Saiakwatsirón:ni - We Are Reigniting the Fire:

Regeneration of Kanien'kéha Silent Speakers

by

Kahentéhtha Angela Elijah

B.A., University of Western Ontario, 2017

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper addresses language loss and the effects of becoming silent speakers, people who understand a language but do not speak it. It is a topic that has been neglected and has created a gap in scholarly research. There is a limited amount of knowledge which has contributed to literature in reference to silent speakers. Although, linguists have written about the deterioration in the structure of the language of silent speakers, there is little knowledge regarding the mental, emotional, social and spiritual effects on people who understand their Ancestral language, but do not speak it. For this reason, further research is needed to address the issues of silent speakers. The research project will be conducted using a methodology based in Kanien'kehá:ka worldview, "Kheiatahónhsatats Tsi Ohnaho'tén:shon Rotiká:ratons", (I will listen to them, the different stories they tell) as they tell the stories from their memories, they will be heard. The study focuses on silent speakers within the three Wolf Clan families in Ahkwesáhsne, one of eight communities of the Kanien'kehá:ka, also known as the people of the Mohawk Nation. It examines common factors which have contributed to the participants becoming silent speakers, identifies shared themes within the framework of a selection of seven wampum strings within the Ka'nikonhrakétskwas: Uplifting of the Minds Condolence Ceremony, and concludes with current mainstream and a culturally-appropriate therapeutic method of healing which can be effective in regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha within the community of Ahkwesáhsne. This study also brings forth strategies, suggested by silent speakers themselves, that could be developed and promoted to assist silent speakers to become speakers. The goal is to regenerate fluent speakers in Kanien'kéha, currently a

threatened language, and in doing so, keeping the Kanien’kehá:ka identity and sense of belonging intact and continuing our connection to culture and history.

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Dedication

I dedicate my work to Kheiatere’okón:’a, my beautiful grandchildren: Shakohentéhtha, Ronwaiè:wate, Rahonwinétha, Taharihwakóhe, Rakawí:neh, Tehonontiiá:khon, Wahsakokiohkón:ni, Niiohonwá:’a, Tehatsható:rens, Kiaonhwentsiawérhon, Ienietí:saks, Rononhsakéhte, Rahontsióhares, Tahonwa’kátha, Iehwentsiakwe’ní:io, Ietsienhakátste, Iehsa’kenserí:ne, Lat^nihsluníhe’, Rohonwaké:ron, Tehaia’torétha, Wa’éhsa, Akawé:’a and to those whose faces are still in the ground. Your existence continuously inspires my life and my work, and has given me the space to become whole again. Niawenhkó:wa!

I also dedicate my work to the silent speakers whose voices have been silenced and have been embers under the ashes. May you take the ember and breathe life into it, building a new fire (see Figure 1), which will burn bright into the future! May you break the silence and allow your voice to speak your truth using the languages that are carried upon the winds, across our lands. May you be fearless as you conquer the obstacles which have caused silence.

Figure 1. “Fire” Painting by Andy Swamp (2017)

Acknowledgements

My actions are guided, not only by the vision of my Ancestors, whose knowledge and language carried us into the future, but by the vision of my family, my clan, my community my nation and the Rotinonhshión:ni (people of the longhouse) as a whole. We are also told that we must forever be mindful of tehatikonhsotónkie (the faces coming).

I acknowledge my maternal grandparents Eva (Jacobs) and Louie Point and my paternal grandparents Charlotte (Papineau) and Leo Swamp and their families, who shared Kanien'kéha so freely when I was a child.

I acknowledge my parents Judy (Point) and the late Jake Swamp for raising me in an environment filled with ceremonial teachings and political activism within our Kanien'kehá:ka territories and for being the voices, telling me to "finish what I start" and to "just do it". A special niawenhkó:wa to my parents for instilling the message of peace and hope to the future generations.

I acknowledge my siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles who were the generation of silent speakers. A special niá:wen to my brother Andy, who encouraged me to take this opportunity before he journeyed, to Iawentaná:wen, Kanerahtiióstha, Kahontí:neh and Skahendó:waneh for your stories and confirming what I knew all along, and to Karón:iase who stayed with me throughout, even though he didn't know.

I acknowledge my children Teiosha'kentíhson, Sakonohontsiá:wi (Iohahí:io), Aronhiakéhnha (Tekatsí'tsiake) , Shohón:wes, Iokarénhtha and Ie'nikonhriióstha (Deyohaho:gę:), for their understanding and support as we journeyed as kahwá:tsire (family fire), while I juggled being an Ihsta, Tótah, Iakoiá:ne, teacher and student.

I acknowledge my partner Alec, for always keeping the home fire burning, being the ear to my ideas and opinions and forever challenging my mind, as I venture through this world.

I acknowledge Tehorón:io, Tawentónkie, Tsiakohá:wi, Konwathró:ri, Kahontíhson, Kanehsatí:io, Kanerahtakè:ron, Atonhwentsiióstha and Konwahonwísen, for sharing your experiences, feelings and ideas for this project.

I would like to acknowledge the faculty and staff at the University of Victoria for offering this awesome program. Your hard work, knowledge and support carried myself and our cohort through! A special niá:wen to the late Trish Rosborough who made her journey during this time and is still with us in spirit. Niá:wen to Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Sonya Bird, Kari Chew, Megan Lukaniec, Edōsdi-Judy Thompson, Wanosts'a7-Lorna Williams, Onowa McIvor, Deanna Nicolson, and Lacey Jones for all your help, knowledge, encouragement and words of inspiration!

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A huge niawenhkó:wa to MENETIYE, CECAYELWET & CIYE and the Elliot family for being my home away from home. You are as beautiful as the land you come from!

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Tsi niiohttòn:ne – (Historical Background)

History among the Mohawks is a highly personal matter since it involves the life stories of a people with deep spiritual connections to the place in which they have grown. When a Mohawk person speaks of his or her community, it becomes a narrative in which they carry the experiences of their ancestors across the generations (D. George - Kanentí:io, 2006).

Historically, colonization and the effects of the dominant language of English, the imposition of the international border, and political and economic factors have contributed greatly to the language shift of many Indigenous peoples. Leanne Hinton (2013) explains that over and over again we have seen the marginalization, enslavement or even genocide of groups of people who were the stewards of their land before the political, economic, or military imperial forces of colonization.

The nations of Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca are known as the Five Nations, also known as the Rotinonhshión:ni (People of the Longhouse). Their territories start in the east from the Mohawk Valley, to the Genessee Valley in the west (see Figure 2). One of the nations of people was the Kanien'kehá:ka (People of the Flint), also referred to as the Mohawk Nation. In his book entitled *Iroquois on Fire*, Doug George (2006) explains that long before European contact, the Mohawks had thriving villages in the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain Valleys where the people, although they left, were remembered and affirmed as never having ceded jurisdiction in those regions. The Kanien'kehá:ka are now located in Ontario and Quebec, Canada and New York, United States within the eight communities of

Ahkwesáhsne, Kana'tsioharé:ke, Kahnawá:ke, Kanehsatá:ke, Ganién:keh, Tyendiné:ga, Wáhta and Grand River of Six Nations as they migrated into different locations.

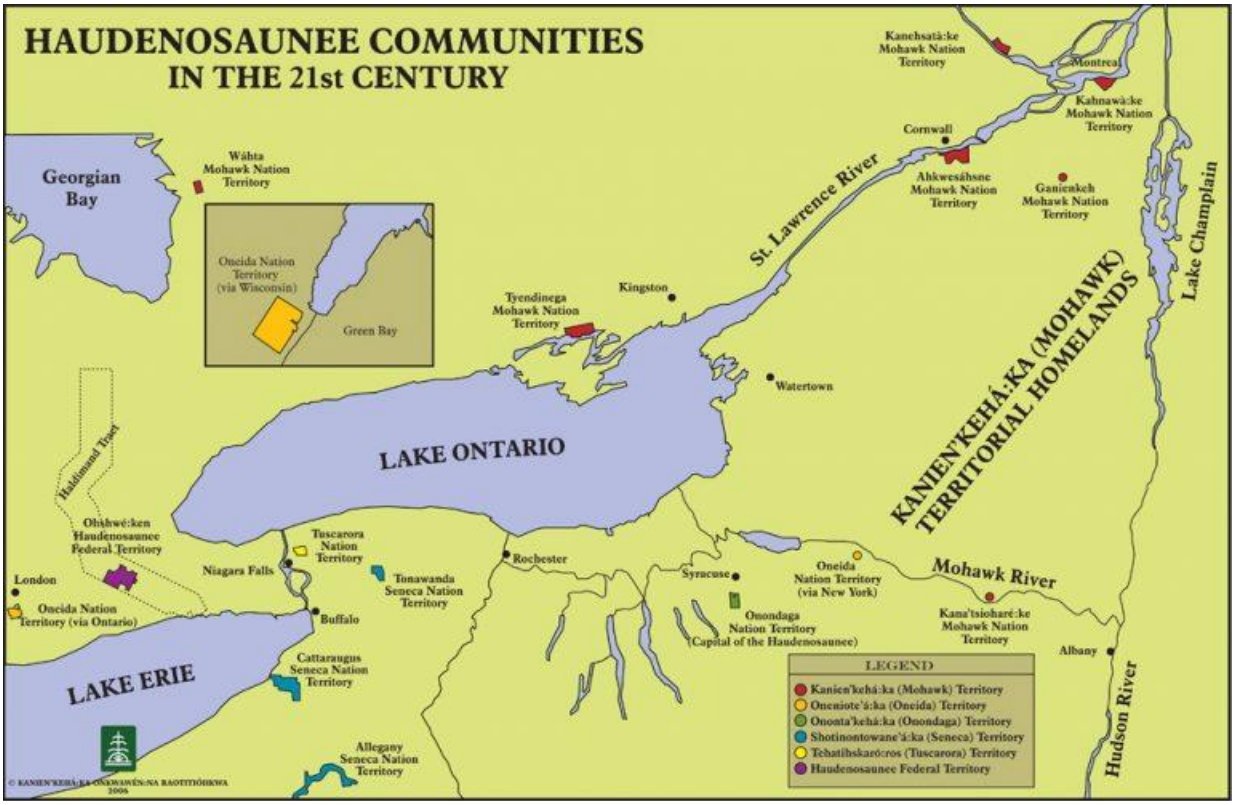


Figure 2. Kanien'keha:ka Territorial Homelands https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/haudenosauneega-st-lawrence-iroquois/

1.2 Ahkwesáhsne - (Land where the partridges drum)

Ahkwesáhsne, also called St. Regis, is surrounded by the Grasse, Racquette, St. Lawrence and St. Regis Rivers. Historically, it was the hunting and fishing grounds for the Kanien'kehá:ka and was settled as a community at the time when people were being removed from their traditional homelands in the Mohawk Valley, causing them to migrate further north. Ahkwesáhsne also has many small islands, which are a part of the community. The community is made up of various political entities, along with various faiths and beliefs. Together, they make up the community of Ahkwesáhsne.

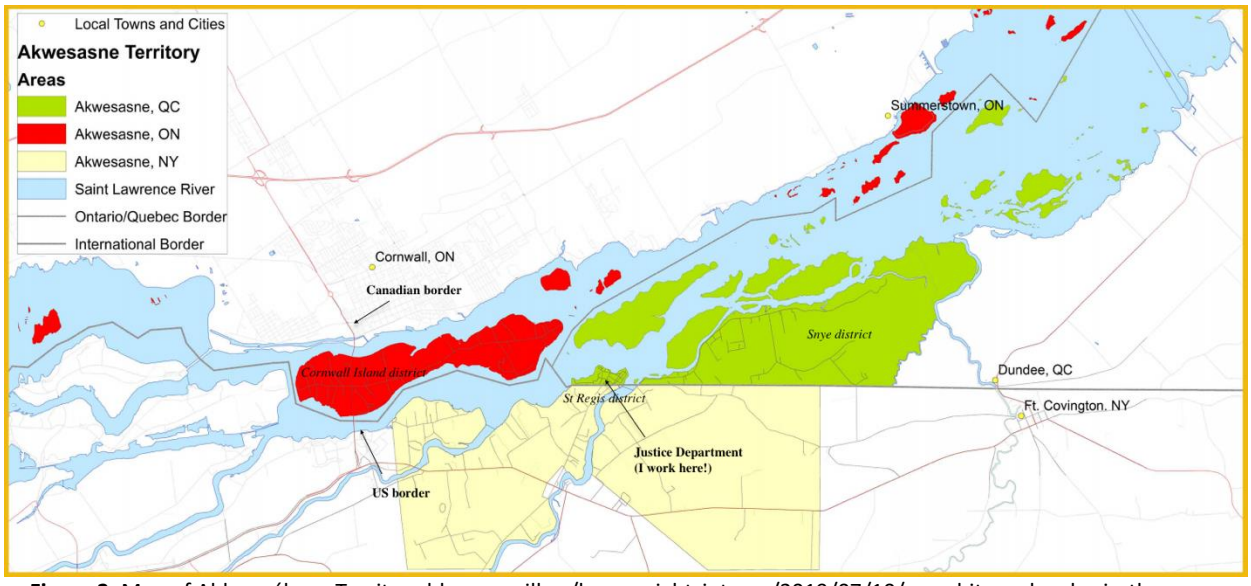


Figure 2. Map of Ahkwesáhsne Territory blogs.mcgill.ca/humanrightsinterns/2019/07/10/an-arbitrary-border-in-the-middle-of-akwesasne/

1.3 Kanien'kéha – (Language of the People of the Flint)

Kanien'kéha, the natural or original language of the People of the Flint, is the means of communication of people to other people and other living entities. It is used in identifying oneself and identifying relationships to other people and living organisms. It is the means used to express one's gratitude through words of thanksgiving and appreciation, ceremonies, songs and other ways of knowing. Language connects our past, present and future through intergenerational-transmission, from the Ancestors who have passed, to those coming whose faces are still in the ground. Language expresses who we are, where we are and where we are going.

