread out along the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. All three of the bands of S’Klallam people lived in the areas that spanned the Olympic Peninsula and the San Juan Islands. The tribes moved from one village to another as the seasons changed until the creation of governmental treaties which allocated a specific portion of land to them. The most significant treaty was known as the Point No Point Treaty. Each of these tribes is governed independently of one another and has its own tribal councils with a tribal chair as the head of the governing body (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, n.d.).

The first of these tribes, Lower Elwha, is situated in a valley, surrounded on three sides by mountains, and to the north by the Pacific Ocean. It is part of the Temperate Rainforest along the coast. This area receives one of the highest amounts of precipitation in Washington State, with an annual rate of at least 56 inches (Olympic Rain Shadow, n.d.).

The Lower Elwha community is considered part of Port Angeles, Washington. Although one of the S’Klallam bands of Native Americans, they have dropped the “S” and refer to themselves as Klallam. The reservation is located at the northern end of the Olympic peninsula. This community is a self-governed reservation less than 20 miles out of city limits and bears the same zip code. In 2007, there were 776 enrolled members of the Klallam tribe, and only 112

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lived on the reservation due to lack of housing. Since that time, two more housing areas have been developed that are set aside for tribal members only (Elwha Watershed, 2007).

Recently the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe has purchased land outside the reservation and built health clinics and other entities such as a gas station. They have a small casino on reservation land they are working to expand.

The second tribe, Jamestown S'Klallam, federal reservation consisting of only 13.49 acres near Sequim Bay, Washington. In 1874, the band of tribes from the Dungeness area purchased 210 acres of land to settle on. The tribe was required to give up rights to this land to be federally recognized but refused the treaty and the recognition it brought to the other bands of the S'Klallam tribe. They chose to remain on their own land; as a result, they were not federally recognized until 1981, and with that recognition, they were given 13.49 acres. Today they have many successful enterprises, including health clinics and a casino. With this success, they have purchased more than 1000 acres of land independently (CoastView, 2023).

The third tribe, the Port Gamble S'Klallam band, is just out of Kingston, Washington. As with the other bands of this tribe, the Port Gamble tribe lost a vast amount of land when they signed the Point No Point Treaty to protect their hunting and fishing rights. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million acres were lost to the tribe, and families had to work to purchase land because they were not given a land base to live on. After waiting 88 years for their own land, they received 1000 acres near their ancestral village. They have worked to create a community that is involved in the education of their children, building and maintaining tribal schools, and they own the Point casino and hotel at Point Julia (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, n.d.).

All three of these bands of the S'Klallam (Strong People) tribe have progressed and succeeded despite the trauma that they have experienced. Yet, there is still an overwhelming

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need for drug intervention and both mental and physical healing within these tribes. The progression of the tribe as an entity has not been enough on its own to bring healing to these communities. However, the resilience of this tribe is evident in their desire to rebuild community, identity, and culture even if they must wait hundreds of years to do so (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, n.d.).

Research Questions

1. Research Question 1. “What are the lived generational traumatic experiences of Pacific Northwest Native Americans and their children?”
2. Research Question 2: “What factors contribute to the severity, length, and continuance of negative symptoms from intergenerational trauma?”
3. Research Question 3. “What are the resilience factors that contribute to the diffusion of intergenerational trauma in Pacific Northwest Native Americans?”
4. Research Question 4. “How do the results of this study compare to similar studies done for other Native Americans?”

Summary

Since historical trauma happens to the family and community together, it is essential that research examines trauma transferred from parent to child among Native Americans (Cwik, et al., 2019). With this understanding, researching the effects of intergenerational trauma and the resilience factors may provide aid in overcoming past traumatic events. The long-lasting impact of mental and physical health caused by traumatic experiences both directly and indirectly has

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caused devastation in families and communities of Indigenous people. Studies that effectively link resilience and trauma have the potential to bring change and growth in a much-needed area.

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

A phenomenological study is designed to examine the lived experiences of Native Americans who have experienced historical and epigenetic trauma (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of this study was the problem that exists with experiencing historical trauma, which leaves an imprint that results in symptoms that interfere with the quality of life for the Native American population (Burrage, et. al., 2021). This phenomenological study examined the experiences of individuals who have suffered from adverse childhood effects. It attempted to determine what factors build resilience and aid the reduction of disruptive symptoms among the Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest.

Design

Qualitative research allows the researcher to analyze a human or social phenomenon by seeking to understand the meaning of the experience to an individual or group that was affected (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The focus of this study was to examine the lived experiences and analyze rich, detailed information gathered from Native Americans who have experienced historical and generational trauma in their natural setting. Generally, qualitative research allows researchers to use a structure that is free-flowing and consists of open-ended questions concerning the experiences of historical traumatic symptoms they struggle with and the resilience factors they use for coping with these symptoms. This helps researchers to understand the perspective of the participants regarding their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This study attempted to use the data collected to determine the implementation of support to build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit Native Americans. Qualitative research is designed to study issues in their natural settings and interpret the phenomena, making it possible

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for transformation (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). The use of interviews, community observations, and conceptual mapping aided in determining how resilience can be supported and what that might mean for Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest in the future.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological research consists of a study that includes both observable and self-reported events, which are unique to the population that the study was trying to understand. It focuses on conversations in the context of the participant's social environment (Heppner et al., 2020). This was important to consider when working with the Native American community because their experiences have affected the community as a whole and they are a people who heal as a community as well.

Transcendental phenomenology is one method of phenomenology research that studies the inner workings of the experiences of the conscious mind that go beyond the range of normality (Yee, 219). When dealing with trauma, this would be the study of traumatic experiences that have left an imprint on the day-to-day functioning of an individual or a community that continues to plague them long after the event has ceased. For this study to represent Native American individuals as a larger population, it considered the differences in how the different tribes view trauma and the severity of their experience (Tolliver et. al., 2020). It also examined the connection of the individual to their community and the development of resilience factors.

A transcendental phenomenology approach is a study that is not numerical in nature and can best provide information from individuals concerning the social problems the Native American population faces (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, a transcendental phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to collect data from multiple individuals who

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have experienced historical trauma directly and examine the secondary effects it has had on their offspring. The data was then examined to understand how these experiences were significant to the individuals. The analysis identified undesirable symptoms that emerged due to trauma and any pockets of resilience that may have existed (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Questions

1. Research Question 1. “What are the lived generational traumatic experiences of Pacific Northwest Native Americans and their children?”
2. Research Question 2: “What factors contribute to the severity, length, and continuance of negative symptoms from intergenerational trauma?”
3. Research Question 3. “What are the resilience factors that contribute to the diffusion of intergenerational trauma in Pacific Northwest Native Americans?”

Setting

The Lower Elwha S’Klallam tribal reservation is a little over eight miles west of Port Angeles, Washington. Lower Elwha is situated in a valley on the Elwha River, surrounded on three sides by mountains. To the north are the shores of Victoria Island, British Columbia, on the Pacific Ocean. It is part of the Temperate Rainforest, and it receives one of the highest amounts of precipitation in Washington State, with an annual rate of at least 56 inches (Olympic Rain Shadow, n.d.). The Lower Elwha S’Klallam tribal land consists of 1,014 acres and has a population of 882 enrolled tribal members (NCAI, 2023).

The Jamestown S’Klallam Tribal community is located on the Olympic Peninsula to the north of the Strait of Juan De Fuca. Jamestown consists of 1,637.44 acres of land that is largely undeveloped. It is about seven miles out of Sequim in Clallam County. The surrounding area to

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the west receives a large quantity of precipitation Jamestown only gets about 17 inches. It is surrounded by the Olympic Mountain range on one side and Sequim Bay on the other (CoastView, 2023). The tribal population is around 600 (University of Arizona, 2015).

Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribal reservation measures about 1,7000 acres and has 1,234 tribally enrolled members (NCAI, 2023c). Little Boston is the reservation area for the Port Gamble tribe. It runs along Port Gamble Bay, close to the Hood Canal, and lies at the base of Point Julia. It is right outside Kingston, Washington, and a half-hour ferry ride from across Puget Sound to Edmonds Washington (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, n.d.).

Participants

The researcher obtained permission to conduct this study from the IRB board at Liberty University. The researcher also made the IRB board of Northwest Indian College aware of the research being done on Indian land, because this college is responsible for many of the studies done among the Northwest Salish tribes. The researcher received an email thanking her for letting the college know and wishing her good luck with her study.

Participants were chosen from among the 3 bands of the S’Klallam tribe who live along the coast of the Pacific Northwest. To do this study respectfully and properly, the researcher met with the tribal council from each band of the S’Klallam tribe, to ask permission to do the study on their reservations (See Appendix A for the letter to the Tribal Council). After being granted permission, the researcher attempted to locate families from the Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, the James Town S’Klallam tribe, and the Port Gamble S’Klallam tribe, who were interested in

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telling their stories and discovering what within their culture builds resilience in the face of adversity.

To determine the effect of intergenerational trauma on each generation the research needed to focus on families and the patterns of trauma they exhibit. Therefore, participants included at least one elder and their offspring. To ensure the quality of the study, depth of information gathered, and adequate representation of all generations involved, the sample participants were kept small. Thus, the study allowed for six to nine participants. Qualifying participants were elders, from each tribe, who experienced direct historical trauma and had at least one offspring who experienced symptoms related to indirect trauma. If the participant had more than one offspring, who was dealing with symptoms of historical trauma and would like to participate in the study, they were added to the number of participants.

Procedures

The next step was to address the tribal council on each reservation, to gain permission to come to their land with the study. (The letter to tribal councils can be found in Appendix A). This was done to respect the authority and sovereignty of the tribes and to let them know what type of information this study was looking for.

The researcher received approval from IRB and the tribe. She then began the process of finding participants and scheduling time for interviews. (The recruitment email letter can be found in Appendix B). Contacting participants, to confirm they were interested in being a part of the study, was the first step in phase one of the conceptual mapping task (CMT). This step included gathering information and building rapport to allow the participants to feel comfortable

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and willing to share their stories during the interview phase. A consent form was made available (in advance) for review and filled out at the beginning of the interview phase. Interviews were conducted by first reminding participants of the purpose of the research and giving them an explanation of how the data will be used after it is analyzed. Additionally, participants were made aware of the goal for member checking through an examination of the notes taken by the participant themselves. The researcher asked for participants input after the analysis during this time. They were told that they could stop at any time during the interview if they felt distress and that they only needed to share what they were comfortable sharing. When the interview was finished, the researcher spoke with each participant to determine their emotional status and made referrals as necessary for mental health consults (Impellizzeri, et al., 2017).

The second phase of CMT involved the interview process itself and can be looked at as a form of storytelling. For tribal elders, storytelling is part of the traditional inheritance. If proper rapport is established in phase one, elders are more likely to freely share their experiences. The questions which were asked during this time are open-ended and gave the participant a chance to voice their experience. The individual interview was structured in a way that allowed for open-ended questions as well as follow-up questions that helped the participants clarify to the researcher what they meant by what they said. Interviews were recorded using two forms of recording methods. The researcher used her iPhone and an app called Otter.ai to record and transcribe conversations (Barry, 2023). The researcher took the time to explain that she would write down the highlights of the participant's stories as they shared them. She also explained that the participant would have the opportunity to review these notes to ensure the accuracy of the information that was collected (Impellizzeri, et al., 2017). This step was further explained in

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the data collection section of this chapter. The researcher instructed the participants that the conversation they had was confidential.

Phase 3 began after letting the participant review what was written on the sticky notes. The participant was asked to place the sticky notes on a board in a way that represented their story. Next, they drew a shape around the concepts that were related to each other. Finally, they used arrows to connect the directional flow between each concept. The participant was allowed to change their maps as many times as they felt necessary until they determined it was completed (Impellizzeri, et al., 2017). This step is further explained in the data collection section of this chapter.

In the final phase, the participant was encouraged to reflect on why their map was designed in the pattern of their choice. The researchers took this time to ask the final questions that came up during the reflection. The maps of all the participants were used to develop themes (Impellizzeri, et al., 2017). Themes were analyzed using the software Atlas.ti. Data that is collected was imported into the Atlas.ti. Software, allowing it to organize data quickly (Barry, 2023).

Data Collection

The multi-method data collection began with the interview process using the CMT method. CMT was a perfect fit for a study among the Native America population because it helps to incorporate the cultural tradition of story telling in the gathering of information. The CMT technique allowed participants to talk about the phenomenon, review it, and then examine it in one sitting. Engaging in this one-time in-depth interview reduced the amount of exposure to

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their traumatic memories. The data that resulted from the CMT was translated into text and pictorial information (Barry, 2023). Textual information was gathered from the CMT interview, while the pictorial data was gathered from the sticky notes that allowed participants to create a visual map of their story (Impellizzeri et al., 2017). The researcher used a digital notepad to keep track of her thoughts during and between interviews. This helped to increase the validity and trustworthiness of the study. The ATLAS.ti software is able to transpose the audio recording into text and then cross check all of the interviews bringing to light patterns (Barry, 2023).

Conceptual Mapping Task (CMT) Interviewing Technique

Concept mapping (CM) was developed when Novak was researching children at Cornell University. It was discovered that it was difficult to map children's understanding of scientific concepts using the interviewing process. To find a way to map the understanding of children Novak came up with CMT to map concepts and linking words. This tool was effective for not only the children in this study but also proved to be a good learning tool (Cañas & Novak, 2009). The conceptual Mapping Technique (CMT) is a tool that is related to CM, but CMT gives researchers a tool that allows multiple methods of verification in one interview. This is favorable in qualitative research because it limits the participant's exposure to possible re-traumatization and provides integrity to the studies (Impellizzeri et al., 2017).

Phase One: Rapport Building and Information Gathering

Rapport is one of the key factors in counseling and research studies that involve interviewing participants. Building rapport increases the possibility of the participants feeling safe enough to share their experiences as well as gather accurate information to analyze. CMT allowed the participants to take an active role in the research process and developed the relationship between the researcher and participants (Impellizzeri et al., 2017).

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Building rapport began from the start and included everything that was sent, shared, or talked about with potential participants. The recruitment letter invited individuals to participate in the study (Appendix B) and maintained a tone of respect, professionalism, and importance to begin the rapport-building process. The letter contained the researcher's contact information so that those who were interested in joining the study could call or text the researcher concerning their interest (Barry, 2023).

When gathering information using the interview script (Appendix C), it is essential to practice active listening. Active listening in qualitative research interviews includes restating, responding, and repetition. Restating what the researcher heard the participant say allows them to know they are given full attention. Responding emphatically helps them feel that the researcher can be trusted with their emotions and helps them to feel safe when sharing their story. Using prompts or repetition can help move the conversation to a deeper level of communication (Louw & Jimarkon, 2018). After the participants were chosen for the study, the researcher confirmed the interview time and location. The researcher also ensured that the consent form (Appendix D) was given and signed before the interview began (Barry, 2023).

Phase 2: Participant Storying

Phase 2 unfolded during the interview. As the participants told their lived stories and experiences with historical trauma, they answered open-ended research questions that were designed to help them build their conceptual map by using both their voice as it is recorded, text as it is written down on sticky notes by the researcher (Appendix E), and pictures as the participant connected the thoughts and themes to create their map (Barry, 2023).

After the researcher asked the open-ended question and recorded the main ideas from the responses of the participants, the researcher asked the participants to review the sticky notes and

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make sure that they were an accurate representation of their thoughts (Impellizzeri et al., 2017).

The participants were encouraged to make changes if there was an area that did not represent their thoughts or experience, to ensure accuracy.

“Can you take 15-20 minutes and describe the generational trauma that you and your children have experienced?” (See Appendix C).

After giving the participant enough time to answer this question thoroughly, the researcher asked follow-up questions to ensure that there were no gaps in understanding.

“How have you and our children overcome the impact of generational trauma?” (See Appendix C).

Once the interview was completed the researcher asked the participant to look over the sticky notes and make any necessary corrections to ensure accuracy and maintain the integrity of the conversation (Barry, 2023). The participation of tribal members in this stage is extremely important and allowed the families chosen to represent the S’Klallam nation and share their unique voices. This design gave the participants control of their own study.

Phase 3: Creating the Conceptual Map

As phase 3 began the participants were asked to create their conceptual map using the sticky notes already recorded, reviewed, and approved. They arranged the sticky notes in groups based on themes and ideas and then labeled these groups according to the way they separated them. When this was completed, they added symbols to represent each group they created (Impellizzeri et al., 2017).

Participants were given a *Post-it* sticky easel board to complete the task above. They were given instructions to help them determine what task they were working towards.

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“At this time in the study, I would like to give you some time to arrange each of these sticky notes, on the easel board, in a way that you feel represents your story. You can arrange them in any way you feel shows how each idea, thought, or experience is related to each other. You can move them around as much as you want, if you feel they are better suited in a different group. The idea is to give me a clear picture of your story through the notes we have worked on” (See Appendix C) (Barry, 2023).

When this task was completed, the participants used markers to draw a symbol around each group of data. They drew whatever they felt represented the concepts they had grouped together.

“Thank you for taking the time to do this. The next step will allow you to assign a shape or symbol to your group of concepts. You can use a simple shape like a circle or square, or you can use something else that you feel represents the concepts of that group. You can be as creative as you want and let me know how you feel about this task as you work through it.” (Barry, 2023).

The final step in this phase was to instruct the participant to use words or phrases to label their groups and then draw lines to connect them according to the order in which they flow.

“Can you now use the markers to label the concepts if you haven’t already, adding comments that point to how they are related and have meaning to you? The researcher will wait until this is completed before moving on to the next part of the task. “Next, can you draw some arrows to show what direction and order these concepts flow in?” (Barry, 2023).

As the participant completed this phase the researcher paid attention to the thoughts expressed by the participant. The observation, recorded audio, and textual notes of their

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comments were added to the data that was collected. This step allowed the researcher to validate, confirm, and reflect on the phenomenon that was shared (Barry, 2023).

Phase Four: Reflecting on the Conceptual Map

In this final phase of the CMT interview process, the participant was instructed to look for meanings and examine the structure of what the map represents. The researcher asked questions that helped the participants explore each subject that they labeled and determine if the map was exactly the way the participants wanted it finalized (Barry, 2023). Instructions and questions are:

What strikes you, as you look at the map that you have created and reflect on it?

What do you think is the greatest reason for your ability to adapt and succeed after experiencing such a trauma?

What is the most important thing you want others to know about generational trauma?

What advice would you give others who might be experiencing similar trauma?

Giving participants these extra moments and prompting them to answer follow-up questions, helped to draw out any important information that may have been missed. It built upon the data previously collected and made it richer. If participants felt that anything needed to be changed, on their map during this phase, they could change it at any time. The combination of visual text and pictures helped the participants draw conclusions about the phenomenon they experienced, even when it was hard to find the words to describe it (Barry, 2023).

Interviews were scheduled for one and a half hours. Traditionally, this is the amount of time that is usually recommended for CMT interviews. This was appropriate when addressing elders with respect and giving them time to speak about such a sensitive matter (Barry, 2023).

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Since the Post-it board was sticky the notes stuck securely and was easy to move. The researcher made sure the notes were secure before moving the board. The researcher also took a picture of the board in case something somehow was misplaced. After the interview, the researcher followed up with an email to thank participants for their participation and assess whether the participant felt any lasting emotional discomfort from the interview process. They were also given the opportunity to follow up with a community counselor if they needed support. A referral was prepared ahead of time by the researcher for those who needed one. The researcher also contacted the tribal counseling facility to let them know of the study and the possibility of receiving referrals after the completion of the interviews (Barry, 2023).

Journaling

The notes that were taken during the interview were included in the process of analysis along with the journal notes that the researcher took concerning their experience and thoughts during the interview, collection and analysis. Journaling began with the very first contact that was made concerning the study and ended when the analysis was completed (Barry, 2023).

Data Analysis

Before the data can be analyzed the information was gathered, organized, and re-read. The researcher read and listened to the transcripts and recordings, so the topics gathered from the collective interviews could be divided into topics. When this was completed, the researcher input the themes into the software applications that built a representation of themes (Barry, 2023).

Research interviews were recorded audibly using an iPhone and the recording application Otter.ai. The transcript from the Otter.ai and the software ATLAS.ti, used to analyze the data, were compared to look for any inconsistencies and make corrections where necessary. This was

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done to ensure that the translation of each interview was correctly entered into the software system word for word. The researcher remembered to use code names, instead of real names, to protect the privacy of the participants. Data has been protected and encrypted for extra security. Posterboards were locked in a secure art bag. Digital files were locked and protected by a password.

