ANISHINAABE MOTHERHOOD: THE ACT OF RESISTANCE BY RESURGING TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS AND PEDAGOGIES

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Abstract

Anishinaabe Motherhood: The Act of Resistance by Resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies

Amy Shawanda

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate Anishinaabe women's Traditional Teachings and pedagogies in a contemporary context. Through this exploration, I have uncovered the tensions, challenges, and strengths that Anishinaabe gaashiyag (mothers) face when engaging with these Traditional Teachings and pedagogies. The research methodology I have used is a branch of grounded theory called the Anishinaabe Research Methodology, and it is integral to the Anishinaabe principles of living called the Seven Grandparent Teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. I used a research method called the Nbwaachiwi (the art of visiting) method. I used the 'Aunties kitchen table' style of knowledge collection, where it is open-ended and one-on-one - like you would be at your auntie's kitchen table, sharing stories and having tea. By utilizing these principles, I conducted my research through the Anishinaabe-aadiziwin (culture and language – way of life) paradigm. I addressed multilayered Anishinaabe teachings and many connections to the land and spirituality.

I have found that Anishinaabe gaashiyag feel pressure to adopt Western modes of raising their children. However, some young women are returning to the traditional Anishinaabe teachings by using traditional birthing techniques, tiknigaans (traditional baby carriers), and evolving our cultural practices to fit modern ways of living. The knowledge I present within this paper can inform mothers who want to learn Traditional Teachings and pedagogies, and thereby resist ongoing intergeneration trauma and colonization. New generations are identifying what the

negative effects on raising Anishinaabe children and taking a stand to break ongoing trauma and abuse so that their children do not have to be subjected to it. These mothers are informed about cultural and Traditional Teachings with the hope that they can use this knowledge to assist them on their path to, and during, motherhood. Given the determination of these young mothers to raise their babies using Anishinaabe traditional methods, the future identities and lives of their children may be significantly better in a cultural sense than their predecessors. They will be the products of their mothers' commitment to the resurgence of Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies.

Keywords: Anishinaabe, Indigenous, Motherhood, Parenting, Teachings

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Glossary of Terms

ODAWA DIALECT

Aki-kinoomaagewin	It is the land teachings.
Anishinaabe	The Anishinaabe Peoples are comprised of various Nations with similar languages called the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatami, and are referred to as the Three Fires Confederacy. I have included the Michi Saagi and Chippewa Nations as they are part of the Anishinaabe family. These Nations currently inhabit the lands around the Great Lakes Region and central Canada and United States.
Anishinaabe Aki	Anishinaabe territory but could also mean Turtle Island.
Anishinaabemowin	The language spoken by the Anishinaabek – Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa.
Anishinaabek	Refers to the plural of the Anishinaabe people or Nation.
Anishinaabe-aadiziwin	Culture and language that is the way of life for the People.
Anishinaabe Aki	Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa land.
Anishinaabe kwe	Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa woman.
Anishinaabe kweok	Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa women.
Anishinaabe naadiziwin	The Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa Culture and way of life.
Anishinaabe niniyag	Ojibwe, Odawa, Pottawatami, Michi Saagi, and Chippewa men.
Bboon	The winter season.
Binoojiihns	Children.
Binoojiihnsag	Babies.
Contact	Refers to settler disruption of the Anishinaabe way of life.

Gaashi	Mother.
Gaashiyag	Mothers.
Gahnoowaning	This is the space where the feathered beings fly free and take up space.
Gda kiiminaa	An additional way of saying the Earth.
Giizhigowaatik Debaajmowin	A short story about the cedar tree.
Gzhe-Mnidoo	Refers to the benevolent Great Spirit of the Great Mystery.
Kwe	Kwe is translated into woman.
Kwesenhs	Kwesenhs is translated into girls.
Manidoowaniing	It is where the Ancestors, Spirits, and Gzhe-Mnidoo reside.
Midewiwin	The Midewiwin are gathered within different lodges in Anishinaabek territory that seek to preserve the teachings, language, and knowledge.
Mino Bimaadiziwin	Living the Good Life. It is to strive to live in harmony with all of Creation.
Mishomis	Grandfather.
Mishomis Giizis	Grandfather Sun.
Mishomisag	The Grandfathers.
Mtigwaniing	The layer that grows plants and trees. It is how the Anishinaabek survive.
Nangoskwaniing	Where the stars live.
Nbwaachiwi	The art of visiting.
Nookimis	Grandmother.
Nookimis Giizis	Grandmother Moon that Anishinaabe women often have a strong correlation to her because of her connection to water.
Nookimisag	The Grandmothers.

Shkagamik-Kwe	Translates to Mother Earth.
Tiknigaans	A traditional baby carrier that mimics the womb. Mothers use this during a child's first year to transport them.
Traditional	*Traditional,* in this research, refers to how Anishinaabek lived prior to contact, which was to follow the path of the Original Instructions, guidance given to us by the Creator to live in accordance with nature as well as return to the teachings of our Elders. The teachings of Elders are often referred to as Traditional Teachings.
Wikwemikong/Wiikwemkoong	The bay of the beavers. It is where I was raised on eastern Manitoulin Island.

Background of the Study

As an Anishinaabe[1] kwe[2] raised in Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, I have always been immersed in my language and culture. Despite my culturally rooted upbringing, I was never taught about traditional child-rearing practices. I did not realize this was a gap in my learning until I had my own children. As each pregnancy was different from the next, I started to learn bits and pieces about traditional parenting. When my second child was born, I sat in the hospital room with him and wondered how many other Anishinaabe kweok (women) yearn for their culture to help heal and guide them while their child experiences life on Earth. When I had my third child, I was able to engage in traditional pregnancy and birthing practices. Each child that was born taught me how to mother them to their specific needs. Each of my children are unique and the experiences I have had raising them have been so different. As they grow older, I continue to braid my experience, knowledge, and understanding together to create a fuller picture of motherhood.

When I decided to pursue this study, it was to ground myself in traditional motherhood teachings because I wanted to engage in traditional practices both inside and outside my home. I also wanted to ensure that my children were supported with our Anishinaabe teachings. During this time, I began to question what the Anishinaabe motherhood teachings were, and how we pass this knowledge down to our children. Through my research, I endeavoured to gain

[1] The Anishinaabe Peoples are comprised of various Nations with similar languages called the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatami, and are referred to as the Three Fires Confederacy. I have included the Michi Saagi and Chippewa Nations as they are part of the Anishinaabe family. These Nations currently inhabit the lands around the Great Lakes Region and central Canada and United States. I am from the Odawa Nation, raised with Odawa language. There are various ways of spelling Anishinaabe, but I have spelled it with the double 'a' because it is how the Wikwemikong Heritage Organization spells it. In Anishinaabek, I utilize the "k" that is similar to the Anishinaabek Nation – a governing body that represents the Anishinaabe First Nations across Ontario.

[2] I am referring to myself as an Odawa Woman.

knowledge about Anishinaabe motherhood teachings and pedagogies so I could ultimately share with other mothers who are interested in learning their culture.

In looking at other research, I found that much of the existing literature was sparse or focused on other Indigenous cultures in Canada. I wanted to focus on Anishinaabe parenting to provide specific information for our Nation. As a result, there are three purposes behind the rationale of my study:

1. To document the knowledge on Anishinaabe traditional motherhood responsibilities from conception to raising their children within a contemporary context;
2. To share the collective knowledge of Anishinaabe mothering with mothers, should the mother want to engage with the traditional practices;
3. And to fill a literary research gap within academia.

The significance of my study is that it will help fill in the literature gap on knowledge surrounding Anishinaabe mothers, and will make the information accessible for those wanting to engage in traditional parenting whether they reside on a reserve or within an urban setting.

Objectives of the Study

Since the topic of my dissertation is Anishinaabe Motherhood: The Act of Resistance by Resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies, I had two research questions:

1. What are Anishinaabe maternal teachings?
2. What are the challenges, tensions, and strengths of practicing Anishinaabe maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context?

I would like to address why I have two research questions. The first research question is essential to understanding what the Anishinaabe motherhood teachings encompass and why they need to

be revitalized. Kermoal & Altamirano-Jiménez (2016) explain that revitalizing our Traditional Knowledges is an important part of strengthening the relationship to our culture: "Privileging Indigenous perspectives involves understanding that being *Indigenous* [sic] and being *woman* [sic] are derived from the relationships established with place, spiritual beings, humans and the environment" (p. 9). Indigenous women have a unique vantage point in that they are the carriers of the next generations and with that power, they are able to resist colonization by simply having Indigenous children. The revitalization begins with teaching our children Traditional Knowledges and adapting these teachings into our current realities.

The second research question examines the challenges mothers have endured or continue to endure in sharing the teachings, the tensions created by Indigenous existence in a colonized world as related to motherhood and teaching Anishinaabe children, and, finally, the strengths that Anishinaabe mothers use to persevere through these challenges and tensions. In the contemporary world, there are Indigenous women who are reclaiming their ancestry and using the teachings, ceremonies, and languages that have been passed down from previous generations in their daily lives. These women are resisting assimilation by weaving traditional modes of child-care into the contemporary Canadian fabric. They are embracing modern conveniences like diapers, disposable wipes, and other materials, but keeping core Indigenous teachings and the values they contain to instill them in the children under their care.

Statement of limitations

While I was researching, one of the first limitations I experienced was working through the COVID-19 pandemic. It was difficult to capture the essence of conversation through Zoom technology, and there were a few knowledge contributors who could not use Zoom, or could not

access the internet. This limitation became a blessing because it reduced my travel significantly. Though I was able to financially save on travel, I missed out on face-to-face conversations with the knowledge contributors. The second limitation I encountered was having no financial backing throughout the initial research, such as grants or scholarships. In the final months of the dissertation, I had received support from the Three Sisters award and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), which allowed me to focus on writing this dissertation.

The length of visits was another limitation because the knowledge contributors opted for a one-time visit and our conversations ranged from 20 -70 minutes in total. Some of the knowledge contributors were in a rush or forgot about our visit. I had to do some follow up questions for clarification or because the story was not finished, so I only received half the details.

An interesting limitation I encountered was recruitment: It was difficult to track down mothers who were available, some who were referred to me were uneasy about engaging in the research, and others did not want to participate because they described themselves as ‘not being traditional enough.’ However, I still wanted to hear their stories and understand why they described themselves this way - whether it was a personal or societal choice.

Another limitation was that I was unable to recruit all four midwives that I had originally intended to get to know, only two of the four ultimately participating. It was difficult to track these women down because of how busy their schedules were at the time. When I was able to get in touch with a knowledge contributor, we faced communication issues, such as I was unable to always receive their emails. Another factor was rescheduling or last-minute cancellations: I

originally had all four midwives booked, but only two participated after the other two cancelled last minute.

The final limitation was that many of the knowledge contributors were apprehensive about sharing their stories. Because of this, I protected their identities and any sensitive information they shared with me. As an extra step, the transcripts - transcribed by Yuja Software - were sent to the knowledge contributors so they had awareness as to what information I would be using, so they could provide feedback on the presentation of our conversation where appropriate. Also, I sent the knowledge contributors the direct quotes that I would be using so they had the opportunity to review and approve them.

Assumptions and Biases

I approached this research from my lens as an Anishinaabe kwe and as a mother, and tried not to be biased, but it is important to be transparent about the stories we share from our perspectives. I do not speak on behalf of the mothers, Elders, or children in this study; however, I interpret the results from our conversations, and shed light on some of the issues that mothers face mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

When I embarked on this exploration of teachings and pedagogies related to motherhood, I thought it would be straightforward. Initially, I assumed that by using my own experiences as a mother, I could identify issues that all mothers experience. This was, however, not the case as I saw that these issues were varied and complex and did not always translate from one knowledge contributor to the next. Each woman/mother faced different challenges that were unique and complex to their own situation. Together, we were able to weave a story. One of the things I learned was that the preparation of this dissertation was a healing journey, a wellness journey,

and a spiritual journey. Although I am a mother with a journey of my own, the issues that emerged indicated that each person has their own journey and their own moccasins that contribute to their unique experience.

Operational Framework

Within this study, I operate within the framework of the Anishinaabe Research Methodology using an Anishinaabe Knowledge lens of inquiry. Borrows (2010) states that "there is more than one Anishinabek intellectual method" (p ix). As I understand, the Anishinaabe Research Methodology is an intellectual framework that encompasses our understanding of natural laws, spirituality, and reciprocity. The natural laws are tied in with the spiritual principle that everything on Earth is imbued with spirit. The spiritual principle of the Anishinaabek ties in the four orders of Creation - physical world, plant world, animal world, and human world - with the metaphysical world (Johnston, 1976). The Anishinaabek had to make sense of the natural order and create our own methods to ensure our survival. As Anishinaabek, we honour all life and we give back to our community so that our children and future generations benefit. I use our teachings and stories to share the knowledge that I gained from this study. For example, I use the Seven Grandfather Principles to guide the research in an ethical way and to ensure I am adhering to the Anishinaabe Research Methodology. I also utilize the Cedar Tree Teaching to structure the research questions, weave in the teachings, and conduct the research.

What is the *Act of Resistance* in Relation to Motherhood?

In the past, our Traditional Way of Life, including sacred traditions and customs, were hidden or practiced in secret because policies were enforced to eradicate Anishinaabe ceremonies

and languages. Anderson (2006) explains that, “the church and state have dismantled the philosophies, practices, and systems that upheld our status as women, a dismantling that has been fed by a simultaneous process: the construction of a negative Native female identity” (p. 98). By targeting the women, you target the culture and transmission of knowledge. There was a time when Anishinaabe women were held in the highest regard because of their ability to bring life into this world and for their connection to the spiritual realm. Women are considered matriarchs in many Nations, unafraid to stand up against violence of any form to lead their families towards Mino-Bimaadiziwin (living a good life). These women hold a great responsibility to their families and future generations, as predicted by the beliefs of their Elders. Anderson (2000) states that, “the guidance that women receive from their mothers, aunts, grandmothers shapes the way they learn to understand themselves and their positions in the world. These teachings, these ways of working together as families build resistance” (p. 123).

Colonization and ongoing assimilative tactics have forced the dismantling of traditional Anishinaabe family structures. Many families succumbed to the pressures of following a patriarchal way of life, while some clung onto their roles as educators of the language, culture, and Traditional Teachings.

That, however, continues to be an act of resistance. When Anishinaabe mothers attend ceremonies, that is an act of resistance. When Anishinaabe mothers have babies to strengthen their Nations, that is an act of resistance. When those children begin speaking the language, that is an act of resistance. When mothers are out in the fields picking sweetgrass with their children, that is an act of resistance.

In the 21st century, Anishinaabe women are engaging in their language, culture, and Traditional Way of Life, which is, in itself, the ultimate act of resistance as they continue to have

binoojiinhsag (babies) and pass these knowledges down to them. The Anishinaabek that are currently living and breathing are the very act of resistance, including their simplest acts of just sitting with their families, visiting their families, and joining in the laughter (Simpson, 2017). When these children are nurtured by Anishinaabe matriarchs, the teachings will be carried through their blood onto the next generation, where their children will also have a strong identity of who they are as Anishinabek, and so forth. They are embodying the language, ceremonies, and continuing the Ancestral Knowledges. We are collectively saying that genocide did not work on our Ancestors, and it will not work on us as long we keep on breathing life to continue our Anishinaabe lineage.

What is Revitalization of Cultural Practices?

Indigenous peoples have and continue to have an influx of settler researchers come into their Nations to study their ways of life. Wendy Genuisz (2009) explains that "the colonization process both destroyed and preserved native knowledge" (p. 3). Nations were left to trust that the documentation of these knowledges would be picked up again. As a result, Indigenous Peoples are searching for gaps in their knowledge, and piecing together their collective historical past by bringing back their stories, their way of life, and ensuring their children embody resiliency. In this manner, we are searching for gaps of knowledge and piecing together our historical past and bringing back our stories, our way of life, and ensuring our children embody resiliency.

The Impact of the Indian Act

The Indian Act was introduced in 1876. It is Canadian legislation introduced by John A. MacDonald to control the lives of First Nations[3] people. Lawrence (2003) explains: "as a regulatory regime, the Indian Act provides ways of understanding Native identity, organizing a conceptual framework that has shaped contemporary Native life in ways that are now so familiar as to almost seem 'natural'" (p. 3). This includes how Indigenous women have internalized polarizing stereotypes and derogatory terms that have erupted since the Indian Act, which work to further marginalize them. The government has attempted to eradicate Indigenous Peoples because they are the legal title holders of the land. Without delving too far into historical narratives, land ownership is essentially the main reason Indigenous Peoples have encountered genocidal attempts by the Canadian government. To this day, Indigenous Peoples of Canada continue to be governed under the Indian Act.

This legislation controls almost every aspect of First Nations People, especially the women who were purposefully targeted through disenfranchisement policies because they were identified as the Nation stakeholders. First Nations women in Canada would lose their status as an 'Indian' if they married a non-Indigenous man, and any children born from this union were scrutinized by their blood quantum. The blood quantum dictated their Indigeneity politically. Indigenous women would also lose their status if they obtained an education, and they would be forced to move off-reserve.

The Indian Act policies also removed children, languages, and ceremonies from every day First Nations life, and controlled who had rights and status. Many amendments to the Indian

[3] The Indian Act creates a legal category of person called Indian. In the mid-1980's, the conventional terminology to refer to Indians changed to First Nation person who were now citizens of First Nations. The Indian Act remains in effect and Indians remain a legal category.

Act have been made to align its provisions with the equality rights of Canadians, but tensions from its 19th century roots still arise amongst Indigenous Peoples, both on- and off-reserve, and with the Canadian state. When Indigenous women have binoojiinhsag (babies), these children are born into this political landscape, leaving them to navigate this arena. However, these very children are a constant reminder to the Canadian government that Indigenous Peoples exist.

Anishinaabe Maternal Pedagogies

Broadly, maternal pedagogies are the primary caregiver's knowledge of teaching and learning that is imparted to their children through "beliefs, values, methods, principles, and practices" (Abbey, 2010). When women become pregnant, there is a natural tendency towards a mothering instinct, to teach their children about survival, and to continue their lineage. Within an Anishinaabe maternal pedagogy, it is sacred work to understand your role in passing on cultural knowledge, engaging with spirituality, respecting Creation, and raising a Nation. This sacred responsibility is grounded in the belief of feminine energies within the cosmos, where we are connected to the Creation of the Earth, the moon, and the water (Anderson, 2007). It is the Earth's teachings and its elements that govern our day-to-day activities (Cajete, 2000).

The Anishinaabe maternal pedagogy is grounded in teaching children through experience, and children exercising their freedom within safe boundaries to explore the world around them. Ultimately the teaching and learning methods are undertaken collectively, between parents and child, child and the community, and are grounded in spirituality (Anderson, 2007; Brant, 2014). Our communities help build our families who are integral to sustaining our Nationhood, increasing our survival rate against predators or enemies, and assisting with the duties around the community. Our communities have passed on stories of survival, origin

narratives, and multilayered teachings. For example, one of our core teachings is based on listening to our mothers speak as they tend to their daily activities. Child (2012) explains that "women continuously worked and otherwise interacted with relatives, and the roles of daughter, sister, mother, and aunt were important mantles of responsibilities" (p. 15).

There are exceptions where family members or close friends who may not have their own children will "adopt" a child by choice and treat them as their own and share in the responsibilities of mothering (Bédard, 2006). These women all assist in nurturing and shaping the identity of children. Indigenous women are given the responsibility to teach children, raise a strong Nation, and understand the relationships in both the animate and inanimate world. It is important to cherish your role as a woman and provide support to other Indigenous women (Bédard, 2006).

The Overview of the Thesis

In Chapter 1, I provide my positionality: who I am, where I come from, and what led me to this research. I set my intentions as to why I am exploring Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies, and why it is important to expand our knowledges on various ceremonies and teachings that are embodied within women and children. The teachings in Chapter 1 examine the earliest relationships we have with our mother and with Mother Earth. Some of our teachings and stories will have different versions but I weave the core teachings and pedagogies so we can build our knowledge system. From there, I share my perspective and the Traditional Knowledge on Sky Woman and the Creation Story by Basil Johnston. Then I provide the Sky World Teachings by Knowledge Holder Mokttewenkwe (Barbara Wall), followed by the Giizhigowaatik Debaajmowin (Cedar Tree story), as told by Wendy Maakoons Genuisz (2009)

and Mary Siisip Genuisz (2015). Next, I weave in the importance of a traditional kinship network and the way it generates and supports our communities. After building upon the foundational aspect of traditional motherhood teachings, I explain how the Seven Life Stages teachings are incorporated, as they become the groundwork for the literature review. I discuss embodied cosmologies in this chapter as well, because it explains how we live our lives according to the teachings, but more so how we engage specifically with motherhood.

In Chapter 2, I describe the existing literature on Anishinaabe maternal teachings. While researching, I noticed themes emerging from the authors on the cyclical nature of motherhood. Although these authors did not have linear narratives, I began taking notes on their stories, thus leading me to create a visual chart of how the authors and the stories related womanhood, conception, pregnancy, birth, and mothering, and how they are centered around the sacredness of Mother Earth. I could not find a story that did not link spirituality to child rearing, and the connection to Mother Earth, as they were all intertwined. This chapter has several subthemes that describes complexities of motherhood.

I explain the research design and break down the chapter with subthemes including Anishinaabe Research Methodology, Research Knowledge contributors, Knowledge Sharing Methods, Knowledge Sharing Practices, Knowledge Sharing Protocols, and Community Dissemination. I explain the Seven Grandparent teachings and the Tri-Council as principles that guide my research. I then make meaning of the knowledge shared and proceed to the findings. After collecting it, I begin to make meaning of the knowledge within their respective groups: pregnant mothers, mothers, grandmothers, and midwives.

Chapter 3 – Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings Findings, and Chapter 4 – Challenges, Tensions, and Successes Findings, present the core findings of my work. My findings are split

into 2 chapters because I wanted to answer my research questions separately. Both sets of findings are complex, and each chapter is loaded with rich information. In Chapter 6, I provide a discussion on the knowledge shared, discussing the old and new information provided by the literature, the research questions, and the knowledge contributors. In the last chapter, I provide the conclusions based on the two research findings chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this section, I begin with my positionality, as I have personal experience dealing with the challenges, tensions, and successes of motherhood. One of the key elements of the research is to privilege Anishinaabemowin when possible. Language is important because it unlocks the fundamental knowledge system of the way Anishinaabek view the world. The purpose of this chapter is to weave in the foundational knowledge so that the reader understands how the fundamental teachings are embedded in practice. This builds our knowledges about conception, pregnancy, birth, and maternal care, and how they contribute to raising strong Anishinaabek children. This section includes the Creation Story and Sky World teachings because they outline the Anishinaabe cosmology, axiology, ontology, and epistemology. These teachings are fundamental because they will be weaved throughout this dissertation to demonstrate my understanding of the relationships within and between the universe, environment, and future generations. Once I explain Anishinaabe foundations, I shift into explaining traditional kinship ties because this is where we are taught to focus on keeping children and Elders together, as they are the core of teachings and knowledge transmission for future generations.

Positionality

The Anishinaabe protocols advise that I must position myself and my knowledge. When we introduce ourselves to others, we tell who we are, where we are from, and who our family is so that they can situate me. I will begin by starting at the beginning with Gzhe-Mnidoo (the Great Spirit or the Great Mystery - the one who created and envisioned the universe as we know it today). Our cosmological connection forms our beliefs as Anishinaabek. When we discuss and engage with the Traditional Teachings, the metaphysical and cosmology are embedded within

this knowledge system. The Traditional Teachings are shared throughout the generations because they provide foundational understandings of survival, morality, and belief. These pedagogies transmit foundational knowledges through oral narratives, experiential leaning, and kinesthetic learning. When our parents share these teachings through oral narratives and histories, it is our own journey to understand and apply this knowledge towards a holistic living; it is up to each individual to interpret the teachings, engage with them, and translate them into practice and everyday living.

I am an Anishinaabe kwe born and raised in Wiikwemkoong, Manitoulin Island. I grew up with my teachings and language from an early age. My first language is Anishinaabemowin. I am very blessed that I received core teachings from my family as well through our community schools. Our schools focused on infusing cultural knowledges within the Western system. My mother also taught me what she could about life by mixing teachings of Anishinaabe naadiziwin (way of life) with Western education. Similarly, my uncle Henry would bring me with his family to cultural gatherings and ceremonies. I participated in powwows and helped where I could during ceremonies. I was too young to fully appreciate the things I was learning at the time, but reflecting back, I am grateful for the teachings I had received from all my Aunties - Doris, Roselinda, Dixie, and Gloria - as well as my Uncles - Frances-baa[4], Clement-baa, Gordon, Henry, and Joe. These relatives taught me everything, including Anishinaabemowin, harvesting food, medicines, animals, Nanaboozhoo stories, and kinship ties.

Once I graduated from high school, I was living off-reserve, working 4.5 hours away from my community. When I became pregnant, it was the loneliest feeling in the world because I

[4] When we add "-baa" at the end of a person's name it is to acknowledge that they walked this Earthly space and then crossed over to the spiritual realm to be with the Ancestors.

hid my pregnancy and did not tell my family or my co-workers about it. The pregnancy was hard. I was young - in my early twenties - and I was scared. I tried to navigate everything myself; I thought it would be as simple as reaching out to the local First Nation clinic, and they would assist me with prenatal care, but instead, they turned me away because I was not their band member. I felt defeated and overwhelmed. Finally, I reached out to my friend who took the time to help me and was able to guide me through the process of self-care for myself and the baby. We tried to find resource centres to obtain an obstetrician. It took four months, but we found a resource centre that would help me with getting a doctor. I did not have access to our Traditional Teachings or Elders, nor was I aware of any traditional maternal care practices. It was a tough road because I carried little relevant knowledge, and the internet was not as big of a resource as it is today.

The birth was hard. I felt like I was not a mother because I did not give birth to my son naturally, as I had to have an emergency caesarian (c-section) delivery. I felt like a failure because I could not breastfeed. Every pamphlet told me to breastfeed and I tried to do it, but my son could not latch. I gave up in defeat, turning to using a bottle. Bottle-feeding is something new for Indigenous mothers - prior to colonization, other mothers would breastfeed our children if we were unable to breastfeed them ourselves. This kept the child fed and healthy and built our kinship network.

As I sat in the hospital room with my newborn son over ten years ago, I remember dressing him in onesies with traditional sayings and moccasins that I had bought at various powwows. Overall, my first year was hard. I had all these expectations, but nothing manifested from my original plans. My mom took time off to help me where she could, but I just wanted to move back home and be with her. I always felt like I was not a good enough mother because

people would ask me if I had a midwife, if he had a tiknigaan (traditional baby carrier) if he had a Spirit name, and so on. I bought him a pair of moccasins and had someone make him regalia for when we danced together at powwows, but this was all I knew, so I focused on the little teachings I had, and my knowledge of our language.

Years later, I had another son. This time I had a little more cultural knowledge that I had collected from family, friends, and ceremonies. I really wanted to take a different approach in this pregnancy and birth. Still unaware of midwives and their holistic approach to birth, I went to my family doctor who found me an obstetrician right away. I had complications in my pregnancy again. This time, however, I knew more about how to care for myself and the baby as I understood that what I feel as a mother, the baby feels and absorbs as well. In this way, I had to be cautious of my thoughts and words because I wanted my children to be raised in a good way.

I began to research a little more on traditional Anishinaabe pregnancy and birthing knowledges. What I found was either scattered knowledge or the teachings belonged to another Nation. I did not think it would be this hard to find our cultural knowledge. I was unsure about many of the teachings and found myself wanting more information. For example, I wanted to give my son a cedar bath after his birth because I heard of other Anishinaabe gaashiyag (women) doing it. The story I heard was from a woman in Sudbury, Ontario, who shared in conversation at a workshop that a mother and child go through a traumatic experience at the time of birth, and that cleansing the baby with cedar will help erase that trauma. Unsure of how to do it myself, I asked around in my networks, but no one had heard of giving their child a cedar bath. Not being able to access these types of teachings and practices was stressful for me because I wanted to ensure my son was engaged in our cultural practices from the time of his birth.

When my second son was first born, I wanted to put him in a tiknigaan (baby carrier), and I wanted to speak Anishinaabemowin to him immediately after his birth. However, I could not do any of that because he almost died during birth and was immediately whisked away. He was born premature, and the hospital staff were worried as during the birthing process, he was barely breathing. The room was quiet and calm after he was born. I did not hear a cry. I asked to hold him, and they said I could not at that time, and gave me the excuse that they were weighing him. I did eventually get to hold him for a brief second, enough time to take a picture, and then they rushed him to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). The last thing I remember was asking if I could keep the placenta, and then I fell asleep. We spent the first few weeks in NICU, unable to implement the first cultural teachings that are customary to Anishinaabe Peoples. As I sat every day, holding my five-pound son, I wondered what teachings and ceremonies I could engage with him in. Even though I was at a point where I was too exhausted to even think, I still yearned for Anishinaabe culture for my child.

I must note that I was pregnant at the beginning of this dissertation, when I started the initial visits. It became a wholistic study for me to get a better understanding of Anishinaabe teachings and Western practices. I was unable to use a midwife because it was immediately considered a high-risk pregnancy. I was disappointed, but I became an empowered patient and established a good doctor-patient relationship. I was advocating for mine and my daughter's health through both a Western and a traditional lens. Throughout my pregnancy, I asked many questions, ranging from getting a midwife, how to handle pregnancy through the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccinations while pregnant, and using traditional care throughout my pregnancy. Leading up to the birth, I was playing hand drum songs and saying prayers in Anishinaabemowin for the safe delivery of my child. When we announced her birth, it was done in

Anishinaabemowin. These were some of the things I did to welcome her onto Earth and into the family. After my daughter was born, I had experienced racism in the hospital that included losing my placenta, to asking if child services were involved, to ruining the bath water for her cedar bath. I was able to advocate for myself throughout the entire the process, and speak with the Director about what was happening. I went through an emotional journey trying to get her placenta back and addressing the racism I had experienced. I did not let that defeat me and carried on with prayers to keep me going.

All my birthing experiences were hard and traumatic. In having conversations with friends and family, some were fortunate to be raised in the culture and to raise their children with the teachings right from the beginning of their pregnancy. Reflecting on my own experience, I thought about how many women have similar experiences to mine - who yearn to raise their children in the culture, language, and teachings. I began to question**:** How do we start raising our children using Traditional Teachings if they are not readily available for Anishinaabe kweok? As part of this, I also began thinking about the mother's desires to raise their children with Traditional Teachings, should they choose to do so. With these questions, I set forth on research that was exclusive to Anishinaabe teachings so that we can start building up our knowledge systems, and teach our children how to live as an Anishinaabe person and the importance of Anishinaabe identity.

Creation Story: Cosmology, Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology

Cajete (2000) explains that "each part of the Earth is a manifestation of the spiritual center of the universe" (p. 109). Indigenous stories position plants as the elder brothers as they carry so much knowledge, healing, and are part of the Indigenous landscape. As knowledge

systems have expanded and developed throughout the millennia, Indigenous Peoples have maintained a connection to their homelands (Coulthard, 2010). Our identity is fabricated through an understanding of natural laws, sustaining relations, ceremonies, stories, and embodying the teachings of living in harmony like our Ancestors (Benton-Banai, 1988; Cajete, 2000; Simpson, 2011). As Cajete (2000) notes, "the philosophy of Native cultures focuses on a direct relationship with the Earth as the source of knowledge and meaning for human life and community" (p. 109). We have come to understand that the land, trees, mountains, and rivers are our relatives and they are part of our community (Gonzales, 2012). We understand our intricate relationship with the land and adopting all of nature into the kinship system. The Anishinaabek rely on the knowledge from the land to sustain life. Many Indigenous Nations in North America have an understanding that connects them to the cosmos. It is through the Anishinaabe Creation story that we learn kweok (women) are the primary transmitters of knowledge. Anderson (2000) states that: "Creation stories strongly influence culture. They often form the foundation for economic, family, and political relations" (p. 71). Our Creation story begins with Gzhe-Mnidoo who had a vision/dream: the Great Mystery is the Creator of all things in the galaxy and the realms, and after nature is created, man is lowered to the Earth to live in accordance with the natural laws set out by Gzhe-Mnidoo (Johnston, 1976; Benton-Banai, 2010; Cajete, 2000). There is also said to be a noise that projects out - the first sound that echoes into the vast darkness. Some say it signifies the first breath of Creation that took place. These narratives demonstrate that life comes with thought, sound, and breath. The Great Mystery first created balance in our universe, and brought forth life last. These natural laws all have a place, as well as a gift and a purpose, as told by Johnston (1976): they include our health and well-being because "the Great Laws governed the place and movement of sun, moon, earth, and stars; governed the powers of wind, water, fire,

and rock; governed the rhythm and continuity of life, birth, growth, and decay" (p. 13). The life given to the Anishinaabek meant following these natural laws because it would mean to live a life in balance; if we stray from the Original Instructions, we will risk creating turmoil in our lives. We are taught to balance our egos and maintain order. Often in these narratives, the animal and plant kingdoms will step in to assist us get back on the right path. We share our dreams and our stories to forewarn future generations what can happen when you stray from the Original Instructions.

Anderson (2000) explains that "many Native creation stories are female centered, and there are many stories that speak about the role of women bringing spirituality to the people" (p. 71). In the time of Creation, a Spirit woman named Winona was living alone above the Earth. Winona asked Gzhe-Mnidoo for another Spirit to be with her, and then conceived two children. The two children are completely opposite to one another, and end up destroying each other, leaving Sky Woman devastated and alone once again. Gzhe-Mnidoo sends another Spirit to her and again she becomes pregnant. The remaining animals watch Sky Woman's suffering and take pity on her. After they consult with each other, Turtle offers his back so the woman can come down to Earth to rest. She requests some soil from beneath the sea. One by one, each animal attempts to retrieve this soil but are not successful. Finally, the muskrat brings her some. She creates an island that covers the turtle's back. She begins to restore and create life on this island. After completing the re-creation of her new home, she is ready to birth her twins, a boy and a girl.

These twins are different from her first set of twins, and when she observes them, she notices that they are working together as a team to counteract each other's weaknesses and bring out each of their strengths. Johnston (1976) explains more about this set of twins:

> What was unique was the soul-spirit of each. Called "cheejauk" it was made up of six aspects: character, personality, soul, spirit, heart or feeling, and a life principle. This substance had the capacity to dream and receive vision. Through dream and vision a man would find guidance in attaining fulfilment of self… Men and women had yet another aspect. Each possessed his "chibowmun," or aura. It was a substance emanating from his "cheejauk," through his body by which the state and quality of his inner being was sensed and felt" (p. 15).

The first year of this family and their lives on Earth relied upon the relationships with the land and animals. During their first winter, the family was going hungry. Mkwa (Bear), among other animals, offered themselves to this family, and Spirit Woman honoured them with a ceremony. Once the children grew up, Spirit Woman said she was leaving them to continue their lives on Earth, and if they lived a good life, they would return to her in the Spirit realm. The Anishinaabek population began to grow, and men and women continued to honour the Earth and the Sky, but more specifically to honour,

> The first of Mothers, Nokomis (Grandmother), whenever the moon gave light. At the same time, they remembered the primacy of women, who bore the unique gift of life, for it was through woman that the cycle – creation, destruction, re-creation – was completed. For her special gift of giving life and being, women had a special place in order of existence and were exempt from the vision quest (Johnston, 1976, p. 17).

To show their love and gratitude to the female lineage and motherhood, the Anishinaabek have a prayer, dance, and ceremony to show their respect for Spirit Woman and Grandmother Moon. Women are the water carriers and have the strong connection to water. This reflects how

grandmothers have that strong connection to their daughters and grandchildren. She is the matriarch of the family. Nookmis Giizis is the matriarch as she governs life on Earth.