Kanien'kéha was the first language of the Kanien'kehá:ka at Ahkwesáhsne, but with the implementation of the educational system through convent, residential and day schools, much of the language began to deteriorate. In a publication by the U.S. Census Office dated 1892, it states "The New York commission of 1889, in commenting on the good work accomplished by the Jesuit priests, very pertinently said: 'The neglect, however, of these missionaries to teach

them the English language is a serious misfortune'" (Venables, 1996, p. 69). This was to be expected as the missionaries themselves could not speak English, only French. After the imposed United States and Canadian border, the Kanien'kehá:ka at Ahkwesáhsne were referred to as the Canadian Saint Regis Indians and the American Saint Regis Indians, which complicated the geography and politics of the community. The publication also states that "contact with the Canadian Saint Regis Indians, however social and tribal in its affinities and intercourse, retards, rather than quickens, the American Saint Regis Indians in the acquisition of the English language" (Venables, 1996, p. 69). It was also stated about Kanien'kehá:ka residing in New York State that "the New York Indians should understand that they must make the acquisition of the English language an essential element in their dealings with the white people" (Venables, 1996, p. 70).

> When any of my elders talk Mohawk, when they describe something, it's just as if the whole side of this building was the great big screen of an outdoor theatre that has three dimensions to it. You know how you have to wear those special glasses and thy make three dimensions? When you hear the language and you understand, its like 3-D. It's in Technicolor. If you can really understand Indian, you can smell the food when it's cooking, you can smell the trees and the water when someone is speaking it. It's a living language. Yeah. And then when it's interpreted into English, it becomes just a little six-inch black and white television set. English is just capitals-dark- and ends with a period, and that's all. You know what I mean? That's the way it appears-very not, you know, living. For me (Porter, 2008, p. 91).

According to Mohawk scholar Tehota'kerá:tonh Jeremy Green (2018), Kanien'kéha is considered to be moribund, a critically endangered language where the active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older. According to the information he has provided on Kanien'kehá:ka communities, there are approximately 932 native speakers of Kanien'kéha in the world (see Table 1). There are 932 L1 speakers of Kanien'keha, those who have learned Kanien'keha from their families as a first language and continue to speak it today. There are 14 L1 speaking families, speakers who have transmitted Kanien'kéha within their family with no disruption and still speak today. There are 1,036 L2 speakers of Kanien'kéha at advanced to mid-proficiency levels, those who did not speak Kanien'keha as their first language within the home and learned to speak it later. There is a total of 21 L1 children who are children of L2 speakers of Kanien'kéha, parents who learned Kanien'kéha as a second language and transmitted it to their children as their first language. It is not yet documented how many silent speakers exist in Kanien'kehá:ka communities, but regenerating a generation or two of speakers would definitely be a positive move to create more speakers of Kanien'kéha.

Table 1. Population of First and Second Language Speakers of Kanien'kéha by Territory

Community (Territory)	Total Population	Population On-Territory	Number of L1 Speakers	Number of L1 Speaking Families	Number of L2 Speakers (Adv-Mid Proficiency)	Total # of L1 Children of L2 Speakers
Akwesásne	18,725	12,896	500	9	1000	3
Kahnawá:ke	10,905	7950	298	4	10	11
Kanehsatá:ke	2,503	1371	121	1	1	3
Ohswé:ken	11,259	5,535	5	0	21	7
Tyendinaga	9,599	2,176	0	0	3	4
Wáhta	796	157	8	0	1	0

Total	53,787	30,085	932	14	1036	28

***Numbers for communities of Ganién:keh and Kana'tsioharé:ke are included with home communities. (J. Green, 2018)**

1.4 Onkwatsiénhaien – (Our Fire)

My chosen metaphor for language revitalization is fire. Fire, being one of the first life-givers and helpers in sustaining people; language which also sustains us, giving us the ability to communicate with others and the environment surrounding us. As fire came to us from ise na'karonhiá:ti (beyond the sky world), our language was given to the unborn by the Ancestors, a gift of communication and expression to ohwentsiá:te (the earth) and life upon it. As the fire on earth is fed and burns bright with warmth, the language of our people is revitalized through learning and flourishes with each speaker. The emergence of two fires was created on earth. The ceremonial fire, through the mental, emotional and spiritual language, acknowledges all that has transpired within the gifts brought from ise na'karonhiá:ti and our ability to express them. The political fire, within the physical realm, brings balance as we seek to reclaim and maintain our languages for the future. Fire guides my research project on silent speakers, people who understand Kanien'kéha, but do not speak it.

Chapter 2. Situating Self in the Research

Kahentéhtha ni iónkiats. Kanerahtarónkwas iontákiats ne ake'nihsténha tánon Tekaronhiané:ken ronwá:iatskwe ne ráke'nih kénha. Wakathahión:ni tánon okwárho niwaki'tarò:ten. Ahkwesáhsne nitewakié:non ne:k tsi Ohswé:ken nón:we tkí:teron. Kanien'kehá:ka niwakehwentsiò:ten. Sharenhó:wane nitewakathwatsirí:non.

My name is Kahentéhtha which means "She stands at the front". I am also called Angela Elijah. My mother is Kanerahtarónkwas (She picks leaves) Judy Point and my father was Tekaronhiané:ken (Two skies together) Jake Swamp kénha (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Judy (Point) & Jake Swamp

I am of the Wolf Clan people, who are the Path Makers. I was born and raised in the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Ahkwesáhsne, land where the partridges drum, which is situated on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, St. Regis River and Racquette River. I currently reside in the community of Six Nations of the Grand River (Ohswé:ken). I am from the Mohawk Nation

and I descend from the matrilineal line of Sharenhó:wane, the Majestic Tree Family, one of three Wolf Clan families of the Kanien'kehá:ka.

2.1 Shikewirá:'a – When I Was a Baby

As a newborn baby coming into this world, I was placed into a family of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and many cousins who spoke Kanien'kéha fluently. My mother was a young mother who stayed at home tending to my older brother and I, and later five more younger siblings. She was raised in a part of Ahkwesáhsne called Kawehnó:ke (Cornwall Island). Her mother, Kanen'tákwas Eva Jacobs (see Figure 5), was well known for her splint basket making and was a condoled Clan Mother for the Sharenhó:wane family. Her father, Aronhiakéhnha Louie Point (see Figure 5), was a hunter/trapper and also worked as an iron worker. They had a small farm and raised their nine children there. They were a traditional family and would take a boat or ferry across the river, then walk to attend ceremonies at the longhouse.

My father left school at the age of fifteen to work iron in a nearby city to support his mother and siblings because of a car accident that left his father, Ioratékha Leo Swamp (see Figure 6) in a coma for five months. They also had a farm where the family tended to milking cows, pigs, gardens and haying fields. His mother, Tekonwahkwén:ni Charlotte Papineau (see Figure 6.), made homemade butter and cream and sold to the community while his father became the local butcher after recuperating from the car accident. They were a church-going family and did not involve themselves in traditional practices but both my parents' families immersed me in unconditional love and Kanien'kéha.

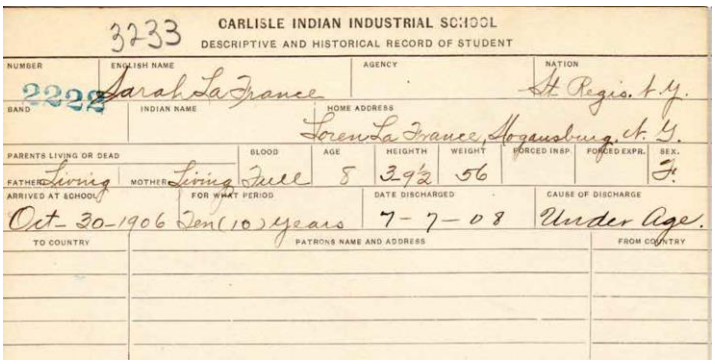
Figure 4. Eva (Jacobs) & Louie Point

Figure 5. Charlotte (Papineau) & Leo Swamp

Growing up in a household where Kanien'kéha was commonly heard, I was distanced from the harsh realities of what had happened to our great-grandparents and our Ancestors in the efforts to colonize and Christianize the Kanien'kehá:ka people. I grew up in the after-effects of a brutal history from five hundred years previous and all my experiences were quite normal. Little did I know that our language was threatened and that years before my time, my great-grandmother, Charlotte's mother Kenkiohkóktha Sarah Lafrance (see Figure 7), was removed from her parents at the age of eight years old to attend the Carlisle Indian Industrial School located in central Pennsylvania, USA.

> At Carlisle and many other residential schools for Native children, students were forbidden to speak their Native languages or practice their traditional ways of life. Carlisle's founder and school superintendent, Richard H. Pratt, associated with the phrase "kill the Indian, save the man" was in charge of the first government-run, all-Indian-student, off reservation residential school where complete assimilation into mainstream white America was the goal (Bell, 1998; Fear-Segal, 2006; Landis, 2006; as cited in White, 2016).

Figure 6. L to R, Annie Lafrance, Sarah Lafrance, mother Margaret (Back) Lafrance



3233 CARLISLE INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL
DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL RECORD OF STUDENT

NUMBER 2222 | ENGLISH NAME Sarah La France | AGENCY | NATION St. Regis. N.Y.
BAND | INDIAN NAME | HOME ADDRESS Loren La France, Hogansburg, N. Y.
PARENTS LIVING OR DEAD | BLOOD | AGE | HEIGHT | WEIGHT | FORCED INSP. | FORCED EXPR. | SEX
FATHER Living MOTHER Living Full 5 3-9½ 56 F.
ARRIVED AT SCHOOL | FOR WHAT PERIOD | DATE DISCHARGED | CAUSE OF DISCHARGE
Oct. 30-1906 Ten(10) Years 7-7-08 Under Age.
TO COUNTRY | PATRONS NAME AND ADDRESS | FROM COUNTRY

Figure 7. Descriptive and Historical Record of Sarah Lafrance (1906) http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/student_records

2.2 Shikehksá:'a – When I Was a Girl

Throughout my childhood, Kanien'kéha was the language commonly heard within the households of various family members. As I walked in and out of my aunts' and uncles' homes, Kanien'kéha was the prominent language used. I started school without any knowledge of the English language. I recall speaking with my cousins at school and teachers would separate us so we wouldn't talk the language to one another. I don't recall being punished physically but the separation was enough to enforce that speaking Kanien'kéha was not tolerated. I was a timid little girl and the experience created some anxiety for all of us as we sat on the floor crying. From that time on, I began to learn the English language. It came easily as most of the children spoke it coming into the St. Regis Mohawk School. With time, it became more common to use the English language, not only at school but at home as well. No one expressed the need for us to speak Kanien'kéha until we were all older and had become accustomed to speaking English on a regular basis. By the age of nine years old, I was no longer using Kanien'kéha. In school,

there was a Mohawk language class which I excelled in because I had the understanding of the language as a first language speaker. Other children no longer spoke and my cousins also spoke less of the language. We attended ceremonies regularly throughout the year and Kanien'kéha was heard within the longhouse as men stood up from both sides of the house in representation of the clan families. When the speaking, singing and dancing were finished, we would all eat together before the closing words were spoken. I loved going to the longhouse and meeting up with my cousins. My aunts and uncles would speak Kanien'kéha to me, but I would respond in English. Some of my older cousins still spoke Kanien'kéha, but it seemed the younger ones no longer spoke. After longhouse ceremonies were over, I would go home with my aunts and cousins where I would spend the night and my mother would pick me up the next day. We would attend lacrosse games in the nearby city of Cornwall and the Elders were heard speaking Kanien'kéha with one another. I remember all of the laughter and teasing that went on between the elders during the games, especially between our sister communities, all speaking Kanien'kéha.

2.3 Shikià:tase – When I Was a Teenager

By the time I was a teenager, I was more focused on my friends and although we still attended social and ceremonial doings at the longhouse, most of the teenagers no longer spoke the language. I recall going to visit my grandparents with my parents. I sat and listened as they all conversed in Kanien'kéha but when one of them spoke to me, I would drop my head in silence and feel very ashamed that I was not responding to them in Kanien'kéha. I felt especially sad when not speaking to my grandmother as she did not speak English at all. When my grandmother questioned me in Kanien'kéha, asking why I no longer spoke our language, again I

was silent as shame and guilt ran through me. After a while, I began to avoid seeing them so I wouldn't be put on the spot and experience feelings of inadequacy and shame. It was easier to stay away. I quit school at the age of fourteen and my father placed me within the homes of basket makers where I learned basket making in silence. They spoke and I listened, nodded and smiled. I did not speak. I stayed silent. I thought of what I could say but I was afraid to say it wrong. I also felt a very sad, feeling that I was somehow disrespecting my Elders by not answering, not realizing that many people in my community were going through similar situations. By my late teens, a Kanien'kéha revitalization movement had begun in Ahkwesáhsne due to the language loss they were seeing amongst the upcoming generation. There was a lot of conflict within the Ahkwesáhsne education systems. Many people wanted more for their children in the way of culture and language. The refusal of schools to meet the peoples' demands initiated the removal of many students from the education system. "In 1979, an unprecedented effort to revitalize the Mohawk culture and language began with the establishment of the community-based Akwesasne Freedom School, which would in time become a Mohawk language immersion school" (White, 2015, p. 4). At its beginning, the school was based in cultural teachings and English studies but eventually evolved into a full Kanien'kéha language immersion school, which continues to this day. In the first year, my aunt volunteered as one of the teachers for a Kindergarten class. It was the only immersion class at the time and she asked me to assist her. I immediately wondered if I was capable of speaking to children but I realized I wouldn't know unless I tried. I assisted her for a little while as I didn't want to refuse her, but I also felt uncomfortable with my language skills, especially when speaking in front of her. Eventually, I stayed with the school for a few years afterwards but

worked as a second-language teacher to students in high school. Teaching was not the career I chose at the time, but I ended up there because someone believed I could do it.