Conceptual maps were considered when determining the conceptual and textural meaning of each interview (Barry, 2023). The ATLAS.ti helped the researcher determine the themes that emerged after inputting the conceptual data that had been collected along with the journal notes. This also helped the researcher develop richer themes and a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Barry, 2023).

The Researcher's Role

The researcher's role is to interview, gather, and analyze the data that is collected. The researcher has lived and worked among the Klallam Tribe for 26 years. Watching the suffering and the struggle that families face with trauma that occurred in past generations left an imprint on her heart. Historical trauma and the symptoms that it inflicted upon the people have torn apart families and communities. Amidst the pain, are those who have found a way to rise above their circumstances. These stories of resilience are far too few. Barriers to receiving mental health care keep communities from growing. Programs that do not take into consideration cultural aspects of trauma have failed to be successful. Indigenous populations often do not feel they can put their trust in governmental programs. Thus, the cycle of loss has continued from generation to generation.

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Essentially the researcher's role involved using open-ended interview questions in person and evaluating the response of each participant to these questions. Audio recording of the interviews provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the participant's responses after the initial interview. This was important because the first revelation of the raw emotions might evoke an emotional response in the researcher and affect the ability to remain neutral, regarding the events the participants share. Since the researcher should not be detached from the participants, analyzing the audio recording later, allowed her to be sensitive and use active listening during interviews (Patton, 2015). This is of extreme importance because the information the participants revealed was sensitive and they remained silent about many of these incidents for generations (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Interviews began with the intent to listen to the participant's story. The researcher explained that the participants only need share what they are comfortable sharing. As the researcher listened to the participant's account and their experience, they were encouraged to elaborate on what parts of the culture they felt contributed to resilience (Cwik et. al., 2019).

Validity

Using the technique of triangulation, the researcher made use of multiple sources of information to cross-check the validity of the data that was gathered. This process allowed for collaboration of the events and helped identify what themes came to light (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Negative case analysis may surface when triangulating the evidence. When the evidence did not fit into the pattern of a theme it was recorded. The researcher was purposely open to

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seeing all pieces of the evidence and not just the pieces she was attracted to (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Participation in reflective journaling helped build themes for the study and helped the researcher remain aware of emotions that come from listening, empathetically, to the stories of the participants. This was important for maintaining validity because a researcher becomes immersed in the data and engaging with the participants as they share their lived experiences (Padgett, 2016).

Allowing the participants to provide feedback strengthens the credibility of the study. The researcher brought data, interpretations, and conclusions derived from the data to the participants and allowed them to have input on the analysis (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The participants worked as part of the research team to analyze and look for any missing information in the preliminary analysis of the phenomenon. In this way, the validity and trustworthiness of the study were strengthened (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The researcher made corrections where they were needed and continue to collaborate with the participants until the study information reported was accurate.

Adding outside sources served as a check and balance system to examine the process, and the data of the study assessed the accuracy of the report. This was important for ensuring validity of the study (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Communication with the dissertation committee and the IRB review board helped with this area of balance. Coordinating with the tribal communities involved gave the researcher permission to proceed with the study. Including the

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tribe in determining where it is appropriate to disperse information will help ensure that the information collected is not misused.

Limitations

Ethical considerations, included ensuring privacy for all participants, has limitations. To maintain confidentiality, no names were used in the transmission of data. This confidentiality agreement was be made clear, to the participants, in the consent to participate forms, before the interviews begin. Code names were given to each participant to protect any identifying markers when analyzing data. Participants were informed of the responsibilities of a mandated reporter, and that the only reasons for revealing any personal information will be under the circumstances where they intend to harm themselves or others (see Patton, 2015). The confidential information has been locked and protected. Data that is stored digitally has been password protected and the codes for each participant used rather than actual names.

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Summary

Chapter three included a description of the research process and the tools that would be used to conduct a transcendental phenomenological study. The process of research included the methodology and research design that would be the foundation of the investigation. These methods and tools included research questions, choosing the participants, collecting data, analyzing data, ensuring the validity of the report, the conceptual mapping task, and member checking. The research focused on remaining impartial and working to give the elders of the S’Klallam community a voice. The goal of this research, particularly in using CMT, was to allow the elders to draw conclusions that will benefit them for generations.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine experiences of trauma Indigenous people face in real-life scenarios. Taking into consideration the experiences of their past, it looked for areas of resilience that are unique to the Indigenous population of the S’Klallam tribes, of the Olympic Peninsula. The data was collected to determine the implementation of support, to build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit Native Americans, including children. This chapter includes information describing the participants and their unique perspectives on the trauma they experienced, both individually and generationally. The data provided, helped to conclude what themes developed during the research, in response to the research questions the researcher proposed.

The results of the research came from the findings of seven interviews with participants on the three reservations assigned to the S’Klallam nation. Each participant shared their story of trauma and then participated in a Conceptual Mapping Task (CMT) that helped to further connect their story and experience. The CMT allowed participants and researcher to view their stories, visualize a pictorial representation of the data, and conclude a deeper meaning from what they have shared (Impellizzeri et al., 2017). The interviews were recorded using transcription applications and note-taking, on sticky notes, for each participant. The researcher worked to allow the participant to lead the direction of the interview and asked a minimum of clarification questions, when listening to each story. The idea behind this was to ensure that the researcher did not influence the answer to the questions, in any way, and to allow participants to share in a way that did not bring them undue stress. It also gave the participants autonomy over their narrative when it comes to both trauma and resilience in their own lives.

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Participant Description

Overview

The purpose of this section is to describe each participant and their story. Participants consisted of seven individuals over the age of 18. All the participants were enrolled members of one of the three bands of the S’Klallam tribe, of Washington State. From the Lower Elwha Klallam band, a father and daughter were interviewed, from the James Town band a mother and daughter were interviewed, and from the Port Gamble band, the interview included a father, mother, and daughter in one family. Everyone interviewed experienced generational and personal trauma within their lifetime. All the participants lived on the reservation where they were enrolled as members of the tribe. Two of the participants had previously been involved in an activity that was similar to the CMT, but they were not familiar with this particular task.

A digital picture representation of the main ideas of each conceptual mapping task is included at the end of the participant’s profile. Appendix E will contain the actual images of the maps made by each participant, to help the reader connect the CMT to the digital representation. The identity of each participant is protected by providing a code name for each of them. The codes used will be objects that help the reader connect better with the information collected. Quotes, with identifying markers, will be adapted removing any names to ensure that confidentiality is intact.

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Participant Demographics				
CODE	AGE GROUP	FAMILY CONNECTION	TRIBAL AFFILIATION	RESIDENCE
1	40-50	Daughter to Rider	Enrolled Lower Elwha Klallam	Lower Elwha Reservation
2	70-80	Father to Lotus	Enrolled Lower Elwha Klallam	Lower Elwha Reservation
3	50-60	Mother to Whisperer	Enrolled Port Gamble S'Klallam	Port Gamble Reservation
4	60-70	Father to Whisperer	Enrolled Port Gamble S'Klallam	Port Gamble Reservation
5	40-50	Daughter to Rosebud	Enrolled Jamestown S'Klallam	Jamestown Reservation
6	60-70	Mother to Dancer	Enrolled Jamestown S'Klallam	Jamestown Reservation
7	20-30	Daughter to Guardian & Witness	Enrolled Port Gamble S'Klallam	Port Gamble Reservation

Table 1

Lotus

Lotus is a female member of the S'Klallam Tribe. She is the mother of three children and has lived on the reservation since she was 11. Both of her parents currently live on the same reservation, although they are no longer married to one another. She has a degree in higher education, is currently working in a managerial position within the tribe and is active in church leadership.

The interview with Lotus occurred in her living room when no one else was home. It lasted approximately 75 minutes. Lotus was excited to share her story even though many parts brought up some painful memories. There were moments of tears and laughter as she recognized the areas of resilience that helped her through traumatic experiences.

The study required that each participant either had an offspring willing to participate or a parent. Both participants shared their stories of trauma and resilience separately from one

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another so that neither one influenced what was shared in the study. Although Lotus has children, she represents the offspring of Rider in this study.

When originally asked to take about 15 to 20 minutes to describe her experiences with generational trauma, Lotus responded that it was a very tough question and needed a few seconds to determine where she was going to start.

Textural Description

Lotus began by explaining that her aunts had to go to the boarding schools that were run by the government, where they experienced abuse, but that her mother was able to avoid the boarding school because Lotus's grandmother somehow secured a place for her mother at a private art school in California. She shared that even though her mother did not go through the same abuse as the children in the boarding school, she still faced prejudice and verbal abuse at this private school. Her mother was very smart and earned her place as valedictorian but was not allowed to have that place of honor because she was Native American. Lotus shared that although her mother tried to downplay the event, she knew it hurt her, and made her feel she was not smart enough. This caused her to push herself and later her children taking a harsh negative approach with them to help them improve. She admitted that her mother would say, "You're not the dumb Indian. You have to be the smart one," when she questioned the choices that any of her children were making.

Lotus's life changed dramatically when she was 11 years old. It was at this point in her life that her mom and dad separated for good. Up to this point, she lived in the city with both her parents, but after her dad left, they moved home to the reservation. Her mother did not have a way of earning income for her family, but since she was a single mother, she knew she had to do whatever it took to provide for her children. At first, they got government commodity foods, and

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her mom would stockpile them to ensure there was always something to eat. After that, her mother went to the river and learned to fish. Lotus admits that she did not realize they were poor because, somehow, there was always fish, deer, or elk that they would butcher and store for meals. She shared that watching her mother and grandmother fish together on the river was one of the best memories she had as a child.

Lotus was the oldest of her siblings and had to take on the responsibility of caring for them, so that her mother could provide for their family. She would help prepare them for school, each day, because her mom had to leave for work before they woke up. The need to have food in the pantry, at all times, is something that Lotus held on to throughout her life. She stated that her pantry is filled mostly with noodles.

Lotus also shared that when she was getting ready for this interview, a memory came up. She remembered how she had a horse growing up, and her mother was emphatic that she took the responsibility of caring for it. Once, she was on crutches after injuring her leg, and her horse got loose. She recalls her mother making her chase the horse down on crutches and find a way to secure it. She noted that the recollection made her realize she had not forgiven her mother for the event. She continued to share that she had to go to school when she had a fever and was sick, because her mother did not allow excuses. Nothing was going to hold her kids back. As a result, she spent her days, at school, in the nurse's office when she was sick.

Lotus tells how she met Jesus at age five, developed a relationship with Him, and knew His voice. Lotus learned that she could call out to God whenever she needed, and He would answer. When she moved home and was confused about why her dad and mom separated, she found strength and peace at church. She would go to service with her grandma anytime the

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doors were open. She uses prayer and worship to deal with stress and anxiety. She also noted that her cultural songs and breathing exercises helped at times when anxiety was high.

“If it wasn’t for God, I definitely would not have had any peace of mind. I don’t know how people do it without him.”

Just before reviewing her story and working on the conceptual mapping task, Lotus remarked that she had been sexually abused as a child by a police officer, and she did not remember it until she was more than 20 years old. When God brought it to her memory, He helped her deal with the emotions it brought up. At the same time, it prepared her to understand that her husband had also experienced sexual abuse, at the hands of one of his brothers, as a young boy. She explained that God revealed this to her before her husband did and when he tried to share it with her, she interrupted him, telling him she already knew. Today, she knows that was not the best way to handle the situation, but she said, from that time on her husband knew she heard from God.

Structural Description

The separation of families by the government was a traumatic experience that caused significant implications in many other areas of life. Removing family members caused brokenness within the family unit and community. Abuse and education that occurred in the boarding schools, forbid the children from practicing their culture and values. When children did return home, to their communities, they experienced a loss of identity that added to the shattered family structures.

Even the experience of racial prejudice, within a privately funded college, caused self-doubt and fear in the hearts of those who attended these schools. Carrying this fear, often

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influenced how they parented and interacted with one another. Lotus's mom never felt as if she measured up or could do enough to succeed, due to the systemic racism she experienced.

“My mom's sister went to boarding school and my mom was sent away to a private art college in California, so she wouldn't have to go to boarding school, but she was so dang smart that she got valedictorian of the school and because she was Native they asked her if another girl could be valedictorian...It really hurt my mom, she didn't feel like she was smart enough.”

Broken relationships lead to broken families. When one parent finds themselves striving to raise the family alone, moving back to the reservation and leaving employment behind, it becomes a source of stress. This can be reflected by children taking over the household responsibilities that are meant to be carried out by adults. “I was the one that had to take care of my siblings. I was the oldest of the three, so I was the one that had to get the dinners ready or get everybody up and ready for school. Mom used to have to leave for work before we caught the bus.” The church in Lotus's community became a refuge for many families and helped Lotus learn to trust in the Lord, for her strength, and rebuild relationships within her family.

Conceptual Mapping Task

Lotus arranged her conceptual map (figure 4.1) in columns, using pictures to represent what each column meant to her. Lotus began by making connections on the left side of the board, where there are two columns. One is on top and the other on the bottom. A picture of a book represents the top group of notes and includes the trauma from boarding school. The bottom group is represented by a broken heart and highlights the experience of the loss of a broken family.

Lotus moved to the right side of the board and began drawing pictures that connected three other groups of notes. The first group was centered to the left of the second and third

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groups, the second group was at the top of the right side of the board, and the third group was near the bottom of the right corner. The first group was represented, on the top, by a dumbbell. Lotus explained that she used the dumbbell because it represents how much strength it takes to live up to the weight of expectations. At the bottom of the same group, Lotus drew a picture of noodles, because she felt she always needed food in her pantry, to have her pantry full like her mother. In the top right column, Lotus drew a Halibut fishing hook, to group her memories of fishing. A football jersey represented the bottom right column because football was a big part of her relationship with her first husband.

In the middle of the board, two groups are connected by a cross. This group of notes was the area of resilience where Lotus first met Jesus, and then called on Him when the trauma and circumstances of life seemed to mount up. At the bottom of the middle section, are the notes from a memory that came after everything was connected. She remembered that her dad suffered from PTSD, from the wars he fought in as a marine, and that he suffered trauma going through the fish wars. She mentioned that there is a lot of generational trauma Native Americans go through, and they may not be able to share it. Many do not know how to turn to God, or even have the knowledge of Him. These additional notes were added to the bottom of the board.

“I know that there’s a lot of suffering that could have scarred me and held me down, in my life, but I choose to always turn to God in every situation, and he helps and guides me through.”

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Lotus noted that she intentionally placed God in the middle of it. “In the middle of all the pain was the cross and Jesus. If it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be who I am today.”

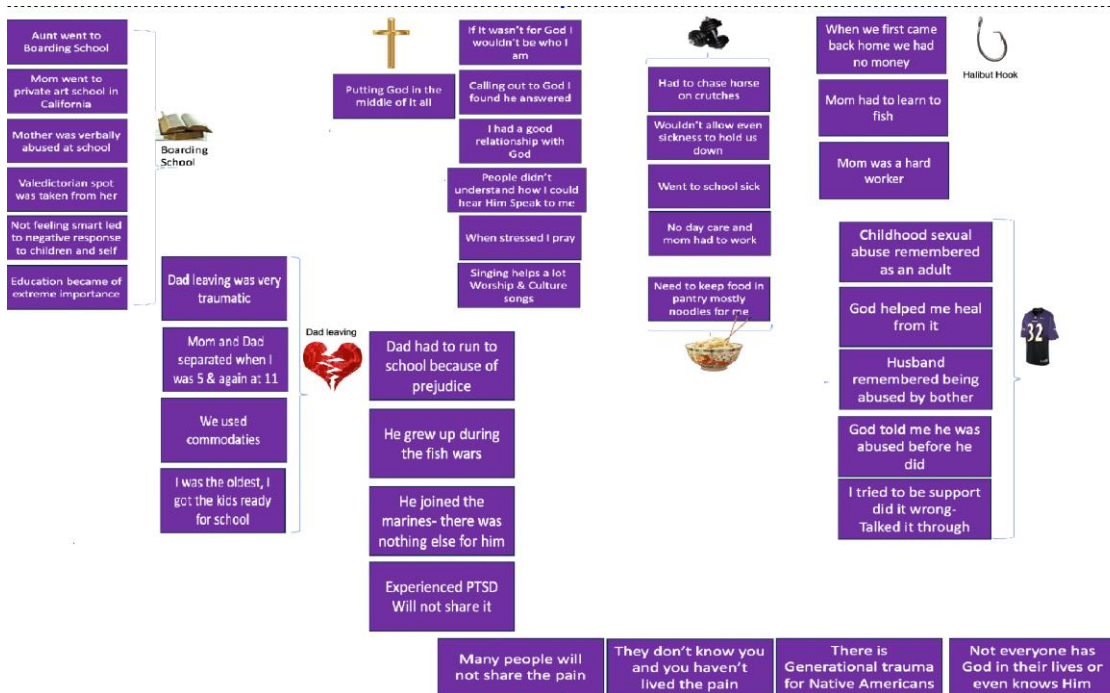


Figure 4.1 Lotus’s Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Rider

Rider is male and considered an elder of the Tribe. He is father to Lotus but has other children as well as grandchildren living on the reservation. Lotus served in the military and spent time deployed. His time in the service included defending the United States. He is proud to be a veteran and actively supports his fellow veterans.

Because Rider’s home was filled with people who might accidentally walk in during the process, Rider’s interview was conducted at the church, on the reservation, at a time when the church was not open. The interview lasted 85 minutes.

He struggled with finding a place to begin , he noted that the topic of generational historical trauma was “big,” and many things happened in his lifetime. Once he began his story

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he bounced around from memory to memory, as they began to surface, sharing with me only the parts he was comfortable talking about.

Textural Description

Rider's story began with an example of trauma that he did not recognize, at the time, as trauma. He was able to understand it as such, later in life when he looked back remembering the experience. He stated that when he was young, his mom would drop him off at his great aunt's house, and any time that a Caucasian person (or anyone they did not recognize) came to visit, she would make him, and his cousins hide. He explained that he did not know why they had to hide; he just obeyed. Later, he realized that his great aunt was hiding them, to protect them from being taken away to the boarding schools like his older brothers had been. His brothers were taken to the Chemawa boarding school, and he recalled being very upset. One of his older brothers got tuberculosis while he was in Chemawa, and he came home on crutches. Rider laughed about how he came home from school, around the same time the veterans came back from the Korean War, and he was telling everyone stories about being injured in the war. He would hold up his crutch like a gun and pretend he was shooting it.

He shared how he experienced systemic racism, growing up, in the town where he lived. When they would leave the reservation, where they had been placed, they had to be aware of the areas they were allowed to go. When he would go to town with his dad, they would see signs in the windows that read, "No dogs or Indians allowed." He recalled that there were only two places where they could go sit down and eat.

When he started attending state-run schools, it was traumatizing for him. He describes the teacher as being "Pretty rugged." She would use corporal punishment to discipline the kids when they did not have the answer correct. He stated that the principal was nice to him and even

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overlooked a fight he had with another non-Indian boy, at school. Unfortunately, he was frequently picked on at school, by one specific boy. It got to the point that his cousin ended up defending him. He remembered the fight occurring in the bathroom and his cousin broke his hand in the fight.

Growing up, he had the opportunity to fish with his older brothers on the river. They would climb up on top of a log jam, and look at the King Salmon. He recalls them being so big that when his brother caught one it would cause him to trip all over the place. Their days of fishing occurred during the fish wars when the government took away the treaty rights that were promised, making it illegal for Native Americans to fish, so what they were doing was illegal. As a result, he mentioned that all the young boys went fishing in groups. Some would fish while others would watch out for the game warden. He recalled that the game warden was always looking for them, trying to catch them fishing, so they fished at night. He remembers his older brother getting in trouble with the law for fishing, at the time.

He remembers hearing others tell them that they were poor, but they did not ever feel poor because they had fish, and they went hunting for deer or elk. "We didn't feel poor. We didn't have no toys. I think we just played in the trees or outside." He remembers that some of his friends who lived near him had bicycles, but he did not. He would just run alongside them as they rode their bikes. One day, one of the elders saw him running with them and felt bad for him, so he put together a bike out of old bicycle parts for him.

In middle school, five of the boys from the reservation were on the same basketball team. He describes his team as moving like they had the same brain and being so good at basketball that no one could touch them. They played other sports like football, but they were not as good at those sports. The middle school coach told them that they should give the other team a chance

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to score, but the boys did not give in to that type of pressure. They were so skilled at basketball that they were given the chance to play the senior high team. The seniors only won them by a few points, so they felt accomplished in their basketball skills.

