

Honouring our Ancestral Wisdom: A Squamish Way of Life

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Bachelor of Social Work, University of Calgary, 2001

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Abstract

The foundation of this research was to establish a framework based on ceremonial work, gathering around fires of the longhouse to honour our ancestral wisdom. As a *Skwxwú7mesh*, Coast Salish researcher and social work practitioner, I noticed an absence of specific west coast Indigenous and Coast Salish knowledge that would help inform social work practices, experiences and understanding in order to be good helpers and relatives within Indigenous community. I applied the *Tl'áktaxan* longhouse model as a research methodology framework that guides an approach of traditional story-telling and place-based Coast Salish teachings and weaves together a cedar basket of knowledge. The intention of this study was to explore traditional knowledge that may offer pathways to build relational practice for social workers to form a deeper understanding of how to be good helpers and relatives in community. Respectful practice that is foundational to restore harmony, dignity and repair from colonial harm.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Supervisory Committee | ii |
| Abstract..... | iii |
| Table of Contents..... | iv |
| Glossary of Terms..... | vi |
| Dedication..... | vii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter 1: <i>Shúkw’um</i> – Spiritual grounding | 4 |
| 1.2 Gathering Strengths..... | 5 |
| 1.3 Preparing the Floor for the Work: Researcher’s Intention..... | 7 |
| Chapter 2: <i>Stl’a7áshen</i> – Light the fires (Define the Study) | 9 |
| 2.1 Literature Review: Assessing the landscape of existing knowledge about Indigenous and decolonizing social work practice and research | 10 |
| 2.4 Indigenous worldview and ways of knowing | 16 |
| 2.5 Land of the People | 19 |
| 2.6 Relationship..... | 21 |
| 2.7 Spirituality | 22 |
| 2.8 Witnessing: What does the literature review tell me? | 23 |
| Chapter 3: <i>Sts’its’áp</i> – The sacred work and protocols to be followed | 26 |
| Image 1: <i>Tl’áktaxan lam ti-</i> this is the longhouse..... | 26 |
| Image 2: <i>Tl’áktaxan</i> , longhouse model..... | 27 |
| 3.1 Indigenous research and methodology..... | 27 |
| 3.2 Indigenous knowledge | 28 |
| 3.3 Ethical considerations..... | 30 |
| 3.4 Data Gathering Process..... | 32 |
| 3.5 Witnessing and Bringing the Knowledge Together | 35 |
| 3.6 Strengths and Limitations..... | 36 |
| Chapter 4: <i>Es-hámkwstas</i> – Cover the speakers..... | 38 |
| 4.1 <i>Nekwsaliya</i> , Linda George | 38 |
| Image 3: <i>Nekwsaliya</i> , Linda George..... | 40 |
| 4.2 <i>D’chatatolt</i> , Jackie Gonzales..... | 40 |
| Image 4: <i>D’chatatolt</i> , Jackie Gonzales | 42 |
| 4.3 Aaron Williams | 42 |
| Image 5: Aaron Williams..... | 43 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.4 <i>Xálek Sekyú Siyám</i> , Chief Ian Campbell | 44 |
| Image 6: <i>Xálek/Sekyú Siyám</i> , Chief Ian Campbell..... | 45 |
| Chapter 5 <i>Telmíxws</i> – Reveal the knowledge..... | 46 |
| 5.1 Historical Timeline..... | 49 |
| 5.2 Legends, stories, teachings & ceremony | 51 |
| 5.3 Values | 54 |
| 5.4 <i>Nexwníwin</i> (Upbringing), Family roots & responsibility..... | 57 |
| 5.5 Ceremony..... | 58 |
| 5.6 Connection to land, water, cedars | 59 |
| 5.7 Closing the Circle..... | 61 |
| Chapter 6: <i>Smeńálhs</i> – Respect to closing the work | 63 |
| 6.1 Looking back to move forward: Implications for social work practice using the Longhouse Model to inform relational practice | 64 |
| 6.2 Areas for further exploration..... | 66 |
| 6.3 Advice and Guidance: Recommendations | 69 |
| References..... | 73 |
| Appendix 1..... | 76 |
| Appendix 2..... | 79 |

Glossary of Terms

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Chen kw'enmántumiyap</i> | heartfelt thanks |
| <i>Chiyáxw</i> | protocols |
| <i>Es-hámkwstas</i> | cover/wrap |
| <i>Na7s tl'i7stway</i> | caring |
| <i>Na t'kwi kwekwín'</i> | in the long ago |
| <i>Nexwníw'</i> | advice |
| <i>Nexwníwín</i> | upbringing |
| <i>Shúk'um</i> | spiritual bath |
| <i>Siyámín</i> | uphold in highest regard |
| <i>Skw̓xwú7mesh</i> | Squamish |
| <i>Skw̓xwú7mesh-ulh Úxwumixw</i> | Squamish Nation/village |
| <i>Smenálhs</i> | honour someone |
| <i>Snew̓iyelh</i> | laws, ways of our people |
| <i>Stl'a7áshen</i> | invited guests |
| <i>Sts'its'áp'</i> | the work |
| <i>Stélmexw</i> | people |
| <i>Sxwexwiyám'</i> | legends |
| <i>Sxw7úmten</i> | Indian doctor |
| <i>Syéwen</i> | cultural dance songs |
| <i>Tel̓míxws</i> | reveal something |
| <i>Temstl'i7s</i> | love |
| <i>Timá ta kwétsi</i> | that's all I have to say |
| <i>Tsetsiyák̓wustay'</i> | sharing |
| <i>Tl'áktaxan</i> | longhouse |
| <i>Úxwumixw</i> | village |
| <i>Wanáxws</i> | respect |

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the people of the Skwxwu7mesh Úxwumixw, Squamish Nation. All the loving children, families, grandmothers and grandfathers and ancestors that have laid out a beautiful pathway of knowledge and teachings for us all. I thank you for the guidance and desire to conduct ourselves with spirit and enthusiasm and to find ways to work together and encourage each other with respect, good hearts and thoughts for everyone.

Introduction

“The healthier we are, the healthier our children and earth will be. Our ceremony is the pathway to achieve that. All ceremonies we can bring back and put into action as an individual, family, and community are so important for our future.” Leonard George, Tsleil-Waututh First Nation.

I begin this journey with self-location and motivation to identify how we can learn to be good helpers and relatives by honouring ancestral wisdom of *Skwxú7mesh* people. This act of self-location is how we begin to prepare for ceremony with the *shúkw'um* in order to cleanse and get grounded for the important work ahead. Throughout the study I refer to the Squamish, *Skwxú7mesh*, Squamish Nation, *Skwxú7mesh-ulh* as interchangeable terms as it is my home community and the worldview I chose to explore and develop Indigenous social work practices within the community.

We light the fires, *stl'a7áshen*, and acknowledge all the invited guests who are witnessing and bringing their knowledge to honour the work I have in mind. This chapter of the research gets grounded with the acknowledgement of existing research and overview of Indigenous worldview themes found in Indigenous ways of helping and Indigenous social work approaches. Chapter 2 was the space to reflect and honour the need for more specific Coast Salish, Squamish teachings to guide ways of helping.

The research design and methodology are based on values and principles within the *Tl'áktaxan*, longhouse, and follows protocols to invite witnesses, guests and speakers to share in the work. The four speakers who share their stories with me are *Skwxwú7mesh* knowledge keepers whom have shared teachings with me over my lifetime. As we do in ceremony, I stand up my dear relatives and knowledge keepers, *es-hámkwstas*, cover each speaker with a blanket of

love and gratitude as I respectfully acknowledge them by thanking them for sharing their gifts and stories. They each hold a community role that advises and guides both the larger community and within their family lineages. From this point, the *Tl'áktaxan*, longhouse methods became the research framework and approach similar to or exactly how Squamish would prepare for ceremony.

There is a notable amount of literature that describes decolonizing social work practices, decolonizing methodologies and Indigenous methodologies to research what works to progress understanding of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in a current day framework. This research also illustrates how Indigenous models of knowledge and helping that can be implemented into practice and recognized as legitimate and scientific. The research also shows models of effective wise practice that honour the language, culture and teachings of a community rooted in the community's knowledge.

Chapter 5, *telmíxws*, reveals knowledge gathered, as I focused the research from a place of *Skwxwú7mesh* knowledge through storytelling, teachings and informal enquiry around historical gaps in Coast Salish knowledge. At the same time, I was observing protocols of seeking knowledge by sharing my recordings and recollection of the stories shared by my storytellers to ensure that I carry and share the knowledge properly. *Na7 tkwi kwekwín*, the ancestors practiced the Squamish Sacred Laws of our people by following the unwritten law of how people conduct themselves from birth to death. These societal norms, family laws and responsibility are called *Chiyáxw*.

How can we honour this knowledge and weave it into the practices of being good helpers and relatives within community? I prepared for the research as I would prepare for ceremonial work and I concluded the research as I would with *smeńálhs*, respect, honour and grateful heart

for all who gathered around the circle and fires to celebrate and honour who we are as Squamish. Ceremony is our Squamish way of showing our intention and honouring our ancestors through celebration, an opportunity to come together as family to show appreciation of who we are and where we come from in a good and humble way. The research provides an overview of the themes that come out of conversations with the knowledge keepers and a reflection on the Coast Salish, Squamish knowledge that can inform Indigenous social work research, social work education, social work practice and ways to be a good helper and relative in Indigenous community.

Chapter 1: *Shúk'um* – Spiritual grounding

Each day began with everyone as they awoke going down to their favoured bathing place, walking into the water to bathe, brush down with cedar branches as they pray in greeting each day, thanking the Creator who guides, protects and provides. The spiritual grounding revitalizes to be present and approach sacred work with open heart and mind. Retold by Vanessa Campbell, Squamish language teacher, knowledge keeper and historian.

In following the *chiyáxw* (protocols), I acknowledge the ancestors, the ancestral names and the traditional territories of Coast Salish people to start things off in a good way. I thank the ancestors, grandmothers and grandfathers as we come together with respect, good hearts and thoughts to our journey together.

According to Wilson (2008), an Indigenous research paradigm requires the holistic use and transmission of information when studying Indigenous people and communities. An introduction of who you are as a researcher helps the listeners to know where the storyteller is coming from, the motivation of the research and how the research information may fit in to their life and worldview. In addition to this, introduction of self helps the listeners to absorb the information being told and reflect on their understanding. To formally introduce and locate oneself is the basis of oral traditions and storytelling.

Yataltenat kwi en kwshámin. Kelley kwi en xwelítn sna. Tina7 chan tl'a Eslha7án' úxwumixw. Ha7lh skwáyel ta newyap, ta siyám'iy ta siyáy'. Chen kw'enmántumiyap. Ha7lh en skwálwen kwins kwéy'kways na7 tkwi Skw̓xwú7mesh sníchim.

My ancestral name is *Yataltenat*. My given name is Kelley and I am a member of the *Skw̓xwú7mesh* Nation from the village of *Eslha7án'* on the shores of North Vancouver, British Columbia in the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples. I am *Skw̓xwú7mesh* on my mother's side and English descent on my father's side. I respect who I am and all my relations. I

am happy to speak and write in my *Skwxwú7mesh* language, even if just a bit, as my ancestors had their language taken away from them through historical and on-going colonization, oppression and residential school. The last fluent language speaker in my family was my great grandmother Molly John (Baker). My grandmother Florence was forbidden to speak the language and would be shamed by Indian agents if she did. She did not share much of the Squamish language with her children or grandchildren out of fear that her loved ones would be taken away. She had two of her five children taken away to St. Paul's residential school in Kamloops, and the others sent to Indian day school. The oldest of her children was my mother Carole, *Yataltanault*. The experience of not having her children with her left my grandmother heartbroken and determined to travel to where they were to maintain contact and connection. According to my grandmother, this disconnection was difficult and the Indian agents and church controlled any contact with the children at residential school. Many parents did not know where their children were or they could not afford the journey. My grandmother was not allowed to speak the language because of colonial laws; to the extent that in her day Indigenous people were not even allowed to leave the reserve without permission from the Indian Agent or they would be thrown in jail. These colonial harms deeply disrupted language, culture and a Squamish way of life.

1.2 Gathering Strengths

In current day, Squamish language immersion classes are taught daily and the number of fluent language speakers is growing. One of the last original Squamish language speakers passed away January 2020. Alex Williams was a *Skwxwú7mesh* man of strength and culture who shared his knowledge with those who came to sit and take the time to get to know him. His knowledge was so powerful and such a gift to our people to be able to not only remember the words, but the

skwálwen (feelings, thoughts, opinions, and mind). The Squamish language was never lost, but was asleep for many years and has now been awoken along with celebration of culture, spirituality and traditional practices.

Coast Salish *Skwxwú7mesh* people are a community whose culture and whose history and relations on traditional lands date back thousands of years. Spirituality is an aspect of life for Squamish people. The knowledge keepers say that Squamish life is centered on spiritual power. The animals, ocean, rocks, and trees are all part of daily life as Squamish people seek understanding and happiness from all connections and the power that holds. The teachings tell us that there is a great respect for habitat and the environment of each and every animal. In daily family practice, Creator is thanked through prayer and song for the continued and ongoing guidance and protection provided. Squamish people use ceremony as a way of showing intention and honoring the ancestors through celebration is an opportunity to come together as family to show appreciation of who we are and where we come from in a good and humble way. Whatever type of ceremony that occurs, it brings family and the community together. Spirituality is a cultural practice that has survived colonialism and oppression and traditional practices have allowed for the strength and resilience to maintain a strong identity. The teachings and oral history of Squamish people has been filtered through time. Traditional stories that are repeatedly shared and passed on to family members so we remember the words that provide us with teachings of our worldviews, values and a way of life. It is through this practice and understanding that Squamish people have endured and continued to live on knowing who they are, and know what that means for our people. When we honour the ancestral wisdom, we are never stuck. To carry the *snewíyelh* (sacred teachings) from the *stélmexw* (old people), we will

provide *wanáxws* (respect) towards *nexwníwin* (the advice/knowledge) and *úxwumixw* (the village & inhabitants). That is the vision and guidance for the people.

