

On-the-land with Project Jewel: A Community-based Research Project in the Inuvialuit
Settlement Region

by
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THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts in Human Kinetics

School of Human Kinetics
University of Ottawa
June 21st, 2019

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Abstract

In the Northwest Territories, there is a growing demand for knowledge about the effectiveness of land-based programs (GNWT Social Services Research Agenda, 2017). Project Jewel is a community-driven, land-based healing program in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) that is run by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC). My thesis, which is written in the two-publishable paper format, presents community-based research with Inuvialuit in the ISR. In paper one, we used postcolonial theory, a decolonization framework, and critical Inuit studies to approach an examination of how an evaluation of Project Jewel could promote cultural safety. The findings enabled us to create an evaluation framework that included centring the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures, and promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare as elements identified by Project Jewel participants and staff that would enhance the likelihood of the evaluation being culturally safe. In paper two, we used the same methodology and theoretical approach to examine the elements of success and benefits of participation in Project Jewel. The findings identified that the elements of success for Project Jewel included Inuvialuit cultural practices, local programming, distraction and judgement free environment, confidentiality, and comfort and support. The benefits of participating in Project Jewel included (re)connection to land, culture, identity and heritage, strengthened systems of social support, and enhanced skills and self-esteem. Together, the two papers contribute to the further development of land-based programs for Inuvialuit in a way that is determined and led by Inuvialuit and their values. They demonstrate that land-based programs like Project Jewel can contribute to processes of decolonization and healing among Inuit that hold implications for improving/supporting positive health and wellbeing.

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to my parents, Paula and Michael Ollier, for showing me how to work with and for other people. I am inspired by the selfless dedication that you have towards our family, your faith, your friends, coworkers, and the communities that you serve; I seek to follow your example.

Acknowledgements

There are many people without whom I could not have completed my thesis. It is so difficult to summarize my appreciation to everyone who has supported me throughout this process and, frankly, words cannot capture my gratitude. I would like to express my heartfelt acknowledgement to the following people/organizations for all of their support:

- To my supervisor, Dr. Audrey Giles. I don't know where to begin – you are such a role model to me. I cannot thank you enough for the phenomenal guidance, commitment, and care that you have given to me throughout these past two years. Thank you for teaching me to question further and think deeper; thank you for holding me to a standard of excellence that pushed me to grow and develop both as a student and a person. I am so grateful that you believed I was capable of undertaking this thesis; thank you for supporting me throughout each and every step of the process. Audrey, you are the best kind of teacher because you changed the way I think about and interact with the world. I am so inspired by your passion, your work ethic, and your ability to pour love and care into everything that you do. While I am sad that your role as my Master's thesis supervisor has come to an end, I am thankful to have gained your mentorship for life.
- I would like to extend a huge thank you to Team Giles; I am so grateful to be a part of this team! You are all such talented, kind, and gifted individuals. Thank you for taking the time to read my work and provide feedback time and time again.
- Meghan and Jimmy, thank you for sharing your passion of community-driven service with me. Working with you over these past two years has been nothing short of inspiring. Jimmy, thank you for going out of your way to teach me practical skills on the land, it enabled me to gain a confidence in myself that I didn't think I had.
- I am so grateful for the members of the community advisory board, Nellie, Esther, Ruthie, and Peggy. Thank you for welcoming me as a collaborator for this research project. Thank you so much for the friendship and care that you have given to me, especially during my time living in Inuvik.
- Sarah Rogers, thank you for sharing with me your wisdom as an Elder; I cannot put into words what you have taught me.
- To the participants and staff of Project Jewel, thank you for sharing with me your knowledge of the land and the Inuvialuit way of life. Thank you to each participant that trusted me with their stories and photos; I am grateful for your patience and understanding as I navigated my own experience of this research.
- Thank you to the community of Inuvik, for welcoming me into your town as an outsider from the South. Thank you for including me in community events and activities that made me feel safe, connected, and valued during my stay.

- I am very grateful to my committee members, Dr. Patricia Palulis and Dr. Willow Scobie; thank you for taking the time to read, consider, and provide feedback on this thesis research.
- I am also very thankful to the organizations that contributed funding that made it possible for me to complete this research: the Aurora Research Institute, the Northern Studies Training Program, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Completing this thesis has been a long road that sometimes felt unending; I was challenged in ways that extended beyond academics, and I would not be here without the support of my friends and family. I am so grateful to you for encouraging me to grow outside my comfort zone. Thank you for providing your unconditional love, listening to me, and filling my life with laughter and joy that transcended even the biggest challenges (and distances of land!) during the process of completing my Master's degree.

- Mum, Dad, Christine, Sarah, and David, I don't know where I would be without you! Thank you for being my rocks, and grounding me with your love and support. I share this accomplishment with you, like every milestone in my life.
- To my teammates, especially Sydney, Hannah, Sophia, Marie-Eve, and Devyani, thank you so much for being the best partners on the track, and even better friends. I am incredibly fortunate to be in your company; thank you for sharing my passion of running, and reminding me daily that I can overcome hurdles both on and off the track.
- Thank you to my coach, Normand Seguin; your mentorship taught me how to translate the persistence and dedication that I apply to my training to other aspects of my life. It has been an invaluable gift.
- Finally, to Brad, I am so incredibly lucky to have you by my side. Thank you for being my best friend and source of unconditional support during these past two years. You spent countless hours listening to me ponder and ruminate on this thesis; when I had doubts, you were there to remind me of the bigger picture. Your presence in my life has brought continual joy and happiness. I love you

Chapter One: Introduction

The land has been identified as an essential part of cultural identity for Inuit, and it is an ideal setting to transmit cultural knowledge, practices, and skills (Redvers, 2016). “Land-based” or “on-the-land” programs refer to programs that provide services outside of existing community structures (i.e., community centres, hospitals). The Inuvialuit are the Inuit of the Western Arctic; like other Indigenous populations, they are heavily burdened with health disparities that are closely linked to the effects of colonization and residential schools (Raphael, Bryant, & Rioux, 2006). Land-based programs are growing in popularity as alternatives to conventional health promotion and treatment programs. In fact, the Government of the NWT’s Department of Health and Social Services Research Agenda (2016-17) identified “research that provides evidence about the effectiveness of land based healing approaches” as a research priority (p. 2).

For my thesis research, I undertook a community-based research (CBR) project as part of a larger research project funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). Specifically, this thesis research was completed in partnership with the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation’s (IRC) land-based program, Project Jewel. Three years ago, Meghan Etter (Manager, IRC Counselling Services, non-Indigenous) and Jimmy Ruttan (IRC On-the-land Services, non-Indigenous), staff of Project Jewel, approached Dr. Audrey Giles (non-Indigenous) of the University of Ottawa, and together they formed a larger research team that received a CIHR Catalyst Grant. The team included Evelyn Storr (IRC Director, Community Development, Elder, Inuvialuit), Francine Darroch (Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia, non-Indigenous), Donald Prince (Addictions counsellor who became the Executive Director of the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation, Dene), Tricia McGuire-Adams (Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa who became a professor at the University Alberta, Anishinaabe), Andre Corriveau (Chief Officer of Public Health for the NWT, non-Indigenous), and Sarah Rogers

(Elder, Inuvialuit). I was then recruited to the research team to conduct my Master's research on the project. All of these individuals comprise the "research advisory team." To engage in CBR, we formed a "community advisory board" to guide and be involved in every aspect of the research process. This board included Sarah Rogers, an Inuvialuit Elder who was also a member of the research team, Nellie Elanik and Esther Ipana, two Inuvialuit Project Jewel participants, Peggy Day, an Inuvialuit IRC counsellor for Project Jewel, and Ruth Goose, an Inuvialuit and Gwich'in IRC cultural support worker. The grant provided us with funding to explore a variety of research questions, two of which are described in this thesis dissertation. In this introduction, I use the term "I" to describe elements that I have contributed independently (for example, the literature review), but "we" to describe the research, which was conducted in collaboration with the research advisory team and the community advisory board.

We sought to explore two research questions: 1) How can we better evaluate Project Jewel? and 2) if/how do on-the-land programming promote culturally safe experiences that meet the self-identified needs of the residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR)? Specifically, the research presented in this thesis drew upon the experiences of participants in Project Jewel. Project Jewel offers three to ten day on-the-land wellness programs six times a year to residents of the Beaufort Delta Region. Run by three full-time employees and supported by Elders and local knowledge holders and users, each session targets a specific group of residents of the region who struggle with a particular issue (e.g., addiction, trauma, poverty). After completing the program, all participants are eligible for aftercare. Through on-the-land programming, Project Jewel aims to provide participants with culturally safe tools that they can use to address and overcome trauma and individual struggles, change behaviours/patterns, and build resilience.

Despite a significant and growing demand for land-based wellness programming for Indigenous peoples, existing literature offers a poor understanding of the relationship between the land and Inuit health (Redvers, 2016). There is a paucity of literature on evaluating land-based programs from Inuvialuit perspectives - and even more broadly, from Inuit perspectives. Furthermore, no previous studies have examined the elements of success and benefits of land-based programming for Inuit communities in Inuit Nunangat, the collective regions of land that are home to Inuit in Canada. As such, there is a pressing need to understand if/how/why on-the-land programming renders health benefits for Inuit using a framework that is rooted in Inuit values and worldviews. Land-based programs may offer an alternative healing option for clients who do not feel comfortable or are not being served by conventional community-based or residential treatment programs. This research, which is presented in the format of two publishable papers, contributes knowledge from Inuvialuit in the ISR that may be used to re-imagine the ways in which health and wellness programs and research can reflect Inuvialuit ways of knowing and enhance the possibility of being culturally safe.

Literature Review

The research in this thesis relates to several areas of literature including the history of the ISR, Indigenous and Inuit health, and Inuit understandings of wellness and how they have been affected by colonialism. I will examine the rationale for land-based health programming and the current state of knowledge (or lack thereof) of such programs in Inuit Nunangat, and relate land-based programs to cultural safety. Next, I will address literature on program evaluation and highlight Indigenous approaches to evaluation. The review will conclude with a description of the Inuit Tapariit Kanatami (ITK), the organization that Inuit represents Inuit living in what is

now known as Canada, and its recently published *National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR)* (2018) report.

History of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region

The ISR covers the northern region of the Northwest Territories (NWT); it is bordered by Yukon Territory to the West, Nunavut to the East, the Sahtu Region to the South, and the Beaufort Sea to the North. This region is home to the Inuvialuit people, who like other Inuit, are descendants of the Thule, who migrated from Greenland into the Arctic Regions of Canada hundreds of years ago (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation [IRC], 2017). Before significant contact with Europeans, Inuvialuit life was rich in traditional hunting, fishing, food-gathering, and cultural activities (Alunik, Kolausok, & Morrison, 2003). Following European contact, the introduction of alcohol and diseases had severe impacts on Inuvialuit health, and unequal power dynamics between Inuvialuit and Euro-Canadian settlers developed in a way that has and continues to devalue Inuvialuit practices and ways of life (Alunik et al., 2003; Bonesteel, 2006). For example, during the mid-twentieth century, the Canadian government initiated the aggressive assimilation of Indigenous children through residential schools (Alunik et al., 2003; Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2013), which eroded Inuvialuit language, traditional knowledge, culture, and spiritual beliefs (Alunik et al., 2003; Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2013).

In June 1984, Inuvialuit signed a land claim agreement with the Government of Canada: the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA). In summary, through signing the IFA, Inuvialuit relinquished their exclusive use of ancestral lands in exchange for land, wildlife management, and economic rights from the Government of Canada (IRC, 2017). Today, the ISR is home to six major communities: Inuvik (pop. ~3400), Aklavik (pop. ~630), Tuktoyaktuk (pop. ~1000), Paulatuk (pop. ~300), Sachs Harbour (pop. ~125), and Uluhaktok (pop. ~500) (IRC, 2017).

Inuvialuit, like other Indigenous peoples, have been adversely affected by land rights issues and the residential school system (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2013). This has led to disproportionate burdens of adverse mental and physical health that can be attributed to the systematic experience of discrimination and prejudice (Raphael, Bryant, & Rioux, 2006). To effectively address the resulting health disparities, it is important to understand the key determinants of Indigenous health.

Indigenous Health

To understand the unique determinants of Indigenous well-being, it is important to first consider Indigenous worldviews (Morgan, Slade & Morgan, 1997; Smylie, William, & Cooper, 2007). Indigenous peoples value a holistic approach to health, where a healthy state is based upon the balance between the realms of mind, body, emotions, and spirit (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2005). In particular, the sense of community belonging, connection to cultural sites, and access to traditional diets are main contributors to the social, cultural, and land use determinants of Indigenous well-being (Kant, Vertinsky, Zheng, & Smith, 2013). Sadly, Indigenous health values and cultural identities have been undermined by the legacy of colonization (Kant et al., 2013). To address Indigenous health disparities, it is important to understand the role played by colonization.

The Effects of Colonization on Indigenous Health

Indigenous people are continually portrayed in epidemiological studies as unhealthy and dependent, which has led to detrimental stereotypes and biases about Indigenous peoples in the healthcare field (Elliot & de Leeuw, 2009). Stereotypes are reproduced vis a vis a lack of attention to the effects of colonization on Indigenous health; many studies report disproportionate health disparities faced by Indigenous populations, but lack adequate context of

the impacts of colonization in their conclusions (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009). Indigenous health can be linked to colonization and colonialism by examining the impacts of geographic and economic marginalization, and forced assimilation through the residential school system (Waldram, 1997). Residential schools played a key role in creating cycles of intergenerational trauma, and led to the adverse health outcomes often reported in epidemiological studies (Gagné, 1998). Without an understanding of how racism and colonialism contribute to systematic discrimination and prejudice against Indigenous peoples, epidemiological studies portray Indigenous peoples as “sick, needy...[and] constitutionally less able to sustain good health than non-Aboriginal people” (Baker & Giles, 2012, p. 16).

In Canada, the dominant, Western approach to healthcare is the biomedical model, which is composed of categorization, pathologization, and treatment; this model neglects Indigenous worldviews and values because it privileges Western understandings of wellbeing (Lavallée & Poole, 2009). By consequence, non-Indigenous physicians have approached Indigenous health from a colonial perspective in which a biomedical model is applied in a harmful way; historically, the primary agenda of Western health care was the assimilation and “civilization” of Indigenous peoples (Kelm, 1998). In fact, the motivation for residential schools was founded on the notion that Indigenous people were unclean, diseased, and unhealthy (Kelm, 1998). Thus, in the Western model of health, which is influenced by colonialism, understandings of Indigenous health are neglected.