Rider was not allowed to go anywhere off the reservation, unless he was in a group, until he was a teenager because “going to town by yourself could get you killed.” When Rider was 12 years old, he found out the hard way that the town had a curfew at 9:00pm. One day they were in town too late, looking for a ride home, and a policeman called them over to his car. He asked them what they were doing. They told him they were looking for a ride home he told them they had missed curfew. Instead of helping them get home he arrested them and held them in jail overnight. The next day, his mom had to appear before the judge and speak on his behalf to get him released to go home.

To be on the football team, he and his friend would have to run to and from school. They became so fast that no one could catch them. Although they were fast, and no one could keep up with them, they realized they were treated differently and Rider commented that, “they felt like they were being used like guinea pigs because of their culture.”

There were two Caucasian ladies he remembers being especially nice and going out of their way to bring them home from school, so they would not have to run home. One lady was from the church, and she decided that she would pick them up from practice, each day, and bring them home. There was also a nurse who would pick them up, on occasion, when she saw them walking or running.

Rider was able to overcome the trauma he experienced. He pointed out that he went to church with his mother. Rider talked about how he grew up in a community where many of the tribal members were Bible-believing shakers. They would ring bells and pray, and God would

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answer their prayers. Rider could not wait until he was grown up enough to ring the bells, but the type of shaker that they were was dying out and he never got the chance. His grandpa, who was basically their chief, told everyone that they needed to start attending the “White man church up there.” So many started attending church.

Structural Description

The Federal boarding schools, operated by mostly Catholic churches, were granted permission to forcibly remove Native American children from their homes. They had permission to take them to schools that were meant to educate, in a way that stripped them of their culture and assimilated them. This action caused families to live in persistent fear. “I know when my brothers left for school with Chemawa I was pretty upset about it. My brothers talked a lot about their experience there. By the Korean War, that was in '53, I can remember one of my brothers came home or came over to visit because he had tuberculosis. He had crutches and was walking on crutches, telling us stories, making it like he was shooting crutches. He wasn't even in the war.”

Systemic racism is widespread in the town near where the reservation is located. This included Native Americans not being allowed to hunt or fish, having their reservation land moved continually (after the government determined their land valuable), being treated as criminals without cause, and not being allowed in certain stores and restaurants. This racism was so significant and widespread that children were taught to never leave the reservation alone. They were taught if they did not remain in groups, they would be murdered. “When I was a teenager, my folks still wouldn't let us go to town by ourselves. They said, if you boys go to town, you go as a group. You don't go by yourself because they killed one of our members. He was only eight.”

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Conceptual Mapping Task

Rider was unsure how to arrange the board with the sticky notes and arranged his conceptual map in seven rows beginning at the left side and moving down, before moving to the next column. He used curved lines to connect each memory that was connected in the rows.

After reviewing his board, he responded to the question of advice that he would give someone who was struggling with similar traumatic experiences. His advice was to share things. He mentioned that sometimes he feels like he cannot share things, and he worried that sharing memories might pass on anger and racism. He realizes that his family needs to know and talk about it because, “You wonder how the rest of the family feels and hope that they will not turn it into racism like I have seen.”



Figure 4.2 Rider’s Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Guardian

Guardian is a female leader from her tribe. She is a mother and grandmother and has many responsibilities within her tribal community. When she was first approached about the study, she was excited that the focus would be on resilience because she felt that too much of the focus had been on the trauma and pain. She felt that all this negative focus had caused people to

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feel hopeless, angry, and bitter. She wants others to know that there is strength in their culture, and to remember the teachings of her elders.

The interview with Guardian lasted only 30 minutes. It was held at the church in Port Gamble, in the evening, when nothing else was scheduled. Guardian is the mother to Whisperer, whose profile will appear later in the chapter. Guardian felt that this study was important and asked to have the opportunity for both of Whisperer's parents to share in the interview process. The researcher felt that getting another male participant would add to the perspective, and the accuracy of the study, so an agreement was made to do three interviews in Port Gamble, rather than just two.

Textural Description

Guardian began the interview by addressing the fact that Native Americans are facing an identity crisis, due to generational trauma. She mentioned that each generation has approached this challenge differently. She is happy to be part of a generation that has had the opportunity to begin to revitalize who they are as strong S'Klallam people. Yet, she still understands that families are suffering because of trauma.

Guardian shared how her mother experienced racist treatment verbally and physically, at school. She went on to explain that her grandparents and great-grandparents, similarly, suffered in the boarding schools. She admits that she did not go through that type of trauma, but that hearing of it brought her to tears. As a result of struggling in this area, Guardian's mother determined to become an educator herself and a historian. She was proud to inform the researcher that her grandmother became the first Port Gamble S'Klallam woman to graduate from high school, even though she suffered from trauma.

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She attributed the success of her parents and grandparents to the fact that her great-grandparents were spiritual leaders and teachers in the tribe. The separation from who they were and the restrictions of who they were expected to be, while in boarding school, was tough. They didn't talk about the experience very much, if at all. When her parents and grandparents would share about the trauma that they experienced, they would only share what was necessary and keep it minimal. They would then begin to share encouragement and teachings, from the Bible that focused on love, strength, healing, and God's demonstration of grace.

Guardian noted that both her grandfather and great-grandfather were ministers. They began as Bible-believing Shakers, and then became ordained ministers. Her great-grandparents had 13 children, the generation that was taken to boarding school. When they returned from boarding school, they grew close and became "Knit together spiritually, spirit strong. Holy Spirit-filled. This was the model that they set for us."

Guardian commented that today she sees people talking about the abuse that went on in the schools and they are passing on anger, hurt, and vengeance. She acknowledges that her parents and great-grandparents prayed through the hurt and anger, to be an example of a spiritual leader to their family and community. Prayer was the way they started the day and was what they did throughout the day. When trauma occurred, they stopped what they were doing and bathed one another in prayer.

Guardian recognizes that one of the biggest traumatic events that families face, is the brokenness of their family. The separation of the family came in many forms, much of which span generations. "I believe we went through a traumatic season of brokenness in families, and I think that was the trauma that personally impacted mine." Guardian's mom married a non-native man. Since Guardian's mom was unable to figure out how to deal with what was going on at the

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time, so she just left. This was extremely traumatic for the family because they did not know if she was alive or not, when she left. Guardian explains that her mother did not call to let her know she was safe and alive. It was not until 3 days after she disappeared that her grandmother called to let them know she was alive. Until that time, Guardian and her family frantically looked for her contacting police and hospitals.

Guardian concluded that the loss of life is one of the most traumatic experiences that they have felt as a family. She experienced the loss of her mom, sister, and dad, all very close together and that added to the brokenness of their family. When asked how Guardian overcame the impact of this trauma, she proclaimed that God is number one in her spiritual well-being. “God, the Father, Jesus in my heart, filled with the Holy Spirit is what I was taught from my great grandparents to guard against evil harm. Valuing life, real love, genuine love, loyalty...being there, being present, and my grandmother pulled us all together.”

Guardian shared a beautiful story of belonging with the researcher. She explained she was feeling badly, during a period when they were working together to smoke fish and butcher deer. Everyone else in the family had a job, but they told her she was too little to help. Her grandma brought her to where the fish were being prepared to be smoked. “She opened my hand, put her hand in the rock salt and she funneled the rock salt into my hand...She moved my hand over to the fish, opened my hand a little bit, and gently showed me how to spread the salt on the fish. She said your hand is the perfect size for the right amount of salt for each fish.” In this way, her grandmother taught her the value of life, the importance of connectedness, belonging, coming together and blessing others.

Guardian pinpoints some strengths among the community, she mentioned that when it was time to smoke fish, everybody worked together. Everyone celebrated together and everyone

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had their job to do when it was time to get work done. Everyone stayed until all the work was done, and never left anyone person to do the work alone. “I think that strategy was that we didn’t deny the trauma. We didn’t ignore the ugly, or the dark, or the hurt, or the pain, or the suffering. We didn’t disregard it, but I believe that it was because of the spiritual health and wellness that we were able to become overcomers, with God, in the trauma.” She cautioned that the pandemic of COVID, including the isolation that was necessary at the time of its outbreak, brought a type of disconnect to the community, once again, that needs to be addressed.

Structural Description

Generational trauma has caused an identity issue within tribal communities. This identity crisis has left the tribe scrambling to build and implement revitalization projects, to help the next generations restore their culture and identity. One of the most significant reasons for this loss is the government sanctioned boarding schools, such as Chemawa. Guardian’s mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother all attended the Chemawa Indian School, which forbade them to practice any of their cultures.

The fear of abandonment and loss is what contributes to the brokenness of Guardian's family. When her mother left, without a warning, she grew up apart from the instructions of her mother, for a time.

Resilience is supported and built by the patriarch of Guardian’s family, by developing and teaching each child that they have a place in the family. In this way, children develop a sense of belonging. When children understand their place, in the family, they will always know who they are. This is helpful for retaining identity through the challenges of life.

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Conceptual Mapping Task

Guardian enjoyed putting the sticky notes, she approved, on her board and making them into a creative map. She chose to place her sticky notes in the shape of a heart. She also drew lines around the sticky notes to create a heart. Inside the heart, she wrote words like together, family, safe, husband, children, tears, hugs, holding, Bible, praying, and at the bottom of the heart-shaped sticky notes, she wrote healing strength and support.

Upon reflection, after finishing her conceptual map, Guardian was asked what advice she would give others who are going through the same type of trauma she experienced. She answered that she would tell them they are valued and loved. “You are a unique expression of God’s creativity. If we do not make Spiritual wellness a priority, our body, soul, and spirit will be affected.” She mentioned, in closing, the need to sift through the culture and keep what is God-given, and letting go of anything that could cause harm to another because that is not of God. “God is love, trust, faithfulness, spirit, soul, physical cleansing; he brings a new vision of

life, joy and belonging.”



Figure 4.3 Guardians Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Witness

Witness is the father of Whisperer, and the husband of Guardian. He is one of the male elders within his tribe. He resides on the Port Gamble reservation and is active in leadership for his tribe. He has other children and family members who also live on the reservation.

Witness was slightly hesitant to share the trauma that he experienced, because he did not want to dishonor anyone. When the researcher explained that he only needed to share what he was comfortable sharing, and that the focus of the study would be mainly on the resilience factors of overcoming trauma, he was ready to discuss what was on his heart. The interview

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portion of the visit, with Witness, lasted only 38 minutes and began at the Port Gamble church, after Guardian completed her interview.

Textural Description

Witness began his story by sharing that his father had been a boxer, in North Dakota, and he moved to Port Gamble. He shared that his dad was physically rough with them, and when he was angry, they would get unnecessary spankings.

From the first day in kindergarten, there was a group of boys who said they were going to make him their target. Every day, until 7th grade, he was fighting 5-6 boys because of his skin color and his size. In 7th grade, he had a growth spurt, and grew 6 inches in one year. After that the boys stopped picking on him. Throughout those years, Witness knew he could go to his mother for support because she was a Godly woman, and always prayed for them.

Witness was not able to make any friends, until 7th grade, because he was busy fighting and trying to survive. In 7th grade, he made a close friend, who would make him laugh. He felt that he could trust her and share with her about the things he was going through.

Witness mentioned that his brothers had gone to boarding schools, and they suffered trauma from that experience. He then went on to describe a house fire, where he almost died. He had been sleeping upstairs, in their two-story house, when a fire broke out. When he woke up, he could not see anything, but he could hear his parents, downstairs turning over beds and running from room to room looking for their children. Everyone made it out of the house, but it was very traumatic.

Witness admitted to getting into drugs, at an early age, because of the abuse he went through. He thought that this would be a way to numb the pain. He started hanging out with

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people who liked to party, and participated in a party-style life, “Until I surrendered my life to Jesus, He took all of that; that’s how I dealt with it.”

At the age of 17, Witness had an experience where it felt as if a heavy weight was hitting his chest, counterclockwise, over and over. By the sixth time, he felt this, he started to exhale and exhale, until the pain finally stopped. When this happened, he could see only darkness, and he felt as if his spirit started circling his body. When he regained consciousness, he found that he had been hitting himself in the chest. He thinks that this motion must have restarted his heart.

This was not the only time he had an experience where he died. Witness, had to have open heart surgery. In the middle of surgery, he experienced a time when he could see his own body, and his chest cavity was open. He could see the doctors and nurses working on him and the interns, who were watching the surgery, and then something caught his eye. It was his mother, who was sitting in a field of pure colors. “Behind her was a big city, and there was a pathway...I didn’t get to see inside the city. There was such a peace there...A peace that surpasses understanding.” Before he returned to his body, he said his mom waved at him, as if to say, “I will see you later.”

The heart attack, leading to this emergency surgery, would have killed most men, and left him with only ½ of his heart function. Then in 2019, he suffered a covid induced stroke. After praying for healing, the doctors reported that 75% of the scar tissue, deemed nonviable from the heart attack, is now viable. Today he states that his wife and children help him through the struggles he faces. “Now I don’t think of that stuff because I keep my eyes on Jesus. Keep my focus on him.”

When asked what other things helped him find strength through the trauma, he described his adventures of fishing with his dad. Witness learned about fishing from his father, they would

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take a 21-foot boat out, and fish on Hood Canal and at Dungeness Bay. On one specific day, they were forced to make camp because of the weather, it was very windy. He woke up in the night to find his dad was not sleeping with them, and he was worried. When he went looking for his dad, he found him trying to hold on to the boat, to keep it from being lost to the wind. He had been standing there for hours holding the boat, and Witness shares that he tried to take over but could only hold it for about an hour and a half. They ended up having to bring the boat in and beach it to keep it from being blown away.

Witness also had a love for music that began with watching how his uncles played and copying their hand movements. He was 8 years old when he started playing, and began with rock music, but he recalls the first song he ever played on the guitar was one that his mother would sing called “Why me Lord.” The guitar became a great help, at times when Witness felt sad, mad, or got in fights at school. He would carry his guitar around with him, and even played with some friends in middle school. Today, he plays and writes worship music, which blesses his heart and the hearts of others.

Structural Description

Witness went to a state-run elementary school, where he experienced systemic racism, from the first day he entered kindergarten until he had a growth spurt, in 7th grade. His trauma came not only from the hands of a group of boys, but from the system that did not protect him from this type of abuse. Witness should have had a safe place to learn and grow, instead his experience at school was filled with fear.

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Conceptual Mapping Task

Witness was a little confused by the task of putting sticky notes on a poster board. He explained that he is still struggling from some cognitive deficits, due to the stroke he had. He decided to place the sticky notes on the board in what he felt was chronological order.

There are seven columns of sticky notes that vary in length. The first group was smaller and bunched up. The second, third, sixth, and seventh columns took up most of the length of the poster board. The third and fourth columns, are shorter in length but are well spread out.

Witness did not choose to write any symbols on the poster board. He started numbering each sticky note but then grew tired of this, so he made it known to the researcher the columns were in chronological order.

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Figure 4.4 Witness's Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Dancer

Dancer is the daughter of Rosebud, who was also interviewed in this study, and the mother to three children. Dancer is proud of her culture and actively strives to give her support to programs that will enrich her tribal community and family.

Textural Description

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Dancer's trauma began even before she was born, as she was conceived when her mother was raped. Her brother was born about 14 months afterward, under the same circumstances. When she was 5 years old, her mother got married to a man who already had 5 boys, meaning there were seven kids in the family when her sister was born.

When her mom was at work, her stepdad came into her room at night and began sexually abusing her. This abuse went on for five years, before her brother told her mother what was happening. Her mother thought that they could fix the problem, by going to counseling, so they all went to family counseling. The counseling caused traumatization, because it required nine-year-old Dancer to stand before her family and confess everything that her stepfather did to her, in detail. During counseling, her stepfather promised that he would never touch her again, but he continued to abuse her for another year, until her mother found out again. At this time, she took her children and left. Since her mother did not have a place to live, the kids ended up going into foster care.

Dancer was separated from her little sister, at first when they entered foster care, and this added to the traumatization she felt. After a while, the case workers realized that all three children needed to be together. It took about 6-8 months before Dancer and her siblings were reunited with their mother.

By the time Dancer moved to Port Townsend, with her mom, she was 10 years old and very angry. Dancer considered her grandmother to be her best friend, at this time, her grandmother was very old and could not get around on her own, so Dancer would go to her house after school, each day, and help her. Dancer recalls this being her safe place. This safe place became especially important, as her mom began drinking regularly and she had to step into

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the place of caregiver for her brother and sister. Two years after moving to Port Townsend, to be near her grandmother, Dancer's grandmother passed away.

Dancer remembers her mother working all the time, and staying out drinking when she was not working. When she was home, she would always be angry. "When I was eleven, I was babysitting a lot, so I had money to go get cake mixes and stuff to make mom a cake for her birthday. My brother and I had been working on it like half the day and super excited and she got home...something that my brother said upset my mom, and she totally took her hand and she just like buried it into that cake and threw it at us." The only time that Dancer remembers her mother telling them she loved them, was when she was drunk.

When Dancer moved back with her mom, Dancer began drinking with a neighbor. Her mom would leave them with him while she was away. Later, this neighbor was the one that she stayed with when her mom went into treatment for her alcoholism.

Dancer spent years blaming herself for the brokenness in her family and she began having trouble with her heart. If she exercised or did any activity that caused her to breathe heavily, her heart would beat hard. "It was the weirdest thing. I feel like it was a broken heart to be quite honest."

At the age of 13, she began drinking and smoking frequently with friends. She engaged in risky activities and was very promiscuous. She recalls ending up in a hotel room with older Navy men and getting into trouble with the law for eluding police officers. This behavior sent Dancer to treatment. While she was in treatment, her mother only visited her one time and the visit did not end well.

Dancer felt as if she was not supported by her mother, and they did not have a very good relationship throughout high school. Dancer continued to drink after treatment throughout high

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school. When she was out drinking, she would come home to find she was kicked out. “When I wouldn't show up or I wouldn't listen and she knew I'd be drinking, I would find all my clothes thrown out outside, you know from a second-story window just thrown out of my room out onto the sidewalk, and I just didn't really feel loved at all, like at all. Probably up until I was like about 25, even.”

After Dancer graduated from high school, she went to Hawaii and back. Throughout her 20s she felt internally lost and depressed, and her behavior mirrored these feelings. When she was 25 years old, she was so out of control that she took Methamphetamine and ended up in treatment again. She had promised herself she would never do Methamphetamine, so the fact that she went that far was a wake-up call. “I remember being so disgusted with myself, because that was one thing I told myself I would never do. My drinking was so out of control, back then, I just went against everything, so I called my brother the next day and asked him to get me into treatment.”

Going to Northwest Indian Treatment Center, was a life-changing experience for Dancer. She was able to get counseling and she participated in the sweat lodge. While in counseling there, she was able to face her past and forgive her mom, for not being able to stop the abuse she went through. “It took about two days for me, to kind of come out of that, like, it was so intense. I just cried, for like two days straight. Just trying to work through it, and worked through the trauma, and I was able to forgive my mom for one. But also, you know, she was able to you know, apologize we had a really good conversation and things got a lot better after that actually.”

At treatment, she met her oldest daughter's father and moved to Neah Bay, Washington, with him. He was not serious about sobriety and became physically abusive to Dancer. She attributed the grumpy attitude her daughter grew up with, to the fact that she remained in that

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abusive relationship throughout her pregnancy. He went through treatment 2-3 more times, and finally got sober for a few years. When Dancer caught him smoking weed, she decided that she could not remain in that relationship, any longer. Dancer and her daughter became homeless, when they left Neah Bay, and had to stay with friends until an emergency housing program found transitional housing for them.

Dancer allowed her daughter's father to move in with them, after she got a job and an apartment, because he finally was clean and sober, but that only lasted a few years. When he began using again, Dancer was going to college and working. She did not want to go back to that lifestyle, so she kicked him out.

A few years later, she met and married a man who was trying to stay in the United States. It started out as just a marriage of convenience, but moved into a relationship. They moved to Idaho, and Dancer had another daughter, but this relationship became abusive as well. Dancer was isolated from her family, in Idaho, for three years and things "Got really crazy. I mean he held a knife to my neck and everything. I remember just being depressed, so I ended up driving back from Idaho with the kids and our stuff. My sister-in-law met me in Boise and drove back with us." Moving home from Idaho, Dancer faced homelessness, once again. She worked three jobs and had to bring her children to work with her, throughout the summer, while her tribe worked to find her a home to rent.