1.3 Preparing the Floor for the Work: Researcher's Intention

Indigenous people have resided in what is now known as North America since time immemorial. There are numerous Nations each having their own unique traditions by which members relate to each other and to the environment they inhabit. Nations also have their own distinct practices and relations to land and water to maintain sustainability. Each Nation's distinct culture and traditions reflects its internal human relationships and the relationships between the people and their environment to maintain spirituality. For these reasons, I chose to explore deeper into Squamish worldview, environment, culture and traditions through 'storying' from knowledge keepers how Squamish people relate to each other and their ancestral knowledge.

There are two main goals of this research study. The first was to explore and understand the roots of Squamish local knowledge, as lived by Squamish people, in order to understand ways of knowing, what it means to be Squamish, and to consider how these aspects may relate to social work practices within the community. The knowledge keepers who shared their knowledge in this study, believe that effective and appropriate services can only be provided when cultural differences are appreciated and accepted as integral to the helping process. So, the study also explored what could contribute towards a framework of practice that includes essential Squamish specific knowledge and what is important to build healthy relationships and understandings to be a good relative and helper.

According to Greene-Moton and Minkler (2019), cultural competency involves being aware of and sensitive to your own values and biases, and developing practice skills for

interacting in respectful ways with people who are different from you. In this study, practice skills need to involve the concept of cultural humility in the fields of helping. That is the ongoing commitment to self-evaluation and critique to how one redresses power imbalances when dealing with individuals, families and communities. Greene-Moton and Minkler (2019), add that cultural competency does not require you to become an expert in cultures different from yours, it simply requires that you reflect on how your values and biases affect your interactions with others. Building these bridges within our differences encourages you to be self-reflective and recognize and/or apply reflective practice with respect to power, privilege and injustice that effect well-being. The knowledge keepers of this study describe cultural competency as a life-long learning of listening experiences where you are open to growing your understanding. One only becomes “competent” when you are sitting as a respected Elder providing the teachings with humility. It is only by understanding a family’s culture through communication and relationship building that you can be a good helper and relative within a community.

The second goal of this study was to create openings and understanding of a Squamish way of life, of spirituality and to explore how Squamish worldview, cultural practices and relationship may create pathways to redress colonial harms, healing and create balance in life. Through this exploration, we not only deepen our understanding of what it means to be Squamish but make space to honour and respect the ancestral wisdom that has guided, protected and provided for Squamish people.

Chapter 2: *Stl'a7áshen* – Light the fires (Define the Study)

T'echuxanm-t siyám, late Chief Joe Mathias stated the following: Families and guests gather at the longhouse to celebrate and witness significant life cycle events. The fires are lit and the tables are set to welcome everyone into the house. Families come together to witness and support each other for the benefit of making positive changes within their lives for the safety and well-being of all. When you are listening to your elders, you are learning our traditions and our cultures. What is given to you is now in your arms, so that sometime in the future you can turn around and give it to your grandchildren. That is the value of our circle. *T'echuxanm-t siyám* Chief Joe Mathias, (1981)

With the aim of addressing a gap in academic literature in relation to how West Coast Salish, *Skwxwú7mesh* people come to know cultural teachings, I chose honouring our ancestral wisdom and exploring Squamish traditional stories as a focal point of the study. The intention of the research was to reveal framework of principles that/to guide Squamish knowledge and support a pathway to restore harmony and dignity from colonial harms and transform learning and healing to a Squamish way of life, with goals of informing a pathway to good relational practice for social workers and helpers of the community. The knowledge keepers of the community have described the ancestral wisdom as our *snewíyelh*, the guiding principles of the *Skwxwú7mesh* people. It is the way of the people with strong values rooted in spirituality. We are taught that spirituality means being connected to the earth and to all things made by the creator. Spirituality is having purpose in life and believing in a higher power. It is also knowing who you are and conducting yourself in a good relational way.

The study focused on traditional and cultural knowledge of the *Skwxwú7mesh* people. The study was conducted on the traditional *Skwxwú7mesh* territories, on the lush environment of lands and waters as generous providers. For clarification of the area that I speak about, the Squamish Nation is a traditional territory from the North Shores of Vancouver, B.C. along the northern coast of Howe Sound. It consists of 23 villages and approximately 4000 members who live on and off reserve lands. The study looked at the cultural perspective, historical and current

practices and how these perspectives blends or conflicts with western practices and methods. The perspective, stories and teachings could inform social workers on how to be good relatives and helpers by understanding traditional wisdom the community holds.

2.1 Literature Review: Assessing the landscape of existing knowledge about Indigenous and decolonizing social work practice and research

Assessing literature that frames this research study felt much like the process of preparing for ceremony and sacred work. It started with aspects of intent, love, protection, energy and prayer as I planned the process to gather knowledge for people to assemble to tell stories and honour ancestral wisdom of people, lands, languages and worldviews. It was a process of protocols, values, relational connections, and experiential opportunities. This sacred practice allowed for the exchange of ideas, beliefs and privileges granted from one person to another.

There is a notable amount of literature I found on Indigenous social work practice, decolonizing social work, anti-colonial social work and Indigenous knowledge that works to progress deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing in a current day framework. I was able to review models of knowledge and helping that can be implemented into *Skwxú7mesh* practice and be recognized as legitimate and scientific social work knowledge within academic institutions and government child and family laws. Many models in the literature reveal effective wise practice that honour the land, language, culture and teachings of a community rooted in the community's knowledge (Absolon, 2011; Baskin, 2016; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2005).

The literature explores diverse worldviews of spirituality, cultural practices and a general way of knowing that describes how a community of people relate to one another and live their life. The literature review revealed common themes to understanding decolonizing social work

practices and key parts to the helping process that connect individuals with their people while reflecting the community aspect of the peoples' relational worldview. Literature findings are valuable information for social workers and community helpers to understand because much of the literature connects to traditional stories from an Indigenous community and stories that are set in an ancient time long ago that describe teachings during times of transformation. These stories transmit moral truths, cultural knowledge, and standards of human behavior from one generation to the next. They bring to life the landscape of the area and explain the origins of people and communities, how they learn, conduct themselves, and acquire their knowledge. The stories and literature tell how certain plants and animals came to be and explains how the people of an area came to have special relationship with the resources of their land and environment. Learning to live off the land, utilize resources and maintain harmony is part of the teachings of each story found in the literature I searched. While many stories contain common themes and teachings, they also describe origins of things, and creation stories that include a constant flow of time. Each Indigenous community has its own unique traditional protocols for its stories and how they are to be told. In the literature, I recognize it is respectful to know and follow protocols of the Indigenous community because they are associated with the meaning, desire and values of community way of life.

Throughout my search of literature on decolonizing social work practices and Indigenous approaches to healing and wellness, I noticed an absence of West Coast, Coast Salish *Skwxú7mesh* knowledge. Nation-specific Indigenous knowledge can deepen understanding, connection and relationships between people, and may also lead to pathways of healing and wellness by providing guidance to individual's and family's identity rooted in values and ways of understanding the world around them.

I reviewed the works of Indigenous scholars to see what is already known around this topic and whether there are gaps of research that could be further explored. I wanted to review the existing research literature on successful Indigenous social work practices that explores the diverse worldviews of spirituality, cultural practices and a general way of knowing that describes how a community of people relate to one another and live their life. I hoped that this would provide some foundational knowledge to building respectful approaches to Indigenous social work practices that reflect a community's needs and values.

The literature review involved me searching through many articles and journals on research that has been done by Indigenous people in the past and from scholarly researchers who have been identified as influential in informing Indigenous social work practices in Canada. I was introduced and exposed to many Indigenous scholars throughout my last fifteen years of developing practice as the Director of Child and Family Services for the Squamish Nation. I did begin with Canadian scholar Shawn Wilson, *Research is Ceremony, Indigenous Research Methods* (2008) not only because I could relate to the research approach like ceremony, but Shawn worked for the Squamish Nation social development department in the early years when our community was developing culturally rooted parent child education programs. You see it all really is about being relational. Wilson (2008) suggests that an integral part of Indigenous research is to have a paradigm that reflects the cosmology, worldview, epistemology and ethical beliefs of the Indigenous people themselves and the areas they identify to be studied.

After reviewing scholarly journal articles, books, government reports, websites and specific literature from Indigenous scholars, I was pleasantly surprised to see how much Indigenous research that has been done over the past five to ten years. The literature review revealed some common themes to understanding decolonizing social work practices and key

parts to the helping process that connect individuals with their people while reflecting the community aspect of the peoples' relational worldview. I have organized the following section of themes I found in the anti-colonial social work and Indigenous social work practices literature, starting with: approaches to understanding, themes that connect to worldview and ways of knowing, teachings and ways to share the knowledge and then themes around relationship to all things, connections to people, lands, environment and spirituality. For me in this research, these themes represent a process to a way of understanding and learning about a way of life of Indigenous people that could be relevant and helpful to understanding culturally informed practices to be good relatives and helpers.

2.2 Decolonized approach to Indigenous research

Kovach (2009) and Wilson (2008) challenge the western approach to research and insist on the need to consider other ways of knowing as a valid methodology in academic research. The literature review and analysis I have read so far reflects that Indigenous research has been done to reveal decolonizing methodologies and new research paradigms that can be used when doing Indigenous research. Most of the literature is not prescriptive, but rather represents a guide to why appropriate methods must be considered. I was surprised to see how much Indigenous research already exists out there and the approaches that are used to build on the understanding of Indigenous peoples and their worldview. The more Indigenous research that is done the better others can understand core differences between Indigenous worldviews and Western worldviews as an important component in achieving cultural harmony and respectful relationships. Wilson (2008) describes literature review as being a culturally relevant way of communicating with the dominant system academics about what has been done in an area of study and offers a clearer voice for Indigenous people. It is not just the voice through a western comparison and lens.

Indigenous literature can inform the mainstream western academics that Indigenous knowledge is both scientific and legitimate. Wilson (2008) also offers a challenge to western thought, contending that cultural knowledge can be seen as extra intellectual with oral tradition being equal to written text as well as answering the how and why of human actions through the songs, legends and stories. As people interact and learn from one another, it will positively evolve our interwoven societies. For instance, Squamish people believe in the power of cultural knowledge to nurture wellness and bring balance back to everyday life. When speaking about traditional cultural approaches to a healthy worldview, many knowledge keepers share teachings and stories that are rooted in the traditional family laws, *chi'yáxw* and values of respect, relationship, love and connection. The teachings emphasize the importance of respect for everyone and everything, a way that is central to living in balance within your family and physical environment.

2.3 Traditional knowledge, general ways of knowing

The practice of sacred family decision making circles has been a key factor in building trust and relationship within the current practice of Ayás Ménmen Child & Family Services of the Squamish Nation while learning and re-learning the important protocols. These types of approaches to helping and being a good relative are grounded in historical understandings of ongoing colonial and structural violence that have disrupted the flow of traditional knowledge and ways of knowing for Indigenous people. These cultural approaches seek to recognize colonial harm and restore dignity and harmony for the Indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over lives of their children and families. Bringing tradition home and the protocols of a community are the sacred circle that empowers families to make decisions for the daily lives and wellbeing of their children and families.

This research and approach seek to define and answer the question, “What is traditional knowledge?” the literature review shows there is no short answer. Indigenous knowledge is not a uniform concept across all Indigenous peoples. It is a concept tied to a peoples’ location, land, values, stories and their way of coming to know the world. Battiste and Henderson (2000) tell us that locating Indigenous knowledge lies within the mind and hearts of the people. The knowledge comes from sources of the land, kinship to all that share the land and kinship to the spirit world. Indigenous ways of knowing follow a structure of beliefs of connection to the ecosystem, language, relationship with each other, community and ecosystem, knowledge of sacred traditions and responsibility to share these teachings as morals and ethics of how to live; as the literature shows us, this knowledge is passed on through social practices from generation to generation.

Anishinaabe researcher Absolon (2011), states that Indigenous knowledge and methodologies have been silenced by the Western scientific means of knowledge. She challenges the colonialist rejection of Indigenous knowledge by asserting the importance of how Indigenous people ‘come to know’ as key to personal identity development and overall well-being. She points out the key to understanding Indigenous traditional knowledge is guided by Indigenous paradigms, worldviews, principles and processes specific to each community. This includes Indigenous philosophies, beliefs and ways of life. In Absolon’s research, she also states that we must acknowledge that how people come to know is seen as living and fluid and that these processes include the spirit, the heart, and the mind. Many Indigenous researchers state that before beginning any search for knowledge, one must consider the spiritual, cultural, political, and social effects that are present within their life and worldview. When approaching my research study, it was important to understand how Squamish come to know and I also needed to

use a *Skwxú7mesh* framework that would guide the values, philosophies and way of life that frames Squamish identity.

In the literature, there are many examples and metaphors that describe how a people come to know. All of these are very specific to the culture, location and perspective of the people. A few examples of these are Absolon's petal flower model (2011) that is earth centered, exists within relationship, is cyclical and changes constantly in the environment within which it exists, and Johnson's (2011) star blanket conceptual model with eight teachings that honours the life cycle and represents all the teachings and blessings. Johnson (2011) explains that the Saulteaux star blanket framework privileges the Indigenous voice by relating it to the teachings, Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, values and beliefs of the people.

We learn that each of these models shows us an Indigenous knowledge system that can inform decolonizing Indigenous social work. These models inform a knowledge system that can be better understood by non-Indigenous people to a deliberate coming together of two ways of knowing.

2.4 Indigenous worldview and ways of knowing

The root of differences between Indigenous and Western worldviews generally lies in the approaches to knowledge, connectedness and the basis of belief and spiritual world. Leroy Little Bear (2000) argues that Indigenous peoples are constantly having to explain themselves to non-Indigenous people. They are forever telling their stories, explaining their beliefs and ceremonies and introducing this as new knowledge to other worldviews. In contrast to Indigenous worldview, Western worldview is very linear and individualistic. Indigenous knowledge has a different approach to how one comes to know; it is holistic and cyclical and views themselves in participation with the natural world. Johnston (1990) tells the story of how a young one learns

the Ojibway way of life through ceremony and rituals of life passages. In the form of the life cycle, the young one develops through participation in naming ceremony, vision quest, marriage ceremony to the ritual of the dead. The young one also learns the responsibility of their role in which they will contribute to society as a hunter, fisherman, dancer and provider. It is only when they develop these abilities and skills that they understand themselves and their relationship to the other members of the community. As in many Indigenous communities, it is the constant flux in the world that calls for constant renewal of relationships for our continued existence and honouring the ways of knowing. This includes sacred teachings and rituals for the greeting of each new day or celebration of a new season of life and activity (Baskin, 2016; Waziyatawin & Yellow Bird, 2005).