2.4 Iakón:kwe Nikia'tò:ten – I Am a Woman

I eventually married and moved to my husband's community of Oneida, a Rotinonhshión:ni community seven hours away from my home community of Ahkwesáhsne. It wasn't until I became an adult that I truly understood what residential schools were. Having moved into my husband's community, I learned that his mother was abandoned and left at the Mount Elgin Industrial Institute (see Figure 9) in Muncey, Ontario when she was four years old where she remained until she graduated at the age of seventeen years old.

Figure 8. Mount Elgin building
https://thechildrenremembered.ca/school-locations/mount-elgin/

Because she was abandoned, she had no one to return to and stayed at the school to repair clothing all summer long. She rarely spoke about being at Mount Elgin except to mention how often they had to pray at the residential school. As stories began to surface from past students, someone set fire to the school and it burned down. Today, we continue to struggle to reclaim our languages and heal from inter-generational traumas inflicted on our people.

For Aboriginal peoples, centuries of colonial policies and practices aimed at suppressing and undermining cultural identity while simultaneously assimilating children into Euro-Western

culture through the residential school system have led to severe trauma that is being passed through the generations (Ross, 1996 as cited in Aguiar & Halseth, 2015).

I lived amongst the Oneida people for fourteen years and during that time I involved myself with helping to implement the Onyo'ta'á:ka language immersion program in their elementary school. I also participated in a two hundred-hour Oneida language course with Oneida Elders. Anyone interested in assisting or teaching in the Oneida immersion program was expected to take the course. I did it out of interest but because I did well, I was asked to assist in the classroom. I also did Oneida language work in the daycare system but parents questioned why an Oneida had not been hired for the position. Sadly, the position had been posted for a few months but Oneida people hadn't applied. A few years later, the Oneida immersion program folded due to lack of interest and teachers. Although being involved in the Oneida revitalization efforts felt good, and my children were students within the Oneida immersion program, I regretted leaving my own community and not having my children enrolled in a Kanien'kéha immersion school. Today, many young adults in Oneida have come together and created an Adult Immersion Program which is thriving due to their commitment to the Oneida language.

2.5 Kherihonnién:nis – I Am a Teacher

Eventually, I became a certified teacher and moved back to my home community of Ahkwesáhsne where I was employed as a Native as a Second Language (NSL) and culture teacher for ten years. I also did curriculum work and coordinated a Mohawk and Cayuga Language Preservation Project, making language resources for the immersion programs in the community of Six Nations. During the time I was exposed to the Cayuga language which furthered my understanding of another Rotinonshión:ni language. I did a lot of language work

with the Oneida and Cayuga languages but shamefully, I still was not speaking Kanien'kéha and my children weren't either. I felt a sense of failure as I did not teach or expose my children to Kanien'kéha. Currently, I work as a Kanien'kéha immersion teacher and have been teaching in an immersion setting for the past six years, allowing me to be in situations where using Kanien'kéha is expected, thus helping me to become a speaker again. In the beginning, I recall trying immersion teaching and not feeling very confident of my speaking ability. I kept at it and I felt comfortable speaking to children and L2 speakers, those who had learned Kanien'kéha as a second language. I was very fortunate to also have had many fluent speakers of Kanien'kéha along the way, offering nothing but encouragement and helping me to say what I could not remember. I still have a ways to go in my learning, but right now, I'm doing the best I can in being a speaker of Kanien'kéha again.

2.6 Kahsóhtshera Nikia'tó:ten – I Am a Grandmother

Because I had not taught my children Kanien'kéha, they enrolled their own children in Mohawk and Cayuga immersion programs so they would become speakers of the languages. It became clear to me that, to fulfill the responsibilities of being a grandmother and a Clan Mother, I needed my language back and felt that the best place I could be, was in a teaching position in an immersion setting. In order to teach Kanien'keha, I had to know the target language. This meant that I had to study what I would be presenting in future lessons, and to know what I what saying. I feel that this helped me to learn and gain the confidence needed to become a speaker. Furthermore, with most of my grandchildren being in Cayuga and Mohawk immersion school, I found the incentive I needed to learn as much as I could in both languages, making it possible to converse with my grandchildren.

2.7 Ka'nihsténhsera Wakeríhonte – I Am a Clan Mother

In 2005, I was asked take my grandmother's seat as a Wolf Clan Mother. The fact that I did not speak Kanien'kéha weighed heavily upon me. I understood everything being spoken, but I was silent when it came to speaking. As a Clan Mother for the Sharenhó:wane family, my lack of Kanien'kéha speaking ability made me question if I should be the one to carry a place of such high responsibility within the nation. It was a responsibility held by my Grandmothers before me who spoke their mother tongue and, for various reasons, I didn't. I felt I was a missing link who had let my Ancestors and my family down. I knew all the eyes of my family were upon me as I asked myself, "Am I capable? Am I good enough? Can I find it within myself to be a speaker of Kanien'kéha again? Am I courageous enough to face and conquer all of the ugly feelings placed upon me by colonization and historical trauma?" The questions went around and around in my mind, and I knew very well that only I held the answers to my questions and that I would have to be answerable to myself first. Stó:lo scholar Jo-ann Archibald (2019) says it very well when stating that the legacy of colonizing knowledge has created a disconnection of people from their traditional teachings, people, family, community, spiritual leaders, medicine people, land and so on. My state of being at that time was not good.

Currently, within the longhouse, I have witnessed the empty seats of responsibility around the ceremonial and political fires. If Kanien'kéha is not transmitted to upcoming generations of people, it will be difficult to follow protocols at the ceremonial and political levels and to fulfill the responsibilities of the clan families, communities, nation and confederacy. Many activities within the traditional circle such as birthing, naming, rites of passage, weddings, funerals,

ceremonies and meetings are currently being done with most of the responsibilities being conducted by only a few people who are fluent speakers of Kanien'kéha.

> One does not automatically gain the culture by learning the language. Language is a very changeable form of behaviour, and if language is taught outside of and without reference to the traditional culture, then that language will be devoid of that culture (Hinton & Hale, 2011, p. 9).

As a silent speaker, I knew that the only way around the situation, was to go through it. I had to face the obstacles I had within me to become a speaker of Kanien'kéha once again. I had to conquer the fear, guilt, shame, grief and regrets but how would I do it?

> Our Akwesasne longhouse is about, I forget if it's fifty or sixty-foot-wide, and a hundred foot long. It's a log longhouse. And it can hold six hundred or seven hundred people in one sitting. So today at Midwinter, everybody comes to the New Years dances. And you can't find a place to sit. They even bring extra chairs, but there's hardly any room to dance, it's so packed. But now today, we're in a dilemma. We're in a real dilemma. It makes me feel sad. You know why? The majority of them, about three-quarters, if not more, of all the Mohawks that are jam-packed in there, they don't understand what the Faith Keepers and Chiefs are saying, when they're speaking at Midwinter. They don't really know (Porter, 2008, p. 153).

As I looked around at the faces at ceremonial, political and social gatherings, I began to wonder how many people experienced similar feelings? If they felt as I felt, what could be done to inspire silent speakers and regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha?

2.8 Kateweiénhstha – I Am a Student

Upon enrolling in the Master of Indigenous Languages Revitalization Program at the University of Victoria, I began to realize that many people and communities were facing the same obstacles as me. I felt I now had the opportunity to examine the issues which plagued my mind when it came to my language situation. I then decided to reach out to my own immediate family and to my extended Wolf Clan families to give voice to their shared experiences as "carrying out research with Indigenous communities that incorporates Indigenous storied methodologies can help develop rich, locally relevant insights that may better guide culturally responsive understandings" (Caxaj, 2015, p. 1). In creating a space to share their experiences, my hope was also to inspire them to become speakers again. It wasn't only about reclaiming the language, it was about reclaiming who we were as Kanien'kehá:ka and keeping our identity and language intact for the coming generations.

In the IED 530: Indigenous Research Methods course taught by the late Dr. Trish Rosborough, I prepared a mini-research project entitled, "Contributing Factors of Passive Speakers in a Kanien'keha:ka Family" which evolved from my interest and discussions with Trish. Because of my personal interest as a silent speaker, I decided to interview my siblings to explore contributing factors to silent speakers within a Kanien'kehá:ka family. My decision to research my siblings (see Figures 10, 11, and 12) was to find out if people within the same family experience language loss and become silent speakers due to common factors. It was also a personal reason to find out if they also carried similar feelings, as I began to speak and reclaim Kanien'kéha.

Figure 9. Iawentaná:wen G. Swamp

Figure 10. Kanerahtiióstha L. Swamp

Figure 11. Kahontí:neh Swamp

The research was focused on how children within a family became silent speakers, while parents and extended family members were fluent speakers of Kanien'kéha. Five interview questions were asked to gain an understanding of their experiences and feelings surrounding the factors they believed contributed to their silence. The common themes contributing to their silence were: (1) being sent to school and speaking the dominant language of English; (2) isolation due to the international border; (3) feelings of fear, guilt, shame and grief at not speaking; (4) loss of relationships with grandparents and Elders within the family; (5) loss of identity and cultural competence; and (6) the inability to speak to their own children which created a disruption in transmission. After doing the mini-research project with my siblings, I decided to expand my research to people within the three Wolf Clan families in Ahkwesáhsne.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

Today, one to two generations are silent speakers, people who understand the language but do not speak, within the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Ahkwesáhsne, which has a population of 12, 896 people. Although there are numerous contributing factors, the overall reason is intergenerational trauma caused by colonization. Mainstream and traditional culturally-appropriate therapies may assist in regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha but is dependent upon how receptive silent speakers are to therapeutic methods and how committed they are to healing and speaking again. It is critical that it be studied in order to regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha, however, learning more about mainstream and traditional healing methods can create an awareness of trauma and its causes. Furthermore, many people are not aware of being silent speakers and also lack the historical knowledge of language loss within the community and nation.

3.1 Colonization and Intergenerational Trauma

European colonization has been the main cause of language and culture loss in First Nations communities in Canada. There have also been many policies enforced within Aboriginal communities in regards to land, rights, and educational institutions. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states:

> Federal policy toward Aboriginal people has its roots in a power set out in the constitution of 1867. Since early British colonial times a legislative power has been reserved to the central government to protect the interests of Aboriginal peoples, first from local settler interests and, since 1867, from provincial interests (1991). With the experiences of the colonization process, Aboriginal people have experienced many traumas which have had a negative

impact on their mental health to this day. “Healing, in Aboriginal terms, refers to personal and societal recovery from the lasting effects of oppression and systemic racism experienced over generations” (RCAP, Vol. 3., 1996, pp. 100-101).

According to Auger & Halseth (2015) and the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAH, 2016), Aboriginal peoples have experienced cultural, linguistic and heritage suppression which is a form of disempowerment and genocide. Across several studies, the continuing assault on the identity of Aboriginal peoples and suppression has led to an erosion of mental health and well-being through high rates of depression, alcoholism, suicide and violence (Auger & Halseth, 2015; NCCAH, 2016; Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000). The oppression and abuse have become internalized, leading to shame and hopelessness (Kirmayer et al.). The goal to eradicate Indigenous people (Auger & Halseth, 2015) has had devastating impacts and undermined all aspects of well-being (Kirmayer et al.).

The idea to assimilate Aboriginal people in order to civilize them was done through various colonial policies. Policies were motivated by paternalistic attitudes which created collective grief, trauma, loss and mental health problems (Auger & Halseth, 2015). Land policies forced relocations of Aboriginal people (NCCAH, 2016) which alienated them from their families, communities and shared Indigenous knowledge and disrupted their connection to the land (Auger & Halseth, 2015; Blue, Darou & Ruano, 2015).

According to Auger and Halseth (2015), the residential school era left continuing colonial policies. Across several studies, we found that children were removed from their homes and separated from their parents and way of life. Dussias (1999) and Oster *et al.*(2014) state that although languages have come and gone throughout history, Indigenous languages in a variety

of postcolonial situations have been oppressed through official policies and social pressures (as cited in Whalen, D. M. Moss, D. Baldwin, 2016).

NCCAH (2016), Auger & Halseth (2015), Kirmayer, Brass and Tait (2000) agree that Aboriginal peoples were denied basic rights to transmit traditions and maintain cultural identity through acts of genocide, violence and abuse. The impact of intergenerational trauma, a psychological term that is to explain how trauma is passed from one generation to the next, has led to self-destructive behaviors such as suicide, substance abuse and violence. The impacts and legacy of shame, loss and self-hatred on health and well-being has been transmitted to subsequent generations through physiological, psychological and social processes and has created a disruption of cohesion, structure and quality of family life (Kirmayer et al., 2000) and has also affected the transmission of ancestral languages. In their study on language and culture as protective factors, they determine that without the language of one's ancestors, individual and collective identity gets weakened, eradicating the culture within a few generations (McIvor, Napoleon & Dickie, 2013).

3.2 Silent Speakers

Historical intergenerational trauma has had a negative impact on the ancestral languages of Aboriginal peoples. Languages which once flowed freely have become silenced. Aboriginal people now struggle to reclaim and keep their languages alive through various programs within their communities. As programs seek fluent Elders within the communities to assist in language revitalization efforts, there is a forgotten group who carry the label of being latent speakers, semi-speakers, passive speakers, and in this research project, silent speakers. These speakers are in a league of their own as they understand what is being said, but for various reasons, do

not speak their ancestral languages. In researching the topic of silent speakers, there appears to have been little research done. The literature presented here shares few common themes, however, the topics are crucial to regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha.