Colonialism has led to the perception that being “unassimilated” precipitated bad health in Indigenous populations. This has triggered discrimination against Indigenous peoples that still persists in both health studies and in the Canadian health care system (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009). Decolonizing health services and programs requires an emphasis on Indigenous teachings

and knowledge; health practitioners should acknowledge, accept, and make available Indigenous health practices in their services (Lavellée & Poole, 2009). Maintaining an awareness of the relationship between Indigenous health and colonization is crucial when considering the health of specific Indigenous populations, such as Inuit.

Inuit Health

In a survey study, Inuit adults were found to be less likely to report excellent or very good health in comparison to non-Indigenous Canadians (Tait, 2008). To gain a better understanding of Inuit health, special consideration must be given to the lack of access to health resources and the Arctic climate and landscapes as determinants of health. Limited access to healthcare in the North proves to be a significant challenge to Inuit, due to lack of year-round road access to hospitals and physicians (ITK, 2004; Tait, 2008). For treatment requiring a physician, or a specialist appointment, Inuit must often be flown out of their communities to regional centres, such as Yellowknife or Iqaluit, or tertiary care hospitals within Edmonton, Ottawa, or Montreal (ITK, 2004). Weather conditions frequently cause delays in emergency medical evacuations, and these trips pose immense financial burdens for the patient, his/her family, and the healthcare system (Tait, 2008). In addition to the challenges to accessing healthcare, major cultural, social, and economic changes in the North have had an impact on Inuit mental health and social well-being (Bjerregaard, Young, Dewailly, & Ebbesson, 2004; Richmond, 2009).

Inuit mental health and social well-being. Epidemiological data have indicated that Inuit communities face suicide rates that are eleven times higher than the national average (ITK, 2016). To understand the elevated rate of mental health issues that Inuit face, the unique historical experiences of colonization that caused collective trauma and cultural disruption must

be contextualized. Colonization and the residential school system have caused a loss of culture among Inuit communities, and resulted in deleterious effects on Inuit structures of social support. According to Richmond (2009) social support is a key determinant of Inuit health. In the Arctic, the Inuit way of life is centred around traditional activities related to the land (Richmond, 2009). These activities primarily include the collection and harvest of country foods (i.e., seal, whale, caribou, muskrat, fish and berries). Richmond (2009) stated that while these activities are important for meeting the nutritional needs of the Inuit, they are, more importantly, vital for fostering cultural identity and creating systems of social support. As noted above, colonization and residential schools brought about significant cultural, social, and political changes to the Inuit way of life (Bjerregaard et al., 2004). By consequence, there has been a profound shift away from traditional economy towards market economy in the North (Healey & Meadows, 2003). As a result, Inuit participation in on-the-land activities has declined, and it has been associated with a lack of social support leading to poorer health outcomes for Inuit (Richmond, 2009). Recently, land-based programming has been employed in the ISR as a strategy to improve the health through emphasizing Inuvialuit values of land and culture.

Land-Based Programming

While the scope of literature is limited, land-based initiatives for Indigenous populations are intended to reinforce cultural identity and enhance resiliency (Redvers, 2016). The land is seen as a place of healing for Indigenous peoples, a place where one can renew and strengthen their physical, emotional, and spiritual bonds with the land (Adelson, 2000; Fletcher & Denham, 2008; Kirmayer, 2009). Redvers (2016) concluded that culturally relevant Indigenous land-based activities and programs enhance individual and community resilience for Indigenous peoples in the Canadian North, and they support movement towards health and wellness. This approach to

health is based upon a fundamentally different philosophical and ideological lens than other wilderness or nature-based programming (Redvers, 2016). In comparison to Western medical models of mental health treatment, land-based programming can be a better approach to residential school healing and suicide prevention efforts in Indigenous populations (Redvers, 2016).

Land-based programming is not a novel strategy; despite a lack of documented knowledge on its effectiveness, many on-the-land programs have been operating within the provinces and territories of Canada (Noah & Healey, 2010). These programs have had a number of focuses including traditional healing, education, culture camps, and outdoor recreation and leadership (Redvers, 2016). For example, the Chisasibi land-based healing program in Nunavik, which opened in 2012, promotes personal, familial, and community wellness from a perspective rooted in the Cree way of life (Radu, House, & Pashagumskum, 2014). The Kwanlin Dun First Nation in the Yukon has implemented land-based healing through a formal land-based treatment program (Noah & Healey, 2010). Despite the existence of these land-based health and wellness programs, the field of land-based healing is poorly defined and understood in the literature (Redvers, 2016). There is a lack of literature exploring on-the-land program models for well-being, and there are no published reports evaluating the benefits of land-based programming with Inuit populations (Noah & Healey, 2010; Redvers, 2016). Land-based programs present a different approach to addressing Inuit health and wellness and, importantly, may protect participants from harm through programming that promotes cultural safety.

Cultural Safety

Cultural safety is the concept that when a healthcare provider/practitioner and person receiving the care are from different cultures, the person receiving care determines if the services

are respectful and inclusive of their culture, thus determining the service/care culturally safe (Gerlach 2007). To be clear, within conceptualizations of cultural safety, differences in culture between the person receiving care and the healthcare provider are extended to include age, gender, sexual orientation, social economic status, disability, and religious or spiritual beliefs (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). Healthcare providers/practitioners can promote cultural safety by being reflexive; they can prevent harm to clients/patients by recognizing the social, historical, and economic contexts that shape the experiences of themselves and the clients/patients (Gerlach, 2007). Importantly, in an Indigenous context, cultural safety is promoted when non-Indigenous healthcare providers do not blame patients/clients, as victims of colonization, for their health disparities; when they examine their own realities and biases that they bring to their practice; and when they are open minded and flexible in their attitudes around diverse cultures. Thus, cultural safety extends beyond cultural sensitivity, which reinforces “othering” Indigenous patients/clients by focusing on the healthcare provider’s ability to recognize cultural differences (Gerlach, 2007). In contrast, service providers who promote cultural safety aim to recognize how their services can address issues of power imbalances, institutional discrimination, and colonization that may affect clients/patients (National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2008). Culturally safe services can be promoted by healthcare providers, but ultimately, whether or not they deliver culturally safe care can *only* be determined by the patient/client.

Land-based programs centre Indigenous pedagogy; the services and activities within a land-based program are rooted in an Indigenous approach to wellbeing (Redvers, 2016). However, with regard to Inuit, and specifically for the purposes of this research Inuvialuit communities, there is a dearth of literature that explores if/how land-based programs promote the provision of culturally safe services. Further, when considering how to better understand the

effects and potential benefits of land-based programs, there is a lack of knowledge surrounding how land-based programs can be evaluated in a way that promotes culturally safety.

Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation

An Indigenous approach to program evaluation promotes a culturally safe way to understand the effects and potential benefits of a land-based program in an Indigenous community. In the literature, evaluation from Indigenous approaches do not follow a rigid framework; rather, they represent dynamic opportunities for Indigenous self-determination in research because they centre Indigenous systems of value (Lafrance & Nichols, 2010; Lafrance, Nichols, & Kirkland, 2012). While the frameworks of evaluation can be diverse, the literature describes Indigenous approaches to evaluation as encompassing three common elements: (1) involving the community, (2) Indigenous ownership, and (3) engaging storytelling and oral histories (Kawakami et al., 2007; Kovach, 2010; Lafrance & Nichols, 2010; Lafrance, Nichols, & Kirkland, 2012). Importantly, Indigenous approaches to evaluation are tailored to the communities and cultural contexts in which they occur because they prioritize local cultural norms and protocols (Kawakami et al., 2007).

An example of Indigenous evaluation in practice is a project by the Kanaka Maoli in Hawai'i. In this community-based evaluation research project, Kanaka Maoli researchers sought to use their worldviews to design and develop a system of data collection that would provide meaningful evaluation of pre-school age Native Hawaiian children in order to promote success in school (Kawakami et al., 2007). The results of this project not only provided relevant information for Kanaka Maoli communities, but the authors also noted that the development of their own evaluation framework allowed their communities to better determine the needs that were important to them and that respect their own cultural protocols (Kawakami et al., 2007).

More recently, another example of an Indigenous evaluation approach is a kaupapa Māori evaluation (KME) project that sought to benefit the community served by the Ngāti Porou Haura (NPH), a Māori health organization, by evaluating the effectiveness of a novel health literacy intervention (Carlson, Moewaka Barners, & McCreanor, 2017). The principal investigator was herself Ngāti Porou, and she worked closely with NPH to become co-designers and co-researchers in the project. Together, they followed KME, an evaluation framework developed by Māori that is used to understand, measure, and assess the quality of an intervention based upon its relevance to Māori communities through engaging communities and researchers together in intimate and cyclical relationships throughout the process of evaluation (Carlson et al., 2017). While the results of this project have yet to be released, an initial reflection has been published. The authors argued that the collaborative nature of KME empowered the Ngāti Porou community to improve their health services. In addition, the principal investigator was grateful for the opportunity to learn from her Elders (Carlson et al., 2017).

While these examples provide insight into Indigenous approaches to evaluation, there is a lack of documented Inuit approaches to evaluation in the literature. Pan-Indigenous approaches to evaluation are unable to account for cultural nuances. In particular, the growing demand for land-based programs in Inuit Nunangat prompts a pressing need to be able evaluate land-based programs from an Inuit approach rather than a Western approach. With more documented knowledge about how to evaluate a land-based program from an Inuit approach, the potential benefits and effects of land-based programs on Inuit health and wellbeing can be more widely understood. To better understand how to address these gaps in knowledge, ITK has provided crucial leadership for research involving Inuit communities.

ITK and the *National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR)*

The ITK represents all Inuit in Canada (approximately 65,000), most of whom live in Inuit Nunangat (ITK, 2018). Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland, and it is formed by four regions that are home to a distinct Inuit population: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador). Specifically, ITK represents the “rights and interests of Inuit at the national level through a democratic governance structure that represents all Inuit regions” and its vision is to promote Inuit prosperity through unity and self-determination (ITK, 2018, p. i). Presidents and chairs from Inuit governments represent each region of Inuit Nunangat to form ITK’s governing board of directors. As leaders of Inuit, ITK play a powerful role in advancing the development of “policies, programs, and services to address the social, cultural, political, and environmental issues” faced by Inuit (ITK, 2018, p. i).

Historically, Inuit have been exploited by non-Indigenous researchers who have been, and continue to be, the primary beneficiaries of research involving Inuit, knowledge, land, and resources (ITK, 2018). In 2016, ITK addressed this colonial legacy by publishing its Submission to the Naylor Panel for Canada’s Fundamental Science Review; this document advocated for Inuit to be central to scientific and research communities in Canada by presenting clear recommendations for research with Inuit communities (ITK, 2016). In March 2018, ITK further addressed research with and for Inuit by publishing the *NISR*; this report called for Inuit self-determination through research by detailing various research responsibilities and priorities that promote Inuit values and enhance the capacity for Inuit-led research (ITK, 2018). The research in this thesis was heavily informed by the ITK’s strategies and recommendations for research with Inuit communities. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I endeavored to meet the responsibilities described by ITK in the *NISR* so that I could engage in this research in a way that would respect

and contribute to Inuit self-determination. Below, I outline the approach to epistemology, methodology, methods, analysis, and ethics that we used in this research.

Epistemology

We used a constructionist approach for this thesis research. A constructionist paradigm was appropriate because it is used to explore and critique the creation of meaningful reality as it is constructed through human interaction with the world (Crotty, 1998). In this approach, knowledge, or “truth,” is not discovered but rather actively created through our experiences (Crotty, 1998). As a framework, social constructionism values the cultural context in the construction of knowledge, language, and communication (Crotty, 1998); researchers using constructionism acknowledge that multiple, socially constructed realities are influenced by the intersection of social, cultural, and historical contexts (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). Importantly, this epistemology recognizes the relationality between the researcher and participant, and emphasizes its connection to the research process (Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoebar, 2005).

We felt that a constructionist epistemology was the most suitable position to use in this research because we, the research advisory team and community advisory board, did not seek a single truth, but rather sought multiple interpretations of on-the-land programs formed through the lived experiences of Project Jewel program participants, staff, and stakeholders. We sought to understand the socio-cultural contexts that shape Inuvialuit understandings of the land and land-based programs and their significance to participants’ health. In addition, we recognized that the research would be a co-construction of Inuvialuit and non-Inuvialuit approaches, and thus did not situate it specifically within an Inuvialuit epistemology. As such, a constructionist epistemology enabled us, a team comprised of Inuvialuit and non-Inuvialuit, to understand how Inuvialuit

construct meaning of the land and its implication in the construction and evaluation of a successful on-the-land health and wellness program.

Theoretical Framework

We used a postcolonial lens that was informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies to better understand how an evaluation of Project Jewel can be conducted in a manner that promotes cultural safety and if/how land-based programming can offer culturally safe experiences that meet the self-identified needs of the Inuvialuit. Members of community advisory board guided my use of theory; their involvement was instrumental in grounding this research in Inuvialuit perspectives and culture.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory can be broadly defined as a cultural critique concerned with revising history from the perspectives of the colonized, rather than the colonizers (Young, 2003). As an academic discipline, postcolonial thought seeks to better understand the voices and perspectives of the exiled, the “othered” - the marginalized populations on the periphery of dominant nations (McLaughlin & Srivastava, 2013). Postcolonial theory does not privilege the histories created by dominant colonial systems; rather, it is used to engage with colonial histories only to the extent necessary to determine contemporary structures of power and oppression (Young, 2003). Importantly, postcolonial theory allows researchers to attend to the experiences of colonized subjects. With this perspective, postcolonial theory is used to “dissect, depict, and demystify” colonialism, with particular emphasis on the ways in which Western nations exploit and govern the Indigenous inhabitants of the land which they have occupied (Gandhi, 1998). Postcolonial theory provides a strong approach to better understanding the legacies of imperialism and colonialism.

While postcolonial theory offers many strengths, its weaknesses must also be addressed. Researchers are expected to use postcolonial theory to gain a better understanding of specific populations and individuals' unique experiences with colonialism; however, there is a tendency to generalize a particular group's experiences into larger sociological and historical accounts (McLeod, 2000). In an Indigenous context, it has also been argued that postcolonial theory has homogenizing and generalizing tendencies that can reinforce colonialism by lumping Indigenous communities together instead of distinguishing their unique histories (Browne, Smye, & Varcoe, 2005). Furthermore, postcolonial studies have been critiqued for the false presentation that colonial domination over Indigenous peoples was an issue of the past; as Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) wrote, "post...have they left yet" (p. 24)? Indigenous scholars have voiced important critical perspectives of the field of postcolonial theory that require examination.