Through traditional teachings and storytelling, Indigenous identity is reclaimed. These identity teachings share what matters, what is important and how we help one another. Thomas (2016) research tells us how storytelling honours the oral traditions of our ancestors. While sharing her own grandmother's stories of the Hul'qumi'num people, she shares that traditional stories are vital to the survival of Indigenous people. The stories are essential in nurturing and educating children on history, moral guidelines and how to behave. Most importantly, the stories provide a sense of identity, belonging, purpose, pride and while building a trusted relationship that provides guidance and direction. It connects the young to the old.

The power of storytelling is the basis of how traditional teachings are passed down through generations. Stories help us to organize our thoughts and make sense of our identity, place, purpose and belonging. King (2016) used storytelling as a methodology to research her family stories and history as an Anishinaabe person. She states the stories of family history and cultural knowledge are key links to reclaiming and remembering important knowledge of

Indigenous worldview of connections to family and community that colonization attempted to wipe out. Rediscovering her Indigenous worldview through stories and research provided a way of understanding the world through the relationship of land, environment and spirituality.

My own personal identity and self-image affect all that I think, feel and do. My values learned, inherited or chosen are fundamental to my perspective on everything and have formed my world view and the way I interact with people. My Squamish teachings were passed down to me by my parents, aunties and Elders. When we are listening to our elders, we are learning our traditions and our culture. There is a connection to our whole being when we look at our values, beliefs and a way of living that brings balance and meaning to our life. It is through reflection that I think of how attitudes or lack of understanding of Indigenous culture has caused differences of opinion and understanding of how values are shaped. Through these barriers there has been oppression to Indigenous culture, traditional ways, and traditional knowledge to health and wellness.

Kovach (2009) describes Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing as interactive, interrelation, broad based, whole, inclusive, animate, cyclical, fluid, and spiritual. It is a state of knowing by an individual, group, community and humanity. It is part of the collective humanity to be in harmony with all things. She emphasizes that Indigenous cultures have complex cultural practices which makes it difficult to define in just one way. She identifies her knowledge source learned through her own life within Plains Cree knowledge as holistic by nature where language bridges the beliefs to an inward knowing that connects with cultural identity. Indigenous knowledge and the specific cultural practices and language of a community reminds us of who we are and where we come from.

Throughout his research, Hart (2003) speaks from his Cree knowledge that the time with his Elders, traditional teachers, and ceremony have been his biggest influence to understanding traditional knowledge. All of this knowledge is upheld with respect for the community Indigenous values and beliefs. Hart adds that Indigenous perspectives recognize and support kinship roles between the earth, people and other life and emphasizes that human life does not dominate nature. Much of the stories and teachings support that Indigenous knowledge is a basis of daily life, a way of life that is understood through teachings of the Elders. The Elders remind us to be humble and never to look at yourself as being greater than anyone or anything else.

2.5 Land of the People

Stories of place, connection to land and environment not only distinguishes Indigenous people ecologically and geographically, but it is a connection to the land that makes the land itself spiritually unique. Creation stories, traditional hunting grounds and vision quests are all tied to specific land and locations of Indigenous people. With colonization, connections to the land were compromised. Indigenous people were removed from the land and places that held their knowledge, resources and worldviews. The connections to the land were compromised with the interference of colonization. Indigenous people were removed from the land and places that held their knowledge, resources and worldviews. Cajete (1994) states that it is important to reflect on changes that Indigenous people have had to accommodate in their relationship to their natural environment. To survive, most Indigenous people were forced to give up their practices on the land causing the spirit to suffer. It was through educational processes on the lands that allowed Indigenous people to re-establish this essential relationship and re-connection with environment. Cajete (1994) also adds that reorientation to the environment presents a model to bring understanding and balance back in to society. Revitalizing health and well-being of

Indigenous people is directly tied to the process of rebuilding connection to the land. Many scholarly articles and research assert that connection to land and place shapes Indigenous people's lives entirely; it is a way to understand how worldview and values are learned and understood. (Baskin, 2016; Battiste, 1998; Hart, 2002; Maloney, 1998; Rice, 2005).

In my review of articles, much of the research asserts that revitalizing health and well-being of Indigenous people is directly tied to the process of rebuilding connection to the wisdom of the land. Basso (1996), tells stories of the Apache's connection to land and how that holds the wisdom and ways of knowing for the people. He conveys land and places have a capacity to trigger self-reflection and inspiring thoughts of who one is or memories of who one used to be. Land is part of informing a person's identity and belonging as related to locating oneself in who I am and where I come from. Basso asserts that relationships to places are lived in the company of others and that when places are sensed together and through this connection worldview can be understood.

By returning to the land, we reconnect with our inner selves. Earth is directly tied to the identity as Cree people (Hart, 2007). As Indigenous people, it is the land we are from that helps to tell the story of who we are. Hart's interviews and stories from his Elders show that connection to the land is central to Indigenous survival. This includes learning, regaining a sense of healing and learning to live off the land. Land is a sacred place where you give thanks, acknowledge life and develop a respectful life. One of his Elders said that it is the connection to the land that is the connection to Creator, connection to mother earth. Through the land we can create natural places of helping and healing. Hart (2002) continues to use his own personal experiences to enlighten Indigenous social work practice to adopt Indigenous approaches to helping. He examines the sharing circle as a way to guide practice with individuals, families and

groups. The sacred circle empowers individuals to tell their own story and honours the commitment to Indigenous ways of working and being together

2.6 Relationship

Relationship to each other and connections to all things around us is key. Each Nation has their own unique system of societal cultural protocols, family and community responsibilities and roles that can guide Indigenous social work practice. Close relationships and connection to all things around us is key to gathering and sharing knowledge.

Among Indigenous peoples, ideas and a way of living are regulated through the social relationships among kinship groups. Battiste and Henderson (2000) refers to ecological teachings as the way Indigenous peoples define meaning of life, responsibilities and duties. These relationships are a sacred process and develop consciousness of responsibility to solidarity with the environment. Battiste (1998) refers to *Mi'kmaq* teachings of respectful relationship and communication with other or all life forms, developing deeper understanding of cultural teachings through prayers, ceremonies and a shared vision of caring that extends for at least seven generations.

Throughout most of this literature research, I found that what was most emphasized was the importance of relationships. Being relational is at the heart of what it means to be Indigenous. Wilson (2008) describes being Indigenous as a collective, a group, it is community. All things are built upon the interconnections and the interrelationships that bind a group together. It is more than just relationships with people, it is about relationships to and with environment, land, inclusive of spiritual connections to the ancestors. Wilson also brought in to focus the lack of understanding that Western worldview has about Indigenous people sharing a relational view of reality. Indigenous knowledge reflects relationships to the land and environment which for our

people is the knowledge or pedagogy of place that form Indigenous societies. Revisiting and reconnecting to the land strengthens the relationship, the way of knowing and the sense of belonging for Indigenous people.

In looking at the literature about holistic approaches, Baskin (2016) says that everyone starts life as a connected being and exists because of a relationship between two people. The family and community relationships become integral to the teaching and well-being of the individual. Baskin explains that Indigenous worldview takes holism to a deeper level as the health of any one person is dependent on the relationships and health of community members. When I think about this, I reflect on the work that is done as a whole when looking at the healing of a community. The concept of one heart, one mind when looking at working together to create balance and bring peace to the children and families in a community is essential for Indigenous practice and protocols.

Carriere and Strega (2015) describe the Anishinaabe teachings of the medicine wheel that are often used as a tool for bringing balance and harmony back into daily life. The teachings show the importance and interrelationship of all aspects of our being, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. These aspects are not built apart from each other as together they represent the teachings and knowledge of an Indigenous worldview. Although this is not a West Coast teaching, I understand the medicine wheel to be a structure that supports the wholeness of a human in a pathway to healing.

2.7 Spirituality

Spirituality has been said to be the core of an Indigenous worldview (Baskin, 2016). One definition of spirituality can be difficult to explain as it is connected to the values, beliefs, relationship and sacredness of a specific group of people. Spirituality is about wholeness, making

meaning, and creating inner peace. It is about a sense of being in both the inner and outer world

The Elders often speak of spirituality as a way to celebrate and acknowledge our existence. Spirituality brings people together in purpose and often in healing. It is a process of coming together to experience, understand or work through things. Wilson (2008) also stresses the importance of relations with spirituality as an integral part of the Indigenous worldview. This represents a relationship to powers greater than ourselves, as well as a connection to the past and teachings of ancestors.

The connection of spirituality and the environment is becoming relevant to the social work profession with a focus on better understanding of Indigenous worldview and traditional forms of helping and healing. Social work has committed to being involved in environmental change providing a broader lens to helping and supporting an individual's well-being. Spiritual connections with the environment bring an Indigenous voice to social work and create space to be inclusive of diversity (Coates, Gray & Hetherington, 2006).

2.8 Witnessing: What does the literature review tell me?

As an Indigenous social worker, over the years I have had the euro/western ways of helping imposed upon me with strict policies, approaches and rules that did not always align with my own worldview and values nor the worldview and values of the Indigenous community I serve. There have been westernized systems of practices within child welfare that have been harmful and clearly did not meet the needs of Indigenous children, youth and families. Although the pathway for Indigenous practice is opening, it continues to be held in comparison to the standards and authorities of western practices. Battiste (1998) suggests that Eurocentric colonizers predominately tend to view their ways of knowing as ideal and superior and use that lens to assess the competencies of others. I have experienced this superiority from westernized

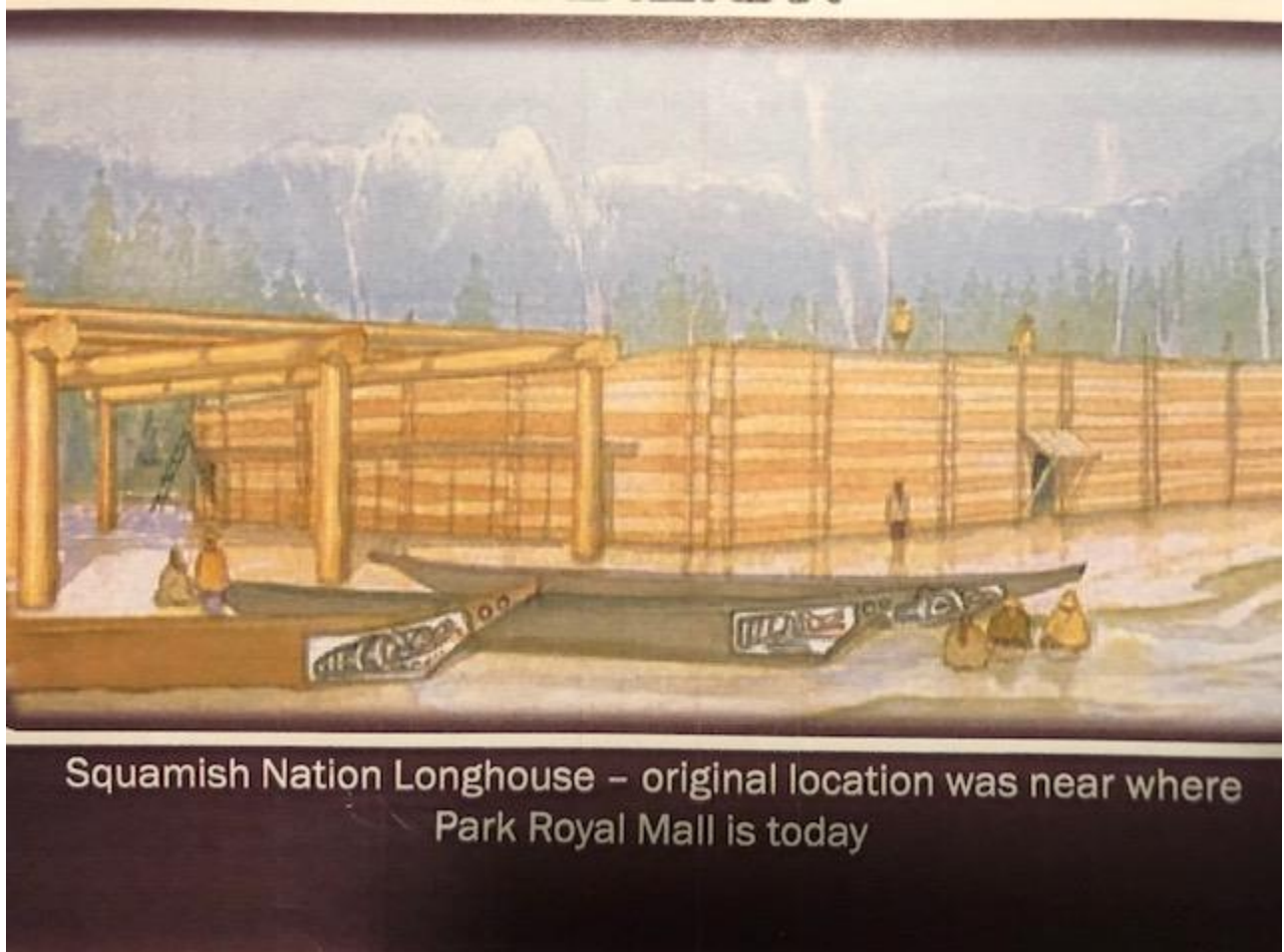
practice as my staff and I advocate for Indigenous families and are treated as knowing less than the dominant system. The literature review has revealed some valid approaches and themes that not only inform better ways of helping but how these themes become the foundation for building a framework of practice that aligns with Indigenous community needs and worldviews.