Dancer's husband moved back to Port Townsend, leaving everything behind in Idaho, and she gave him a second chance. Even after he again became abusive, they remained together. Approximately five years later, the family traveled to Africa to meet his family, and when they came back, he decided to return to Africa without them. Dancer waited for him to return, for two

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years, but he never returned. Dancer and her daughters felt the pain of abandonment, and this led Dancer into a period of depression and hoarding.

A few years later, she met her son's dad. She was surprised to find herself pregnant at the age of 41, but she felt it was a welcome surprise. Her son's father has been good to her, but he struggled with alcoholism, so she would not allow him to live in the home.

Because of all the chaos and loss, Dancer and her children have been in counseling for about three years now. Her youngest daughter has broken doors in their home because of her anger. Working through some of the anger through play therapy has helped her. "That was super rough, because you never want to see your kids hurt. You know you want the best for your kids. You don't want them to suffer through the same things that you've had to suffer through."

Dancer's oldest daughter is dealing with addiction, and she prays that her son, who is only 10, will not have the same struggle. She connected some of the poor choices she made, to not having a good male role model in her life, and not knowing how to choose a good man.

Dancer realized that she had not completely worked through everything, but she felt in control of her life, and her alcoholism. She felt that participating in tribal events and putting effort into helping tribal programs, has helped her feel as if she is making a difference. Praying and participating in the sweat lodge has helped her to feel more spiritually connected. "I have definitely felt like I could give a little more... I ran for tribal council a few years back. I've done tribal journeys. Those are the kinds of things that made me feel good."

Dancer concluded that her primary focus is trying to help her children get through their trauma, and she finds joy in helping others who are just coming out of treatment. Relating to those who need someone to talk to, after going through treatment, seemed to make a difference for Dancer and those she connects with.

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Structural Description

The direct abuse that Dancer experienced, as a young girl, happened when her mother was not at home. Dancer's mother was struggling with alcoholism and married a man who was not Dancer's father and was also abusing alcohol. He had already been molesting his own children, but no one was aware of what was going on. Much of the abuse that Dancer experienced, as a child, is linked to generational trauma. Her mother experienced the same type of abuse, as a child, and Dancer's grandmother was an alcoholic as well.

The foster care system separated the siblings, when they were taken from their mother, and this added to the trauma. Because the abuse broke up her family, Dancer blamed herself and her mother. This further added to the trauma and reduced their ability to heal.

Conceptual Mapping Task

This was the first time that Dancer participated in a conceptual mapping task activity, and she commented that she was excited to see how it all turns out. Dancer's interview took place in her living room, and only the researcher was with her.

Dancer approached her conceptual map task by placing each sticky note on the board, one at a time, from left to right. Like others who were interviewed, she chose to arrange her story chronologically. When asked to draw how each note is connected, she simply drew an arrow from left to right, demonstrating the chronological process of lived events. The board ended up having 12 columns on it, neatly and evenly placed. Of these columns, 5 of them contained 5 sticky notes, and the last 7 columns had 4 sticky notes.

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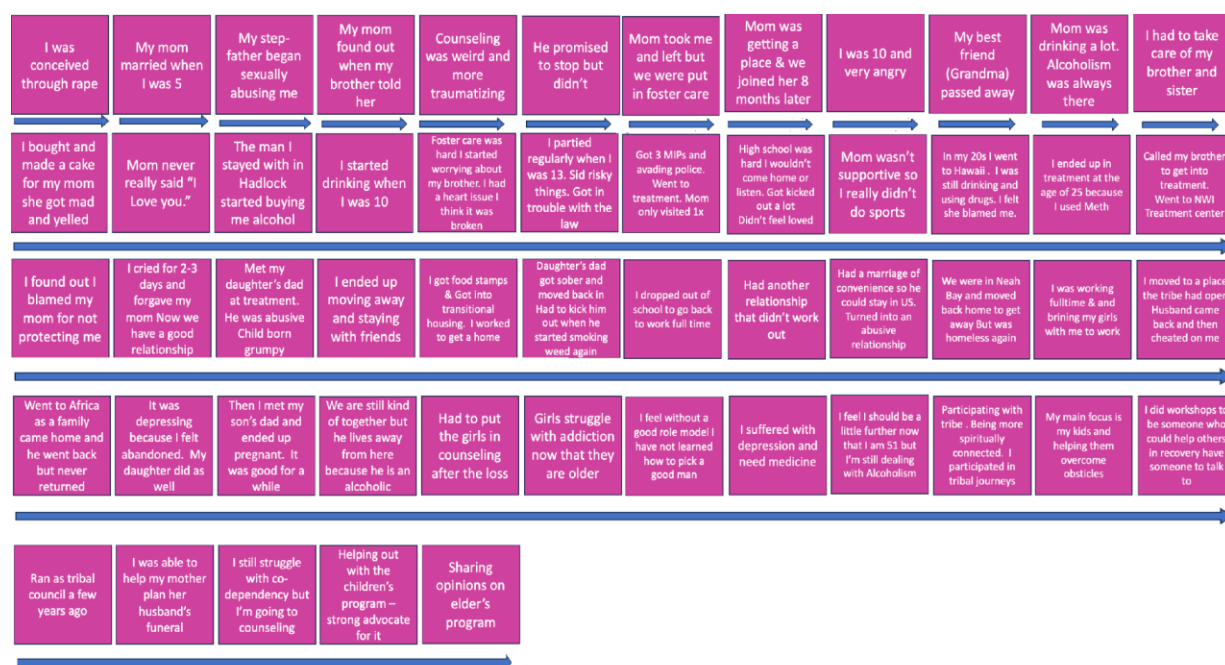


Figure 4.5 Dancer's Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Rosebud

Rosebud is a female elder of the tribe. She is the mother to Dancer and three other children. She has worked within and outside the tribal community, to help counsel those struggling with addiction. Rosebud's home resides on the Port Gamble Tribal reservation. She pays the tribe for her home based on her income.

The interview with Rosebud took an hour and a half. The researcher went to Rosebud's home and met her in the living room where she lives alone. Rosebud had not participated in conceptual mapping before and was unsure of where to start with her story. However, once she began to open up, she willingly shared what came to her memory.

Textural Description

When Rosebud was 13 years old, her father died. Up until that point, things were good for the family. Her mom was able to hold things together for the first two years, after the passing

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of her father, but by the time Rosebud was 15, her mother began drinking on the weekends and then progressed to drinking all the time. Trapped in her addiction, she started bringing men home, and then going into her room, to go to bed, leaving them to do whatever they wanted in their home.

One day, one of the men Rosebud's mom brought home, decided he wanted to have sex with her. At this time Rosebud did not even know what sex was. "I didn't even know what sex was, until I got raped the first time. I didn't even know how a baby was born, until I was in the hospital having a baby. I didn't even know what a period was, until two months after I started; she didn't give me much information or give me any kind of direction on what to do, or protection, because she was too busy in her addiction."

Rosebud went into Job Corps to get away from her abuser when she was 16, but she was not there very long before he came looking for her, and took her with him to Cannon Beach. This relationship quickly became as physically abusive as it was sexually abusive. Whenever Rosebud attempted to get away from him, he would catch her and bring her back. In a drunken fit of rage, he would punish her for trying to leave.

It was not long before Rosebud got into trouble with the law, when she went with her abuser to rob a hardware store. She was prosecuted and ended up in a behavioral correction center, for a year. Rosebud states that she was grateful for getting locked up because she was tired of being beaten, and the correction facility became her safe place. It was while she was there that Rosebud gave birth to her first-born son. Unfortunately, one of her counselors was convinced, by the smooth talk of her abuser, and let him take her to live with him in Shelton, Washington. While Rosebud was living in Shelton, she decided she needed to give her son up for adoption, to protect him from the abuse that she was living through.

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As the abuse continued, Rosebud decided to take advantage of a time when her abuser was having a party and escape. She had never hitchhiked before, but she wanted to get as far away as she could. One of the men in the car that picked her up, was a large Chippewa who she ended up having sex with because she was too afraid to say no. Once again, Rosebud's abuser found her, and this time he beat and kicked her, in front of his friend, until she was covered in blood. He took her to a house and locked her in a bathroom and continued to beat her for hours. Rosebud found a razor and decided she would have to cut him, to get away, but he just laughed at her, so she tried to break a window to escape. Every effort she made, to get away, was unsuccessful.

A week after this attack, Rosebud was forced to marry her abuser, and moved with him to Shelton. "One night, he came home drunk and pulled me out of bed, pulled me through the house by my hair, took me outside and smashed my face against the windshield, until the windshields shattered. The next day, he looks at me and says, "what happened to you? Did I do that?""

Rosebud suffered injuries and was hospitalized for a week, after being in a car accident, and then was forced to have sex with other men, throughout this time. Rosebud confesses that she did not know what he was doing to her was wrong. "I just thought I was nobody. I was nothing. I didn't even have a right to be alive."

Finally, her abuser got put in a minimum-security prison, for his illegal behavior. At this time, Rosebud was 20 years old and started going to community college. Her college roommate convinced her that she needed to leave and get away from him. So, Rosebud left without telling anyone and went to Arizona, where she would stay with her roommate's family. Since she packed up so quickly, and did not let anyone know, her sister was worried and began searching

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for her. When Rosebud went to work, it was reported to the tribe and so her sister found out where she was living, but so did her abuser. He sent her money to come back home to him, but she did not go back with him. She took the money, got the rest of her things, and went back to Arizona.

While she was in Arizona, she became aware of her own addiction and alcoholism. Rosebud decided she needed to move back home, to Port Townsend, during her addiction. When she returned home, she began drinking heavily. When she turned 21, she found out she was pregnant with her oldest daughter. She continued drinking during her pregnancy and had many relationships with men. "I didn't care who they were, as long as they were nice to me and didn't beat me up." Fourteen months after having her daughter, Rosebud had another son. Rosebud admits that she does not even know who their fathers are, and she became extremely depressed during this time. Rosebud would work and try to care for her children, but all she wanted to do was drink.

Rosebud started seeing a counselor for a few years. During this time, Rosebud began to finally realize that she had been raped and that the things that had happened to her were not her fault. However, she confessed to her counselor that she felt she needed to see a minister because she was still so depressed that she did not even know what day it was. At that point, her counselor stopped and prayed with her. "She prayed over me, and it worked. I felt all the pain leave my body from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head. It was amazing. I couldn't believe it. I felt good. I went outside and everything was clear, and I could hear even a lot that I hadn't heard before. Like people walking in their shoes, making noise. Everything was great. And clear." This experience was new to Rosebud, but it was not able to keep her from drinking again, because she did not have the foundation of a belief system in her life at the time. "I didn't

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believe, and when I didn't believe, it wasn't part of my life. When she prayed over me like that it was great, but it didn't keep me from not drinking.”

When Rosebud started drinking again, she met her second husband and found out she was pregnant, again. “I was working all of the time, and I did not realize that my husband was molesting my oldest daughter. When my son finally told me what was going on, I confronted him, and he denied it.” The next day, Rosebud was finally able to get him to confess, and she called the police. Those she contacted, told her that they needed to see a counselor as a family. They did this for a few months and then tried to get back together. Rosebud felt that things were still not right, at first, her daughter denied anything was going on, but she finally admitted it. “So, I said “we'll, pack up your stuff; we're leaving.” It's the last time we were ever there. The kids went into foster care, for three months, while I tried to make money to get a place of our own.”

Rosebud continued drinking and went from relationship to relationship, after this. While this was going on, her son began to struggle with addiction and ended up in treatment two times, before he even turned 16. The second time he went to treatment, Rosebud quit drinking, herself, for a few years, so that he would come home to a house free of alcohol.

Quitting one addiction, led to another addiction and Rosebud began using Methamphetamine. Rosebud confessed that she used it for about 5 years, until her son had a baby who died in his arms. She noted that she could not even hold the baby before he passed away, because there was so much meth in her pores it would have harmed him. This experience caused Rosebud to ask her son to help her get into treatment. After treatment, she moved in with her son and his wife, until she was able to get an apartment of her own. After getting clean Rosebud decided to become a drug and alcohol counselor.

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Years later, she met her last husband, who also had an addiction to alcohol before he met Rosebud. He got to the point where he prayed to God to deliver him from alcohol, asking him to take away the cravings, and God answered him. Rosebud shared that he was very supportive and good to her. Today, even after her husband has passed away, she has been drug and alcohol free. She has been sober, for 25 years and has retired from being a drug and alcohol counselor.

When asked what advice she would give someone who has gone through the type of trauma she experienced, she shared that people in abuse need to share with a domestic violence counselor what is going on, so they can get help. This type of counseling was not available when she was in the middle of the trauma. Celebrate Recovery is another avenue that she suggested, to help those struggling with addiction.

Structural Description

When Rosebud's father died, there was no one to help her mother keep her alcoholism under control. Rosebud was only 13, and she lost her father to death and her mother to alcohol. Rosebud's mother brought home men who were left alone with her small children. The lack of supervision in Rosebud's home, left her defenceless and unprepared for life. Rosebud had no one to turn to for help. Rosebud was unable to break free from the abuse because she did not feel that she was of value.

Conceptual Mapping Task

Rosebud set up her conceptual map in chronological order, from left to right. She did not see the need for writing extra pictures or shapes to connect the sticky notes, because they were already put in order. She mentioned that she did not feel as if she was very creative.

Rosebud never participated in a conceptual mapping task before. As Rosebud reviewed her board, I asked her about how the prayer that her counselor prayed affected her. She

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mentioned that before the prayer she had not believed, but that when something like that happens, “You can’t not believe.” She shared that today she believes in Jesus and in prayer, but she does not feel comfortable in church.

I was 13 when my dad died	Mom started drinking a year or two later	My mom was an alcoholic, but my dad kept it under control	She went to bed while her company was still there	I ended up getting raped. I didn't even know what sex was or how a baby was born.	When I turned 16, I went into the Job Corps but the man who raped me came and got me	I wanted to drown myself in Bremerton, but it was too cold, so I didn't	I went to my cousins he came and got me, and a bunch of men raped me. He kicked me	I was later locked in a bathroom with him. I tried to get away using a razor, but he just laughed at me	I tried to break a window, but I couldn't get out that way.	I ended up having to marry him and we moved to Shelton	One day he was drunk. He drug me by the hair, smashed my head into a windshield until I was bloody
He was violent. Threw me out of my house and took a knife to me	Next day he didn't know what had happened. He was an Alcoholic	I got into trouble and went to Maple Lane. I like being there because I was tired of beatings	I had my first son there. He was 11 pounds. I gave him up to protect him	My abuser talked my counselor into letting me go with him.	One night I took off while they were partying and ended up with a Chippewa man	He found me again and we got in a car accident. I was hospitalized with hip dislocation	He made me have sex with a man he brought home	He went to Clallam bay Honor camp prison.	I went to visit him and he tried to convince me I was cheating on him. I almost believed it.	I didn't know what he was doing was rape.	I thought I was nobody. I didn't deserve to be alive.
I didn't think my life could ever be normal	I started going to Peninsula College and my roommate convinced me to go to Arizona to meet her family	I filled my car with my stuff and didn't tell anyone where I was going	In Arizona the landlord tried to get me to sleep with him and his wife saw and threw me out	The abuser's dad sent me money to come back to him. I took his money but returned to Arizona	I didn't know it then, but I was already an Alcoholic. I had to get out of there	I went back to Port Townsend and found out I was pregnant. 6 months later started drinking	My mom came to bribe me with a bottle of whiskey to return to my abuser. I hid and my neighbor kicked them out	I used to have nightmares that I cut his throat, and he would just stand there laughing	I did not know who the fathers of both of my children were	My next husband was the father of my youngest daughter, but he molested my oldest daughter	I confronted him and he denied it. But the next day he confessed so I called welfare and the police
We had to go to counseling and then we got back together	I went out fishing one day & things started happening with him again so we pack and left	Kids went into foster care for 3 months. It broke up his family because he had been molesting them too	I finally started going to counseling I was so depressed	I told my counselor I needed to see a minister because something was wrong with me	She prayed and it worked. I felt it and could see and hear more clearly than ever before	That lasted a while until I started drinking again.	I don't know what I would have done if it hadn't been for that counselor	My second husband was also a cocaine addict. He stole my son's paper route money for drugs	My son ended up going to treatment 2x before he was 16. I quit drinking so he could come home	Next, I was with my fishing buddy for a couple of years, but he got mad because I drank too much	Back in the day no one respected Native American women. Just used and abused them
I started using meth Then my son's baby died and I couldn't even hold him to say goodbye	I told my son I was ready to quit drugs and went to treatment for 28 days	My son was one reason I got clean and sober.	I hated rehab. I almost faked a heart attack but I stuck it out	I moved to be with my son and his wife for a few years until their next baby was born	His wife's family was all supportive and nice to me and I went back to work	I got an apartment and decided to become a drug & alcohol counselor	I started working at Clallam counseling and then Suquamish after that	I met my husband on e harmony. He told me his story, and didn't want to meet at first	He had a bad drinking problem. Prayed to God to get rid of cravings. It worked	Then when he came to see me we got married and were together for 14 years.	He was the only one who treated me like I was someone. I'm seeing a grief counselor now.
The answer is Family!	Once I make up my mind I usually can do it.	I would suggest others see a domestic violence counselor	Counseling and Church helps too Celebrate recovery								

Figure 4.6 Rosebud's Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Whisperer

Whisperer is a young female. She lives on the reservation with her family and works to provide for them as a single mother. Her children are still young and are just starting school. This was the first time that Whisperer really shared her story, like this, with anyone, so this researcher felt extremely honored to be able to listen to her story of hope.

The interview was conducted in private, at the S'Klallam Worship Center. The researcher and participant were given a space that was free from any interruptions.

Textural Description

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Whisperer started her story by speaking about the trauma in her life that she felt could not be hidden from others, because it happened suddenly and was out of the Whisperer's control. A few years ago, Whisperer suffered from a heart attack that led to a stroke. This happened at a time when she was planning on beginning her life. She thought that she would be settling down and starting a family, and instead she found that she had to begin to learn how to walk and think all over again. This delayed her ability to work, and it left her feeling exposed because she could not make the choice to share it or hide it from others.

Whisperer changed gears after speaking about what she felt others already knew, and began to share about things that happened when she was younger and suffered trauma from being sexually abused. At 11 years old, Whisperer went on canoe journeys. At canoe journeys, all the families camped in the same area. She was preparing to go take a shower with her friends, but they left her behind because she was taking too long. On her way to meet her friends, at the showers, a man pulled her into his tent and raped her. The police were called, and it was extremely traumatizing for Whisperer. Sometime later, her sister's ex-husband attempted to rape her, but her cousin heard her screaming and came to her rescue.

When Whisperer decided to have a relationship, later in life, it started out good at first but ended up being extremely abusive. At one point Whisperer experienced broken ribs and black eyes. From that relationship, came her first little girl. Whisperer pointed out that the first time she experienced the violence, others noticed. After that, her daughter's father got better at abusing her, learning how to hurt her without leaving marks where anyone else could see them. To avoid being beaten, Whisperer began dealing drugs for her abuser. During this time, Whisperer totaled her car and ended up in the hospital.

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Whisperer was able to look back at this situation and see how God was with her, in the middle of it all. She testified that in one visit to the hospital, everything that Whisperer was going through was brought to light, and this moment helped her face the problem and make a change.

When she totaled her car, she split open her eyelid and broke her nose. When they took her blood, they found out that she was pregnant, doing drugs, and highly intoxicated. They also discovered that many of her bones had been broken before due to the physical abuse she had suffered. It was at this point that she knew she legally could not hide any longer.

After being released from the hospital, Whisperer was allowed to go home for a while but then she was sent to jail for a few days. She said she did not complain about this because she knew that she probably should have received a harsher penalty. "Living in a small community...I knew everybody could see me going to the wellness center. It was humiliating, but it was also the reality check that I needed...it was my wake-up call. That was my aha moment, where I needed to do things different. I needed to stop trying to fill that empty space in my heart with something else."

Whisperer spoke of the pain that had come from being a single parent, and not having the opportunity to interact with the father of her child in a healthy positive way. She suggested that it was not only difficult for her, but for her daughter as well. Whisperer tried to figure out how her daughter's father could live life without making his daughter a priority, when all she wanted to do was ensure her children were always cared for. Whisperer explained that her dad has become such a big part of her life, and wishes that her daughter had the same type of relationship with her father.