Indigenous Critiques of Postcolonial Theory

Indigenous scholars have voiced a variety of positions on postcolonial theory. From LaRocque's (1996) perspective, postcolonial theory holds value in seeking to "understand what happens to a country that has existed under the forces of colonial history over such an extended period of time" (p. 11). She has argued that postcolonial theory can offer tools to reveal the functions of power and racism, its effects on Indigenous peoples, and the significance of resistance (LaRocque, 1996). However, Narayan (2000) critiqued postcolonial theory and drew attention to the oppositional binary of "colonized" and "colonizer" that is reinforced through postcolonial discourse, and which ignores the capacity for resistance and agency among Indigenous populations. Browne et al. (2005) also argued that postcolonial theorists have a tendency to ignore the complexities and nuances of the multiple social locations held by Indigenous individuals and homogenize Indigenous histories in a way that risks reinforcing the

very systems of colonial domination that the researcher seeks to dismantle. Smith (1999) voiced a more critical perspective: “Many Indigenous intellectuals actively resist participating in any discussions within the discourses of post-coloniality. This is because post-colonialism is viewed as the convenient invention of Western intellectuals which re-inscribes their power to define the world” (p.14). Smith explained that colonialism is far from a finished practice, and that the institutions and legacy of colonialism that still remain are inadequately addressed by contemporary uses of postcolonial theory.

Decolonization Framework

In response to the critiques of postcolonial theory, Indigenous scholars have drawn attention to the need to decolonize research through informing postcolonial theory with a decolonization framework (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999). From an Indigenous perspective, Western research, “white research,” or “academic research” is a site of profound colonial influence that reinforces colonial domination of Indigenous peoples (Smith, 1999). Therefore, Indigenous research agendas are often conceptualized and situated within the decolonization politics of Indigenous peoples’ movements (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999). To create a framework of decolonization, it is necessary to understand postcolonial Indigenous thought.

Battiste (2000) emphasized that postcolonial Indigenous thought is distinct from other uses of postcolonial theory in the literature. While they may be related, postcolonial Indigenous thought “emerged from the inability of Eurocentric theory to deal with the complexities of colonialism and its assumptions” (Battiste, 2000, p. xix). Importantly, postcolonial Indigenous thought is firmly grounded in Indigenous epistemologies to provide new frameworks of decolonization to better understand both the pervasive effects of colonialism from an Indigenous perspective, and how to shape a better postcolonial future for Indigenous peoples (Battiste,

2000). There is a growing number of Indigenous scholars who are developing new methodologies, research designs, and approaches to implement healing and cultural restoration among Indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999).

The development of postcolonial Indigenous thought has resulted in a collection of works by Indigenous scholars from Canada, the United States, and New Zealand who provide new frameworks for understanding the complexities of colonization and decolonization. It is important to note the emphasis that Indigenous scholars place on postcolonial discourses as tools for challenging their non-Indigenous colleagues to re-evaluate their colonial frameworks of interpretation, their conclusions and portrayals, and the tendency to exclude or devalue the work of scholars who are Native (LaRocque, 1996). Therefore, a decolonization framework requires a distinction between postcolonial theory and postcolonial Indigenous thinking. When employed effectively, each can be used to inform the other while resisting the appropriation of Indigenous knowledge.

A decolonization framework is especially suitable in the Canadian context. This is because, while the imperial reign of the British empire may have passed, the fact that Indigenous populations in Canada have undergone horrific colonization and assimilation techniques cannot be ignored. Decolonization frameworks have been used in many fields of research in Canada, such as education, language, and knowledge translation (Browne et al., 2005). They have been used in health research with the aim to decolonize knowledge, understanding, policy, and healthcare practices (Browne et al., 2005; LaRocque, 1996) to better serve the needs of Indigenous peoples. Inuvialuit are still greatly affected by colonialism, and have experienced radical shifts in culture and traditions; therefore, we informed our use of postcolonial theory within a decolonization framework to better understand the ways in which colonialism has

shaped Inuvialuit health and wellbeing. As a non-Indigenous scholar, my research partners on the research advisory team and community advisory board that represented the IRC and Inuvialuit played crucial roles in the ways in which I used a decolonization framework.

Critical Inuit Studies

The research presented in this thesis was also informed by critical Inuit studies. Inuit culture is an oral culture (Inuit Quajimajatuqungit, 2017); therefore, critical Inuit studies place oral histories and traditions at the forefront of knowledge acquisition to convey the Inuit ideologies (Martin, 2009). Through considering rich and complex oral traditions, critical Inuit studies emphasize the importance of social and historical contexts during the research process (Martin, 2009). Researchers who draw upon critical Inuit studies must inform themselves with Inuit Quajimajatuqungit (IQ), or Inuit traditional knowledge (Martin, 2009). IQ is “a set of values and practices, the relevance and importance of these, and the ways of being and looking at things that are timeless” (Inuit Quajimajatuqungit, 2017, p. 1). IQ represents an intellectual tradition that is essential to engaging with critical Inuit studies.

Throughout this research project, as a non-Inuvialuk, I used critical Inuit studies to inform my understanding of the role of the land in land-based health and wellness camps in the ISR. I did this by reading Inuit Quajimajatuqungit (2017), meeting with Elders, and learning from the community advisory board members and research participants. By informing this research with critical Inuit studies, we endeavored to place the Inuvialuit worldview at the forefront of this research.

We assert that a theoretical approach formed by components of postcolonial theory, a decolonization framework, and critical Inuit studies, offered a robust theoretical framework that was more suitable for this research than one single component used alone. We chose to use these

three components because they complimented one another synergistically; using all three components enabled us to address the weaknesses of one component through using the other components. Postcolonial theory enabled us to situate our examination of Project Jewel and its services within the history of colonization that shapes the health and wellbeing of the residents of the ISR. However, if used alone, this approach would fail to extend our understanding of the research to address how ongoing colonial legacies can be resisted; it would also fail to engage unique Inuit knowledge, values, and traditions in the research process. Thus, a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies helped us address the weaknesses of postcolonial theory for this research; the Indigenous and Inuvialuit members of the research team provided their perspectives in a way that enabled us to inform our approach to the research with a nuanced understanding of multiple theoretical lenses.

Methodology

The research team used community-based research (CBR) in the research presented in my thesis because it offered an approach that privileged Inuvialuit perspectives. In order to address the research questions in this thesis, the IRC drew upon partnerships with southern-based researchers to receive tri-council research funding (CIHR Catalyst grant). Therefore, since the research team was formed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous members from northern and southern backgrounds, it was crucial that we used a methodology that would involve the Inuvialuit community to prioritize their research needs, goals, and perspectives. In this section, I will describe how the key methodological principles of CBR enabled our approach to the research to align with Inuvialuit research priorities and ITK's strategies for research with Inuit communities. I will detail the strengths and weaknesses of CBR, and provide examples of its use in the field of human kinetics.

CBR

Historically, Indigenous community perspectives on research agendas, priorities, and results have been silenced or marginalized (Castleden et al., 2010; Kovach, 2009). Community-based research (CBR) is a methodology that can be used to engage Indigenous community members' perspectives through emphasizing inclusive participation amongst all individuals involved in the research process (Gehlert, Kye-Price, & Bekteshi, 2012). In CBR, reciprocal partnerships are formed between academics and community members to focus efforts on open discussions of power and privilege, the identification of common goals, the co-creation of knowledge, and implementation of community improvement (Gehlert et al., 2012). Importantly, an effective CBR approach requires a community advisory board to be formed so that communities can co-govern research. Community members are actively involved in each phase of the research process to enhance the relevance and richness of the data (Frisby et al., 2005); for example, Flicker et al. (2015) identified Elder engagement in CBR with Indigenous populations is vital for promoting positive relationships and culturally safe research. Therefore, for this research, it was crucial that a community advisory board was formed that included Inuvialuit community members that were Project Jewel participants and Project Jewel staff who work with/for the IRC to advise and inform the research priorities and practices.

In the literature, CBR is also known as “community-wide research,” “community-involved research,” or “community-centered research” (Israel et al., 1998). These research approaches grew out of participatory action research, which emphasizes participant involvement in some or all phases of the research, as well as social justice action towards improving the community involved in the research (Israel et al., 1998). In the field of health research, CBR developed in response to critiques of the dominant positivistic research approach such as

randomized control trials (RCTs). RCTs have been emphasized as the “gold-standard” of knowledge creation (Israel et al., 1998); however, this approach narrowly focuses on the individual determinants of health and disease, reinforces hierarchical power dynamics, and obscures the impact of social determinants of health (Frisby et al., 2005; Krieger, 1994). While positivist research can contribute knowledge about health issues, researchers who use this epistemology often fail to effectively disseminate such knowledge (Israel et al., 1998). In studies of Indigenous populations, a positivist approach was often used by non-Indigenous researchers and seldom yielded benefits to participants or their community (Smith, 2012). Therefore, in response to critical reflections on health research, CBR was developed as a methodology where researchers strive to increase community members’ involvement and control (Israel et al., 1998).

CBR users challenge the weaknesses of positivistic health research with an alternative epistemological foundation: constructionism. Constructionism is better suited to researching complex health issues involving multiple social determinants of health. Unlike RCTs, which seek to uncover knowledge of one single reality, CBR aligns with a constructionist epistemology through creating knowledge from multiple perspectives (Frisby et al., 2005). The constructionist foundation of CBR can be informed by Indigenous values of interconnectedness. Research that is situated in Indigenous methodologies treats knowledge as relational; multiple realities are formed in the interconnected relationships between a person, community, land, and cosmos (Steinhauer, 2002; Wilson, 2008). I am non-Indigenous, and I do not intend draw upon Indigenous methodologies in a way that would colonize them. Rather, I involved a community advisory board in the research to inform my use of CBR with Indigenous methodologies and critical Inuit studies. The members of the community advisory board contributed their

perspectives and shared their values during processes of data collection, analysis, and determining results to increase the likelihood that our research met community members' needs.

According to Israel et al. (1998), the key principles of CBR are as follows: recognize community as a unit of identity; build on strengths and resources within the community; facilitate collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research; integrate knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners; promote a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities; address health from a positive and ecological perspective; disseminate findings and knowledge gained equally to all partners. CBR is especially effective when members of marginalized communities are meaningfully involved in the research process to meet their self-identified needs (Frisby et al., 2005). When partnering with Indigenous community members, CBR users should inform their research practices with Indigenous methodologies, and strive for respectful, reciprocal, and responsible partnerships between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities (Ninomiya & Pollock, 2017). Through a commitment to the reciprocal translation of knowledge and skills, CBR will strengthen the relations between researchers and Indigenous communities and help to bring benefits to the participants. Therefore, the key elements of CBR made it a strong choice of methodology to employ with marginalized communities. Further, CBR best practices align with many key principals of research with Inuit communities that were outlined in ITK's (2018) *NISR*, such as advancing Inuit governance in research, enhancing the ethical conduct of research, and ensuring Inuit access, ownership, and control over data (ITK, 2018).

Strengths

When choosing a research methodology, it is important to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Ethically, CBR allows research to be more accessible to community participants by

demystifying the research process (Frisby et al., 2005). Its users are better equipped to address complex issues through joining together partners of diverse skills, knowledge, and sensitivities (Israel et al., 1998). CBR enhances the relevance and usefulness of the research data for all research partners, and it improves the quality and richness of the research through engaging local expertise (Israel et al., 1998). As summarized by Hatch et al. (1993), the opportunities present in CBR promote a greater balance among the social, political, economic, and cultural priorities within research, which helps to meet the demands of both research inquiry and members of marginalized communities.

Challenges and Weaknesses

While CBR possesses numerous strengths, its challenges and weaknesses must also be considered. It has been challenging for researchers to achieve effective co-governance with community partners in a CBR approach to research. Communities may be involved in the research, but rarely are they meaningfully engaged in every process from project design to publication (Freeman, Brugge, Bennet-Bradley, Levy, & Carrasco, 2006). It is also challenging to align the objectives of the research with the outcome expectations of all people collaborating on the project; collaborators may have differing objectives in regard to community benefits, policy development, academic publications, or completing a thesis or dissertation (Freeman et al., 2006). Balancing various research objectives and outcomes can place a strain maintaining the project timeline (Freeman et al., 2006). CBR, by nature, is an approach that can be applied to interdisciplinary research and encompass a variety of research methods (Jagosh, 2012). This causes the evaluation of CBR to be a challenge. Jagosh (2012) has suggested that, as a result, it can be difficult to attribute outcomes to either the participatory process or other features of CBR.

Challenges in distinguishing between the benefits of the research program itself and the benefits of co-governance in the research process can be a weakness to the methodology (Jagosh, 2012).

Despite its weaknesses, CBR methodology has been effectively utilized in research with Indigenous peoples in the field of health studies and human kinetics. To understand the relationship between Iqaluktutiamiut (Inuit of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut) health and muskoxen, Tomaselli, Gerlach, Kutz, Checkley, and the Iqaluktutiaq community (2017) used CBR with semi-structured interviews. Their use of CBR exemplified effective and meaningful community engagement through working with Iqaluktutiaq community members as equal partners in the research process. Perry and Hoffman (2010) used CBR to address the prevalence of obesity among Native American youth in the United States in response to concerns raised by youth about exercise and health. Through building partnerships with Native American youth, the researchers gained a better understanding of sport and exercise among Native American youth, and they implemented their results through program development. These examples demonstrate how CBR can be used to better understand health and culture, and implemented to co-create positive change with Indigenous communities. In the following chapters, the research team used CBR to collaborate with the community advisory board to develop an evaluation framework for Project Jewel that promotes cultural safety. Then, we used CBR to understand the effectiveness of land-based programs for Inuvialuit community members and to help to yield meaningful outcomes for communities in the ISR.

Methods

Sampling

The community advisory board and research advisory team determined that the use of purposeful sampling will be the most effective way to identify participants. Higginbottom (2004)

defined purposeful sampling as the process of identifying the community or culture under investigation, which forms the sampling frame. In the two studies presented in this thesis, Inuvialuit living in the ISR represented the community of interest, and the Project Jewel participants formed the sampling frame. Purposeful sampling was effective for this research because it was used to select information-rich participants so that their perspectives could yield insightful and in-depth understandings relevant to our research questions (Patton, 2005).