The story about Winona illustrates how women are honoured as the thresholds of the spiritual realms and demonstrates the strength that women carry. When Winona passes into the next realm, she leaves behind her son. The grandmother is left to raise him. She is the matriarch and raises him. Similar stories honouring powerful women on Turtle Island are Sky Woman from the Haudenosaunee; White Buffalo Calf Woman honoured in the Lakota Nation; and Spider Woman in the Navajo Nations. The stories, parallel in nature, place women and children as the carriers of future generations.

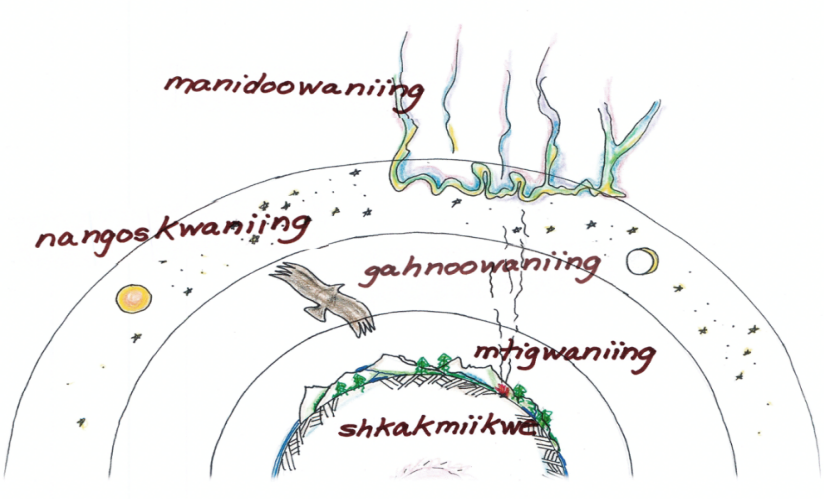
The teachings from our Elders tell us that we have been given the knowledge to live by Creator's laws, which in turn are the natural laws of the Earth (Benton-Banai, 1988; Cajete 2000). These laws impart the knowledge of "cycles of birth, growth, undoing, renewal, and returning… Indigenous Peoples often follow principles of interaction based on relationship, reciprocity, respect and responsibility" (Gonzales, 2012, p. xiv). The Anishinaabe story is our connection to the cosmos and "the whole of the creation story, when you think about it, you can liken that to your own birth, to your own creation" (Benton-Banai, Creation, 2010, p. 99). As in a sacred connection, our umbilical cord is a symbolic tool for how the Earth and Moon are held together by an invisible cord, or, as Gonzales (2012) describes, how it "unites the Earth with the Moon, like a loving umbilical cord of energy that unites mother with child" (p. 125). We have two mothers, our birth mother, and the Mother Earth, the one who sustains us. She continues to be our teacher and we must always listen and observe the natural movements of gda kiiminaa (The Earth). Our Creation story is centered around the Creator bringing forth Mother Earth,

Mishomis Giizis (Grandfather sun), and Nookmis Giizis (Grandmother moon) as a family that work together to take care of life on Earth.

Sky World Teachings

I was given permission to share the Sky World teachings by Barbara Wall, Mokttewenkwe, Waawashkesh Dodem, a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation, Shawnee, Oklahoma. I specifically wanted to share her version of the Sky World teachings because it explains our cosmological connection. I will be focusing on maternal teachings and utilizing Figure 1 Sky World Teachings to demonstrate how this relates to Anishinaabe motherhood. These teachings show how Anishinaabe women understand our place in the world and our duty in raising strong Anishinaabe children. In Figure 1, Mokttewenkwe begins with Shkakmiikwe / Shkagamik-Kwe (Mother Earth). Since I have already provided the Creation story, I focus on the four layers of mtigwaniing, gahnoowaniing, nangoskwaniing, and manidoowaniing.

Figure 1 **Sky World Teachings**



Note. This is Mokttewenkwe's original drawing. There is more to this teaching than what is provided here. I only took the Sky World Teachings that applied to motherhood teachings and

kinship relationships. I wanted to use this because it provides a broad understanding of how we carry the Original Instructions from Gzhe-Mnidoo.

The first layer, closest to Earth, is mtigwaniing. This is where the trees are anchored down; it is the space we currently occupy, and it is the space we strive to live our best lives in as instructed by Gzhe-Mnidoo. It is where children are taught and raised by their communities, and it is the space where we have our ceremonies. We share this space with all our relations, from the plants to the animals to the water beings. The children and youth explore their surroundings and the teachings are passed onto them from the grandparents within this space.

The second layer is gahnoowaniing – the Eagle and Thunderbird space. It is in this space where women of childbearing years are spiritually anchored because they are the doorway to the spiritual realm, much like the eagles and the thunderbirds. Once women are reaching the end of their childbearing years, they transcend back to the first space, mtigwaniing, to help raise the children, share their knowledge, and ensure the next generation is raised with the Anishinaabe principles of Mino-Bimaadiziwin.

The third space is nangoskwaniing – the place of the stars. This refers to the star world and the place where our Ancestors reside. This is where the shkabwewis giizis (helping star – sun) and Nookimis Giizis (Grandmother Moon) reside as well. Many of our teachings and understandings of our environment stems from this space.

The last layer is of manidoowaniing – the place of the Spirits. This is where Gzhe-Mnidoo resides. In this last sphere, our Spirits are known to visit this space and reconnect with the Ancestors. Even when we are physically tethered to our bodies on Earth, we are given the ability to travel. Our Spirits also reside in this space when we are preparing our journey to have an Earth experience.

The Creation story and Sky World teachings are foundational constructs that demonstrate that a woman has a sacred role within Creation, and that she is the one who can impart vital cultural knowledge and Traditional Teachings that will prolong our Nationhood. Indigenous Peoples recognize these gifts and hold women in high regard. The Anishinaabe teachings tell us that women are the spiritual doorway between our world and the Spirit world because they have the ability to bring life into this world. Ultimately, these teachings are tools for Anishinaabe kweok. It is up to us to share these knowledges with our children so that they can understand their place in the world.

Giizhigowaatik Debajmoowin (Cedar Tree Story)

Wendy Makoonhs Genuisz (2009) and Mary Siisip Genuisz (2015) share the knowledge of the Cedar Tree origin story in their books. I have previous knowledge of the origin stories of how tobacco, sweetgrass, and sage came to Mother Earth. As I read the two versions of the Cedar Tree story, it became a central part of my research because I shared this story with some of my knowledge contributors that were interested in learning about it, and I use it to share Chapter 5: Maternal Teachings Themes.

This story will be part of the Giizhigowaatik Debaajmowin research method and is the basis of my methodology, as it sets the foundation as a qualitative study. Aside from my children inspiring the research, I found this story to complement the research. The story shares how we lost our way and how we begin to reclaim our knowledge again with the help of our clan animals. Our clan system is integral to how we operate as a society and ensuring we are accountable to one another. It is also the Anishinaabek way of sharing our knowledge and engaging in anti-colonial work and decolonizing the academy.

The Cedar Story

A long time ago, Nanaboozhoo gave all the living beings a purpose and a gift. Each of these beings resided below, above, and on Earth. Nanaboozhoo had left the Anishinaabek aki-kinoomaagewin (land teachings) for Mino-Bimaadiziwin. He also instructed the animals to assist with the Anishinaabek should they ever lose their way. The Anishinaabek were known to fall off the guided path. This is the story of that time. The Migiziyag (Eagles) had noticed that the Anishinaabek were living in turmoil and needed to be rescued yet again. The Migiziyag notified the other bineshiiyag (birds). The Migiziyag tried to notify the giigonhyag (fishes), but they swam deeper into the water. The Kookooko'oo (Owls) said they would try to help and by telling the waawaabiganoojiinyag (mice), however the mice would run into the thickness of the grass to hide. The Gekek (hawks) tried to get the waaboozoog (rabbits) attention but with no luck, as they bolted into their burrows. The bineshiiyag had a meeting where they came up with a plan to have a neutral party to contact the land animals, so they came to the consensus of the Amik (Beaver). The Amik, who likes to keep to himself, was minding his own business, and in the middle of building a bigger pond. Ojiishkimanisii (King Fisher) volunteered to request Amik's assistance to be the communication line between the kingdoms. However, Amik could not be bothered by Ojiishkimanisii or anyone else for that matter, as he was focused on building his pond. Ojiishkimanisii (King Fisher) swooped down to use his talons to grab the fur on Amik's head. This got Amik's attention. He annoyedly asked what Ojiishkimanisii wanted. This is where he explained how the Anishinaabek lost their way and the animals needed to work together

to investigate how bad the situation is and how they could interject and assist. Amik did not want to do it. Amik questioned why he should help and Migizi reminded Amik that it was their duty to Gzhe-Mnidoo to assist with Anishinaabek. The bineshiiyag pleaded with Amik until he finally agreed to help. Amik left on his journey to check on the Anishinaabek and realized the critical state the Anishnaabek were in. They had abandoned all their teachings and had become greedy, selfish, and sick. Amik went to notify the water and land beings that a Council meeting needed to happen to address the situation with the Anishinaabek. The animals agreed to have the Council meeting in bboon (winter) realm where they could all voice their concerns, opinions, and have their questions addressed. After discussing this, they decided a secondary committee needed to be arranged and since Mkwa (bear) and Nigig (Otter) made compelling arguments to assist the Anishinaabek, they were appointed to head the committee. Mkwa and Nigig thought it was important to communicate between the realms that were above and below the Earth, that way the realms could help the Anishinaabek. Mkwa and Nigig began digging, but their efforts were pointless. Mkwa was focused on digging out the big boulders but Nigig had small paws and was not as efficient as Mkwa in digging to the Anishinaabek Aki (The land of the Anishinaabek). Nigig had an idea to have some type of tool, like a tree, that could be used as a line of communication instead of trying to dig their way to Anishinaabek Aki. So Nigig ran off to find Amik for a tree that they could use. After Nigig explained to Amik his plan, Amik gave them his favourite tree - the aspen. Mkwa tried to push it through to the Earth realm but the Aspen snapped in half. So Amik brought all the trees but they were either too soft and snapped in half, or they were much too heavy to push through the sand. Exhausted from the activity, the sat thinking

about what they should do next. Nigig jumped up and explained to Mkwa that they are clan animals and they could ask to Gzhe-Mnidoo to help them. After much prayer, Gzhe-Mnidoo asked what it is they needed, so Nigig explained the situation, from the feathered beings witnessing the turmoil the Anishinaabek were in, to Ojiishkimaanisii contacting Amik, to the council meeting, to Amik providing various trees to push through the earth. Gzhe-Mnidoo thought about their request and since they were using their gifts to help their fellow man, he granted their request and asked what kind of tree they needed. They replied that they need a light tree that can be carried through the hole, but strong enough that it would not break, and maybe it could be oily enough so that it could slide up on the other side of Earth. In Anishinaabek Aki, Baambiitaa-binesi (Woodpecker) was flying when he heard the rumblings and movement of the Earth. There he witnessed an odd-looking tree he had never seen before, and he went to share the message of this beautiful, flat, foliage tree, that had a strong woodsy scent. The other animals made fun of him for describing the new tree that popped out from the ground fully grown. Mkwa and Nigig were so happy to see this tree birthed successfully from their realm to Earth. However, the job set out by Mkwa and Nigig was not over just yet as they had to explain to the Anishinaabek how to utilize the tree. They set out to find the Anishinaabek and saw that they were already gathered around the bank looking at the Giizhik mtig (Cedar tree). There, they explained that this tree was a gift: it was a new line of communication, and there were also medicinal uses for Giizhik mtig. Mkwa and Nigig went back down to their realm to share to the Council in bboon (winter) what had happened and what the Anishinaabek people would be doing to change their lives around. (Genuisz, 2009; Genuisz, 2015)

I retell this Cedar Story to explain my positionality as an insider because I am an Anishinaabe gaashi (mother), raised within my community and culture. I also acknowledge that other Anishinaabek Nations carry our teachings, and that we are collecting bits and pieces to enhance our understandings of our medicines, Traditional Teachings, and to provide an Anishinaabe framework of our relationships with the animals and cosmos. The Cedar Tree story frames the questions about what teachings are missing that we could use to resurge our knowledge. This story touches upon how the Anishinaabek have lost their way, so the clan animals work together to bring a renewed life to them. The clan animals return to the teachings for guidance and ask the Creator for assistance. This story assisted in setting the foundation for investigating the unknown knowledges out there and what challenges we experience when we are in pursuit of our Traditional Teachings. My research signifies returning to understand what those teachings are and the challenges and strengths of Anishinaabe women as they renew life in a contemporary context. Many of our stories examine our relationships with the Manidoog (Spirits), Creation, Creator, and Motherhood, and our Guidance from the supernatural. More importantly, my research raises the question of how we reconnect and access our Traditional Teachings so we can apply them in a contemporary context. I keep this story as a guiding framework to strengthen and identify key teachings that enhance our knowledge backgrounds.

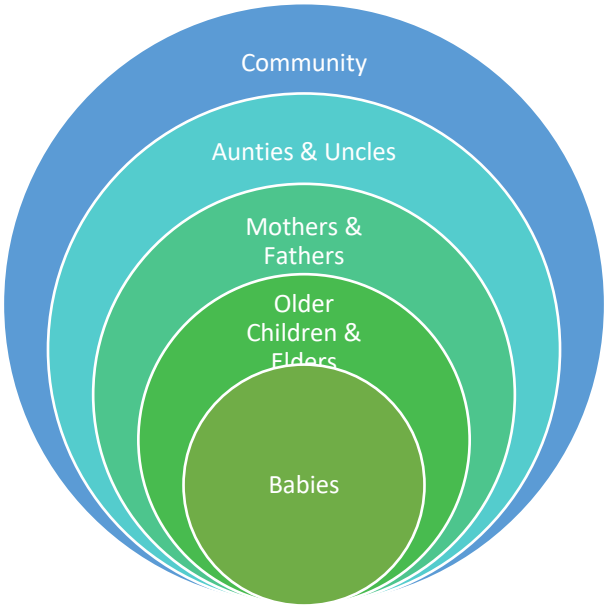
Traditional Kinship System

In our traditional family structures, we believe that it takes a village to raise a child. This was the concept I heard growing up because it would take our mothers, fathers, siblings, aunties, uncles, cousins, nookimisag (grandmothers), mishomisag (grandfathers), and our neighbours to have a hand in our upbringing (Anderson, 2000; Chief Lady Bird, 2020). These kinship ties are

described in Figure 2 - Traditional Kinship System. I want to acknowledge in this section that we have an important role to play as mothers and parents, but our communities may "adopt" our children as their own and raise them with the love and care they need. The reason we do this is because we have an inherent understanding that children are a gift from Gzhe-Mnidoo and that they are on loan to us, so we must honour each child and their gifts. As children grow, they have their own autonomy to make sense of the world through exploration and participate in community environments. When it comes time for discipline, someone within their kinship will correct the child's behaviour through more subtle discipline actions like a storytelling method or by some light teasing (Anderson, 2000).

In the traditional kinship system, we teach our children through stories about our expectations of them within our families and communities. This is where the child can choose to listen and contribute to their clans and Nations. The traditional kinship system is very important to Anishinaabek because it is our support system no matter where we live.

Figure 2 **Traditional Kinship System**



Babies are the core of sustaining futures. The Elders and older children are in the same ring because children learn from the Elders how to sustain practices in a good way, whereas the Elders receive the help they need. The last three circles operate in tandem and on a much larger scale, tending to the more strenuous activities required to achieve a healthy Nation.

First, we must ensure that we take care of our babies because they are carrying our lineages into the next generations. We want to ensure that they are raised with our teachings. We have children and Elders in the next level because not only do they assist with raising the babies, but they are both closest to the Spiritual Realm (this is further explained in the Seven Stages of Life section). They have an inherent wisdom and life experience that teaches both babies, but also their families, on the importance of Traditional Teachings and a Traditional Way of Life. The outer rings of the adults are important because they do the bulk of the work in sustaining our communities. Before colonization, it was hunting, harvesting, and protecting our families. We worked with each other to ensure we were not leaving anyone to struggle. In contemporary times, we utilize this method by helping our families through fundraising to help off-set financial costs, we volunteer our time to help other families, and we share or loan what we can to help others get through difficult situations.

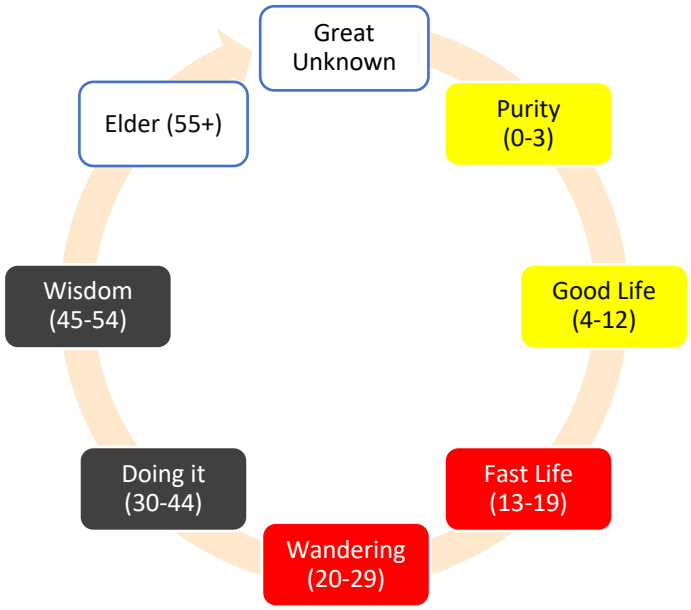
Seven Stages of Life

The Anishnaabek were given the Seven Stages of Life teachings through dreams so that we could make sense of the world. Through our dreams, we were given instructions for ceremonies to protect the binoojiihnsag (baby) and to celebrate the milestones or the next chapter in life. The Seven Stages of Life were included because they represent the cycle of life and that

there is constant transformation. Our first transformation is when we leave the spirit realm to have an earthly experience, or, in other words, we are born. I rely on the teachings from Stewart King-baa, Lillian Pitawanakwat-baa, Edna Manitowabi, and Peacock & Wisuri (2006) as they discuss the life stages from the Creation of Life (pregnancy) through each of the seven stages. I explore the life stage teachings as articulated by women because this research is for women to understand the knowledge on traditional childbirth and child rearing. At times, Anishinaabek niniyag (Men) hold some of our teachings, which is why Stewart-baa's teachings were included. When discussing these teachings, it is apparent that there has been a disruption to the maternal pedagogies due to colonization. It is a challenge to capture the scattered knowledge on Anishinaabe life stages and to accurately describe the women's responsibilities with raising their children.

In Figure 3 - Seven Life Stages, I have the stages arranged around the medicine wheel because it demonstrates the link between the spiritual component and life cycle. I begin the spiritual component at conception because it is part of the developmental stage that is critical to beginning life on Earth. In our contemporary lifestyles, we are taught spirituality from the moment of conception and throughout the pregnancy.

Figure 3 **Seven Life Stages**



Note. I have added the age ranges in which these teachings are typically taught, but they are only suggested guidelines, as each of these teachings have variations. I have utilized Stewart King-baa's teachings for this outline and title headings. I will be addressing each of these stages from an Anishinaabe parenting perspective.

Great Unknown

I have purposely situated the Great Mystery or the Great Unknown in the Northern white sphere, between the Elder and Purity life stages, because these are the doorways where Spirits enter or exit life existence. Spirits are wise, as they are part of the unconscious collective memory that is embodied in the cosmos. The Great Unknown is not a physical stage but a metaphysical one. The purpose is to represent the Elder stage in proximity to the Western door, where our nookimis (Grandmother) or mishomis (Grandfather) have fulfilled their life's purpose and transitioned into their return to the Great Unknown. The newborn stage is situated on the

right, which represents the Eastern doorway where our Spirit decides it would like a human journey (Manitowabi, 2019).

Everything has a beginning - whether it is from molecules or dust, we originate from somewhere (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). Even the beginning of the universe and the Earth have their origin stories. Before conception occurs, our Spirits reside in the Great Unknown. They reside within the spiritual realm of the Ancestors. Traditional stories tell us about the moment of conception, like the story told to our children about our connection to the stars (Johnston, 2010). We, prior to conception, are the twinkling stars in the night sky, travelling the galaxy, the spirit realm, looking for our parents, visiting different Nations around the world. We select our mothers and our fathers, and then we choose the lessons that our parents will teach us. Once a Spirit chooses their mother and father, they travel down towards Earth. When we gaze up at the night sky, we will see a shooting star in the sky journeying to meet their parents. During the pregnancy, the Spirit will be with their mother. They watch over her. This is the foundational knowledge of how and why we came to Earth as children from the sky (Johnston, 2010). Each star that is in the galaxy is unique in every way, varying in shapes and in colour (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). We use this story to demonstrate our connection to the Earth, Stars, and the spiritual realms. It is a metaphysical account of our Spirit travelling to Earth. It shows how we understand conception and our relation to the stars.

Schki Bimaadiziwin zhinkaade (Purity Stage)

This is the stage that begins at birth to the toddler age group. In this stage, babies are born with few responsibilities. They are gifts from Gzhe-Mnidoo and everyone celebrates their arrival. The mother makes their first treaty with the newborn as the child receives their mother’s milk. In

contemporary times, not all women can nourish their children in this way. We are fortunate that mothers can use formula so they can still mimic the treaty made between parent and child with the first feed. After the babies are born, they observe their parents from their tiknigaans and listen to their families interact with each other and their surroundings.

In the first year of life, babies were placed in tiknigaans, wore very little clothing, and mothers would prepare dried cranberry or wood moss for the babies for their waste (Densmore, 1979). They were celebrated with feasts, like a modern-day baby shower. Further, Peacock & Wisuri (2002) add that "their dried naval cords were saved in hopes that the cord would help a child on the path toward wisdom. It was put in a leather pouch and hung over the [t]ikinagan until the child was a year old or more" (p. 77). Other items were hung on the tiknigaan such as dreamcatchers, medicine to assist when teeth were first emerging, medicines to ward off evil spirits, and other charms that the family thought would be beneficial to the baby.

Densmore (1979) explains that a mother made all her child's baby gear during the pregnancy and common practices were shared, such as, "…In cold weather a baby's feet were wrapped in rabbit skin with the hair inside" (p. 49), and the "child's head was encased in a close-fitting hood, soft deer hide being used for this before cloth was available" (p. 50). This first year was critical to family and community bonding. Many Anishinaabek traditional teachers share how important the first few years of life of the baby are. It is important to start bonding with the child as early as possible because the parents will learn about the little Spirit who chose them.

Mna Bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Good Life Stage)

This is the period between the toddler and adolescent stage where children learn about unconditional love and trust (Pitawanakwat, 2006). It is within this stage that parents learn their

child's individual strengths, interests, capabilities, weaknesses, fears, limits and dreams (Best Start Resource Centre (a), 2010). Parents are role modeling their behaviours to their children during this time, so it provides the optimal opportunity to instill Anishinaabe traditional values of the Seven Grandparent teachings as a framework to ensure that children have a moral guide to life. Because Anishinaabek rely on kinship networks, and children are therefore often surrounded by extended family members, it is important that everyone is aware that within this stage, children are listening to and observing all of the adults within the room.

Children within this stage need to be taught life skills to be successful later in life (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). An Anishinaabek philosophy is non-interference – a tenet of traditional parenting. Children often are given the freedom to make their own choices within "a safe and supervised way, to allow children to learn their own lessons about life and behaviour" (Best Start Resource Centre (b), 2016, p. 23). Indigenous parenting includes discipline in the sense that children come to understand what the limits of their behaviour are and the consequences of transgressing them. This method teaches children to respect others, differences, and Creation.

Wenda Bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Fast Life Stage)

The Fast Life stage is the stage where boys and girls begin their transition into manhood and womanhood, and enter the teenage years. Often when children are showing signs of puberty, this is the stage where they will begin their rites of passage ceremonies. Each ceremony has its unique protocol: boys are taught what it means to be a man with all its roles and responsibilities; girls are taught about their bodies and women's roles and responsibilities.

Joey-Lynn Wabie (2017) shares the narratives of women who have gone through their rites of passage. When a young woman encounters her first menstrual cycle, she is taken through a ceremony to celebrate her next stage in life as well as to teach her what her responsibility is as an Anishinaabe kwe. This ceremony is called the Berry Fast, where women abstain from eating berries for one year. This is an integrity trial period where young women are meant to develop discipline, strength, and resiliency. One of the purposes of the Berry Fast is to "…increase their self-respect, understand the sacredness of womanhood, and have access to and understand the profoundness of Algonquin and Ojibwe women ceremonies" (Wabie, 2019, p. 54). These young women are taught about their roles and their connection to the water, moon, and childrearing abilities. Older women guide the young ladies throughout their first year, teaching them about womanhood.

One of the teachings for young girls is about sexual intercourse and their ability to have children at this stage in their life. Anderson explains that "respect for their bodies was related to the respect and responsibility they commanded in their families, villages, and Nations" (p. 85). When girls enter womanhood, they are given the teachings about respecting their bodies, their sacredness of their lifegiving ability, and sex education (Anderson, 2000). When a woman becomes pregnant, she is in ceremony, and her body begins to do the work to create life by opening to the spiritual realm, creating a safe space for the baby to develop, and nourishing the placenta for the baby to thrive. Once the baby is born, there are simultaneous ceremonies that take place. Furthermore, a woman was taught not to have intercourse during her menstruation, and she would remove herself from her lodge during this period (Anderson, 2000). All these teachings are shared throughout this stage so that young women can learn about the respect, responsibility, and resiliency encompassed within their womanhood (Wabie, 2017).

Bonda Bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Wonder/Wander Stage)

In this stage, young people move into the young adulthood stage and begin to wonder and wander (Pitawanakwat, 2006), thinking about what they want to do, where they are going, and who they want to spend their life with. This is when young adults learn about themselves: they travel, go to school, and spend time discovering who they are. In this stage, it is easy for young adults to stray from Mino-Bimaadiziwin and engage in things that may not necessarily be good for them. However, this is part of the wandering/wondering stage and as children get older, parents pray and urge them to make safe and informed choices.

Zhitchge Bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Doing It Stage)

Once young adults are ready to start a new family, Anishinaabe teachings caution mothers to be mindful of how they are behaving and of their daily interactions so that they ensure their child has the best chance at life. Many traditional stories exist in this stage to ensure that mothers can protect their children-to-be. For example, if mothers were concerned about deformities, they were told not to look at anything deceased, and the husband was not to go hunting (Densmore, 1979; Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). There were also teachings about what a woman can and cannot do during her pregnancy, such as looking at her body shape to guess the gender of the baby, not speculating if the baby was reincarnated from a passed Spirit, and not gazing at particular animals too long or the child would get their characteristics (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006; Anderson 2000).

The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2012) notes that the community supports the mother's mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual state during the pregnancy. However, existence in the contemporary world brings a new set of challenges for

Anishinaabe women. For example, Winona La Duke (1999) explains that pregnant mothers are sometimes forced to consume contaminated water or chemicals because of the environments they live in. La Duke states that, “the first environment is about a baby, a woman, and a family…. Everything the mother feels, eats, and sees affects the baby” (1999, p. 22) - anything the mother endures the unborn child also endures. In contemporary times, pregnancy is more challenging because of outside influences such as consumption of unhealthy foods, contaminants in the water, no access to prenatal information, drugs, and alcohol (Anderson, 2000; Gonzales, 2012). In this stage, young women are ensuring that they are surrounding themselves with positive forces to raise their children.

Kendaan bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Wisdom Stage)

This is the stage where parents and children are getting older. In this stage, it is expected that one pauses and reflects upon the accumulated knowledge from their life experiences up until this point. It is also the time when adults get to start living and take all of life’s teachings and utilize them.

Gichi bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Elder Stage)

In this stage, one becomes an Elder. Some are blessed to be nookimisag (grandmothers) and mishomisag (grandfathers). They have watched their children and families grow. The Elders are now sitting close with the binoojiihsag. They teach them things that their parents cannot. To make it to this stage in life as an Anishinaabe is a blessing considering the challenges Indigenous Peoples have faced, such as residential schools, addictions, family dysfunction, and so forth. In this stage, Elders are getting closer to the Western doorway and revert to their child-like state (King-baa, 2020).

In each of these stages, we sit across from other stages: babies are across from adults, as babies rely on their parents to grow and be nurtured; children are across from Elders, as children and Elders rely on each other to share teachings; the Great Mystery is across from the wandering/wondering stage, as in this stage, young adults may challenge their purpose in life or need guidance in discovering who they are. Each of these stages relies on relationships. These stages are merely a guide: individuals can progress into each stage smoothly, but it is important to remember that trauma can have individuals stuck in certain stages, or progress through them at a different rate (King-baa, 2020).

Embodied Cosmologies/Geographies

Given the Creation stories, the Sky World Teachings, the Traditional Kinship System, and the Seven Stages of Life, it becomes evident that almost all Anishinaabe stories have spirituality embedded within them. We often do this to understand our roles as humans interacting with the animate and inanimate life energies. We understand that we come from the sky and are sustained by the land. We live in a reciprocal relationship with land and understand that it is our responsibility to create and maintain balance.

Women and men alike have gathered specific knowledge from the accumulation of experience they develop over time. Here, I explore the resurging of maternal teachings and pedagogies through the language and concepts of embodied geographies and cosmologies. Söffner (2010) describes embodiment as "being a concept used for both describing and surmounting the mind-body dualism, *embodiment* [sic] is at the core of theories of cultural, social, personal, and psychological dimensions of identity" (p. 345). In this definition, Anishinaabek are utilizing the language to describe our surroundings to make sense of who we are and what our purpose is on Earth. When Anishinaabemowin is spoken, it creates a different

level of meaning and a holistic understanding of how we are situating ourselves within the larger cosmological world.

Gonzales (2012) explains that “Native knowledge is experienced directly through the body, whether it is in direct relationship to land and place or felt in ritual and ceremony” (p. xxiv). We embody the knowledge of our Ancestors who walked the land and are then buried in its soil, thus becoming part of the landscape. Kermoal and Altamirano-Jiménez (2016) explain, “the knowledge held by Indigenous women is lived and embodied, is a process of sharing social life, histories, economic, and political practices” (p. 10). As an example of our connectedness to the Earth, after birth, we bury our placentas in the ground so that we are connected to our territories, and if we are ever lost, our Spirit will know where home is. Moreover, our Spirit is now linked with the Ancestors, and it is through teachings that our blood memory is now embodied within the geography. Furthermore, we have Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon, who are both considered part of our family unit, and the sacred geography. Our Grandfather Sun provides us with light so that our children can see the beauty of land, and he shares the teachings of the fire that bring us warmth. Our Grandmother Moon stays close to our Mother Earth to watch over the children, allowing our mother to rest while the children sleep at night. The Earth and Moon are tethered together because the Moon can make the tides rise. She is our grandmother, and we show respect to our Elders and honour the gifts of our Grandparents.

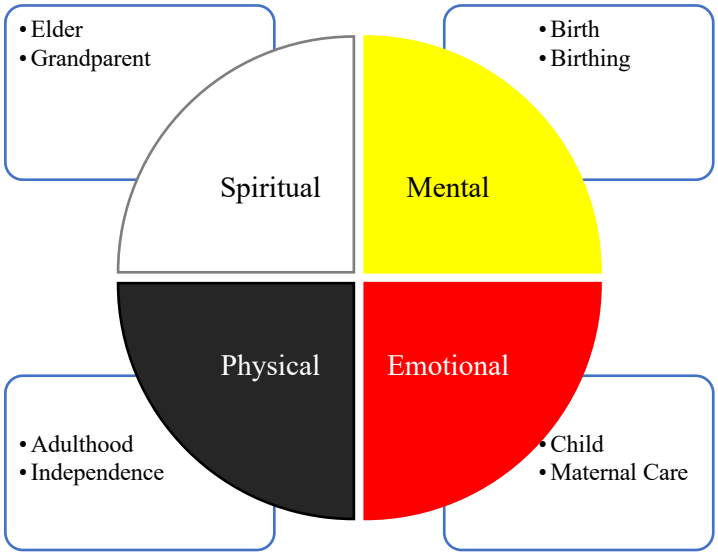
We embody the cosmologies and the geographies every time we engage in ceremony. We look to the natural order of life and mimic that in how we raise our children. We take in our surroundings and create ceremonies and new understandings to live in a good way. Elder Betty McKenna states “I am from Mother Earth. I am her child, the one created from moose meat and blueberries” (McKenna, 2017, p. 117). We honour the natural laws and the gift of life that is all

around us. We honour the role the land plays and created the stories of invaluable teachings to create order in our lives. We are grounded in Mother Earth.

Anishinababek Concepts of Health

This history has had devastating effects on Indigenous Peoples and their health globally. The health and well-being of Anishinaabek has been disrupted, and we are now beginning to reinvigorate our Traditional Ways of Knowing to restore our mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. In Figure 5 - Four-Dimensional Aspects of Anishinaabe Health, aspects of Anishinaabe health are examined and broken down by the Medicine Wheel. In each of these quadrants, I look at the development of the child and at the perspective of the mother and overlap them because they work together to provide a delicate balance.

Figure 4 **Four-Dimensional Aspects of Anishinaabe Health**



Note. Although each of the quadrants happen simultaneously, I divided the four areas of health and assigned it to mother and child development to demonstrate the cycle of life and a mother's

responsibilities. The first bullet point in each square represents the child's life experience, and the bottom bullet represents the mother's journey. We begin our ceremonies in the Eastern direction (yellow sphere) and move clockwise around the Medicine Wheel.

When children are born, they enter through the Eastern doorway. I have placed the mental aspect in the yellow quadrant. It is said that our babies are born intelligent as they have just come from the spiritual realm. They understand many languages and are aware of the conversations we have as adults. When a woman becomes pregnant, she must be cognizant of her thoughts and actions because the baby can feel her energy. When she gives birth, it takes a lot of mental strength to get through the laboring pains and to deliver a healthy baby. Sometimes it can be overwhelming for mothers to endure childbirth.

In the Southern direction (red sphere), I have placed the emotional quadrant because both mother and child learn about each other's feelings. Within the first two years of the child's development, they are exploring the world around them – what makes them happy, angry, scared, shy, surprised, excited, and sad. The mother may experience her child's emotions alongside them, as well as nurturing the validity of their emotions. A mother also deals with her own emotions as she is navigating motherhood, and she may experience things such as 'the baby blues,' to the more severe postpartum depression. In a contemporary context, there are so many more responsibilities for a mother to face compared to the past, as they are trying to raise children to the best of their abilities. Many women try to balance work and childcare, which can feel overwhelming at times, especially if they are living away from their families.

In the black sphere, we review the physical quadrant. As the child grows, their body is maturing and entering adulthood. This is the stage where they could have children of their own, if they choose to do so. They are learning what it is to be an adult and the responsibilities that

this new stage carries. Mothers, on the other hand, are finding their independence and may want to explore physical landscapes (travelling). A mother may find herself in an 'empty nest,' where she has no children within the home to care for anymore. She may be taking time to care for herself at this stage.

The final quadrant is the white sphere, which represents the spiritual stage where the natural progression from adulthood to the elderly/senior stage takes place. It is also at this point that the mother has entered the menopause stage, ending her childbearing days. Both mother and child find themselves in an evolving relationship, especially if that adult may have graduated their mother to Nookimis (grandmother) status. All of this is also described in the Seven Stages of Life.