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Whisperer went to some counseling and said that it helped some, but she found it challenging to talk to anyone about what she felt or was going through, because her parents were ministers. As a pastor's kid, Whisperer felt an extreme amount of pressure because people put her family on a pedestal and had unrealistic expectations for them as a family.

Whisperer felt like she had failed her family, in the choices that she made, due to this type of pressure. "We joke around and say that my parents got it right with my brother, because he got married, and then they got a house, and then they had a baby and all of that stuff."

Whisperer has found her faith in Jesus, to be a source of strength. She mentioned that she keeps going to church, and she made it known to her parents that she was not going to church for them. She wanted them to know, "Even though I've messed up all of those things, and even though I'm covered in tattoos, and I have gauges and I have piercings and all of those things, I still love Jesus. I can't leave because I know that I need him."

Whisperer remarked that her life did not need to be that hard, but that the choices she made caused her life to be more difficult. Part of the choices that made it more difficult was not talking about what she experienced. She felt that people do not need to know the details of her life, and she did not feel safe sharing with others. She confessed that she understood the need to share her experience, so that others might be motivated to change or get help.

She recalled how she was a trusted friend whom many confided in, but that she usually doesn't share what she went through. Whisperer remarked that it was easy to relate to others, but she did not know why she had been unable to share. Whisperer has found that the trauma she went through, gives her a different kind of love and compassion for others. "It gives me like a different kind of Love, like a real pure genuine love for people. And I just, don't feel the need to

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talk about myself. The love is just there because I can relate to them and listen to them, be there for them, pray for them, and things and just be the person that I needed in those times.”

Whisperer felt fortunate to have the parents that she had. She told the story of how her parents were not always who they are today. They were not there when she was younger, and she had to care for her little brother. Her older sister was the one who took care of her because Whisperer’s parents were partying and drinking. When Whisperer’s parents found Jesus, everything changed. Her parents stopped using alcohol and were present for their children and prayed for them regularly.

Whisperer explained that when she lost her car, because of her DUI, she did not allow the circumstances to make her bitter and angry, but she looked at the situation as a blessing in disguise. Because her parents had been praying for her and taught her about Jesus, she felt that everything she went through helped to make her stronger.

When she suffered a heart attack and stroke, she had family and friends who helped to support her and rally around her each step of the way. Whisperer declared that having to relearn things and work on her memory loss, was even a blessing because she used that time to choose who she wanted to be. “I wanted to be an amazing mom. I wanted to have all the patience with my kids. I wanted to have peace, rest, and no stress in my life, and just be organized and clean. I changed a lot about myself, and it wasn't for anybody else. It was just that's what I've always wanted to be like that, and I lost it when I went through all those other things, bad decisions, choices I was making.”

Going through the struggle of learning everything over again, helped Whisperer learn to tolerate things not going as planned and not being perfect. In the past, if things did not go as she planned, it would give her so much anxiety she would curl up in a ball and lay on the floor.

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Instead of being focused on the stress, when things do not go well, she learned to pray. “I'm not really good at reading my Bible. I'm not. I do maybe a couple of times a week...A lot of people talk to themselves, and I just talk to God.”

Whisperer's boyfriend also has children, and they planned together, to work and build a healthy family. When asked what helped her overcome her trauma, Whisperer confided that she did not believe in God at the time. She was questioning everything, so she had to focus on changing for her kids. She could see them physically right in front of her, and they became what she fought to remain alive for. Afterward, she started going back to church. “That was the beginning. It unlocked all those other areas, you know motivation. The Bible says that God is love and that's something that I've always struggled to feel and also accept, just from anybody, any human being, and the simple fact that God is love has always stayed with me. Everybody needs the love of God.”

When reviewing her conceptual map, Whisperer was struck with amazement. Seeing her life visually before her eyes highlighted the growth that she had made throughout the years. She mentioned that at first, she was overwhelmed by how many mistakes she made and how much trauma she had gone through, but then she saw how big the steps of growth were. “Those are all things that are really, really big. Like, in this generation, a lot of people struggle with pride. Being able to admit that all of these things on the board, I made all these mistakes, but they do not define who I am.”

The conceptual map also brought out the fact that sharing her story helped, and made Whisperer conclude, that others who are suffering through trauma should find someone they can talk with and trust, because keeping it hidden does not allow for growth.

Structural Description

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Whisperer was in a place that should have been safe, when she experienced the first traumatic sexual offence. The next time she experienced trauma was at the hands of her brother-in-law, whom she should have been safe with. Whisperer and her siblings had to deal with absent parents, due to their drinking problems, until Jesus turned their lives around. Such abuse from adults, who should have been there to protect her, diminishes trust in others. Whisperer had a habit of keeping her trauma to herself. She understood that as a pastor's child, she was under more scrutiny than others might be, and did not want to burden anyone with how she felt.

Whisperer took this silence into an abusive relationship, which led her into drug and alcohol use. The drug use led to a car accident and a wake-up call at the hospital.

Conceptual Mapping Task

Whisperer arranged her conceptual map in approximately 5 columns. The columns started from the top left and moved to the bottom of the board. When she wrote symbolic connections of her experience, she drew lines to connect the sticky notes in each column, and she also wrote a word above each column. The word over the first column was *control*. The second word was *feelings*. The third column had the words *belief and faith* at the top of the column. and the final word was *growth*.

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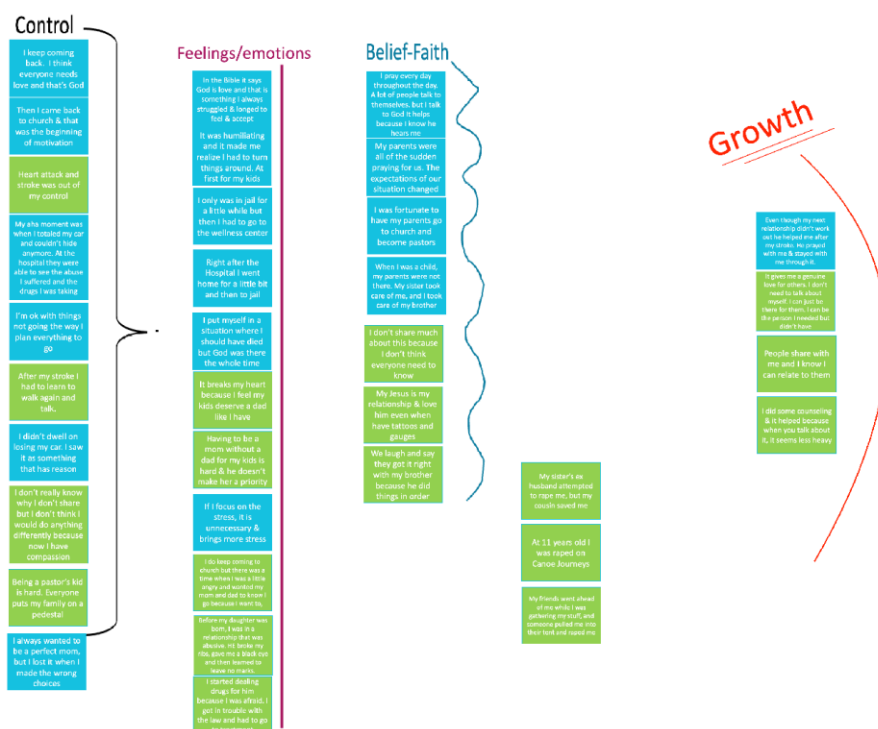


Figure 4.7 Whisperer's Digital Conceptual Map Representation

Results

Otter.ai is the software used to analyze the participant's interviews. Using this software helped the researcher when writing the results of the interviews. The photos in Appendix E are the visual summaries of the interviews that were conducted and the conceptual maps each participant created. The researcher created a digital representation of the conceptual map and added them to each profile, considering the themes that were developing (Figures 4.1-4.7). The conversations recorded on Otter.ai were added to Atlas.ti, which is a qualitative data analysis software application. Using Otter.ai, notes taken during the interviews, participant verification, visuals from conceptual maps, and Atals.ti, the validity and trustworthiness of the study increased significantly (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

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The conceptual mapping task aided in the research process in a way that reduced the steps needed for integrity verification because participants shared their experience, reviewed it, and added any corrections or additional information needed through the natural movement of the interview (Barry, 2023). As the researcher listened to and re-read the interviews repetitively, themes began to become clear. Using the different options within Atlas.ti the researcher created a word, and a number concept and used them to confirm the themes that came to light.



Figure 4.8 Atlas.ti Word Concepts

The word concept graph presents a visual demonstration of how often each word was mentioned in the interviews. The larger words were spoken, more frequently, across the interviews. Evaluating this word concept image, clarifies that family trauma is the most common denominator between all of those interviewed.

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Figure 4.9 Atlas.ti Number Concept

The visual images that were produced through Atlas.ti helped the researcher to determine what to classify and integrate into themes for this study, from the data collected through interviews and the conceptual mapping tasks (Barry, 2023).

Theme Development

Analysis of the data revealed three main themes, each of these themes had multiple subthemes. The main themes were 1) Trauma, which is subdivided into categories that include abuse, criminal activities, and mental health impact. 2) Family trauma, which is subdivided into categories that include adult responsibilities, domestic violence, substance abuse, generational trauma, and broken families. 3) Resilience resources are impacted by the sub-themes of making connections with family and community, and spiritual connections. These themes will be further examined later, in this chapter, as the results of how the research questions were answered are evaluated.

Theme 1: Trauma

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The theme of trauma is consistent throughout this study and is subdivided into categories that have to do with external trauma in relationship to family dynamics. These subcategories include abuse, and criminal activities.

Subtheme 1A: Physical, emotional, & sexual abuse

Lotus was sexually abused as a child, by a police officer, and she did not remember it until she was more than 20 years old. Her mother was verbally and mentally abused in school leading to negative comments and low self-esteem. As a result Lotus experienced emotional trauma and felt she always had to be perfect, better or smarter than every one else and not a “dumb Indian.”

Witness experienced physical abuse when his dad would get angry. He describes this abuse as unnecessary spankings. When he was in school, he was targeted by a group of 5 boys for 7 years and suffered physical abuse from them daily.

Dancer was sexually abused by her stepdad at the age of nine years old. She kept the abuse a secret out of fear.

Rosebud was raped before she even understood what sex was, her innocence was stolen. She was abducted by the man who raped her, and forced to live with him until she got in trouble with the law and ended up having a baby in a correction facility. She was so traumatized that the correctional facility was her safe space. Rosebud was continually beaten and raped, for years, until she turned 21 and began college. Beginning college allowed her to meet her roommate who convinced her to leave the abuse behind.

Whisperer was raped during a tribal event. At 11 years old, her innocence was stolen. She was preparing to get showered and pulled into a stranger’s tent. She also was subjected to

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abuse at the hands of her sister's ex-husband, who attempted to rape her. Later in life, she experienced severe physical, emotional and mental abuse from the father of her child.

Rider experienced the fear of not being able to leave the reservation alone. The fear of possibly being a target of murder was always in the back of his mind. To stay safe and participate in school events, he would have to run home every night after practice. He experienced systemic racism all around him.

Guardian experienced trauma when the racial tension between her mother's world and her father's world came into conflict, and her mother left them unable to cope with what was going on. This trauma was due to outside forces but affected the inner connections of the family, resulting in family Trauma.

Subtheme 1B: Criminal activities.

While dancer was drinking, she got sent to treatment for eluding the police and receiving three Minor in Possession (MIP) citations.

Rosebud went with her abuser as he robbed a hardware store and ended up getting sent to Maple Lane correction facility for being an accomplice. She spent a year there. She felt safe being locked in this correction facility because she had a chance to get away from the abuse she was suffering.

Whisperer received a DUI when she got in her car accident. The DUI and car accident were the turning point in Whisperer's life. She realized at this point she needed help.

Theme 2: Family Trauma

Trauma that happens within the family is one of the most challenging traumatic experiences for participants to overcome. For the purpose of this study, the family will be defined as those who are connected through blood and marriage. Due to generational and

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historical trauma, each one of the participants interviewed has gone through significant family trauma. The subthemes of family trauma include adult responsibilities, domestic violence, substance abuse, generational trauma, and broken families.

Subtheme 2A: Adult responsibilities.

Lotus was the oldest of four children and had to help make dinners and ensure that the kids got to school safely. It was her job to make sure that her sisters behaved. They all were made to strive for perfection

Dancer had to take responsibility for her siblings because her mother was never home. She would either be working or out drinking. Dancer used the money that she got from babysitting to get food for her family, and even make a birthday cake for her mother.

When Rosebud's mother began drinking, she did not prepare Rosebud for life. Rosebud was forced to have an adult relationship before she was of age. Rosebud was preyed upon by an abusive pedophile and was forced into being his live in victim (for years) because her mother didn't protect her or teach her any skills to protect herself. She didn't even know it was wrong. Rosebud had to make a choice to give up her first child to protect him from the abuse she experienced. She had the instincts to protect her baby even when she didn't know how to protect herself.

Whisperer had to care for her younger sibling while her older sibling cared for her because her parents were out drinking and not usually around.

Subtheme 2B: Domestic violence.

When Dancer went to treatment, she met her oldest daughter's father, and moved with him to Neah Bay after graduating from treatment. He was not serious about sobriety, and he would become extremely abusive with Dancer. A few years later, she met and married a man a

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to help him evade immigration, but they ended up having a relationship and a child. He isolated Dancer from her family, moving her to a different state and became very abusive.

Rosebud experienced over six years of physical and sexual abuse, at the hands of the man who raped her, as a child, and then forced her into marriage. Her next husband molested her children and destroyed her trust.

Witness was affected by what he described as unnecessary spankings. This experience happened when his father was angry and was not a correction for childhood behavior.

The father of Whisperer's daughter physically abused Whisperer, breaking many of her bones over an extended period of time. The physical abuse led to such fear that it would force her to go against her own values. She began by dealing drugs for her abuser, and from there she used the drugs she was dealing, to ignore the pain.

Subtheme 2C: Substance Abuse

Guardian used alcohol as her coping mechanism, until she met Jesus. Alcoholism has affected her extended family as well.

Witness began using drugs and alcohol at an early age, to dull the pain of abuse. He had spent more than 7 years being attacked by a group of boys and receiving unnecessary spankings at home. By the time he was in high school, he started partying and lived that way until he gave his life to Jesus.

Dancer started drinking with her neighbor, at the age of 10. "When I was about 10, there was an old man that lived in Hadlock who would buy me alcohol, and we would drink. I would drink those wine coolers and he would drink his gin...I mean that's what happened for...a couple of years...I never really thought there was anything wrong with it." By the time she was 13, she began drinking heavily, smoking and having sexual relationships. Dancer's behavior sent her to

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treatment, but it did not keep her sober the first time. Immediately, when she got out, she began drinking and using drugs. However, when she used Methamphetamine and stayed up all night, she scared herself into treatment. For most of the participants, drug and alcohol use was passed down to the next generation from their parents. Dancer shared, “You never want your kids hurt, or you know you want the best for your kids. You don’t want them to suffer through the same things that you’ve had to suffer through... My oldest daughter struggles with addiction and my youngest daughter struggles with addiction, now. My son is 10, so he’s so far obviously good, you know. But I’m just praying that he doesn’t end up going through it too.”

Rosebud progressively began increasing her use of alcohol because of the abusive situation she found herself. She was unaware of her addiction until she was finally free from the abuse. “My abuser found out where I was, and his dad sent me money to come back. I took that money came up here, got some more stuff and went back down. I didn’t bother with my abuser, I wasn’t gonna get back with him. I didn’t realize until once I was in Arizona that I was actually an alcoholic myself. I got so drunk I wound up in a car with a couple guys. I don’t even remember what happened, I remember I needed to get out of there, so I talked somebody into bringing me back to Washington.”

Whisperer began dealing drugs for her daughter’s father, after he broke her ribs. Dealing drugs led to using drugs, and a car accident was the result of driving while intoxicated. “At one point, he broke my ribs and another point he gave me a black eye. After that, he made sure that nobody else could see the bruises and stuff. So, I started dealing drugs for him because I was scared of him.”

Subtheme 2D: Generational trauma.

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As a result of the way that Lotus's mother was treated when she went to college, her fear of not measuring up melded into her parenting, causing distress and emotional trauma for her children.

Rider's brothers were taken away to the Chemawa Indian Boarding school. This traumatic experience happened to families, for generations, and caused severe fear of loss in the families that experienced it. "At my great aunt's house, every time a *wanetum*, or Caucasian, or white guy would show up, or anybody a stranger she would hide me and her other grandson. I never really understood why she would do that, but she was afraid that they would take us away, like they did a few others. Off to a boarding school...she didn't want to lose us."

Guardian felt that these boarding schools also contributed to the brokenness of families. "Their experience of separation from family, separation from culture, restrictions that were given, the circumstances of their day-to-day activity, was rough. My grandmother never talked much about it. My mom shared minimal about it. She did tell me that she experienced name calling, such as being called a no-good half-breed, from a teacher."

The siblings of Witness were taken to boarding school and suffered trauma from the experience. This has had an impact on his family to this day. Witness did not feel as if he could relay the story of his brother's experiences in the boarding school, but he commented, "I wish you could talk with my brothers about this, they came through the boarding schools."

Dancer's mother conceived her, through rape, when she was just a young girl. Her grandmother and mother were both alcoholics and seemed unable to maintain a healthy relationship with their male partners. Both Dancer and her mother grew up fatherless. These patterns of trauma span over generations and are thus, considered generational trauma.

Whisperer commented, "I just feel like, you know, some of the choices I've made as far

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as...their dads...just feel like I haven't made the best choice...Not having a dad in my life, and then just having men in and out of my life with my mom...you just don't know how to choose a good man, because you've never had that kind of role model that father figure."

Generational trauma for Rosebud, started with her mother and extended to her daughter and grandchildren. "My mom, from the time I was 15, My dad died...she started drinking all the time. She's bought home this guy who...wanted sex...and then he wouldn't leave me alone after that." Rosebud has worked to understand her addiction, and has been clean and sober for 25 years.

For Whisperer, generational trauma was witnessing her parents' abuse alcohol, which was an attempt to dull the pain they'd experienced. Whisperer repeated this pattern when the pain of abuse took over her life. "Actually, when I was a child, they weren't really there. I talked about how my parents' becoming pastors, even going to church and stuff was the best thing that could have ever happened because at that time they were just gone a lot."

Subtheme 2E: Broken families.

Lotus's father left the family when she was 11 years old. He also entered the Marine Corps because there was nothing else, he could do to provide for his family. He suffered through combat trauma that continues to affect him today, including PTSD.

When Rider's brothers were taken from their home to the boarding school, it was very difficult for him because they were a significant part of his support system. His brother came back from boarding school with tuberculosis and was unable to walk without the aid of crutches. Since he came home around the same time others were coming home from the Korean War, his brother made up tales of how he got injured in war, rather than share his own story of how he contracted tuberculosis.

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Guardian experienced the brokenness of her family, when her mother could not deal with the racism that came with being a Native woman married to a Caucasian man. She left her family and did not let them know if she was even alive. They searched for her for three days, before her grandmother let them know their mother was alive. “My dad was non-native, and my mom was native. It was my mom that left, because she didn’t know how to deal with what was going on and she just left. We didn’t know if she was alive...It wasn’t my mom that called it was my grandmother who called, to let us know she was ok, three days later, after we called police and hospitals.”

Dancer’s family was broken long before her birth. The generational trauma of brokenness continued from her grandmother on down. Dancer is working to help her children overcome the trauma that they experienced, so that they will not carry this trauma to the next generation.

The death of her father was the beginning of all the brokenness that Rosebud would face. Living without a father figure, with a mother who was lost in her addiction, left her vulnerable and without a stable home.

Theme 3: Resilience Resources

Although much of the interview was listening to the lived experiences of the participants, and hearing the stories of trauma that they endured, the main focus of this study was to look for patterns of resilience. When using the Atlas.ti software, to analyze the interview transcripts, three subthemes emerged. These subthemes include making connections with family, community/cultural connections, and spiritual connections.

Subtheme 3A: Connection with family

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Lotus grew up in poverty with limited food resources, but she never knew she was poor because of her mother's resourcefulness. Her favorite memories were of watching her aunt teach her mother to fish, so she could provide for her family. "I remember going to the river with my mom and auntie, when she started fishing because she had no money...she had no job when she first got home, so she had to go try to catch some fish. She never did any river fishing before, and she was out there with my auntie doing it. That was kind of cool. Watching them pull fish out of the net, while I was just playing on the beach.