As suggested by Charmaz (2006), the aims of a research study drive the project design, and thus the sampling size. Lee, Woo, and Mackenzie (2002) stated that studies employing multiple, in-depth methods require fewer participants to reach saturation. With regard to the use of purposeful sampling techniques, there is little consensus in the literature on minimum sample size. For example, Berteaux (1981) suggested a minimum sample size of 15 participants, while Yin (2011) recommended a minimum of 25 interview units within a single case. Based on Berteaux's and Yin's findings, I found that interviews with 13 Project Jewel participants (10 women, three men), three Project Jewel participants who had disengaged from the program (three women), and 14 stakeholders (10 women, four men), for a total of 30 participants, enabled us to reach data saturation, and thus provided a sufficient sample size. The community advisory board and research advisory team identified three research methods to address the research questions in this thesis: sharing circles, semi-structured interviews, and photovoice.

Sharing Circles

We used sharing circles to prompt group sharing among Project Jewel participants. Indigenous scholars have emphasized the importance of using sharing circles in Indigenous research (Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Sharing circles are used to gain insight into people's experiences (Lavallée, 2009). They are comparable to focus groups, where group interactions

like asking other participants questions, exchanging anecdotes, or commenting on personal experiences have been found to generate rich data (Berg, 1995; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Parker & Tritter, 2006), but they are rooted in Indigenous culture. According to Lavallée (2009), sharing circles can decolonize the academy by incorporating Indigenous knowledge into the Western paradigm of qualitative research. When using this method, all participants, including the researchers, are viewed as equal.

Sarah Rogers, the Inuvialuit Elder on the research team who also attends Project Jewel camps as a support to participants, facilitated two sharing circles with Ollier and Giles; the first sharing circle was held at the Paulatuk camp and the second was held at the Reindeer Station camp. Sharing circles involve participants sitting in a circle to engage in respectful discussion regarding a topic; each person has the opportunity to talk about the subject while the other participants listen respectfully (Wilson, 2008). Information, spirituality, and emotionality are shared to promote healing and learning (Lavallée, 2009). Nabigon et al. (1999) identified the key elements of sharing circles as including the following: recognition that the spirits of ancestors and the Creator are present in the circle; the energy of the circle is created by those involved; the circle is non-judgemental, inclusive, and supportive; respecting and listening to others is integral to the process of sharing. Sharing circles have also often been used in ceremony or as a way of healing (Stevenson, 1999). This method was deemed suitable for the research by the community advisory board because it presented a method of inquiry that may have been familiar to and comfortable for Project Jewel participants. Through engaging in sharing circles, the underlying issues, norms, beliefs, and values about land-based programs that are common to the participants may have been voiced (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001).

Ollier and Giles facilitated two sharing circles with the help of Rogers, Inuvialuit Elder, who was a member of the research team. The first sharing circle with three Project Jewel participants, two women and one man, during a fish camp in Paulatuk (n=3). The second sharing circle was with nine Project Jewel participants and an IRC research assistant, eight women and two men, at a weekend camp at Reindeer Station (n=10). Sharing circles were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are used in qualitative research to gain detailed information about the experiences and perspectives of the interviewee. It is a method of data collection in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of the respondent in a verbal manner (Polit & Beck, 2006). The key features of semi-structured interviews are that they are scheduled in advance at a designated time; they occur outside everyday activities; they are organized around a set of structured questions; and they include other questions that emerge from open dialogue (Whiting, 2008). Through using open-ended, probing questions asked by the interviewer, the interviewee has the space to share rich information and create a better understanding of the issue being researched (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). We conducted 30 semi-structured interviews in total (13 with current participants, three with disengaged past participants, and 14 with program stakeholders) to understand the current participants' and past participants' expert, experiential knowledge (Harrell & Bradley, 2003).

Traditional healthcare interviews consist of pre-determined structured questions aimed to elicit answers to specific questions; however, rigidly controlling the interview process is detrimental to both the participant and the data. By treating the participants as instruments to produce data, the traditional healthcare interview process lacks respect for participants' lived

experience (Oakley, 1981). Semi-structured interviews address this issue by using pre-structured questions to maintain the research focus, while enabling space for organic conversation and open dialogue to take place. This allows the researcher to respect the knowledge and expertise that the interviewee feels are important to share (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, & Dillon 2003). As stated by Krueger and Casey (2000), semi-structured interviews are about listening and paying attention. Their success depends on the researcher's openness to hearing what participants have to say, and the creation of a non-judgemental environment for people to share (Krueger & Casey, 2000). If executed effectively, semi-structured interviews are useful for seeking very detailed and complete descriptions and responses to complex issues (Whiting, 2008). Compared with other methods, semi-structured interviews obtain a wider range of data through gathering opinions, perceptions, attitudes, background information, facts, knowledge, and personal expertise (Longhurst, 2003). For the context of this research, we felt that semi-structured interviews would be an appropriate method for participants to describe complex ideas about their experiences with Project Jewel; for example, it would enable participants to discuss relationships between land, culture, and wellbeing.

Photovoice

Photovoice is an innovative method that can be used with CBR. It was developed for health research with the purpose of allowing marginalized populations to be empowered to share their knowledge and implement change (Palibroda et al., 2009). Photovoice is a technique that blends both images and words to express a person's knowledge and understanding to represent and enhance their community (Wang & Burris, 1997). Those who employ photovoice seek to achieve three main goals: enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and

small group discussion, and reach an audience of policy makers (Wang & Burris, 1997). As such, photovoice has become an important research method that starkly contrasts the top-down power dynamics of traditional research practices.

Limitations to photovoice include that participants who are not skilled in photography may have difficulty representing complex or abstract thoughts and ideas through photos (Palibroda et al., 2009). Another weakness is practicality; cameras must be available to participants, charged or battery-powered correctly, and accessible for important moments that the participant may wish to capture (Palibroda et al., 2009). Despite these weaknesses, uses of photovoice have been shown it to be an empowering and engaging method with many different populations who experience marginalization, including people who experience homelessness (Radley, Hodgetts, & Cullen, 2005), senior citizens (LeClerc et al., 2002), people living with HIV/AIDS (Hergenrather, Rhodes, & Clark, 2006), mothers with learning disabilities (Booth & Booth, 2003), and immigrant women (Bender et al., 2001).

Photovoice's key strength is that it uses images and words to enable participants to take control of the method (Wang & Burris, 1997). Participants, not researchers, determine what images and words are important to the data collection. Researchers that use photovoice value the knowledge put forth by participants as a vital source of expertise, and it can emphasize issues that community members consider to be important (Wang & Burris, 1997). For participants, photovoice can allow them to promote self-advocacy (Wang & Burris, 1997) and improve self-esteem through skill building (Wang et al., 1998). Further, photovoice has been documented as a culturally sensitive method for research with Indigenous peoples. Research involving Indigenous communities has often reinforced social structures of power, oppression, and colonialism (Louis, 2007). Photovoice can be sensitive to and respectful of Indigenous two-way sharing of

knowledge (Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu et al., 2008; Ens et al., 2010), and enabling of Indigenous people to direct the research agenda in a culturally appropriate way (Maclean & Cullen, 2009; Woodward, 2010). In the context of Indigenous communities and research, photovoice replaces notions of research “on” community members with research “with” community members.

We conducted photovoice with 13 current Project Jewel participants during four programs: a five-day fish camp held outside of Paulatuk, a three-day camp at Reindeer Station, and two day-long berry picking camps held on Inuvialuit land outside of Inuvik. Once consent was received, we provided each participant with a digital camera (supplied by Project Jewel) that s/he used throughout the duration of the program. We instructed photovoice participants to use their cameras capture moments and/or ideas that represented important and meaningful thoughts, feelings, and/or ideas about the program. At the end of the program, the participants discussed three to five of their most meaningful images with Ollier and/or Giles during a one-on-one interview to provide captions for each photo; these interviews were followed by a semi-structured interview, and both were audio-recorded and transcribed. We sent the interview transcripts to participants to review and make any changes. We then created Photovoice photobooks from participants’ images and captions and provided copies to the participants, Project Jewel, and the IRC.

Analysis

Thematic analysis offers a robust, reflective, systematic, and flexible approach to analyzing applied research data that is well-suited to this research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a way of organizing data in rich detail to identify meaningful patterns of meaning; these patterns are rigorously coded and reported as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme encompasses something important about the data, whether it is a repeated aspect that relates to

the research questions or a prevalent pattern of responses. Within a constructionist epistemology, we used thematic analysis to theorize the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions inform the data.

The flexibility provided by thematic analysis makes it a strong choice for this proposed thesis project. Thematic analysis is not explicitly bounded to a theory; it allows for a flexible approach that provides a rich and complex account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is appropriate for this project because the method of analysis must be flexible enough to reflect the research needs and priorities of the Inuvialuit community. The strengths of thematic analysis are numerous; however, the weaknesses must be given due consideration. While its flexible nature offers strong benefits, it can also serve as a weakness by causing a lack of clear and concise guidelines around how to conduct the thematic analysis (Jagosh, 2012). If the researcher fails to sufficiently ground his/her use of thematic analysis in an appropriate epistemology and theory, then thematic analysis is limited to only describing the data, rather than initiating meaningful interpretation (Jagosh, 2012). However, these weaknesses can be mitigated if the thematic analysis is conducted within a strong theoretical framework, and if the researcher employs a systematic and rigorous approach to the process of thematic analysis.

Historically, research has (re)enforced colonization by placing Western, non-Indigenous perspectives at the forefront of understanding and interpreting data. CBR can promote opportunities to decolonize research by enabling Indigenous perspectives to determine meaning in the data. Therefore, it was crucial that we involved the community advisory board in the process of data analysis so that their perspectives could determine what was important in this research. Three members of the community advisory board, Elanik, Goose, Ipana, were joined by Ollier to analyze the data together.

We used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step model to conduct the thematic analysis. The six steps are as follows: familiarize the research team with the data by transcribing, reading, and including initial notes on the data; generate initial codes in systematic fashion; search for themes by collating the codes; review the themes by generating a thematic 'map'; define and name the themes; produce a report by relating the analysis back to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We met in person to thoroughly read and discuss each transcript, with Elanik, Goose, and Ipana identifying relevant codes. Ollier recorded and organized the codes and patterns in an NVivo software file during each meeting, which we reviewed at the end of each meeting to generate themes that were reflective of the meeting's discussion. We reviewed and confirmed the themes that we identified with the research team before proceeding to writing the final reports. Conducting these steps effectively, and with rigour, produced an insightful analysis to answer our research questions using a constructionist epistemology and postcolonial theory informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies.

Ethics

To complete my Master's thesis research, I obtained an NWT Research Licence and Research Ethics Board Approval from the University of Ottawa. That being said, I would like to acknowledge that processes of obtaining research licences and ethics approvals have been critiqued by Inuit communities (ITK, 2016). These processes exist in colonial institutions, like universities and governments, and while they exist to protect the rights and wellbeing of those involved in research, they do not directly involve community members whom the research directly affects. Therefore, it was important that I approached the ethics of this study as a continual and ongoing process; it was crucial that I built meaningful relationships with the members of the community advisory board and participants to ensure that the research aligned

with their ethical standards, at all stages of the research process. Before engaging in any research-related activity and in addition to the completion of consent forms, I made sure to discuss of the purpose of the research, IRC ownership of the data, and implications of the research; this not only contributed to informed consent, but enabled me to address ethical approval with participants directly.

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Chapter Two: Promoting a Culturally Safe Evaluation of an On-the-Land Program in the
Inuvialuit Settlement Region, Northwest Territories

Abstract

In 2017, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation partnered with a diverse research advisory team to understand how Project Jewel, a land-based program in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, could be evaluated in a way that promotes culturally safety (i.e., in a way that addresses the social, historical, and economic contexts that shape participants' experiences). We used community-based research methodology to approach the study, through which semi-structured interviews, sharing circles, and photovoice were identified by the community advisory board and research advisory team as appropriate research methods for this project. After piloting and evaluating these methods, we then used thematic analysis to analyze the data, which included images and transcripts, to identify that the components of a culturally safe evaluation: centring the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures, and promoting benefit over harms through program aftercare. Our findings provide a template of a meaningful evaluation framework that other on-the-land programs could use if contextualized within local cultural practices and values.

Program evaluation is an important tool for understanding a program's effectiveness, enhancing program development, and justifying why a program should receive support (financial and otherwise) from external agencies. While the concept and practice of evaluation has existed for millennia, approaches to evaluation will differ depending on *who* is conducting the evaluation; this is because, fundamentally, evaluation is based upon a system of values (Cram, 1997). Importantly, Indigenous approaches to evaluation are based upon different values than Western approaches (Cram, 1997; Kawakami, Aton, Cram, Lai, & Porima, 2007; LaFrance & Nichols, 2010). In a settler colonial country such as Canada, Western academic knowledge has been privileged as the dominant approach to evaluation, even for programs that focus on Indigenous values and ways of knowing. Such an approach to evaluation is culturally unsafe and result in findings that are largely divorced from the context in which the program operates.

“On-the-land” or “land-based” programs are founded on Indigenous worldviews (Redvers, 2016); they refer to programs that provide services outside of structures that exist in-town. In Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in Canada made up of four regions [Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Québec), and Nunatsiavut (Labrador)], the demand for land-based programs is growing [Inuit Tapariit Kanatami (ITK), 2018]; however, there is a paucity of literature about land-based programs, especially literature that is contextually specific to Inuit communities throughout Inuit Nunangat (Redvers, 2016). Inuvialuit are Inuit of the Western Arctic in Canada. Like other Inuit, Inuvialuit life and culture are rooted in a deep and interconnected relationship to the land on which they live (Alunik, Kolausok, & Morrison, 2003); as such, Inuvialuit communities have expressed a desire for land-based programs (NWT On-the-land Collaborative Report, 2018). Recently, the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Health and Social Services Research

Agenda (2016-17) identified “research that provides evidence about the effectiveness of land-based healing approaches” as a research priority (p. 2). However, to meet this research priority, land-based programs first need to be evaluated. Currently, no evaluation frameworks for land-based programs have been developed that reflect Inuvialuit perspectives.