In her studies of semi-speakers of the Gaelic language in the East Southern villages of Scotland, Nancy Dorian (2015; 2009) takes a linguistic approach and addresses the reduction and loss of languages which are spoken only by a few people. She views the semi-speaker as being a "problem" in language death as there is an assumption that the reduced use of the language will lead to a reduced form of that language (2009). In another study of the Gaelic language, Nancy Dorian (2015) says that when a language is dying, it changes in its phonology, "how sounds systematically behave" (Genetti, 2019. p. 55). For example, in Gaelic the mutational system, where speakers will either substitute or leave out the consonants, has begun to change. She says it can be expected with changes in lexicon, what is considered to be the mental dictionary and the speaker's knowledge of words and how they are used; morphology, the internal structure of words and syntax, the grammatical structure of words and how words are used to create phrases and sentences. When referring to the community of Gaelic speakers, Dorian observes elder speakers being more comfortable in speaking Gaelic and younger people being more comfortable with speaking English. She states it has caused the younger people to speak an *imperfect* version of the language and become less fluent.

In further studies of silent speakers, Botokova (2017) writes about the Dene Tha language in northwestern Alberta, Basham & Fathman (2008) write about the Athabascan languages of Alaska, and Juuso (2015) writes about the Sami language of Norway. All agree that language is important to traditional knowledge, culture and identity. While Dorian addresses mutation and

changes in lexicon, morphology and syntax because of less use of the language, Basham & Fathman (2008) and Jusso (2015) agree that strategies need to be put into place to encourage silent speakers to speak. They draw attention to the fact that there are few adult programs in place as the focus is more on children. There is also mention that to speak confidently, adults must be actively participating in various activities such as being with fluent speakers to practice speaking. Boltokova (2017) speaks to how language is measured and raises questions as to how many speakers are needed to be considered endangered and at what level of fluency does one need to be to be considered an endangered language speaker. In the use of various scales in measuring fluency, Boltokova states that language fluency cannot be easily categorized and measured in endangered languages and that the varying levels of fluency of semi-speakers shows this. Boltokova (2017) also states that semi-speakers are at the forefront of learning, relearning and revitalizing their heritage languages and cultural practices. Bashami & Fathman (2008) and Jusso (2015) also add that semi-speakers want to become speakers again, so culture and traditions can be preserved, continued and transmitted to the future generations. To succeed, they need to find strategies and tools to assist them, as each individual is different. They agree that, given tools and strategies, semi-speakers should be given opportunities to see themselves as playing lead roles in language revitalization (Boltokova 2017). Furthermore, it is also possible for semi-speakers to develop into fluent speakers and become effective teachers (Basham & Fathman 2008). Bolotokova argues the use of terms Dorian uses in her research. Terms such as “imperfect”, “language death” and “major problem” all appear to create negative views toward language and semi-speakers. Juuso’s writing on silent speakers takes on a more positive outlook as she questions, “But, who exactly knows anything perfectly?” as she

acknowledges the pain of not speaking one's ancestral language and appears to also question Dorian's choice of the word "imperfect". Juuso sheds light on the fact that language is connected to feelings and that it is troublesome to be afraid and have feelings of grief, loss and shame. In an encouraging statement she says that language is not just about grammar and words but also about thoughts and feelings. Juuso also adds that thoughts control the feelings connected to language use.

3.3 Mainstream and Traditional Therapeutic Methods of Healing

Today, Aboriginal peoples are beginning to understand the effects of intergenerational trauma caused by colonization and how it has created many self-destructive behaviors. They are becoming more aware of trauma-informed practices which create an understanding and responses to the impact of trauma on people. There have been projects created using a mainstream therapeutic method called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to assist silent speakers to reclaim their language. According to Saul Mcleod (2008), two of the earliest forms of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy were Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), developed by Albert Ellis in the 1950s, and Cognitive Therapy, developed by Aaron T. Beck in the 1960s. REBT was "a type cognitive therapy first used by Albert Ellis which focuses on resolving emotional and behavioral problems. The goal of the therapy is to change irrational beliefs to more rational ones" (McLeod, 2008, p. 2). The approach helped people to identify irrational beliefs and negative thoughts that could lead to emotional and addictive behaviors. "Beck's (1967) system of therapy is similar to Ellis's, but has been most widely used in cases of depression. Cognitive therapists help clients to recognize the negative thoughts and errors in logic that cause them to

be depressed" (McLeod, 2008, p. 4). The principles of CBT are based on the belief that people have the ability to change their lives by changing the way they think.

Juuso (2015) wrote about how the Sami people of Sweden and Norway had noticed the decline of Sami language speakers. Realizing that the language was an important part of their identity and cultural knowledge, they knew that action was needed to take back and relearn their language. They began a "language blockage" project and used Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as a strategy to assist Sami people who were silent speakers, and found it to be successful for language revitalization. Jusso (2015) explains how cognitive theory is based on the assumption that learning is affected by feelings and thoughts. Juuso, the developer of the courses in Sweden, then gave permission to the First Peoples' Cultural Council to translate course materials for pilot Silent Speaker programs in British Columbia. *Reclaiming My Language: A Course for Silent Speakers*, is based on the successful program that was developed in Norway and Sweden for and by Indigenous Sami peoples. First Peoples' Cultural Council adapted the program through pilot courses with seven First Nations communities in British Columbia.

Another mainstream therapy called Narrative Therapy can also be helpful in collecting personal narratives from silent speakers. Narrative Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that helps people to identify and live their values and skills so they can deal with current and future problems. Harder (2017) explains how stories have the power to impact how we think, act and feel and have the potential to connect, inform and influence us as individuals, families and whole communities. Harder also goes on to explain how Narrative Therapy seeks to help people understand the stories that influence their lives and to create greater choice through

highlighting those experiences that fit within their preferred story. Although these therapies would be useful and helpful within Aboriginal communities, it is also important to include culturally-relevant and appropriate therapeutic methods from within the community itself and as Ojibwe scholar Renee Linklater (2014) states, therapies need to come from the worldviews of the people and must maintain their connections to the land, language, people and knowledge. Linklater (2014) also states that Indigenous ways of healing have existed since time immemorial and that cultural approaches are essential for Indigenous people to move forward in healing from colonization.

In the community of Ahkwesáhsne, the practice of Ka'nikonhrakétskwas (Uplifting of the Minds), a Rotinonhsión:ni Condolence Ceremony is still used to deal with feelings of grief associated with loss. It has been used since the acceptance of the message of peace by the Rotinonhshión:ni which, has been estimated to have been brought over one-thousand years ago. Shimony (1999) explains how the words embedded in the wampum strings enable the mourners to clear their bodies and minds from the great loss they have suffered, and to restore them again to the ranks of the sane. Traditional people of the Rotinonhshión:ni have also developed various therapeutic methods in dealing with trauma, which have become popular within the communities because of the use of cultural knowledge and expertise, creating a sense of pride and identity and will be discussed further within this project.

Chapter 4. Research Methodology and Methods

4.1 Methodology

The methodology I have chosen for my project is based in Kanien'kehá:ka worldview that every life form has a voice. Within the epistemology of all Rotinonhshion:ni (People of the Longhouse), the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Thanksgiving Address) is used to acknowledge all life forms within the world and speaks of equality amongst all that is living. With the use of one's voice to speak comes the responsibility of Creation to listen. The methodology used is "Kheiatahónhsatats Tsi Ohnaho'tén:shon Rotiká:ratons", (I will listen to them, the different stories they tell) as they tell the stories from their memories, they will be heard. This demonstrates reciprocity, another example of the epistemology of the Rotiononhsión:ni. Jo-ann Archibald (2019) states that many Aboriginal people have said that to understand ourselves and our situation today, we must know where we come from and know what has influenced us. As people share their stories of the past, they are able to create new ways of dealing with what comes from it and move into the future. Similarly, "Autoethnography is an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the purpose of extending sociological understanding" (Wall, 2008, p. 38). Autoethnography originates with a story about self, and in this research, I begin with my story of becoming a silent speaker and what I have done to reclaim my language of Kanien'kéha. The experiences shared by myself and the participants will give an understanding as to the causes and effects of becoming silent speakers and will encourage the participants to create their own solutions to regenerate their own fluency in Kanien'kéha. The experiences presented by myself and the participants in the research will be guided by a selection of seven wampum strings from the

Ka'nikonhraketskwas, a Rotinonhsion:ni Condolence Ceremony. The wampum strings are used to symbolically remove obstructions of grief from the mind, heart and body to instill hope and a clearer outlook of the future.

4.1a Wampum Strings

1. Introduction Wampum

   The first wampum is a symbolic expression of welcoming to those participating.

2. First String of Condolence: The Vision

   The string will acknowledge the tears which have been shed due to the pain of the memories from our language loss.

3. Second string of condolence: The Hearing

   The string will acknowledge the hearing and how we have become affected by our language loss and no longer understand what we hear and what we have heard in the past.

4. Third string of condolence: The Voice

   This string acknowledges the obstruction the pain has caused in our throats and how we have become silent and unable to speak.

5. Fourth string of condolence: Dark Clouds

   This string acknowledges the fear and guilt caused by not speaking the language.

6. Fifth String of Condolence: The String of Darkness

   This string acknowledges the sadness and depression of no longer speaking and our loss of identity.

7. Sixth String of Condolence: The Sacred Fire

   This string acknowledges the healing which must take place to move forward and regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha.

4.2 Methods

An invitation (see Appendix A) was sent to Wolf Clan members to participate in the research project. Through a qualitative data collection approach, interviews were to be conducted with

nine participants from the three Wolf Clan families of the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Ahkwesáhsne, who self-identify as silent speakers of Kanien'kéha. This strategy was intended to allow participants to express their narratives and feelings using their own voices, according to their own beliefs and opinions. It was also intended to ensure that the research was conducted with members of Ahkwesahsne, to assist the community with silent speakers of Kanien'kéha using storywork. Jo-ann Archibald (2019) explains that storywork is about cultural understandings, how stories speak from deeper understandings of humans and their relations and can speak from places of trauma and injustice. She speaks to decolonizing research and the importance of how "it is time for us to go deeper into our own knowledge systems, deeper into our own storyworlds" (Archibald, 2019. p. 11). A meeting was then held with the Sharenho:wane Council to gain support (see Appendix B) for the research project to move forward using the Ka'nikonhrakétskwas Condolence Ceremony as a guide. Data was collected from participants to identify contributing factors of silent speakers, people who understand the language quite well but do not speak it, within the three Wolf Clan families of the Kanien'kehá:ka who are from the community of Ahkwesáhsne. Interviews were conducted with nine participants between December 2019 and February 2020 to give voice to their experiences and feelings as to how they became silent speakers. They were also asked to identify contributing factors to their silence and what would be of assistance in helping them to become speakers of Kanien'kèha again.

4.2a Setting and Participants

The study took place in the homes of the participants within the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Ahkwesáhsne where a majority of the remaining fluent speakers of Kanien'kéha are in their

40s and older. “The most fluent speakers of Indigenous heritage languages are typically the elders, the oldest living generations” (Meek, 2010, p. 57). It is not yet known how many silent speakers exist within the community of Akwesáhsne, but further studies in the future would be useful in identifying the number. Prior to starting the study, participants were informed about the research work to be conducted at a community Wolf Clan meeting and through email. They were invited to participate if they met the criteria which was that they be of the Kanien’kehá:ka people, live in Ahkwesáhsne, be a silent speaker (one who understands the language but does not speak), and be a Wolf Clan person from one of the three families.

4.2b Procedures

Participants who accepted the invitation and wanted to take part in the study, were given Participant Consent Forms (see Appendix C) which detailed the purpose, objectives and importance of the research. Informed consent was also explained, meaning participants were well-informed about the study, the potential risks and benefits of their participation and that their participation was part of research and not therapy. Participation was voluntary and it was their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The subject’s physical, emotional and psychological capability was taken into consideration when consenting. The informed consent process ensured the subjects understood their involvement in the study.

4.2c Data Collection

A participant interview guide (see Appendix D) was used to focus on obtaining participant experiences, feelings, and attitudes toward being silent speakers during face-face-interviews. A total of five interview questions were posed to the participants:

1. What are some of your earliest recollections of speaking Kanien’kéha amongst your family?

2. What factors have contributed to making you a silent speaker?
3. What kinds of feelings have emerged from the contributing factors?
4. How has being a silent speaker impacted you and your life in general?
5. What do you feel would help you break down the barriers of silence and to become a speaker again?

Each interview was recorded using a recording device. Once all of the interviews were recorded, transcription was completed to create written accounts of the spoken words. Each transcript was reviewed, coded to identify important concepts which answered the interview questions and placed into themes guided by the wampum strings.

Chapter 5. Findings

5.1 Ka'nikonhrakétskwas (Uplifting of the Minds Condolence Ceremony)

As a young child and moving through my life into becoming a grandmother, I have held the traditions and ways of being of the Rotinonshión:ni with respect and reverence. The teachings of the Elders within my family, the ceremonial and political leaders of, not only my own community and nation, but those of the sister communities and brother nations, have wrapped me in a blanket of belonging and safety. The teachings and ways of being that I have been fortunate enough to receive, have guided me through difficult times during my life. I have often wondered where I would be, had they not been given. The sacred bundle of knowledge and language, given by the Ancestors and passed on to the future generations, continues to be handed to the future generations. It is from this place that I do my research, guided by the knowledge and the words, passed on to me over time. It is with the utmost respect that I have used Ka'nikonhrakétskwas, the Uplifting of the Minds Condolence Ceremony, to uplift the minds of not only myself, my family and my extended Wolf Clan families, but to all of the silent speakers who have been silenced and have endured the pain of the traumas inflicted upon them. I have been mindful and respectful as I have approached the Sharenhó:wane Wolf Clan Council and have asked for permission and support for this research project. They have come to realize the importance of the research work and have agreed to my request.

As a young child, being raised in a family of traditional Rotinonhshión:ni teachings, it was not uncommon to hear the stories associated with the Peacemaker and how he brought his message of peace to warring nations of people. They had accepted the message of peace and agreed to stop warring with one another and to find alternative ways of dealing with their

grievances. All of the war leaders now became leaders of peace. With all of the warring, many lives had been lost in vengeance so there was a lot of grief affecting the communities. It was through this that the Condolence Ceremony came about. It was also not uncommon to attend the Condolence Ceremony, which is done previously to the raising of a new leader within a nation of the Rotinonshión:ni. In its entirety and original form, the Condolence Ceremony consists of what is called the "Fifteen Strings of Sympathy". In more modern times, the strings have been modified and used in dealing with other losses other than death as it has proven to be helpful amongst the people.