Conclusion

This chapter is only a small snippet of so many complex teachings. These teachings are widely shared amongst the Anishinaabe community. These stories can vary from Elder to Elder, community to community. Each of the teachings centre back to the children as sacred beings. The Spirits choose to be born into our culture, where they will endure both struggles and triumphs. I have demonstrated that we honour our mother and Mother Earth and how we teach our children to live a good life and how the teachings fall on the mother and community to transmit them to a new generation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this section, I provide the themes and subthemes that have emerged from the literature on Anishinaabe maternal traditional teachings. As I was researching, I saw a pattern of overarching themes emerge: Womanhood, Conception, Pregnancy, Birth, Motherhood - all in connection to Mother Earth. There was an inherent connection to spirituality, like the teachings provided in the previous chapter.

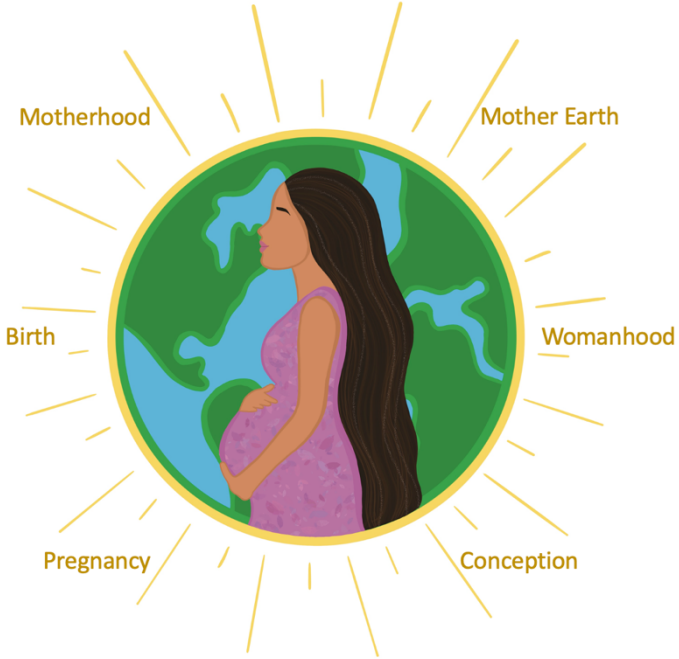
The literature collected will be explored through making meaning through themes, as demonstrated in Figure 5 - Thematic Literature Review. Most of the literature is written by Anishinaabek kweok and other Indigenous women, writing on aspects of pregnancy and maternal care. These authors and organizations have provided the groundwork that illustrates the teachings and knowledge of our culture to guide our children on what it means to be Anishinaabek. I want to note that I do not focus on the colonization of Indigenous women, but that findings of such oppression are shared through the missing and murdered Indigenous women research and the Report of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Colonization has resulted in a high level of trauma among Indigenous peoples. As a result, I discuss the use of trauma-informed practices as part of a contemporary Anishinaabe maternal pedagogy.

Artist Statement - Our Mother

Raven Sutherland states: For this piece, I wanted to capture the strength that Indigenous women possess. Indigenous women are always powerful but when we carry life, it is a different kind of power. The power to give life and to breathe life from past and to future generations. In this picture, you will see a pregnant woman holding her unborn baby merging with the earth and

becoming one. Her hair connects to creation as it always has, an extension of our Spirit from herself to the earth. The sun rays are emerging behind her to show the immersive light and love we hold for ourselves and children during this time.

Figure 5 **Thematic Literature Review**



Note. In this figure, Mother Earth is central and is the anchor to how women use their connection to the land. Beginning with Mother Earth, we move in a clockwise direction that demonstrates how women begin at womanhood and transition into the state of Motherhood.

Mother Earth

We have Mother Earth to teach us how to live, sustain ourselves, create relationships, and be grateful (Johnston, 2010). We care for her as we would for our mother. We tend to her needs as she does to us – the mother and child relationship. The Anishinaabe Creation story is the

foundation for the cosmological connection. Although the story itself may have slight variations, the premise is the same.

Mother Earth was created by Gzhe-Mnidoo; her mother is Nookimis Giizis (Grandmother Moon), and Mishomis Giizis (Grandfather Sun) takes care of her and the living forces on Earth. The Earth is referred to as our mother because she gave birth to everything on Earth and nourishes all life; the Earth exudes female energy as it gives life to everything, from the plants to the water, to the beings that roam the Earth (Benton-Banai, 1988; Cajete, 2000). She provides us with the sustenance, shelter, and everything we need in-between to live Mino-Bimaadiziwin. Anderson (2011) shares these sentiments, as Moshum Danny explains: "Mother Earth taught us and taught the animal world that there are certain seasons that are conducive to healthy offspring" (p. 42). We ensured our lineages would continue by watching how animals lived, took care of their young, and how they gave birth, so that we knew what to do. In the traditional sense, we relied on the Earth's elements to take care of our children. It was easier for mothers to give birth during the spring, just like the animals, because food would be in abundance.

When we read closely Simpson's (2011) *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, we find mothering at the core. Simpson (2011) shares an in-depth analysis of resurgence, heavily reliant on bringing back our traditional way in contemporary means. Indigenous people have had resurgence movements but the biggest is when we continuously have children. Simpson (2011) states:

> Parents are a child's first and often most profound experience with leadership. For the Nishinaabeg, the first relationships a child experiences are critically important because they provide the model for all other relationships (p. 127-128).

The relationships we have with the natural world models our relationship with one another. We should be respecting the Earth because it gives us so much to sustain ourselves. If the Earth is sick, we get sick. We are sick and are unable to foster good relationships and we go into survival mode. When she is healthy, we are healthy. We want to live a balanced life close to Mino-Bimaadiziwin. Simpson reflects on Mother Earth in the context of rebuilding Anishinaabek Nations, and the underlying theme of the teachings shared to the children, her parenting style, and our duty as mothers, is to raise strong Nations. Using the Creation story, the Anishinaabek make sense of their responsibilities and their life's purpose. As Anishinaabek mothers, we are ensuring that the children are maintaining their connection to Mother Earth and staying on the path of Mino-Bimaadiziwin, especially during these contemporary times, by engaging with the land, teachings, and language. Simpson (2011) states, "interpreting Creation stories within a culturally inherent framework provides several insights into Nishinaabeg thought… We begin to teach our children theory immediately, and they begin to teach us theory immediately" (p. 43).

Edna Manitowabi shared her knowledge at the Canadian Indigenous Native Studies Association (2020), hosted by Trent University. She shared teachings on Creation and women as Creators. Manitowabi shared the knowledge as women are the life-givers, and the doorway to the spiritual side. These women are held in high regard because women have sustained and kept our Nations inhabited across Turtle Island for thousands of years. Gunn Allen (1992) also reiterates Edna's point that "to address a person as 'mother' is to pay the highest respect" (p. 16). My community knowledge states that our Mother, our first caretaker of the Earth, taught our Ancestors the Way of Life through observation. They began to understand the aki-kinoomaagewin (land teachings) and generated stories so that the children could form those relationships with the metaphysical world.

Womanhood

There are many teachings that Gunn Allen (1992) focuses on that are related to a woman-centred tribal life. She discusses empowering and restoring women's leadership because it ensures the success of the Nation. Gunn Allen's early work identifies the challenges of the patriarchal and colonialist dominance that created Indigenous women's dichotomies. In both past and present accounts, she captures how women share stories that become the collective narratives: "to share our discoveries, uncoveries, recoveries, the hair-raising adventures of childrearing, career building, and super-womanhood" (Gunn Allen, 1992, p. xv). Her primary focus is the reconstruction of Indigenous womanhood.

Maria Campbell (1973) has written about the impacts of racism that Indigenous women experience. Although Campbell discusses her experiences from a mixed-race perspective, many Indigenous women deal with the politicization of their identities because of the Indian Act, which can cloud an Indigenous woman's role. Since the gradual destruction of the Traditional Ways of Life, women have had their identities attacked and dismantled. Campbell shares how many Indigenous people leave the security of their homes in search of better economic and educational opportunities, and experience racism. She also provides the realistic challenges and tensions that Indigenous women face in their communities and states "Lethbridge, like towns everywhere else with a large Native population, is really racist, and although it accepts Native money, it in no way accepts Native people" (p. 186). Despite the racism, within communities, the families worked together to support their cultural knowledges. Campbell (1973) shares: "Moshom would spoil me, while kokum taught me to bead, to tan hides and in general to be a good Indian woman" (p. 26), signifying that Elders passed down traditions to their grandchildren. Even as Campbell shares the tensions that Indigenous people face in Canada, it

validates the struggles that we are systemically oppressed. However, despite this we also celebrate the strengths and the beauty of our communities.

Anderson (2000) explains that “Native womanhood is not simply playing certain roles, or adopting present identity; rather, it is an ongoing exercise that involves mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional elements of our being” (p. xxv). Anderson’s themes throughout her book are Indigenous resistance, reclamation, and reconstructing traditions. She discusses her book as an entry point to assist in restoring balance in our homes, “it is about creating a vision of a society where every member has a place, a sense of value, a gift to bring. It is about recreating the circle in a way that suits our modern lives.” (2000, p. xxiii). One of the critical areas of focus is restoring Indigenous womanhood, as it will nourish our communities' overall well-being and shift the emphasis to resurgence as the continued act of defiance.

The community informally raises children to ensure Anishinaabe kwesenhs (girls) start early on their mothering nature. For example, female children follow their mothers and listen, observe, and learn. These young girls would learn valuable tasks and understand their role as a woman and their place within the community by paying close attention to how their mothers conduct themselves throughout their day-to-day life. Moreover, daughters were taught early lessons of economics through beadwork where they would learn to take care of the household through her hardwork which would often translate to the “accomplishments of the feminine life” (Densmore, 1979, p. 62). Further, young girls were sought after because of their abilities to take care of a home, such as cooking, gathering, stitching clothing (Densmore, 1979; Child, 2012), all of which they learned from the other women in their communities If young women could not perform primary duties and would rather gossip with the ladies in the community, they would have a reputation of laziness (Johnston, 1976).

Birth Control

It is important to note that our Ancestors were aware of birth control (Anderson, 2000; Child, 2012). Children were always welcome, but there were never stigmas around the concepts of unwanted pregnancies, single mothers, and pregnancies before marriage. The woman could bring life into the world, and each child was considered a gift by the Creator to the family. However, if a woman did not want to have children, there were ways for her to deal with this, such as consuming tea or having a ceremony to keep the Spirits away (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). Women had the autonomy to make their own choices. They had sexual freedom to engage or disengage with motherhood.

Pregnancy

During pregnancy, women are straddling two realms and are considered sacred as they are the spiritual doorway to bringing a Spirit into the physical realm (Johnston, 1976; Anderson, 2000; Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). Within their community, "pregnant women were considered medicinal women because of the new life they carried and were honoured as a bridge between the spiritual life and life on earth" (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2012, p. 6). During pregnancy, our children learn to listen when they are in the womb as they develop a sense of their environment (Horton, 2019). Developing babies will listen to the sound of their mother's heartbeat, the tone of the voices around her, and the noises made outside the womb. The baby's first sound is their mother's heartbeat. Simpson (2006) states, "our culture is a 'listening culture,'" (p. 31), and at the beginning stages of the pregnancy, the baby is listening to the natural world around them. Fathers or families need to drum, so babies can get to know their clans from the beginning. The heartbeat and our drumming are interconnected, and as a result,

we are reminded of our connection to Mother Earth. The sounds our babies hear within the womb are essential to our Anishinaabe culture. We should carry those teachings and gift them to our babies, so they have a solid Anishinaabe identity.

When a woman becomes pregnant, her duties change to relieve stress and strenuous activities (Densmore, 1979). Tabobodung (2008) adds that although women's duties are modified so she is still active which is to ensure that women do not have a long, tiring birthing experience, and this includes being mindful of their diet. Anderson (2000) and Johnston (1976) note that pregnant woman would work closely with her partner, family, and community. The community would assist in bringing food to the expectant mother so she could rest, and if she had a partner, he was pregnant with her, and he too must relax. (Anderson, 2000). The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2012) note that women tend to eat healthy and rise early to prepare for their newborn, and that the engage in moderate physical work. Tabobodung (2008) states that once a woman became pregnant, her role was renewed within the community because she would be examining issues or situations through a different set of lenses that could impact her future child. The community responded in a reciprocal nature and took care of the woman because she would be bringing another family member into their community.

Placenta

The placenta develops within the early stage of pregnancy, and "will supply everything a baby needs to grow. It serves as a connection to our mother… a baby is attached to the placenta by the umbilical cord." (Peacock & Wisuri, 2006, pp. 26-27). The placenta is like a pillow where babies receive their nutrients. It also filters the toxins away from the baby and is essential to their development.

There is a ceremony to honour this other Tree of Life (Gonzales, 2012). The placenta has become part of the baby's protection and part of the sacred transmission for a vital life. The symbolism of the baby's placenta represents the wholeness, reciprocity, and vulnerability of life. It is handled with great care because "the placenta was often referred to by knowledge contributors as 'sacred.' It was wrapped in birch bark or cloth, carefully handled, and subsequently taken out into the forest and buried or hung in a tree" (O'Driscoll, et al., 2011, p. 27).

Many parts of pregnancy are essential to having a healthy baby, but the placenta is beneficial because it provides the baby with enough nutrients. After birth, there is a placenta burial for two reasons: the first is to honour its duty to sustain life within the womb, and the second is that it grounds the child within their territory, so their Spirit knows where their Ancestors reside (Simpson, 2006). Anderson (2011) discusses the healing power the placenta possesses and recommends that parents should care for it. It was not something you left lying around; it was sometimes burned or put out by a tree or near water to ensure it was properly disposed of and that its nutrients were returned to the Earth.

When I began to do my research on pregnancy, placenta, and the umbilical cord, I consulted many language speakers, but they could not provide me the words for these items in Anishinaabemowin. The reason is that they are not used regularly in conversation. The language speakers I consulted had great difficulty trying to piece the forgotten words together, which demonstrates why it is crucial to incorporate Anishinaabemowin in maternal pedagogies and resist assimilation and the elimination of our languages.

Water

Anishinaabek understand that water is life. Many traditional societies have built communities along rivers and bays to access the water. Anishinaabek know water is a force you need to respect because it can nourish you, it is used for teas to heal you, but it can also take your life through drownings or droughts. With women having the ability to make life, having their menstrual cycles, and maintaining a special connection to the Nookmis Giizis (moon), they are "said to be the guardians of the waters and the spirits of the water" (Richmon-Saravia, 2011). Also, Anishinaabe women understand that Nookimis Giizis is influential on the waters of Earth. She can sway both men and women as we are composed of water. The amniotic fluid that surrounds the baby for nine months protects them. It is vital because it sustains the baby while they grow in the womb. This is why it is the women's responsibility as water carriers. They are governed by the Nookmis Giizis and they carry their binoojiihnsag (babies) within water.

Birth

A new ceremony begins when a mother is about to give birth as the woman is opening the spiritual and physical realms. Before hospitals existed, women gave birth at home or in our Nations' lodges. When a woman's water breaks, she is given tea to assist with the contractions (Gonzales, 2012). Women would retreat with their trusted support to aid in the delivery. The husbands were often not present for the birth experience (Gonzales, 2012; Peacock & Wisuri, 2006).

Midwives

The role of midwives was critical to pregnant women. They would guide them on the ‘do’s and don'ts’ during pregnancy. The involvement of a midwife ensured a healthy pregnancy and diet for both mother and child (Tabobodung, 2008). O’Drischoll et al. (2011) state that “traditionally a midwife and one or two helpers attended a labouring woman and prepared a bed of boughs or moss as a temporary delivery bed. The mother would deliver where she was living: in a bush camp, a teepee, or a house” (p. 26). A birth meant a ceremony was about to take place, aiding the Spirit through the physical doorway, so it was important to have knowledgeable assistance for the mother. Cedar medicines was used to assist with delivering and protecting the mother and child (Gonzales, 2012; Peacock & Wisuri, 2006). When it came time to push, sweetgrass was used to bite down. Her trusted team supported her in bringing life into this world. The imprint of the energy given is “a ‘blood memory’ of birth in her remembered womb” (Gonzales, 2012, p. xxv). Both mother and child will remember the birth in some way, and birthing experiences can vary, including being a traumatic experience on both the mother’s body and the baby.

Complications

Birthing a child is a blessing. Complications can, of course, arise as documented in stories such as that of Nanaboozhoo's birth and how his mother died shortly after childbirth. There are many variations of this story. To briefly give context, the story is about two women living together, mother and daughter, and the daughter wakes up pregnant. The mother who is now a grandmother guides her throughout the pregnancy by teaching her about the life growing

within. Tensions arise, such as the children fight amongst one another and though each story will have a different connotation, the mother always dies shortly after childbirth.

In Johnston-baa's (1976) version, Winonah married Epimgishmook and they had four children together. The youngest was Nanabush, and Winonah died sometime after his birth. Her name means "to nourish from the breast" (p. 151). Nanabush was raised by his grandmother and assisted with bringing many teachings to the Anishinaabek (Johnston-baa, 1976). In McLellan's (2016) version, Nokomis came to Earth and had a daughter named Winona, who gave birth to twin boys; only one survived the childbirth. Nokomis forgot about the young baby while she grieved for her daughter. When she went back for her grandbaby, he was gone. This baby was Nanaboozhoo. It turns out that the baby was spiritually gifted, and that he had transformed into a rabbit. Nokomis took on the role of teaching him the ways of life. Child (2012) adds that Nokomis should have cared for Nanaboozhoo too because his life was also meaningful. This story is a reminder that prior to Western science, mother and infant could die or become ill rather quickly, so skilled midwives were essential to the communities to mediate the risks of complications arising. This story serves as a reminder that the child and mother are in a spiritual place and every precaution needs to be taken.

There are medical risks for some mothers, and not all can engage in cultural practices, and do require Western medical care. In addition, some Indigenous mothers may be dealing with a variety of factors during pregnancy, including having no support, not having the appropriate education, abusive relationships, not understanding limitations, not resting, stress, etc. Some of these factors can contribute to child loss. Many authors do not focus on this aspect as it could be challenging to discuss the loss of a child during childbirth or a child's death within the first year. The Native Women's Association of Canada (2007) shares,

> Continuing reproductive health throughout a woman's life is an especially serious issue for Aboriginal women because of our higher birth rate (1.5 times higher) than non-Aboriginal Canadian women. We presently also experience higher rates (2 to 2.5 times higher) of prenatal, stillbirth and newborn death than that of the Canadian Average (pp. 1-2).

These are still meaningful conversations to have as many new mothers may not know how to take care of themselves during pregnancies, leading to miscarriages or stillbirths. Pregnancy education and cultural understanding of pregnancy are critical to ensure the safety of mother and child.

Influences of Western Medicines

The medicalization of pregnancy and childbirth, adopted as an overriding approach, pushed Anishinaabe maternal practices away. Western medicines and methods, however, have saved both the mother and child's life and are not fully rejected by Anishinaabe women. Gonzales (2012) explains that: "Western medicine provides important technologies and knowledge when birth complications arise" (p. 5). Not all women can give birth naturally or with the assistance of an epidural and may require either an emergency or scheduled caesarian delivery. Health care professionals also have access to delivery methods to assist the baby with forceps and a vacuum - I know this from my personal experience. The Native Women's Association of Canada (2007) noted the outside factors that may impact our health, which includes the colonization of our traditional diets that has led to gestational diabetes. One of the critical discoveries for Anishinaabe people from Western science is that medical practitioners

can now detect gestational diabetes through early screening and prescribe prenatal vitamins, thereby improving the health of the mother and child and the chances of a successful birth.

When I discuss my own birthing story with other mothers who gave birth during the 1970s-1990s, they share their ideologies of having hospitals as legitimate places to deliver a child. This is where I discovered there were three prongs to the medicalization of traditional maternal care services. The first was to advance hospitals as the "modernist institution of knowledge" (Olson, 2017, p. 94), which was a way to surveil Indigenous women (Shahram, 2017, p. 13) and eliminate midwives. While Western science and methods have certainly saved many Indigenous lives, there has been forced manipulation that these concepts and perceptions are the only proper way. Assimilation is at work because we are no longer nourishing the relationships between mother and child with our cultural knowledge. Simpson (2006) suggests that "we must also undergo a re-traditionalization of thinking and living based on our individual Indigenous cultural and intellectual traditions" (p. 25). Simpson (2006) also reveals that she did this by having a traditional birth, aligning as closely as she could through interpreting the teachings that apply to our modern lives. She states that "calculated colonialism changed birthing" (Simpson, 2006, p. 28). What she is suggesting is that we replaced traditional care of our children by going to hospitals, using sterilized equipment, and subscribing to a method of detached parenting.

The second reason identified was to have Indigenous women delivering children in hospitals so they could be monitored by non-Indigenous people to see if they were fit to be parents (Shahram, 2017). Because of colonization, Indigenous women were viewed as unfit mothers, and often the state would intervene and remove Indigenous children from their families

and communities. The Sixties Scoop[5] was part of this type of surveillance. Child welfare authorities would be sent to pick up children in hospitals without the parent's consent. Mothers were torn from their babies at birth because they were deemed unfit and needed intervention (Shahram, 2017). By removing children, an action that was sanctioned by the Indian Act, this created trauma within Indigenous communities.

The third prong was the devaluing of traditional birthing techniques and midwifery to encourage birthing in hospitals. Midwifery is a non-Indigenous term which is used to describe women who are specialized in birthing techniques. The National Aboriginal Health Organization (2008) state that "the traditional art of midwifery was learned from mother and grandmother. Today modern medicine and doctors have taken over" (p. 12). Historically, it was women who ensured that the mother was safe, nurtured, and cared for while her baby entered this world. Over time, midwives were pushed out by the indoctrination of Western medical practices, many of which excluded women. Sharp (1995) explains that, "among the major effects of the acquisition of parturition by Western medicine was the loss of influence of the midwife and the hospitalization of the expectant mother" (p. 63). With the creation of hospitals, the policies in place systematically encouraged Indigenous people to abandon their traditional birthing practices (Tabobondung, 2017). This was a success for colonialism. This robbed mothers of having a child within the comfort of their own home and of the ability to engage in traditional practices. Indigenous women were no longer seeking out midwifery care. With that said, "colonialism hijacked our pregnancies and births, it also stole our power and our sovereignty as Indigenous women" (Simpson, 2011, p. 28).

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5 The removal of children by child welfare authorities beginning in the 1950s and onwards. The children were placed with non-Indigenous families where they lost their identity, language, and culture.

We are at a pivotal time where women have access to the internet to learn about cultural teachings and can take online workshops to learn them as well. We can have midwives and doctors for collaborative care, which means utilizing both western and traditional practices for the best outcome for mother and child. Simpson (2006) discusses the importance of having midwives during her birth and how it is a decolonized approach to childbirth:

> If more of our babies were born into the hands of midwives using Indigenous birthing Knowledge, on our own land, surrounded by our support systems, and following our traditions and traditional teachings, more of our women would be empowered by the birth process and better able to assume their responsibilities (p. 29).

The critical piece for collaborative care is to use Traditional Knowledge to address the needs of high-risk Anishinaabe mothers or high-risk births. Although colonization, oppression, and marginalization contribute to Indigenous mothers' health, the irony is that these imposed Western views employ modern medical practices to assist in delivering our babies and can still empower Anishinaabe mothers.

Reports

With settler disruption and colonization of the lands and Indigenous Peoples, reports were created, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), to analyze and propose solutions to the issues Indigenous Peoples face. This report specifically was the reaction to a series of tensions erupting between Indigenous Nations and Canadian settler society. This report outlined the challenges that Indigenous Peoples face within Canada and contained recommendations to mitigate these ongoing issues.

In “Volume 3, Gathering Strength: Health and Healing,” the RCAP outlines the government-sanctioned disruption to Indigenous families. This report examined three critical areas within infant and child health: “abnormal birth weight, the use of alcohol during pregnancy, and childbirth practices and policies” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, 1996, p. 118). However, closer examination of the report provided the reality of many challenges that confront Indigenous Peoples, such as lack of transportation to medical appointments, lack of affordable housing, lack of nutritional foods, loss of identity, low self-esteem, and lack of medical coverage. There is also the issue that many First Nations are not situated near a hospital and may require taking long car rides or even plane rides to deliver babies. Indigenous mothers living in urban settings or having to travel outside their communities for childbirth also face the fact that “traditional rituals to name and welcome the child are delayed or abandoned” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 124).

The RCAP (1996) also states,

> the wholesale replacement of traditional health and healing systems with Western systems has had negative and positive results. In the case of childbirth, many Aboriginal women (in the south as well as in the north) are arguing for a combination of traditional and modern practices (p. 126).

Some programs have begun to exist to educate Indigenous mothers who choose to reside in urban areas. There are programs within Friendship Centres, such as the Prenatal and the Family Support Programs, that have recognized the need for Indigenous mothers to have culturally relevant programs to support themselves and their babies (Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre, 2020). Since this report, there has been an increase in education on Indigenous parenting. Many new programs are geared to assist Indigenous mothers and fathers with more educational

resources to prevent or minimize the use of alcohol and drugs while pregnant. There are also Indigenous-led programs and services to help Indigenous mothers in each region located within Ontario. These requests, for Indigenous families to have autonomy on how they would like to select services, stemmed from this report. Some areas have been reformed, such as allowing fathers within the birthing room and the utilization of midwives, but overall, the report is still relevant as some of the issues it outlines are still prevalent within Anishinaabe communities.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report (2015) documented the Residential School legacy and the negative impacts on the social, health, and cultural spheres that continue to affect Indigenous communities. Many of these schools subjected Indigenous children to a variety of abuses in varying degrees that have had long-lasting intergenerational effects. This report had 94 Calls to Action to help rebuild the relationships between Indigenous communities and Canadian society. Again, this report reiterates the RCAP findings almost ten years later, requesting that the government allow Indigenous Peoples to choose how they want to access services and to give validation to Traditional Ways of Life:

> Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #22: We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders were requested by Aboriginal patients (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 3).

There is still a need to incorporate Indigenous health and well-being protocols into the Western biomedical model. For example, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) documents the violence encountered by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and the ongoing violent behaviours directed at these individuals, which

has had devastating impacts on their communities. The 231 Calls to Justice in the final MMIWG report were aimed at governments, institutions, and services to address these issues. Four years after the TRC and 23 years after RCAP, this Inquiry looked at the health institutions, requesting:

> 7.1: We call upon all governments and health service providers to recognize that Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, including 2SLGBTQQIA people – are the experts in caring for and healing themselves and that health and wellness services are most effective when they are designed and delivered by the Indigenous Peoples they are supposed to serve, in a manner consistent with and grounded in the practices, world views, cultures, languages, and values of the diverse Inuit, Métis, and First Nations communities they serve (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019, p. 17).

These inquiries all highlight the need for health care services and providers to ensure Indigenous clients have informed choices and freedom to choose how they would like to access their health care, and, more importantly, without judgement from those service providers. Many Indigenous health centres advocated for the implementation of the Indigenous Midwifery Summit Report (2019) to bring back our more natural and gentler practices throughout Ontario. The main goals of this report were to revitalize and sustain Indigenous midwifery and enact this through the TRC. The summit's purpose was to support and expand Indigenous midwifery practices into the home, giving Indigenous mothers a holistic service. One of the core recommendations of the Midwifery Summit Report is reducing barriers and better supporting our Indigenous mothers in their communities.

Trauma-Informed Approach

This section explains how colonial trauma, historical trauma, intergenerational trauma, and institutional trauma have impacted a mother's ability to parent, and how mothers can be aware of the types of traumas that exist. When examining the influences of Western health practices and the RCAP, TRC, and MMIWG reports, systemic racism exists, and Indigenous Peoples are aware of it. Indigenous patients regularly have negative interactions with the health care system, which has come to include birthing services, which lead to an apprehension of accessing health care services (Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006; Shahram, 2017). Indigenous women are often subjected to violence, abuse, or psychological stress, which can stem from intergenerational trauma. Most of these issues arise from historical complexities. It has become apparent that there are a variety of traumas that permeate our Indigenous communities. They are similar but have different effects on each generation.

Colonial Trauma

Since the initial arrival of European settlers on Turtle Island, different and competing European colonies have arrived in droves. These settlers brought their ideologies, diseases, and technologies, while claiming ownership over land and resources, with a complete disregard to the Indigenous Nations that have lived here for thousands of years. As settlers were claiming land, they encroached on Indigenous territories, which created tensions and confrontations between the Indigenous populations and the settlers. Many wars led to many deaths, but settlers also brought new pathogens, viruses, and diseases that Indigenous Peoples had no immunity to.

As the settlements were becoming more permanent, there became a desire to 'solve' the 'Indian problem.' As a result, there was a rise in aggressive acts to eliminate or assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the Western fabric of colonization. Colonial trauma stemmed from the disruption of Indigenous Peoples lives where policies and laws were put in place, creating a domino effect. Aguiar & Halseth (2015) state that Indigenous Peoples "who have been subjected to generations of abuses through colonialism and who continue to live with conditions of disadvantage resulting from these colonial policies, would certainly fit these criteria of coercive control" (p.8). As we moved through the centuries, some policies were amended, but the damage had already been done. The many types of abuses that Indigenous Peoples experienced created distrust between the Nations and settlers. Indigenous Peoples have been in survival mode ever since settler arrival, and this has created the 'Colonial Trauma response' which "is the interaction of the historical trauma and current contemporary issues that perpetuate colonialism, racism, discrimination, and other injustices that are experienced by Indigenous Peoples throughout the generations" (Aguiar & Halseth, 2015, p. 9). To this day, Indigenous Nations and communities are trying to repair their communities and relationships with one another.

Historical Trauma

Historical trauma is "described as being more complex in its antecedents, evolution, and outcomes" (Aguiar & Halseth, 2015, p. 9). There have been significant traumas that have impacted Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island, such as the Trail of Tears, Residential Schools, banning ceremonial practices, being forced onto reserves, the Louis Riel Rebellion, Inuit Relocation, Trading Posts, the Sixties Scoop, and the continuous missing and murdered Indigenous women and men. With various Indigenous Nations coerced into various negative

situations, it is evident that historic trauma lives in our blood and reminds us that we are constantly subjected to some form of injustice:

> HT [Historic Trauma] is described as a collective phenomenon rather than an individual one, in that trauma is shared by members of an identifiable group who have experienced it over the generations; it thus incorporates the psychological and social aspects of historical oppression rather than just the psychological and biological aspects (Aguiar & Halseth, 2015, p. 9).

Although each Indigenous Nation has experienced different colonial policies, collectively, we understand and empathize with the pain and suffering each Nation has had to endure for survival.

Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma stems from the mistreatment of Indigenous Peoples and impacts the way we connect. Indigenous Peoples have taken this trauma and passed it down from one generation to the next, and the cycle continues until individuals are able to heal from it. There can be various traumas involved, such as sexual, drug, alcohol, physical, emotional, and mental abuse - all of these can occur simultaneously or gradually over a person's life. It only takes one member of the family to break that cycle to start repairing the historical wrong doings that have occurred in their family. Shahram (2017) explains that:

> Indigenous mothers and their children often represent the literal site of intergenerational trauma. Recurrent recollections of trauma experienced by individuals have entered into social narratives of Indigenous peoples and have manifested in the breakdown of families and relationships, leaving children often psychologically damaged (p. 25).

As these children become adults, they carry heavy burdens and try to cope with the damages created by colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. Many adults find it weak to get help and see a psychologist to address the childhood traumas. Often these cycles are perpetuated and can lead to risky lifestyles.

Institutional Trauma

There are a variety of terms that encompass institutional trauma. However, when looking at it through an Indigenous/Anishinaabe lens, Thompson's (2021) definition is:

> In order to account for the profound and formative entanglement of institutions and trauma, we must understand institutions not only as environments and settings, but also as situated knowledges, histories, ideologies, practices, structures, and *methods* of power. While much attention has been focused on developing scientific methods to study the characteristics of "institutions," very little has been spent on account for *institutions as methods* for the (re)production of trauma (pp. 112-113).

This term is not new. Indigenous Peoples have been subjected to institutional trauma and its structural violence dating back to the introduction of churches, residential schools, houses, and other buildings. As settlers began taking over the land and encroaching on the Anishinaabek territories, they brought with them their ideologies and concepts. They also introduced rigid structures onto the land. For example, the log house was a structural disruption because it introduced four walls, doors, and glass windows; this disrupted traditional homes such as wigwaams, longhouses, igloos, etc. These new structures (houses) generated violence and division in the homes. The institutional trauma continues to occur today because of legislation of the Indian Act that limits what we can do as Anishinaabek. The Indian Act has disrupted our

traditional lifestyles do not align with our ways of doing. We have policies that do not support our practices, and they do not support our knowledge system.

The impacts of these traumas influence family dynamics, especially when it comes to mother and child. A mother may cope by using drugs, alcohol or turn to abusive relationships, leaving her unable to adequately support her child. Moreover, a mother could carry the effects of intergenerational trauma or historical trauma, for example, and pass it down to her child, perpetuating the trauma cycles within our communities. Therefore, providing mothers the support they need to break these types of cycles is important - mothers alone have the power to create a new generation of Anishinaabe children who are free from cyclical traumas. Weechi it te win Family Services (2000) have stated:

> After so many years we have a nation of people that need to relearn the way of life they were intended to live. We need to prove to the Government that currently controls our people, that we can take control and that we have been given a way to properly raise our children (p. 3)

Once we can regain control of our children, and our sovereignty, we can break away from the government-imposed traumas that cycle between the generations.

Impacts on Anishinaabek Health

When settler societies started to encroach on our traditional territories, a gradual rift began in the teachings of pregnant women, birthing practices, and maternal care. Women's Traditional Knowledge on pregnancy and the birthing process has been pushed aside, creating barriers to a once prestigious traditional gift. Indigenous life became about survival as Indigenous Peoples were assaulted with genocidal tactics from various wars including

biochemical, physical, biological, and cultural genocides that occurred in tandem (Diamond, 1997; The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). Biochemical warfare includes smallpox, influenza, malaria, yellow fever, tuberculosis, and even diabetes, where Indigenous Peoples had no way to combat these deadly diseases until the introduction of modern medicines (Diamond, 1997; Waldram, Herring, & Young, 2006).

The physical genocide includes wars that ensued from the forced removal off traditional lands, starvation, rationing of food, and experimenting on children within institutions. The biological genocide includes, but is not limited to, Indigenous women being strategically targeted to wipe out the Nations through Legislative Acts, like introducing the reserve system that allocates minimal land to Indigenous Peoples; the Indian Act, which introduced a policy that targeted First Nation women who married non-Indigenous men so that they would lose their Native status and be removed from their respective Nations; thinning out blood lines to dispossess families of their territories; sterilizing unsuspecting Indigenous women; and the removal of children by child protection agencies when parents were seen as unfit. To this day, Indigenous women are degraded by the majority of Canadian society and are more likely to go missing and/or murdered (The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019).

The cultural genocide speaks to the denial of being able to live off the land, preventing and outlawing Indigenous Peoples from engaging in ceremony, and destroying cultural tools such as drums, shakers, pipes, etc. These acts were intended to wipe out millions of Indigenous Peoples that resided on Turtle Island (North America). The effects from this cultural genocide are still rippling through our current society; we have been disconnected from our Ancestral teachings about the traditional care of our bodies and of our children because of the colonial

discourse that has destroyed our Indigenous Way of Life. These discourses have influenced Indigenous women who came to believe that Western child-rearing standards of care were to be emulated and that those of their Ancestors were to be discarded.

Motherhood

The earliest recordings of Anishinaabe motherhood and traditional practices were from Frances Densmore, an anthropologist who wanted to document and preserve Indigenous cultures (1929). Although Densmore is not Indigenous herself, she captured some critical information on how the Chippewa cared for their babies, how naming ceremonies were conducted, and how children were raised with the seasons (pp. 48-66). This anthropological beautifully captured what still goes on within some of our communities.