Through the literature review, I noted that much of the literature comes from Cree, Anishinaabe and Plains scholars who reference stories of connection to place and landscape and worldview of their teachings. The gap I could see in the literature is the limited amount of Coast Salish specific knowledge in social work practice. Seeking more place-based Coast Salish teachings, more specifically, Squamish teachings of knowledge, land and space that can be woven into a framework of practice would better inform me to make sense of my own work and the development of a Squamish model of practice. I was deliberately trying to seek the Indigenous voice and view to define Indigenous social work practice, Indigenous knowledge and how it is implemented in Indigenous communities. I was seeking to find out what models and frameworks of helping looked like, if they were successful and why in order to inform my own research. The conceptual models of practice I reviewed steered me to ask the community Elders and knowledge keepers more about what best defined a conceptual approach to how Squamish would conduct themselves, restore balance, and pass down the teachings. I was at a community gathering when I heard elder *Paitsmauk*, Dave Jacobs, describe the longhouse as our teaching and gathering place. He described how we would prepare ourselves to enter the longhouse and leave all our hard feelings and emotions on the hook outside the doors so we could enter with open hearts and minds. He described the strong corner pillars that provide strength in the values that guide us and provide us with strong teachings to gather together around the sacred fires to

hear the teachings, stories, songs and *syéwen*. That is the way of our people. This was my inspiration to expand on the conceptual model with the guidance of the knowledge keepers.

Chapter 3: *Sts'its'áp* – The sacred work and protocols to be followed

Tl'áktaxan lam ti (this is the longhouse) Methodology framework, how information is gathered and analyzed, ethical considerations



Squamish Nation Longhouse – original location was near where Park Royal Mall is today

Image 1: *Tl'áktaxan lam ti*- this is the longhouse

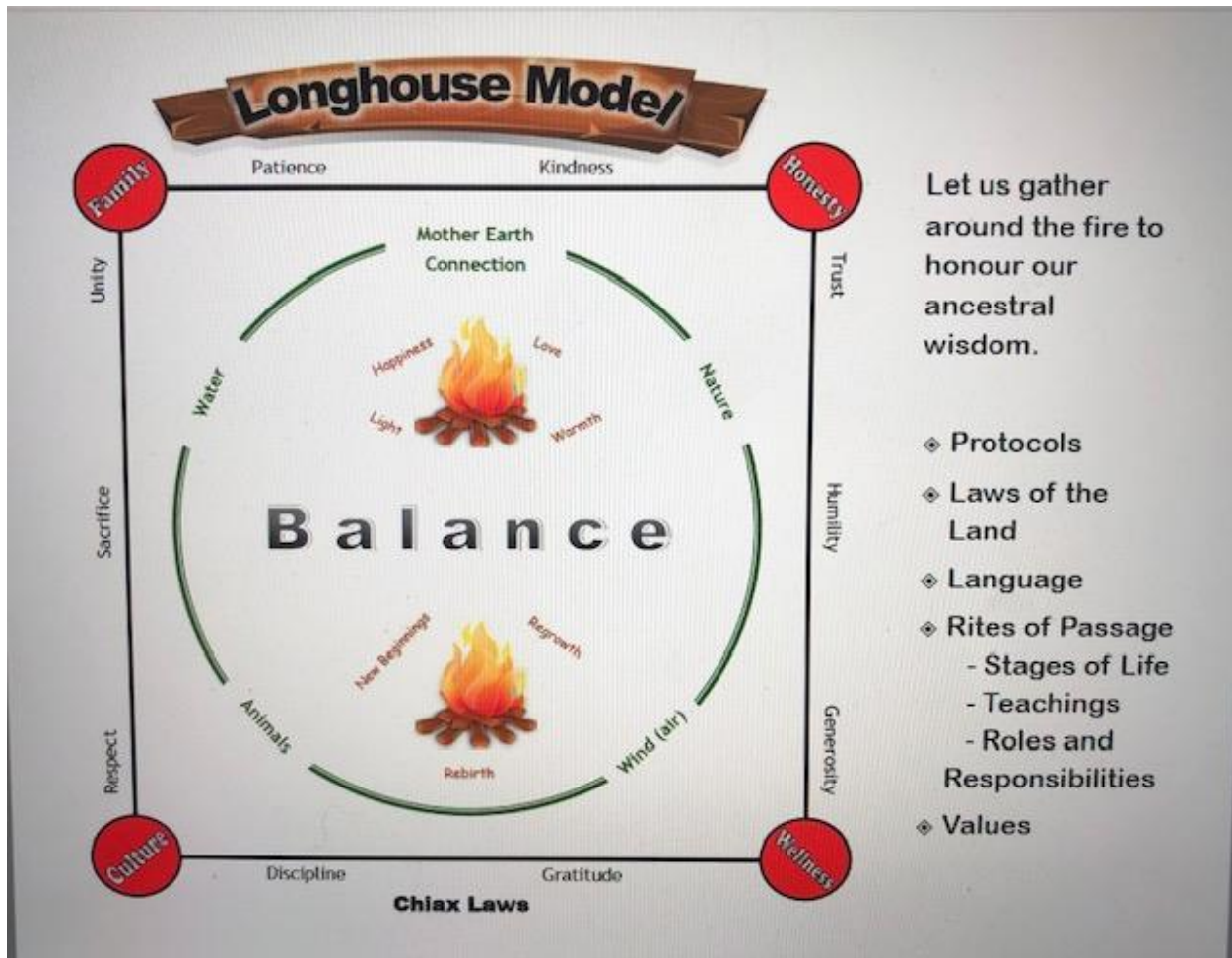


Image 2: *Tl'áktaxan*, longhouse model

3.1 Indigenous research and methodology

Many Indigenous people continue to be impacted by ongoing cyclical colonialism. The health, wellness and healing structures offered in social work and other helping professions are often ill equipped to address intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, marginalization, and disparities in the social determinants of health for Indigenous peoples. The voices of Indigenous peoples demonstrate there is a need for a transformative shift and recommend the way forward is grounded in Indigenous knowledge that honours the wisdom of the ancestors. Through speaking with the Squamish knowledge keepers, I was able to explore a broader understanding of a Squamish way of life, worldview and practices that may affect pathways to healing and helping.

Wilson (2008) writes that an Indigenous research paradigm is of great importance as it develops and/or informs Indigenous theory and methods of practice. The research framework must provide ways to show the uniqueness of the cultural worldview while allowing an examination of how the research has been approached and why. The Indigenous research framework allows for an understanding of Indigenous history and the formation of a unique worldview and how it is formed. Through the research and methodology, I was able to explore the Squamish epistemology of how people come to know. The Squamish process embraces spirit, heart, mind and an experiential journey that includes the person in an environmental context. Indigenous methodology founded in an Indigenous epistemology, indicates there cannot be just one way to approach research. There must be a clear understanding of the very unique epistemology as it is connected to the landscape, location and person as a result, what is revealed are shared values and beliefs. For Squamish, the longhouse with its strong corner post pillars became the research framework for this study as it contains values, teachings, heart and mind of a Squamish way of life. Using this framework in the process can inform academic theories of Indigenous methods to support community healing from past historical trauma. The creation of the unique Squamish space is needed for true healing and recovery.

3.2 Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous knowledge is the exploration of one's own identity, creation stories, worldview and beliefs. Kovach (2009) uses descriptive words such as interrelated, inclusive, whole, cyclical, and spiritual to describe Indigenous epistemologies. Each culture has sophisticated and complex practices that are very personal. Kovach (2009) adds that the knowledge gathering methods must respect the protocols, relationships and fit within the practices of the community.

As Coast Salish people, the Squamish lived together in *Tl'áktaxan* (longhouses) as a way of being with family, taking care of one another, and gathering around the fires to share, learn and socialize. This type of gathering of our people provided the structure for learning societal norms and the guidance to a way of life. Numerous families would live together in one longhouse to enjoy the company and protection of living together. The culture has always been a close-knit social unit where families and relatives can share their traditions, economy and affection. The knowledge keepers of this study share that this way of living proves that the more you share, *tsetsiyákwustay'*, the closer you become to each other. The four strong corner pillars of the longhouse represent the strength and values of family, honesty, wellness and the wisdom taught through culture teachings. The Longhouse model forms the conceptual image and methodology framework for this study. The conceptual framework brings together the values, laws, protocols, beliefs and way of life of the Squamish people. It provides for description of the roles, responsibilities, sharing of stories and teachings that set the guiding principles and pedagogy for the framework of research. Kovach (2009) refers to using tribal knowledge and worldview as Indigenous research methods, ethics, protocols, ceremony and decolonizing methodologies. The longhouse model in Image 2, describes traditional knowledge, the principles, methodology and methods that guided the study with the strength of the Squamish longhouse corner posts.

My research approach is grounded in the Squamish ontology and epistemology. I was fortunate to have good teachings from my parents, aunties and grandparents forming a worldview that reflects the teachings and wisdom of my family and community. My family provided me with good role modeling to be a positive community contributor. I grew up in a bi-cultural home, which has informed my understanding of what is possible as an Indigenous and

non-Indigenous worker in my community. Squamish social work practice is about building good relationships by taking the time to sit down to listen and recognize the true strengths of stories that are shared. I like to say to social workers in training that relational work is about the tea and bannock. Meaning, you take the time to sit down, create space to share stories, share food and listen to understand what one another is saying. The tea and bannock time should inform good Indigenous social work practice. Wilson (2008) stresses the importance of relationships in Indigenous ontology and epistemology is the heart of what it means to be Indigenous.

3.3 Ethical considerations

As I considered how to ethically engage with gathering and caring for the knowledge shared by the knowledge keepers who participated in the study, I engaged with Wilson's (2008) research paradigms of axiology as being the ethics or morals that guide the search for knowledge and what knowledge we think is meaningful of searching for. In this search, gaining knowledge about how to understand and honour ancestral wisdom was the ultimate goal, as such, I needed to find the pathway to gather knowledge about what is real for Squamish people through the knowledge keepers I interviewed. This knowledge could then be used to inform those who are interested in learning and understanding how to be good relatives and helpers within Squamish community.

My first ethical consideration is to the community and people of the Squamish Nation. In beginning the research, I sat down with my family Elders to ensure that I was being respectful to the protocols of gathering, carrying and sharing knowledge. I explained my intention and goals of the study and provided a copy of the consent form and my request for permission to share the knowledge I would gather. My family elder was supportive of the research and provided me with some guidance on the work. She said that we all come together because we care and we are

willing to share our triumphs and challenges with others, to nurture each other's strengths in a respectful way. There are stories worth sharing.

Access to Indigenous knowledge is considered sacred and restricted to certain groups or individuals within a community. This can create some ethical issues with breaches of confidentiality of sacred knowledge (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). It will be important to have the consent of the elders and knowledge keepers about what information they feel comfortable in sharing, and how I will be required to hold this sacred information.

In following the academic references to ensure ethical accountability for the research, I reviewed the University of Victoria's "Protocols & Principles for Conducting Research in an Indigenous Context" (IGOV, 2004). I also went through the university's research ethics review process that assessed my proposal against the policies and its core principles or research ethics that respect persons, concern for welfare, and justice. During the period of this research there were additional concerns and protocols that needed to be addressed due to a worldwide pandemic. These COVID-19 protocols were necessary to protect everyone as the research involved human participants, but COVID protocols did present some challenges to the Indigenous community practice of meeting in person. My Squamish teachings are to visit in person to cover the individual as we request knowledge sharing, to be present and share space on the land or sacred places while stories are being told and to provide an in-person thank you to honour and respect what was shared.

Wilson (2008) emphasizes the ethical and moral responsibility of research relationship as relational accountability. He says that the relationship that we build through an Indigenous research paradigm shapes and defines accountability. Through this, accountability is built into the relationship with the storyteller, the community and for how this knowledge will be used. As

Squamish people, relationship is one of the most important teachings we have and a function of who we are. For this reason, I had to seek elder guidance on how I could still practice relational accountability in this research process while respecting the health and safety of the knowledge keeper participants of the study. The pandemic forced us all to be creative and resourceful and to pivot how we could still be relational and interact with one another. My elder guided me in contemporary “injunity” with approval to use modern technology and tools of emails, text messages and recorded zoom interviews to get consent from the knowledge keepers and a way to record our conversations and story sharing. She shared that long ago, Indigenous communities also faced disease and risks and always found ways to uphold the teachings to maintain values of respectful relationships. I was then able to continue with the research interviews, share the recorded interview and get consent for how I was sharing their stories in the research findings. I provided each knowledge keeper who participated in the study a small thank you, dropped on their doorstep, to honour the time and energy they provided in sharing their wisdom.

3.4 Data Gathering Process

The approach for data collection in this study was through *nexwníw*, advice and teachings by storying methodology, gathering information through a recorded zoom interview with four respected knowledge keepers of the community. Knowledge keeper interviews are a powerful learning, connection and primary source of sharing the teachings. I have learned that the heart of all teachings is through storytelling. The oral tradition, nature of Elders and knowledge keepers speaking, singing and drumming is irreplaceable. The respected Elders and knowledge keepers are the true experts on matters of culture.

Storytelling is a form of oral tradition and oral history of Indigenous peoples and how traditional knowledge is shared. Thomas (2016) speaks of honouring the oral traditions of the

ancestors through storytelling. Stories in the oral tradition serve an important function to teach values, beliefs, history and moral guidelines by which one should live. They teach the young and remind the old about belonging, identity, and situating oneself within the family lineage. The Elders of the Squamish community speak of oral traditions as distinct ways of knowing and the means, by which knowledge is re-produced, preserved and conveyed from generation to generation and offers a beautiful connection between the young and the old. Archibald (2008) describes oral traditions as a way for keeping knowledge alive by telling as many people everywhere. This could be through songs, ceremonies, dances and stories that are repeated over and over by generations of people. She included that some stories and songs belong to a particular family and require permission from that family to sing the song or tell the story. This was an important point to clarify with my family elder prior to the data gathering process as I wanted to ensure proper protocols and ethics were upheld. I found it interesting that Archibald also stated that there is no standard methodology in collecting and analyzing oral traditions as it is so specific to the tribe of people. This storytelling method of data collection became the bridge to local Squamish cultural expertise and it was essential that I follow protocols and provide a safe space for the knowledge keepers to share their stories.

This data collection of the recorded stories is a priceless treasure, a library of knowledge, wisdom, and story that might otherwise be lost. I will continue to ensure that this knowledge is shared and carried in the way the knowledge keepers intend it to be held by acknowledging their stories as theirs and by sharing the knowledge in ceremony as a way to celebrate and honour the ancestral wisdom. Archibald (2008) also points out that it is important that the researcher be accepted by the community and the leaders of a community as someone who can be trusted to hear this knowledge. My position as a Squamish member brought the already established

relationships of trust, but I wanted to ensure that I did not take advantage of or compromise those relationships. The ethical guidelines of any research process must protect the integrity of the information gathered and the information that will be made available to the community to benefit their future development.