Rider fished with his older brothers, as he was growing up. Since his family could not afford a bike for him, Rider ran everywhere; he ran beside his friends as they rode their bikes. One day, a community member put a bike together for him, out of broken bike parts. This left a lasting impact on Rider. He remembers feeling the freedom of riding instead of always running. "Somebody felt sorry for me, and one day he pulled me over and said, here I got you a bike. He had put one together and it was haywire. It was just an old bike, but it was alright!" Rider's lived experience represented an area of resilience that was fostered by his community and church.

A lady from the church would give Rider a ride home, every day, after football practice, once she saw that he had to run all the way home after practicing. "At church she said, "how do you boys get home?" I said, "we run." She said, "you do?" I said, "yeah." She said, "you're not afraid?" I said, "well that is probably why we ran." She said, "well, for now on, I'll pick you up and bring you home. You guys shouldn't have to run home, every night, after practice." So, she did, she picked us up."

Guardian's grandmother ensured that her children and grandchildren knew that each of them had a place in the family, and with that place a job that was specific for them. Working

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together, gathering together, and working through the trauma together, built identity and strength. “My grandmother taught value, the value of life. She taught the importance of giving and blessing others. She always shared the importance of helping others, the connectedness, and coming together.”

The guitar became one of the areas of strength for Witness. He learned to play by listening to his uncle play, and watching where he put his fingers when he played each chord. Playing music together, helped to increase the connection within the family. “I started out when I was eight years old. Watching my uncles when they set up and played music. I would be right there, right in front. I mean, right in front of them looking at their cord or their hands, and strumming what they were doing.”

When Rosebud got to the point where her drug addiction was so out of control that she could not risk holding her dying grandson because the drugs were coming out of her pores, she reached out to family members who could get her into treatment. After treatment, she went to live with her son and daughter-in-law. They lived on the reservation, surrounded by family, which was a great support for her recovery. “I went down to live with my son and stayed there for three years. My son wasn’t drinking, at that time. You know, my daughter in law don’t drink that’s for sure and then their next boy was born, I said, I got to move out of here. I got myself a little apartment and started working at Klallam Counseling...I haven’t drank since 1990.”

Subtheme 3B: Connection with Community and Culture

When Dancer went to treatment, for the second time, she was able to find healing through counseling and begin talks with her mother, which brought healing to their relationship. After treatment, the connection she felt with her community, through participating in cultural activities, helped to give her purpose and strength. She also put time and effort into influencing

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programs to better her community. “I was able to forgive my mom for one, but also, you know, she was able to, you know, apologize. We had a really good conversation and things got a lot better after that, actually. I left there in pretty good shape, I guess, you know, I’m a better daughter. My mom is getting older now, and I’m there for her. I was able to help her with the whole funeral thing, with her husband passing away, and that was like a memorial and a full-on funeral that I’ve never done before.”

When Whisperer had a heart attack and stroke, she needed help to learn to walk and talk all over again. She found help and support within the Church community. “After I had the heart attack and stroke, even though the young man from church I was with didn’t work out, he was really there for me. He did help me relearn how to walk, and relearn how to talk, and think, and all of those things. Taking me to appointments, and praying with me, and reading the Bible to me, even though I couldn’t remember it 30 minutes later. Eventually, I got to be who I wanted to be, in a way.”

Subtheme 3C: Spiritual connection.

To provide a spiritual connection which builds resilience, churches need to build relationships, within the community, with the knowledge of how the community has been hurt in the past.

Lotus found comfort in Jesus, during difficult childhood experiences. She found strength in her relationship with God, by talking and listening to him, even when others did not understand it. “When we moved home, I would go to church on a Sunday morning, go to church in the evening, and then go to Wednesday service.”

Rider and his friends followed the advice of their grandpa and went to church. At first, they just stayed outside, when service was going, but then they were invited in, by the minister,

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and they began listening to the preacher and learning to pray. Rider believes that the relationship that he had with his grandpa, and with God, helped him to deal with the trauma he experienced.

“A lot of trouble we had, probably was lifted just by doing that. Coming up here with Grandpa.”

Guardian’s great grandparents and grandparents were spiritual leaders in their community. They purchased a church and built upon it. They taught their family how to show grace and forgiveness in the face of trauma. “There was a lot of brief sharing of trauma endured, but more of the focus on love and strength, and healing and grace. Demonstration of grace.”

Guardian was also taught to value culture and keep only what is good, in light of the Bible.

“You have to sift through the culture and keep what is God-given. If you can use something to harm another person, it isn’t of God.”

Guardian explained that having a connection to God, and making spiritual health a priority, is what made a difference for her family. Dealing with the traumatic experiences they walked through, was bathed in prayer. “I believe that we were blessed, and I believe that it was because of the spiritual health and wellness that we were able to become overcomer, with God, in the trauma.”

Witness found Jesus, as an adult, when he was in the middle of partying and drinking. Giving his life to Jesus, changed the trajectory of his life, completely. He is now considered an elder in the church, he helps lead. “I was in that party-style life. That’s kind of like it was, all the way until I surrendered my life to Jesus. He took all of it and that’s how I dealt with it.” He recognizes that his mother was a godly woman, who prayed for her children, and she was his safe place. “All that time my momma, who was a godly woman, always prayed for us. She was my place to run when I would go home.”

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Dancer participated in sweat lodge, while at treatment, and continued to do so periodically at home, when she got out of treatment. She describes the experience as being a time of prayer and survival. “Sometimes you got to get out, after the first round, because it gets too hot, but they’ll dump water on it and you say prayers, some people sing or tell stories. By the fourth round, because they keep adding rocks and it keeps getting hotter, you’re praying to survive. It so intense, you feel amazing you made it afterwards.”

Rosebud was not a believer when she first cried out, to her counselor, for a minister. Her counselor prayed for her, in her office, and Rosebud felt the power of God come upon her. She experienced everything more clearly afterwards. After this experience, she could not deny that there is a God. “I started seeing a counselor...she prayed over me, and it worked. I felt all the tension leave my body, from the bottom of my feet to the top of my head. It was amazing, I couldn’t believe it. I felt good. I went outside and everything was clear, I could hear even a lot that I hadn’t heard before...I never had that before...That lasted for a while, until I started drinking again.”

Even though Rosebud does not go to church, she still believes in God and his power to change her life. Her husband of 13 years, prayed to God to take away the cravings he had for alcohol, before he even met her. The prayer he prayed worked, and he remained clean and sober throughout their marriage. “My last husband was a Christian, he prayed to God because he had such a bad alcohol problem. He went to the Union Gospel Mission, in Spokane, but they wouldn’t take him...He prayed to God to get rid of the cravings and the desire to drink, and it worked.”

Whisperer began going to church, after her wake-up call at the hospital. At first, she began her journey of sobriety for her children, but then she began to see God as love and cried

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out to him in prayer. “I pray, every day, throughout the day...I just talk to God and just everything helps me, because I know that he’s listening to me.”

Research Question Responses

Each interview, first, focused on listening to the responses that participants gave, regarding an open-ended question. *Can you take 15-20 minutes and describe the generational trauma that you and your children have experienced?*” When participants fully answered the first question, a follow-up question was asked. *“How have you and our children overcome the impact of generational trauma?”*

Participants completed a conceptual map, based on the Post-it notes that were created by the researcher. They were then asked to share their answers, to questions, that reflected the conceptual map they created.

- *What strikes you as you look at the map that you have created and reflect on it?*
- *What do you think is the greatest reason for your ability to adapt and succeed, after experiencing such a trauma?*
- *What is the most important thing you want others to know about generational trauma?*
- *What advice would you give others who might be experiencing similar trauma?*

The answers to these questions, naturally, flowed out of each story that was shared, showing the lived experiences of Native Americans who have experienced generational trauma. All the research questions were addressed by each participant, although some shared more openly than others.

RI- How do Native Americans describe their lived experiences with generational trauma?

Every participant, interviewed, had experience with generational trauma. Some participants started out hesitant, but opened up and shared their stories, thoroughly. Others chose

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the highlights of the trauma that they experienced, including things that stuck out to them or came to their memory, as they were reflecting. When interviewing parents and offspring, it became clear that there is a connection between the type of trauma a parent and their offspring went through. All the participants, even those who experienced extreme traumatic events, went on to make improvements in their lives. Many of them have become successful in their careers and have begun to build healthy relationships, within their families and communities. Those who have taken steps to stop the cycle of trauma, even experienced some of the same types of traumas their parents experienced. The biggest difference, in how trauma impacted the next generation, had to do with the resilience resources that were available and applied by the participant.

R2 -How have you and our children overcome the impact of generational trauma?"

All of the data gathered, by interviewing participants, pointed to three major themes of resilience. These two themes, 3A) connection with family 3B) connection with and community/culture and 3C) spiritual connection influenced the resilience level in all the participants. Resilience can be built in the heart of individuals, in various ways. These ways are similar, in that they allow the individual to develop a sense of belonging and identity. One participant shared that the interconnection of family, gave her a place and a purpose, and this identity helped build resilience, when others tried to stamp out her identity.

Additionally, every participant had an experience that helped them to build a spiritual connection. One of the participants attends services at a sweat lodge and prays to the Creator during her time there. The others have put their faith in Jesus and the healing that he brings. One of the participants mentioned that his mother was always praying for him, another mentioned his grandpa directed him to go to church, and yet another shared that her grandparents were spiritual

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leaders and taught them to run to prayer, when dealing with traumatic events. They were instructed not to ignore the pain of their trauma, but to acknowledge it and turn to God for healing in it.

R3- What do you think is the greatest reason for your ability to adapt and succeed after experiencing such a trauma?

All the participants answered this question similarly. They spoke of the need to talk about their experiences, even when it is difficult, to reach out to others who are hurting, and to learn to forgive. They do not wish to speak in a manner that is not honorable, or to dwell on the anger or hurt that comes from the trauma, but to extend grace and healing. At the heart of their story, is a desire to end generational trauma and to introduce revitalization and wholeness, among their people and all they encounter. Rider commented, “You wonder how the rest of the family feels, and hope that they will not turn it to racism like they have seen.” He went on to explain that “it’s all about forgiveness.”

Investing and connecting with family and community, while fostering spiritual wellness, includes walking in forgiveness, praying for one another, singing songs of healing, and restoring identity. When individuals know who, and whose they are, there is hope for the future.

Summary

The lived experiences of each participant were unique to them, and yet similarities emerged within their stories. This is especially true, when listening to the stories of family members. The three bands of the S’Klallam tribe, also experienced much of the same historical events, within their lifetimes, and these factors were evident in every interview. From the data collected, there were three main themes within the nine subthemes. The data was gathered from seven participants, and the responses collected were reflected in the conceptual maps they

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created. The themes of trauma and family trauma are divided by events experienced, by the participant, from within the family circle, and things that occurred outside the family circle. The third theme has to do with resilience.

The results of this study show that the most important place to begin building resilience, is in the area of spiritual and cultural connection. Each of the participants described their individual experiences, with faith and the strength that God has given them. They also described the elements within their culture that helped them through the times of pain and sorrow. Specifically mentioned, were singing and drumming, cultural and worship songs. The components of culture are significant to building community and family connections. It should be noted that not all these connections came from immediate family members. Many had outside influences that helped guide and strengthen them.

When both connections are strengthened, individuals will experience a spiritual wellness that helps to guide them through the trials and traumas of life. Each theme, presented in this study, is interconnected in a way that when adequately connected, provides wholeness.

Chapter Five

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine experiences of trauma Indigenous people face, in real-life scenarios, and give a voice to the experiences of their past. It looked for areas of resilience that are unique to the Indigenous population of S'Klallams, of the Olympic Peninsula. This chapter will evaluate and summarize the findings, and will discuss implications and limitations of the study, and consider recommendations for future research.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

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The participants of this research study described their lived experiences, with valuable details, for analyzing generational and historical trauma and resilience. Historical trauma has been on display in the media recently, Governor Jay Insley identified locations of boarding schools, 17 of which were in Washington state. These schools were used as Native American boarding schools. Some of the children from the S'Klallam tribe were taken to the Chemawa Indian training school in Oregon (Inslee, 2022). Many of the children of the S'Klallam tribes were sent to Chemawa, even though their reservations were in Washington State. For the participants of this study, trauma was unnoticed, ignored, and even perpetuated by the system and people who should be protecting them. The trauma these participants experienced was not isolated to one person, or even one generation. The struggles they face, due to trauma, have been passed from one generation to the next.

Both male and female participants, alike, suffered from physical abuse, and almost half of them experienced sexual abuse. This abuse began when the participants were young and among people who should have protected them, at a time just before they developed a sense of identity and self preservation. When a child is between the ages of 6 and 12, their development focuses on the industry vs. inferiority stage of development where they begin to develop a sense of identity. Dealing with trauma at this age results in regression, a sense of guilt and a feeling of inferiority (Clark, 2021).

Three of the participants who experienced trauma, shared that they got in trouble with the law. These participants were thankful to have a safe place to stay when they were incarcerated. For at least one of the participants, the legal trouble they experienced was a wake-up call that changed the course of their life.

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Family trauma was the most significant area of trauma, described by the participants. The theme of family trauma refers to trauma that was experienced inside the family unit, and often extends from one generation to another. This theme involves children having to take on adult responsibilities, or being forced into relationships that are meant for adults. Four of the participants shared about the impact this type of trauma had on them.

Family trauma also includes domestic violence. Most of the participants who experienced physical or sexual abuse, also ended up experiencing domestic violence. This violence started out small and progressed as the relationship continued. Domestic violence against Indigenous women is not unique to the S'Klallam tribe. Native women are 3 times more likely to be assaulted than any other population. If Native women did try to report the abuse, they suffered it would go uninvestigated. This is particularly problematic, because before 2013, when the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA 2013) was enacted to address the gaps in the law, tribal authorities were not allowed to prosecute non-native cases of abuse against Native American women (Lorz, 2020). The female participants who experienced domestic violence, felt there was no way out of the abuse. It was not until they got into some trouble with the law that there was a reprieve from the abuse. Rosebud and Dancer both experienced a reprieve, and went back into a situation they hoped would change. The perpetrators were never held responsible for their actions, and every time the women took steps to walk away from abuse, they ended up homeless.

Aside from one participant interviewed, everyone attempted to cope with their pain using alcohol or drugs. The use of these substances turned into an addiction, as the abuse lingered on. For Rosebud, it took a tragic loss of life to show her the need for treatment. Dancer did not consider treatment an avenue of hope, until she did a drug that she had promised herself she

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would not do. This experience showed her she was completely out of control. Guardian and Witness drank daily, until they gave their lives to Jesus. “I got into drugs early because I thought it was the only way to mend the pain of abuse...that’s kind of like it was all the way until I surrendered my life to Jesus.”

The most significant area of trauma was the area of Generational trauma. Every one of the participants shared about their experience with generational trauma. All participants had the shared experience of having at least one family member survive the abuse of boarding schools. Some participants saw the effects of boarding school span several generations. Many participants did not recognize their trauma as generational, because they felt isolated in their experience. Working through the conceptual mapping task helped them to draw conclusions about trauma, they never connected before.

Although this study examined the trauma that was experienced by the participants, the researcher intended to focus on the areas of resilience that helped the participants overcome the trauma they lived through. The two most significant areas of strength that the interviews revealed, were the **connection with community, connection with family,** and a **spiritual connection**. All the participants pointed to at least one person who made a difference in their lives. The connection they had with a friend, family, or community member did not always change the outcome of their experience, instantly, but it ultimately contributed to the transformation, freedom, and healing they found in their lives.

Another resilience theme that each participant shared was the spiritual connection they made that helped them overcome the effects that trauma had imprinted on their lives. One of the participants shared how prayer helped her. The power of this prayer made it impossible for her to

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deny that there was a God. Since she did not have a foundation based on faith, she could not hold onto the change that it made.

Matthew 13:3-6 is an example of her experience. “Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root” (*NIV*, 2011).

Talking with those who turned to faith in God, when they sought to heal from their trauma, demonstrated the difference in an understanding of where to turn in their times of trouble. When the **teachings** of faith were passed down from the teaching of elders, the impact on the following generations was significant. Their faith helped them hold on to their identity when everything around them was trying to stamp them out. It taught them to respond to trauma and prejudice with grace and **forgiveness**, instead of anger and bitterness. Luke 6:27 instructs us, “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you” (*NIV*, 2011).

One of the most noteworthy tools used, in both faith and culture, is singing. Six of the seven participants mentioned using music to build their strength. **Singing** songs of worship, and cultural songs of prayer, during times of trouble, lifted their spirit to bring healing and hope for the future. This shows that there is a need to combine both culture and faith and that they should not be considered exclusive from one another.

Cultivating Resilience

There is a natural relationship between the themes of resilience. Figure 5.1 illustrates the concepts described in this study and the interaction they have with one another. In Figure 5.1 the

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illustration consists of 7 elements. The main themes are listed in three large circles that overlap with one another. The three main themes of resilience are **3A) family connection, 3B) Community/cultural connection, and 3C) Spiritual connection.**

Family connection 3A) is a representation of connections that are built within the family. In this study, healthy relationships with elders provide participants with a sense of identity that they could hold and come back to, when dealing with trauma.

The **community/cultural connection (3B)** is important to resilience, as seen in this study. When participants were able to reach out to their community, they were able to find stability and change the trajectory of their lives, allowing them to heal spiritually.

Spiritual connection (4B) in this study, represents an understanding of how worshipping God brings healing. Some of the participants shared how they surrendered their lives to Jesus and put their trust in Him. They believe that he will be true to His word and make them a new creation. All the participants mentioned that they believe in God, and that praying to Him brings them comfort.

forgiveness, and prayer.

An analysis of the conceptual maps and transcripts from the interviews, on both Otter.ai and Atlas.ti, showed the relationship between resilience and the connections it takes to build resilience. The areas of resilience that are described in this study helped to give participants the strength to make changes in their lives, and to live life successfully despite the circumstances of their trauma. Trauma is consistent in the lives of the participants and the lives of most Native Americans. Therefore, cultivating resilience is necessary for strength, wholeness, maturity, and wellness. The connections that build resilience can be referred to also as attachments.



Figure 5.1 Cultivating Resilience

In the areas where the three main drum circles overlap, there are four subthemes. Each one of the subthemes is written in smaller, different colored font. The subthemes are *singing*, *teaching*,

The themes of Native American resilience, represented by the interviews in this study, are interconnected and when adequately balanced, bring wholeness to the lives of individual and strength to the communities they represent. The weaving of these themes, to create a connection, is similar to the creation of a native drum. The rim of the drum is the foundation on which the drum is built. Having a strong spiritual connection to the Creator, helps to build strength all the way around. The hide that covers the rim, represents the covering of family and the strength that comes from building a healthy family connection. Like the drum hide, the family often will be softened and stretched to endure the trauma of life. Thus, it is important to have a good foundation on which you are attached. The sinew represents the community connection, which

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ties it all together and keeps it secure. The support of communities can help bring restoration to the family connection, and help maintain it. The community is also active in sharing experiences of faith, and in doing so, may become part of a family of choice. When all of the pieces of the drum are connected, it creates a whole drum. When all of the themes of resilience are adequately represented, in balance, an individual is whole.

The findings of this study align with the theories found in the literature, from previous chapters. It also confirms studies from others that cannot be generalized and need further confirmation, in other populations. Additionally, the study revealed areas that will contribute to the understanding of resilience and the challenges of historical trauma, and the impact it has on a community.

Confirmation of Previous Research

Attachment theory suggests that a lack of connection, affects an individual's ability to access resources and seek help. The interviews and conceptual maps showed this to be the case, for these participants. It also confirmed that those who felt connected to their family, community and faith, were able to seek and receive help quicker than those who did not know their self-worth (Machin, 2014).

Within this study, the participants displayed both direct and indirect transference of trauma. While each participant experienced a direct trauma, of their own, there is a clear pattern of trauma that is repeated from one generation to another. Their stories, also, were an example of how a destroyed attachment can be restored, giving the participant the chance at transformation and growth (McLeod, 2023). Rosebud was targeted at the age of 9, when according to the stages of development, she would have been learning her identity and building self-esteem. She was unaware that what she was going through was not normal. She thought that

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she was worthless. “I was nothing, I didn’t even have a right to be alive.” After treatment, Rosebud stated that it was the attachment that she made with her son and daughter-in-law's family that helped her to maintain her sobriety and move forward with her life, to be a drug and alcohol counselor. “When I made it 28 days, every time I ever even thought about drinking after that or doing meth or anything, I go oh no, I’m not gonna go back there. Besides I had a family now. My son was really supportive and his wife. I was there for three years, and everybody was so nice out there.”