Lavell-Harvard and Lavell (2006) recognized the need to have literature on Indigenous motherhood, sharing the collective knowledge on what Aboriginal mothering is, from conception to labour, to the politicization of Indigenous mothers and their children. The authors contributed to the traditional care of raising children and the fight women have had to endure since the beginning of colonization. In Lavell-Harvard and Lavell (2006), Bédard shares the Anishinaabe-kwe ideology on mothering and motherhood and celebrates it because it is a gift. She discusses that mothering and motherhood includes grandmothers, aunties, and sisters, and that these women help foster our identities as Anishinaabek (p. 68). These teachings begin when we are babies. The central ideology in raising a Nation is collective: “we also have been given the responsibility of teaching, nurturing, and leading these children in a ‘good way’” (Bedard, 2006, p. 72), because Anishinaabek children are gifts from the Creator. It is our jobs as mothers to

understand our role in guiding the children, but it is also the community's responsibility to assist with helping mothers and take part in raising the children.

Bédard emphasizes that women ensure our survival into the next century by carrying our Anishinaabek legacy. Simpson (2006) shares her perspective on Anishinaabe motherhood. She states: "we must be prepared to liberate ourselves from the ideological constraints of the colonial mentality that plagues present day Indigenous political and governing structures and Indigenous thought" (Simpson, 2006, p. 25). Simpson further elaborates that we must return to our teachings and apply them in a contemporary context because of resistance to colonization and the resurgence of our Indigenous pedagogies.

In 2017, The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives released three booklets on the *Stories and Teachings About Pregnancy, Birth, and Infant Care.* These are excellent Indigenous resources that many Nations can utilize. They discuss delivery and traditional childcare in a universal manner. However, they assume the mother and child do not have any underlying health issues. These booklets also discuss the benefits of breastfeeding, but do not elaborate on breastfeeding challenges such as children with cleft lips, those who are born tongue-tied, or mothers who experience latching issues. Another issue is that some mothers have difficulty producing milk, and these resources do not address this. These reading materials are therefore only for ideal situations. They could, as a result, leave mothers feeling defeated because they want to breastfeed but cannot because of issues outside their control.

We should try to understand the challenges and pressures mothers face when trying to follow Traditional Maternal Teachings. In 2019, the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives released the *Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: Framework of Competencies (2019),* an overview of the comprehensive list to assist Indigenous mothers when requiring prenatal and

antenatal care. This list includes information for mothers who cannot obtain a midwife in their area, and how they might inquire about whether doctors or hospitals are willing to provide culturally safe care. Similarly, I aim to do this for Anishinaabe mothers as well - to offer teachings that they can engage with if a midwife is not available to them. A readily available list can reduce anxiety and overwhelming feelings and help manage their expectations of motherhood.

Literature Summary

In the literature, I found prominent information on how mothers engaged with introducing our culture, knowledge, and language. Most of the literature discussed Indigenous maternal knowledges but it was hard to find information on just Anishinaabe motherhood, and I therefore had to piece it together from oral teachings I received. The early 2000s was where I was able to locate more contemporary and practiced traditions. This information was like digging up the trail of Traditional Knowledge that our Ancestors buried – they knew we would crave this knowledge eventually, and would begin our journeys to unearth these cultural practices.

There was not a lot of available research for me to lean on because Indigenous peoples have not been researched in a good way. There have been more Indigenous researchers that are taking back the research practices and sharing the knowledge in a good way. The disruption of passing down our teachings due to colonization and there are no western documents that survived. So the literature relied on early anthropologists and actual literature does not exist for Anishinaabek. Instead, we pass our knowledge down through oral narratives.

The tenets of motherhood across the Nations are very similar despite our Nations' differences in culture and language. The literature on Haudenosaunee People is substantial in the

cultural knowledge of birthing practices because they are the matrilineal ties to their lands, language, and traditions, but I did not want to blend the two knowledge systems.

One of the weaknesses in the literature is that it does not address what women do if they have a high-risk pregnancy and birth. When we discuss traditional birthing practices, this is to empower pregnant women to feel confident in choosing the supportive birthing techniques that our Ancestors once used, but how do high-risk pregnant women engage in cultural practices?

I want to share Anishinaabe knowledge for mothers who may want to engage in the traditional teachings. I want to be part of the medium giving voice to our traditions as this is how we attain strong Nations. There is still much to be researched. Many of the authors in my research discussed colonization and oppression; then, they shared why the teachings need to be revitalized, but did not outline how to do that. These authors also discuss child-rearing based on historical accounts, and each author presents a different story and experience. We have adapted ceremonies and teachings based on what resources are readily available in our areas. The literature demonstrates that there is a strong need to continue these practices within our communities, especially those stories situated in urban areas. Ultimately, we need a “how-to” of knowledge to ensure our survival in the modern context.

Chapter 3: Anishinaabe Research Methodology

My research is a qualitative study involving conversations with mothers and traditional Knowledge Holders about the challenges, tensions, and successes of adopting traditional Indigenous maternal knowledge. I used an Anishinaabe Research Methodology, grounded in Anishinaabe Traditional Knowledge and Ways of Knowing. It allowed me to navigate between the ethics of University research and the ethics of Indigenous, specifically Anishinaabe, research. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is specific to my Nation and the way we view life, and is focused on listening, observing, and having informative visits. I did not want to engage with pan-Indigenous methodologies, but instead focused on what was familiar to me. I engage this research as an insider-outsider (in-betweener) researcher: I am an insider because I am an Anishinaabe gaashi (mother), and an outsider because I have resided in the city for years. I am in-betweener because I use my western education to build a bridge to navigate the two realities.

Anishinaabe Research Methodology

There are many Indigenous research methodologies out there that are Nation specific. I have chosen one of many Anishinaabe Research Methodologies. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is centered around relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and the reclamation of

our knowledges in our communities. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is similar to Grounded Theory. It is important to note that with Grounded Theory, "theory is not discovered; rather, theory is constructed by the researcher who views the world through their own particular lens" (Tie, Birks, & Francis, 2019, p. 3). Though both approaches work well, I privileged Anishinaabe knowledge sharing methods to make meaning from my lens over Grounded Theory because we collect, analyze, and share data in a different capacity that is not incongruent with how we share our knowledge (Wabie, 2017). The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is fundamental to harnessing the knowledge and validating it within the Anishinaabe community so we can reclaim the principles of our Traditional Ways of Knowing within an academic discourse. It affirms that "Indigenous Peoples engage oral traditions, historical/Ancestral knowledges, and cultural resources to examine current events and Indigenous understandings in ways consistent with traditional worldviews and cosmologies" (Iseke, 2013). By focusing on relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and reclamation I am conducting research in accordance to the Seven Grandparent Teachings.

The conducting, gathering, and sharing of my research is to assist mothers and our future generations to Mino-Bimaadiziwin. Over the years, I had conversations with other Indigenous mothers who shared their birthing stories that were similar to my own. When reflecting on stories shared from families, friends, and colleagues, I began to wonder if we are embracing our Traditional Teachings, and, if not, why? If we are engaging with the teachings, what exactly were the mothers doing to raise culturally grounded children? Having an idea of what stories exist in our communities, I decided to use the Anishinaabe Research Methodology because it would allow me to address the issues and challenges that Anishinaabek may have. In addition, I wanted to understand what teachings were utilized at the time of birth. This research is not meant

to shame mothers; rather I want to understand the dualities of birthing stories and experiences to grasp what the reality is like for Anishinaabe mothers living in a colonized world.

The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is about creating relationships, reciprocity, and responsibility. Wilson (2001) discusses relational accountability: “your methodology has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship?” (p. 177). The Anishinaabe Research Methodology is central to relationships and the reclamation of our knowledge in our communities. This includes the inanimate: the spiritual understanding that something bigger than us is happening, and that the Spirits will be watching over us. Linda Smith (1999) also reaffirms the importance of this methodology by stating: “it frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed, and shapes the analyses. Within an Indigenous framework, methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of Indigenous research” (p. 143).

I have consulted with my thesis committee and ensured the research process is conducted in a good (ethical) way that can assist future mothers and future generations. It is paramount to center this research from an Anishinaabe point of view to facilitate an ongoing process of decolonization and resurge our Traditional Teachings as we work towards rediscovery and recovery. As part of my methodology, I have listened to the knowledge contributors’ stories as we navigate the tensions, challenges, and successes of Anishinaabe motherhood together. These visits were loaded with rich information; I journaled after my visits to reflect on each story shared. Applying the Anishinaabe Research Methodology was natural for me because my knowledge is rooted in my Anishinaabe upbringing. I was fortunate to be raised on my First Nation, where I was exposed to Anishinaabe language, culture, and traditions.

The strength of my research utilizes the Anishinaabe framework. This area looks explicitly at Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies, and is unique as they have not been documented in written form. The purpose of privileging an Anishinabek position throughout this research aims to strengthen Anishinaabe Nationhood by offering it a voice and engaging with it in an anti-colonial framework. I have focused on mothers and their stories and experiences. I do not include many voices that also need to be amplified, such as mothers who have had abortions and miscarriages, and those that have adopted.

Since Grounded Theory is not linear, much like Anishinaabek Research Methodology, they were a complement to one another because they are flexible. The Grounded Theory was selected because I was able to Indigenize the process by utilizing Anishinaabek ways of knowing and created a hybrid of knowledge. By gathering data in a respectful way, I was able to use my lens as an Anishinaabe Kwe to ensure I was also adhering to the Seven Grandparent teachings. When engaging with community work, one needs to understand that our "research is ceremony," as coined by Wilson (2008), and that it should be honoured. As an Indigenous researcher, it is essential to acknowledge our lived experiences, teachings, and ways of knowing, and that these conversations are a sacred time between two people. For example, as the knowledge contributor shares their knowledge with the researcher, it is like an individual approaching an Elder/Knowledge Holder. The researcher is asking their auntie to share their knowledge or their lived experience.

Lens of Inquiry

The research was conducted through an Anishinaabe Knowledge lens of inquiry and is focused on the question: how we can adapt Ancestral teachings and Traditional Knowledges to

fit within our contemporary society? For example, we pass on stories such as we come from the stars, and books have been produced to share this knowledge such as the recently published book *I sang you down from the stars* written by Tasha Spillet Sumner (2021). It is important to know who we are as an Anishinaabek, and Anishinaabe knowledge is needed today for our continued strength in our culture. Anishinaabe Knowledge is the foundation of my thesis because it relates to the Ancestral maternal customs that we had prior to colonization. Some of those teachings include the importance of celebrating pregnancy, childbirth, child rearing, and Nookimis (Grandmother) roles like we once had, because they are key to rebuilding a strong Anishinaabek Nation.

Specifically, I have also used the Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood as a lens of inquiry for my thesis. The Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood involve having the responsibility of raising your child away from harm. This also entails raising them with love and respect while guiding them to achieve their dreams. It is important that I follow the Anishinaabe concepts of motherhood while conducting research because it will allow me to avoid the pan-Indigenous model of how other Nations engage with child-rearing practices. I will focus on the realities of "traditional parenting values and practices" (Muir & Bohr, 2014, p. 67). As well, most contemporary Anishinaabe cultures are heavily influenced by Canadian society and Christianity, which I wish to avoid as I want to reinvigorate Traditional Teachings. With this singular cultural lens, I will weave together Anishinaabe specific teachings that can create accessibility for Anishinaabe mothers, families, midwives, and health care workers. I want to assist in building a healthy Nation and start supplying Anishinaabe mothers with the tools to learn about their culture, language, and ceremonies.

Within the Anishinaabe Research Methodology, I will use the guiding principles called the Seven Grandparent Teachings, which are Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth. I approach my research with these principles because it is becoming a part of my bundle. The bundle I carry is the Traditional Knowledge to raise culturally grounded children, but also to build my own Anishinaabe intellectual perspective. The wisdom each of my knowledge contributors carries is so profound, and they carry each of their experiences with bravery. They spoke with honesty and humility, and they accepted their life's journey with respect and love. Most importantly, they spoke their own truths on what it is to be an Anishinaabe Gaashi (mothers). From a researcher's perspective, I honour each story shared, but more importantly, I treat each knowledge contributor's motherhood journey with respect and love. I was very careful with sensitive information and wanted to ensure that each knowledge contributor had the opportunity to review our conversations once they were transcribed. I also wanted to amplify their voices because it can be a hard road to walk down as you attempt to incorporate Traditional Knowledge in contemporary times. I wanted to honour each knowledge contributor's voice because it builds our collective stories and struggles of becoming mothers.

Knowledge Contributors

For this study, I acquired 15 people who shared their knowledge on motherhood. It was essential to me to have insight into the maternal teachings and pedagogies as they are transmitted within different stages of pregnancy. As a result, I had conversations with five Anishinaabe gaashiyag, some living in an urban area, and some within a rural setting. In addition, I had four conversations with pregnant Anishinaabe women because I thought it was important to capture their stories before the birth experience. Also, I was able to see if there was any resistance to

utilizing cultural practices during their pregnancies. I visited with four nookimisag (grandmothers) in Nipissing, Wausauksing, Wiikwemikoong, and Curve Lake. I had a great selection of women regularly engaged in traditional practices and those that classified themselves as non-traditional. I also spoke with two Anishinaabe midwives who work with Indigenous women and were willing to share their teachings about labour and delivery, and who spoke about the importance of midwifery. Each of these women has contributed to critical pieces of the motherhood teachings and pedagogies.

I utilized the 'snowball sampling' method (Chilisa, 2012), which is a method of referral. I was also thinking about this as if my auntie does not know the answer, she would tell me to go and visit another person who may be knowledgeable on the subject. I began my conversations with respected Anishinaabe nookimisag who could search for knowledge contributors they thought would be informative. I emailed each referred people to first see if they were interested, and then I sent my letter of intent, consent form, and research questions. I followed up day or two later to see if they were still interested in sharing their knowledge in the study.

Knowledge Sharing Methods

I sought out trusted nookimisag (grandmothers) in urban communities who referred me to Anishinaabe gaashiyag (mothers). I invited all knowledge contributors for an online coffee meeting. I had an Auntie's Kitchen Table style for knowledge sharing method, where the conversation is open-ended and one-on-one, like you would at your auntie's kitchen table, sharing stories and having tea.

Within the Anishinaabe research framework, I informed knowledge contributors how I would gather, interpret, and share the knowledge. The research method I focused on, the

Nbwaachiwi Method, involves collecting information on our lived experiences because “our lived experiences are records of these histories” (Abosolon, 2008, p. 24). Shirley Williams (2020) explains that Nbwaachiwi is the art of visiting. Usually, when we see our families, we are visiting with intent. For example, when we visit, we are checking in on our loved one’s health and well-being, to see if they are safe and secure, and sometimes visiting knowing that person holds specific knowledge. I wanted to connect with the knowledge contributors by visiting them first and learning who they are, before asking them what could be construed as personal questions.

I wanted to have kitchen table style, where we could have tea and fry bread with jam, or have tea with a traditional treat. I wanted to establish long-lasting relationships as per the Indigenous/Anishinaabe Research methodology outline, and to have relational accountability. I rejected narrative and storytelling methods because I wanted to have actual conversations. I wanted to hear their birthing story, the story of the births of their children, and the teachings behind the birthing ceremonies, allowing the conversations to flow as naturally as possible. However, due to the pandemic, we had conversations over Zoom technology.

Before our conversations started, I reviewed the ethics form with the knowledge contributors one to two days before our visit. As I was filling in the documents, I had tobacco pouches sitting next to me with my intentions and traditional confidentiality method. The traditional confidentiality method is when we sit with our medicines and create a sacred space. Within that space, I respect the stories being shared with me. Throughout this knowledge sharing process, I was taking notes and not recording. I had guided conversations, and all knowledge contributors received the questions before the visits started.

I did follow-up visits to clarify any information. I wrote in a journal to reflect on the thoughts of our conversations. After the visits, I began to see themes emerging and started making meaning through themes. I paired my notes with the discussions and started drawing out themes.

In some cases, I reached out to knowledge contributors, and they did not respond to me. Some explained that they were not traditional enough to participate in my study. It was more common that the knowledge contributors did not respond after multiple attempts. I did not pursue further than that out of respect that they may not want to engage in a research study.

Knowledge Sharing Practices

Due to the pandemic, I could not engage in an Auntie's Kitchen Table style of gathering information. However, for most of the conversations, I used Zoom and I felt like I transcended time and space, and almost like I was in their home visiting them. I was still able to engage in intimate conversations.

Once the visits were completed, I asked knowledge contributors if they knew anyone interested in the study. A majority of my referrals were people within Wiikwemikoong. I opted to try to recruit outside of my community, though it became a little challenging.

When it came to recruiting midwives, I contacted one of the referred midwives, and she agreed. I had another one that was referred but was unresponsive to emails and phone calls. I reached out to the midwife organization in Nipissing, and they were happy to contribute. I had two other midwives that had personal issues arise and could not engage at this time. In total, I had two midwives that shared their stories.

Knowledge Sharing Protocols

I emailed the letter of intent, consent form, and research questions to the knowledge contributors. Once the knowledge contributors agreed to do the study, we scheduled a Zoom call or phone call at a time that worked for them. Some mothers had to wait until their children were asleep, which was typically after 8 pm. I often had to give a few dates and times as options, and sometimes had to reschedule the visits because of unexpected circumstances. All of the knowledge contributors opted to do a one-time visit that ranged from 20-70 minutes in length. During our conversations, any information that the knowledge contributors did not want to share, they requested that I stop recording the session. I complied and will not be sharing that information. The visits with the knowledge contributors lasted for four months.

I uploaded the recorded conversations to Yuja, a software that transcribes audio files. I had to edit some of the missed or inaudible speech, and any words/phrases in Anishnaabemowin. I focused on the stories and quotes I would be using for this study.

The three photos used within this dissertation are my own personal photos that I had taken. It was important for me to use my own visuals. These are found in the remaining chapters.

Gift Giving

It is Anishinaabe protocol to provide tobacco to the knowledge contributors because they are assisting the researcher. Once we went over the consent form, I obtained verbal consent from the knowledge contributors. Typically, tobacco would be offered before signing the consent forms. Due to the pandemic, I was unable to do that. Instead, I pre-packaged tobacco in paper envelopes and had them with me during the conversations. After the visit, I placed each tobacco pouch into each knowledge contributors mailing envelope. I also put in a pair of Indigenous-

made earrings, valued at $30. It was vital for me to find an Indigenous artist that could make a unique set of earrings using the mother of pearl and cowrie shells, two items that come from the water - where our babies also come from. A couple of knowledge contributors got a different set of earrings because of the stories that they had shared with me, having to do with their Spirit and Spirit names. These earrings and tobacco were accompanied by a personalized thank you card to honour their stories. The total package was estimated to be roughly $40. I funded this research study from my personal funds. I also mailed these packages at my own expense.

Photo 1 **Knowledge Contributors Gifts**

Note. These were some of the earrings that I have given away. I tried to hire the same Indigenous artist but often they do not take large orders. If the knowledge contributors decided to withdraw

at any point of the research, they were entitled to keep their gift because I valued the time they took out of their schedule to converse with me. I erased all their information from my files.

Once the visits ended, I went to the post office to have the packages sent out. I sent follow-up messages to knowledge contributors to see if they had received their gifts. Some responded, and others did not. I wanted to ensure they received their gifts. Some knowledge contributors received additional gifts such as stories or teachings that I collected along the way.

The Elder on my committee, Edna, cautioned me that I should not be mailing tobacco because we should be giving it before our conversations started. I explained that with COVID restrictions, along with lockdowns, it would have been impossible for me to have any visits conducted for another few months to a year if that was the case, thus creating a bigger financial burden by staying enrolled in another year of university. I also explained that I still wanted to honour the knowledge contributors time, stories, and teachings; therefore, I sent the tobacco and a gift. I wanted to stay true to our tobacco protocols and gifting practices as per the Anishinaabe intellectual framework and Anishinaabe Research Method. In explaining my intentions, I had sat with my actions around the tobacco offering protocols. I was not doing it out of ill-intent or disrespect, but instead adjusting to the situation of the pandemic. I thought by altering the traditional tobacco offering to my knowledge contributors that I did honour our time together. She agreed.

I shared my stories in celebration with how far we have come as Anishinaabe kweok. As someone who is asking for intimate information, I do understand what I am asking of them. I kept the Cedar Tree story metaphor in my mind while conducting the research. I have been trained in Indigenous relations and in Indigenous research practices. I use the research

opportunity to amplify Indigenous voices and experiences of women, mothers, children, and our Nations. I know that women are the backbone to our cultures and our lineages.

Community Dissemination

We must give knowledge back to our communities. I have collected these stories, and it will greatly benefit the community when I return the knowledge in an easy-to-understand format. When I completed the visits, I sent the information back to the knowledge contributors so they knew what I was using in this study. I provided a summary of the work to them so that it was not too overwhelming to read through. The knowledge contributors were given the option to remove, edit, or approve the quotes. The consent process is part of Indigenous protocol, and the relationship is on-going throughout the completion of the research. Also, for Knowledge Holders, they were able to see how I interpreted their knowledge and shared their teachings.

Making Meaning

In *Kaandossiwin*: *How we come to know* by Kathy Absolon (2011) is rephrasing the data analysis to making meaning. I look at the conversations I had with the mothers as "coming to know" as stated by Absolon (2011). While working with the knowledge collected, I noticed overlapping themes. I had over thirty themes emerge after three conversations and needed to condense them. I decided the best way to present these themes was to answer the following research questions:

1. What are Anishinaabe maternal teachings?
2. What are the challenges, tensions, and strengths of Anishinaabe maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context?

I split the knowledge findings into two chapters: Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings as understood by the knowledge contributors, followed by Challenges, Tensions and Strengths. I did this because the information could be overwhelming to the reader, and I wanted to ensure I answered the two research questions in full.

When I was making meaning of the conversations, I had no outside sources of assistance. I utilized Zoom technology to record our sessions. I went back frequently to listen to the stories that were shared by the knowledge contributors. I needed to sit with these stories at times because their individual stories were so powerful and related to different stages of motherhood. I took pen and paper to make notes on emerging themes. Each time I came back to listen to their stories, I would find another theme and make connections to the other women's stories. I felt like it was becoming a spider web of knowledge, all interconnected.

The second part of making meaning involved uploading the transcripts to Yuja, a software that Trent University provides. There were errors as Yuja cannot translate our Anishinaabemowin language. There were also some instances where the conversation was not clear. I took these rough drafts and sent them to the knowledge contributors letting them know that they were auto-translated by computer software. Later, I sent the knowledge contributors the quotes that were used for this dissertation.

I had a few Anishinaabe kweok who requested to be anonymous. In part of Anishinaabe research and the Seven Grandparent Teachings of Respect, Trust, and Humility, I let the knowledge contributors choose their own pseudonyms so that they could find their stories in my dissertation. I had created both a written and verbal confidentiality form. The knowledge contributors were given it ahead of time to review and given the opportunity to ask questions. I also had a verbal confidentiality agreement in case there were technology issues and they could

not sign the document. In the verbal consent form, I had a space to write their pseudonyms down and identified all notes and printed pages with their new name. The Zoom calls and Yuja transcripts were stored on my Trent accounts, and printed documents were stored in the locked cabinet within my home. The downloaded files were printed and emailed to the knowledge contributors then deleted off my computer immediately.

Knowledge Sharing

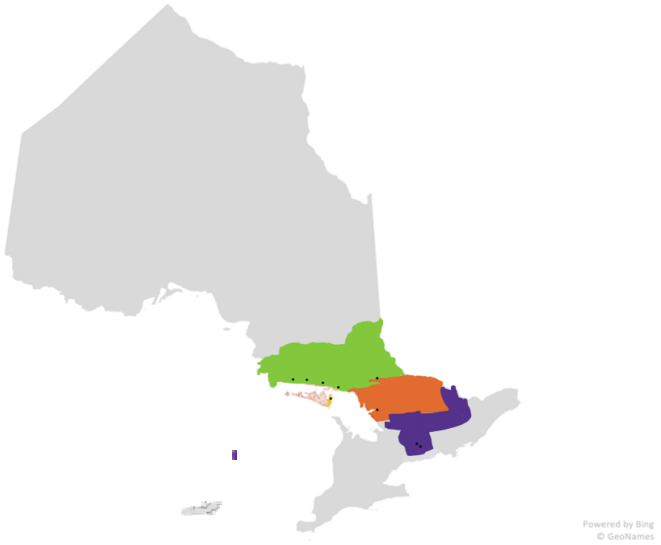
I started my visits with Anishinaabe Nookimisag (Grandmothers), Gaashiyag (mothers), Maajiishkaayag (pregnant women), and midwives. I had four conversations with grandmothers, five mothers, four pregnant women, and two midwives. In total, I had fifteen knowledge contributors. I have provided Figure 6 - Knowledge Contributors Locations Throughout Ontario to situate the them geographically.

Figure 6 **Knowledge Contributors Locations Throughout Ontario**

Note. These are approximate locations—many of the knowledge contributors are currently living within their traditional territories.

Some of the knowledge contributors are from one First Nation or commute between two that they call home. It was evident that many of the Anishinaabe mothers commuted between two or more communities, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous communities. Some worked in cities and commuted quite frequently. Others had positions in First Nations communities that were not their own, but still felt like it was home. Some were not raised on their traditional Anishinaabe territory, but in one of the neighbouring Nations such as Haudenosaunee Nation or Cree Nation. Whichever the case, it was interesting to note how we still travel within our territories. With this in mind, I provide Figure 7 - Treaty Territories. Some of these visits were conducted online, while others were phone calls due to technology issues. Most of these knowledge contributors resided on the Northeastern Shoreline along Lake Huron. In this map, I wanted to show the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek and Treaty areas, as we live along the Great Lakes on both sides of the geopolitical border.

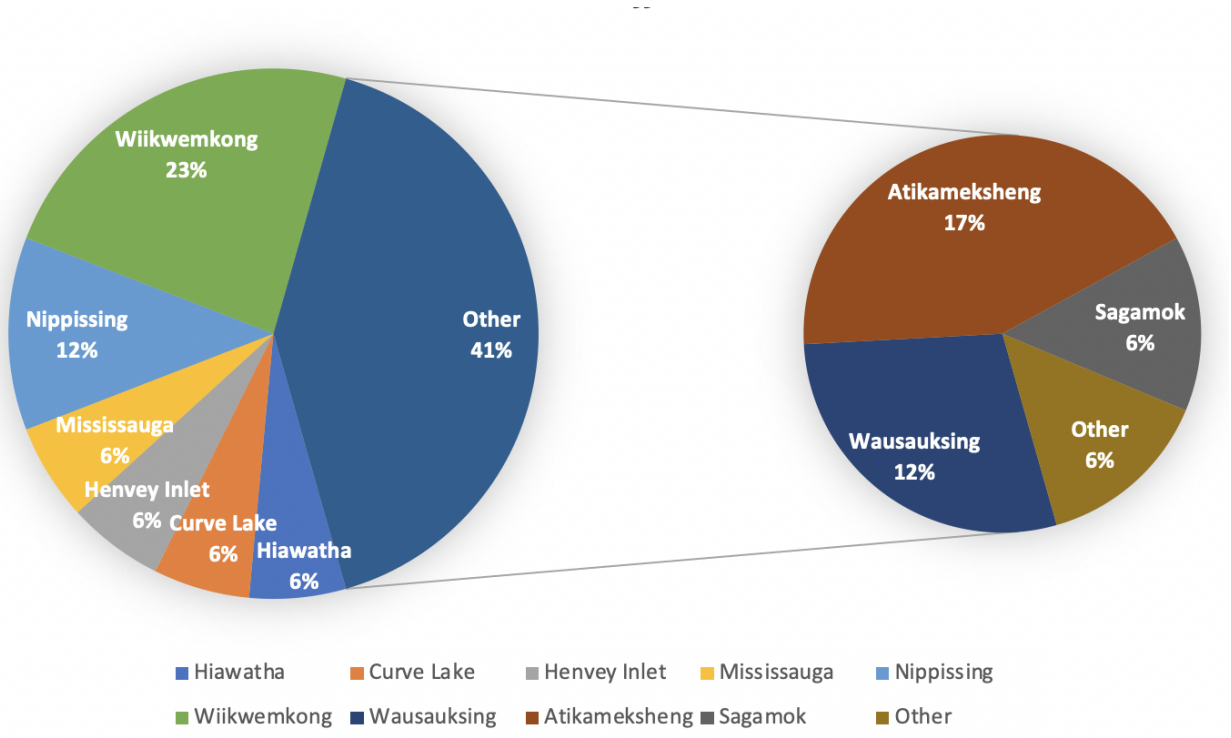
Figure 7 **Treaty Territories**



Note. The Robinson Huron Treaty is in green. There are five First Nations where these women reside. The orange is an overlap between two treaties: Robinson Huron and the Williams Treaty. The purple is the Rice Lake Treaty, and it is Treaty #20. Lastly, I have Manitoulin Island in a light peach colour. There are two Manitoulin Island Treaties: Treaty #94, The Manitoulin Treaty, and the Treaty of Manitowaning.

In Figure 8 - First Nation Affiliation, I have created a graph to demonstrate the complexity of locations as the Anishinaabek continue to move within their territories. First, I broke down each of the First Nations, and then the second graph shows the individuals who are from two communities. Despite the treaties, Anishinaabe still travel from one First Nation to the next.

Figure 8 **First Nation Affiliations**



Note. The blue quadrant branches off to another pie chart that shows the knowledge contributors from Wausauksing and Atikameksheng, Mississauga and Six Nations, and Sagamok and Atikameksheng, Atikameksheng and Nipissing. There is a bit of travel between communities, so I took the locations where the knowledge contributors are currently calling both places home.

This research did not require any band council resolutions. Each knowledge contributor had freedom to engage in the research. At the time of this research, almost all of the women resided within their home communities. I did not collaborate with any agencies, however I did contact two midwifery agencies to see if the Anishinaabe midwives were interested in becoming part of the research project. I received notification from one centre and no response from the other.

I do want to note that I knew some of these knowledge contributors either directly or indirectly. I had many referrals, but only those individuals that were familiar with me are the ones who had participated. I did have knowledge contributors decline the visit because they thought I wanted 'traditional' mothers that engage in Anishinaabe practices daily. Near the end of the visits, I had one mother contact me, asking if she could still participate, and I was happy to have her.

Coding the Knowledge

In the coding process, I began to look at the specific code words in each question to ensure they were answered. I highlighted each section of the transcripts and listened to their stories again. I wanted to make sure the stories I was gathering were in their appropriate section. I have listed the questions below:

1: What is your **birthing story**? What is your child(rens) birthing story?

2: What are the **challenges** that Anishinaabe mothers experience?

3: What are your Anishinaabe **Traditional Teachings** about pregnancy? Motherhood?

4: What are the important teachings that can be **shared** with Anishinaabe women and children? **How do we share them**?

5: Why does **early exposure** to Traditional Knowledges and languages important for mother and child? **How do we share Traditional Knowledge with children**?

6: In what ways could we **culturally support** mothers who are **high risk**?

7: Why should we **care** about Anishinaabe motherhood traditional practices? How do we get children involved?

8: How and why do we teach **ceremony** to mothers and children in the **city**?

9: How would you define **resistance** in motherhood?

After thinking about the rich information that was shared, I had many themes emerge. I gathered the key themes and began making meaning through themes because it would be a lot easier to compile the information for the knowledge contributors and for community dissemination.

Making Meaning through themes

When themes began to emerge throughout the process, I wanted to share the information in chronological order. I have indirectly facilitated each of my knowledge contributors voices and organized this section with overarching themes and subthemes. Even though there are multiple teachings within each section, I kept Traditional Teachings separate to have a list of teachings that would be accessible to readers. Trying to organize the knowledge became difficult to create an easy-to-read format. Time is essential to mothers, and I wanted to ensure I was executing the information where they did not have to read a lot of dense information.

Selecting Knowledge Contributors Stories

When I was choosing the knowledge contributors stories, I had to be selective in the process because I wanted to make sure I was encapsulating their stories but also sharing the experiences of other mothers. The other aspect I looked for was unique experiences that could broaden the knowledge of other Anishinaabe kweok.

Conclusion

The Anishinaabe Research Methodology has its own knowledge sharing methods (or data collection methods) that are specific to our culture. We gather the knowledge and shared it in a storytelling format and share it with the community. This research design was selected to reclaim our traditional methods and knowledge, respect Anishinaabe ethical protocols, and adhere to Trent University's ethical procedures. More specifically, I used our Anishinaabe etics of the Seven Grandparent teachings because I hold myself accountable to community but also to Gzhe Mnidoo. The Anishinaabe Research Methodology informed my research and was the template to answering my research questions, but more importantly, it shaped the way I was making meaning of the knowledge and drew out the themes. In the following two chapters, I explore the Findings: I will first share the Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings Findings, followed then by the Challenges, Tensions, and Strengths Findings.

Chapter 4: Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings as understood by the Knowledge Contributors

This section presents the themes that emerged from the first research question: *What are Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings?* I have organized this chapter by first including a brief introduction of each knowledge contributor to get to know the person who is sharing their story. This is to establish the relationship between the reader and the knowledge contributors. Then I examine each emergent theme in depth and consider what impact they have on the knowledge contributors of the study. In Figure 9 – Anishinaabe Teachings, I share the maternal teachings and themes I have uncovered by linking them to the Cedar Tree Teaching. I link it back to this teaching because it is the story of how clan animals assisted in the birthing of the cedar tree and how the community came together to ensure the survival of the people. The fourteen themes that emerged in this chapter are demonstrated within the cedar tree illustration, created by Raven Sutherland. Much like Raven's description of the cedar tree, it demonstrates how we are connected throughout the generations. It is our continued perseverance that keeps our stories and teachings intact. The cedar tree story is a healing narrative for those lost Anishinaabek that wish to return to the Original Instructions.

Artist Statement - Mother of Creation

Raven Sutherland states: This piece has many stories intertwined and I wanted to honour the Anishinaabe Creation story throughout. In this picture, you will see a mother holding her baby in front of a cedar tree with an otter and bear cub beside her. Roots are flowing out of her feet into Mother Earth, showing the connectedness between past and future generations. This piece symbolizes the resilience of our people; it shows that our stories, ceremonies, and teachings are

still here and living, and that we are still guided by our Ancestors. The cedar tree, otter, bear cub, mother, and flowing roots are all integral parts of the Anishinaabe Creation story that come together to show the connection to sacred motherhood.

Figure 9 **Anishinaabe Teachings**

Note. Refer to Giizhigowaatik Debaajmowin (p. 25) for the cedar tree origin story and its relation to this research.

Mothers

All of the knowledge contributors are great-grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers, or soon-to-be mothers. I share the stories of resiliency, strength, and healing that they have passed down to their binoojiinhsag. I would like to provide a brief introduction of each knowledge contributor, so the reader understands their diverse maternal backgrounds and what they bring to the research. A brief biography will be shared for those individuals who opted to be anonymous because I wish to honour their story and protect their identity.

Carol

Carol is a midwife, a mother, and an advocate for Indigenous Midwifery. She uses her knowledge and powerful voice to explain the complexities of traditional practices, historical accounts, and her position as a midwife working in Anishinaabe communities.

Kerry

Kerry is a midwife as well as a mother. Her stories of becoming a mother and midwife are relatable, as she uses her experiences as a mother to assist other mothers. Her approach is gentle and kind. She is very knowledgeable in her teachings, and she is a strong advocate for Indigenous midwifery.

Laurie

Laurie is known around many Anishinaabe communities because of her Traditional Knowledge and community work. You can find her at powwows or within the community

sharing her teachings on wholistic health. She is a mother, and she uses her lived experiences to evoke change to better our communities.