In the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), Project Jewel is a land-based program that is run by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC). It offers three- to ten-day on-the-land wellness programs (“camps”) approximately six times a year. It is run by three full-time employees and supported by Elders and local knowledge holders and users. Each camp session targets a specific group of residents of the ISR who struggle with a particular issue (e.g., addiction, trauma, poverty). At the end of a camp, Project Jewel staff meet with each participant to establish an aftercare plan. Follow-up occurs over the phone, in-person, and/or over social media (e.g., Facebook) to maintain support, and participants are invited to a follow-up camp(s), if possible. Through on-the-land programming, Project Jewel aims to provide participants with culturally safe tools that they can use to address and overcome trauma and individual struggles, change behaviours/patterns, and build resilience. Previously, Project Jewel staff and participants have used Western approaches to program evaluation; they believed these evaluation methods were disconnected from participants and resulted in findings that were not reflective of the program. As a result, a research advisory team was developed to answer the following question: How can Project Jewel be evaluated in a way that promotes cultural safety?

Project Jewel staff, specifically, Meghan Etter (IRC Manager, Counselling Services) approached Dr. Audrey Giles of the University of Ottawa to apply for a Catalyst grant from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). They recruited others to create a diverse research advisory team, see table 1, that successfully received CIHR funding to conduct a community-

based research (CBR) project in partnership with Inuvialuit community members; the first author was then recruited to conduct her MA research on this topic. Following both CBR best practices and principles of the National Inuit Strategy on Research (2018), a community advisory board, see table 2, was formed so that Inuvialuit perspectives would be central to the research. The research presented in this paper was co-authored by members of both the research advisory team and the community advisory board.

Through the research that we describe below, we identified five components that promoted a more culturally safe evaluation framework for Project Jewel: centring the land, building relationships, using words and pictures rather than numbers, and promoting benefits over harms through aftercare. Based upon these components, we created a refined evaluation framework for Project Jewel, which we were able to pilot at the end of the research process. This research will enable Project Jewel staff to evaluate its programs in a way that reflects Inuvialuit values and could serve as a template for future on-the-land program evaluation.

Literature Review

To ground our research in the existing literature on Indigenous approaches to evaluation, we begin by outlining the colonial history of Western evaluation research practices. We then discuss the key tenets of Indigenous approaches to evaluation, as well as these approaches' strengths and challenges. Following this, literature and examples of Indigenous and non-Indigenous evaluation partnerships will be presented, with an emphasis on the need for cultural safety and community advisory boards. Finally, a brief description of Project Jewel's previous evaluation approaches is provided.

Colonialism and Evaluation

Mainstream Western evaluation methods have reinforced and (re)produced colonialism by depicting Western knowledge as superior to Indigenous knowledge – and they continue to do so today. This has led to a dichotomy: Western settlers are constructed as the norm, while Indigenous people are positioned as the “other” (Cram, 1997). By consequence, mainstream evaluation research inappropriately compares Indigenous communities to an apparent non-Indigenous norm. In doing so, Indigenous people are seen as failing to reach the norm, are judged to be unacceptable, and thus are (re)constructed as inferior to colonizers (Cram, 1997). As described by LaFrance and Nichols (2010), this manifestation of colonialism harms Indigenous communities by fixating on constructed “failures”; furthermore, it ignores the strengths of the communities from members’ own perspectives.

There are numerous ways in which mainstream Western approaches to evaluation reinforce colonialism. They do not consider, let alone prioritize, the importance of following cultural protocols within the community (Kawakami et al., 2007), including having Elders as the primary determiners of quality in the research approach and method design (LaFrance & Nichols 2010). Consequently, there is a pressing need to address the colonial nature of mainstream approaches that dominate evaluation research. Recognizing the importance and utility of Indigenous approaches to evaluation is essential in ensuring that evaluations represent the programs that are being evaluated appropriately and bring meaningful benefits to Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation

While there is a paucity of academic evaluation research that has been published from Inuit perspectives, there are common elements within Indigenous approaches to evaluation research that can be identified. These key elements include (1) involving the community, (2)

Indigenous ownership, and (3) engaging with storytelling and oral histories (Kawakami et al., 2007; Lafrance & Nichols, 2010).

Indigenous approaches to evaluation strongly emphasize the importance of involving the community in the evaluation process (Lafrance & Nichols, 2010). Discussions and collaborative decision-making about (a) the initiation and design of the research, (b) data collection methods that are respectful and follow cultural norms, and (c) data analysis that aligns with cultural contexts and includes longstanding strategies must be done with community members (Kawakami et al., 2007). Involving the community in these ways acknowledges histories where evaluation research was conducted “on” Indigenous people and communities, rather than “with” and “for” their benefit (Kawakami et al., 2007). Lafrance and Nichols (2010) identified Indigenous ownership of evaluation research as another key element of Indigenous evaluation frameworks. Indigenous communities take ownership of the project through defining the standards of evaluation so that they do not convey judgement, but rather the evaluation is perceived as an opportunity for learning and self-determination. Another important element of Indigenous approaches to evaluation research is the inclusion of storytelling and oral histories. Stories are a method for understanding the lived experience of members of Indigenous communities; they need to be included in effective evaluations. Storytelling and oral histories are commonly valued across many Indigenous cultures, but they are nuanced within the unique social, historical, and cultural contexts of each community (Kovach, 2010). Indigenous approaches to evaluation seek to use stories and oral histories to “explain evaluation from an Indigenous perspective” (LaFrance, Nichols, & Kirkhart, 2012, p. 67). Researchers must collaborate with the community to determine the appropriate use and place of stories and oral histories in evaluation research.

Importantly, the above elements contribute to Inuit self-determination in research, as identified in the *National Inuit Strategy on Research* (2018), which was published by Inuit Tapariit Kanatami (ITK), the national representational organization for Inuit in Canada. The key elements of Indigenous approaches to evaluation align with the *NISR* because they ensure that Inuit are partners in governing research (Priority Area 1) and that Inuit have access, ownership, and control over data and information (Priority Area 4) (ITK, 2018).

Strengths and Challenges. Indigenous approaches to evaluation possess numerous notable strengths. They enhance the validity of evaluation research because they emphasize engaging in meaningful community participation, and thus ensure that the research more accurately reflects the community. Indigenous evaluation approaches also offer opportunities for community empowerment and thus promote opportunities for local capacity-building (Anderson et al., 2012). Importantly, Indigenous approaches also ensure local ownership of knowledge and resources and self-determination in research (ITK, 2018).

Indigenous approaches to evaluation research also face some challenges. A notable challenge to Indigenous evaluation approaches is the persisting perception that Indigenous ways of knowing and methods of data collection are less valid than those from Western paradigms (Cavino, 2010). For example, Western quantitative methodologies persistently dominate evaluation research with Indigenous communities over Indigenous quantitative methodologies, such as those defined and described by Walter and Anderson (2013)¹. Further, effective community involvement requires significant time (Johnston-Goodstar, 2013). True collaboration requires patience; adequate time must be allotted for all collaborators to make their decisions before the project advances to the next stage. In contrast to Western research norms, which heavily value adherence to timelines and schedules, Indigenous approaches to research place

greater value on the process (Anderson et al., 2012). Non-Indigenous stakeholders (i.e., funding agencies) sometimes express frustration at delays, but Elders and community members require time to process decisions and should not be rushed (Anderson et al., 2012).

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Evaluation Partnerships

In Inuit Nunangat, there is a lack of academic institutions that are recognized by federal research funding agencies (ITK, 2018). As such, research projects in the region often rely on collaborative partnerships between local Inuit experts and academics from southern universities to gain access to financial resources (NISR, 2018). When partnering with non-Indigenous researchers, Indigenous communities have voiced their demand for community advisory boards for any research project involving evaluation (Johnston-Goodstar, 2012). Moreover, this demand is echoed in the NISR (2018), which emphasized that forming a community advisory board is necessary in any evaluation research with Inuit that involves non-Indigenous researchers to ensure that Inuit cultural knowledge and expertise are recognized, respected, and given equal value to non-Indigenous knowledge.

A community advisory board is defined as a committee of community members that collaborates with non-community members to direct and participate in the purpose, agenda, decision-making, and processes of a research project (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). In the context of evaluation, Indigenous community advisory boards are essential because they can help ensure the relevance of the evaluation through community-based participation in the decisions and direction of the research at each stage of the project (Johnston-Goodstar, 2012). In these projects, non-Indigenous evaluators have the responsibility to maintain awareness of their own culturally-biased assumptions and positionality, and to uphold cultural safety. Drawing upon literature in the field of health care, Gerlach (2007) explained, “in cultural safety terms

‘culture’ is defined in its broadest sense and ‘safety’ is defined in relation to the responsibility of health professionals to protect their clients from anything which may risk or endanger their health and well-being” (p. 2). Cultural safety “moves beyond the concept of cultural sensitivity to analyzing power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonization and colonial relationships as they apply to healthcare” (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2013, p. 3). When applied to evaluation research, cultural safety promotes the consideration of the historical, economic, and social contexts that affect an individual’s experience. Non-Indigenous evaluation partners need to take efforts to promote cultural safety in evaluation so that they can respect and centre the worldviews of Indigenous co-evaluators and participants (American Evaluation Association, 2004).

Evaluation of Project Jewel

While Project Jewel has been evaluated in the past, the previous evaluation methods used non-Indigenous approaches, and their processes and results garnered dissatisfaction from the program staff and participants. The first evaluations of Project Jewel used written questionnaires that were completed by participants at the end of a program; however, Project Jewel staff found this evaluation strategy to be inadequate, as it failed to yield rich feedback that could be used to further develop the program. Participants had differing levels of literacy, which presented a challenge in the use of written questionnaires. Another evaluation strategy that Project Jewel staff used was encouraging participants to journal throughout the programs; the on-the-land facilitator would, with participant consent, read the journals to evaluate the program. However, journaling did not resonate with all participants, staff reported that they did not have adequate time to analyze each entry, and varying levels of literacy across participants again served as a barrier to this evaluation approach. In 2016, Project Jewel received funding from a non-

Indigenous external agency, which included a requirement to complete the agency's evaluation framework. Despite consulting with Project Jewel staff, the evaluation framework nonetheless lacked cultural safety, and the Project Jewel staff had concerns about its use with program participants. Therefore, in light of previous evaluation challenges, Project Jewel staff sought to pursue the development of a culturally safe evaluation framework that would be relevant to the program, promote meaningful program monitoring, evaluation, and development. They further hoped that the evaluation results could be used to achieve recognition from external agencies and also improve the chances for further funding. The information provided below offers insight into the collaborative efforts that our team made create a culturally safe evaluation tool with Project Jewel.

Theoretical Framework

A postcolonial theoretical lens, informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies, was determined by the research advisory committee to be the most appropriate theoretical approach for this project. As defined by Young (2003), postcolonial theory is used to dissect histories of colonization from the perspective of the people that have been colonized, rather than the colonizers. By using a postcolonial lens, we sought to contextualize how legacies of colonization have affected and shaped Western evaluation methods and to better understand how to create an evaluation approach that would engage with Inuvialuit ways of knowing. Postcolonial theory is, however, rooted in Western research, which, from an Indigenous perspective, is a profound site of colonization (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999). Thus, our use of postcolonial theory was informed by a decolonization framework.

A decolonization framework is used by scholars to better understand the effects of colonialism from an Indigenous perspective. Importantly, a decolonization framework is used to

address the complexities of postcolonial theory and its assumptions (Battiste, 2000).

Decolonization frameworks have been situated in the decolonization politics of Indigenous peoples' movements to enact change towards a better future (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999).

Through engaging with a decolonization framework, we placed Inuvialuit perspectives, values, ways of knowing, and social agendas at the forefront of this research.

We also determined that this research must be informed by critical Inuit studies, which places oral traditions at the forefront of knowledge acquisition to convey Inuit ideologies (Martin, 2009). Oral traditions have been used throughout Inuit Nunangat for time immemorial to share histories, knowledge, and teachings (Karetak & Tester, 2017). They are used to share Inuit Quijimajatuqangit (IQ), an intellectual tradition that encompasses “a set of values and practices, the relevance and importance of these, and the ways of being and looking at things that are timeless” (Karetak & Tester, 2017, p. 1). Through engaging with critical Inuit studies, we emphasized oral traditions as the primary means of understanding the social and historical contexts that shaped this research.

Process

When crafting the grant application, the research advisory team strongly felt that CBR was the most appropriate approach to address all research objectives detailed in the project. Importantly, the key tenets and strengths of CBR enabled meaningful and reciprocal partnerships to form between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the research advisory team so that we could pursue a process of research that in and of itself was culturally safe. In CBR, community members are meaningfully integrated into the project so that they can co-create, co-determine, and participate in the research. In this approach, discussions of power and privilege between academics and communities can be more openly addressed (Israel, Schulz, Parker, &

Becker, 1998). The key tenets of CBR are to facilitate collaborative partnerships in all steps of the research process; integrate knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners; promote a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities; address health from a positive and ecological perspective; and disseminate findings and knowledge gained equally to all partners (Israel et al., 1998). Importantly, CBR enables power sharing throughout the research process, a practice emphasized by ITK (2018). CBR best practices with Indigenous communities are also rooted in the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession™ (OCAP) for data management (The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014).

After the initial grant application was successful and the community advisory board was formed, the decisions and processes throughout the research project were determined by the community advisory board and the research advisory team. The community advisory board included two past participants in Project Jewel programs, Nellie Elanik and Esther Ipana (both Inuvialuit); and two Project Jewel employees, Peggy Day (counsellor, Inuvialuit), and Ruth Goose (cultural support worker, Inuvialuit and Gwich'in). Honoraria were provided to members of the community advisory board for whom this research was not a part of their job. Meetings between the community advisory board and the research advisory team took place in person (with several people attending over Skype) at the IRC headquarters in Inuvik, with meetings of smaller subgroups occurring either in person or over Skype. Our first meeting together took place in May, 2017; here, we further built relationships with each other and refined our plan for data collection. We then sought and received approval for this project from Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa and the Aurora Research Institute, which is responsible for issuing research licenses for the NWT on behalf of the Government of the NWT.