It was common to see my father receive phone calls and leave our home to tend to the responsibility of being roti'nikonhkáhte (the upright mind) when someone from the opposite side of the fire within the longhouse suffered a loss. Those who suffered the loss are known as roti'nikonhkwenhtarén:'on (their minds have fallen to the ground). It was during times such as these that the three wampum strings addressing the eyes, ears and throat were used to assist the families with feelings of grief associated with loss. Traditionally, the words are used at a feast to uplift the minds of the people who have suffered a loss and offer comfort and healing so they can move forward in their lives.

My father was a big thinker. Many times, I would come upon him sitting at the kitchen table deep in thought. It was during one of these times that he formulated the idea of Indigenous people of the world coming together to console one another for all of the grief and traumas that had been inflicted upon us by the oppressors. He would often talk about how our people were "stuck" and didn't seem to be able to "move forward" because of grief. It was during that time that he had a dream of a Condolence Ceremony to be attended by Indigenous leaders

from North and South America, to address the grief of colonization and genocide. The traditional Gathering of Condolence, Strength and Peace, was held at the headwaters of the Mississippi River on June 18-23, 2012 so Indigenous people of the Americas could begin to move forward in peace.

The words which were embedded into the wampum strings and were used at the head waters of the Mississippi River for the people of the four directions, are the same words used in guiding the findings of this research project of silent speakers. Seven strings have been taken from the original "Fifteen Strings of Sympathy" to demonstrate an understanding of how silent speakers have been affected by grief and trauma and how using traditional therapeutic methods can assist in creating resilience and clearing the trauma from the heart, mind and body.

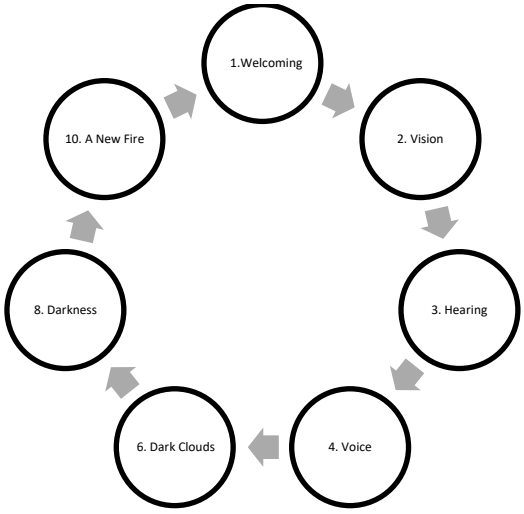


Figure 12. Selection of Seven Wampum Strings of Condolence

5.2a Welcoming the Participants

The participants were in their forties to sixties; seven of which were female and two were male. All participants were parents, with six of them also being grandparents. All nine participants live in the Kanien'kehá:ka community of Ahkwesáhsne, are silent speakers and are

from one of the three Wolf Clan families within the Kanien'kehá:ka; the Sharenhó:wane (Majestic Tree) family, the Kionhnhéhkwen (Life Sustainers) family and the Orenhre'kó:wa (Great White Eagle) family. All nine participants have asked to remain anonymous and have been identified as P1-P9.

When asked about early recollections of being immersed in Kanien'keha within their homes at an early age, participants stated Kanien'kéha was spoken amongst family members as well as community members. Some had recollections of speaking the language themselves, whereas others did not self-identify as being speakers.

Four participants recalled speaking Kanien'kéha as small children as illustrated by their comments. They drew upon their memories and shared how old they were as speakers, which brought them to the age associated with starting school. *"I truly believe", "maybe*" and "*probably*" demonstrated some uncertainty, but they believed they did speak it at one time. *"I don't even know what age I was, but whenever going to Tótah's (grandparents), the old house, everybody spoke Mohawk, seemed like, anyways. My mother and father spoke to each other in the language. I used to go to her (mother's) mother and father's little house. They always conversed in their language to each other. My oldest siblings were fluent. Myself, early on, I just watched the guys have a good time and I listened to what they were saying, I could understand what they were saying, not everything, but most of it. Yeah, I grew up a lot with the old farmers that used to farm, so I got the tail end of the guys that used to farm and also the guys that used to hitch up horses, buggies, and sleighs in the wintertime. Summertime was buggies for the parades. So, I was always around the language" (P1); "When I was young, I truly believe I used to speak Kanien'kéha. When visitors would come over, and my mother and father would talk*

with the visitors, it was always in Mohawk, in Kanien'kéha" (P2); "My first years were speaking Mohawk. I did at home with my siblings. It was the main language of our home, then." (P3); "My parents always spoke. They spoke in Mohawk but it was mostly from my grandparents, always spoke, growing up. Yeah, we always heard it" (P4); "…maybe Grade 1, yeah, maybe Grade 1" (P5); "My earliest recollections, I never really spoke with my family members but I remember hearing basic commands from my parents like going back to maybe six or seven. I never really had conversations with my parents or with my siblings in the language, but you know, they told us what to do in the language and stuff like that. Grandparents, same thing. They actually all spoke to us in the language too, not 100 percent of the time" (P6); "Probably in my childhood, my grandparents were fluent in the Mohawk language. My parents, my dad was very fluent. He had broken English because he was so fluent in his language. My older siblings, they're fluent now and they probably conversed with them" (P7).

5.2b Welcoming String of Wampum

We understand it may have been difficult for you to travel. As you traveled, we imagined you encountered dusty trails and caused you great discomfort. We therefore symbolically use the eagle feather to take the dust off your body, from the top of your head to your feet. During your travels you may have encountered area's where thorny bushes grow. You may have accumulated burrs and pickers on your clothing to cause you discomfort. We remove these things from your clothing so that you will now be in comfort. Symbolically we offer to you, the purest and coolest water for you to drink. This will wash away any obstructions in your throat and stomach. We do this, so that your voice will be strong and your hearing will be

> **good. We give thanks that the Great Spirit allowed our brothers and sisters to arrive safely. These are the words as embodied in this first wampum string (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).**

5.3a Tears in the Eyes

When identifying contributing factors of being silent speakers, participants spoke of attending school for the first time, and the fear and punishment associated with speaking Kanien'kéha. Staying silent caused the erosion of language speaking abilities.

Five participants mentioned that in school, the use of Kanien'kéha was discouraged whereas the use of the English language was encouraged, resulting in English gradually becoming the first language spoken in the home. *"I was going to school in Salmon and my mother and father got a letter from the school saying not to encourage me to speak Mohawk, but they encouraged me to speak more English" (P1); "The biggest part of it was going to school" (P2); "My first years were speaking Mohawk but when I went to school at St. Regis Mohawk School, I remember it wasn't very nice. When I would speak Mohawk with my friends that were from Spaghetti Corner way, we were punished, we were punished not to speak. About second grade and once listening and learning English, that's when I started speaking." (P3); "English was, was more popular, it was easier, it was in our school, and you weren't made fun of. But I remember, my cousins saying they got beat up for using it and they were two or three grades ahead of me. You know? So, that was still at our school. I was behind them, you know?" (P5); "…the influences of school, being in school and just English becoming our first language more than anything" (P7).* "Language suppression, particularly for Indigenous peoples, is 'a form of disempowerment and oppression' that impacts self-identity, well-being, self-esteem and empowerment, all of which

are key ingredients for individual and community healing" (Cohen, 2001 as cited in NCCAH, 2016, p. 1).

Three participants spoke of looks they received from grandparents or Elders when there was an expectation they understand or respond in Kanien'keha. *"They conversed to me, they conversed in the language, thinking that I should understand. I should be able to articulate back to them in the language, what they would ask of me, the look that I got from Tótah Boy." (P1); "A lot of the time we would always get that look when we didn't answer them or we didn't understand what they were trying to tell us to do." (P6); "They know that a lot of people are learning, so they just like sit there and stare at you and wait for you to answer." (P9).*

> Aboriginal families have been at the centre of a historical struggle between colonial governments on one hand, which set out deliberately to eradicate the culture, language and world view of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit children over whom they assumed control, and Aboriginal parents on the other hand, who believe wholeheartedly that they have a sacred responsibility to maintain balance in the world for their children and others not yet born (RCAP, 1996. Vol. 3. p. 19).

5.3b The First String of Condolence: The Vision

> **We the people of the north and the east would like to bring to your attention the loss of vision you have incurred from our past history. The pain and suffering you have been carrying for generations have caused tears to envelop your vision. When you look into the future you can only see blurry shadowy unrecognizable figures. This has been caused by the heavy burden of grief we carry. Our brothers and sisters of the south and west, listen to our words of condolence. We the people**

> **of the north and the east uplift our arms toward the universal power in our request that the softest and gentle cloth be provided by the Great Spirit. We, the people, will now take this sacred cloth to wipe away the tears you have shed for the past five hundred years. We now beckon our great creator above the heavens to lead you by the hand and place you at tomorrow's new sunrise. You will stand there with no more tears, and your vision for the future will be restored. You will now look out into the world with a renewed vision. You will see the brightness of the suns light revealing all of nature for you to enjoy. You will again see the animals, birds, clouds, sun, moon, stars and you can see the gentle breezes as they move through leaves on the trees. Now you will see the children of the future coming toward you, beckoning for the chance to live your teachings. We now deliver this sacred string of wampum containing our words. We will now await your favorable response, our brothers and sisters (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).**

5.4a Dust of Grief in the Ears

Three participants spoke of hearing the language in anger and during arguments between family members and themselves which resulted in not wanting to hear the turmoil and as a result, blocked it out. *"My mother and father spoke to each other in the language but when they came to me, they didn't speak in onkwehonwenéha, only unless they were mad or pissed off or swearing at the other." (P1); "They told us what to do in the language and stuff like that, but we didn't talk like we understood what they wanted us to do, and if they were mad, they used the language but we didn't really converse."(P6); Yeah, a lot of arguing, well him arguing*

with her, and I think that probably could have been my like block it off, so I don't hear it or something" (P4).

One participant shared a memory of how their older siblings were all fluent and a bus driver, upon bringing the children home from school, scolded their mother not to speak Kanien'kéha to her children and to teach them English. The prompting to speak English through punishment and verbal abuse created more fear in the participant. *"It happened later when I was a teenager, my mother said she can remember a bus driver coming right to her house and scolding her because my older brothers would only speak Kanien'kéha. And the bus driver came in and said, "Why do you want your children to be savages?" He told her she had to teach them to speak English. When you go away to school, when you leave the house to go to school, and you're taught English and you're scolded for not speaking English, I think it has a lot to do with it. Even as I was in high school, I remember my gym teacher was yelling at me because I told one of the girls, "Hánio ó'ksa!" and she pulled me aside and said, "We don't use that bad language here." (P2). Another participant recalled the fear of speaking Kanien'keha because of what was told to her. "I did at home (spoke Kanien'kéha) with my siblings, but it was the main language of our home, then. But when the other kids came along, I think my mother wanted us to learn more English because of what happened to the older ones, some of my brothers were punished, but they never really talked about it." (P3).*

Three participants spoke of being sent away or not being allowed in the home of the grandparents when adults were gathered, which they felt impacted them as they were unable to hear Kanien'kéha being used in conversation. *"My mother and father would talk to the visitors and it was always in Mohawk, in Kanien'kéha. A lot of times the kids were sent away,*

like upstairs to go play out someplace else so we didn't hear what they were talking about" (P2); "like what they didn't want us to know they spoke in Mohawk, we were always told to go outside and play." (P4); "We weren't allowed to go into Tótah's house, so we didn't hear all the gossip" (P5).

Two participants also looked at being impacted in their lives by the parents and Elders in their families who began to mix Kanien'kéha with English during conversations and beginning to speak English to converse with their children knowing they could fully understand Kanien'kéha. *"I think it was starting to break up with our aunts too. I remember it breaking it up, and like, it was easier to say the English word than to say their long Mohawk words, I think, English and Mohawk." (P5); "My dad was very fluent. He had very broken English because he was so fluent in his language. I think the influences of school, being in school and just English becoming our first language more than anything. So, my dad seemed like he was trying more to speak English over Mohawk too. To try and communicate with us, even though we understood the Mohawk language" (P7).* Whether heard directly, through a memory, or not heard at all, it has had an effect upon children growing up in Kanien'keha speaking families. Many Elders began to use English more often to support the education of their children and to avoid having them be punished and ridiculed. Leanne Hinton (2013) explains it well when stating that people can and have often given up language, along with other aspects of their heritage culture and way of life, for the sake of their own welfare and that of their children. Upon hearing more use of the English language within the home domain made it more possible for the children to follow suit and use Kanien'kéha less.

5.4b The Second String of Condolence: The Hearing

We would like to bring to your attention a very serious matter. First, when we experience grief from all of our mounting losses our hearing becomes affected. This is what happened to you and I. Because your hearing has been affected it is hard to hear the words as they come from your loved ones. When someone speaks to you, you cannot hear the words clearly. You are distant and cannot respond properly. This has been caused by the pain and suffering we have inherited from the experience of our ancestors. Listen to our words of condolence, so that you, our brothers and sisters may receive our gift. With extended arms and faces toward the sky we ask a request from the Creator, that a soft plume of the feather is provided. With the softness of this feather we come to you to cleanse away the dust of grief that has accumulated in your ears. Again, we, your brothers and sisters, extend our arms toward the Creator and request that you will be placed in the new sunrise of tomorrow. This new sunrise will represent the dawning of a new day that your hearing was restored. With restored hearing you will go out into the world to enjoy the sounds of nature. You will hear once again the rippling sounds coming from the waterways. You will recognize once again the different songs of music coming from your bird relatives. You will hear the changing of the winds. You will be able to hear the drumming in the distance as your neighbors perform their thanksgiving ceremony. With the restoration of your hearing you can now enjoy hearing your children's laughter. With restored hearing, you can now hear the coming faces coming toward you (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).