As a Squamish community member, I requested and received permission from the Squamish leadership and Elders through oral approval to conduct this study. Through my knowledge and relational connections in the Squamish community, I invited four knowledge keepers that represent the four strong corner posts of the longhouse. I interviewed knowledge keepers within the community who appear to me as holding knowledge about how to help people from a Squamish perspective. I met with them individually for a 1 hour on-line recorded zoom interview where I asked semi-structured open-ended interview questions aimed at a focus for their story to begin. I emailed them the overview of the study, some questions to guide the discussion and a consent of the research participant form for them to review and decide upon. At the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the overview and consent form again and asked if they would still like to proceed. The recorded interviews were shared with each knowledge keeper of the study and they were given an opportunity to decide if they would still like their stories to be used as the data to form the framework of knowledge. A copy of how I summarized stories gathered and themes of our important teachings was shared and each participant was able to provide feedback to ensure it reflects the information they wanted to share.

The approach of experiential and witnessing as methodology was limited due to the restrictions of the pandemic. I was able to gather some data where the participant was already out on the lands cedar harvesting, where I was able to witness and connect the story teachings of place and environment. Respecting social distancing, I wanted to give the knowledge keeper an

opportunity to expose me, as the researcher, to the experience, or learning by doing an approach to provide understanding through reflection on doing. I believe this generated a deeper understanding of the knowledge gathered. Where we could not be out on the lands together, the knowledge keeper shared pictures or longer stories through zoom interview.

3.5 Witnessing and Bringing the Knowledge Together

Kovach (2009) refers to observation and witnessing as a methodical tool for epistemic positioning. We gather knowledge by observing relationships in the natural world and understanding the worldview of the storyteller. She continues to describe tribal-centered Indigenous methodology as a holistic relational approach that includes a personal preparation to motivation, purpose, inward knowing, observation and ways that a researcher can relate their own process in the research. The interviews with the knowledge keepers of the study are the experiential and observation approach that unfolds the connection to traditional knowledge and how the Squamish people come to know.

Wilson (2008) describes research as ceremony, with this in mind I began to make meaning of my own research study and how I could share it with others within the framework of the longhouse and the ceremonies that take place there. The longhouse is a sacred place that plays a significant role in the culture of Coast Salish people and how teachings and rituals are upheld and shared with others. An important part of the longhouse is the witnessing ceremony. Whenever one is doing work of any importance, the speaker and floor manager begins the ceremony by calling witnesses. These witnesses are required to take note of the work that is taking place and to speak about the work when it has been completed. As my late Auntie Julie Baker, Sxwelhchaliya-t shared, our Squamish ancestors and leaders protected and preserved our knowledge systems through practice and protocols of oral traditions, rather than the written

word. It is by our people's tenacity, grace and collective memory, passed from generation to generations, that we maintain an intimate connection to our lands and traditions. In this research, I am in the role of a witness and have the responsibility to observe the protocols and share the information I observe and obtain through this study. The stories and details are shared throughout my research work, but the information belongs to the collective of the Squamish people. I will remain as the witness to speak of the beautiful work that took place and respectfully share.

The longhouse model became helpful to the learning process and organizing the knowledge that was gathered similar to how one might hear the stories and observe sacred work while gathered around the fires. The strong protocols and values are echoed through each story shared with me as the knowledge keepers highlighted teachings, core values and guidance. To ensure that I was understanding the data accurately, I provided the knowledge keepers a copy of my research and gave them time to review and offer feedback. This gave them each an opportunity to correct or modify what was to be shared with me. As part of the recommendations are to share this information with new staff and community helpers, I have extended an invitation to the knowledge keepers to be present in the sessions I provide to the staff. In keeping with the protocols of Squamish teachings, with permission from the knowledge keepers the sources of the stories and teachings will always be acknowledged.

3.6 Strengths and Limitations

Although there were many strengths experienced through the research approach with several individuals wanting to collaborate and to re-imagine new ways to support one another and share information at a distance, there were also many challenges faced during a time of pandemic. The impact of the pandemic had a profound effect on the world emotionally,

physically, intellectually and spiritually. It raised stress, fears and anxiety levels for many people as many were isolated to their homes with limited in-person activities and most individuals were working from home. For a while it felt like everything outside of the pandemic came to a halt and the focus was on keeping loved ones safe and healthy as our bubbles of safe people were kept small. For the research study, this pandemic initially made it difficult to conduct culturally appropriate interviews, dialogue and land-based activities that are typically the basis for sharing Indigenous knowledge. There were no longhouse gatherings or ceremony that exemplify how Squamish would gather together and share. With the advice and permission of the knowledge keepers of the community, they provided adjustments to what would be acceptable knowledge sharing options while still honouring traditional protocols of sharing stories. An additional challenge for my research during the pandemic was the delay and restrictions to getting my proposal reviewed and approved through the University ethics board. This was in part due to most people were not in the workplace thereby limiting the time the board gathered, but largely it was the ethical matters of COVID-19 protocols of avoiding close contact with people and social distancing that needed to be in place to ensure protection of people and minimizing the spread of the virus/disease. We have all discovered new ways to stay connected, care for and support one another as we discovered what is really most important to us in life. This pandemic challenge has forever reshaped the landscape moving forward.

Chapter 4: *Es-hámkwstas* – Cover the speakers

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pin needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing, and all humming insects, are holy in the memory and experiences of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. Chief Seattle, 1854.

Family and connections to all things are pivotal to the wellbeing of Indigenous people. My elders told me that understanding family lineage defines our sense of connectedness to kinship and culture, and in return we find the spiritual and cultural belonging in the strengths of our family. The Elders and knowledge keepers have been described as the heart of our community. They impart traditions, knowledge, culture, language, values, and lessons using oral and role modeling traditional practices. So, when it came to choosing speakers for this research, I looked to my family lines of respected knowledge keepers who trace back to *Tsiyaliya* and to *Khatsahlano*, to ask if they would share their family-based knowledge. With the connection and relationship to the speakers, we begin a journey of storytelling to remember the stories of our people and honour ancestral wisdom. I wish to stand up and honour each of my dear relatives like we do in ceremony. Their wisdom gives guidance and comfort as they remember the teachings they received and graciously pass on their knowledge to others. There is no simpler, more beautiful way to honour someone than to make room for their stories to be told. By listening, we affirm the teachings and protect our traditional teachings from being lost. The re-telling of the teachings reveals that the traditional knowledge is in our hearts. Through ceremony we acknowledge, celebrate and hold up one another.

4.1 *Nekwsaliya*, Linda George

Linda George is Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh and grew up in the village of *Eslha7án'*. Linda spent 46 years working as a social worker and manager for the Squamish Nation supporting and strengthening families until her retirement in 2017. She continues to support the families and

community as an elder in residence. She has a fantastic memory for everyone's connections and family tree including remembering the children who may have been lost to the child welfare system. She has a heart of gold, compassion, love and understanding for all people, at the same time being a tough protector and advocate for Indigenous people. Linda shares her stories and teachings from the grounding of the *nexwnínew'* (upbringing) from her mother and father. Her mother, *Nekwsaliya-t*, Margaret Locke, was very instrumental in the Squamish language revitalization which has allowed many more to become proficient in the language. It is through family relationships, all my relations, which build the foundation for teachings and learning from womb to tomb, as Linda says.

Linda has been such an integral part of caring for our people and mentoring others in the ways of Squamish. She speaks softly and lovingly as she shares the teachings and I often refer to her as the *Tá7a* of bringing peace to the children of the Squamish Nation. I share the love everyone has for her. Linda is not only a mentor to me but a good relative and friend. We have shared many laughs, tears and moments of reflection in our journey together. Paddles up, the journey continues. For all this, I am forever grateful, *chen kw'enmántumi*.



Image 3: *Nekwsaliya*, Linda George

4.2 *D'chatatolt*, Jackie Gonzales

D'chatatolt, Jackie Gonzales is Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh/Musqueam and grew up in the village of *Eslha7án'* next door to my grandparent's home. She is the oldest of seven children and matriarch to a large family tree. Jackie shares stories of growing up in North Vancouver, attending St. Paul's school and all the interesting lessons in that school, including being taught clog dancing. Jackie is grounded in Squamish protocols for ceremony, longhouse, family connections and healing as she learned from her elders. When I first returned home fifteen years ago, Jackie sat beside me and said, that excitement you feel is the little "indian" inside you. It's in your blood and will always call you back to who you are and where you come from. You are home.

I think of Jackie as the gatekeeper of Squamish wisdom, knowledge and history. She is firm in the protocols to maintain respect to the ancestral wisdom and is often called upon to share and lead important work that reflects the values and teachings of our Squamish people. Jackie shares healing practices with strength and peace through ceremonies and traditional teachings and as an elder in residence supports the formal and informal education to reawaken the cultural knowledge for children, youth and families. She is not one to back down from any opportunity for adventure as she traveled with our canoe journey and hiked the Elaho, Tricone Valley back country with bears and spirits and a group of youth. These lands and/or territories are the best teaching grounds. Jackie will often say that Squamish teachings are experiential. If you want to learn and understand Squamish, you must participate, watch, listen and be present on the lands, waters and spaces of sacred ceremony. That is where the vision of Squamish life is contained. I am forever amazed by Jackie's strength and appreciate the mentorship she has given me as a good auntie and matriarch.



Image 4: *D'chatatolt*, Jackie Gonzales

4.3 Aaron Williams

Aaron Williams is *Skwxwú7mesh* and grew up in the village of *Eslha7án*. He proudly speaks of the teachings he received as he was raised by his grandmother Doris Williams, *Skwetsatenat-t* whose lineage I share going back to *Tsiyaliya*. It is through these teachings that Aaron was taught important lessons of *snewíyelh* (advice) and *wanáxws* (respect) towards a Squamish *nexwníw* (upbringing), ones that he is able to model and provide to his son. The teachings provide a foundation for the strength and resilience to navigating life's challenges.

As a means of assimilating Indigenous peoples, colonial polices and residential schools forbid the speaking of Indigenous languages. This led to the ongoing endangerment of loss of Squamish language as many of the elder language speakers were dying. As language is the foundation of a culture, in 1993 a group of Squamish elders, including Aaron's grandmother,

formed *tiná7 ta na wa nexwníwen ta a ímats*, from teachings for your grandchildren/ the Squamish Language elders group. This led to the language revitalizations programs to build more proficient language speakers. Aaron returned to school to develop his language proficiency and is now a passionate speaker and language teacher in our community. In addition to his great laughter that can fill a building, Aaron has a deep understanding of the Squamish language, the sounds and the essence of the words. He is understanding of new language speakers and makes learning fun as he supports language lessons and dialogue. I am proud to know Aaron as I witness him lead community events, ceremony and honour the ancestral wisdom he holds in his heart. I admire the strength he has shown to create positive change for Squamish people.



Image 5: Aaron Williams

4.4 *Xálek Sekyú Siyám'*, Chief Ian Campbell

Ian Campbell, *Sekyú Siyám'* of the *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Squamish Nation) is a hereditary chief, head of family, elected politician, cultural ambassador and strong leader to negotiating lands, rights and title. He was one of the first graduates of the Simon Fraser University MBA program in Aboriginal Business and Leadership and continues to challenge other governments and businesses on appropriate intergovernmental relationships as he protects and enhances the rights and title for Squamish people, lands and resources.

Ian's love and connection to Squamish language and teachings has made him a captivating teacher to our youth as he developed the *Ayáteway* (peace together) youth in training program. His love for the environment brings youth up to the mountains, out on to the traditional territories learning the ways of hunting and gathering and to make real connection to all things in the environment. This is the true value to learning our *Skwxwú7mesh* ways. He shares the stories from his grandfather Lawrence Baker, *Xálek-t*, about our history, language, songs and that life is about caring for each other and the land. Squamish understanding of success is through "lifting each other up". As the youth learn to be stewards of the lands they gain pride and the sense of belonging and hope for a better future for our people. The lands and waters have been an ideal training ground to impart teachings as a process of storying and passing on knowledge.

I respect Ian as a strong leader and voice for our people. As family and as hereditary chief from the village of *K'ík'elxen* (Port Mellon) his roots trace directly back to *Xats'alanexw* (Kahtsalano). He conducts himself with kindness and generosity to share knowledge. He incorporates all aspects of life – spirituality, history, cultural practices, social interactions, language, healing. When I first returned home and trying to find my way back in to the community, I attended a gathering at Chief Joe Mathias Centre. Many speakers got up to bring us

together in stories. In the closing, Ian invited all Squamish singers to the front to sing a celebration song. I wasn't confident in my drumming and singing so stayed in my seat. I heard Ian speak out, "Kelley McReynolds, that means you, you are Squamish". Yes, I am *Skw̓wú7mesh*. I was home and found meaning and purpose to who I am as Squamish and my sense of belonging.



Image 6: *Xálek/Sekyú Siyám'*, Chief Ian Campbell

Chapter 5 *Telmíxws* – Reveal the knowledge

Shared stories of knowledge keepers Snewíyelh, the sacred teachings

“Oh God in heaven! Give me back the courage of the olden chiefs. Let me wrestle with my surroundings. Let me once again, as in the days of old, dominate my environment. Let me humbly accept this new culture and through it rise up and go on.

Oh God! Like the thunderbird of old I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man’s success- his education, his skills, and with these new tools I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society. And before I follow the great chiefs who have gone before us, I shall see these things come to pass.

I shall see our young braves and our chiefs sitting in the houses of law and government, ruling and being ruled by the knowledge and freedoms of our great land. So shall we shatter the barriers of our isolation. So shall the next hundred years be the greatest in the proud history of our tribes and nations.” Chief Dan George, (1967)

I share the stories, teachings and *snewíyelh* I heard from the knowledge keepers; similar to how a witness would share what they saw and heard in ceremony. In the long ago, in ceremony, witnesses were called by the speaker upon request of the family. Witnesses are called upon as they know the background and lineage of the family and can verify who was present, what took place and how it was done. The witnesses’ job is to return to their home or village and report back to those who were not in attendance as to what occurred at the ceremony. The witness may be called upon at the end of the ceremony to stand up and share words with the family on what they observed and heard, summarize the ceremony that took place and uphold the intension of the teachings. Witnessing is a way to gather the medicines of the ceremony and share them others so they may receive the love and revive their spirits with the connection to traditional knowledge.