The conceptual mapping task was a culturally relevant way to examine the lived experiences of Native Americans, because it involves storytelling and gives the participant control of the study. Specifically, participants were able to share only what they felt comfortable sharing. Some of the participants skipped from memory to memory and later shared more details, as they began to feel more comfortable with the process. Others shared, right away, in detail. The CMT allowed individuals to view the trauma and mistakes they made, next to the choices they made and the steps they took to change their lives for the better. This made a positive impact on each participant, leaving them focused on the positive rather than the trauma, as the interview ended. Looking at her board, Whisperer commented, “Dang, man, look at the growth. At first, I was like man, those are all big things that I did. Being able to admit that all of these things on the board, all these things, I made all these mistakes, but they don’t define who I am. I did go through those things. But I also made them right with God.”

New Contributions from this Research

This study is the first that we know of to examine the relationship of generational trauma by interviewing a parent and their offspring within Indigenous populations of the Pacific Northwest. Looking at the conceptual mapping and evaluating interviews, from both a parent

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and their offspring, reveals some patterns that are almost identical among generations. The study exposes the impact of historical trauma, at the community level, as each participant shared how they were personally affected by the removal of their family members, who were forcibly taken off to boarding schools. Understanding how the participants experienced historical trauma, as a community, can help understand the need for intervention and lead to the development of culturally appropriate approaches to aid in this area.

Implications

The implications of this study indicate that an absence of resilience factors decreases the chance for individuals to access resources that help overcome the impact of trauma. Furthermore, this study shows that resilience can be built and restored. The attachment that develops from connections within the community, family, and through faith, can transform lives that have previously been torn apart by trauma. Although this study is limited to the S'Klallam people, there is a great possibility that the results will be applicable to many of the tribes of the Pacific Northwest, and all North America. The results of this study can also be used to confirm theories for non-native people who have experienced trauma, as well.

The results of this study will hopefully begin a discussion among other tribes, and encourage them to proceed with their own studies to determine how to build connections within their communities, and how to build family attachment for those who have grown up in hurting families.

Fostering Family Connection

Family connections may not necessarily be made with immediate or blood relatives. Family connections were made when the participants were able to make a connection

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with someone who helped them discover their identity and self-worth. Thus, the families can be those who care enough to bring restoration to the lives of those who are struggling.

According to the participant interviews, this can be done through the teachings of elders. For example, Guardian shared how her grandmother taught the value of life by sharing that each child had a place in the family, and a purpose. Rider shared how his grandfather instructed them to go to church, and lead by example when he himself attended church. He knew that faith in God was important for the survival and healing of his family.

From a Christian world perspective, this type of resilience building can be replicated when believers in Christ share a genuine love for one another and choose to walk through life alongside them. This does not require stripping the culture but an understanding of what is God-given, within the culture, and building on it. If the loss of identity is destructive than making disciples means we look to identity building. This identity can be found in both culture and in who they are as a child of the God, who is their creator.

Fostering Community/Cultural Connection

Fostering community/cultural connection begins with the restoration of identity through culture. Many of the tribes along the Pacific coast, including the S'Klallam tribe, are working to bring restoration of their culture into the community. Guardian remarked, "My generation has always had the opportunity to be a part of the revitalization of who we are as S'Klallam people, as strong people, but generations before that...experienced a lot of racist treatment, verbally, and physically." Fostering community, begins with choosing to be part of the solution, like Guardian's mother who became a historian and an educator with the hope of making a change.

Communities directly connected to tribal reservations should consider evaluating their position honestly, considering the past, and engage in conversations to determine what areas

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need change. Rider remembered the days when he could not walk alone as a child, to town, and almost every shop or restaurant hung a sign on their doors that stated Indians were not welcome. This division is part of history and part of the problem. Confronting it with honesty is the beginning of moving forward to bring healing to the community and provide opportunities for connection and reconciliation.

Fostering Spiritual Connection

As a result of the trauma inflicted upon Native Americans, by those who called themselves the church, fostering spiritual connections can be a sensitive area. However, Guardian disclosed, that as far back as she can remember her family has always had a spiritual leader who based their faith upon the Bible. She is frustrated with the accusations that the Christian faith belongs to the “White man,” and that the elders of each band of the Klallam tribe share their faith in the creator in the stories that they pass down. Rider shared how it was the instruction of their village chief that led them to attend church, when the Bible-believing Shaker faith was fading out. The data that this study uncovered shows the importance of building a relationship with one another. To do this, individuals must demonstrate the same type of grace and forgiveness that the participants in this study have shown to those who have offended them.

Within the Christian community the spiritual connection can be fostered by creating relationships built on genuine love and respect. They should look within the culture for the beauty of what God, their Creator, imparted to them instead of fearing or ignoring the differences. As Guardian specified, “You have to sift through the culture and keep what is God given.”

Limitations

There are three areas of limitations in this study. The first area of limitation can be found in the fact that participants who volunteered were mainly female. Only two of the 7 participants were male. Additionally, the males that were interviewed were both elders within the community, so young male adult representation was absent.

There were also limitations in that the study only examined two generations. The patterns that were found between parent and child were significant, and would benefit from examining further generations. Some of the participants spoke of the generations before them, which allowed a glimpse of what it would have been like to interview a third generation. The increase of participants, and inclusion of grandparents or grandchildren, would strengthen the connections that are associated with this study.

Finally, the study is purposely limited to the S'Klallam tribe, to provide accurate data for the study. More studies are needed to determine the impact that trauma has had on other tribal populations. Knowing the specific cultural values, family, and spiritual connections, within each tribe, would increase understanding of resilience.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are large gaps in the research on resilience, and even fewer on resilience among Native Americans. As a result, there are many areas in which this research can be continued in the future. The first area that the research should be continued in the future is for other tribes to conduct their research, to discover the connections that have value.

Future researchers should also pursue researching more participants within one family, to include 3-4 generations if possible. Looking for patterns of trauma and resilience that extend from grandparent to grandchild, will strengthen the researcher's understanding of the patterns

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that are represented by the interviews. It would be interesting to see when the patterns of trauma begin, and what resilience was gained or lost throughout more generations.

The current study represented mainly the experiences of middle-aged women, and some male elders. Therefore, future researchers could pursue interviewing more young adults, especially male young adults, to determine if there is a different perspective among genders and age groups. This is important for determining how to bridge any gaps that may hinder community and family connections.

Finally, future researchers could research any curriculum tribal communities are using to try to restore their identity. This would be especially helpful if the progress of the curriculum is being tracked to determine its effectiveness. This can help future researchers build a successful curriculum that is geared toward building strength and resilience in the Native American community.

Conclusion

This study intended to look for patterns of resilience among Native Americans who experienced trauma. The interviews, conceptual maps, and responses were included in the study of seven enrolled tribal members. To find patterns, this study interviewed parents and their offspring to determine what generational trauma they experienced. From the data collected three main themes surface: (1) Trauma; (2) Family Trauma; (3); Resilience. Trauma is the type of traumatic experience that occurs outside of the family circle. Family Trauma is the type of trauma experienced directly within the family unit, or indirectly as a result of generational trauma. Resilience refers to the resources and connections that a participant must have access to, in order to overcome the trauma that they lived through. An analysis of all the data collected, showed that for these participants, resilience is built through connecting. The connections

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needed to build resilience are connections within families, communities, and faith. Participants pointed to influential people with whom they connected. When participants only had a brief connection, within the community, and an encounter with faith, they were unable to hold onto the teachings, from their elders, and struggled with trauma for years. Once participants were able to build a foundation of faith and share connections with their community and their families, they were able to overcome the impact of the trauma they experienced and maintain wellness. Additionally, this study identified tools that helped the participants make the connections that were needed to maintain resilience. If these findings are applied and developed further those working to rebuild resilience will have a starting point for restoration.

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APPENDIX A**Permission Letter to Tribal Council**

Dear Tribal Council,

My name is Mary Laungayan, I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I have lived and worked on the Lower Elwha reservation for the past 28 years and I am seeking permission to begin a study with families on the S'Klallam reservations who are willing to share their stories of resilience. I_[MJM(E1)] will be working closely with the ethics committee board from Liberty University. The ethics board from Northwest Indian College will also be made aware of this study. The title of my research study is A Phenomenological Study of Resilience Among Native Americans. This phenomenological study will examine the experiences of individuals who have suffered from adverse childhood effects. It will attempt to determine what factors build resilience and aid in the reduction of disruptive symptoms of trauma among the Pacific Northwest Native Americans. A phenomenological study allows the researcher to focus on the personal and collective experiences of the S'Klallam people through culturally appropriate procedures. This will allow them to voice what they have been carrying for generations and make the information from the stories available as data. The technique known as Concept Mapping Task gives those who tell their story control of the study and act mainly as a facilitator.

I want to respect your authority by sharing my plans with you and asking for your permission to proceed with this study and make sure you know that the identity of all of those who participate in this study will be kept confidential.

I will post recruitment information online and leave my contact number for those who are interested in participating in the study. The participants will be asked to tell their story one time for this study and this interview will last 1-2 hours in a place that is comfortable for the

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participant. During the interview, participants will be asked to complete a conceptual mapping task. After the interview, participants will be asked to review their interview transcripts for accuracy.

I am willing to meet with your council to describe the study further if you feel you need more clarity on the study.

The researcher conducting this study is Mary Laungayan, phone: [REDACTED], or by email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. John King, at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED].

Thank you for taking the time to read my request. If you have any questions or would like me to meet with you to clarify anything, please feel free to contact me. I appreciate your help with this and thank you in advance for the difference your stories will make to others.

Mary K. Laungayan

LMFT, Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX B**Recruitment Email Letter**

Dear Potential Research Participant:

My name is Mary Laungayan. I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I have lived and worked on the Lower Elwha reservation for the past 28 years, and I am seeking to begin a study with families on the S'Klallam reservations who are willing to share their stories of resilience with me. The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of individuals who have suffered from adverse childhood effects. It will attempt to determine what factors build resilience and aid in the reduction of disruptive symptoms of trauma among Native Americans. A phenomenological study allows the researcher to focus on the personal and collective experiences of the S'Klallam people through culturally appropriate procedures. This will provide you with the opportunity to voice what you may have been carrying for generations and make the information from the stories available as data that may benefit other tribes. There are very few tribal studies available to bring awareness and build strength, I would like this to be one of the first. The Concept Mapping Task gives those who tell their story more control of the study.

If you are 18 years old or older, have experienced trauma directly or indirectly, and have a parent or offspring that has experienced trauma as well, and are interested in a study on building resilience, I would love to hear your story. Participants must also be enrolled members of one of the three bands of the S'Klallam tribe. This includes Lower Elwha Klallam tribe, Jamestown, and Port Gamble bands of the S'Klallam tribe. You will be asked to complete a survey and participate in an interview. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The interview will take 1-2 hours. During the interview participants will be asked to complete a conceptual mapping task. After the interview participants will be asked to review their interview

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transcripts for accuracy. Your name and any other identifying information will be kept confidential and will not be released to anyone else. I will be working with Liberty University's ethical committee as well as the Northwest Indian College committee to ensure to pay strict attention to ethical guidelines.

To participate, please contact me [REDACTED]. A consent document will be emailed to you. The consent document will need to be signed and emailed back to me if you intend to share your story for the purpose of this study. If you are interested in this study, please contact me and set up an interview time and place that is best for you.

Participants will receive a gift as compensation for participation in this study

Sincerely,

Mary K Laungayan,

Doctoral Candidate, lead researcher

[REDACTED]

APPENDIX C**Interview Script**

I really value your time and am honored that you are willing to meet with me. To begin with we need to go over the Informed Consent form and make sure you agree with everything we will be doing today. If you have any questions for me before we begin, please let me know.

Before we begin recording it takes a few minutes to fill out an ACEs questionnaire. We will discuss the results briefly when we begin our recording. (When the questionnaire is complete begin recording). Were you surprised at all by your ACE score? What do you think the score is revealing to you as an individual?

I would like to take the next 60-90 minutes (about 1 and a half hours) to listen to your story, ask a few questions to dig a little deeper into your story, and then develop a conceptual map from what you share with me. The conceptual map is a visual activity that helps me to organize your story and see it clearly.

I am very interested in your story and everything that you have experienced. my hope is that science will catch up to what many of the Indigenous people already know regarding culture and healing and that we will be able to use what we learn from you to develop a plan to help others who are struggling to deal with historical trauma. I believe that your story will help to create a greater understanding of the role that resilience plays in Native American communities.

I will be looking for themes within the information you provide me, and I draw conclusions from your story. When I feel that I have finished analyzing the audio recordings, I will ask for your input to be sure that the conclusions I have made are accurate and to make sure

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I did not miss any pertinent information you wanted to bring to light. Do you have any questions for me at this point?

If you are ready, I will begin with my first question.

“Can you take 15-20 minutes and describe the generational trauma that you and your children have experienced?” (Give the participant time to tell their story while writing down the key themes that come up on sticky notes.). When the participant is finished telling their story ask the next question.

“How have you and our children overcome the impact of generational trauma?”

While listening to the story be prepared to ask questions that come to mind which will give the participant the opportunity to reveal more of their story. When the questions are fully answered, move on to the next question.

Next, I would like you to look at the sticky notes I have taken and make sure these are an accurate representation of your story. Let me know if there were any other details you would like to add or anything you want to change.

Conceptual Mapping Task

If you feel comfortable with all the notes and they seem accurate to you, I will give you this *Post-it* easel for you to stick each note on. You can arrange them on the board in a way that you feel best represents your story.

When all the notes are placed in the order and the participant feels it is complete move on to the next part of the task.

Thank you for taking the time to do that. The next step involves using coloured markers and drawing shapes around each group that you feel go together. If you need to move any sticky

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notes when you do this or change anything feel free to do so. You can use a circle, square or any shape that has meaning to you.

Listen to anything the participant may say during this step and write it down. When this step is complete move on to the final task.

To finish this map draw lines that will connect the concepts and demonstrate how they are related to each other. If you can sense a direction in which these concepts flow, please draw arrows to clarify the direction.

Reflection Questions

1. *What strikes you as you look at the map that you have created and reflect on it?*
2. *What do you think is the greatest reason for your ability to adapt and succeed after experiencing such a trauma?*
3. *What is the most important thing you want others to know about generational trauma?*
4. *What advice would you give others who might be experiencing similar trauma?*

We are through with our interview, but I want to make sure you are feeling safe after addressing these memories and probing questions.

1. Did anything you shared with me make you feel uncomfortable, or unsafe in any way?
2. Do you feel like you need support in any area that we discussed today?
3. Do you have someone you can talk to if the memories or emotions that we stirred up today become a concern?

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If you do not have a professional therapist or counselor, I would like to leave a list of resources for you to consider using as a step toward wholeness and healing. My contact number will be on this list of resources, in case you need to contact me for any reason.

Now that we have concluded this portion of the study, I would like to gift for taking the time to share with me your story and perspective. In keeping with tradition, I would like to present you with and wrap you in this blanket.

APPENDIX D**Consent Form**

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of Resilience Among Native Americans

Principal Investigator: Mary Laungayan, a Doctorate Student at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and an enrolled member of one of the three bands of the S'Klallam tribe who live along the coast of the Pacific Northwest. These are the Lower Elwha, Jamestown, and Port Gamble bands of the S'Klallam people. You must have also experienced, and have a parent or offspring who has experienced, a traumatic event, directly or indirectly. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before making a decision to join this study.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this phenomenological study will be to understand what resilience factors contribute to the reversal of adverse reactions to epigenetic trauma in Native American children. The study will attempt to use the data collected to determine the implementation of support and build a scaffolding of resilience that can benefit Native American Children.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to:

1. Fill out a survey online. This will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.
2. Participate in a 60-120-minute interview to share your experience. These interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and will be conducted in person.
3. During the interview, you will be asked to complete a conceptual mapping task. As you tell your story, the researcher will write down the key ideas you discuss on sticky notes. When you are finished with your story, the sticky notes will be given to you to analyze and fact check, allowing for member-checking within the initial interview. You will then place the sticky notes on a board in the order of a theme you feel has meaning and link each theme to another, according to the order of importance, using a geometric shape as you continue to add to your story.
4. After the interview, you will be asked to review your interview transcript for accuracy.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants will not receive direct benefits from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include a better understanding of the adverse effects of historical trauma and how resilience can reverse these effects. This may help guide tribal, as well as outside, communities to build programs which reinforce, rekindle, and develop resilience factors in youth.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The risks of involvement in this study include the possibility of retriggering traumatic events and negative emotions through sharing memories. These risks are minimal and are equal to what you might experience when sharing your stories in a community setting.

I am a mandatory reporter. If child abuse, neglect, elder abuse, or neglect are revealed in this study it will be reported according to the mandatory reporter laws that the researcher is obligated by.

If the memories that arise during this study cause significant psychological symptoms for you, you or the researcher may terminate participation.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

During the interview process there will be no identifying markers associated with the data collected. Recorded data will be stored on the researcher's personal computer in a secure file that requires a password known only to the researcher. Participants' responses will be kept

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confidential by replacing names with codes. Interviews will be held in a place where others cannot easily overhear the conversation.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. A small blanket will be given to you as part of a blanket-wrapping ceremony at the end of the internet.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at

██████████. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Mary Laungayan. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact Mary Laungayan at ██████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. John King, at ██████████.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

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Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subject's research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

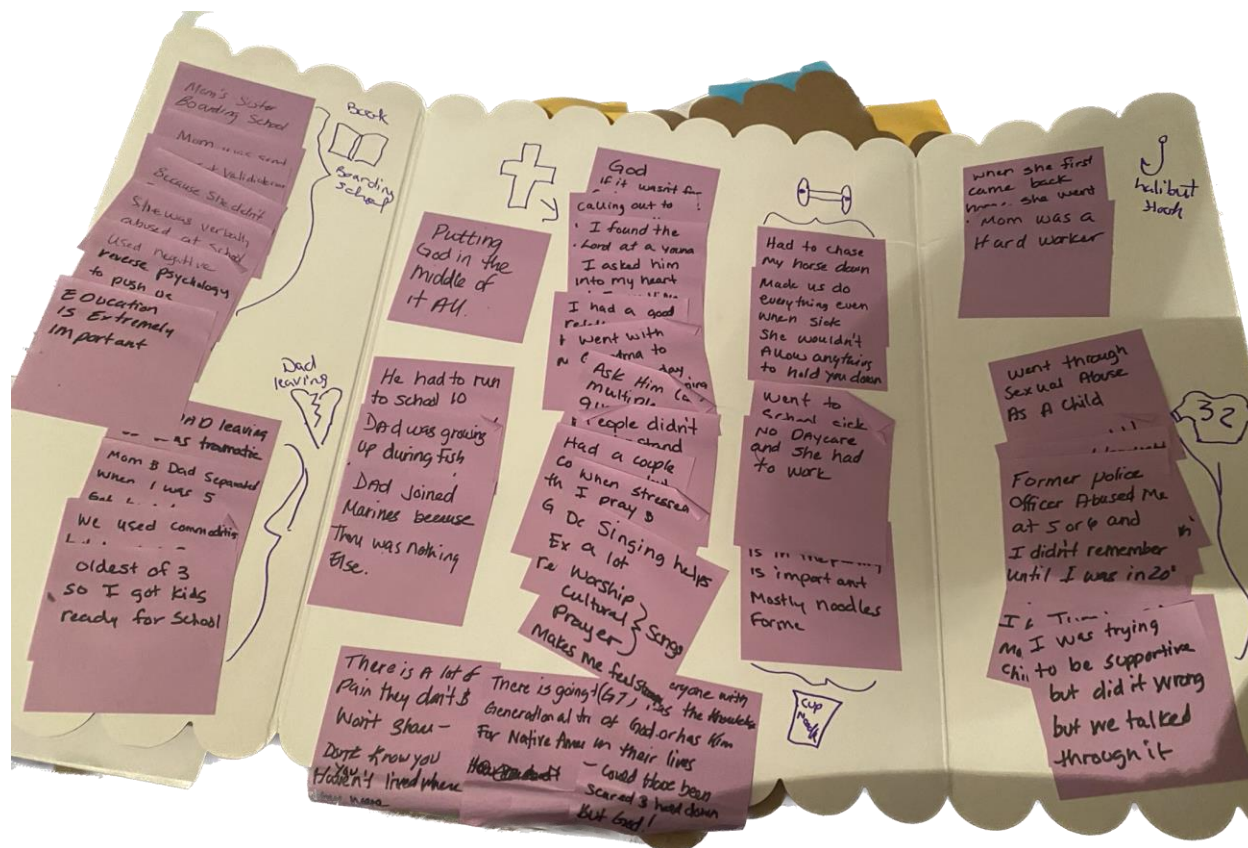
I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