5.5a Obstructions in the Throat

Many of the feelings associated with becoming silent speakers surfaced as obstructions in the throat. The obstructions were related to the silence and each feeling and obstruction were needing to be dealt with in order to begin speaking Kanien'kéha again. Juuso (2015) explains how there are people who have been more or less forbidden to speak their language, some who spoke or heard the language as children but have not spoken as adults, and some who one may expect would know more, but lack vocabulary. With the punishment and fear of speaking Kanien'kéha as they became older, three participants began to use more English and silenced their use of the language. *"We were punished not to speak, so each day that I went back to school it was the same thing we couldn't speak "those words" so because of that, I stayed quiet and would barely talk." (P3); "When I get hurt, I don't say no more, I just block, I just block, I block things out and become silent. I just block. I don't carry it either though. Like, I'll carry it for a while and then forget about it. It's not important. That's probably why there's a lot missing, you know, because I blocked it out." (P5); "I remember conversing with my grandmother and trying to say something to her in Mohawk and she couldn't understand what I was trying to say and interpreted it in a whole different way. I would just stop talking all together" (P7).*

Juuso (2015) also states that when one feels foolish, they reject any responsibility to learn the language. Two participants expressed wanting to be able to communicate with speakers of Kanien'kéha but how awkward it was for them when they did. *"Whenever I spoke to my family members my grandparents, the relationship was built on English so when I really spoke in the language it became awkward." (P6); "And then you're just sitting there with a speaker and then you're trying to remember what to say, and it's just awkward" (P9).*

In speaking less Kanien'keha, seven of the participants expressed a feeling of fear of making mistakes when speaking their own language which also contributed to not speaking anymore. *"When I was older, I didn't totally understand what they said and when I answered, it was wrong, and they laughed. I was embarrassed and I didn't speak anymore." (P4); "I felt shameful that I didn't know. I kind of looked at my mother and my mother put my head down. From that point on, I didn't know what to say. Sometimes I started to converse in Mohawk, end up saying it wrong and being corrected." (P1); "I think that afraid to make a mistake if I did speak, speaking two languages, the fear of being punished again or feeling bad for my friends. I was afraid that I would be laughed at." (P3); "Oh, I couldn't speak. I don't know why I couldn't speak. Afraid of mistake, afraid, afraid of being wrong, hollered at, not saying it right. That's how it was growing up too. I remember our cousins trying to speak and my older siblings would say, 'That's not how you say it. You're still baby talking.' You know? It's throwing those mean words at somebody. I just didn't speak. I didn't want those words thrown at me." (P5); "It's a hard thing because, at the bottom of your heart, you want to speak your language, but at the same time you have this fear that's built in, but not quite sure exactly what, I was afraid of, besides making a mistake but that's just how it was, I guess." (P6); "I had difficulties as a child pronouncing some our language and I might have got misinterpreted or I dunno. I think I would stumble on my words, maybe stutter on some of my pronunciations and then it just made me feel insecure about speaking my language. I was afraid if I made a mistake or you don't wanna get hollered at or made fun of for speaking it the wrong language or not stressing or not pronouncing it right." (P7); "Fear of saying words wrong. Then my memory, I could never remember what I wanted to say" (P9).* Juuso goes on to ask, "who actually knows anything

perfectly?" (2015). She also adds that in order to become proficient, you have to start from where you are.

Three participants expressed feeling shame at no longer being able to speak Kanien'kéha. Saraiya & Lopez-Castro (2016), describe that "Although frequently interconnected, guilt is the negative evaluation of a specific behavior ("I've done an awful thing") whereas shame condemns the self ("I am an awful person"). During this study, guilt and shame, along with fear were the most prominent feelings identified by the participants. "Their difference is further highlighted in what each emotion motivates: guilt may prompt reparative efforts whereas shame may trigger avoidance and withdrawal (Saraiya & Lopez-Castro, 2016. p. 2). *"The first response, it was shame. I felt shameful that I didn't know, we're talking about emotions and we got to be able to identify what we're feeling. Shame is one of the deepest emotions. I wanted to say no because I know that I didn't have the ability to speak fluently and I felt ashamed." (P1); "Not understanding, there was a lot of shame with that." (P4); "Shame, you know, shame was one of them especially that would be some of their responses, especially with the grandparents" (P6).*

Seven participants also expressed feelings of inadequacy at not speaking the language when there was an expectation to do so. They expressed expectations from grandparents and elders, more so than their parents. One participant spoke of expectations which were tied to cultural knowledge and being in a leadership role within the long house. *"There's a lot of expectation as a young person, growing up and expecting to know these languages especially if you belong to a lot of societies, you should know how to do the opening, you should be learning the songs and you should start to be able to understand what everyone's talking about in their speeches. It's*

always been a setback for all of us, even myself, to be able to perform certain things and having the confidence. I don't know if my brain got kind of, like concrete not allowing me to absorb too much more. I've tried to learn songs and I just can't pick it up and, what's that word, to memorize? Same way with the language, I am learning, but it feels like I'm still on the short version and when I practice, I practice. When it comes to that moment, I have to really think about it and really put myself in a different mindset because my conversation, the language I speak, is English. Kanienkéha is my second language and I can't even be fluent in that. I've been doing that, being around people all my life, and still struggle with that today" (P1).

One participant felt she had failed her grandchildren in not being able to speak but also felt good that she had enrolled her children in Kanien'keha immersion to learn the language. *"Makes me feel like it can, even though I feel like I failed my own self, I can say that I helped somebody else in getting that language because I put my children there. My granddaughters now, are at the Ahkwesáhsne Freedom School and they're learning, but I feel like I'm holding them back sometimes because they have the language, then they come to my house and they speak for a little while, then it just goes back to English. For the language, it seems like I tried all my life to do that and I can't get it. Like, I can hear people talking, I know what they're saying, I just don't know why I can't say, answer in Kanien'kéha" (P2).* One participant attributed her lack of speaking ability to not having the self-confidence to do so while one participant compared her language ability to that of her own children, believing she knew nothing. *"I guess not having the self-confidence enough to speak it." (P3); "They (children) were correcting me so then I thought, 'Holy man, I really don't know nothing!'" (P4).* Another participant regretted not doing more to teach her children Kanien'kéha and felt guilty. *"I feel like I shoulda did more and I just*

should've listened to my inner self and said, 'No, I wanna speak my language!'. My children should've been more fluent than what they are. It starts with me and I didn't do enough. I have the younger one that really wants to learn the language and she reminds me and I feel, indifferent or I feel like bad that I didn't incorporate the language more. Because I grew up with it, I was one that understood it, but never really spoke it" (P7). One participant expressed anger at the expectation placed on her by her mother. She blamed her mother for not teaching her and questioned what she believed was an expectation to speak Kanien'kéha. *"I was supposed to know that was what was being said. Well, how do you (mother) expect me to know? How do you expect me to know when you never talk to me in these words? Then she would just wave her hand at me like, 'Eh, she doesn't know how to talk!' like it was my fault. Cause she was, you know, making me look bad" (P8).* One participant was frustrated at her speaking ability and not being able to converse as she wanted and at not being able to teach her children. *"You kind of feel like an outsider, like, even though you're among your own people, you're just like sitting on the sidelines watching them speak, watching them converse. You can't do anything because you can't speak Kanien'kéha. You can't put your sentences together, and you've got your little words, and you could put your little words together, but everybody's speaking all advanced and everything like that. It's hard, especially having kids, because that's what you want for them, you want them to grow up to be first language speakers" (P9).*

Language acquisition is not just about grammar and words, but also about thoughts and feelings. The thoughts control the feelings connected to language use. Negative thoughts make you even more reluctant to believe in your skills, and make it even harder to start

speaking out loud. We have all thought that, "I'm not good enough; I can't do this", even though we could if we just tried (Juuso, 2015, p. 10).

5.5b The Third String of Condolence: The Voice

Listen to us, our brothers and sisters. Today your voice is limited, caused by the great losses you have incurred in the past five hundred years. There is an obstruction of pain in your throat that prevents you from speaking clearly. The certainty behind your voice has been consumed by the painful memories your ancestors experienced. We come to you to offer support so that your voice will be restored. We, your brothers and sisters, uplift our arms and faces toward the sky where the Creator dwells. We request on your behalf that the Creator will look favorably upon you to send the purest medicine water to drink. We now give you this healing water to drink. This water will cleanse your throat and remove all of the obstructions that resulted from your past pain, and suffering. We now request from the Creator to bring you before the dawn of a new day. In the light of our oldest brother the sun, your voice shall return. With a renewed voice, you will be able once again to speak with your relations of the natural world, and your immediate families (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).

5.6a Burden of Grief and Sorrow

One participant had feelings of grief as he recounted the loss of Elders and their language and the knowledge they had taken with them. *"We had a tremendous loss of Elders that were very sentimental and pushing forward and preserving our culture and way of life, and unfortunately those who have struggled and maintained, have left us. They look a lot of their*

knowledge. Some, the ones that shared, had left an impact and a legacy behind so they could preserve the language" (P1).

Feelings of hurt and sadness from the attitudes of others were expressed by two participants. One participant spoke of her grandfather who had attended residential school and took an attitude towards his granddaughter's pride in her own identity as an Aboriginal person. *"My grandfather, he used to live with us he was raised in a residential school. I was trying to be so proud of being Kanien'kehá:ka. I used to wear a lot of beaded bracelets, necklaces, moccasins and he was a miserable man when he wasn't drinking. So, I saw a lot of that how miserable he was and he would scold me sometimes and say, 'Aw, I hate that Indian stuff!' and that really hurt" (P2). "I was so sad, that they weren't proud enough to know how beautiful our language is. I only knew how beautiful it was, only because I went back to school" (P5).*

5.6b The Fourth String of Condolence: Dark Clouds

> **Listen to us our brothers and sisters, we look upon you and we take notice of your apparent distant, disposition. You appear to us as if you are covered with dark clouds from above and beyond. Your head hangs with your troubled thoughts. Your whole being is covered in loneliness, and with unease you trod from day to day uncertain where to go. We understand the heavy burden of grief you carry, therefore listen to our words. We your brothers and sisters, we implore the Creator to give us the strength to scatter the dark clouds away from your existence. We request from the Creator that the dawning of the new day will cause you to look about you and at this time you will realize the blue sky has again come back into existence. Brothers and sisters, continue to listen to our words. Now that you have**

been freed from the clutches of the dark clouds you can go into future days with a renewed spirit. You will be able to once again partake of normal activities in the world and in your community (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).

5.7a Burden of Trauma from Anger and Blame

Three participants spoke of the use of alcohol being associated with Kanien'kéha being spoken amongst family members. Alcohol is associated with lowering inhibitions which explains why silent speakers tend to speak their language more when under the influence of alcohol. *"My oldest siblings were fluent. Then, the ones a little bit older, in between us, didn't speak the language, only when they were drinking. So, I heard a lot more when people were drinking. Maybe because it was confident for them, when they were drunk they speak the language" (P1); "My father and mother would argue, and my parents were drinking, so I know there was a lot of harsh words said." (P4); "I stand up for myself and I look at them and I say, 'What about your kids? Look at your kids, are they speakers?' The one older guy said, 'Only when they're drunk, they speak'" (P5).*

One participant spoke of sexual abuse and how she felt it was related to the blocking of not only Kanien'kéha, but her childhood memories overall. *"I think it was affected by my sexual abuse. I think that's what happened then and I don't know where my language went. You know? But, I think that was a block somewhere, that blocked a lot of my childhood" (*P5).

Three participants spoke of feelings associated with cultural incompetence within the longhouse and not being able to fulfill responsibilities in the ceremonial and political aspects and in teaching the young ones. *"I know being involved, and the leadership, the expectation and the weight that it has on me from others in the family all assuming I'm a fluent speaker and I*

understand everything. I say, no I'm not, I'm still learning. Such a big role for a leader to know that part, an important role otherwise you can't perform and conduct and facilitate ceremonies. So, there are other feelings and emotions that go along with that such as helplessness, hopelessness, and there's frustration for myself, sense of failure, sense of disappointment in myself. I try to do the best I can today and try to focus on that much anyways but being a leader is a tremendous stress and all the responsibility lies on me to be able to perform. I know one day I would like to go out and be able to speak fluently" (P1); "It didn't bother me until I had my son. When we were young, there weren't a lot of speakers. I don't remember a lot of speakers. Why did it matter at that time? Oh, it mattered. What was I gonna give him (son)? You know? How was I gonna show him who he was? So, I tried harder and I was 22 at the time. So I tried harder, I spoke as much as I could to my mother, and holy, it mattered. Our ways mattered. But, I understood everything that was going on at the longhouse, most of it I didn't, and I kept going. I was able to make out a lot of it. Knowing it was all in the language and I didn't know it" (P5); "When I go to the ceremonies, I can fully understand most of what's being said and what's being conducted. But for me to translate to somebody, like my child, if she has questions it's hard for me to interpret. Because I automatically understand it, so sometimes it's hard for me to put it in English to fully explain to the extent of it, because our language is so complex that if you don't understand it fully it's hard to interpret I guess. Yeah, so I have a hard time explaining it" (P7).

Two participants felt feelings of anger and blame towards their parents for not teaching them the language and traditional teachings*. "When I was younger, I used to blame my parents. Growing up in the church I didn't get to have a name in the longhouse until I was in my early*

20's. I had to repent that I did go to church" (P1); "No encouragement. There was no prompting or just no support, or nothing. The only time they really spoke, when we wanted to know. We would say, 'Hey, Ma! How do you say...?' She would tell us, but we would be the ones asking. They sure didn't offer. They didn't make it a mandatory. You know, she like brushed it under the rug, like, it's her fault she doesn't know how to speak. And it was my Ma's fault. You know? And it would make me angry!" (P8). (Wexler et al. as cited in Jenni et al., 2017) suggests that cultural resilience in Indigenous communities is the result of an active production of culture that creates meaning and allows Indigenous people to have a positive view of their identity.