Dorothy

Dorothy is a Knowledge Holder in her community, and a mother. She frequents different conference circuits, sharing her knowledge on Anishinaabe teachings and Indigenous issues, and serves her community.

Cheryle

Cheryle is a mother, grandmother, and a great-grandmother. She is also a Knowledge Holder and a professor who offers gentleness when teaching her students. She often spends time with her family and likes to travel.

Zara

Zara is very knowledgeable in Traditional Teachings. She is a mother of two and likes to engage in land-based learning with her children. She has valuable life experience and uses that to empower other Anishinaabek kweok.

Julia

Julia is a mother, Midewiwin[6], and academic scholar. She has many roles and is often found at community events sharing her knowledge. Julia offers her expertise and lived

[6] The Midewiwin are gathered within different lodges in Anishinaabek territory that seek to preserve the teachings, language, and knowledge.

experience as a way to empower her family and the communities of young women with whom she works.

Maddie

Maddie is a proud mother, student, and social worker. She has a strong background in mental health for Indigenous youth. She has lived experiences that she shares regarding mainstream and Indigenous pedagogies for assisting children and mothers.

Hiawatha

Hiawatha is a chef, entrepreneur, and mother. She is known for her traditional food dishes and uses that knowledge to share cultural foods throughout Anishinaabe Aki. Hiawatha comes from a family of strong Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Anishinaabemowin teachers.

Ketrice

Ketrice is a first-time mother. She is an insightful young woman and an intergenerational cycle-breaker in her family. She recognizes the influence of mainstream practices but yearns to learn more about her culture. She is also aware of the complexity of raising children and the challenges that she and her peers encounter.

Courtney

Courtney is a first-time mother. She is an Early Childhood Educator and has excellent insight into child pedagogies and using her experiences to raise her own child. She is also very knowledgeable in cultural teachings and is grounded in Anishinaabe practices.

Brittany

Brittany is a first-time mother. She has shared her experiences as someone disconnected from her culture despite growing up in her First Nation. She brings a unique perspective to Anishinaabe teachings and her understanding of knowledge transmission in our communities.

Asinii

Pseudonym has been provided for this great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother.

Daphne

Pseudonym has been provided for this first-time mother.

Kwe

Pseudonym has been provided for this mother who was also pregnant during our conversation.

Birthing Stories

I began my visits by asking the knowledge contributors about their birthing stories. I asked this question for a few reasons: First, mothers are often willing to share their children's origin story. In my observations, I found it is like a rite of passage to share the challenges and successes of pregnancy and giving birth. Secondly, I wanted to see how traditional birthing practices have intersected with Western techniques and ideologies. Finally, it is essential to share

with a child their first moments in life because it explains how they arrived Earthside, which sets the stage for their life to come.

> Carol received a teaching on the importance of the birth story:
>
> I think understanding the power of story and especially the birth story… it was from a young man that I saw in Curve Lake, he was teaching about traditional ways of raising children with that child's birth story, all his children's birth stories… from how the weather was, the time of day, and how they came about their Anishinaabe name. He said every child deserves the story of how they came into that family because that is the beginning of their self-esteem.

The story Carol shared is important because it explains how we arrived on Earth, and each story is unique, just like our Spirit. The birthing stories bring forth our connection to motherhood and the celebration, along with the trauma, of becoming Anishinaabe mothers. In the colonial past, these stories were not shared, and if they were passed down, they came mainly from older generations. Daphne states the reason: “we had all this knowledge about birthing, practices, motherhood, that kind of thing before colonization and assimilation took it from a majority of people.” Since the impact of Residential Schools, government policies, and institutional practices, the result was that the Elders and midwives I had conversations for this story could not provide specificity of their own stories, and similarly, these knowledge contributors had to seek out information from their family members because their stories were never shared.

Fathers

This study did not include any father’s direct perspectives. However, the mothers shared why the father’s role was important in raising children. The Elders that knew of their birth stories

discussed that their fathers were not present during their births. In the past, it was not appropriate to have men in the room while the mothers gave birth. However, today, the father's role is essential to establish a relationship with their child. Laurie shares that:

> We know that the father's role is to protect the mother, protect the woman during pregnancy, to provide for her, you know, make sure that she has a roof overhead and food to eat and to minimize her stress.

In present day, the mother's lens has changed and resurging Traditional Teachings now see more men involved in the pregnancy and birthing process. Cheryle specifically noted how the presence of men in the birth room has changed over time. She shares that she was living in Toronto and going to a check-up when the nurses identified that Cheryle was ill. She was at the women's college and had to deliver her daughter right away - her partner was sent out of the room because he looked like he was going to pass out. Today, fathers are welcomed to stay in the room. Most of the mothers indicated that they had their partners in the room with them except for one. Zara shares that she called the father to light a fire at the start of her birthing process: "the man was supposed to go light a fire when the mother was ready to give birth… he lit the fire immediately and sat by the fire all night while I was experiencing everything." Zara explains that because of a teaching she received, her partner was not present for the birth of their first child.

Carol explained that, as a midwife, she does not exclusively work with women, but teaches fathers and men about midwifery too:

> I will talk to men about the significance of midwifery around culture and birth and the lodge. Like why it's so important, and they'll be shocked. I'll take their teachings about the lodge, and I'll talk about the physical, but you can talk about the spiritual stuff, emotional stuff, and talk about knowledge. There's still the physical element that happens

> in the lodge, like the water and the heat of the fire, which represents how men and women come together. We can talk about the DNA of the two couples—the breath in the heat of sexuality of the whole thing. The line represents the cord of the baby. The umbilical cord goes into where the placenta, which represents those rocks. What do we call the rocks? We call them the grandmothers, the DNA coming into the woman's body of another person and her carrying that. It's all these physical things that are in our culture that we have an understanding of what we lost.

Although fathers were not included in this study, many mothers regarded the father's role as essential. Selecting a partner who is ready to have children is very important because they will also support the pregnancy andmotherhood, and will get involved in the child's upbringing. For example, Dorothy shared her experience in selecting her husband. It was important to her that he was ready to be a father and had a good understanding of what it meant to start a family. When she observed him, she asked herself, "How does he treat the women in his family? What kind of language does he use around them? What kind of actions does he use?" Laurie was also selective when choosing her husband because she wanted to raise her children in a safe and culturally grounded home. Laurie shared that: "the father's role is to protect the mother, protect the woman during pregnancy, to provide for her, make sure that she has a roof over her head, food to eat, and to minimize her stress." Selecting a partner was crucial to Zara, and she added that, "when picking a partner, I was like you're not father material because I didn't want the person that had children with five other women or whatever." These were some of the same messages many of the mothers mentioned: be selective of your partners and future fathers, as these men will support the mothers during a sacred time should they choose to be blessed to have a child.

Conception

There are three themes that emerged in the area of conception. First, in order for children to be born, a girl needs to transition into womanhood by having her first menses (moon time). This is a time when the young woman enters the Berry Fast as shared in the Wenda Bimaadiziwin zhinkaade (The Fast Life – p. 26). Carol and Asinii shared various teachings on this topic. Carol discussed the sacredness of moon time and having intercourse through a traditional lens: "the moon time of women is the oldest ceremony which would make birth the second oldest ceremony, the act of sex." Young women need to understand that when they engage in sexual intercourse, they can become pregnant, so it is important that they receive the teachings on womanhood and motherhood.

Because Christianity altered the perception of sex, our Traditional Teachings were displaced. Asinii explained that no one taught her about womanhood, sexuality, pregnancy, or motherhood because of the Christian violence. She did not know she was pregnant and was uneducated in the process. Now that she is older, she is committed to raising awareness of Anishinaabe culture and bringing the Traditional Knowledge back so that future generations can make informed decisions. Looking at conception from a traditional lens, Dorothy shared her teachings on the physical acts of love:

> Sex is a beautiful thing, that's what I was always told… It's an expression of ourselves. We also had support if the baby came from sex. There's nothing more powerful than the coupling of a man and woman, that energy, because it creates life. It is a deliberate act and, in a respectful way, to enjoy it.

Within Dorothy's teachings, she mentions the possibility that comes from sex – the creation of a life. Ultimately, we must remember that engaging in sexual relations with someone could result

in pregnancy, but that women and men who want to engage in sexual freedom and do not want to have children, have access to contraceptives.

The second theme that emerged regarding conception is that there are women who may struggle to conceive. Courtney shared her journey of healing her Spirit and the emotional toll it took on her. She approached the Western medical side when the practitioners suggested various types of procedures to assist in conceiving naturally. However, these procedures were not for her so she turned to a traditional Knowledge Holder, who made a medicinal tea and told her: “it’s going to help rebuild all those tissues and all those healthy blood cells and to make yourself health again.” Courtney raised interesting points on conceiving children - how it comes easy for some, unplanned for others, and harder for those who want children but have physical issues that prevent them from conceiving.

The third theme was planned pregnancies. Of the women I spoke with, four of them planned their pregnancies. The couples that were prepared to have children wanted to conceive them with good intentions and love. Some knowledge contributors said they were blessed to get pregnant when they did. Laurie and Dorothy both shared that they had planned their pregnancies, and a significant part of that was finding a partner they had a connection with, and then starting their families. The other mothers shared that they did not plan their pregnancies but had felt ready to conceive a child if it should happen. Regardless of preparedness, all knowledge contributors felt that their child coming into the world was a blessing. Within Anishinaabe culture, pregnancy (and the act of sex viewed as a ceremony because of the possibility of conception) is considered highly spiritual, often being connected directly to ceremony.

Pregnancy

There is no doubt that Christianity has impacted a women's uterus from menstruation to conception. From a traditional view, pregnant women are Creators and can engage with things that allow for their creativity to flow in a healthy way for mother and baby. Kerry shares simply that "pregnancy is ceremony." It is a sacred time because as women grow life within, it is viewed that children are considered gifts, but women need to take care of themselves wholistically leading up to the birth of their children. Courtney explains that "connecting with Mother Earth and the Creator, understanding the energy and emotions you are carrying, are passing to your baby, and understand the importance of your medicine." As mothers, we should try our best to be in a loving space, both personally and socially. In Anishinaabe culture, we welcome any child born, despite the circumstance, because they are here for an Earthly journey, and we honour their journey and the gifts they bring with them.

The state of being pregnant is considered highly spiritual, and brings important teachings, such as the water teaching, which is one of the first teachings to accompany this sacred time. Laurie shared this teaching by saying:

> We are told that we, as Anishinaabe, we are the water carriers. Water is so powerful; it can transcend worlds and comes to us from that third level of Creation. When that birth water is flowing, we as women are those doorways to help bring forward that new life. We carry that water; we carry that baby within the water.

This teaching shows that we are all connected in life through water. In my community teachings specifically, there are four types of water: Springwater, maple water, rainwater (from the Thunderbirds), and birth water. It is evident that water is essential to life on Earth, and it is especially vital because it is our first home.

Pregnant mothers are in a critical time because they need to take care of themselves, as this is the beginning of good relations with herself and her child. Women undergo 40 weeks of preparing for their child mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Within this timeframe, they become hyperaware of their thoughts and actions. Kerry explained that it is a critical time and suggested that mothers should "find time to centre in on the pregnancy, set your intentions. Mothers can do this on their own." In a contemporary context, women can engage in cultural activities such as drumming, singing, beading, and other creative works. When women do that, Asinii explained that "babies hear everything and feel our energy, feelings, and thoughts… Be in a good frame of mind, have good food, good drinks. It all goes into creating life. You are the Creator."

In our communities, we discuss how our moods, thoughts, and feelings can influence the baby's development. Looking at both positive and negative issues in our communities, we should be mindful of our stress levels. For example, there could be ongoing trauma issues in our families that may be overwhelming for pregnant women. When women become pregnant, the teachings our Elders and our community members share note that women need to try to keep their stress levels down. Some of the knowledge contributors have teachings on this. Zara explained that, “I feel like experiencing that trauma during a time when we're carrying, it does affect how we carry our children.” To counteract the negativity that mothers experience, Courtney shared the teachings to “offer your tobacco and talk to your Ancestors about your worries or talk to the Creator and ask them to protect your baby.” By doing this, Anishinaabe mothers are trying to combat the overwhelming feelings and outside stressors that could potentially consume them. Courtney further added that they “put tobacco down and check-in to talk to the baby's Spirit.” This is a great reason to take a walk and offer tobacco near the water, a

tree, or on the land. Courtney's Nana (Grandmother) had told her, “I ‘needed to be outside and needed to be barefoot as much as possible.’ She's like, that way you're grounding yourself to Mother Earth, and you're making that connection to Mother Earth and your Baby.” This is how mothers can tap into their spiritual side for guidance and support, which nurtures both mother and baby. Mothers should create a support network of both contemporary and cultural ideologies, such as this, so that they can make informed decisions regarding what is best for their child. In this network, they can receive teachings and additional resources about motherhood and raising their children.

Birth

The birth of a child is a beautiful moment when the physical and spiritual doorways open. When the Spirits are ready to come to Earth and meet their families, they come to us with so much knowledge and teachings. However, as Kerry suggested, before our children arrive, we should have their bundles prepared to ensure they are immersed in culture and teachings as soon as they arrive. Many things could be added to these bundles, such as a pair of moccasins, tiknigaan (cradleboard), a medicine pouch, the four medicines (sage, sweetgrass, tobacco, and cedar), a drum, and a traditional shaker. Zara explained that:

> Having your medicines, having the medicines prepared, having what they're going to be able to carry on in their life… What's going to help them and support them on their journey Then being able to do those ceremonies along the way for them?

By compiling a bundle just before the baby is born, the child will have its cultural tools from the first moment they emerge into the physical realm.

When the child is being birthed into this world, the mother and child enter a ceremony. The child is entering from Spirit form and coming through to the physical dimension. Laurie shared the teachings of babies entering the physical space:

> When our child is born, they are wise. They have travelled through Creation, and we are told that they carry all that knowledge with them. When they are born, they take that first breath of life; that breath is what connects to this realm because when they're in the womb, they're still in Spirit form. When they're in Spirit form, they can travel between the spiritual realm and the physical realm. When our babies are born, they have their spiritual DNA and their physical DNA. We're told that there is a replica of us in almost every cell of our body and twenty thousand of our Ancestors that came before us. No matter where we go and what we do, we are never alone; when we think about our babies, it's so important for us to wrap them in cultural knowledge.

Building upon this knowledge, Asinii provided another essential teaching that when "we emerge from the vessel, we have our first breath, the sacred breath." This moment refers to when our child is born. The first breath is so important because it is our Spirit coming into the world; we have arrived at our destination. In that breath, we are solidifying our connection to Creation; the trees that allow us to breathe, and our first exhale that gives back to the trees. All of these teachings are interconnected.

One of the signifiers of Anishinaabek children are the blue spots that appear on their lower back and buttocks. There is spiritual significance to these blue spots. Laurie elaborated on that spiritual teaching:

> We have a teaching on babies born with a birthmark on their lower back or their bum. We are told that deep within the heart of Mother Earth, there's a fire that burns so hot that it's

> blue. She has marked those children that she has claimed those children as her own. So that's why those markings are so, so very sacred to us.

There have been plays and stories that talk about the blue spots and their importance. When we see these blue spots on our children, we understand they comes from a sacred place. However, the medical staff may mistake these blue spots for bruises and child services may be called for alleged physical abuse. Often these cases do not go anywhere, but it is stressful for first-time mothers to experience having their child examined in this way. This would be a crucial education piece for health professionals, so that they understand these markings are sacred to Anishinaabe people.

Sometimes the little Spirits are excited to come to Earth and may arrive before physical development is completed in the womb. These are called premature babies and depending how early they arrive, come with their own challenges. However, this could be part of their Earthly journey and lessons they need while they are here. Courtney shared that her child arrived early. While conducting this research, I had a two mother's reach out to me to discuss their child's early arrival. I shared my experience with them and with some of the knowledge contributors such as Carol who shared that "premie babies are supposed to be really, really smart." As we talked about my son, who was born premature, she shared that premature babies come with their own teachings. Some premature babies may have "high energy and that energy needs to be focused in a good way." During our conversation, Carol and I discussed how intuitive premature babies are and we as parents need to help them understand their gifts.

Mothers who do not have a complicated pregnancy, have the benefit of accessing midwives who provide holistic care. However, mothers who need to access doctors and hospitals should not feel ashamed because they can only become a mother with the assistance of Western

medical care. There are traditional practices a mother can engage in such as having drumming and singing present, even though she is in a hospital. A water ceremony and song can take place during this time. In the birth plan a mother could request that she be the first one to speak Anishinaabemowin to her child once the child is born. Shortly after, a cedar bath can be provided to mother and child. If the child does not require medical intervention such as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), the mother can use a moss bag or a tiknigaan for her child. The earlier she can have her child wrapped up, the more comforting it is for the baby because they are reminded of that space in the womb. If the mother would like she can also request for her placenta to be stored until she is ready to go home. Then she can transport it to her home and put it in the freezer until it is time to bury it. If the father is not in the picture, she can have a family member do it for her or with her. They can have a ceremony and feast afterwards.

Placenta

I asked all my knowledge contributors about the placenta and their knowledge about it. The placenta is an organ that grows with the baby. The baby receives their oxygen and nutrients from it in order to grow. It also acts as a filtration system and removes waste from the baby. Two mothers shared how they had their placentas in the freezer waiting for the Spring to have a ceremony for them, and bury them. There was one mother who forgot their placentas at the hospital after giving birth because she was too exhausted to remember. Another mother identified that the hospital lost her birth plan, so they did not keep her placenta, and one mother did not want to engage in the ceremony at all. The grandmothers had no knowledge about what happened to their placentas after they were born, but often concluded that it was probably disposed of as medical waste.

Cheryle shared that she did not bury her daughter's placenta at the time because she did not have the teachings. However, after the birth of her grandson, Cheryle and her daughter buried their grandson's placenta and had a ceremony around it. Cheryle mentioned that, during this time, many families were engaging with this ceremony. Laurie shared the teaching on the placenta ceremony,

> The grandmother's role is to collect the placenta when the baby was born. And depending upon where you're from, then usually the placenta is buried close to the baby's home. And maybe a cedar tree would be planted or a rock would be placed on top of it. And so what we're doing when we do that is we're nurturing that babies connection to mother earth. And when we use that cedar tree, cedar tree becomes their medicine. And when they use a rock, it's just so an animal doesn't get to it.

When the placenta is buried, it is said that the child will always know where home is and will be grounded. Julia talked about her early experiences when requesting the placenta after the birth of her children:

> We returned the placenta back to the earth like we did with all the babies. And we got lots of funny looks for that. Like why do you want that? And I said I just want it, never mind. I'm not going to eat it or even if I was going to eat it, it's mine right? We got some raised eyebrows, but nobody put up barriers up. You know. In fact, they probably wanted to know a little bit, but we didn't necessarily just offer the information or why or how the act of burying the placenta and what it does for the children.

The placenta ceremony is a way of resurging ceremony. Expecting mothers look forward to doing the ceremony with their families. One of the teachings gathered is to request it from the hospital or midwife, store it in the freezer until it is time to bury it. The grandmother, mother, or

father are the ones to burying it – the teachings varied on who buries it. A prayer is made, and tobacco is offered with the placenta. As Laurie mentioned, a cedar tree or a rock can be placed above it on the ground.

Midwives

Through my conversations, I noticed more women were opting for midwives, with five knowledge contributors indicating that they utilized a midwife. When listening to Carol's story, she mentioned that she was influenced to become a midwife from her personal experience as a first-time mom, and a negative experience she had with a doctor. Carol explained,

> I needed a midwife so badly, so for the rest of my career, I became the midwife I needed, and it taught me how to be a good midwife because it taught me how people think when they really don't know much.

Kerry, on the other hand, was a midwife before she had her first child. Her original intent was to utilize the midwifery practices, but she had some unexpected complications that led her to deliver her baby at the hospital. This was her first child, and the interactions she had at the hospital were a mix of positive and negative experiences. She explained that,

> the poor treatment was not from the labour and delivery staff. It was from the postpartum staff and NICU [Neonatal Intensive Care Unit] nurses. The obstetrician was very respectful, and he worked well with my midwife. It was the follow-up care within the hospital after the birth that was problematic.

In our conversation, she shared that there could have been resentment between the professions. That experience led her to be an even better midwife for mothers as she understands that it is a powerful ceremony and one of the most important times in a woman’s life. Kerry is aware of the

issues in health care that are systemically racist to Indigenous Peoples, and she uses that knowledge to create a safe and supportive space for Indigenous mothers. She discussed the colonial complexities that often make a mother feel surveilled because of their Indigeneity, which can impact their health and well-being. Kerry shared that she does home visits as a midwife, making it easier for a mother to stay in her own environment and rest with the baby. Also, she shared that when she enters her client's homes, it is judgement-free because she understands the colonial legacy that has left many of our families in poverty.

While she was talking, I reflected on my experience as a mother and could not pinpoint my own uneasiness about visiting clinics and hospitals until she discussed how Anishinaabek often feel like we are under surveillance. Because of this feeling, I always needed to ensure we dressed our best to attend appointments. Due to pregnancy issues, I could not utilize a midwife and had to rely on Western health professionals to deliver my children. If I had the opportunity, I would have opted to use an Indigenous midwife because of their gentleness and flexibility in assisting mothers as part of their support network, and in understanding the cultural aspects of having children.

The knowledge contributors who opted to have midwifery care stated that they had great experiences with their midwives. Kwe stated,

> I had a midwife, which I absolutely loved. I felt it was kind more personal, one of the best decisions I've ever made was to get a midwife. I always rave about it and to everyone because it was the most amazing thing.

These knowledge contributors indicated that their friends had used midwives, so they wanted to as well.

In Sudbury, Ontario, the Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre caters to the urban Indigenous community, and is partnered with both the Sudbury Midwives and the Indigenous midwives. Ketrice explained that the reason she went with a midwife is because she wanted to feel supported culturally. Ketrice also added that she wanted education on traditional parenting, which she did not have when she was young. Courtney further explained that, "I wanted my birth experience to be calm, and with me being traditional and spiritual, I said it would be an easier transition to have my baby welcomed into the world." Ketrice and Courtney both touched on a theme of why some Anishinaabe mothers choose midwives: so they can have access to traditional birthing techniques. Daphne further added,

> I know we had all this knowledge about birthing, practices, motherhood, that kind of thing before colonization and assimilation took it from a majority of people. It's just something that was just part of our way of life as we grew up. I believe women grew up watching it, learning it, knowing it, and then doing it all the time… It was interwoven into the fabric of our lives, and they were just in tune with these practices.

Two first-time mothers utilized midwives for their pregnancies because they had heard good things about the care received from their family and friends. It is a personal choice mothers get to make when selecting prenatal and birthing care. However, Anishinaabe mothers are moving into selecting Indigenous midwifery care because they want to feel supported culturally and do not want to face racism.

When I was speaking with the mothers, I was surprised to see a growing trend towards utilizing the midwives. Those that were claiming not to be traditional were opting for midwifery. We had discussions around the importance of utilizing Western care or whether or not we abandon it completely; the knowledge contributors had equally shared that Western medicine is

there to heal and save us in case of complications. This was to say we need medical pluralism, and you can utilize both midwife and doctor. While I was pregnant during the pandemic, I inquired about using a midwife and given my history of complications and my previous pre-term birth, the doctor cautioned against it. I was informally asking about midwifery and accessing care to colleagues, but it was suggested that complicated births should go directly to hospitals because of the equipment they have available for the safe delivery of the baby and care for the mother.

The after care for a mother was mentioned by two knowledge contributors, Kerry and Julia, who had used doulas, but there was not much information available. A doula is a support person that is used during pregnancy if the mother does not have anyone. A doula is someone that can assist the mother in a variety of ways, and they are trained to assist the mother and child in the first few weeks for care. Making this information available for patients in their care packages could prove to be very beneficial to some mothers. She can provide all the cultural supports for a mother, so that the mother can focus on bringing a child into this world. A doula can sing, drum, engage in ceremonies, and most importantly, support the mother.

Importance of Anishinaabe Motherhood

One of the questions I had asked knowledge contributors was to share why Anishinaabe motherhood is essential and why we should care about it. First, knowledge contributors agreed that we need to ensure mothers are cared for and can provide so that the next generation is in a better place than we had left them. Moreover, childrearing, through our traditional practices, ensures cultural continuity. Asinii explained this by stating, “it is a big responsibility in childrearing, also it is a big responsibility to take care of the Earth.” With this sentiment, we can connect the idea that taking care of children is also taking care of the Earth, our home, and that it

is important that we ensure that future generations also understand their responsibility. We impart our teachings to them to live with the Natural Laws and realize what those teachings reveal.

When we reflect on Figure 2- Traditional Kinship Model (p. 30), we know it takes a community to raise a child. Many of our communities still engage in these practices to a certain extent. Also, if these communities and families are healthy to do so, they assist new families in adjusting to motherhood. Some grandmothers embrace their role to help their daughter with the adjustment and to start bonding with their child. A mother needs to be taken care of so she can take care of her children. She needs a whole network to help her.

Courtney mentioned the transitions involved in becoming a mother. She noted that we should be culturally supporting mothers, but also "making sure that they have a mother, mothering support, positive resources like counselling, and during pregnancy because your body's going through so much transitioning into motherhood that many women may need that TLC that is kind of lacking." Courtney tied in Figure 1 - Sky World Teachings (p. 11) and Figure 2 - Traditional Kinship System (p. 30), which is that Anishinaabe kweok have important roles as teachers and need support from families during contemporary times. We endure a long nine months of carrying a child, and our bodies go through so much. In addition, our bodies will not be the same after we have a child. The transformation is a lengthy process, and we should give more support to mothers because it becomes overwhelming. As a mother adjusts to raising her child, she feels the pressures of Western societal expectations and the nuclear family model.

Another aspect of Anishinaabek motherhood is that we carry the next generation. Asinii explained, "we need to ensure the Anishinaabe way of life continues, continue as a People. We need to connect to Mother Earth because we are Turtle Island; we were lowered to Turtle Island.

That's why we are sacred; we give life, like Mother Earth." There are many teachings about our inherent connection to Mother Earth, which has been described as sophisticated and within the laws of nature. Asinii further added, "we need to be taking back our practices. Acknowledging what our Ancestors did and what they have been through will guide us into a better future. We need to be adapting those teachings for today." Many of the knowledge contributors noted that our Traditional Ways of Life is vital to continue our Nationhood and sustain our practices. Laurie added to Asinii's point about our purpose to be born Anishinaabe:

> Everything has a purpose and a place within Creation. According to Anishinaabe teachings, each of us sits with the Creator Seven Generations before we are born. We receive teachings and instructions from the Creator. We can select from a variety of different paths in life. We have an agreement with the Creator of the work that we are being sent here to do. My understanding is that based on those instructions that the Seven Grandfathers, the Mishoomsag hold council, and they decide things for us like what our Spirit name will be, what our clan, colours, helpers, the gifts we carry, and that is part of our bundle. That is called our spiritual bundle. We also receive from the Creator all of the love that we will ever need, and that bundle is placed within our hearts.

There are so many life choices we could have made, but we choose to be born Anishinaabe. We are born to help in some capacity. To be delivered within a particular Nation on Turtle Island is a gift because we choose the complex and beautiful things that come with it. When we bring our children into this world, Laurie explained that,

> We are nurturing our children while we help them find their way. We all have a purpose. We have gifts to contribute to the world. That's our role as parents is to help steer and help our children nurture and find their gifts.

Many mothers discussed the importance of sharing their roles as mothers to raise strong Spirits and help guide them to the work that is meant to be done on Earth. One of the crucial things to note about Anishinaabe motherhood is that you do not have to give birth physically - the community takes a role in raising the child as well, whether you are a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Daphne explained that,

> Even if you're not a mother, that you can still engage in a kind of mothering… taking care of the community, taking care of yourself, take care of Mother Earth; the community should be leaving a better place for the children, for the communities children to grow up in… Everybody has their roles, gifts, and things that they were taught… it should be a whole village to help.

Whether it is traditional or within Western practices, supporting mothers ensures we are raising a strong Nation and children (biologically, adopted, or honorary), because we all have an essential role to play.

Traditional Parenting

Traditional parenting was defined in a variety of ways by the knowledge contributors, with each knowledge contributor providing their own perspective. First, Cheryle defined traditional parenting "as doing something different than mainstream." Kerry offered her insights into what that might look like: "find Traditional Teachings on parenting styles. Try using medicine as a discipline. For example, use water to help you and your child. It is effective to use water, especially for child/parent conflict." The grandmothers and midwives suggested that young mothers access services and organizations to teach them about traditional mothering and what that entails. For guidance, Asinii offered a metaphor to traditional parents by using "the

Creation story to mentor parenting. I use it as a teaching tool for birthing because there are so many teachings that parallel the Creation story, like the first movement and the first sound of creating life." Moreover, Kerry recognized that, "traditional parenting is out there to do things differently." In resurging Anishinaabe culture, there is a need to re-establish the Anishinaabe parenting model, which is to infuse our traditional practices into, in terms that we see fitting, a contemporary perspective. Looking at the spiritual role of traditional methods, we go back to the foundational teaching where, Daphne explained,

> I understand that children choose their parents and they choose their parents for certain things that they know their parents can teach them. That children are a gift from Creator, and they're given to us for a short time, that we take care of them and nurture them as best we can. We have to conduct ourselves in this world that provides for the next Seven Generations.

Melanie Corbiere (as cited in Anderson, 2000) states that: "that child is your spiritual responsibility. That's what children are." (p. 162). Furthermore, Julia shared her understanding of what our role as mothers is:

> We come with our instructions, like a blueprint. We do have free will with our life on Earth, but it depends on how we support and connect with our original purpose. We have to honour our child's purpose. We are spiritual beings, and we help and support them by connecting them to their purpose and ensuring that they have a strong foundation.

What we demonstrate to our children, they will follow. We must become strong role models. in the conversation I had with Cheryle, she shared that we must model our behaviour to our children and grandchildren. This includes everything from spiritual health, physical health, and

speaking our languages. She shed light on how important it is to set a good example for your children, and it is something she remembers from both her mother and grandmother.

Pedagogies

One of the purposes of this study is to look at how our Traditional Knowledge can be transmitted to children. One of the crucial aspects of pedagogies is role modelling. Most knowledge contributors agreed that they show their children what to do. For example, Cheryle stated, “role modelling is so important.” Hiawatha expanded further by saying, “children are always going to be born, right? So you have to have a positive role model impact on these children's lives because if you don't have that, then what is there for these kids?” This a powerful question posed by Hiawatha, but Daphne took it further by adding:

> When you have children witness things, you role model for them. You have them around, you have them listening and seeing and learning, and they'll pick up things that way. Then you involve them to practice what they've been witness to and learn through that way. I think a good thing to do is pair up children with Elders and Knowledge Holders like little apprentices.

We, as mothers, set the tone for our children's relationships. We provide them with what is acceptable and what is not. Zara explained, “… it's coming back to your self-worth and mimicking what kind of relationship you want your children to have, and you set it by example, right?”

The other aspect of traditional pedagogies is that we must teach them while they are young. Courtney, who works with children, stated that,

> We share Traditional Knowledge with children because we teach them early on while their brains are just like giant sponges. The more they're being taught at a younger age, the more they will retain and hold that information. The more you practice, practice smudging and show them the medicine, trees, berries, and harvesting animals. Find a way to expose them at an early age, and then they're going to practice the same traditions.

By normalizing and exposing cultural practices at a young age, it becomes part of their way of life. The earlier you start, the better, especially during pregnancy. Courtney further added:

> It will help them develop a cultural identity with themselves. Mother and child have formed that bond, a connection during pregnancy. And you want to maintain that bond culturally. Mothers are basically teachers; since you create that bond with your baby, that's why your baby or the comfort zone is that safe place for them. They're going to always go to you for advice or just to talk and stuff like that.

If you continue traditional practices, it becomes part of their day-to-day life. Daphne explained:

> When you normalize things like smudging or having cedar tea in your life to calm you down and ground you or meditation or prayer or what have you. That becomes something that just belongs in their toolkit. It's good to do that early on. So definitely role modelling, storytelling, just whatever you think that the children should know.

Lastly, Cheryle added that mothers should try “to engage in healthy things so that they see that and they mimic, but in their way.” Maddie stressed that they should start “knowing the Seven Stages of life and the Seven Grandfather teachings [as it] is very important on a philosophical level. By knowing these, it can help with coping and the trauma that has been inflicted in our lives.” Passing on this Traditional Knowledge and these traditional practices helps shape a child’s identity and grounds who they are within their culture.

Shawl Teaching

The Shawl Teaching was something I uncovered in this research. The Shawl is a beautiful, long covering used for many purposes: it can be ceremonial, or for everyday use, or used to cover children from the elements. One of the knowledge contributors who shared her Spirit name, shared with me a portion of the teachings that relate to the Shawl Teachings. The Shawl hangs low off the woman and gently grazes the ground. It sways gently back and forth, kissing the Earth. It is one of many pieces of her bundle that keeps her grounded and connected. More importantly, the mother's Shawl can be used to shield and protect children from the elements. It is also used for children to hide behind or under when they are scared, shy, or sad. They feel a sense of protection and comfort behind the Shawl. Asinii also mentioned the importance of the Shawl in relation to Mother Earth, saying, “Mother Earth is the green shawl,” where she uses the Shawl to protect, nourish, and keep her children safe. The Shawl is protection for mother and child; it grounds her to Mother Earth and shields them both from harm.

Imagery of the Shawl appears throughout Anishinaabe stories, as well, taking different forms. For example, Johnston (2003) and McLellan and McLellan (2010) share the story about Nanaboozhoo, who made butterflies from pebbles and fallen leaves for the inconsolable and bored children. In the story, he gathered the items, put them together, then threw them up in the air. While in mid-air, the pebbles and fallen leaves turned into butterflies. As they gently floated down, the children were delighted, and it brought smiles to their faces. This is a condensed and blended version of two stories about Nanaboozhoo, who made various butterflies for the children, but it is from this story that we have created the Shawl Dance that mimics the butterfly. Often this dance is taken up by the young women who have fast feet. The Shawl is stretched out

with her arms like a feather floating in the wind as she dances. As described, we can envision the resemblance of the butterfly. She also carries the gracefulness and swiftness of her legs and feet as she matches the drumbeat.

Transformation

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Stages of Life Teachings: Wenda Bemaadiziwin zhinkaade (Fast Life stage) is where children transition into young adulthood; the caterpillar evolves and finds its freedom, a new sense of adventure, and transformation. Our young women in this stage of life change to womanhood. This stage is marked with the Berry Fast, where young women go through a ceremony of their first moon time. The Berry Fast has various teachings and preparations for young women and involves them abstaining from eating berries for one year, as well as being secluded during moon time, as she undergoes her first transformation from a girl to a woman. The ceremony is to teach her restraint and discipline of the mind and body. During this time, she learns to respect her body and ensure others respect her body as well, and she also gains guidance from knowledgeable women around her.

This teaching that was uncovered relates directly to the process of transitioning to motherhood. As a mother, you carry life and transform once the baby is born, and we change to protect this baby that was gifted to us by the Creator. Carol spoke about metaphors and ceremonies, but she also mentioned the transformation that takes place:

> I told you about changing, like the fact that women change, right? We automatically change. You're a different person altogether, and the world is different as a result. All these things are metaphors for birth. So understanding that change for women, whether we like it or not, we're going to mature. Whether we even know anything about babies,

about life. Whether we're ready for that baby, whether we're not prepared for that baby, the minute our bodies conceive, we've changed right from the first pregnancy.

This conversation about change was enlightening because it was reminiscent of the Shawl Teaching, of protecting ourselves, pregnancies, babies, and families. We undergo transformation once our bodies conceive a child. We begin to respect that process and honour the life that was entrusted to us. For some, motherhood is an easy transition. It may be harder to go through for others because it is overwhelming, or they have experienced other traumas that may impact their ability to be a parent.