The diversity of stories, important places and traditional knowledge helps to connect and remember the ancestral teachings of how to live and how to conduct oneself. Indigenous storytelling methodology is about how to gather knowledge about life, family and history as an example of Indigenous family-based research. Family-based research sees collective

transformation as beginning with small-scale change, remembering and reconnection as a way to overcome barriers (King, 2016). This remembering and reconnection can reveal what is important *snewíyelh* for Squamish people. These teachings are the foundation for balance, healing and daily living.

I had the great fortune to sit with elders and knowledge keepers to hear their stories, traditional teachings, legends and how they articulate both the resilience and the pain our elders have carried for many years, more specifically through residential school. That pain elders spoke about in their storying was bottled up for years and along the way, although they did the best that they could to take care of themselves, they developed coping mechanisms that were not always healthy. Bringing out the darkness through truth telling from stories, brings out the light for the process of healing by returning to the foundation of culture, beliefs and a Squamish way of life. The truth telling and stories brought out so much understanding and compassion for my relatives and for me to really delve into the experiences they shared of what hurt them, the harms, but also what helped them. The stories brought out positives of who they are and the strengths and resilience that kept them going. For the knowledge keepers who shared stories, healing is the importance of love, compassion and understanding. They were children that were hurt, they became adults that parented and lived life the best they could. Through culture, spiritual cleansing and ceremony they were able to stand safely in a place to reframe pain and suffering and remember the strength of the ancestors. I too can now stand here with strength and unity in community to pray for all those suffering to have a better life.

The teachings we need to learn and understand were and continue to be foundational in the structure of the longhouse. In the long ago, Squamish sat in longhouses with powerful *syéwen* and powerful speakers who spoke of love, kindness and caring for one another. The

whole culmination of who we are as Squamish takes place in the longhouse. We gather around the fires to express who we are and the lands we come from. The longhouse is where we gather our strength, draw songs from, understand the rhythms of the lands, where we get our regalia from, the starts for creation, the sun, moon, universe and balance that inspires us to show our gifts and contribute in a good way to be a good community. We all have a role in the longhouse whether big or small to understand the societal laws to adhere to, pass on teachings and plan for our young warriors to face the challenges in order to become wise. This is a place to give and receive advice, guidance, find gratitude, acceptance and stand oneself back up to move beyond challenges. In the longhouse, practices and protocols are progressive, it is not like the teaching all just suddenly happens. We are taught, we are constantly learning as we go through life until our last breath. It is that humbleness to be open to learning and growing that will help us and our families be cohesive again. It is our ancestor's teachings that help us have faith and trust in the teachings, battle adversity and overcome barriers to get to a place of help and healing.

The knowledge keepers of this study were able to share Squamish legends, teachings and personal stories to inform ways of knowing, helping and healing. They shared many of the same loving legends and stories of their upbringing and how teachings were passed on to them. Each knowledge keeper spoke to the loving family and community they are connected to and the responsibility they have in sharing the knowledge with others. I have synthesized the helpful themes from the dialogues that can provide some guidance to deepen the understanding of a *Skwxwú7mesh* way of life. These are the teachings to understand how to be a good relative and helper.

5.1 Historical Timeline

The *Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw* (Squamish people, villages and community) have a complex and rich history. Ancient connections are traced within our language through terms for place names and shared ceremony among the Salmon Peoples of the cedar longhouse. We are descendants of the Coast Salish Aboriginal peoples who lived in the present-day Greater Vancouver area, Gibson's landing and Squamish River watershed. The Squamish Nation has occupied and governed our territory since beyond recorded history.

It is important to understand the historical timeline of *Skwxwú7mesh* people going back to a time before contact, then first contact and how relations were made with explorers and settlers. For *Skwxwú7mesh*, first contact with European cultures in this part of the world goes back to 1791 with Captain Narvaez, the Spaniard, followed by Vancouver in 1792, this first contact of the explorers represents the catalyst where we cannot go backwards before European arrival. Then we experienced mass depopulation as a result of epidemics introduced by European settlers. So, in 1827, we have Fort Langley where there is robust trades and commerce where Indigenous peoples were central and integral to creating the economy where that become British Columbia. That led to confederation in 1872 where you see a deliberate attempt to usurp power from Squamish people and allocate full jurisdiction to provincial and federal government without consent nor compensation. These colonial encounters then/now become the crux of the agitation between settler governments and Indigenous people. There was an attempt to subjugate Indigenous peoples in 1876 with the Indian Act being imposed, to then really not assimilate us, because if it was about assimilation, we would be fully assimilated into every sector of society, and in to every level of government. Colonial encounters with our people were about eradication of our entire way of life, language and culture. The *modus operandi* was to set aside Indigenous

people and to put us on reserves in order to allow others to benefit and then claim interest, allocating rights to third party interests within our territory on top of our rights and title.

The social issues that plague our families today are directly linked to that time line, to the facts and the legislation that Canada imposed over the last 150-200 years. As a result of these impositions, Ayás Ménmen Child and Family Services of the Squamish Nation are now dealing with and responsible for, bringing our families back to a place of wellness and a solid foundation as a way to heal from colonial forces.

From 1876 to 1906, Squamish sent delegations of our chiefs to England to implore the crown to seek honour in the crown, they did not see us as humans. They completely dehumanized us and continue to see us as savages. The racism was completely blatant. It is indicative in 1913 with the forcible removal of villages, such as *Sehákw* and Stanley Park. The imposition of the RCMP as wielded from the agent of the crown to then impose the banning of our ceremonies. We had no legal recourse until 1960 when we became citizens of Canada. Our people, Indigenous people were the last group in Canada to become citizens in our own land. All of these facts led the Squamish Nation to launch legal action in 1977 for the confiscation of our reserve lands. As a result of the legal action, Squamish have more autonomy today with land use, we have planning departments and own source revenue that we draw upon to correct a lot of the trauma that our predecessors encountered while fighting and confronting governments to give the Squamish people more autonomy over our own jurisdiction, authority over our homelands, families and water.

The whole timeline is fact, and it becomes a matter of fact for every Squamish person to know this. It helps them to understand the predicaments they are in are not by accident or coincidence, it is all by design. It is important for our people know that it is systemic racism that

has led us to be in a position of abject poverty. We cannot hold our breath and wait for the abusers in government and corporations to all of a sudden become enlightened and all of a sudden like “Indians”. They are the ones who have put us in this position. In order to move beyond blame, shame and judgement and not living in the past, we then have a duty to get healthy and strong and get our own *Skwxwú7mesh* laws together so that we can once again flourish in our territories. It has been proven over and over again throughout the entire timeline that we can overcome adversities and transform. In each of our legend stories, it shows how transformation is possible and if you look at the trickster, and in these facts, the trickster is the colonial system and it is the trickster that continues to perpetuate dysfunction within our families. It is our turn to move beyond colonialism and get back to our teachings and our foundation of how we, our roles and responsibilities from baby to adult to elder, our lifestyles and way of life becomes intact and foundational. When we bring the balance back to our *Skwxwú7mesh* ways, it is not about assimilating but about adapting and moving forward. We are *Skwxwú7mesh* in a modern context. We cannot go backwards we can only draw from our ancestral wisdom and apply it in a modern context.

5.2 Legends, stories, teachings & ceremony

Our Squamish history has been passed down from generation to generation orally through stories and legends. Many people can recall stories, but it is a special talent to be a gifted storyteller and to recall our creation stories and value teaching legends.

Some key Squamish legends that are important to share with our youth are *Slhxi7lsh* , also called Siwash rock, which teaches the importance of living an upright way of life and honouring our children both born and unborn by following the teachings of our ancestors. The day the animals turned their backs on the humans tells of the time in the long ago when animals and

humans were brother and sister and communicated openly and lived in harmony. Through ego and arrogance, the human's offended the animals causing animals to turn and follow protocols in order to successfully hunt for survival. *K wech'taal* and *Sínulhkay'* the two headed serpent and the warrior tells the story of a quest to train and purify in order to slay a two headed serpent that plagued his people. Many of the legends are documented and available by request from the Squamish language and culture department. There are also skilled story tellers that can be called upon to share the legends with youth and families.

Songs and dances are an important part of Squamish culture and the children and youth are exposed to hearing songs from the time they are in their mother's womb, to preschool, through culture and youth camps, family ceremony and celebrations. Four key songs and dances are *Tl'ení* or the deer dance, *Syexwaliya slúlum* which was originally a *syéwen* song and was altered to a public version to share at gatherings. By teaching these aspects of Squamish culture, we empower our children and youth to become ambassadors of our culture and to carry on the teachings. Some of the identity crisis we go through as Indigenous people has been forced on us by the Indian Act, and so disruptive to our families such as separating men from women, children from their families and communities. We live in a different environment than what our ancestors did. We have different tools available to us than our ancestors did and we have different challenges. What informs us about our adaptation is in our *sxwexwiyám* (legends) and our mythology that talks about catalysts of change and there are many times in our history that we had to persevere, our societies crashed and we are the direct descendants of those survivors.

Uncle Louie retold the story heard from Tommy 120 years ago when he saw the European people coming and our people leaving because they no longer had their community roles. Women were gatherers, men hunters and that changed when men took on other jobs and

roles at the settler mills. Parenting roles got lost, storytelling got lost as people working on the outside were now not gathering and passing down as much language and teachings. People discovered alcohol, were fighting at the bars and ended up in jail. When he finished telling the story, he said it is still the same way today, losing stories and traditions through outsider. We need to bring language, culture and legends back to the schools and in community with our kids, back to our day-to-day life. We have teachings of respect, honour, caring, sharing and community love. Our young ones are losing out on that when they are not in our community or not with their family. The family circle needs to be recreated where families can work through challenges, whether it be in the long house or living room, every age group together learning and sharing together and non-threatening talking from the heart. This is the value of imparting knowledge through family and community stories, legends and teachings.

When we look at sharing knowledge and teaching young ones, we are reminded of how Squamish come to know knowledge and identity and how things are taught. The creation story is an important story to guide the values of our people to respect, care, share and humility. When the flood came, the strength of the people came together as a community to ensure safety and survival. They survived by working together and gathered in the canoes to save the people. The importance of the story is our life as *Skwxwú7mesh* people and how we became a stronger people by coming together to uphold each other to stay safe. Going back to the land as a community to rebuild, start again and the life cycle starts again. The legend of the two-headed serpent tells us how he went up to the mountains to get all of his training and knowledge from the ancestors then came back down to the village stronger to protect and provide for the people. The legends show us that there has always been suffering, and it is through the suffering that we find the resilience and strength to overcome and start again. That is the balance and resilience of life.

The stories connect us back to who we are, our teachings, and the stories of how we came to be. The creation story of the great flood connects us back to beginnings and how we lived and how we were taking care of one another. The great flood didn't just happen to Squamish it happened worldwide. Our people survived and some floated down in their canoes but they all worked together to take care of one another. Creation stories, story of our sacred masks, creation of the *sxw7úmten* (Indian doctor) and how *kwech'taal* slayed *Sínulhkay'* the double headed serpent are important teachings. They show us how families practice spirituality by going to the water every day, live on the land every day, food preservation from thousands of years ago and values that guide us on how we remain respectful and in harmony with all things. Some of the stories you learn throughout life, from grandparents and elders. They are stories of the land that continue to connect us to our worldview, teachings, our values and how to conduct ourselves each day.

5.3 Values

To honour Squamish knowledge is to hold it up, live daily life with its values and teachings with the ability to carry it respectfully. That is the legacy of a Squamish way of life that impacts people and places with the richness of its culture and wisdom of the ancestors. When we look back to the long ago, we look at what traditions and cultural teachings can be brought forward to current day life. The research that has been done on Squamish teachings, stories and way of life shows that what holds true today are the values of our people. These values need to be brought back to families, to the community, to the helpers in our community so they can take part in culture and ceremony; so that they can learn to understand values in a more meaningful way. Once they have learned it and understand what it means to Squamish people, they get acceptance from the people and community. Community builds trust when others are

there to understand and be a part of a process, not to impose other views and systems upon a community. When there is an openness to build an understanding of another's worldview and values, there is a better understanding to working with the family guided by their own values and ways not by policies based on another's view. Giving support in a loving way to guide, protect and provide are values following the direction of our ancestors and what they have laid out before us.

As told by the knowledge keepers of this study, the Squamish sacred law, *chiyáxw*, is the unwritten law of how people conduct themselves from birth to death. *Chiyáxw* is literally “a quiver for arrows”. In the era of writing our language this word was used to denote what we all rely upon to look after ourselves. It is the way of Peoples. It is our law to uphold one another. There are teachings which speak of the ways in which the people interact to live as Squamish people, parents, friends and communities who support one another. *Chiyáxw* is interwoven and all-encompassing because it refers to all in a community where nothing goes unnoticed. There is notice when someone is not well or notice when a family has difficulty. When there is notice that someone needs help, all come together to help and all are of one mind and one heart. Elders, parents, extended family and community hold common values to Guide, Protect and Provide:

1. Guide children in the ways of the Squamish people. Begin each day by thanking the Creator for providing guidance.
2. Protect the family from harm. It is the responsibility of the family and community to step up and ensure our children are protected and safe at all times. Each day begins with thanking the creator for protecting in daily life.
3. Provide direction of life choices and give thanks to the creator for providing whatever the needs of the family and community for providing enough harvest each winter.

These strongly rooted values become our *Snewíyelh*, the guiding principles and ethics of the Squamish people's way of life. It is a way of the people with strong values rooted in spirituality, with emphasis on guiding protecting and providing. The values and teachings are told through the legends, stories and practiced in daily life. The unwritten laws include the following principle or value of the Squamish people:

Respect, *Wanáxws* (personal), *Wanáxws* (others) -respect is our regard we have toward people and all things. This regard is one of honour and dignity. We treat others in a manner that we want to be treated.