Table 1

<u>Research Advisory Team</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Indigenous/Non-Indigenous</u>
Meghan Etter	IRC Manager, Counselling Services	Non-Indigenous
Jimmy Ruttan	IRC On-the-land and Support Services	Non-Indigenous
Evelyn Storr	IRC Director, Community Development, Elder	Inuvialuit
Francine Darroch	Post-doctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia	Non-Indigenous
Donald Prince	Addictions counsellor who became the Executive Director of the Arctic Indigenous Wellness Foundation	Dene
Tricia McGuire-Adams	Ph.D. candidate at the University of Ottawa who became a professor at the University Alberta	Anishinaabe
Andre Corriveau	Chief Officer of Public Health for the NWT	Non-Indigenous
Sarah Rogers	Elder	Inuvialuit
Mary Ollier	MA candidate at the University of Ottawa	Non-Indigenous

Table 2

<u>Community Advisory Board</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Indigenous/Non-Indigenous</u>
Nellie Elanik	Project Jewel past participant	Inuvialuit
Esther Ipana	Project Jewel past participant	Inuvialuit
Peggy Day	IRC Counsellor	Inuvialuit
Ruth Goose	IRC Cultural Support Worker	Inuvialuit and Gwich'in

Methods

Data for this study were collected at on-the-land programs between 2017-2019. The first author and Giles attended five on-the-land programs with Project Jewel, where they and two members of the community advisory board, Rogers and Elanik, piloted three evaluation methods: sharing circles, semi-structured interviews, and photovoice. Our intention was to expose research participants to a variety of evaluation methods so that they could identify those that were the

most or least suitable for the evaluation of Project Jewel. In turn, these evaluation methods constituted our research methods. Below, we discuss these methods.

Sharing circles. As a research method, sharing circles are rooted in Indigenous culture and generate rich data through group interactions that enable participants to share experiences and reflections through group conversation (Berg, 1995; Parker & Tritter, 2006; Lavallée, 2009). The first author and Giles co-facilitated two sharing circles with the help and guidance of Sarah Rogers, the Inuvialuit Elder on the community advisory board. The first sharing circle was with three Project Jewel participants during a fish camp in Paulatuk (n=3) in August 2017. We conducted the second sharing circle, with the support of Rogers and Elanik (who was in a dual role a participant/research assistant), at a weekend on-the-land gathering with nine individuals who had previously participated in Project Jewel programs (n=9). Some examples of prompt questions included, “Why did you attend Project Jewel?” “What role (if any) does this program play in connecting you to the land?” Sharing circles were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews make use of a flexible interview guide and prompts; they promote organic one-on-one dialogue between the researcher and the participant (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, & Dillon 2003). We deemed this method to be an important data collection technique for those who did not want to share their thoughts and feelings with other participants. Sample questions included but were not limited to the following: “What role does having an Elder at camp play in connecting participants to the land?”; “How does being on the land make you feel?”; “If you were to evaluate Project Jewel, how would you do it?”; and “What did you think about the sharing circle/ photovoice/this interview as a way to evaluate your experience with Project Jewel?”

The first author, with occasional help from Giles, conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 Project Jewel stakeholders (10 women, four men), 13 Project Jewel participants (10 women, three men), and three past Project Jewel participants (three women). Stakeholders included five IRC and Project Jewel staff members, three Inuvialuit Elders, and three professionals who reside in Inuvik, and two professionals (experts in forgiveness), all of whom had previously collaborated with Project Jewel. The first author transcribed the audio recorded interviews verbatim. All participants received copies of their transcripts and were invited to make clarifications and edits as they deemed necessary before their data were included in the analysis. Only one participant made changes to the transcript.

Photovoice. Photovoice is an innovative arts-based method that blends photography and words to enable participants to share their perspectives. Researchers who use photovoice seek to achieve three goals: (1) Enable people to record and reflect on their community's strengths and concerns; (2) promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion; and (3) reach an audience of policy makers (Wang & Burris, 1997). The community advisory board determined that photovoice presented a valuable evaluation approach because it would enable Project Jewel participants to use their perspectives and experiences to direct discussion during data collection and broaden our data collection to include images.

We conducted photovoice with 13 Project Jewel participants, one Project Jewel research assistant, and one Elder, all of whom had access to a digital camera throughout their participation in a Project Jewel program. At the end of each program, Ollier and Giles met one-on-one with all participants to ask which photos that they felt were most important during an audio-recorded interview; the interviews were then transcribed and used to identify captions. After each program, we compiled a photobook of participant photos and captions that participants had

shared during interviews. We gave copies of the photobooks to all participants, and Project Jewel kept additional copies.

All research participants were informed that the IRC would own, control, possess, and determine who had access to the data prior to giving their consent to participate in the research. Audio files of recorded interviews, transcripts, and photos were temporarily stored by Ollier and Giles on their computers for the purposes of working on the research reports while in Ottawa; all data will be transferred to the IRC upon the completion of the research.

Iterative Process

Our process of data collection was iterative and cyclical; each time we piloted our evaluation methods, we reflected on how they were received by the participants. We experienced bi-directional learning throughout this process; skills and knowledge were shared between members of the research advisory team and community advisory board. For example, the Inuvialuit members of the research advisory team and community advisory board taught non-Inuvialuit team members about Inuvialuit ways of living, culture, and history so that they could better engage with participants; team members that lived in Inuvik taught Ollier and Giles, who grew up in southern Canada, on-the-land skills on the land like driving a snow machine and sewing so that they could better engage with activities during Project Jewel programs.

Paulatuk. We began piloting our evaluation methods during a five-day program outside of Paulatuk at a fish camp in the summer of 2017. Ollier, Giles, and two members of the community advisory board, Ruttan (who planned and supported the program) and Rogers (Elder), attended and participated in the program. This particular camp focused on forgiveness and healing from trauma. The southern-based researchers did not sit on the sidelines of the camp. Instead, they were full participants. They introduced themselves at the beginning of the camp to

explain their roles as researchers/participants and distributed cameras for photovoice. It was important that Ollier and Giles participated in the program for two reasons: 1) So that participants could develop relationships with them prior to engaging in research; and 2) to better understand the experience of participating in Project Jewel. Following guidance from the community advisory board, we did not collect data until the final day of the camp. Overall, our pilot methods of photovoice and sharing circle were met with enthusiasm: participants expressed that they enjoyed using photovoice and, with Rogers' guidance, the sharing circle facilitated rich dialogue about Project Jewel. Interestingly, photovoice in particular facilitated an opportunity for some participants to initiate a dialogue about painful and/or traumatic past experiences.

We did, however, encounter challenges during our first pilot experience: we had a small sample size, and those who did participate were wary of negative connotations associated with research. Initially, nine participants from Paulatuk expressed interest and signed up for the program; however, only three attended the camp. While this small sample size generated rich data, we recognized that factors such as unexpectedly low participation, must be considered in future planning. When Ollier and Giles introduced the research project to the program participants in greater depth (they had been told about it by Project Jewel staff prior to registration), the participants expressed uneasiness about participating in any form of research. Notably, residents of the ISR have experienced a history fraught with exploitative researchers who have taken advantage of their knowledge, expertise, and resources while returning little, if any, benefits back to the communities. After this experience, Ollier and Giles learned how to better introduce the project; they needed to emphasize that they were invited to do the research for and with the IRC, who would own the data (IRC), that an Elder would be involved in the data collection, and how the data would be used to bring benefit to ISR communities. These

difficulties provided the research advisory team and community advisory board with useful lessons, which, in addition to the successful elements of our piloted methods, helped us to refine our approach for the next Project Jewel program at which data collection occurred.

Reindeer Station. In September 2017, Ollier, Giles, Ruttan, Day, and Rogers attended a three-day weekend camp with participants who had all previously participated in a Project Jewel program. The purpose of this camp was to pilot our evaluation methods with people who could draw upon their past experiences with the program. In comparison to our first pilot in Paulatuk, nine participants were able to attend the Reindeer Station camp. Further, the lessons learned in Paulatuk, and the participants' understanding of the unique purpose of the camp (i.e., to gather past participants for their feedback), promoted a greater sense of ease and comfort during data collection. However, challenges did arise; Ollier was reminded to use non-technical language when explaining photovoice to participants. Participants also emphasized that sharing circles need to be held in private spaces. As we were in one large cabin with no breakout rooms, the sharing circle unfortunately occurred in a space where cooks and maintenance staff were able to listen, an event for which the research advisory team issued profound apologies afterwards, but nevertheless should have anticipated and avoided.

In the context of the research project, it was becoming clear that the pilot evaluation methods could indeed be useful for Project Jewel. Participants at both Paulatuk and Reindeer Station camps expressed positive feedback about using photovoice, and participating in a sharing circle. Further, Project Jewel staff noted that these methods were already promoting richer feedback than previous evaluation methods that Project Jewel had used before. However, we still felt that our sample size remained small. As a result, the first author continued to pilot the evaluation methods at day-camps with Project Jewel over the following summer.

Interviews with past participants and staff. We conducted semi-structured interviews with past Project Jewel participants who had not attended a program in more than two years. We felt that participants with whom we engaged at a Project Jewel camp might be more inclined to focus on the positive aspects of the program, while other past participants interviewed outside of the program setting might be more inclined to share their critiques. Further, as they had disengaged with the program, they might have had different experiences than those who continued to be engaged with it; however, these individuals were hard to find because, being disengaged from the program, Project Jewel staff did not have reliable contact information. Over the summer 2018, Ollier conducted semi-structured interviews with three female past participants: two interviews were conducted in person in Inuvik, and one was completed over the phone with a past participant who lived in Ulukhaktok. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with four Project Jewel staff and Rogers, an Elder who supports the program. They contributed important perspectives to the evaluation due to their expert knowledge and experiences with Project Jewel.

Analysis

While we recognized that it would require patience and hard work, we were committed to meaningful collaboration in every stage of the project, including data analysis. As such, over the course of her summer in Inuvik, Ollier worked very closely with three members of the community advisory board, Elanik, Goose, and Ipana, to analyze data that were collected for this study. Elanik's, Goose's, and Ipana's perspectives as Inuvialuit community members with meaningful relationships with Project Jewel were essential to approaching research analysis in a way that upheld CBR best practices and that prioritized local perspectives. From July-September 2018, Elanik, Goose, Ipana, and Ollier met for two hours on a weekly basis to analyze the data.

The four individuals engaged in the line-by-line analysis of each transcript used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, an approach that was agreed upon by the community advisory board because it offers a robust, reflective, systematic, and flexible approach to analyzing applied research data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We thoroughly discussed each transcript, with Elanik, Goose, and Ipana identifying relevant codes. Ollier recorded and organized the codes in an NVivo software file during each meeting. At the end of each meeting, a discussion between all team members confirmed the codes and patterns that were recorded in NVivo to ensure they were reflective of the meeting's discussion. In November, 2018, the research advisory team and community advisory board met in Inuvik to finalize the themes, which are outlined below.

Results

We identified four themes that comprise a culturally safe evaluation framework for Project Jewel: centring the land, building relationships, working with pictures and words, and promoting benefits by minimizing harms through aftercare.

Centring the Land

Elders, staff, and participants strongly emphasized the importance of the land as the foundational core of Project Jewel and its evaluation. This is a key element that distinguishes Project Jewel from other health and wellness programs that are offered in the region. Jane*, a participant at the camp in Paulatuk, used photovoice to emphasize the importance of being out on the land during the program to heal from past trauma: "To be out on the land, it is the best place to heal." During a sharing circle at Reindeer Station, Keith, a Project Jewel participant, explained the importance of holding Project Jewel programs on the land versus in town:

In town and out on the land are two different things, two different worlds. If you're in town, you can't go setting nets, for example, with people. You can't hold group sessions, well I guess you can hold group session, but then you're going to have interruptions. Out here, there's no interruptions\.

Ruttan, the On-the-land Coordinator for Project Jewel, described that being on the land is the primary reason why people decide to attend Project Jewel: "I think people get enticed [to attend Project Jewel] because of the draw that there is to the land."

The land is at the centre of Project Jewel and being on the land is a key motivating factor for participants to attend Project Jewel; therefore, a culturally safe evaluation framework for Project Jewel should be guided by discussions of participants' relationship to the land, their needs on the land, and their comfort level on the land. Further, the timing and delivery of the evaluation methods should not interfere with or take away from the activities or pace of life that makes being on the land so important for participants.

Building Relationships

Staff emphasized that it was important to build meaningful relationships with participants throughout the program before engaging in evaluation. Ruttan described how previous evaluation frameworks for the program lacked appropriate regard for relationships, with intrusive questions being asked very soon after meeting Project Jewel participants: "[There was] no real consideration for first impression, for establishing a relationship. [There was] just no real regard for establishing a relationship between two people." Goose, an Indigenous staff member for Project Jewel, elaborated:

Relationship-building is one of the first things that needs to happen, and that happens really good on the land...you take somebody out that's not really talkative, by the time you get them back you would have learned a few things about that person.

Through participating in the programs, members of the research advisory team and community advisory board were able to share experiences with participants that built trust; for instance, sharing a cabin, tent, or early morning coffee and exchanging personal stories helped to build more trusting relationships. As a result, when they engaged in the evaluation activities, participants felt more comfortable with sharing rich information about their experiences.

Working with Words and Pictures

Project Jewel staff identified words and pictures as better forms of evaluation than numbers. Storr (IRC Director, Community Development and Inuvialuit Elder) described the value of developing an evaluation framework that enables a richer description of participants' experiences than statistics:

I don't react to huge numbers, a lot of people will – and I think that's what [external funders] look for. But that's why this project is important, so that we evaluate not on, “so we had 50 people, we have 50 responses.” We need to expand that evaluation tool... But, when you can get information, or see the results in somebody's life that brought them from here to here, and you're helping them, that's more important.

Participants in this research had the opportunity to talk about their personal stories and experiences by taking photos and discussing them during photovoice one-on-one interviews and also in sharing circles. The pictures and words that resulted from these methods conveyed information that could not have been captured by numbers. For example, Daniel, a Project Jewel participant at a camp at Reindeer Station, expressed the benefits that he experienced from

attending Project Jewel programs while describing a photo that he took of Reindeer Station for photovoice:



Coming back to Reindeer Station [depicted], bringing us close to each other, me and my wife, it sure helped me and my wife in our marriage, in our marriage we were having a bit of a falling out, and it is why we decided to come out, to help us in our marriage and in our family, [Project Jewel] gets our family closer together.

Barbara, a Project Jewel participant at Reindeer Station, said that she preferred to share her experiences through discussion, rather than through surveys: “Interviews, talking...it is really good this way because everyone gets to come and say what they need to say and just try to help others.” Enabling a space for personal stories to be shared helped Project Jewel to be respectful of Inuvialuit oral traditions (Alunik et al., 2003).

Furthermore, meaningful discussions with participants resulted in what we believed to be honest feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This honesty was strongly valued by Project Jewel staff for program development. Etter elaborated:

[In the past,] we would have a survey at the end, you know trying to get at, “What did you get out of it”, but also, “What are ways that we could improve” and you know different things like that? And the feedback was always positive...if there was ever something negative, it had to do with maybe the food, or the weather...it was that kind of stuff that really didn’t develop the program.