Three participants, raised in the teachings of the church, spoke of the importance of taking the learning of Kanien'keha back to nature and traditional teachings. *"It comes to Creation cause a lot of our answers are there. We talk about that fire, it begins with that spark. If there's a spark in us, there's motivation, there's determination in learning something new. With the language, it has to be something that can inspire us and motivate. It can be something that's so ancient and so hard, difficult to do. People just want to learn the language because it fills them up with something good and it makes you feel good inside. That warmth starts growing in your chest, where that fire is. I think it's very important that we do speak our language that we do speak it with compassion and love and that we treat each other in that way, as we're talking or communicating in that way, conversing with each other. When we do that, it changes our minds and the way we think. A lot of times today we're trying to figure out our identity and trying to figure out where our place is in today's society. I think maybe we need to get back to nature. All the answers are in the kanonhséhsne (longhouse), all the answers are in the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Thanksgiving Address). When we generally acknowledge those things, then*

we feel more connected to nature, more connected to Shonkwaia'tíson (Maker of our bodies), and all the things he provided us." (P1); "I knew who I was. I was strong, recognizing that we weren't supposed to be English people, we were supposed to be Onkwehón:we (natural people). I really took that to heart and I tried really hard to leave that Catholic part of me away. I wanted to go, to be who I was supposed to be, in the longhouse." (P2); "They want them to bring more culture and learn more about it. Go to the longhouse learn what you can. I was embarrassed because I didn't know nothing about it, but then again, that's the way we grew up, it was almost like, taboo" (P4).

5.7b The Fifth String of Condolence: The Darkness

Our brothers and sisters, listen to the words we convey to you. We have an empathy with you in carrying the great burden of grief caused by the arrival of people from the other side of the ocean. For over five hundred years, all of our people have been victimized through the use of genocidal practices. Both of our peoples have been disinherited of our homelands. We have experienced countless atrocities by misguided individuals. Every day, we remember the rapes, the murder, the cheating, broken treaties, tactics of coercion, decimation through disease and loss of land and language. Yes, our brothers and sisters, we indeed carry this heavy burden derived from our common experience and past. Every day, wherever we may be, we have images of terrible events in our past. We react to our burden in different ways depending on the circumstance or where we are in that particular moment. We become addicted to alcohol and drugs because it offers a momentary escape from our reality. We become workaholics so that by

> **constantly occupying our minds with something, we lessen the pain of our burden. We become travelers so that we can keep changing our scenarios. We join the oppressor's military because we want to be validated as a people. We take partners from another race to feel acceptance. When we become successful in the oppressor's way of life, we often lose our cultural values and identity. We have accepted foreign religious practices in the past to accommodate our survival. Some have forgotten our own religious practices designed by the Creator for the people of Turtle Island (J. Swamp, personal communication, June 13, 2011).**

5.8a Reigniting the Fire

Three participants shared their opinions of the Kanien'kéha and English languages. *"I think English language is probably the worst language that we could speak in the world because it degrades spirit" (P1); "It just seems that it's easier you get a better understanding of things when it's hurting the language. I think English is boring just to listen to English and Mohawk has more feeling, I guess" (P3); "That's when I knew how beautiful our language was. It didn't have swear words or to cut people down, you know, chop them up like English does" (P5).*

Two male participants identified various gatherings as a way to educate people. *"They can be responsible for their own, learning their language too. I know one day I would like to go out and be able to speak fluently. I think that maybe one way, I don't know if it's the answer, is to organize, have to be very, very organized in the sense that someone can facilitate a talking circle, to reach certain levels of expectations we have, setting some goals for ourselves. We can gather up certain people in the clan and maybe the focus is just to direct all the attention to the languages if that's something they want to pursue and find the answer. Workshops and talking*

circles, to begin to talk about our struggles with the language and how talking with other individuals in the family and finding out, what could work and what can't work. I think the most important thing to do is just start out with the effects and impacts of colonization and what it has done to our ancestors and to our way of thinking" (P1); "To gather people like that and being able to expand on the vocabulary that we have, you know, just working together to try and build on what's there" (P6).

The family theme addressed the importance of learning language within the family setting. Historically, language was learned within the family and all participants also experienced their first language from the family*. "My boys are kind of confused into what language they speak. I try to encourage them to speak Mohawk, but I know I'm using the English kiorhén:shen name but I told them I would like to use more of the Onkwehonwenéha kahsenna'ón:we (natural names). But, I get in the habit of using their English names. So, I'm at fault too in a lot of ways because I let down my family. It's hard when you go longhouse and you're the only one there, and you look for your family there. I know sometimes we feel the same way and we kind of look around to see who are left and who still continues these ways. I know I might have some of them but there are others that in the family, might have some parts of how to solve this problem." (P1); "There's still a lot of work to be done and if they could teach our class, I mean have our classrooms into homes, I think it could help to bring families in there not just only kids. Our schools are still the residential schools. They're not family-orientated. It's behind desks and our kids don't learn that way" (P5); "Get a lot of the material in the house, to start with the families, the parents. And to help them learn here, and that could be from us to start. My sister, we were gonna do a bulletin with the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Thanksgiving Address) on the*

wall so that she could practice that, it's somewhere to start, you know? Like colors and everything, like we know all of that. The letters, the syllables, cue cards so that we're at least doing something with the language for an hour or two a day. Even if it's just games for the little guys, for now" (P9).

Six participants expressed that it was more important to hear and speak through conversation rather than learning to read and write the language. They all expressed, from their own learning experiences, that it did more for them to be immersed in conversations with Elders, using different teaching methods and having the support of a fluent speaker or Elder. *"I'm still looking for the magical formula so I can just pick it up in no time. I haven't found anything so far. Just have to speak it" (P1); "What is the method that would make us produce speakers, like, in the immersion programs? What's the ratio, the best ratio of speakers to child? I always thought, if two parents, if they spoke the language together, their children are going to speak the language. Both my parents spoke the language together, but I don't speak it, so, there's something there. But I always believed that, two speakers to one child, not one teacher to five children. I think having the best ratio is two to one, if you want a speaker. The biggest barrier for me now, and I don't think it's a barrier, if I was given the chance to go to an immersion program." (P2); "People should be more immersed, with more speakers around you, more being immersed instead of the writing. Writing it down, you gotta really do it. Situational teaching would be really good, and to have somebody who's really going to help you" (P3); "I know I'm not able to hold a conversation with someone. I might understand with what they're saying. I might get a gist of what they're saying, but not the whole dialogue. My son, he says we just learned to read and write where the younger ones can have a conversation. He said he*

wants his kids to be able to speak" (P4); "I find that you can get so much from that, simple conversation. People do all this reading and writing that you're made to do in school. Yeah, it's great. But, if you don't understand what you just wrote or what you just read, then you're not knowing the language. I've come to learn that the only way I'm going to become a speaker, is to speak it fluently, to actually be conversing with people. I find that you can get so much from that, simple conversation" (P7); "I feel like I needed someone. Elder? To me, it's like one thing, yeah, I go to school. And you leave and it's class content, but it's not life. I think that you need support for your teacher and you need support" (P8).

Participants expressed that immersion education has brought Kanien'keha fluency to their children. Hermes, as cited in McIvor, (2009) draws upon the work of a number of prominent researchers to assert that "the Indigenous-immersion method is quickly being recognized as one of the most effective tools for restoring Indigenous language" (p. 5). Participants also expressed their own desire to enter immersion programming to regenerate their own language speaking abilities. McCarty (2003) and long-time Indigenous language revitalization advocates Grenoble and Whaley (2006) also support language immersion.

Four participants spoke of learning vocabulary, from the basics to conjugations of verbs and pronouns*. "I've realized that throughout my life and during my teaching years, I never really understood the conjugation of verbs. The verbs are what I wanted to learn, so I joined this group and I did it for about maybe six to eight months. I really enjoyed it. It was about speaking. I got to learn how you changed the verbs depending on how many people. There's like, it was told to her, about 16 different verbs, not verbs, its pronouns I'm talking about. Yeah there's a lot, so that's what I really want to learn more about. It changes the other words once you learn the*

pronouns, it changes the structure" (P3); "I need to work on that plural and groups, and stuff like that that I still don't know, how to conjugate the word to make it sound right. Singular, like, you, me, he, she, that I can grasp and I can conjugate the words, but when it gets two people, two males, two females, and group settings, you lose me" (P7); " A word would get thrown in there that I didn't know. Like, right now I'm trying to remember a word. You know there are pieces of it, I remember. I do get hung up here and there. Sometimes, I just don't know how, like I have a word I just don't know how to use it. Like the context. Or, if I hear a conversation and I can figure out what they're saying, but I don't get the context of it" (P8).

Two participants spoke of confidence which is needed for people to begin speaking Kanien'keha again. *"We work on each other's self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence then we can work with one another and help one another" (P1); "Working together to try and build on what's there and build that confidence in everyone to start reaching out even further and fine tuning the language they speak" (P6).*

Three participants stated that grouping people at their speaking levels was important to regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha. One mentioned feeling more comfortable when speaking with children*. "I would probably be more comfortable with kids than adults because that's probably where my level is at like to theirs" (P4); "…being hooked up with other people in the same situation maybe even at the same level finding a way" (P6); "Speak all levels, you know. All levels, because we really do gotta hear it without the broken English" (P8).*

In today's modern times, people are connecting socially using phones and internet; some participants believed it could be useful in teaching language. Two participants mentioned the use of technology and how it would be helpful as a teaching tool with learning apps and on-line

courses. *"Today there's a lot of distraction but I know technology is very interesting because a lot of people say, 'Well, it's bad, but if we can use that for our advantage to learn, I think that can be a positive thing, using technology'. Our thoughts is on the phone now, it's become a habit, a way of life. Either set the phone down or use it as a tool to advance yourself. I know the world has become a lot smaller and consciously, the phone is a very interesting tool we can use to advance our language possibly" (P1); "We always have the technology for the phones like the apps, the courses" (P9).*

In discussing the impacts of not being able to speak Kanien'kéha, four participants recounted how, even though they no longer spoke Kanien'kéha fluently, they felt they had a positive impact on their children and community by helping to move the language into the future. *"I'm proud that two of my children are speakers and teachers of the language. That makes me feel like, even though I feel like I failed my own self, I can say that I helped somebody else in getting that language, because I put my children there (Kanien'kéha immersion). That was one of the main, it's so important to me to have the language, If I don't have it, at least I know the future generations will have it." (P2); "I have more confidence to speak to the elders especially. So, I'm really happy about that. More confidence and not being afraid to speak and teaching the younger ones. Accomplishment, I guess, to be helpful to other people. I feel I'm giving back to community by speaking and helping them to give them confidence too because I know a lot of them won't try. They have to realize that no one is going to laugh at them, but that they're going to help you. I try to do that all the time." (P3); "When I had kids, I wanted them to know the language. That's why I kind of pushed them to learn, like the older three went to immersion. They talk and I think that's where I'm fine with, but I wish I could talk more. As long as they're*

learning it and passing it on." (P4); "It's hard, especially having kids, because that's what you want for them, you want them to grow up to be first language speakers. But they learn it at school and they learn what we teach them here. It's all a learning experience to not take it that hard" (P9).

5.8b The Sixth String of Condolence: The Sacred Fire

Our brothers and sisters, listen to our words that are directed to you. We can see how cold and uncomfortable you are as you traverse on earth. The fire that kept you warm in past years has gone out. The wood from your fireplace has scattered and no longer produces heat. You have suffered many great losses and that is the primary reason your fire has gone out. The Great Spirit gave you, life, and with that life you were given a fire to keep your body warm. The Great Spirit also gave a family fire so that circle would be strong. Now this is what we will do for you. We have brought with us bundles of wood and we will rekindle a new fire for you and your families. This fire will grow strong and keep all of your families warm. The smoke from your fire will rise to the heavens and will be noticed by all of your relations and neighbors. Your friends and neighbors will say, to themselves, "We are happy that our neighbor's fire burns again! Now, we can live again, with no obstacles". Now we your brothers and sisters say to you, you must now make preparations to honor your responsibilities once again. Our brothers and sisters, we have conveyed these messages of condolences to help rekindle your fire. Your fire is now lit again, you will now take your positions of responsibility and steer it

toward the future. We thank Creator, for allowing us to come together in this way. We have spoken and await your favorable response (Jake Swamp, 2011).

Chapter 6: Discussion

The participants in this project have identified many reasons as to why they are silent speakers. They expressed various experiences, attitudes and beliefs surrounding language loss in the information that was gathered through the interviews in regards to their silence in speaking Kanien'kéha and addressed in the condolence strings of wampum.

1. The Introduction Wampum- The first wampum was a symbolic expression of welcoming participants and sharing their earliest recollections of speaking Kanien'kéha amongst their family members.
    - Spoke Kanien'kéha as children
    - Kanien'kéha spoken amongst family and community members
2. First String of Condolence: The Vision

    The first string of condolence acknowledged the tears shed due to painful memories from the language loss of participants and resulting in becoming silent speakers.
    - Attending school
    - English was encouraged
    - Kanien'kéha was discouraged
    - Fear of punishment
3. Second string of condolence: The Hearing

    The second string of condolence acknowledged the hearing and how the participants had become affected by the language loss and no longer understood what was spoken. There were also harsh words associated with Kanien'kéha being spoken which had an impact on their understanding and how they viewed the language. The participants identified various feelings which emerged from the contributing factors.

- Shame
- Fear
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Grief
- Not worthy
- Embarrassment
- Anger
- Hurt
- Frustration

4. Third string of condolence: The Voice

   This string acknowledges the obstruction the pain has caused in the participant's throats which affected their ability to speak and created the silence.

   - English became acceptable
   - Effects of parents/grandparents in residential school
   - Less intergenerational transmission of Kanien'keha
   - Embarrassment of making mistakes
   - No encouragement
   - No self-confidence

5. Fourth string of condolence: Dark Clouds

   The fourth string of condolence acknowledged the fear and guilt caused by not speaking Kanien'kéha.