This section demonstrates how women are strong, transformative, and grounded to our culture. What stood out for me in this theme is transformation. Mothers are protectors of their children but also of their communities and families because they are the knowledge carriers. Anishinaabek gaashiyag (mothers) are forever transformed to care for their children and again when they become nookimisag (grandmothers). Motherhood is this fierce protection over their kin and their families. Mothers love, protect, and are now becoming healers of their Nations.

Motherhood and Cedar Teachings

Cedar is essential to the Anishinaabek. I have learned that one of the knowledge contributor's Spirit name was in relation to cedar and she shared her connection of healing. I shared my knowledge of the Cedar Tree story with the knowledge contributor and it became important to include a theme on cedar as it is used as medicine and tools for motherhood. As we learned in the Cedar Tree story (p. 25), cedar had been birthed to us by the clan animals and Gzhe-Mnidoo. Cedar is one of the four commonly used medicines along with tobacco, sage, and sweetgrass. Courtney and Kerry shared that babies should have the four medicines in their

bundles. Kerry suggested that, leading up to the birth, mothers can have their partner or their chosen support people harvest the cedar.

A teaching that is emergent in this research is that cedar was gifted to us from our Ancestors and signified a healing cleanse especially at the time of birth. Ketrice shared that after the birth of her son, the first bath he received was the cedar bath. Maddie added that the cedar bath is important, but that she was unaware of the teaching at the time her children were born. The cedar bath ceremony was shared with me by a health care worker, who is also a grandmother. I sat in her workshop, and she shared that we should have cedar baths after birth because birth is traumatic to our bodies and babies. When passing through the canal, it is the first time the baby is experiencing a tremendous amount of pain, like the tree entering from the Spirit realm to the Earth realm. When a mother must go through a caesarian (C-section), she puts both her and the child into a life-threatening situation. Although our medical technology has advanced, many variables could put mother and child at risk. Many knowledgeable people conduct cedar baths, and they may conduct them in different ways. Before engaging in this ceremony, the person you select should be trustworthy to assist you in doing the bath. Asinii provided her perspective that we need to empower young women to take back our traditional ways. When engaging in using cedar for ceremony, it is important to have someone who is knowledgeable because the medicine is powerful and should be used for health and healing. By allowing the mother to take charge in her healing with the cedar bath, it honours the traumatic journey of the baby and mother.

Once mothers have given birth, they can drink cedar tea once again. As always, with all our medicinal teas, they should only be consumed in moderation because they can become toxic

for your body.[7] Cheryle and Daphne discussed that normalizing medicines and ceremonies at the time of birth is grounding for both mother and child. Daphne further added "things like smudging or having cedar tea in your life to calm you down and ground you… that becomes part of their toolkit." Cedar tea has so many medicinal properties and vitamins that can help with the healing of the body. It can also prevent viruses around the cold and flu season, which is necessary for mother and child. The healing properties and vitamins of cedar tea can be transferred to the baby if the mother chooses to and can breastfeed. Just like pregnancy, anything the mother consumes is transferred to her child while breastfeeding.

The Cedar Tree story and the many teachings it provides are a gift from Gzhe-Mnidoo, and we utilize the gift of cedar in various practices. This origin story reminds us of the traditional birthing practices and our motherhood experiences. It is a teaching tool that so many mothers can learn from, and I have incorporated it into my personal teaching and healing bundles.

Tiknigaan (Cradle Board)

The tiknigaan is a portable vessel that carries the baby, often created from a cedar tree. Before settlers impacted the Anishinaabe way of life, we had teachings around using the cradleboard. It is not exclusive to our culture, as many Indigenous Nations had their style of and pedagogy with the cradleboard. Photo 2 - Tiknigaan is an example of one of many styles used. The board can be made in different ways, with different fabrics, ribbons, and beads. The mother can spend her time making one during her pregnancy for her baby.

[7] I will caution that pregnant women should refrain from drinking cedar tea because it could lead to miscarriage or cause harm to the developing baby.

Photo 2 **Tiknigaan**

Laurie shared her knowledge on the cradleboard:

> The cradleboard is one of the first tools that parents create together. It's the father's responsibility to harvest the cedar. What he does is take his semaa [tobacco] and offer it to the south side of the cedar tree as that side of the tree the sun shines on the longest. He's asking the sun to follow his child throughout their life. He's also asking that cedar tree to give it life and be that medicine for his child. The women's part is to create the pouch and decorate it according to the teachings about the baby. Whether it's the baby's Spirit name, clan, colours, and all of those things to nurture what it is that child needs.

The cradleboard's main structure is the cedar board, and the rest of the material can vary. The bumper bar and the food bar are often made of ash, as a safety precaution to repel snakes should they be near. Cradleboards can be passed down from child to child or created each time a child is born. Another function of the tiknigaan is so that parents will wrap their children snugly onto the board, which emulates the womb. Laurie explained that:

> When we wrap our babies because they have been travelling so far to come to this world, sometimes you see babies flailing and things like that. We wrap them snugly; this is to reassure them that they have reached their destination, are safe, and can rest now. The cradleboard emulates that feeling of security felt in the womb.

When looking at the Creation stories in the Chapter 1, where Winona is travelling down to Earth and the shooting stars, we understand the importance of teaching the baby that they have arrived safely to Earth and that they are with their parents. Laurie provided this teaching on the wrapping of our children in the cradleboard:

> We look at teaching tools like cradleboards, and you know how it has the zigzag the way we tie it. It reminds us about their DNA, their spiritual DNA and their physical DNA, we wrap them too. We wrap them in who they are. But that it's a sacred tool for many reasons. It has a lot of health benefits for babies and the mom.

The snug wrap mimics the womb, providing that familiarity to the baby. The tiknigaan also has another purpose as shared by Asinii who stated that “it strengthens the mother's spine.” The weight from carrying the baby in front is now shifted to the mother’s back to work on her core muscles, which realigns her body and allows her pelvic floor muscles to heal. Laurie further added that, “the cradleboard strengthens the baby's back and neck muscles. So the baby grows straight and strong. It strengthens all of those muscles.” As the baby becomes secured in the tiknigaan, they develop their senses: to listen intently, observe the world around them, and take in the smells until they can engage in taste and movement when they are older. The last piece to add is that children should be placed in the tiknaagan right away so that babies will continue to feel and experience being snugly and lovingly wrapped with care, as they once were in the womb.

The moss bag was created similar to a tiknigaan. The moss bag is the bag that is attached to the cedar board. In the recent decades, we have seen baby swaddlers emerge on the market, made from a soft cotton and velcros. These swaddlers come in a variety of colours and designs. They can range in price, from $20 and upwards. From my community teachings, the moss bag was made from a variety of materials such as birch bark and moss. The moss was used as a diaper to absorb the baby's excreta (bodily waste). In conversations over the years with many Indigenous families, they quickly made the comparison that swaddlers are the commodified version of the tiknigaan and the moss bag. Photo 3 - Moss Bags and Swaddler illustrates the similarities between the two wraps. A few of my knowledge contributors shared that they had used the moss bag. Maddie, Hiawatha, and Kwe have used tiknigaans or moss bags for their children. Ketrice craved for the knowledge on how to make a tiknigaan or a moss bag. She expressed wishing that she knew what the cultural importance was about them. Kerry did not use a moss bag, but she did mention the importance of swaddling which is similar to Laurie's teachings. Dorothy stated that:

> I just made sure they were swaddled and I didn't put them into a separate room for the first six months of their life. They slept in the room with me you know when you're breastfeeding. The babies are still in the spirit world, so you have to protect them.

The moss bag and tiknigaan are typically created during the woman's pregnancy, and can be designed by the mother's preference for style. Each Nation has their own version of the moss bag and tiknigaan, but they are generally used for the same purpose of keeping a newborn baby comfortable, secure, and safe.

Photo 3 **Moss Bag and Swaddler**

Note. On the left is a traditional contemporary moss bag made of cotton, fleece, and ribbon. On the right is a swaddler, which is the western version of the moss bag.

The tiknigaan and moss bags teachings have been resurging in Anishinaabek communities over the past couple of decades. It has been interesting to see these on the market and wonder if this is appropriation, or if the health community has seen the benefits of cradleboards. The swaddler provides only one layer of cotton, whereas the moss bags and tiknigaans provide one or two layers to ensure the baby is kept warm.

Resistance and Resurgence

I asked a few of my knowledge contributors to describe what resistance and resurgence are within motherhood. I left it open-ended to see how the knowledge contributors would interpret and define these terms with regards to their own experiences. Some asked, why we would resist being a mother? Why would we not raise our children? While others thought about it and defined resistance with regards to colonization, assimilation, and patriarchal norms. Julia stated, “Resistance is the biggest, and the first breath of life is an act of resistance.” When we, as Anishinaabek, continue to have children, we are resisting colonialism and assimilation. We are returning to the teachings and having families armed with cultural knowledge. Ketrice explained that resistance and resurgence can be things like “going back to your traditions like using a midwife.” By using a midwife, we are engaging in a culturally safe environment in the comfort and safety of Indigenous midwifery practices like we have done in previous generations, bringing traditional practices to the forefront of important moments in our lives.

Asinii also agreed that resistance is related to returning to traditions: "Resistance is picking up our bundles. Give power back to the people, give power to the mothers." Carole added that "Motherhood is about resistance and resiliency." With these two points, when we have strong Anishinaabek Kweok supporting one another and raising a culturally grounded generation, good things like healing will happen. By looking through a contemporary, diversity lens, Daphne shared that:

> I think we have to create non-judgemental and open and safe spaces for people to come because they're not going to go if they don't feel safe. We need to create those spaces where teachings can be accessed from people that they can trust. Resistance rejects that kind of way and goes back to a more balanced way of living in harmony with all of

> Creation. We got back to what we were meant to do and protected plant life, animals, and Mother Earth. This is where we witness the beauty of all that into living a good life with your family and your friends, where we experience the story together.

Some of the main points – resistance as returning to our traditions and giving birth to the next generation and providing them with the teachings - is not only resisting colonialism and assimilation, but it is also contributing to the resurgence of our Nations.

Resurgence is the reawakening of cultural and traditional customs that were utilized by the Anishinaabek prior to contact. We, as Anishinaabek kweok, are taking up the task to nourish our Ancestral past with the guidance of our Elders and continued motivation of our children (Anderson, 2006). We no longer must keep our Ancestral traditions secret, such as requesting our placentas, openly supporting breastfeeding (if mothers choose or are able to do so), discussing moon times (menstrual cycles), and carrying our babies proudly in tiknigaans (cradleboards). Resurgence can happen in both rural and urban areas. When we reinvigorate our Traditional Ways of Life, we are strengthening our Ancestral connections and relationships with the Earth, which then creates the healthy Nations that we envision for our children (Simpson, 2011).

Summary

This chapter sought to answer the question: *What are Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings?* from the knowledge contributors point of views. I presented the fourteen themes that emerged and what they entail. The maternal knowledge that was shared provided a small blueprint of raising children in a contemporary setting.

The themes have shown that mothers need support, especially from their own communities and from people who are willing to understand and abide by traditions. They need midwives to help them respect their ceremonies and to fight for appropriate, culturally relevant care. Mothers need to immerse themselves in Anishinaabe culture to support and nurture themselves, and their baby. The teachings provided in this chapter were a reminder that our children are sacred beings.

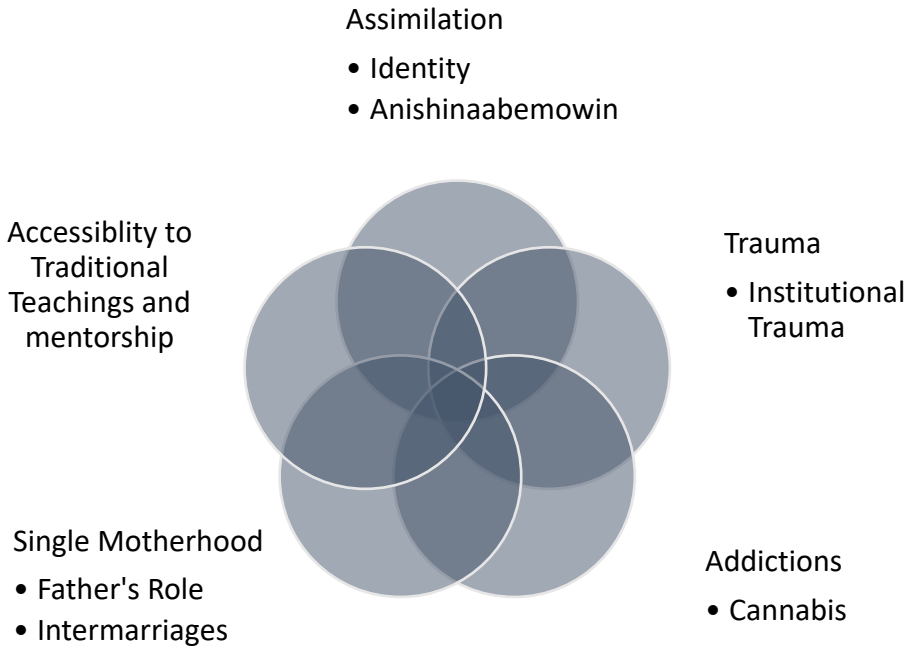
Chapter 5: Challenges, Tensions, and Strengths Findings

This chapter identifies the challenges, tensions, and strengths that the knowledge contributors identified and experienced as they attempted to use Anishinaabe maternal teachings to care for their young ones. The issues identified in this section arose out of two sets of circumstances: the first set of issues and challenges arise out of the personal challenge of grappling with the meaning of traditional maternal teachings and how to translate them into personal behaviours; the second set arise from institutions that do not know how to, or were unable or unwilling, to support Anishinaabe mothers in using Indigenous knowledge.

Challenges

The knowledge contributors of my study identified some key challenges that they have experienced or witnessed. Anishinaabe mothers face issues of trying to navigate their identity, cultural beliefs, and traumas while raising their children, and often, these issues and traumas are transmitted to their children if they do not have a good support system. Throughout my conversations, I was able to uncover the complexity of these issues. I compiled a list of five themes and six subthemes that further explore Anishinaabe mothers' challenges. I have created a visual, found in Figure 10 - Challenge Web, which illustrates how mothers can face one or more issues. Throughout this section, the strong Western and Christian violence on our culture becomes apparent, and its effects are demonstrated through the people that reside on and off reserve. In this section, I share some of their experiences and stories within each theme.

Figure 10 **Challenge Web**



Note. I have organized this Challenge Web with assimilation at the top, because the issues that began with the Indian Act have trickled out from there. As shown, these issues can be overlapping. For the purpose of structure, based on this diagram, I will be going clockwise to address the challenges.

Assimilation

Many of our communities encountered assimilation and colonization affecting families, our homes, and the way we raise our children. Asinii explained that "we are surrounded by Western culture, and we lost so much due to colonialism. We need to be empowering our people so we can help our people stand up." The violence of Western culture and forced assimilation of our people caused some of our families to be ashamed to be Anishinaabe or to reject our way of life. Daphne, who grew up longing for her community, shared her struggle to reconnect:

> It took years for me to build connections to relationships with my family members, community members, Elders, and Knowledge Holders that I was able to get access to… you have to find out who's safe to go to, what kind of knowledge they have, what kind of gifts they have, how they can support you, how to appropriately approach them and develop that relationship with them.

There was a huge rift in our communities when colonization and assimilation were imposed. Many mothers still struggle to build their communities and support systems as a result.

Identity

Whether children are raised on-reserve or within urban Indigenous communities, they do not always have access to specific education about who they are as Anishinaabek. Ketrice, who was raised both on and off reserve, shared that she was not exposed to a lot of Anishinaabek culture, and that her interaction with traditional practices was mainly through smudging. Although she knew she was Anishinaabe, she did not know fully what that entailed. Similarly, Brittany, who was raised on-reserve, stated she did not know much about who she was or what the teachings were, and described that she was told things, but never had any in-depth knowledge. Daphne reiterated these statements: “the challenges that I had was like, the number one is that I didn't have any teachings passed down to me when I growing up. I only learned who I was” as she learned more about culture and traditions. A lack of identity is significant because it can create a feeling of being lost, or not knowing who you are, or what your purpose is if you have not had the guidance. Learning the Seven Stages of Life and the Seven Grandparent Teachings, for example, and having no prior knowledge of these, can make one feel lost.

Traditional Knowledge helps to form the Anishinaabe identity, and is critical to rebuilding our communities, whether we are on or off reserve.

Cheryle explained that when she was raising her daughter, she did not engage in traditional ways until later in life when they started learning together. The learning process began when she started accessing Friendship Centre for resources, and that is where she started picking up her bundle. She mentioned that her grandchildren have been engaged with the teachings from a young age. This is the case in some families, where they want to do better for the next generation, and they can see a shift happening with their grandchildren engaging with traditional ways of doing from early ages.

The grandmothers I spoke with all engage in ceremonies and are culturally knowledgeable, there were two mothers who are still on their cultural journey, and three others were implementing the teachings in their daily lives. There were two pregnant mothers who were still learning about culture and the other two felt culturally grounded. The two midwives were knowledgeable in Anishinaabek ways of knowing.

Anishinaabemowin

All the knowledge contributors had stated that it was important for children to learn Anishinaabemowin because it is part of their identity. Anishinaabemowin is in a critical state as more fluent language speakers pass on. Hiawatha shared that mothers should “start introducing the language when women are pregnant.” She also addressed that if you cannot speak the language, it important to be around language speakers who can speak among themselves and to you. This is the alternative because not only do they, themselves, get to hear and learn the language, but their child is exposed to Anishinaabemowin as well. Zara expressed these

sentiments as well by stating: “we want to be able to go back to our language and want to be able to go back to the land. I want to raise my children and then teach them the importance of the spirituality of the land and our language.” Anishinaabek have a land-based culture and have the understanding that our language is shaped by the land. Shawanda (2021) states “the language carries a big piece of our sacred geography. When we speak Anishinaabemowin, we learn about our relationships to the geographies, histories, and stories of the land. Our minds begin to process the world differently” (para. 14). Hiawatha further explained this concept by suggesting that we should select Anishinaabemowin names for our children: “names that came from the land and the food we eat, as opposed to regular non-Indigenous names.” When we reclaim our Anishinaabe names for children, it provides them with a sense of pride and belonging to their culture. This is part of the resurgence of reclaiming our identity, language, and traditional practices.

Trauma

The Indian residential school legacy left historical traumas within our communities, including the loss of identity, addictions, abuse, severed family ties, and many other issues. Asinii, who was a young mother and uneducated about parenting, lost her children to the children services agency because she was deemed not fit to raise them. This happened to many mothers who survived Indian residential schools, and may not have had the necessary parenting skills for raising children.

The Sixties Scoop is a term used to describe the removal of babies and young children from Indigenous homes without the consent or knowledge of families or bands, based on the colonialist assumption that Indigenous Peoples were culturally inferior and unable to adequately

provide for the needs of the children. Removing children from their homes created trauma and severed the familial bond.

The next key challenge was trauma cycles. The first thing the mothers identified was to heal from our own traumas. There were a variety of traumas and abuses that the mothers faced. Not healing these traumas could lead to passing them down to their children and continuing those cycles. Some mothers could also live a life of addiction while carrying their child, and then ultimately lose them into the child services system because of it. This results in families who end up adopting their grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or cousins so that they stay within the home. The issues of adoption become complex when families take on children who came from parents who have high-risk lifestyles. Another issue is that when mothers use drugs or consume alcohol that they could potentially be harming their children with long-term health effects. Trauma occurs in a variety of ways, so it becomes up to the mother to heal from it and do better for her children or raise them the way they wish they had been raised. There is no blueprint on how to raise children but in Anishinaabe ways of knowing, we have teachings that point us in the direction. All other teachings will follow.

There are families that have a high level of fear, stress, and distrust towards institutions that opt out of hospital care and will instead have midwives. Kerry, who is a midwife, reaffirmed that “Indigenous parents are under surveillance.” The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) (n.d.) provided information that “many women reported being pressured by doctors, nurses, and social workers to give up their children shortly after birth” (para. 8). This was based on the ideology that Indigenous women could not take care of their children. Also, the cold, sterile environment was not a pleasant place to give birth. There were three knowledge contributors that indicated that they wanted to have a midwife but due to unexpected complications, they were

sent to a hospital to give birth. Courtney confessed that she was afraid of being admitted to the hospital in Thunder Bay when her water unexpectedly broke; it is known to Indigenous communities in Ontario that there is a high level of racism that takes place there. Julia, who also had a traumatic experience, was taken into surgery after giving birth. She had heard stories about doctors sterilizing Indigenous women and asked her midwife to be her eyes and ears while she would be unconscious. Zara was also rushed to the hospital during her first pregnancy because of preeclampsia, a pregnancy complication that causes high blood pressure. Though these women wanted midwifery, they were now placed into the hands of the Western medical practice. Since the Sixties Scoop, Indigenous women have been leery of institutionalized care. Kerry explained that "Indigenous bodies have been problematic" for non-Indigenous people and as Anishinaabek women, we carry that extra burden of protecting ourselves and our children before, during, and after birth.

Another form of trauma that permeates our communities is sexual assault. Both boys and girls become silent victims and do not always feel safe to tell their parent or guardian if something happens. There are many women that carry this burden into motherhood and are unable to heal from sexual abuse. Sometimes it is projected onto their children, and the trauma is perpetuated. Those children that become parents after experiencing these abuses may need extra counselling. Laurie clarified this by stating:

> I think there are women who are struggling, are struggling for a reason. There is a lot of underlying trauma there. Often a lot of sexual assaults and things like that. We need safe places where we can deal with those things, that we let them go and we can work through that. Working through those traumas and that's a really hard truth. The number one abuser of native women is native men.

Almost all of the mothers who participated have encountered some or all of the following abuse from family or their partners: mental, emotional, physical, sexual, financial, cultural, and/or spiritual abuse. Carol revealed that she is familiar with trauma in her family and the communities she works with. She shared:

> I talked to my children a lot about what happened. I told them the stories I am telling you now…. I took them to the Spanish [residential school], I sat them down in front of that place, and I said that our relatives were taken to this place and that has affected our ability to parent. My ability to parent and many things that [have] happened to you in your life comes from this place, and I said I have worked all of my life to change that not only for you but for other people as well.

Laurie commented on the traumas endured by thefts encouraged by addictions:

> Often communities know exactly who did it. But we don't say anything. By not saying anything, we're not only enabling them, but we're also risking their lives. Because being held accountable for their actions is also an opportunity for them to be held accountable, to get help, to get the help they need to heal and to recover from whatever challenges that they are facing.

Many First Nations communities are trying to heal the traumas that are embedded within their families. Each First Nation is tackling trauma in a variety of ways, trying to create financial stability, employment, education, and fostering and encouraging the adoption of traditional pathways. Some families are taking on the healing work to break the cycles.

Institutional Trauma

A few themes emerged from the Elders whom I had conversations with stateed: they were born in hospitals, the mother was alone, and there were no traditional birthing ways. These births were in a sterile environment and considered to be a doctor-centered approach. Carol explained that,

> We lost our midwives and the job was given to doctors. As a result, our women are flailing. We're talking about forced sterilization in 2002 or 2001. We're talking about missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Like these are the things that happened to a community who lost their leaders. Women have lost their leaders. They have lost the people like the warrior that was for them in the community when they lost midwives. To make sense of all of how to grow strong women and strong people. To bring the community around. To bring the community around that kind of the most vulnerable in their community, which is old people and pregnant people.

Kerry also shared that "midwives provide that common understanding. We understand the complexity of our histories." Cheryle, who has some knowledge of how she was born, recalled that: "I was born in a hospital, there wasn't any relatives, so my mom was pretty well by herself… She had to do that whole experience alone pretty much without that support or anybody." Similarly, Julia explained that when she was born, her mother was living away from her community. She said that,

> she went into labour and didn't have a long education or understanding about the process of labour. It was a very clinical setting. It was clean and very cold. She was alone except for the nurses coming to check on her once in a while and offer medication.

Kerry recalled that her own birthing experience was not good, even though she is a midwife. She was familiar with the nursing staff, as she had worked alongside them, but she wondered if it was their competing worldviews on delivering babies that may have caused her to have a negative experience. She stated that "the nurses behaviour impacts you. It is a powerful time and the most vulnerable time for women." The majority of knowledge contributors could recall that their births took place within a hospital because that's where women were encouraged to go, which then became a direct conflict with the traditional birthing practices of their Nations.

Addictions

In this section, I address the theme of addictions through a health challenge lens that emerged from conversations with Laurie. Two main themes were identified, and Laurie, a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Program Coordinator, discussed these themes from a professional point of view. The first issue identified is the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) that has plagued many of our Indigenous communities. The Centre for Disease and Control (2021) defines FASD as:

> a group of conditions that can occur in a person whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects can include physical problems and problems with behavior and learning. Often, a person with an FASD has a mix of these problems.

FASD occurs when a mother consumes alcohol during her pregnancy, and it is then passed to the baby through the umbilical cord. Laurie shared,

> My program is the largest program in the health team. To me, this is hard because in our struggles, it is affecting the well-being of our children. When people will drink during pregnancy, it affects their children throughout their life cycle and their whole lives. Often

> our communities have very little to support those with these types of complex, lifelong disabilities.

There are many children who are affected by their parents' choices, leaving them to struggle and cope with their disorders. It is important to raise healthy and strong children, but we also need to be aware of the issues that mothers face. There are mothers who are uneducated about alcohol or may not be fully aware of the effects of alcohol on the baby. Zara discussed that the father should also abstain from alcohol during his partners pregnancy, and Dorothy shared that both mother and father need to be alcohol free to have and raise healthy children. Knowledge Holders and health professionals inform mothers to abstain from alcohol so that they can minimize the risk of miscarriage, birth defects, and long-term disorders for their child.

Cannabis

Recently, cannabis has become legal, and shops have begun to emerge in our communities. With many intergenerational traumas, some individuals have used cannabis casually, which may have led them to an addiction. Some women may get pregnant and are already addicted to cannabis or could be using it casually in the pregnancy for its alleged natural health benefits. However, Laurie cautioned mothers about using it:

> We have cannabis in our communities and a lot of women are told its good for you to use during pregnancy, to help with nausea and things like that. It is a really skewed perception and there is a whole trajectory that comes with this. Similar to FASD, [there] were increased issues such as ADD, ADHD, learning and behavioural disabilities.

There has been more recent cannabis research regarding maternal use. Joseph & Vettraino (2020) state:

> the literature available for review suggests that no amount of marijuana use in pregnancy and lactation is safe. Marijuana use has the potential for adverse maternal, fetal, and long-term childhood development. Women contemplating pregnancy or pregnant should discontinue marijuana use.

Just because cannabis and alcohol are legalized, does not necessarily mean it is something good for mother and baby. The use of alcohol by pregnant women affects a baby's long-term development, so mothers should be aware of how cannabis use might affect developing brains as well. In this section I only mention cannabis because it was brought up by Laurie. When the other knowledge contributors were sharing, they generally noted drugs in general, but did not specifically identify which drugs they were referring to.

Single Motherhood

When talking to knowledge contributors, one of the challenges mentioned was single motherhood. Either witnessing it or experiencing it comes with its own unique set of challenges. The Christian ideology is that women should only have children with their husband, creating a nuclear family of mother, father, and children. As a result, a mother receives extra scrutiny if her child is born out of wedlock as she is deemed irresponsible to raise a child independently (Anderson, 2011). Anderson (2000) explains "the new family structure severely damaged women's roles… it isolated women from one another and broke down family and community systems that once empowered women" (p. 84). The Anishnaabek view children, regardless of how they were conceived, as a gift, and pregnancy as a natural part of the sex cycle. When we look back to the Traditional Kinship Model (p. 30) there is no single parenthood, as the community takes its role to help children.

Women who left abusive relationships were often looked down upon because of the ideology of the nuclear family. In Anishinaabe culture, when separation occurred, women had autonomy and were interdependent with their families. When a union ended, the children would stay with the mother and the man's belongings would sit outside the lodge. She would settle in with her family who would help support the children. Ketrice identified that "there are a lot of single moms out there, [and] usually the father is not present." She shared that she noticed a lot of her family and friends end up "doing it alone," or raising their children by themselves. Laurie provided some observations on single mothers in saying,

> I see a lot of young women raising their children alone. I feel bad for that because I feel like so many of our young men are really lost. Our women are raising the children alone, but they are also growing up quicker. They're rising to their responsibility and even though they take a break for a while to take care of their kids, they do find a way to pursue higher levels of education. They are able to nurture their families.

Here, Laurie identified the resilience and perseverance of single mothers. Moreover, she mentioned that many mothers end up returning to school to get a higher paying job to sustain their families, showing that single mothers can overcome adversity for the sake of their families.

Another aspect of single parenting is how isolating single motherhood can be. Daphne shared:

> The overall sense of isolation as a single Indigenous mother is a struggle for sure. There's that really big burden. Feels very heavy because you're often the sole person who's teaching your children and that sole support.

The single mother who lives with her child needs support. In accordance with the Traditional Kinship Model, mothers need emotional and mental support. In a contemporary lens, they also need financial support for childcare and role modeling as well.

Fathers Role

Fathers can play a huge role in raising children, but they also play a role in the pregnancy. Courtney shared that, “I know some of my friends were pregnant and they didn't have support from their partners. They were stressed out with the pregnancy.” Many of the knowledge contributors indicated that, during pregnancy, the fathers need to help take stress off the mothers because it can seriously affect them. Not only that, but fathers need to consider their lifestyle and recognize how it might be affecting the pregnancy or the mother. Zara shared that, “he should also be abstaining… Abstaining from alcohol. He should be there for the mother, being supportive. Then no matter what happens, like the father of children should always support the mother when she's carrying those children.” Maddie further explained why women should be selective when choosing a partner, noting that “the first year of life is so important. One of the first teachings of life is love. The development of the fetus is the first stage of life and we can raise a whole generation that can be changed by this.” Almost all of the women mentioned how important the father’s role is and why Anishinaabe women should be selective, especially if they plan on getting pregnant, because it is crucial to the development of the baby and their wellbeing to have a supportive partner. During the time of birth, some men are present by choice. If the father is not present, Kerry offered the suggestion to build the support around you during this powerful time: “One person can't be everything. It is important to build a network of support. Like a web of support. In First Nations, it was everyone's responsibility to create a safe space.”

When it is fathers that are creating the safe space, they should also take note that, although not physically, they are pregnant as well. Kerry shared: “they have to support your pregnancy and create a safe and sacred environment. The home should be alcohol- and cannabis-free because it is the safest way for pregnancy.” The role of the father is to create that safe space for his child even if he is not with the mother of his child.

Intermarriages

Intermarriage or raising bicultural children can be challenging. This can lead to some challenges on how the child will be raised and which community they will reside in. Laurie stated,

> For families who are from different nationalities or intermarriage, you want to teach both of their cultures and their spirituality and things like that. This also effects the transmission of Anishinaabe teachings. We have to prioritize it. We must become the people that we want our children to be. We can't give them what we don't have.

Four other mothers discussed the issues with having bicultural children. It can be a challenge, but it is something that each parent should take on. Kwe provided an example:

> The dad is Ojibwe and Mohawk. His beliefs are a little bit different than mine, and his are little bit more firm. I guess that's a thing to is if you have a child with somebody from another First Nation. I was raised Catholic and know a little more of the language and culture now just because I found things out on my own. But the dad was raising very differently, so he has very different beliefs.

Daphne further added that there is a reality of tensions arising:

> As a single Indigenous mother, it's also important that the kind of partner you have for your child will have an effect on your experience as a mother… Raising my daughter with Indigenous teachings is a bit of sore spot for him because of a personal conflict with him and that he didn't think it was fair that I was teaching her about my culture and not about his culture, which should be more his role, but that's just our personal conflicts.

Courtney addressed Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe relations as her and her partner made the decision to raise their child on the father's reserve, so she noted that she had to work to ensure her daughter received Anishinaabe teachings. Cheryle noted that one of her grandchildren is bi-cultural and bi-racial but the mother, who is not Anishinaabe, embraces her son's culture. The mother works with the father to ensure that their child is culturally grounded and connected to his territory. When addressing bicultural relationships, it is challenging to keep Anishinaabe or Indigenous teachings at the forefront because both (or all) cultures may want or need to be represented and taught.

Accessibility to Traditional Teachings and Mentorship

In this section, I describe the issues mothers faced accessing Traditional Teachings. When discussing accessibility in this section, I define it as 'the ability to access cultural services.'

One accessibility issue that was identified was mentorship – finding people a mother can trust and that can provide access to Anishinaabe knowledge. Daphne shared that people residing off-reserve often become disconnected from our Traditional Ways of Life, and that when they try to immerse themselves in the culture, it makes it difficult because "it takes years to build connections." Ketrice explained that "there needs to be more Indigenous mentorship. I want to

access programs and be supported." Furthermore, this sentiment was shared by Laurie who stated: "I guess my biggest concern for young moms is going it alone then also not having other women to guide them, having their mothers or grandmothers that they can rely upon." In addition to Ketrice's concerns over having accessibility to general teachings, she shared, "I wish there was a list of ceremonies I can access that give a list of ceremonies and teachings. It would be easier if there was an App I can access that tells me why these ceremonies are important." There are places mothers can go, such as Friendship Centres, Indigenous programming in various institutions, and community members, who could provide this type of knowledge, but some mothers may not have any idea where to start.

Tensions

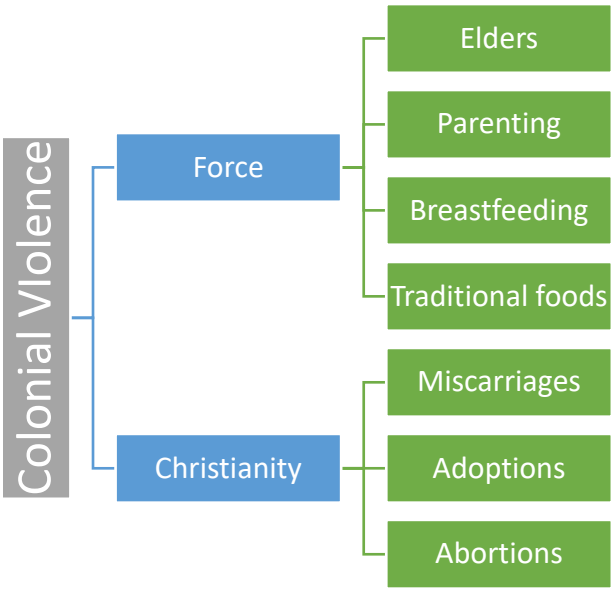
In this section, I will be discussing the tensions that emerged. These tensions were primarily based on common issues mentioned by a few of the knowledge contributors. Through conversations, it became apparent that there is still stigma around certain issues. The themes that were unveiled had colonial violence that stemmed from forcing Christianity upon Indigenous Peoples and forcing them to adjust their traditional values and ways of life. Since the opening of residential schools, many Indigenous families were forced to send their children to these institutions. There was abuse that occurred in many forms (as previously mentioned in the Trauma section of the Literature Review chapter). The children who survived these schools returned to their homes as adults, and suffered from fear, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. The Catholic Church created violence that impacted the Indigenous population, which a lot of our community has internalized. This negativity trickled down and has compromised many

aspects of Indigenous life, including our Elders, parenting, breastfeeding, traditional foods, miscarriages, adoptions, and abortions.

In Figure 11 - Tension Chart, I have created a flowchart to illustrate the impact of colonialism and its use of force on various aspects of Indigenous Peoples' lives. This chart demonstrates how these tensions created an outside force that created violence that the parent absorbed, even if the effect of colonization and assimilation is subtle. Our Nation is not static, and we can have the opportunity to weave our culture and embrace the conveniences of new ways of living created by the Canadian population.