Overall, the feedback garnered from words and photos was able to elicit a range of positive and negative critique.

Promoting Benefits While Minimizing Harms through Aftercare

Staff and participants expressed that it was important that Project Jewel promoted benefits for participants while minimizing harms. Aftercare programming was identified as being a critical component to promoting benefits among participants. As Project Jewel programming focuses on sensitive issues, it is important for that participants have the option of receiving support from a Project Jewel counsellor when they return home from their on-the-land experience. Leanne, a past Project Jewel participant, described how her experience of aftercare, or lack thereof:

I didn’t get a call from the person who was supposed to give me a call or see how I was doing, not sure that happened there...I was looking forward to the phone call [for the counsellor] to see how I was doing. But I kind of felt like I was – I don’t know – I wouldn’t say neglected, more like just forgotten I guess.

During a sharing circle at Reindeer Station, John* expressed a desire for more formal aftercare programming:

I am kind of confused about [aftercare]... I believe, if I understood correctly, that we could arrange to have them call us or to have a home visit, or you know that the office

was there and quite often we could just go in. But, personally, I would have liked to have seen something a little bit more formal and really a genuine effort to organize something to bring us together so that we could let each other know how we were doing as well.

Eva, a past Project Jewel participant, expressed how her experience with aftercare enhanced the benefits that she gained from participating in Project Jewel:

It was actually quite easy for me [to have aftercare] because, well, I work in the [IRC] department. So, it was more easily accessible for me I found because I would Peggy [Aftercare Coordinator for Project Jewel] was here, Jimmy [On-the-land Coordinator for Project Jewel] was here – if I wasn't feeling quite right – I don't know how to word it, I'll just go to them. But yeah, they've helped me ... occasionally I will come to them for something. Just to either talk with them or even just to sit and cry.

Aftercare can help participants continue to feel supported by Project Jewel; however, if aftercare is lacking or perceived to be lacking, participants are at risk of experiencing harm. The participants' strong feelings about the need for and benefit of aftercare illustrated the importance of including it as an element of Project Jewel's evaluation.

Discussion

The research advisory team and community advisory board met in November 2018 to discuss the research process thus far and resulting themes. Together, we drew upon our results, reflections, and experiences over the course of data collection and the literature on Indigenous approaches to evaluation to further refine the evaluation framework.

Who Should Be Involved in the Evaluation of a Project Jewel Program?

A key element of Indigenous approaches to evaluation is meaningful community involvement (Lafrance & Nichols, 2010; Lafrance, Nichols, & Kirkland, 2012). As such,

program participants, past/disengaged participants, staff, and program stakeholders of Project Jewel were engaged in this evaluation research; we assert that in any evaluation of Project Jewel programs must continue to engage these groups. Further, these groups should be represented on a community advisory board that remains involved in executing, reviewing, and refining the evaluation. By involving these people, Project Jewel's evaluation will be guided by the community that it serves.

When Should the Evaluation Happen?

The evaluation of Project Jewel's programs should not be limited to the duration of a camp, but rather be an on-going, longitudinal effort that aligns with Project Jewel's services. Project Jewel completes a general intake form with all participants before programs begin, and concludes programs with one-on-one aftercare planning sessions between participants and a counselor; aftercare meetings occur on a case-specific basis over the following two years, with an opportunity for a possible follow-up camp(s). Together, we decided that evaluation should begin at the start of a Project Jewel camp, at the end of a camp, and during at least one point in time during aftercare to follow the course of a participant's experience with Project Jewel; this could occur during a possible follow-up camp. Evaluation through interviews with past/disengaged participants, staff, and stakeholders should happen continuously throughout the year; analysis of the data collected from the evaluation should occur on an annual basis.

How Should the Evaluation Be Conducted?

The research community advisory board determined that the evaluation methods we had piloted, sharing circles, semi-structured interviews, and photovoice, should continue to be used to evaluate Project Jewel. We noted that using all three methods will increase the time investment required for evaluation, in comparison to using only one method. Staff responsible

for future evaluations will face the challenge of a large workload; however, the value of using all three methods was deemed to be worth the time and effort, as they would provide participants with a variety of ways to share their thoughts.

Semi-structured interviews with participants should be used prior to and following camps and during aftercare; Project Jewel participants should continue to have the opportunity to use photovoice to engage in evaluation, and sharing circles should be used at the end of camps. We determined that a wireless iPad would be the most appropriate tool to organize and store the interview guides and evaluation data. iPads can be transported easily on-the-land, recharged with a generator, capture and store audio and photographic data, and consolidate information into one comprehensive location (i.e., IRC server). It is important to note that Project Jewel currently does not have the staff resource capacity to deliver all three evaluation methods.

Components of the Evaluation

We wanted the evaluation framework to reflect Inuvialuit ownership and self-determination in the evaluation. One way in which non-Indigenous standards that are rooted in a colonial perspective harm Indigenous people is by making them feel pressured to prove their “Indigeneity” (Smith, 1999). We wanted to ensure that the interview and sharing circle questions would not reinforce these colonial standards by pressuring participants to feel they had to prove “Inuvialuitness.” We wanted the semi-structured interview guide used with current participants to reflect the components of a culturally safe evaluation framework that we had identified through research. We created new pre-camp and post-camp interview guides, which are presented below in Table 3. The questions in the pre-camp guide are meant to learn more about participants’ motivations for attending and expectations of Project Jewel so that the evaluator(s) can begin to build a relationship with them; they also will help the evaluator(s) better understand

the participants' relationship to and comfort on the land. The post-camp guide was designed to create opportunities for personal stories about the participants' experiences of the program. Their comfort on the land during the program and their feelings about going on the land again are specifically addressed to centre the land. Questions about aftercare and the participants' readiness to return home were designed to promote participant safety immediately after a camp and throughout aftercare. Notably, we included questions probing the participants' overall experience and how they compared to their expectations of the program to enable opportunities for rich critique with words.

Guides for sharing circle and photovoice prompt questions are presented below in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. Like the semi-structured interview guides, these guides were designed to promote the components of a culturally safe evaluation framework for Project Jewel that we identified in the themes. Like in the research, sharing circles should occur at the end of a Project Jewel camp; photovoice should be introduced and described at the beginning of a camp, when cameras are distributed to participants, and one-on-one photovoice interviews should be conducted at the end of the camp. Specifically, we recommend that the following components of this new evaluation framework for Project Jewel should be conducted by a staff member designated to program evaluation who attends Project Jewel camps.

Table 3

<u>Pre-camp and Post-camp Semi-structured Interview Guides and Corresponding Themes.</u>		
<u>Pre-camp</u>	<u>Prompt Questions</u>	<u>Component Evaluated</u>
	1. What do you want to get out of this program?	Building relationships
	2. Why are you here?	Building relationships, working with words and pictures
	3. How do you feel about going on the land?	Centering the land, working with words and pictures
<u>Post-camp</u>	1. What were the highlights of the camp?	Working with words and pictures

2. What helped you the most during this camp?	Building relationships, working with words and pictures
3. How would you feel about going on the land again?	Centering the land
4. What would make you feel more comfortable if you come back?	Centering the land, working with words and pictures
5. What do you expect to get out of the next follow-up camp?	Promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare
6. What was the most difficult part for you?	Working with words and pictures, building relationships
7. How do you feel about going home today? What do you need to feel comfortable going home?	Promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare
8. Did the program meet your expectations, what was missing?	Building relationships, working with words and pictures

Table 4

Sharing Circle Guide and Corresponding Themes.

<u>Prompt Questions</u>	<u>Component Evaluated</u>
1. Why did you attend Project Jewel?	Building relationships, working with words and pictures
2. What were your expectations and desired outcomes of attending a PJ workshop?	Building relationships, working with words and pictures
3. Do you think the land plays a role in the healing process for people?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
4. Is it important to re-connect with the land to learn? Why?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
5. Does being on the land connect you to your culture?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
6. What role does this program play in connecting participants to the land?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
7. What challenges do you have to access land based programs?	Centering the land
8. How does being on the land make you feel? How does it help you think through problems you may be having in your daily life?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
9. How would this program be different if it were offered in a community centre or another location (not out on the land)?	Centering the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures
10. What was the best part about the program for you?	Working with words and pictures
11. What changes would you like to see in the program?	Working with words and pictures

12. What is/are the best way/ways to capture this experience?	Working with words and pictures
13. Did Project Jewel impact your wellness long-term, if at all?*	Promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare
14. Did you receive aftercare?*	Promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare

*indicates prompt questions to be asked during a sharing circle at a follow-up camp (participants have already attended one or more camps with Project Jewel).

Table 5

Photovoice Guide and Corresponding Themes	
<u>Prompt Question</u>	<u>Theme</u>
1. Can you describe the photos that you took that are most important to you? Why are they important to you?	Working with words and pictures

Evaluation dry run: Reindeer Station, March 2019. Five previous Project Jewel participants (one male, four females) attended a three-day camp held at Reindeer Station held mid-March, 2019, and participated in semi-structured interviews and photovoice (a sharing circles was planned but not completed). Initially, seven participants expressed interest in attending the camp; however, two participants from Inuvik were unable to attend. Like the first camp at Reindeer Station discussed above, participants understood that this camp was held for the purposes of the research, but would also include programming. Ruttan, Ollier, and Giles represented the research advisory team, and Day represented the community advisory board at this final camp, and two Elders (both female), one from Inuvik and another from Ulukhaktok, were included for cultural support of participants. Prior to the camp, Ruttan, Ollier, Giles, and Day practiced implementing the evaluation with iPads that we had purchased for this purpose. Despite our successful practice, during the interviews, we found that the audio recording-transcription feature on the iPad did not reliably transcribe the recorded audio. The iPad seemed have difficulty understanding local accents and some individuals' use of non-standard sentence

structure. We thus disabled the transcription feature and decided that transcription would have to occur post-camp. We also were unable to conduct a sharing circle at the end of the program due to the unfortunately-timed onset of stomach virus in members of the community advisory board and research advisory team and a desire to limit its spread amongst participants and Elders. We learned from the dry-run that future staff in charge of evaluation should practice using the iPad until they are comfortable and that extra time must be allocated post-camp to transcribe the interviews before they can be analyzed.

Conclusions

The research presented in this paper addressed a need to research how to better evaluate the IRC's land-based program, Project Jewel. In doing so, this research also addressed a research priority of the GNWT, which was to provide more knowledge about the evaluation of land-based programs throughout the territory. To better understand the effectiveness and benefits of a land-based programs for Inuvialuit, it is important to create an evaluation framework that reflects Inuvialuit culture and values to enhance the likelihood that participants will experience the evaluation as culturally safe.

The research presented in this study demonstrates that Inuvialuit approaches to evaluation are grounded in the land, relationality, and oral culture. We learned through this research that, put simply, context is everything; those who seek to understand, and subsequently evaluate, land-based programs need to contextualize their approach within the cultural practices and values of the community/ies the program serves. In this regard, while we reported on an evaluation framework developed with/by Project Jewel, and believe it can be used as a resource for similar land-based programs, we implore other programs and future evaluators to consider it only as a template to inform their approach to evaluating land-based programs. Future research should

continue to examine approaches to the evaluation of land-based programs that are contextualized within the cultures and lands of other communities throughout Inuit Nunangat to further support, develop, and evaluate land-based programs.

Footnotes

¹ Walter and Anderson (2013) presented a new paradigm for Indigenous quantitative methodologies to produce statistical data by and for Indigenous peoples. They critiqued Western approaches to quantitative methodologies that socially construct Indigenous peoples as “deficit” to a colonial standard.

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Chapter Three: The Elements Necessary for Success and Benefits of Participation in Camps of
an On-The-Land Program in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region

Abstract

The following study represents a partnership between the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) and the University of Ottawa that seeks to understand if/how on-the-land programming offers culturally safe experiences that meet the self-identified needs of the residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Specifically, this study draws upon the experiences of participants in the IRC's land-based healing program, Project Jewel, and explores the development of an Inuvialuit approach to an initial evaluation framework for land-based programs in the NWT. We used postcolonial theory, informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies, to approach this research and CBR methodology. Semi-structured interviews, sharing circles, and photovoice were co-determined by the community advisory committee and the research advisory team as research methods for this project. Preliminary themes indicate that land-based healing programs foster cultural identity and meaningful connections to social support and Inuvialuit heritage in an "on-the-land" environment. Land-based programs may offer an alternative healing option for clients who do not feel comfortable or are not being served by conventional community-based or residential treatment programs.

The land is at the root of Inuvialuit culture, identity, and heritage (Alunik, Kolausok, & Morrison, 2003). The Inuvialuit, Inuit of the Western Arctic in Canada, have been disconnected from the land by colonization and residential schools (Alunik et al., 2003); consequently, like other Indigenous populations, they are heavily burdened with trauma and health disparities (Raphael, Bryant, & Rioux, 2006). “Land-based” or “on-the-land” programs refer to programs that provide services outside of existing community structures (i.e., community centres, hospitals). These programs’ decolonizing approaches to healing and wellbeing have been documented in several Indigenous populations, including the Kwanlin Dūn First Nation (Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, 2014), Cree Nation of Chisasibi (Radu, House, & Pashagumskum, 2014), Dene (Redvers, 2016), and Taku River Tlilgit (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher, & Coulthard, 2014); however, there is a paucity of literature in an Inuvialuit-specific context. Recently, the Government of the Northwest Territories’ Department of Health and Social Services Research Agenda (2016-17) identified “research that provides evidence about the effectiveness of land based healing approaches” as a research priority (p. 2).

Project Jewel is an on-the-land program that is operated by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC). It offers three to ten day on-the-land wellness camps to residents of the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) in the NWT approximately six times a year. Run by three full-time employees and supported by Elders and local knowledge holders and users, each camp targets residents of the ISR whose members struggle with a particular issue (e.g., addiction, trauma, poverty). While run by the IRC, Project Jewel offers its services to all residents of the Beaufort Delta Region, regardless of cultural background. As such, participants of Gwich’in heritage – a First Nations group whose territories border the ISR, often attend camps, as well as non-Indigenous residents. After completing a Project Jewel camp, all participants are eligible for

aftercare whereby a social worker on staff meets with each participant to establish an aftercare plan. Follow-up occurs over the phone, in-person, and/or over social media (e.g., Facebook) to maintain support, and participants are invited to a follow-up camp(s), if possible. Project Jewel aims to provide participants with culturally safe tools that they can use to address and overcome trauma and individual struggles, change behaviours/patterns, and build resilience.