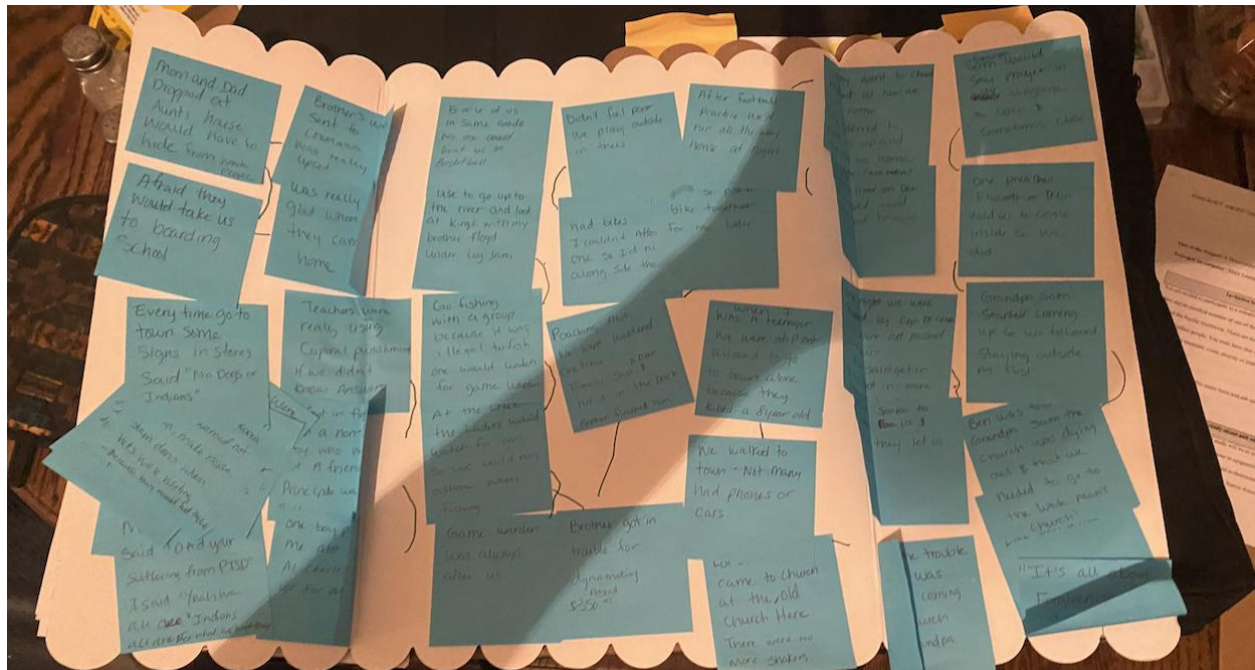
Signature & Date

APPENDIX E



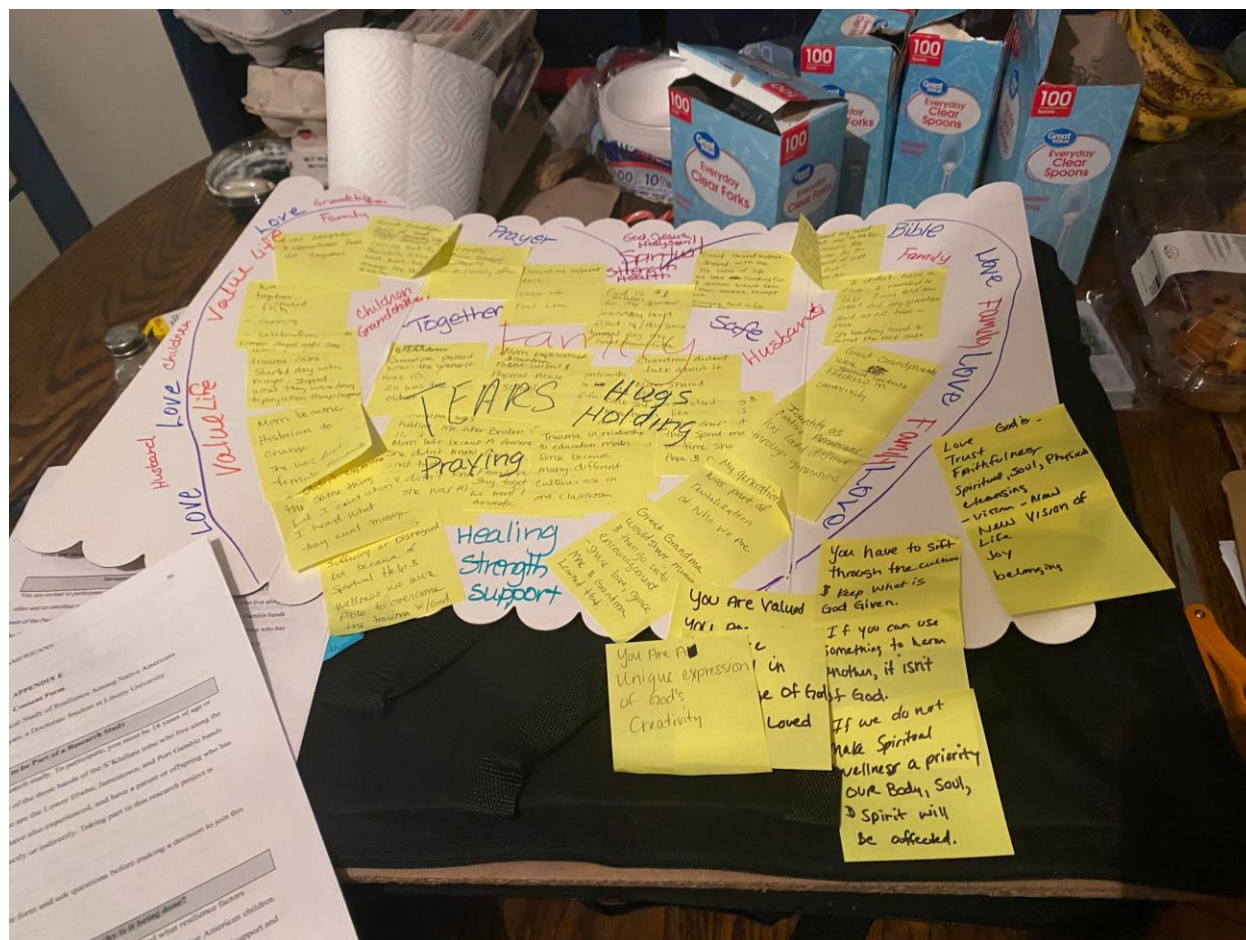
Lotus's Conceptual Mapping Task

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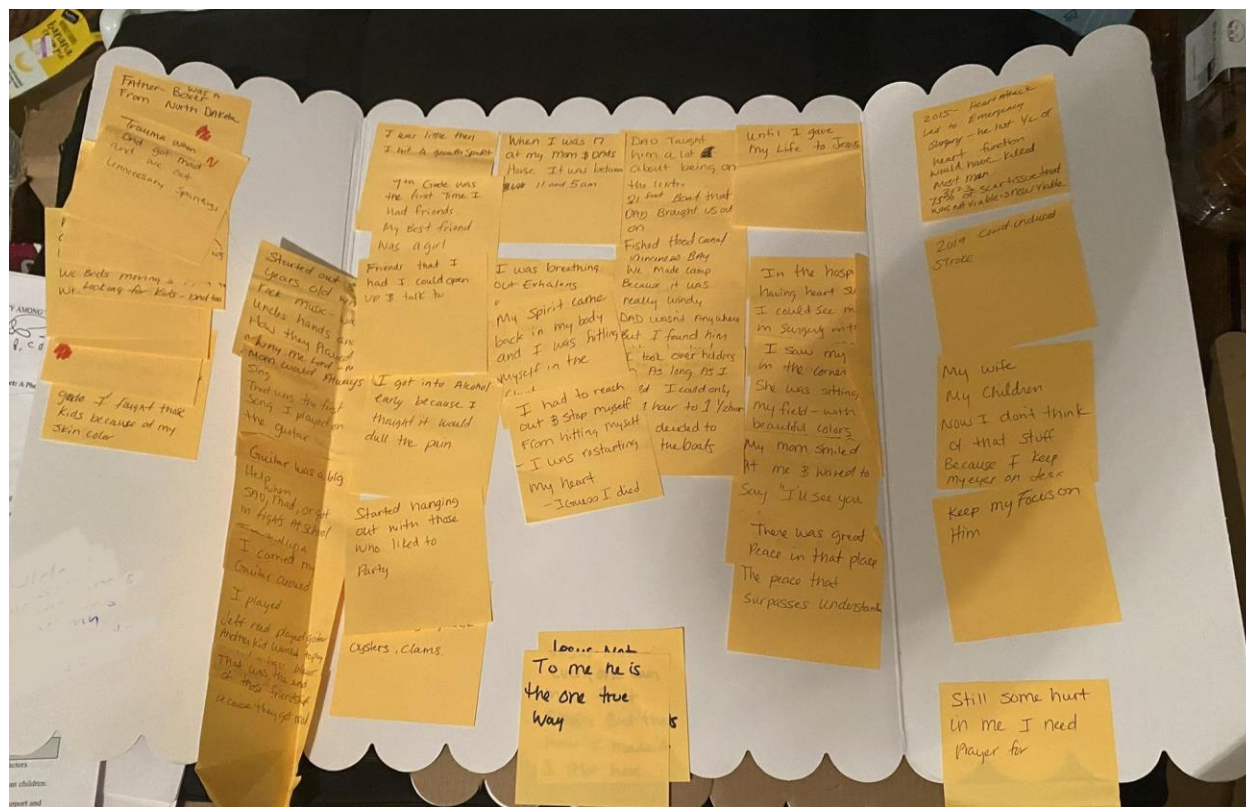
Rider's Conceptual Mapping Task

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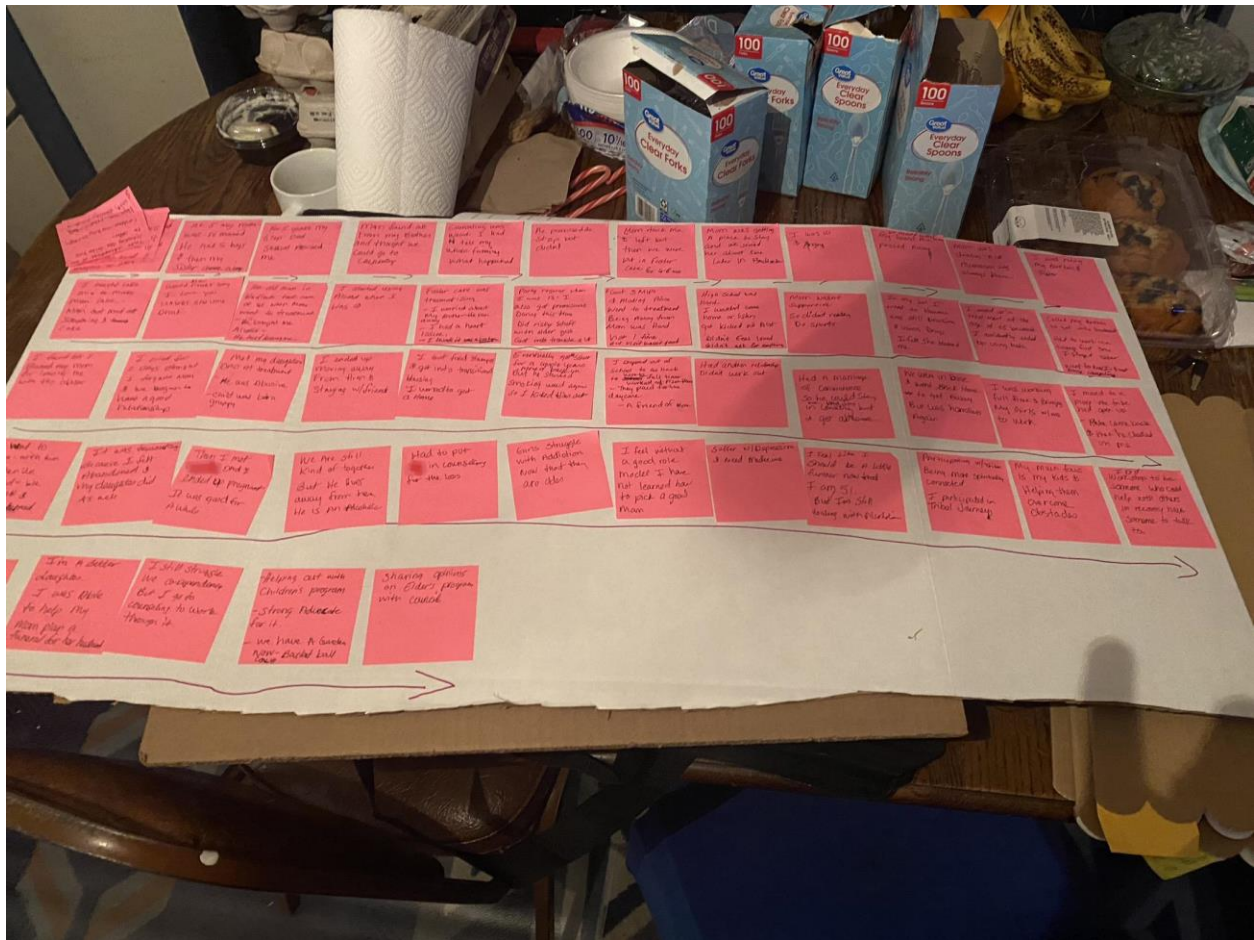
Guardian's Conceptual Mapping Task

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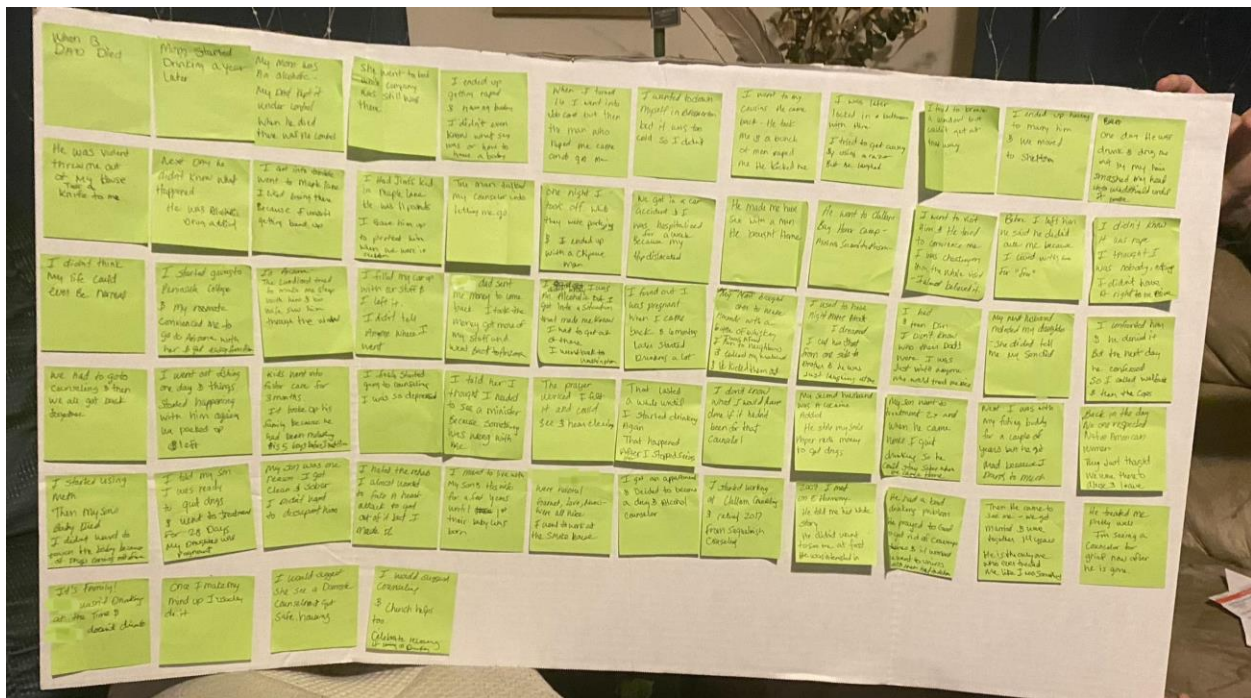
Witness's Conceptual Mapping Task

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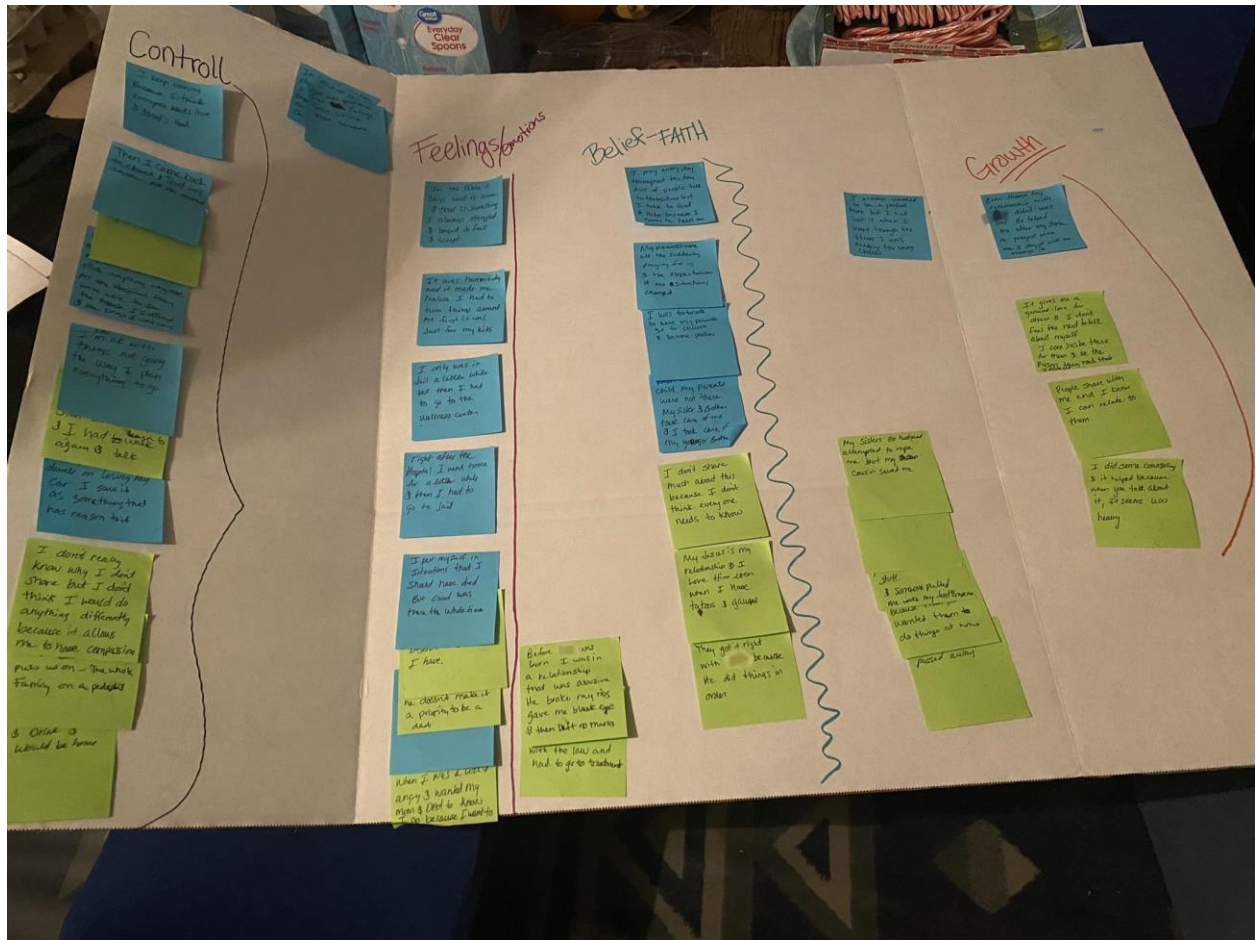
Dancer's Conceptual Mapping Task

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Rosebud's Conceptual Mapping Task n

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Whisperer's Conceptual Mapping Task