Anishinaabe mothers should have the freedom to raise their children in either belief system should they feel it is appropriate for their family. The notion of 'force' was brought up, and it became very interesting as some potential knowledge contributors declined to have conversations about my research because they felt they were not 'traditional' enough, or that they conflicted with my research. This dichotomy of Christian and traditional ideologies was interesting, and I wondered if this was a tension that mothers are feeling? If so, why are they feeling it? What is causing it?

Figure 11 **Tension Chart**



Note. I used the tension chart because it demonstrates that our communities are affected by the colonial violence, either directly or indirectly. It infiltrates our communities in so many ways that we often do not think about how Christianity and force impact our ways of life.

Force is grouped into the subthemes of Elders, Parenting, Breastfeeding, and Traditional Foods because I often found these to be the areas where Western expectation is introduced. I then grouped together Miscarriages, Adoptions, and Abortions under Christianity, as these topics are typically viewed from a Christian lens, as opposed to a traditional lens.

As stories unfold of the uncovering of children's remains at the sites of Indian residential schools (Assembly of First Nations, 2021), further tension grows between Christianity and traditional ways. For those individuals learning about the Indian residential schools and the mass graves being uncovered, conversations in our communities have occurred regarding what this means for Indigenous peoples moving forward, and it raises questions about the influences of the church (Pickard, 2021). Although there are many reasons why people will engage in Christianity or Anishinaabe traditional lifestyles, we should not be shaming either way – some families will

reject Traditional Ways of Living, and embrace Christianity, and vice versa. It is my hope that this research will lead to the embracing of the remaining culture and language left with us, and to understand what has been stolen from our culture. As a Catholic and an Anishinaabe, I know the two systems and understand the history, but I try to privilege Anishinaabe ways of knowing before Western and Catholic ways of living when teaching my children.

Force

One of the recurring themes was the idea of force. Several mothers indicated that they would not force their child into ceremonies, cultural practices, or the teachings. Interestingly, some mothers would baptize their children, but did not see this as using force. Rather, it was tradition that their parents wanted them to engage with because they, themselves, were baptized as children. I wanted to understand at this point how the term 'force' was defined by my knowledge contributors, as there were three mothers who stated "I don't want to force my child into it" when discussing Anishinaabe Traditional Teachings. I began to ask what force looked like, or if they could describe it for me. Hiawatha explained that when engaging in traditional practices,

> it's better to start them young, that way they could grow with it and learn more. It'd be hard for them to get into their culture say like in adolescent age, or even at ten years old, they would probably shy away from it just because it's unknown. If you adapt them then they're born… newborn, babies, toddlers, then it would be something normal to them.

Instead of looking at it as force, we are exposing them to cultural knowledge at the beginning of their life. Julia also added that our cultural knowledge is not just "supplementary teaching," but it

is foundational. If children are immersed in our ways of life, to them it becomes part of their being. Zara provided her perspective to the term ‘force’:

> I don’t want to say we’re forcing our cultural beliefs, but I mean, that’s just who we are as Anishinaabe People… I look at it as awareness… You’re bringing that education because we lost it due to residential school. We lost our culture, our values, our beliefs, we lost all of that and now we are having to re-educate ourselves. We’re having to bring awareness back to ourselves. What are these ceremonies that we used to do? I feel so disconnected from it. How can I start to engage my children in this way of learning? Thinking again, because it’s gone and you do something you will have two different viewpoints. One parent and the other parent. One parent might not believe in, one parent does know and wants to start going that way. They may not like it but the only way you can do it is through awareness and education.

When we engaged in conversations in defining what ‘force’ was, it was apparent that some knowledge contributors had issues with trying to define it and were comfortable with not introducing Traditional Knowledges, perhaps because of uncertainty or lack of knowledge. But what about mothers who did not have access to teachings, or grew up without the culture and have interest in Anishinaabe culture and traditional practices? I explore this question in the next theme.

Christianity

Christianity was synonymous with the term ‘force’ throughout my conversations. There were four mothers who indicated that they were more Catholic than they were into the traditional practices. When trying to recruit knowledge contributors, I had two mothers decline because they

indicated that they were not traditional enough for my study. Although my study does not require them to be traditional or Christian, just that they share their experiences as Anishinaabe mothers, they still did not want to participate.

When the mothers indicated that they were not traditional, I was interested to learn why they thought that. I began asking them questions on various teachings. We talked about the Seven Grandfather teachings and how it was important to them. They discussed traditional foods and how it was critical to bring those related teachings back. They also mentioned that they understood traditional protocols and ceremonies but often felt there were many mixed messages because Elders and Knowledge Holders have different ways of doing things. It felt overwhelming for them to try and follow all the different Traditional Teachings that conflicted with one another.

Elders

The knowledge contributors discussed that, when accessing Traditional Knowledge, we should turn to our Elders. As mentioned by my knowledge contributors, however, accessing Elders or Knowledge Holders can be difficult as they each have a specific way of doing things. One of the questions I asked was: If I am learning my culture, who would I seek out? Almost everyone referred to Indigenous organizations such as Friendship Centres, or community centres. Brittany noted that, in a quest for Elders or Knowledge Holders, “there are so many people that have different teachings or the way they conduct ceremonies. Although, some may conduct ceremonies and teachings different, we should respect one's way of teaching.” Dorothy stated that when looking for guidance, women should:

> Watch your Elders for a month minimum. And watch how they conduct themselves. Watch how they talk on a daily basis, and how the men treat the women…stay away from women Elders that gossip. That's so important just because they have cultural knowledge doesn't mean that they're awesome. Sit and watch them. That's my number one advice for young people trying to find an elder that they want to learn from.

The younger knowledge contributors recommended asking around about the Elders to get a sense of who they are and what they are about, while others mentioned asking for referrals from friends and trusted family members to see who they speak to and to receive introductions to Elders. When thinking about first time mothers who want to engage in traditional parenting, it can be overwhelming to understand who to ask and where to go for specific knowledge. It my hope that this research can guide them in a good direction, should they want to access the knowledge.

Parenting

There were a few subthemes that came up under the topic of parenting. The first is knowing that your role as a mother is to teach. Dorothy explained, "as a mother, you have 100% right to teach your child whatever. Don't be shy about telling them anything because you have 100% right. That's your job as a mother, to teach." Many of the mothers indirectly said this, including Kwe, who spoke about mother-daughter relationships: "my grandma said that my daughter should be with me, I have to teach her about her moon time, boys, and stuff like that – mothers are the nurturing parent." Laurie explained that "we help steer and help our children nurture and find their gifts."

Another subtheme as a mother was to do better than how you were raised. Kerry stated that mothers should "resist old patterns and break cycles. Ask how can I do better? Try to resist falling into old patterns. Also, have patience with yourself. Find role models to share parenting stories with and get parenting advice from." Maddie shared that she went on a mother/daughter retreat to heal her relationship with her mother and so that she could become a better mother. This was a rebirthing ceremony for both to heal and come together. Understanding that Anishinaabe mothers can raise their children in a positive and nurturing home is fundamental to raising strong Nations and resurging Mino-Bimaadiziwin (living a good life).

Another subtheme that arose was with reference to the *attachment parenting model,* which is looking at how the child is attached or unattached from their mother or parents (Sears & Sears, 2001). Kerry stated that "the attachment parenting model is a Western model. We should be looking at our version of Western ways of parenting." Maddie wished she had known about the attachment parenting model before the *'cry it out'* parenting model because traditionally we would not let the children cry it out as it is psychologically damaging to a child when left long periods crying. When her oldest son was born, the 'cry it out' method was popular in the mid 2000's, which involves the suggestion that parents leave their babies alone while they cry so that they learn to self-soothe, which in theory teaches the baby that they need to put themselves to sleep (Blau & Hogg, 2005).

Breastfeeding

If we consider the Creation story of Winona, she is the first woman to birth her children on Earth. She is also the first to breastfeed her children. Once our babies are born, we bring them to our breast to feed them. Asinii stated that "breastfeeding is the first teacher for your child. It is grounding and creating a strong foundation. It is the first treaty." Almost all the knowledge

contributors shared their experiences with breastfeeding. Some of their children latched on easily, such as Julia, who had a complicated delivery but woke up from the anesthesia when her baby latched on and started breastfeeding. Kwe also mentioned how easy her breastfeeding journey was: “I felt like it was just healthier and saved money.” Other knowledge contributors had difficulty with latching their babies to the breast. Kerry shared her story with regards to a latching issue and states “He was intubated by the pediatrician at the birth, I feel it was unnecessarily rough. He was crying a lot initially and wouldn’t latch then later, sleepy and having trouble.” Carol was told that she could not breastfeed her child because he was colicky. Some women end up feeling quite discouraged and opt for formula. This was my experience as well, where my first child did not breastfeed, but I pumped milk for six months determined he receive breastmilk. To address some of these issues, we now have breastfeeding clinics, which can help to discourage mothers from sharing milk or feeling as though they must opt for formula instead. This is often situated within hospitals and could make Anishinaabe mothers hesitant about returning especially if they had a negative interaction with the health care staff.

Traditional Food

This theme was not in the original line of questioning but there was mention of it by the knowledge contributors. While Zara was sharing her pregnancy experience with her second child, she noted that during her entire pregnancy, she chose to select healthier food choices. Zara shared: “I swear she made me eat healthy. She wanted greens, like all I could eat was greens. I basically had to go vegan my whole pregnancy because I did not want meat.” This was the first mention of healthy eating by any of the mothers. Later, Laurie mentioned traditional foods and stated:

> whenever there was a fresh killing the community that, that the pregnant women would always have a choice of the organs because they knew that they needed that iron to nurture babies. Bone development and things like that. And so to help, you know, also prepare the woman's body for child birthing.

It was something that stuck with me because Indigenous women are more likely to get gestational diabetes, and this could be avoided if we are careful with our diets (Voaklander et al, 2020). Zara's mention of her diet reminded me of conversations with other mothers in my life, and how they shared their experiences with gestational diabetes, which forms in pregnancy when the placenta cannot process the excess glucose (sugar) properly. As the conversations progressed, Ketrice mentioned, "I wish there was more education on traditional foods and the teachings instead of just avoid fast food." Seasoned parents and doctors will state to avoid fast food places because of the junk food that they provide, but for Indigenous women, there is little to no direction on what traditional foods they can eat instead. Hiawatha, who is a chef, provided insight to this:

> I notice when I cater, there are Native kids there and honestly, majority of the kids were picky, they didn't touch it. And there were some kids that did…So I feel like having kids to try and expose them to these traditional foods at a younger age… or even exposed to this processed, McDonald's fast food drive-thru. That's what these are used to because it's fast, quick, cheap, affordable. But then if we give them wild, fresher fish, or anything like that, it's more protein that is healthier, and we want that because you want your kids to live as long as they can.

Hiawatha brought up a few considerations such as affordability, accessibility, and early exposure. This is a challenge and tension because many parents may not have thought of this,

especially because eating healthier is typically more expensive and can take more preparation, and, as a result, many Anishinaabe families opt for easier, cheaper food. This tends to occur due to not having education on nutrition or the need to exercise, which leads to its own complications later in life.

The other aspect of this is that there are many First Nations that do not have access to healthy foods. As I was thinking about traditional foods, I realized that our diets have become colonized: we have become aware of how sugar and its many names will filter into our foods, how it is a new challenge to learn how to read food labels, and so forth.

Hiawatha also mentioned that it is important to provide early exposure to traditional foods for children so that they begin to prefer healthier and traditional foods over fast food. This is part of reclaiming our culture, returning to traditional foods like wild rice, corn, beans, squash, wild meats, fish, traditional teas, and others. Kerry shared that "our foods are guided by the mother and are used to create cultural support." When we educate our mothers on traditional foods, it can lead to early exposure for our children.

Miscarriages

There were four knowledge contributors that shared their miscarriage experiences. Due to the sensitivity around this topic, I will not be identifying them. Throughout our conversations, I could see their yearning to know those Spirits, but the knowledge contributors have healed. The loss of a baby or Spirit is very disappointing no matter what week the loss occurs at because the mother has already started the bonding with their child. In addition, there may need to be medical intervention to help remove the baby and placenta which could be a very painful process. Two

out of the four knowledge contributors that discussed their miscarriages also looked at the cultural teachings behind it. Knowledge Holder Laurie provided a teaching:

> sometimes things happen, and our children leave us. It's not an issue of fault. One of things we are told is that maybe something happened then that Spirit decided it wasn't the right time. So they decided to wait a bit and come back later.

Since their Spirits are sensitive enough to travel between worlds, they have the ability to come and go, but we have to make the Spirits feel welcomed and loved. Laurie further added, "but for those Spirits who don't make it, we know there is always a reason for their journey. Part of healing may be to find and take comfort in the teaching that they traveled so far to bring." This was the Traditional Teaching of miscarriages.

The Catholic view on miscarriages is that women often suffer in silence, and the woman could be blamed for the loss of her own child. Some women often wonder if their child will make it to heaven because they were not baptized in the eyes of God. Despite one's culture or religious affiliation, the loss of a child is devastating, and mothers need support to heal their hearts. Currently, there are no specific Indigenous programs to assist mothers during this time of grieving.

Adoptions

When examining this theme, I noted three aspects to adoption. The first is that some women give up their children for other women to raise because they are not ready mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. The second aspect I identified is that mothers who have addictions may lose their children to the child welfare system, or children are adopted at birth and the adoptive family takes on any health issues the child may have from the mother's addictions. The

last aspect I recognized is not legally adoption, but it is when the mother loses custody and becomes the visiting parent.

There were two knowledge contributors that had adopted children. I am not naming them in this section to protect the children who may not know they are adopted or the circumstances around their adoption. When I was talking to the two knowledge contributors, we got into the conversation on how many children they had. They numbered them and stated it was discussion they had with their children and their partners. From a spiritual view, the first knowledge contributor stated that the addition to their family was that "another woman was the doorway." She spoke with her family about bringing in a new addition to the family and stated:

> [the baby] was going to be apprehended at birth… [I spoke with my family to] let them know I wanted to put in a plan of care because there was no one else in our extended family who was going to be able to take care of [the baby].

It is not an easy task for the families that choose to take in these children, as there are criteria that need to be met to raise these children. Not only do they need be loved but they also need a safe space and assurance that the families can financially afford to take them in. Two of the mothers that adopted children spoke about the challenges they face, with one knowledge contributor stating: "it's affecting their identity, it's affecting their self-esteem. And they have a lot of struggles because of that." The second knowledge contributor understood the challenges of involving the biological parents and stated: "I have two adopted children, and I've always worked really hard to ensure that they had connection to their biological parents, but also recognizing that they lost their children because they were not well." This is where the self-worth portion for children becomes important. This knowledge contributor further stated that they are

“caring parents and they know they have us, but they also have that that hole inside of them and it's a trauma that they carry. I recognize that.”

Children can be taken from the mother because of the breakdown of a relationship. Carol discussed that losing a child in a custody battle is like having to give up a child for adoption. She was a good mother, but the judicial system ruled against her because of financial reasons and in the eyes of the court, she was unable to raise her children. She talked about this:

> But if we’re strong and know who we are, know our culture… this helps our ability to bond and stand up for each other, like when you have new knowledge, when you have confidence, when your self-esteem is as good as it can be, that’s what makes motherhood really less vulnerable.

In the end, Carol was reunited with her children, but her losing her children was a difficult time in her motherhood journey.

Abortions

The topic of abortion is looked down upon because of Christian influence, as they see abortion as morally unacceptable. There are many reasons why a mother might have an abortion. Dorothy explained that:

> when we’re talking about young mothers having abortions and the negativity about abortion, it comes mostly from Catholic and Christian upbringing. We were nomadic, it wouldn’t be good practice to have 15 kids at once. We knew the herb that would terminate pregnancies - it wasn’t negative. Some moms had to abort for practical reasons like the pregnancy wasn’t going well or there were lots of complications, so she would drink the tea... We had controlled birthing and pregnancies.

This was the Anishinaabe perspective on abortions. Although this topic was not discussed by other knowledge contributors, it is a reality that women face within our communities. Women have the right to choose abortion if they think it is right for them, for whatever their reasons may be. Dorothy reinforced this idea, mentioning the different reasons a mother might have to abort, including practicality, and the reality of a nomadic lifestyle.

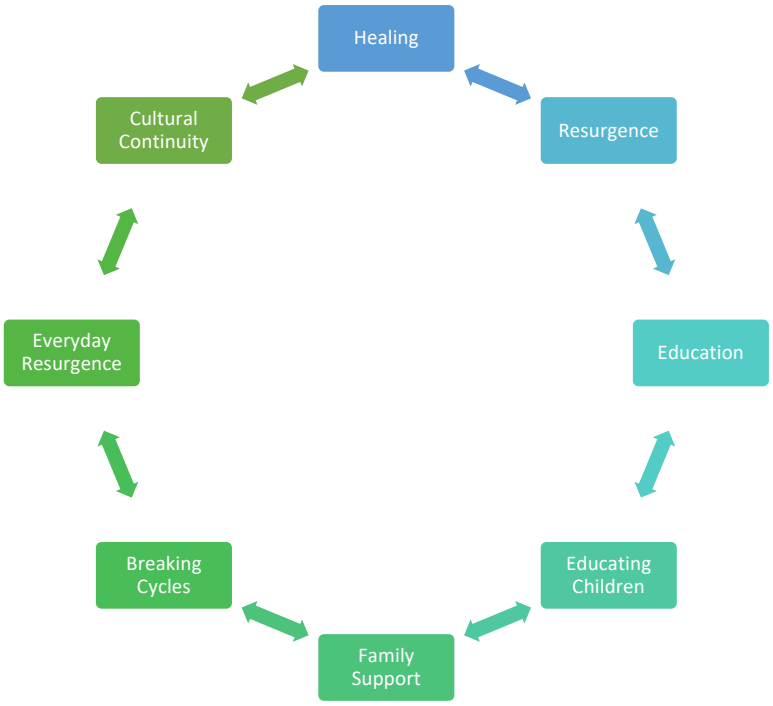
Conclusion

These tensions are complex because they involve two colliding worldviews – Christianity and traditional Anishinaabe. Studying these tensions is not meant compare traditional Anishinaabe teachings and Christianity, but to illustrate how Christianity is still influencing our communities. By bringing back our teachings, Anishinaabe communities can break free from ongoing colonization and Christian ideologies that have infiltrated them.

Strengths

In this section, I will share the strengths and successes of Anishinaabe motherhood as experienced by knowledge contributors. I discuss themes of education, family support, and breaking intergenerational trauma. Although this is a shorter portion, I want to highlight how mothers are raising their children, what they are doing successfully, and why they are doing it. I have provided Figure 12 - Success Cycle because it became relevant to how the participating mothers perceived their success within their families. Of course, these successes are not just limited to what is listed here, as there are many other factors that contribute to raising children in healthy environments.

Figure 12 **Success Cycle**



Note. There is no starting point in this diagram, and it is multi-directional. There is no direct order as many of these can happen simultaneously. Each mother found a formula that worked for her and has been utilizing the tools in her parenting bundle[8] to break intergenerational cycles and engage in everyday acts of resurgence.

Traditional Education

Having a traditional education is so important to mother and child. Ketrice explained that "having exposure to the culture before the baby is born is important because you are more prepared, more knowledgeable." While gaining access to traditional education can be a challenge, most knowledge contributors suggested accessing local Friendship Centres,

8 The parenting bundle are the sacred tools we use to raise culturally grounded children by nurturing their emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical needs.

Indigenous health services, and utilizing online resources for Traditional Knowledge. Maddie added that culturally supporting mothers through education, “sets the foundation and the traditional ways of life for the relationship.” Julia also shared that our way of living is “a healthier way of living” - it is bringing that cultural support and reconnecting a part of ourselves that has been severed.

Educating Children

Another aspect to education is with regards to educating children, and teaching them good physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Cheryle explained that we are our child’s first teacher, and we need to role model good behaviours like healthy relationships, healthy eating, physical activity, and independence, which allows our children to build their Anishinaabe identity in their own way. Both Cheryle and Hiawatha expressed that we should acknowledge and reward children. This can take the form of praise or sharing news with other family members on something that they are doing well in. It builds a child’s confidence and character when parents show their pride in them.

When we raise children, it is important for a mother to recognize her own triggers. Sudden outbursts can be traumatic for children. A few mothers talked about knowing your triggers, identifying them, healing from them, and moving on from them. An example of identifying triggers and strengthening our positions as mothers came from Zara, who demonstrated this notion by stating:

> I made it a point to walk every day, to actually continue exercising and just completely take care of myself, and with her it was the realization that I wanted better for myself at the same time and that meant with my relationships. That meant everything around me.

Kerry added that when we take care of ourselves in a good way, it is our well-being and our connectedness with who we are that will be healing to both us and our Ancestors. We will become stronger mothers for our children. As well, we are setting the intentions for our relationship with our children.

Family Support

One of the issues identified by knowledge contributors for Anishinaabe motherhood was having family support. Maddie talked about her grandparents being there and witnessing other grandparents help with their grandchildren. She explained that, "pregnancy is a celebration of life. Our grandparents are our biggest support." In addition, Courtney added that: "my Nana is one of my biggest teachers because she does a lot of the traditional practices and like any problems that I have, I go to her." The family support in teachings is critical to expanding a child's knowledge base. Hiawatha shared that for her, Anishinaabemowin is transmitted with the help of her aunty. She stated: "teach the language as much as you can, even when the baby is in the womb. If you are talking in the language like my aunty who's trying to talk the language even if I'm not a fluent speaker, but I'm listening to my aunt and repeating the language."

Family support is critical, and Daphne described the importance of supporting Anishinaabe mothers:

> I think women are the heart of the communities, …because if there are any spiritual and emotional connections, we need to care about them, because we need lift them up and empower them because of that connection in that sacred ability to create life. Through that, they have a unique ability to see things through their intuition. They have a way of

> envisioning things and understanding things. And to disempower, I think, is a detriment society in communities, no matter where you are.

Knowledge contributors discussed yearning for the traditional kinship system, similar to what is outlined in Figure 2 – Traditional Kinship Model (p. 30). They want to see healthy people, healthy communities, come together and resurge our traditional systems because it provides mothers with the support they need, whereas Western societal pressures can have them feeling like they need to endure the process alone.

Breaking Intergenerational Cycles

This is the biggest theme that came out of the strength and success of Anishinaabe motherhood. It was generated through listening to stories of how mothers were able to remove themselves from toxic and unhealthy relationships – it had me in tears time and time again. These stories demonstrated resilience: despite the generations of toxic cycles, my knowledge contributors were able to break free. Maddie discussed why we have to break the cycles: "Our communities have been broken and there has been lack of cultural upbringing. There are a lot of single moms, and their struggles are huge… it is all trauma related." Courtney stated that it was her mother who taught her what a strong Anishinaabe mother can do, explaining, "my mom chose her children over drugs and alcohol or anything like that."

Zara mentioned that mothers must make choices daily, and that her self-worth is important. She explained:

> First thing that comes to mind is self-worth and it has to do with the role intergenerational trauma played. Even just saying it just sucks because we're experiencing what our grandmother experienced, and what our mother experienced, and it is slowly changing

> like that, the intergenerational. But at the same time, it's with our generation, like my generation, that it's really going to change because we're the ones that are learning more about the teachings, we're the ones that are being able to openly talk about and voice ourselves when it comes to experiencing sexual abuse, emotional abuse, mental abuse. Then finally being able to say no to those unhealthy relationships.

Ketrice explained that she wanted to do better for herself by exposing her child to their culture: "I am the first in my family to do things, I am breaking intergenerational cycles. I want my child to be immersed in the culture, whereas I didn't grow up with it." Throughout my conversations with my knowledge contributors, I noted that it seemed important for mothers to engage in cultural practices to break intergenerational cycles. After generations of Indigenous Peoples being removed from their traditional practices, it felt important for these mothers to reconnect those lost ties, to ground both themselves and their children.

A subtheme that surfaced as important to the breaking of intergenerational cycles was the importance of knowing your self-worth. Many Anishinaabek went generations thinking they were worthless or not good enough, just by virtue of being Indigenous. Residential schools were designed to make our people ashamed of who they were, where they are from, and what they valued. Being told that your Indigenous identity is wrong is psychologically damaging. Children who experienced residential schools had to ensure mental, emotional, and physical abuse, which lead to trauma and abuse in their own families.

Most women did speak to the importance of self-worth, and what setting an example to your children looks like. Teaching your children and knowing your own self-worth is important because we are reminding our children that we matter, our culture matters, and our lives matter. Zara provided an important teaching that was shared with her:

> I remember talking to an Elder and she had told me, 'Well, you can stay in your relationship and live another five years how you've been living. Living this false identity, not being authentic, and just keep living the way you're living and perceive that everything is okay.' Then she said, 'or you can leave, you can choose to leave. Your life will be completely different. You're going to struggle. It's going to be hard, and there are days you're going to be crying because the loss of what you left behind.' She said 'I'm telling you from experience, the next 5-years isn't going to change. It's going to be the same, no matter what that person is telling you. It's not going to change… He will tell you all these things every six months or whatever it is. Nothing will change.' Just the realization that if my daughter sees that and thinks it's okay, I'm continuing that cycle…

Zara reflected on intergenerational cycles not only from a personal perspective, but also from a historical perspective. She also noted the influence she can have on her own daughter, who watches the choices she makes, understanding that she has the ability to break the cycles she has witnessed. Similarly, Daphne shared:

> I think what is really important going forward is any teaching are about respect and knowing your body, knowing yourself. Any teachings to help women and children know how to respect themselves and to teach others to respect them, to know their own abilities, their own power, and how they deserve to be treated. And they should know humility. But in my opinion, it shouldn't be used to teach them to be silent or to devalue themselves in any way.

Understanding how the cycles of abuse still affect our individual behaviour and our communities, but severing ourselves from it entirely, can raise a whole new generation of strong, Anishinaabe niniwag minwaa kweok (men and women). No one else, especially white settlers,

gets to tell you that you are not good enough – you have to learn to know yourself that you are good enough. You are enough. You specifically chose to be born into Anishinaabe culture.

The final subtheme involved showing our children healthy love and what that entails. Almost all of the knowledge contributors discussed healthy love in some capacity, such as Courtney, who stated: “It's my responsibility to ensure that my [child] has a healthy, happy safe life.” Asinii brought in a spiritual aspect by sharing, “our babies are more spiritual than physical because they just came from the mnidoo [Spirit] place, and they are still tethered to the spiritual realm. Speak kindly to the baby, sing songs, teaching about their clan, colours, name.” By showing our children that they are loved and respected, it sets the tone on what they will tolerate, and is also important to their well-being. Cheryle reiterated: “Love is very important and especially in contemporary times where we are seeing this resurgence come back. We also have a lot of sickness too, because I'm also thinking of all those children in care right now.” By showing our children a healthy lifestyle, including healthy love, we can help remove them from the colonial systems that aim to take them away. Zara stated:

> To be able to teach our children what healthy love is, what unconditional love is, and being able to teach them all of those, all of those values of compassion, and kindness, and respect, and how we are warriors. So stepping outside of everything that's happened to us as Anishinaabe people.

This is an important subtheme - to teach our children what healthy love looks likes is crucial because many of our relatives may not have experienced or witnessed what that is and what that entails. Children were taken away from their parents and put into residential schools, so they never felt or witnessed that healthy love from their parents. Then they have their own children but do not have the parenting skills or emotional capacity to teach their children what a healthy

and loving support home looked like because they did not have the role models to teach them the same. Many families were taught that abuse is love. This led to a lot of children being taken away and put into child welfare systems. When those children are taken away from their parents, the cycle continues.

Conclusion

This chapter was comprised of the challenges, tensions, and strengths of Anishinaabe motherhood. What became apparent was that there are more external challenges that make it harder for mothers to engage in traditional practices. I noticed that the tensions around Traditional Teachings were more about internal struggles caused by Christianity and colonization. Where do mothers engage with the teachings and become confident in raising their children within their culture? The strength section revolved around education, family support, and breaking intergenerational cycles that are caused by the ongoing assimilation and colonization of Anishinaabek. Even though there are many challenges working against mothers in becoming culturally grounded mothers, they are crafting warm and loving homes. They are tackling and breaking intergenerational cycles because they wanted better for their children. Those mothers who have chosen to raise their children differently took a stand against colonialism and its negative effects. When I spoke to the grandmothers of this study, they identified this beautiful shift that is happening with their grandchildren. This demonstrates how resilient and powerful Anishinaabe mothers are and are becoming. Anishinaabe mothers are raising Indigenous children to be proud of who they are, children who value their self-worth, children who will know about intergenerational traumas, but who will not fall victim to those

trauma cycles. These children will be the ones creating an uprising by bringing healthy love into the equation, and by being positive role models to both older and younger generations.

Chapter 6: Discussion

In reviewing the stories told by knowledge contributors, many of them found Traditional Knowledge because they went seeking it; they began a journey of Mino-Bimaadiziwin (living a good life) and had a thirst for learning who they are as Anishinaabek. Others had pieces of the puzzle but did not have a full grasp of who they are. The identity piece was emergent and begins with the individual's Creation story. I have attended gatherings where various Elders stated that Indigenous people should know their Nation's Creation story. From there, we come to understand how we came to Earth and are situated in that particular geography of the land. Upon learning Dorothy's teachings on identity and reflecting on my children's entrances to the world, I always share their Creation stories with them. When I spoke to Zara about her Creation story and entry to the world, we had a great discussion as she identified some of her life's challenges. These challenges include not only relationship challenges but also health challenges. Taking our Nation's Creation story and our own Creation stories are teachings to assist in building strong identities for our children. Knowing who we are as Anishinaabek does impact how we view the world despite the journey we have selected.

Trauma

A big theme that I did not expect to come out was trauma. Many of our families were and still are married[9] to the traumas and abuse. Some cope with drugs and alcohol and perpetuate the intergenerational abuse cycle. Sometimes the young people are attracted to the glamorized life

9 To be married to trauma and abuse is when the victim lives in survival mode and has the inability to identify that many of their responses are rooted in fear. It takes years of counselling to heal individuals or families.

they imagine to be part of the Fast Life Stage of drugs and alcohol. This could lead to addictions, which leads to homes being broken into and items being stolen. These actions can add to the trauma a family is already dealing with. Some people recover, while others do not. Many families have been ripped apart because of this, allowing child welfare societies to sanction non-Indigenous workers removing children from the home. However, in northern Ontario, there are Indigenous social services agencies that work hard to ensure the children stay with family members or within the community. If that is not possible, then they are kept within an Indigenous home. Although we want the children to stay with the parents, our communities are still suffering. As we recognize the ongoing traumas, there are good people working hard to end the intergenerational traumas and abuse. We are also healing as we try to navigate the intergenerational cycles and put a stop to them. It is imperative that Anishinaabek kweok know they are worthy of love and do not have to live in fear, hurt, or pain. As I was navigating this section, it resonated with me because I started looking at the healthy and unhealthy relationships that are happening within Anishinaabek communities. There is quite a lot of research within this area of trauma because we have a few Indigenous social work programs that are aiming to mitigate this situation by keeping the children within the communities.

Anishinaabe Parenting

One of the first things mothers will require after a child is born is the love and support from her family. She will also need to build her community of support. If she is unaware of her culture, it can be a journey that she and her child baby can embark on together, where they boh get to learn about the sacredness of their bond and the importance of their culture. There are so many ceremonies and traditions that occur in the first few years of the child's life that could be

and should be celebrated. One of the most important things is to expose your child as early as possible to the teachings, but more importantly to teach your child about zaagi'idwin – the teachings about love. Despite the many challenges we face as mothers, and the many tensions we navigate, we should be gentle with ourselves as mothers and have patience with our children. Each generation was raised through different eras that incorporated different teachings, life lessons, and endurance. If we look back seven generations of what our grandparents went through to what our children will be going through, we can see the drastic changes of survival skills, and we have supported the conditions where they are now thriving. It has become evident that the sooner we start introducing these practices, the better it is for our bonding and our raising of strong children.

The division of families was another interesting point that was raised, and it came in a variety of ways that lead to so many tensions and challenges in our communities. It is a reality in our communities, but I did not anticipate the complexity of the issue. Once it was revealed to me as a theme throughout my conversations, I began to realize how prevalent it is, even within my own home, and when I look critically at how I am raising my children.

First, the parents of bicultural children could be facing some divide such as which culture will the child be raised in and which First Nation should the child be registered with? Second, it raises the next question of bi-racial children and how do we raise them to be strong Anishinaabek? It made me think: could children perhaps have identity issues? Where do I fit in? How do I fit in? Do I fit in? I have bi-racial children and I am raising them in Anishinaabe culture, but I am making sure they know both sides of their families. Although we spend more time with their father's side, they are being raised with Anishinaabek naadiziwin. As an Anishinaabe mother, I have to work harder to ensure that I am passing down the teachings and

engaging with my partner's culture to be respectful of both our backgrounds. A blending of our cultures is a good thing, because our children will be leading with the teachings that best suit them. However, not every bi-racial family has the benefit of being able to immerse their children in both cultures. Because of this, we must be aware of potential identity issues our children could face if they are not exposed to important parts of their background.

The third division brought up through conversations was when both parents are Anishinaabek, but one is exploring the culture and the other is heavily impacted by Christianity violence. This came out when the knowledge contributors were using the term "force," and it became evident that if they were unsure to introduce culture, they would describe it as forcing a way of life. Some families choose to utilize both an Anishinaabe way of life, and well as a Christian way of life. Though Christianity created this violence that impacted our cultures, if Indigenous parents choose to subscribe to Christianity, we should not pass judgement on them. Some Indigenous Peoples have found their way out of hard times with the help of churches and not their cultures. In my experience, I have heard stories of Indigenous Peoples becoming scared of our medicines because they grew up without it, and instead turning to the church to help them into recovery and to heal. It would not be any different if someone received help from Buddhism, Hinduism, or other religions.

When children are not surrounded by their community, they may yearn for that reconnection back to traditional territories. It can be hard for children when a household becomes divided but it is also hard when mothers are unable to connect their children back to culture and traditions. It becomes hard for the mother to teach their child about their Ancestral practices when they are gone with their father, and even harder when they are from another Nation or race because of the cultural differences.

Another division within the home was caused by colonial trauma involving the government and churches. During the time of Residential Schools and eras like the Sixties Scoop, many families were separated, and children were displaced or adopted out into white families. These children were disconnected from their culture, and many had a hard time finding their way back to their communities, if they ever made it back at all. Often, survivors of these policies feel ashamed of their heritage and do not want to reconnect.

Community was another factor that played a role with assisting the mother. Although it was mentioned, no one spoke to how we engage with raising children as a community. Some mothers said they did not allow their children to other's homes in order to protect them. It made me wonder: how do we heal our communities so that we can return to raising a child by our community? There is a variety of abuses that have gone on, and still go on, but how do we heal them? How do we break those intergenerational traumas as a community? Do we achieve this one family at a time, or within one or several generations? I had so many lingering questions that needed to be answered.

Looking at the title of my dissertation, I asked knowledge contributors what they thought resistance and resurgence looked like. They all struggled to define it. They wondered why anyone would resist motherhood. Sometimes I rephrased the question and prompted them that it could also mean resisting Western ways of motherhood. Our conversations took another turn and explored historical legacies and why they wanted to do better and why we should be doing better. I wanted the knowledge contributors to leave with a sense of empowerment and redefining motherhood on their terms, whatever that may entail. The mothers began to redefine what motherhood looked like to resist western ways and resurge traditional ways of knowing. They were complex terms to explore.