Love, *Tsetsiyákwustay* - we must learn to love ourselves before we can learn to love others. People learn to care for each other in a loving way.

Caring, *Na7s tl'i7stway* - we come together because we care and are willing to share our triumphs and challenges with others to nurture each other's strengths in a respectful way.

Sharing, *Tsetsiyákwustay* - we come together because we care and are willing to share our triumphs and challenges with others to nurture each other's strengths in a respectful way.

Nurturing- we come together because we care and are willing to share our triumphs and challenges with others to nurture each other's strengths in a respectful way.

Humble- Being humble is not drawing attention to oneself, but to all. One is humble and does not brag, but gives others credit. Being humble can also mean having inner power to be a gentle leader giving generously and being kind to others.

Promises- The teaching on promises is to keep your word and to choose your words wisely before speaking them. A broken promise leads to the loss of respect and lack of confidence in your spoken word. We listen, follow through and honour our word.

5.4 *Nexwníwin* (Upbringing), Family roots & responsibility

For Squamish people, equal importance is attached to kinship. On both the maternal and paternal sides, traditional life is structured on an interdependent kinship system. While Elders carry authority for providing teachings to younger family members, such as knowing how to behave, and living up to one's name, each house has a leader who holds authority and responsibility to guide, protect and provide for members. Family members are encouraged to support each other and to care for each other's children as well as to help each other in problem solving decision making about family matters. The values lived and told through the teachings, legends and stories are foundational for the upbringing of our children.

There are significant differences between Western and Indigenous worldviews, which, in turn, influence the upbringing and needs for our children and youth being raised by their family. Cultural considerations include worldviews, values & ideals of collectivism versus individualism, identity formation, and community healing. The construct of a nuclear family is decidedly Eurocentric. In contrast, Squamish describe family as a network of extended family and community members who create a web of relationship around a child and guide them in to adulthood. *Ha7lh Stélmexw kwelh tiná7 cht*, we come from good people; this is the importance and strengths to knowing family roots and lineage to who you are and where you come from. A Squamish upbringing provides for physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual well-being; and assures lifelong connections to extended family, siblings, community, other significant adults, family history and traditions, race and ethnic heritage, culture, religion and language.

Squamish worldview and traditional child rearing practices operate as a collectivist society in which parents, grandparents and community members all have a role in providing care for the children and teaching them to become contributing members of their community. The

elders would say, youth reach, elders teach. The role of the family elders is essential to the right *nexwníwín* upbringing and teachings of Squamish children. Children learn early in life the significance of family, responsibility, respect and the foundations of relationship and kinship. In Squamish worldview, children continue to be viewed as a valuable communal resource and a child's best interest is seen as inseparable from the best interest of the entire community.

A lot of our teachings and upbringing talk about how we need to have a strong mind, watch what we think, watch how we speak and listen, be patient and to go through each life cycle experience with gratitude. This is why the young men go sit on the mountains, fast and go to the rivers. The young women go through ceremonies with their aunties and grannies. These ceremonial upbringings instill a sense of relay runner, that we simply accept the baton from our predecessors and mentors as we step in to our roles and responsibilities. Ultimately, our role is to pass cultural and community knowledge and practices on to the next generation. Therefore, we all have a duty to continue to uphold the integrity of our teachings, and to ensure their successful perpetuation for the next generation. That to me is Squamish, it is about knowing that when we have a solid foundation, many countless generations will continue to embody our Squamish teachings. We are honouring the legacy of many of our mentors and ancestors when we continue to share the stories, speak the language and go out on to the lands.

5.5 Ceremony

Ceremonial events of the Squamish people are customarily conducted in the longhouse. The longhouse is a sacred place that plays a significant role in the culture of Squamish people. A ceremony is the Squamish way of showing intention and honouring the ancestors through celebration. It is an opportunity to come together as family to show appreciation of who we are and where we come from in a good and humble way. Whatever type of ceremony occurs, it

brings family and community together. It is a cultural practice that has survived colonialism and oppression.

Some examples of ceremony include: mask ceremony, honouring our babies, honouring our elders, puberty rites for young men and ladies, naming ceremony, cleansing ceremony, memorial, death ceremony, marriage ceremony. The longhouse is used for ceremonies including *syéwen*. The masks handed down through bloodline are part of Squamish sacred ceremony. It is connected with spirituality and good medicines for healing. The songs and miracle of what we get to hear in ceremony is what energizes spirit, rituals and has a positive effect on mental health and wellness.

5.6 Connection to land, water, cedars

For Squamish people, our historical links to lands and waters are numerous. A location has particular meaning to our people because of the existence of oral traditions that served to explain that place in the Squamish universe and in our relationship to the land. The land bears witness to the settlements, resource sites, and spiritual and ritual places of our ancestors, including villages, hunting camps, and cedar bark gathering areas. Some of these village sites date back 3000 years. So, by exploring what I know through the Squamish teachings and stories told to me by my grandparents and the knowledge keepers, I have questioned more the historical precedence to defining how environment and nature is protected by humans.

Although the pandemic prevented much of the experiential on the land research I had in mind, I was able to get out on to the lands to connect to environment and to get a deeper understanding of the importance land, water and cedars have to Squamish people. I wanted to experience and gain greater culturally specific understanding of people and their possible relationship with environment through annual cedar harvesting. This experience gave me an

opportunity to get out of my head and pay close attention to the ontologies and epistemologies that the Squamish knowledge keepers described in the interviews about the relationship to land and the world around us. Out in nature seemed like a natural classroom to have this experience and reflection.

My land research began as an opportunity to connect to the land while having some of the cedar harvesters share traditional teachings as we walked in the cedars. It was springtime, and the sap was still running, making it an ideal time to experience and learn the teachings of cedar bark gathering. The best time to harvest is in the middle of May, but as long as the sap is still running, the bark can be pulled off easily. My Grandmother's teachings included cedar as a means of cleansing and healing. The cedar is used to brush off an individual to remove stress and negative emotions so they can move forward with a clean mind and heart, or cedar can be used to protect and bless the pathways of the home.

Initially, I was just at peace with the healing aspect of being in the mountains walking in the cedars. The smells, colours, and depth of the forest were breathtaking. We began in prayer and asking the cedar trees permission to enter the forest and gently take a strip of their cedar, I rested my hand on the side of the cedar feeling its strength and respectfully giving thanks to the cedar for allowing us to harvest. I listened; I prayed and then lifted the first strip as it went right up the side of the tree. When the strip of cedar fell to the ground, I again rested my hand on the cool sap exposed portion of the tree. Again, in prayer giving thanks. We are careful not to take more than we need, only one or two strips can be taken from a tree in order to support its continued growth. I share this experience as I felt the human nature relationship, healing aspect and a real experience of interconnection with the cedars. The practice is mindful, respectful and ethical to the forest. This experience provided me with a great deal of self-reflection and long-

term thinking to how the cedars continue to be protected with respectful harvesting in traditional ways.

Working with cedar wood is traditionally recognized as the role of men, yet the working of inner cedar bark is a task almost entirely carried out by the women as explained by knowledge keeper, *Leslha7lhamaat*. The teachings experienced as we entered the forest began in prayer to the creator and ancestors to request entry into the forest. We admired the massiveness of the cedars in height and numbers. After selecting a tree, *Leslha7lhamaat* addressed the spirit of the cedar in a prayer of respect, thanking it for being such a good provider and asking it for its bark, explaining why she needed it. As with all natural resources, whether plant, animal, bird or fish, people express gratitude, with the understanding that the resources gave of themselves: to show respect was to ensure a good supply in future years. This practice would appear to be a mindful environmentalist approach to ensure effective use of the resources along with preservation of our great lands and resources. The spirituality of the experience provided a meaningful connection and relationship between humans and environment that was fulfilling. The experience and lessons received from the lands communicate to us how to take care of one another and all things around us. This is meaningful to Squamish people.

5.7 Closing the Circle

Gathering together around the fires of the longhouse has been an important way to walk through the cycle of a Squamish way of life and honour the ancestral wisdom. We have learned the importance of building relational practice as social workers and how the interconnectivity of all aspects of one's being, including the connection with the natural world can bring greater awareness of self and the circles of knowledge passed on from generation to generation. This circle of knowledge provides the power each of us has to gain strength, courage and wisdom to

have an open heart to understand and connect with one another. As we close in ceremony, we reflect on teachings and values that are needed for hope, help and healing in our communities and respectful interactions with all those in need or to those that are suffering. We reflect on the voices and stories we have heard of love and understanding that help us to be patient and open to other points of view. We are refreshed in our spirits and awaken our imaginations to the possibilities of working together. It is through respectful relationship with all beings and collaboration that we can improve our accountabilities to one another. We are inspired to move forward steadfastly, strive for everything that is true, everything that is honourable, everything that is sacred to Squamish and grateful for the hearts and minds that are eager to help. We raise our hands in thanks and peace for all our relations.

Chapter 6: *Smeñálhs* – Respect to closing the work

“The time will soon be here when my grandchildren will long for the cry of a loon, the flash of a salmon, the whisper of spruce needles, or the screech of an eagle. But he will not make friends with any of these creatures and when his heart aches with longing, he will curse me. Have I done all to keep the air fresh? Have I cared enough about the water? Have I left the eagle to soar in freedom? Have I done everything I could to earn my grandchild’s fondness?” Chief Dan George.

Along this research journey, I continued to look at ways to inform a framework of understanding traditional knowledge and continuum of ways of knowing good practice that honours the wisdom of our ancestors. I looked at how I could respectfully continue teachings that I have learned from the knowledge keepers in order to effect positive change to clear pathways to build relational practice for social workers and helpers of the community. With much reflection on stories I have heard growing up put together with stories of the current day knowledge keepers, I have learned that one must live everyday like a ceremony. You carry your culture in the way you move through the world. Lean on the folks that understand the culture deeply and work along with them. This way you can empower and create a strong understanding for meaningful relationship and respectful understanding of a Squamish way of life.

Squamish knowledge and the ways of viewing the world are the foundation of my sense of belonging, sense of direction, and purpose of who I am and where I come from. Each one of us has a medicine in our heart. Each one of us has a medicine in our head. Each one of us has a great soul full of compassion. A compassion that is greater than the waters. It is inside each one of us to nurture it, look after it and when the time comes to be strong enough to share the gifts to teach and help others. That is the teachings of the ancestors (Chief Joe Mathias, 1981). The Longhouse model has become the container and foundation of my Indigenous social work practice. The core values and teachings are all understood and represented through the Longhouse model that reflects the process of how life evolves, how the natural world grows and

works together, how all things are connected, and how all things move toward their purpose. The model can be used as a teaching tool to help others understand and connect to the culture and traditions of Coast Salish longhouse people, similarly to how other Indigenous people or researchers have described conceptual models specific to their lands and culture across Canada. The Longhouse model represents the space of awareness and unique knowledge that provides the beauty and balance to a Squamish way of life.

6.1 Looking back to move forward: Implications for social work practice using the Longhouse Model to inform relational practice

“We walk in to the future backward, looking to our ancestors for direction and guidance”
T’echuxanm-t siyám Chief Joe Mathias (1981)

When we compare Western methodology to spiritual and traditional ways, we sometimes reflect on how attitudes or lack of understanding of culture may have caused a difference of opinion and understanding of how values are shaped. This created a world of misunderstandings of Indigenous people. Along with the Eurocentric way of thinking, it showed that their way of life, their values, and their institutions were far more superior to another’s way of life making that world view the basis for systems, laws and practices. How ignorance has played a major factor in Indigenous history is unjust. As social workers, we move forward in today’s world with an open mind to the needs of people, community, and environment with enlightened beliefs, values, and practices. What has been a colonized norm is now affecting the worldview as is known today. Hall (1997) looks at how definitions, meaning, understanding and opinions are linked to those with power. He suggests that there needs to be a process to critically examine meaning to get the context and not have it controlled by powers in operation. That means taking the time to know the background, history and purpose of something to better understand and get

to truer meaning. Through this process, we can best find meaningful solutions to important issues.

When considering how this translates into Indigenous social work practice, I consider the values and teachings that I heard and what stood out as important aspects to supporting community healing. Community is a place of connectedness, and ideally where one feels supported, nurtured and has a sense of belonging. Strengthening and building capacity for communities to create supportive, resilient and healthy environments for children and their families is essential. A healthy community focuses on the whole environment of the social, cultural, and physical places in which a child will live, learn and play.

My reflections on social work practices and the research study provides me with a Coast Salish Squamish approach that allows me to express my identity and my relevance to the work I am doing within my own community, much like how Kovach (2009) describes Indigenous methodologies as flowing from tribal knowledge. While the Indigenous approach may be allied with western approaches, they remain distinct to the specific tribe or nation. The Nation specific knowledge connects to the importance of land, culture, spirituality, and traditional values all the important themes and findings that were shown in the literature review of previous research studies. This Squamish Nation specific research model of the longhouse allows me a visual image to advocate for exercising inherent right to protect and take care of our children in a Squamish valued way. We should not have to be forced to use knowledge and models reflective of other's worldviews while having our own values and way of life compromised. This protects and strengthens families, identity, culture and community by utilizing all those in the social structure, family, elders, knowledge keepers, linguists, historians and healers to contribute to the life and planning of a child. We must move beyond a pan-Indigenous approach or one size fits all

model to social work practice and draw from the specific knowledge and wisdom of the Indigenous people and community you are working with.

Social work practice in my workplace continues to be developed through a holistic model of social work practice that acknowledges and understands the important values and worldview of the community as shown in the longhouse model, as it gives members the connection and strength to do the work and healing that they are facing. We are not just addressing the social issues head on, but providing opportunity for community to be involved in environmental sustainability through community gardens, harvesting of plants, processing of plants to medicines, food sharing and waste reduction. There is so much more we can do for the good of all. One that has a moral and ethical approach rooted in the spiritual notion that there are relationships between all people, other living entities and the physical realm. This position guarantees the rights for all its residence for equitable distribution of the Earth's resources, pooling of the risks and benefits. The duty to care for one another and all things is a move towards a world that is cared for and not taken for granted. Utilizing the Longhouse model as a teaching tool for social worker practice will support to increase the understanding of Squamish-specific realities, the true history, needs and teachings that embrace a Squamish way of knowing, doing and relating.