   - Didn't want to make mistakes
   - Being laughed at
   - Scolded for speaking
   - Stumble on pronunciation

6. Fifth String of Condolence: The String of Darkness

The fifth string of condolence acknowledged the sadness and depression of the loss of identity and no longer speaking Kanien'kéha.

- Loss of identity
- Cultural incompetence
- Cannot fulfill responsibilities as parent, grandparent, leader
- Hopelessness
- Expectation by Elders to speak
- Inability to speak

7. Sixth String of Condolence: The Sacred Fire

In identifying what would help to break down the barriers of silence and to become speakers of Kanien'kéha again, the sixth string of condolence acknowledged the healing which participants felt they needed to move forward into the future and regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha.

- Gatherings of silent speakers and families to educate on historical impacts, colonialism, trauma
- Natural learning in family domain, nature, longhouse, cultural activities
- Less reading/writing and more listening/speaking with Elders (immersion)
- Create support systems
- Teach according to levels
- Noun/verb conjugation with pronouns, prefix/suffix

Through the course of the research, the participants addressed the causes of their silence and the effects of pain and trauma born from it. The intent of using the Ka'nikonhraketskwas (Uplifting the Minds) Condolence Ceremony as a guide for this project was to demonstrate that healing can take place when acknowledging the internalized pain and trauma affecting the thought processes and creating blockages within the mind, body and spirit. Our Ancestors did

not leave us defenseless. They left us a way to deal with our traumas by releasing whatever caused the silence and encouraged us to move on and to continue to live good lives. In speaking with Elder, J. Elijah, from the community of Oneida who has done many years of healing work with community members, when asked about silent speakers, he stated:

> Rebirth, it's like born again, some more than others. Some of us were hurt with the language, that's the troubling part of it. I could help somebody else but no one could help me. Yet, I have the same. Somebody has to be able to help me just as well as I help somebody else. We struggle with trying to get that back. So, we just memorize what we can. Only what we need. We don't need a lot of it so, we don't memorize a lot. We just memorize enough to get by. You have to clean them right off and start all over again. It's like you're reborn. If it's the language that you want, and that you need, then you get a fresh start at it, without any of the traumas in the way, even the teachers (personal communication, January 28, 2020).

All of the participants in the research project came from families of Kanien'keha speakers and were immersed in the language. All of the participants attended day schools and associated the onset of their language loss with attending school. Once in school, they were punished physically or verbally to discourage the use of Kanien'keha. The abuses generated many feelings which caused silence and had negative impacts on their lives, resulting in the inability to speak Kanien'keha.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Currently, there are modern methods of healing from mainstream society that are being utilized within Indigenous communities which can assist in breaking the silence and regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha. Harder (2013) explains that at the heart of Narrative Therapy, is the belief that people are multi-storied and that there is more to a person than meets the eye. He explains that although we are all multi-storied, some stories naturally hold more weight, while others are not as apparent. As the participants have shown in this project, their many stories surrounding being silent speakers, draws out their experiences, beliefs and attitudes and "helps them to live better in their preferred narrative" (Harder, 2013, p. 4). The Silent Speaker pilot projects in British Columbia have also been successful using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. The initiative, which originally began with the Sami people in Sweden, uses "cognitive strategies aimed at changing the way people look at the world and how people with limited knowledge about themselves and their surroundings, may interpret their experiences incorrectly and therefore; draw incorrect conclusions"(Juuso, 2015. p. 12). In the courses taught in the pilot projects in British Columbia, narratives are shared by the participants and cognitive theory is used in identifying avoidance strategies which they used to avoid speaking, self-focusing on collected negative expectations and unfavorable interpretation patterns, automatic thoughts (negative) and alternative thinking (positive). Silent speakers of Kanien'kéha could also benefit from CBT as they examine their own stories and begin to identify and understand what has created their silence.

The use of Ka'nikonhrakétskwas, Uplifting of the Mind Condolence Ceremony, is also a positive form of therapy, which historically, comes from the Rotinonhshión:ni people of the

longhouse. It not only promotes healing through a traditional therapeutic method by addressing the effects of grief and trauma on the mind, body and spirit, it also creates a solid base of an individual's identity. Culture and language revitalization are sources for healing and resilience within individuals, families, communities and nations but one must also be mindful of some ceremonial practices that remain protected within many Aboriginal communities. Rotinonshión:ni people are able access their own ceremonies through specific processes that are not always available to the public. Ceremony still takes place in a sacred place and ceremonial keepers still protect the spaces in which they are held, and this must be respected.

The importance of regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha is crucial and deserves further studies. An in-depth exploration of the topic of silent speakers in regards to the effects of trauma on language silence is needed along with more culturally-relevant therapies which would be useful in regenerating speakers of Kanien'kéha. It would be preferable that the therapies are culturally relevant to promote pride in identity for the Kanien'kehá:ka. It would also be beneficial to identify how many silent speakers exist, not only in Ahkwesahsne, but for all of the Kanien'kehá:ka communities. There also needs to be a deeper understanding of contributing factors of silent speakers which may vary from one community to the next. Economics, education and politics all play different roles within the communities and contribute to language loss. It would also serve the community if a survey could be done to identify silent speakers and use the information to create programs specifically to meet their needs.

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Appendices

Appendix A.

University of Victoria

Recruit Letter

She:kon, my name is Kahentéhtha Angela Elijah. I am a graduate student at University of Victoria in the Education Department. I am conducting research on silent speakers of the Mohawk language in the community of Ahkwesáhsne and I am contacting you to invite you to participate in a project called Saiakwatsirón:ni - We Are Re-igniting the Fire: Regeneration of Kanien'kéha Speakers.

The study is to identify silent speakers (people who understand the language but do not speak it) within the three Wolf Clan families of the Kanien'kehá:ka. The researcher will examine experiences of inter-generational trauma, identify common themes and seek traditional methods of healing to assist in regenerating speakers. I hope to use the information from this study to regenerate speakers of Kanien'kéha to ensure transmission of ceremonial and political knowledge.

You are a very important person. You have survived inter-generational trauma and although your mother-tongue has been silenced, you still have the opportunity to break the silence, find your voice and speak again. Your narrative is important in this study and you are being recruited as a participant because of your involvement within the traditions of the longhouse and within the community of Ahkwesáhsne.

If you take part in this study, I will come to your home and I will interview you by asking five questions about how you became a silent speaker. The questions and answers will be audio-recorded and the collected data will be used within the project thesis. I will present you with a token of my appreciation for your participation in the project. The interviewing process will take up to one hour of your time.

I understand that some participants may become uncomfortable at times in answering some questions but we can change the questions to suit your needs. You are also welcome to withdraw from the interviewing process at any time without judgement.

If you are interested in participating in this project, you may contact me at (226) 934-7239 or email me at kahentehtha@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

In peace,

Kahentéhtha Angela Elijah

Appendix B.

HAUDENOSAUNEE

MOHAWK - ONEIDA - ONONDAGA - CAYUGA - SENECA - TUSCARORA

MOHAWK NATION COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
VIA BOX 366 ROOSEVELTOWN NEW YORK 13683
Telephone (518) 358-3381 Fax (518) 358-3483

November 15 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Greetings on behalf of the Sharenho': wane Council, we hope that this letter finds you in good health & spirits.

In a meeting of the Sharenho': wane Council, the leadership of the Majestic Tree family of the Wolf Clan, it was agreed upon that the Iakoia': ne (Clan Mother) of the said family, would use the Ka'nikonhrake'tskwas Condolence Ceremony as a framework within her research project at the University of Victoria. As there are written works available in current literature, they can also be utilized by Angela Elijah.

It was also agreed upon that any Wolf Clan members participating in the research project as interviewees, are doing so of their own free will and may want to share their experiences with other clan members at a later date, if they wish to do so.

The Sharenho': wane Council is in full support of Angela Elijah and her research project in regenerating Kanien'ke'ka speakers within the Wolf Clan families and look forward to her sharing the results when it is complete. As a council working within the traditions of the people, such a project would shed some light on how to assist silent speakers in the regeneration of Kanien'keha, the Mohawk language.

Should you require additional information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office at the above address.

Sincerely,

Bula Hill/MNCC Administrator

Appendix C.

University of Victoria

Participant Consent Form

Saiakwatsirón:ni: We Are Reigniting Our Fires - Regeneration of Kanien'kéha Speakers

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Saiakwatsirón:ni - We Are Reigniting Our Fires: Regeneration of Kanien'kéha Speakers that is being conducted by Angela Elijah.

Angela Elijah is a graduate student at the University of Victoria, Department of Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education and you may contact her if you have further questions by: Phone (226) 934-7239 or Email kahentehtha@yahoo.com.

As a graduate student, the student is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Masters in Education with a focus in Indigenous Languages Revitalization. It is being conducted under the supervision of Edosdi Judy Thompson.

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this research project is to identify silent speakers (people who understand the language quite well but do not speak it) within the three Wolf Clan families of the Kanien'kehá:ka. The researcher will examine experiences of inter-generational trauma, identify common themes and consider traditional methods of healing to assist in regenerating speakers in the future.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because it will contribute to the gap pertaining to silent speakers as there is a lack of scholarly research in this area. It will provide methods of healing which could be utilized by other First Nations communities in Canada and other Indigenous groups internationally. It is hoped that this research will lead to the development of a project where silent speakers can attend and deal with intergenerational-trauma while re-learning their language through land-based activities.

Participants Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a silent speaker, (a person who understands the Mohawk language fluently but does not speak), a member of one of the three Wolf Clan families, from the community of Ahkwesáhsne and a member of the Mohawk Nation.

What is Involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, participants will be interviewed individually within their homes. All participants will be asked the same questions. Interviews will be audio recorded and data will be transcribed. The researcher will also take notes of participants during the interview and will be watching facial expressions, body movements and emotional responses which can be helpful when documenting the data.

Inconvenience
Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including loss of personal time.

Risks
The nature of this research might cause psychological or emotional risks such as feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, or upset. Participants will be able to express their emotions and feelings during the interview and discussions, but they will not be questioned on any traumatic experiences. Researcher will remind each participant that they do not have to share any information that they do not feel comfortable sharing. If they do feel like sharing information that triggers an emotional response, or answering a question evokes an emotional response, I will let the participant dictate where conversation/interview goes from there (e.g. pause interview, return to it later, reschedule interview, or discontinue/withdraw.) The researcher will look for signs of distress and will continuously check in with participant about how they are feeling.

Benefits
The potential benefits of your participation in this research include contributing to existing theories on learning and making contributions to Indigenous research methodologies and ways of doing culturally relevant and useful research. Participation will also lead to understanding how people become silent speakers and how language is a crucial component in transmitting ceremonial and political knowledge.

Compensation
As a way to compensate you for any inconvenience related to your participation, you will be given a small gift of tobacco at the end of the interview to express my appreciation for your participation. There will also be a traditional feast held to acknowledge your participation and share results with the group after all data has been documented.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data from your interview will be erased. Once your interview has been erased, you will no longer be a part of the process as you have withdrawn. You will have already received your tobacco at the interview and you may keep it.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

As a Clan Mother for the Wolf Clan, I may be viewed as being in a position of authority. I remind you that within the Great Law of Peace, humans are equal with different roles and responsibilities. I will not use undue influence or manipulation within this project and your willingness to participate is completely voluntary with the goal of assisting our community in language revitalization efforts. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on our relationship.

Informed Consent
Informed consent means that you are well informed about the study, the potential risks and benefits of your participation and that it is research, not therapy, in which they will participate. Participating is voluntary and it is your right to withdraw from the study at any time. The location where the consent is being discussed, the subject's physical, emotional and psychological capability must be taken into consideration when consenting a human subject. The informed consent process should make sure that the subject understands what they are signing up for.

Anonymity
Anonymity means that no one, including myself, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants. You can be anonymous in the data gathering phase of the project and in the dissemination of the results. Your anonymity can only be partially protected as there are not many Mohawk silent speakers within the longhouse of Ahkwesahsne, making it possible to be identified. While there may be a partial loss of anonymity in data collection, your anonymity will be protected in the reporting of the data, if you request it. If you request anonymity, your name will not be recorded on the transcribed data, coded initials will be used in place of your name and the researcher will be the only person who knows your identity. In the written report, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected as no names or identifying information will be used in the analysis of the research, unless you want to be recognized for your contribution to the research.

Confidentiality
Confidentiality means the protection of your identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of your data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data and after the study is completed (e.g. storage). The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. The ethical duty of confidentiality includes obligations to protect information from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss or theft.

Dissemination of Results
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others through a research project, possible presentations at scholarly meetings, Internet (students: most UVic theses are posted on 'UVicSpace' and can be accessed by the public), directly to participants and/or groups involved in an information session.

Means of Storing and Securing of Data

Participants recorded interviews will be valuable for my assignment and may be useful for language work and knowledge transmission for our Wolf Clan family and community. I will provide you with a copy of your recording. The recording device I use to store interviews will be encrypted, the files will be password protected and the device will be stored in a safe, locked space for three years, which will not be readily accessible by people. You are free to share your recorded interview with family, community or others.

Contacts

If you have questions or concerns about this research project you may contact my Supervisor, Edosdi - Judy Thompson, Department of Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, at edosdi@uvic.ca or at (250) 472-5499.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:

I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study: _____
(Participant to provide initials)

Future Use of Data

PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT only if you consent:

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research:
_____
(Participant to provide initials)

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix D.

Saiakwatsiron:ni - We Are Reigniting the Fire: Regeneration of Kanien'keha Speakers

Research Interview Questions:

1. What are some of your earliest recollections of speaking Kanien'kéha amongst your family?

2. What factors have contributed to making you a silent speaker?

3. What kinds of feelings have emerged from the contributing factors?

4. How has being a silent speaker impacted you and your life in general?

5. What do you feel would help you break down the barriers of silence and to become a speaker again?