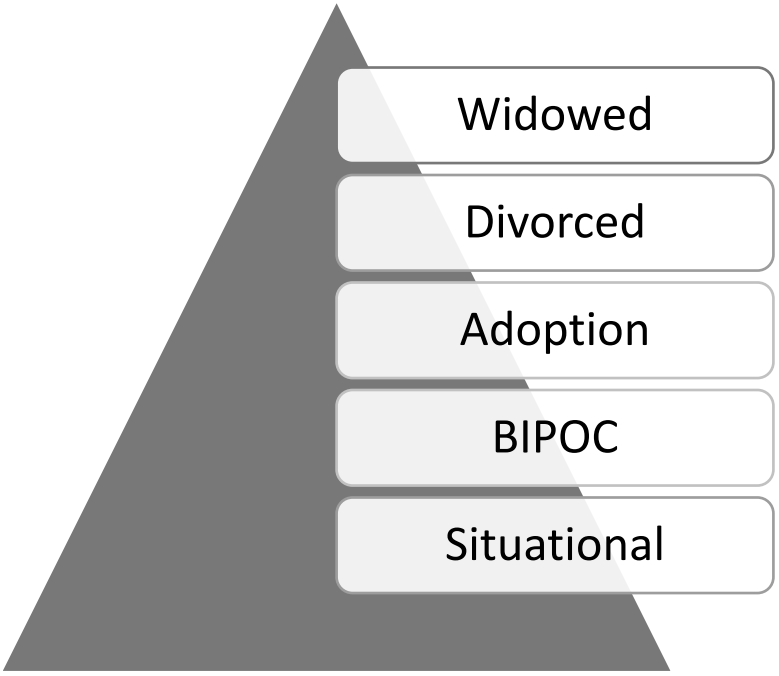
One of the interesting things that emerged was that a lot of the younger mothers did not identify as being traditional. However, in so many ways they engaged in the cultural practices. As the visits continued, they were more into the philosophical teachings of the culture - they smudged, they put their tobacco down, knew how to harvest medicines, danced at powwows, made traditional foods, and they would attend ceremonies from time to time. To me, these practices mean engaging in the culture, so it made me wonder if they thought I was looking for people who are fully immersed in daily ceremonies and practice. Some mothers expressed wanting to engage in more practices, but did not know how to do it. When it came to exposing their children to the culture, they said they would want their children to be immersed in it because they thought it was valuable.

Single Motherhood

When I was looking at the literature, it was primarily Anderson (2000) who shared information on this topic of single motherhood. There are many single parents within our communities, but I found it is not written about, perhaps because it is a Western mentality, although single motherhood is common outside of Indigenous communities. Many mothers leave relationships for a variety of reasons or sometimes they are widowed. In our communities, there are suicides, often men, leaving behind children. It takes an emotional toll on both mother and child. There are colonial complexities that are left with a child to figure out what happened to their fathers. Allers (2016) identified a single motherhood hierarchy. As I was reading through the article, I began to take note how single mothers are unconsciously categorized outside of Indigenous communities. I have created Figure 15 - Hierarchy of Single Motherhood that gathers

the hierarchy structure created by the patriarchal society that continues the toxic norms as identified by Allers (2016).

Figure 13 **Hierarchy of Single Motherhood**



Note. BIPOC is Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) within this chart and they are just above those of teenage pregnancy, one-night sexual encounters, pregnancy by rape, and so on, that are encompassed by the term 'Situational.' Some mothers may fall into two of these categories.

Aller (2016) identified this hierarchal structure after encountering her own personal struggles and perceptions as a black, single woman. As Anishinaabek kweok move off-reserve, they may experience this type of categorization. I placed this information here because as I had discussions with friends and colleagues, we were placing our situations into this hierarchy. This information is included because I think it is important that we should be cautious who we share our journeys

with because we can inadvertently be placed within this structure. As our discussions were lively, we have concluded that many women will stay in abusive relationships because of the perception of single parents and societal pressure to be married. Mothers often stay in abusive relationships longer than they should, meaning they give the father multiple chances before deciding on the hardship of single motherhood. There are other factors that contribute to single motherhood, such as teenage pregnancy, the father not wanting to have children, the father not being prepared to have children, the father leaving due to an addiction, the mother needing more financial stability, the mother relocating the children closer to her family, the mother deciding she is tired of the relationship, and so forth. There are a several reasons why mothers will leave a relationship which include abuse, infidelity by the father, financial instability, substance dependence, health burdens, and incompatibility (Anderson 2000). This is where Western society would place single mothers in the bottom tier as 'situational' and then decide if they will help or not. Instead of having this structural mentality, our children are supported by immediate and extended families as demonstrated by the Traditional Kinship Model (p. 30). When a child is in need of something, such a fundraising for school, extracurricular activities, new gear for sports, etc., the community is quick to help as long as they know where the proceeds are going. There are other factors where the community comes together such as babysitting, assisting in transportation (ensuring our kin make it safely to their destination), and watching children during ceremonies, to name a few. It does not matter that a mom engages in single parenthood.

Fathers Role

One of the interesting things that the older women mentioned was that when they were born, their fathers were not present for their birth. They spoke about a time when men were not

expected to be at the hospital with the mothers. Mothers were alone in the birthing rooms and the men would either be close by or at home waiting for the mothers to return. Instead, it was often a group of women who were knowledgeable about birthing that would support and assist the mothers during the birthing process.

Doulas

Information on doula training should be made available to Anishinaabe Kweok who want to engage and support other Anishinaabe Kweok. For example, in Winnipeg, the Zaagi'idiwin has a full-spectrum Indigenous doula program. This organization offers training online along with valuable Traditional Teachings. In Ottawa, a program called "Aunties on the Road" is a full-spectrum Indigenous doula program aimed at Indigenous youth. When I started looking outside of Indigenous doula programs, I found there were mainstream services that have significant fees. Although I think a lot of mothers would benefit from the services, the fees might be too much for young parents, even though they would be the ones to benefit from the services the most. I started thinking about doula training programs that are offered online, and how they would be beneficial to communities. But how do we reach them if our First Nations have limited internet connections? I think this type of information needs to be forwarded to health organizations and First Nation communities to let individuals know that these courses are offered.

Homes

With the introduction of nuclear households, child-rearing is mainly focused on two parents raising their child with little to no help. The Traditional Kinship Model is more complex,

involving not only the parents, but also the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and other members of the community. In the event of separation, the Western concept of step-parents and step-children is not an issue for Anishinaabe families. The Traditional Kinship Model embraces new family members like their own. When reflecting on the Traditional Kinship System, it can assist in defining child-rearing roles when mothers may have to address mental health issues such as post-partum depression, feeling isolated, societal pressures to be a perfect mother, and the feeling that she must raise the children by herself. There are some Anishinaabe families that will assist the mothers by taking time off from work and helping them. Sometimes, a mother will move into the support person's home (such as their mother, sister, aunt, grandmother, or someone else they trust) temporarily until they have had time to adjust to motherhood.

Expectations

While looking at the father's presence in their child's life, I began reflecting on the knowledge shared: I think as little girls we are sold a Westernized version of the family, a Disney version so to speak, where women may have expectations of their family living in a home with the white picket fence, flower beds, and a jungle gym in the backyard. When I think of the teachings regarding why children choose their parent, divorce and separation were quite common, but single motherhood was a commonality between knowledge contributors. However, looking at the old teachings about separation, it was not an issue and would occur and the mother had the Traditional Kinship system to assist with raising her child.

Intermarriages

I can imagine how challenging it would be to incorporate two Traditional Ways of Living. Although our teachings can be similar, as we follow the Original Instructions of the land, our histories are often different. However, all our cultures are beautiful, and couples should have conversations on how they would like to raise their child, and how they wish to pass on their traditions in meaningful ways. Women have their own unique challenges, such as getting along with the family, that they face when navigating which culture to raise the child in or which teachings will be incorporated. I wonder, when combining two cultures, who the responsibilities will fall onto? Often mothers play a role in raising their children, but is there one religion or way of life that takes precedence over an Anishinaabek Way of Life? This is not for me to decide, but it is a consideration for mothers.

Accessing Traditional Teachings

There are instances where mothers may not feel safe accessing services in institutions because of the employees. There may be some hesitation because often our families are employed with such organizations, making mothers feel judged and ashamed for accessing services. It could also, however, empower some mothers because they know someone working within these institutions, and it becomes easier to access services because of the familiarity. As a result, it may be easier to access online resources, but this also presents an issue of accessibility, as not all mothers have access to the internet. This was my experience when trying to connect with young mothers. As I was researching for my literature review, I would position myself as a young, first time mother. The information that is currently available is overwhelming. Can we make short informative pieces for young mothers or those wanting to reconnecting to their

culture? What about non-Anishinaabek mothers raising their bi-racial children? How do we assist mothers who are non-Indigenous but have Anishinaabek children? What resources could we provide for them when their children start to ask questions about their heritage?

Indigenous Knowledge

While reflecting on the concept of Christianity, I wanted to make note of something that many Knowledge Holders and Elders state: take what you need and leave the rest behind. I think in that sentiment, it is about taking the teachings that work for you, and if you hear a variation on the same teaching, you can adapt the way you do things. In addition, it is important to work with people (Knowledge Holders, Elders, community members, etc.) that you feel comfortable with. Our teachings are about adaptability and not being static; there is no single right or wrong way to do things, so long as you have the right intent.

After having these discussions with my knowledge contributors, it became obvious that they do follow core Anishinaabe teachings but embrace Western ways of living. After reflecting on our conversations, I think it is fair to say most of our communities have evolved into accepting Western ways – which is okay for us to do. Reflecting back to the mothers who stated they were not traditional, it seems that they practice their culture in a variety of ways without realizing it, whether it is hunting, singing, dancing, teaching their children morals and values, or bringing items such as moccasins into their home.

Breastfeeding

There is an increased pressure to have mothers breastfeed. Personally, when I was visiting the hospital with my baby, I felt the pressure to breastfeed. Even though I know my own

limited ability to produce milk, it felt like shame and that I was doing an injustice to my child because I could not produce enough milk. I felt that I had to explain myself for not breastfeeding, and that I should feel shamed for having to combination feed using breastmilk and formula. As I now see, there are many mothers who struggle in this area.

If we turn back to our teachings, many lactating mothers would breastfeed other children if the mother could not or was not present to do so. A fed baby is a happy baby and there was no shame in sharing milk. In present day, milk banks are becoming more in demand. These are often run by hospitals where pre-term babies are in dire need of milk that will assist the baby's first few weeks of life. The hospital provides various screenings for the mother and her donated milk, and then it is pasteurized to ensure the milk is safe. Indigenous women were aware of sharing breastmilk because they understood that a fed baby is a happy baby. Women who were lactating were able to share their breastmilk for other babies that were not their own because it ensured the baby's survival. Since the introduction of formula, whether it is powder or liquid, it has provided an alternative to mothers who cannot produce enough milk or cannot breastfeed at all. That has altered the way women feed their children, and although it is convenient, it can also be very expensive.

Adoptions

There are two Anishinaabe child welfare organizations around where many of the knowledge contributors are located, which are Kina Gbezhgomi and Nogdawindamin. These organizations aim to keep children in their home communities, or at least in Anishinaabe communities in the surrounding area. In previous generations, like during the Sixties Scoop, social welfare agents would take children from Indigenous parents and either sell the children, or

give them to non-Indigenous families (Carreiro, 2017). This created a rift in our communities, where some children were shipped across the ocean and into countries in Europe. The trauma mothers experienced when their children were taken away was generationally damaging, so Indigenous organizations have created their own child welfare agencies to keep children in Indigenous communities. Many families have become foster parents, and others have adopted because some parents have been unable to escape abuse, addictions, or poverty conditions[10]. Also, some children are abandoned, neglected, or consistently exposed to unhealthy behaviours. Most times children are taken in by their family members until the parents can get back on the road to healing or until their situation turns around.

When looking at the complexities, there are so many colonial violence, such as the introduction of alcohol and drugs, that disrupt our communities. However, on the cultural side of things, another mother, aunt, sister, grandmother would happily adopt a child, raising them as their own. This would also happen if the mother died of natural causes - the family would raise the child in question. Adoption is accepted in our communities, but our hope is always that mothers are healthy enough to raise their own children so that they are not lost in the child welfare system.

Abortions

The Christian view is that abortion is a sin, as it is unfathomable to kill an unborn child. This notion could stem from patriarchal values, and the idea that women should produce children despite health complications or how the child was conceived. Whatever the reason, a woman's

[10] Many Indigenous families live in poverty. What I meant in this case where children are being taken away, is because the parents cannot feed or cloth them. Some families do not have the life skills to clean their homes and their children are living in unsafe conditions.

body is her own, and she should be supported in her decision, because not everyone can afford to raise a child, not everyone has the mental capabilities to do so, or, sometimes, a woman may just not want children in general.

Children and COVID-19

Indigenous people are the fastest growing population in Canada (Government of Canada; Indigenous Affairs, 2020). Since the start of COVID-19 pandemic, I have noticed through my social media the high rate of pregnancies and births within Anishinaabek communities. As we are ending the second year of this pandemic, there is research emerging about COVID-19, vaccines, pregnant women, and breastfeeding. I noticed that there was a surge of pregnancies at this time and it made me think of the Baby Boom era after World War II. I could not help but notice my community blossoming with pregnancies and births. As we navigate these years, I wanted mothers to know that we are raising children during this challenging time.

The future of Anishinaabek

As I was researching during the time of a pandemic, examining the stories that were shared with me, it was evident that our Traditional Teachings are so important because we were temporarily taken away from ceremony, traditions, and teachings during various lockdowns over the past two years. Now, looking at how we raise our children, it made me think how lost I was in that short period. Although I was in a certain type of ceremony for the duration of eight months (pregnancy), I was craving to get back into the ceremonies that involved my communities. This made me understand the importance of cultural knowledge because it provides children with a sense of who they are, where they are going, and why they made the

journey here on Earth. If we can collectively break intergenerational traumas, how healthy would our communities be? We could be raising culturally grounded doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, etc., where we can talk about Indigenous Knowledges within Western spaces with ease. There would be so many Knowledge Holders in a variety of fields, reclaiming spaces. We could be rebuilding our Anishinaabek Nations with a modern flair.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Within my research, I found that it was overwhelming for mothers to access Anishinaabe maternal teachings and then translate them into raising their children. That said, each conversation I had proved that women are resilient in nature and no matter what life gives us, we will find a way to provide for our children. There were many times I had to light sage to read and listen to the stories, and not because they were sad, but because they were inspiring and brought me to tears. This research was empowering for me both as a mother and a scholar. I had the privilege of listening to the knowledge contributors' stories of struggles, survival, and growth. When I was listening, I could relate to the education on culture and traditions that the other mothers shared with their children. My research included 15 knowledge contributors who resided in various areas of Anishinaabek territory. I spoke with four grandmothers, five mothers, four pregnant women, and two midwives. I utilized the Anishinaabe Research Methodology, which is centred around relationships, responsibility, reciprocity, and the reclamation of Anishinaabe knowledge. With that, I used my Ancestral Anishinaabe practices of Mino-Bimaadiziwin to conduct, collect, and share my research with present and future generations.

This study had three ambitious purposes:

1. To document the knowledge on Anishinaabe traditional motherhood responsibilities from conception to raising their children within a contemporary context;
2. To share the collective knowledge of Anishinaabe mothering with mothers, should the mother want to engage with the traditional practices;
3. To fill a literary research gap within academia.

When I examine the purpose of this research, I successfully captured the scattered knowledge of Anishinaabe motherhood teachings. I was able to locate and gather teachings for mothers

interested in obtaining cultural understandings and have made this work available to them. I am looking at expanding and developing Chapter 4: Anishinaabe Maternal Teachings into a bright and colourful book that would act as a reference guide for Anishinaabe mothers. The knowledge that I have personally gained from this research, I have shared with family and friends and have been utilizing it in my own home. I hope that I can also share this work with hospitals to further their knowledge regarding Anishinaabe maternal health and traditional practices. As I share this information with some of my Elders and Knowledge Holders, they revealed that they have learned something new with this research and look forward to seeing it published so that the knowledge can reach a wide audience.

By looking at the impact of colonization and residential schools, I wanted to know what knowledge we managed to keep, what had changed, and whether I could find what was lost. I started looking at how we resist the colonial impacts on our maternal teachings with regards to raising our children. I reflected on my own lived experiences as a mother, and on how my mother raised me. I began by looking at the that examined historic Anishinaabe maternal teachings and found little research. With that, my research generated two main questions:

1. What are Anishinaabe maternal teachings?
2. What are the challenges, tensions, and strengths of Anishinaabe maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context?

The first research question was to get a sense of what knowledge that mothers have carried across generations. I used the Giizhigowaatik Debaajmowin teaching - our connection to cedar with birth, children, healing, and in child-rearing - to share this information since it was related to birthing, and because of the many uses of cedar in the first year of the child. This research revealed the dichotomous relationship of Western and traditional lifestyles that

Anishinaabe mothers are required to choose between daily. As Anishinaabe mothers, we often hear the phrase, “we live in two worlds.” This research demonstrated that Anishinaabe mothers are consistently pulled in by Western influences and do not feel a strong enough pull into traditional and cultural aspects of their lives. With this knowledge and the recent uncovering of unmarked graves at residential schools (Whiteduck, 2021), Indigenous Peoples have been having conversations that condemn Christianity, and look towards recovering our Traditional Ways of Life.

It is evident that Anishinaabe mothers have adopted Western practices into our cultural norms, and that traditional methods have started to be re-incorporated into our child-rearing practices as well. As Anishinaabek, we can adapt and evolve our cultural practices. Many of the knowledge contributors understood the importance of raising children in our cultural and traditional ways but with a modern flair. It is interesting that much of settler society has Christian values, and that even though Canada was built on the near genocide of Indigenous Peoples, we have embraced modern living with our Canadian counterparts.

The second research question looked at the challenges, tensions, and strengths of maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context. I uncovered the many complexities of the issues our communities face when attempting to use traditional ways. I found that there were more challenges and tensions than there were strengths and successes. It can be argued that the challenges and tensions are closely related, and the tensions are just more challenges Anishinaabe mothers have to face. The knowledge contributors indicated the tensions section are occurring specifically because of two worldviews colliding – Christianity clashing with Traditional Knowledge. The tensions occur because of internal wrestling between two pairs of

wolves: one of Western practices and the other of traditional practices. This tension is caused by modernity and the adaptation of our culture into the 21st century.

There are so many issues that affect our communities. It became interesting to see how many mothers fell into these gaps where they struggle and face hopelessness, trauma, and abuse. As I was compiling the themes, it seemed like the themes would not end. This is where I began to group issues together into broader, more general themes. Some issues were not covered, like pre-eclampsia, complicated births, post-partum depression, and mental health support. These themes did not emerge because not enough knowledge contributors discussed them. The issues were interesting and varied from person to person. Off-reserve Anishinaabek were not more or less culturally knowledgeable than on-reserve Anishinaabek, meaning that just because someone lived on-reserve, it did not mean they were immersed in their culture. Some of the knowledge contributors that lived off-reserve were hungry for the knowledge and would seek it out. Some families reject the Anishinaabe ways due to their experiences with residential schools, colonization, and intergenerational traumas. However, despite historical legacies working against the survival of Indigenous Peoples, the Anishinaabe way of living is alive and well, and through my conversations, I was able to capture what it looks like today and how we are passing it down.

Unfortunately, many Anishinaabe mothers have gone through some very challenging upbringings because of assimilation tactics that targeted our communities throughout generations. However, our mothers and mothers today continue to persevere and have demonstrated that they can raise healthy, knowledgeable, and culturally grounded families. They understand colonial trauma, and because of their lived experience, it has made them strong Anishinaabe Kweok. More importantly, mothers have taken those struggles, braiding their survival and hardships with their resilience, and have built thriving lives for their children. We

have experienced so much as Anishinaabek and recognizing that allows us to raise healed generations.

What Did the Research Reveal?

This research study revealed that Anishinaabe mothers are actively reclaiming their culture because of the guidance they have received from their friends, families, and communities. We, as mothers, are working collectively to resist colonization in our families and to continue to revitalize our teachings. Although we have been in a transformative shift for the past decade, where Anishinaabe mothers are bringing back traditional practices proudly, I see the momentum building for teachings in existing families that have little cultural knowledge or those not fully immersed in cultural practices. Furthermore, the research revealed that the passage of knowledge is a continuous cycle, whether we carry the strengths or the trauma for the next generation.

I asked my knowledge contributors what they thought resistance and resurgence meant with regards to the title of my dissertation: *Anishinaabe Motherhood: The Act of Resistance by Resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies*. They all, except for one, struggled to define it, but eventually the conversations turned to why they wanted to do better as women and as mothers, and what that means for our children. I wanted the knowledge contributors to leave with a sense of empowerment and the ability to redefine motherhood on their own terms, whatever that may entail. None of the literature spoke to resistance and resurgence within motherhood – some authors mention it generally along with our inherent connection to the land, but I felt that the important work that Anishinaabe mothers are doing with regards to resistance and resurgence needed to be specifically noted.

Now that I am looking back on their answers and this research, what is the continued Act of Resistance mentioned in the title of my research? The Act of Resistance is when mothers choose safe spaces for themselves and their children. The Act of Resistance is when mothers end intergenerational cycles. The Act of Resistance is when mothers carry themselves closely to Mino-Bimaadiwizin. The Act of Resistance is when we have children and those children continue our traditional practices. There is no blueprint for raising children, but in Anishinaabe ways of knowing, we have teachings that point us in a good direction, with the understanding that all other teachings will follow. Although Anishinaabe mothers have gone through so much historically, we see a shift in recent generations that want to break intergenerational cycles. Those that are conscious of the traumas that permeate our communities do not want to contribute to the ongoing historical processes. I am happy I could gather women from different First Nations, both on- and off-reserves, to shed light on this. When the Anishinaabek can engage in Ancestral practices openly, proudly, and unapologetically, they are resurging our traditional matriarchal family structure. Anishinaabek kweok are bringing sacredness back into the circle and bridging new cultural wisdoms that tie our Ancestral Knowledges with current realities.

Excluded from the study

In this study, I did not include the voices from fathers, adopted parents, other Nations, same-sex couples, or the details of specific ceremonies.

The reason I did not research Anishinaabe fatherhood is because I believe this research should be performed by a father. Even though I have two sons and would be happy to engage in the research, I choose not to because it could be difficult for men to talk to a woman about their experiences for fear of being judged.

Although I briefly mention adoption, I do not examine it closely because I believe the topic warrants a research project of its own, either by children that have been adopted, from a parent's perspective of adopting children, or regarding traditional adoption in our communities such as aunties and uncles who have chosen to raise their nieces and nephews.

Families are all unique and diverse. There are many types of families and I want to honour all the families there are out there raising Anishinaabek children. For similar reasons as above, I did not explore same-sex couples who are raising children. Topics such as this deserve to be explored fully, and I did not feel that I could do it justice at this time. Moreover, I do not think it is appropriate for a cisgender woman to conduct this type of research, but as an ally, I would be more than happy to assist in any way.

Lastly, I did not examine ceremonies in-depth. I collected enough detail for someone who wants to explore the teachings, but not be overwhelmed by the information. I believe finding an Elder or Knowledge Holder to share ceremonial teachings is the most beneficial way to learn.

Contribution to Research

I have undertaken two very complex research questions in this study. I wanted to make an easy-to-read format for women, new mothers, and community members. I did not want my study to focus on the negatives because Indigenous Peoples already endure so much. My contribution works to ensure that Anishinaabe mothers have enough information by making these conversations and practices more accessible. We no longer must keep our Ancestral practices secret, such as requesting our placentas, being openly supportive of breastfeeding (if mothers choose or can do so), carrying our babies proudly in tiknigaans, and growing their hair long. We continue to resist assimilation by weaving traditional modes of child-care into the contemporary

Canadian fabric. We do embrace certain conveniences such as diapers, wipes, and bottles, but we keep our core values by instilling our teachings within our children. We should celebrate and embrace traditional pregnancy, childbirth, child-rearing, motherhood, and Nokomis roles like we once had because it is key to rebuilding a strong Anishinaabek Nation.

Future Research

Future steps in this research entail finding grant funding to create an app that allows mothers to explore Traditional Teachings and teaches them how to develop their parenting bundles. Furthermore, I have already contacted the Peterborough Regional Hospital to start incorporating ceremonies and Traditional Teachings, which I think will assist in educating Western practitioners.

Another issue that is still unfolding are topics surrounding pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic, raising children during the pandemic, and accessing ceremony during the pandemic. This pandemic has greatly impacted the way pregnant women give birth and how we are currently raising children. I think there is so much to cover in this area in terms of what the impacts have been on raising children and accessing Traditional Teachings.

Significant Outcomes of the Study

Inspired by my research, I have contacted the Director of Maternal Health at Peterborough Regional Health Centre to share my findings and have begun having critical conversations around racism in their field. Although some of the staff at Peterborough Regional Health Centre have had cultural competency training, there is a need for further training. I am focusing on hospitals currently for Anishinaabe mothers who need healthcare for complicated

pregnancies and deliveries. I am having conversations with these institutions and looking to set up meetings and professional development with the nurses.

Conclusion

In this research, I answered both research questions: What are Anishinaabe maternal teachings and pedagogies? and What are the challenges, tensions, and strengths of adopting Anishinaabe maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context? The existing literature does not cover much about Anishinaabe teachings. My methodology had me completely immersed in the Anishinaabe way of life in a contemporary context. Because there is no specific research on Anishinaabe motherhood it was much easier to identify the bigger picture on what to look for in terms of issues and resurging teachings.

The amazing thing that came from this study was the teaching of our parenting bundles. There are motherhood bundles and our children's bundles. They each carry their own tools, and we add to them as we mature and grow. These bundles need to include our own Creation Stories, where we learn about how we entered Earthside, because it is our origin stories that teach us who we are, who are family is, who our clan is, and adds to our self-esteem. Overall, the information provided was so rich. I did not expect that Anishinaabe motherhood came with so many challenges, but when our mothers are strong and healthy, so are the children. We need to be building up our communities to raise children with their bundles so they can navigate the world on their own.

I want to say chi-miigwech to the knowledge contributors. To each mother out there, do your best in raising your children. Try to engage in cultural practices when you can do so. When you are unsure, select the Elders with whom you are comfortable sharing your stories because it

is your journey to Mino-Bimaadiziwin. I hope that this research study enlightened or resonated with you. As more Anishinaabe mothers continue to have their babies they are continuing to resist colonization because colonization was meant to eradicate us. We are still reclaiming our Traditional Knowledges and resurging these traditional practices to have culturally knowledgeable children.

Miigwech for nurturing the next generation.

Miigwech for the protecting the sacred ones.

Miigwech for raising the revolution.

APPENDIX 1 **Conversation Questions**
This research will focus on revitalizing traditional teachings and pedagogies and understanding what the tensions and challenges the Anishinaabe gaashiyag face with Anishinaabe knowledge.

Research Questions first visit	Question 1: What is your birthing story? What is your child(rens) birthing story? Question 2: What are the challenges that Anishinaabe mothers experience? Question 3: What are the Anishinaabe traditional teachings about pregnancy and maternal care? Question 4: What are the important teachings on birthing practices that can be shared with Anishinaabe women?
Research Questions second visit	Question 4: How does Anishinaabemowin connect the teachings that involve maternal care? Why is language important for mothers and babies? Question 5: Why does early exposure to traditional knowledges and languages important for mother and child? Question 6: What is one ceremony that could be revitalized that Anishinaabek women can be part when they are considered high-risk?
Research Questions third visit	Question 7: Why should we care about Anishinaabe motherhood traditional practices? How do we empower urban Anishinaabek kweok to utilize these teachings? Question 7: How do urban Anishinaabek kweok engage in ceremony in the city? Why is it important to children to embody these ceremonies?
Final visit:	Clarification on any materials and gift giving.

APPENDIX 2 **Consent Form**

Anishinaabe Motherhood: The Act of Resistance by Resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies

Researcher:
Ms. Amy Shawanda
Ph.D. Indigenous Studies

Trent University
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2
(705) 988-2484
amyshawanda@trentu.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. David Newhouse
Director Chanie Wenjack School of Indigenous Studies
Trent University
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2
(705) 748-12011 ext.7497
dnewhouse@trentu.ca

The following is a request to take part in a research study on Anishinaabe mothers and to share any experiences on how they engage with ceremonies, language, and culture in a contemporary context once their child is born. You are being approached to participate because of your knowledge and experience of childrearing or working with Indigenous mothers. Your participation will be needed for a total of 60 minutes in 20-minute intervals throughout one week or in one 60-minute setting. The purpose of this research is outlined below and you may ask any questions before agreeing to participate and participation is strictly voluntary.

The focus of this study is to explore the traditional knowledges that shapes the Anishinaabe maternal teachigns and pedagogies in a contemporary context. The purpose is to create a framework for Anishinaabe gaashiyag (mothers) and share the collected teachings with Anishinaabe kweok (women) who may not have access to traditional teachings. Furthermore, this research is to inform the Anishinaabe community as well as to fill a literary research gap within academia.

If you agree to be in this study, I will visit with you either in three 20-minute sessions or a single 60-minute visit depending on your time and availability. I want to honour your time and ensure I am working within a timeframe that works for you. The potential visit is set up with open-ended guiding questions where you will be sharing your birthing stories and experiences, followed by the second visit of how ceremonies and contemporary challenges. I will be taking notes throughout our visits. As our visits nearing the end, I will be providing the information I will be utilizing in the research for your final approval. In this last visit I will provide a gift for your participation.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be safely stored. I will use pseudonyms in any public dissemination and I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. I anticipate that I will keep all information for three months then destroy all notes recorded.

Taking part is voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time, even after the completion of the visit. If

you choose to withdraw from this study, all information will be returned to you (notes) and you can destroy them yourself, or I could proceed to shred them myself. All information that has been analyzed will remove your data then reanalyzed. This Consent Form allows me to use the information in your visit for the purpose of my PhD research and thesis. The results of this research may be presented at academic conferences or published in academic articles.

If you feel that this interaction could cause you distress, I will be providing you with a list of resources available. In addition, I will request a phone number of a trusted person I could call should this arise to ensure that you are emotionally and mentally supported.

If you have any questions please contact me, or my supervisor at the address above.
If you have any questions concerning the ethical conduct of this research, please contact:

Jamie Muckle
Ethics Office
Trent University
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2
Toll Free: 1-855-MY-TRENT

I agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this Consent Form:

---------- ---------- ----------
Print Name Signature Date

I would like to receive a research summary of the findings (if yes, include mailing address or email)

Name:_____

Address: _____
_____
_____

Email: _____

APPENDIX 3 **Verbal Consent form**

My name is Amy Shawanda and I am PhD Candidate at Trent University. I am from Wiikwemkoong, Manitoulin Island.

I am conducting research about Anishinaabe Motherhood: The act of resistance by resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies. And I am interested in your experience as an: Anishinaabe mother, Anishinaabe soon-to-be mom, Nookmis, or midwife. Please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. The purpose of this research is to understand how mothers incorporate traditional teachings in child raising activities and what the successes and challenges they have experienced in using Anishinaabek Knowledge.

Your participation will be needed for a total of 60 minutes either in:
a) three days for approximately 20-minute intervals throughout one week; or
b) one day for approximately a single 60-minute setting. If this doesn't work for you, we can agree upon a different schedule.

This research has minimal risks. This research will benefit the both the Anishinaabe and academic communities because it will help in fostering our Traditional Teachings about child raising and motherhood.

You can identify yourself in my study or you can choose to have a pseudonym. Please know that that I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study. The ZOOM call will be safely secured on Trent University's server and my notes will be kept on encrypted USB safely stored in my home.

Have you received the letter of intent?

Do you have any questions about the study or what is expected of you if you agree to participate?

Do you consent to participate in this study? If yes, continue. If no, stop

Do you understand that you do not have to answer any questions that you do not with to?

May I record our visit on ZOOM technology? Saying no to the recording will have no effect on the conversation.

- Yes ☐ No ☐ I grant permission to be ZOOM recorded (Video-taped)
- Yes ☐ No ☐ I grant permission to be Audio recorded
- Yes ☐ No ☐ I grant permission have my name used
- Yes ☐ No ☐ I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

APPENDIX 4 **Letter of Intent**

Date:
Dear [Name]:

Aanii, my name is Amy Shawanda, an Anishinaabe kwe from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory. I am currently enrolled in the PhD Indigenous Studies program, Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, Trent University. The purpose of my letter is to invite you to participate in my study, I am seeking Anishinaabe kweok that are pregnant, mothers, grandmothers, or midwives.

I would like to hear from you to share your experiences and knowledge about maternal pedagogies in my research study. My research is on "Anishinaabe Motherhood: The Act of Resistance by Resurging Traditional Teachings and Pedagogies." The focus of this study is to explore the traditional knowledges that shapes the Anishinaabe maternal pedagogies in a contemporary context.

The purpose is to create a framework for Anishinaabe gaashiyag (mothers) and share the collected teachings with Anishinaabe kweok (women) who may not have access to traditional teachings. Furthermore, this research is to inform the Anishinaabe community as well as to fill a literary research gap within academia.

I believe your voice is important and would like to hear from you. If you agree to be in this study, I will visit with you three 20-minute sessions or a single 60-minute visit depending on your availability. The guiding questions will be sharing your birthing stories and experiences, followed by the second visit of how ceremonies, then contemporary challenges. I will be taking notes throughout our visits. As our visits nearing the end, I will provide the information I will be utilizing in the research and a gift will be given for your participation.

The proposed study is of minimal risk for those participating I am contacting each knowledge contributor for support and permission to speak to you. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time, even after the completion of the visit. This Consent Form allows me to use the information in your visit for the purpose of my PhD research and thesis.

Sincerely,

Amy Shawanda, PhD Candidate, Indigenous Studies

Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies

Trent University

APPENDIX 5 **Artist Statement**

Tansi! My name is Raven Sutherland, I am a proud Plains Cree and Saulteaux woman from Lake St. Martin First Nation in Manitoba. I am a freelance artist and I currently reside in southern Ontario. My art has always been an outlet to help heal and reclaim my Indigenous roots. As an Indigenous artist I want to design work that promotes inclusivity, evoke emotion, and to empower others. You can find more of my work on Instagram @nehiyaw.creative

“Our Mother” found on page 44.

“Mother of Creation” found on page 94.

APPENDIX 6 **Copyright Release**

ARTWORK COMMISSION AGREEMENT

This Agreement, entered this May 7th, 2021, between Raven Sutherland (Artist) and Amy Shawanda (Client), shall govern the respective rights of Artist and Client with respect to the artwork described herein.

1. Scope of Work Commissioned

Artist and Client expressly agree that the artwork to be created by Artist pursuant to Client's specifications shall be limited to, unless modified in a writing signed by both parties, the following artwork, hereafter known as "the Work":

- 2 Colour Sketches
- 2 Fully Rendered AI or Procreate file Illustrations of mother with the earth and mother with creation
- Artist agrees that the Assets shall be of first class quality, artistically produced, with aesthetic content technically correct.

2. Deadlines and Completion

Upon receipt of Client's specifications pursuant to Section 1, which Client agrees are true and complete at the time of execution of this Agreement, Artist agrees to complete the Work upon the following schedule:

- (7) days following the signature of this Agreement for the Thumbnail and Color Sketches (already completed)
- Full illustrations will be complete on May 30th 2021 at the latest.

3. Rights Transferred

Artist and Client agree that the following rights shall be transferred from Artist to Client upon receipt of full payment.

Artist agrees to the perpetual non-exclusive license of all rights (including, but not limited to, the right to display, modify, transmit, transfer, sell, and create derivative works) to Work to Client, excluding only the right to authorship credit, which is retained by Artist.

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