6.2 Areas for further exploration

The ways to learn how to be good helpers and relatives in a community and know what are good ways to help others understand the *chiyáxw* and *snewíyelh* to have helpers experience and go through a ritual ceremony. They do not have to adopt a Squamish way of life, but go through an experience to peel away layers of western world view and open their eyes to Squamish ways. This experience helps connect the head to the heart. A weeklong experience of

cultural immersion, teachings, bathing, brushing off, being on the water, in the cedars and preparing for ceremony will tell more than any book can. To go through and witness a ceremony, the spirituality of bathing, eating together, handling disputes, who are the family heads, are all good experiential teachings. We have seen children thrive with experiential learning, learning the protocols of how to be a speaker and greet the canoes to the shores. Can you imagine if we had immersion training for helpers on how that could break down the barriers? The way to help people understand the stories, feeling and emotions is for people to go through the experience themselves. Even for some of our own people they need that same experience. They haven't had the teaching but it is in their blood and they can feel safe enough to ask for help. That's amazing where we want to be with all our people. Let's experience this together!

Although the Squamish Nation receives culturally relevant child welfare support services through the Ayás Ménmen Child & Family Services department, numerous challenges remain, including the need for legislation and funding that allows Squamish to ensure adequate care for children in a way that incorporates traditional knowledge, recognizes the ongoing impact of historical wrongs, and build on the strengths of Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people to take responsibility for our own children. This is important to be done as Canada attempts to move forward in reconciliation in an environment that continues to be challenged by the multi-generational impacts of the Residential Schools, ongoing discrimination against Indigenous peoples that interferes with housing, employment, and other paths to access social determinants of health, and other harmful colonial policies and practices such as those in child welfare. This discrimination is extended to the service delivery of Ayás Ménmen with underfunding and the challenges of Provincial legislation guiding the process making it difficult to truly regain control over children and families, a legacy that continues from the beginning of colonization in Canada. Canada's

first priority in a journey toward reconciliation with the 94 Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), needs to include equitable funding for Indigenous child welfare agencies as well as recognizing that Indigenous communities are in the best position to make decisions about their child's care. With the introduction of Bill C-92, an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis children, youth and families, Squamish will finally have an opportunity to affirm and recognize jurisdiction, legal decision-making and judgment over children and family services by developing our own polices and laws based on history, culture and circumstances. Honouring family systems and longstanding traditional decision-making processes is respectful and empowering and upholds the inherent rights of Indigenous people, a right that was never given up.

This is a new chapter in the history of Canada and its relationship with Indigenous children, youth and families. It is time to gather the circle around the fires and explore what this must look like. I know we are in a hard place right now, hit hard with the discoveries of the remains of many missing and undocumented deaths of children who never made it home from residential school. There are no words to describe the shock and grief experienced and how this trauma is impacting Indigenous people across the country. We remind ourselves that we are the ones alive today while telling this story. We are in a time for great change and we need to be walking together and healing together to make changes that ensure healthy and happy future generations. This is a time in our history that we are ready for. We are the ones we have been waiting for and we know we have a great gift of the strength and wisdom of thousands of ancestors. Our ceremony and ancestral wisdom are the pathway to achieve that.

6.3 Advice and Guidance: Recommendations

Using the longhouse model image with its concept of core values, strength and energy of the fires is a way to help others understand how to help in a Squamish way, and why we just go out and help a family even if it does not fall in the government mandates. It guides how we conduct ourselves even in practice. Too often in modern society people are separated from each other and cut off from the great mass of humanity that comes from being community. We must guard against the tendency of westernized worldview or individuality and focus on inclusive ways of helping others and upholding one another in positive ways. This is the “just do it” value and relational based practice approach that reflects the holistic ecological approach of a family-based system that is real for Squamish people. We help each other because it is the right thing to do. Our mandate as Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh is our people. All Sk̓w̓x̓wú7mesh people with an ounce of Squamish blood, registered or not, on or off reserve, All Our Relations, where ever our people are and in need of support and connection should feel belonging, to have a voice and learn the beautiful teachings, stories and songs. This is in contrast to European view that is more nuclear rather than communal, we have always learned through our family systems and community; that is the importance of asking helpers to review the following recommendations from the study.

Recommendations informed by the framework of the *tl'áktaxan* longhouse model

Let us gather around the fires of the longhouse to honour our ancestral wisdom, protocols, laws of the land, culture, language, teachings and core values. These teachings will bring balance to the relational social work and helping practice that is informed by the *chi'áxw* (laws) of Squamish people and guided by the *snewíyelh* (advice) of the ancestors. Treating each other with courtesy, dignity, and respect, *wa chexw wanáxstway*, is the pathway to helping one another. By following the recommendations and lessons of the longhouse model we can build and sustain

healthy relationships of respect, compassion, and authentic interest inquiry into another's experience.

- ***Nexw'niw'* (advice) and humility. Seek guidance and advice from the knowledge keepers and elders.** The Elders have informed and play an advisory role rather than a coercive role or decision-making role. Their advice brings a spiritual dimension to the consideration of family problems. Their advice and recommendations ought to be heard and considered with the utmost seriousness, as they speak with the accumulated wisdom of the community in the past and present.
- **Connection and generosity: Gather around the fires, be present and participate in community with an open heart and open mind.** This will help you to better understand traditional social structures, protocols and see the strengths of the families and community. When we are present, in community, in service, authentic, it is a natural way to build genuine relationship and trust among people.
- **Family and culture: Importance of Indigenous history.** Take the time to learn and understand the history, timelines and stories of Squamish people. Bring truth to Indigenous history, understand the important place names and villages of Squamish Nation and listen to the legends and songs. This connects past and future generations much like in the longhouse where landscapes and identity are inseparable. The strong corner posts and panels depict ancestors, family history and holds the stories of powerful teachings and language that is integral to Coast Salish Squamish culture.
- **Patience and kindness as you listen and learn.** *Chiy'áxw* and *Snewiyelh*, take the time to experience and understand the Squamish values, protocols, upbringing, practices and worldview and why it is important to Squamish people. Experiential learning is essential

to the traditional teaching and learning process that entails the making of meaning from direct experience; reflection and doing. It has been recommended by the knowledge keepers of this study to develop a weeklong experiential immersion program for new helpers as an introduction to *Skwxwú7mesh* community.

- **Respect:** Equal footing. *Sme'álhs*, honour someone, respect that no one is better than anyone else. Ask permission; how can I walk beside you in this journey and support you, teach me how I can better support and learn from you. When we are on equal footing with people and nature, we are morally obligated to treat each other with respect, kindness and cannot help but get energized by spirit.
- **Relationship and trust.** *Chén'chenstway*, support one another and take the time to build strong relationships, trust and understanding. The quality of relationship is measured by effort invested; integrity and respect are fundamental. Be trustworthy, transparent, invested, involved and patient. It is about the tea and bannock; taking time to sit down and have dialogue.

The core values and relationship as depicted in the longhouse model image become the important piece of advice for social work practice and new helpers to the community. It is all about the relationship and connections, this cannot be overstated. Taking the time to build relationship is one of the most important teachings and function of who we are as *Skwxwú7mesh*. When building strong relationships based on mutual respect and trust, we learn to walk together, we become in harmony and connection with each other a natural world connection to all things. When we are on equal footing with nature, we become energized by spirit and morally obligated to treat all with respect. A function of who we are to come together on equal footing with no hierarchy comes from a genuine place of walking on the same earth side by side.

We have seen through the years there has consistently been one culture dominating another and that has become practice. We began to take back our cultural ways and traditions and living in two worlds moving from mainstream to tradition to totality. As we walk through these worlds, we see we do not have to lose our cultural identity, our beliefs or our values. What we become can be seen as a whole, we have achieved an ability to cope constructively with another society. We can blend and not destroy one or the other, we learn to apply the tools to a modern day of life living in harmony that creates balance. Even mainstream dominant culture needs to work with us to learn how to work and live in both worlds. Learn humility to come to us and ask can you teach us your Squamish laws and ways of life that have worked for you all along. Help us to understand how you guide, protect and provide for your people. There is so much beauty of experiential and being on the land, the power of the water, and the strength of the cedars that is so important to any human. That is how we can be and learn together. We are all human, emotional, holding hands and moving through life. We can all learn and heal in different ways, stories, and experiences out on the lands. It is all good to do it together, open up, live, heal and be. Together we can celebrate in song that has power and strength with the vibration of the drums. The heartbeat of the drums that goes out like a ripple sending a message to all. A message to keep the focus, help guide protect and provide for us all, promises of respect, love, caring, sharing, nurturing and kindness. That is the *Sk̓wxwú7mesh snew̓íyelh*. When you learn how to say and live those values in the language you learn to know and understand them.

Timá ta kwétsi that's all I have to say

Chen kw'enmántumiyap, thanking you for your kind attention

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Appendix 1

Honouring Our Ancestral Wisdom: A Squamish way of life Informed Consent Form

Researcher:

Research Supervisor:

Chen kw'enmántumi for indicating your willingness to consider participating in my MSW thesis entitled Honouring Our Ancestral Wisdom: A Squamish Way of Life.

This consent form, a copy of which will be given to you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand the accompanying information.

The purpose of this study is to learn about aspects of Squamish understandings of helping as lived by Squamish people, what it means to be Squamish and Squamish ways of knowing, and to consider how these aspects may relate to social work and a Squamish model of child and family services that upholds our teachings and understanding of how to be good relatives and helpers. I am intending to interview Elders and knowledge keepers like yourself, who appear to me as holding knowledge about how to help people from a Squamish perspective.

- By agreeing to be interviewed, we will be involved in an informal discussion that will last approximately 90 minutes.
- I will have a list of questions that we will use as a guide for this discussion, but feel free to use a storytelling format.
- I will make notes on the discussion after the interview. If you agree, I will also record our conversation.
- If you like, I will make a copy of the zoom recording for you to keep. In addition, I will have the recording typed out word for word and offer you a copy of this typed out transcript of the interview once it has been completed.
- After offering you a copy of the typed out interview, I will contact you to see if you want to change, delete, or expand on anything you had shared.
- I will then proceed to include parts of what you have shared in a thesis paper I will be writing.
- Once the paper has been written, I will contact you to offer you a summary of how I have incorporated what you will have told me. You will once again have the opportunity to change anything you have said, direct me to use the information differently, or to remove anything I have used.
- Finally, if you would like, I will provide you with a copy of the final thesis paper and/or summary of the paper once it is completed.

Confidentiality & Risk:

- Unless you direct me otherwise, all information you share with me will be held confidentially, meaning that I will not identify who shared the information with me.

- Any recording of your interview (including my notes, any audio or zoom video recording you may agree to and any transcripts of these recordings) be kept in a locked file cabinet and not made available unless you provide direction or consent to the sharing of these recordings with others.
- I will keep any video or audio recordings stored in a password protected laptop for one year after the thesis paper has been completed and accepted by the University of Victoria. At that time, unless you provide with alternate directions, I will destroy/delete the recordings.
- I do not foresee any consequences for you if you decide to share information openly, other than people may want to contact you to request further discussions and/or the use of the information in other studies.
- I do not perceive any risk for your participation in this process as I am only intending to address experiences that are part of your interactions when helping others.
- For participating, I will present you with a small gift for your time and contribution

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the study and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

You can contact me or my supervisor at the following numbers:

This research has been approved by the University of Victoria’s Human Research Ethics Board. 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

If you consent to participate and wish that all information you share to remain confidential, meaning that your identity is not shared, please sign on the following line.

Participant’s signature _____ Date _____

Researcher _____ Date _____

If you consent to participate and are willing to have yourself identified with the information you share, please sign on the following line.

Participant’s Signature _____ Date _____

If you prefer to indicate your consent verbally, I will sign on this line to indicate that I have witnessed your understanding of, and agreement to participate in this study.

Signature _____

Participant requests to review a copy of their transcript

Participant requests a copy of any audio or video recordings

Appendix 2

Dear Knowledge Keeper,

I am conducting interviews as part of a research study for my Masters of Social Work at the University of Victoria.

The purpose of this study is to learn about aspects of Squamish understandings of helping as lived by Squamish people, what it means to be Squamish, ways of knowing, and to consider how these aspects may relate to social work and a Squamish model of child and family services. I am intending to interview knowledge keepers, like yourself, who appear to me and the Squamish community as holding knowledge about how to help people from a Squamish perspective.

The 90 minute interview can be conducted via scheduled zoom call, to maintain covid-19 protocols of social distancing in person interviews will not be conducted. Online interviews will be conducted using protected Squamish Nation or UVIC licensed version of Zoom account set up with provisions of confidentiality and privacy to access by firewalls, security so we can see each other, have a dialogue and with permission record the interview. This will require use of lap top/cell phone or personal computer with the Zoom application that can be provided to Elders as needed for interview process.

You can protect your identity and increase protections of your personal information if you choose not to use your actual name in Zoom. You can do this by:

1. using only a nickname or substitute name
2. they can turn off their camera if they choose to
3. they can mute their microphone if needed
4. this will be offered in the script and verbal instructions in informed consent. All ways to protect personal information on Zoom

I have provided some questions below to give you an idea of what we are trying to capture, but for ease of conversation, please feel free to maintain a storytelling exchange. Keeping with protocols of sharing, there will be a small thank you for your time. Your participation and knowledge sharing will be a valuable addition to my research and findings could lead to greater public understanding of how to be a good relative and helper in our community and to the people in the field of Indigenous social work.

If you are willing to participate please suggest a day and time that suits you and I will do my best to be available. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Some suggested questions:

- What does it mean to you to be Squamish?
- What are some of the stories that remind us about how Squamish come to know their history, traditions, identity? How do we come to know?
- What are important teaching or stories to health and healing?
- Are there stories of the land that you would like to share? What is the connection to worldview, teachings and values? Are their teachings or values you would like to share?

- How can we best honour our Squamish knowledge?
- Image of the longhouse – how would you describe the importance of the longhouse to Squamish people?
- How do you and/or Squamish people relate to the longhouse teachings to ways to interact with one another?
- What are Squamish ways of knowing, being, helping and healing?
- How can we learn and understand these practices to be good relatives and helpers? Ways of helping?
- How would you like to inform the Squamish model of social work practices and those who are helping in our community?

Chen kw'enmántumi
Huy chexw a