Staff of Project Jewel, specifically, Meghan Etter (IRC Manager, Counselling Services) and Jimmy Ruttan (On-the-land Coordinator), approached Dr. Giles of the University of Ottawa. By partnering with Giles, they were able to apply for federal research funding, a Catalyst grant from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR). The team received the CIHR grant and then recruited the first author, Mary Ollier (non-Indigenous), to conduct her MA research on this project. The research team was comprised of a research advisory team (southern-based researchers, two Project Jewel staff members, an IRC Director, and an Elder) and a community advisory team (two past Project Jewel participants and two Project Jewel Staff Members). The research presented herein represents a component of this larger research project. For this component of the research, we used sharing circles, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to address two research questions: 1) What do Project Jewel participants and stakeholders identify as elements necessary for the camp to be successful?; and 2) What are the benefits to those who participate in Project Jewel camps?

Using postcolonial theory that was informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies, we identified that the elements of success for Project Jewel included several elements: Inuvialuit cultural practices, local programming, distraction and judgement-free environment, confidentiality, comfort and support. These elements enabled the participants to reconnect to their land, culture, heritage, and identity; strengthen systems of social support; and

enhance skills and self-esteem. These findings will strengthen Project Jewel's program delivery, and thus better help to meet Project Jewel participants' needs, while also making crucial empirical contributions to understanding the importance and effectiveness of land-based wellness programs.

Literature Review

To identify the elements of a successful on-the-land program and its potential benefits for Inuvialuit wellbeing, we first review the literature on Inuvialuit identity and culture, the effects of colonization on those subjects, Inuit mental health, and on-the-land programming. In our review of these topics, we draw upon general Inuit examples in the literature when Inuvialuit-specific examples are not present. We then highlight the existing literature concerning on-the-land programs and their role in decolonization and healing among Inuit in Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homeland in what is now known as Canada. We conclude this section with additional information about Project Jewel.

Inuvialuit Identities and Culture

Inuvialuit identity is defined by the land that they inhabit; this land is known today as the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Various distinct local resources enables Inuvialuit identity to be "subject to multiple definitions and understandings," depending on the specific region and land in which it is fostered (Lyons, 2009, p. 63). Historically, Inuvialuit were divided into eight territorial groups; they were semi-nomadic, each with "a main village which was the focus of an annual summer sea-mammal hunt" (Morrison, 2003, p. 13). Regional resources and affiliated groups gave rise to distinct families and ancestral heritages that play important roles in Inuvialuit identities (Alunik, 2003) and associated cultural practices.

Collectively across Inuit cultures, the land is not meant for profit or farming (Karetak, et al., 2017); indeed, Inuvialuit culture is rooted in traditional land-based activities based upon the respectful harvest and consumption of country foods (IRC, 2017a). Seasonal whale camps, fish camps, and trap lines for the hunting and harvesting of resources such as “caribou, muskox, polar bear, arctic hare, muskrat, seal, bearded seal, duck, goose, ptarmigan, beluga and bowhead whale, fish (whitefish, herring, inconnu, arctic char, and trout), and berries (aqpiit, blueberries, crowberries, currants, and cranberries)” are at the core of Inuvialuit culture (IRC, 2017a, par. 3). Presently, going “out on-the-land” remains an essential practice in Inuvialuit culture despite the challenges posed by colonialism (Inuvialuit Pitqusiit Inuuniarutait, n.d.), which are presented in detail below.

Effects of Colonialism

The first devastating effect of colonialism came to Inuvialuit at the turn of the century in the form of disease. Whalers introduced European viruses that reduced the Inuvialuit population to an estimated 250 people, a mere ten percent of earlier generations (Morrison, 2003). With the subsequent influx of missionaries, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and government officials, who had already developed immunity to these diseases, Inuvialuit “lost sovereignty over their own lives” (Morrison, 2003, p. 93). The arrival of thriving white settlers “ushered in a new lifestyle,” one in which Inuvialuit were forced to live away from the land in new communities that were now heavily influenced by the settlers’ Western wage economy, rather than traditional Inuvialuit lifestyle (Aglukark, 1999; Alunik, 2003; Dowsley, 2005).

Residential schools in the ISR. Residential schools in the ISR have a history that is “more recent than that of residential schooling in the rest of the country” (*The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, p. 3). When the federal government

first opened the Sir Alexander Mackenzie School in 1959 (initially named the Inuvik Federal School), Grollier Hall (Catholic) and Stringer Hall (Anglican), hostels for the Alexander Mackenzie day school, were also opened (Kolausok, 2003). These hostels, which housed many of the students who came from remote communities, were overcrowded and had deteriorating conditions (*Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*, 2015, p. 102). Samuel Hearne Secondary School was opened in 1969. Stringer Hall was closed in 1975, while Grollier Hall was closed in 1997 (*Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*, 2015). Sir Alexander Mackenzie School and Samuel Hearne Secondary School were both closed in 2012 and replaced with new primary and secondary schools (Canadian Broadcasting Company, 2012). In both the hostels and the initial schools, the staff forbade Inuvialuit languages and ways of living, and prevented children from receiving an education in their own culture (Kolausok, 2003). Horrific acts of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse were committed by staff to children that lived at Grollier Hall and Stringer Hall to attend school (*Canada's Residential Schools: The Inuit and Northern Experience*, 2015). The colonial legacy of residential school and hostels, as well as the concomitant social and demographic shifts that occurred in the region, converged to threaten Inuvialuit identity and culture.

Effects of colonialism on identity and culture. The effects of colonialism have threatened and continue to threaten Inuvialuit identity and culture because they have dispossessed and disconnected Inuvialuit from their lands (Alunik, 2003; Kolausok, 2003). Life in colonial society has precipitated economic stratification that prevents contemporary Inuvialuit, like other Inuit, from accessing the land (Dowsley, 2015; Kolausok, 2003). Further, the Western wage economy has created a reliance on currency for commodities such as gas, equipment, permits, and vehicles to access land-based activities (Dowsley, 2015; Searles, 2010). These

contemporary colonial systems have impeded Inuvialuit from living a traditional land-based lifestyle. The legacy of residential schools has, and continues to, affect Inuit culture because it has caused many Inuvialuit to lack knowledge and teachings about the land that would have been transmitted by their family and would enable them to engage in the land-based lifestyle of their ancestors (GNWT Social Agenda Conference Report, 2001, p. 8). Reconnecting with the land has been identified by Inuit Elders, scholars, and communities alike as a crucial step to addressing the trauma of colonization and residential schools and reconnecting and revitalizing identity and culture. The relationships between the land, identity, culture, colonization, and residential school hold implications for Inuvialuit health; in particular, discussions of Inuvialuit mental health must be contextualized within these elements.

Inuit Mental Health

Due to a lack of data specifically on Inuvialuit mental health, in the following review of literature we draw upon broader information gathered from Inuit populations across Inuit Nunangat. Mental health is an area in which Inuit face tremendous health disparities in comparison to non-Aboriginal Canadians (Richmond, 2009). Post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse disorder, and major depression are the leading mental health issues that affect Inuit, and are associated with high rates of morbidity (Inuit Tapariit Kanatami, 2016). In fact, epidemiological data have indicated that Inuit communities face suicide rates that are eleven times higher than the Canadian average (Inuit Tapariit Kanatami, 2016). According to Richmond (2009), these disparities are linked to a decline in social support. Through causing a loss of identity and culture, colonialism and residential schools weakened, and continue to weaken, Inuit structures of social support, and therefore, are linked to poorer mental health outcomes (Richmond, 2009). Recently, land-based programming has been employed by the IRC as a

strategy to improve participants' mental health and wellbeing through emphasizing connections to Inuvialuit land and culture.

On-the-Land Programs

While there is a paucity of literature about land-based programs for Inuvialuit, on-the-land or land-based programs have been identified and practiced by Indigenous scholars and communities as a way to reclaim identity and culture, and heal from colonial traumas (Kwanlin Dün First Nation, 2014; Noah & Healey, 2010; Radu et al., 2014; Redvers, 2016). Due to the lack of Inuvialuit-specific literature pertaining to on-the-land programs, the following sections feature research concerning on-the-land programs from a variety of Indigenous groups.

Decolonization. On-the-land programs for/by Indigenous peoples are more than simply programs in the bush; fundamentally, they are decolonizing (Redvers, 2016). Simpson (2014) explained that the practice of physically going out on the land is crucial to Indigenous healing and reconciliation: land-based programs address the dispossession from the land that Indigenous people throughout Canada have experienced and continue to experience through acts of colonial violence (Simpson, 2014). While treaties and land claim agreements have been and continue to be negotiated between Indigenous communities and the Canadian government, disconnection from the land persists in contemporary colonial society (Redvers, 2016). Land-based programs potentiate an effective approach to healing the ongoing trauma that stems from colonization and residential schools, and can promote wellbeing and decolonization amongst Indigenous individuals and communities.

Healing. From an Indigenous worldview, the land is at the root of both the concept of healing itself, and the process of healing *from* colonization and residential schools (Irlebacher-Fox, 2009; Redvers, 2016; Waldram, 2014). The land is a place of healing for Indigenous

peoples; it is where one can renew and strengthen one's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness – the elements of a healthy individual and healthy communities (Redvers, 2016; Wohlberg & Scott, 2018). The disconnection from the land caused by colonization and residential schools has “led to breakdowns in connection to language, culture, and identity” (Wohlberg & Scott, 2018, para. 2). Culturally relevant Indigenous land-based activities and programs have been shown to enhance individual and community resilience, cultural identity, and social support (Noah & Healey, 2010; Radu et al., 2014), which demonstrates their potential relevance to enhancing wellbeing.

Existing on-the-land programs. Currently, there are a variety of Indigenous-led land-based programs operating within communities across Canada. For example, the Chisasibi land-based healing program in Nunavik, which opened in 2012, promotes personal, familial, and community wellness from a perspective rooted in the Cree way of life (Radu et al., 2014). In the Yukon, the Kwanlin Dün First Nation piloted four land-based health programs from 2010-2014 (Kwanlin Dün First Nation, 2014). The First Nation established a permanent land-based healing camp at Jackson Lake, 25km outside of Whitehorse on Kwanlin Dün traditional territory land, where it offers one or two land-based programs annually (Kwanlin Dün First Nation, 2019). These programs use a land-based healing approach to bridge culture with clinical therapy during a four-week camp, which is followed by aftercare. Evaluations of these programs have indicated high retention rates and satisfaction among participants, as well as overall measured improvements in general well-being, personal balance, social relationships, mental health, cultural knowledge, life skills, and resilient behaviours (Kwanlin Dün First Nation, 2014; Radu et al., 2014).

IRC staff members created Project Jewel to meet Inuvialuit demand for a local, land-based health program. The pilot program, which focused on addictions, began in 2015 and was called Project J W L. However, staff members encountered difficulties recruiting and retaining participants when operating under the label of an addiction-focused program. During this time, funding for the closest formal addiction treatment centre in Hay River, NWT ceased, and was instead channeled into supporting on-the-land programs throughout the territory. Therefore, Project J W L developed into Project Jewel, a land-based wellness program with a focus on providing experiences on the land (during “camps”) that connect individuals with services providers. Despite the existence of numerous land-based health and wellness programs in the North, the field of land-based healing is poorly defined and understood in the literature (Redvers, 2016). There is a lack of literature that explores on-the-land programs for Inuvialuit wellbeing (Redvers, 2016); indeed, currently there are no peer reviewed publications that describe the elements of successful land-based programs or the benefits of land-based programming for Inuvialuit. Through the research presented below, we address this gap in the literature.

Theoretical Framework

For this research, the research advisory committee determined that a postcolonial lens informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies would be the most suitable theoretical framework. Postcolonial theory is employed to better understand the voices and perspectives of marginalized populations on the periphery of dominant nations (McLaughlin & Srivastava, 2013). This approach provides a strong theoretical foundation for better understanding the legacies of imperialism and colonialism. It is suitable for this research because Inuvialuit, like other Indigenous peoples in Canada, have experienced – and continue to experience - horrific colonial efforts and assimilation techniques. By consequence, Inuvialuit

have experienced radical shifts in their culture and traditions are still greatly affected by colonialism (Lyons, 2009). However, we decided that our use of postcolonial theory must be informed by a decolonization framework, as, from an Indigenous perspective, Western research, “white research,” or “academic research” is a site of profound colonial influence that reinforces colonial domination of Indigenous peoples (Browne, 2005; Narayan 200; Smith, 1999).

A decolonization framework is conceptualized and situated within the decolonization politics of Indigenous peoples’ movements to better understand both the pervasive effects of colonialism from an Indigenous perspective, and how to shape a better postcolonial future for Indigenous peoples (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 1999). As stated by Smith (1999), a decolonization framework is also used to centre “broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research” (p. 143) in the methodologies that the researcher subsequently employs. Therefore, we used a decolonization framework to frame the research in the context of Inuvialuit values, tools, knowledge, and social agenda. By informing the use of postcolonial theory with a decolonization framework, this research can be used to better understand the ways in which colonialism has shaped, and continues to shape, Inuvialuit health and wellbeing from a perspective that is guided and informed by Inuvialuit values and social justice goals .

For this research, we also used critical Inuit studies to inform our use of postcolonial theory and a decolonization framework. Inuit Quajimajatuqungit (IQ), “a set of values and practices, the relevance and importance of these, and the ways of being and looking at things that are timeless” (IQ, 2017, p. 1). IQ represents an intellectual tradition that is essential to engaging with critical Inuit studies. Inuit culture is an oral culture (IQ, 2017); therefore, critical Inuit studies place oral histories and traditions at the forefront of knowledge acquisition to convey the Inuit ideologies (Martin, 2009). A key aspect of critical Inuit studies is the use of rich oral

traditions to emphasize the importance of social and historical contexts during the research process (Martin, 2009). The Inuvialuit members of the research advisory team and the community advisory board were essential in grounding this research in IQ.

Methodology

We used a community-based research (CBR) approach for this project. In CBR, reciprocal partnerships are formed between academics and community members to focus efforts on open discussions of power and privilege, the identification of common goals, the co-creation of knowledge, and implementation of community improvement (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). The key principles of CBR are to facilitate collaborative partnerships in all phases of the research; integrate knowledge and action for mutual benefit of all partners; promote a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities; address health from a positive and ecological perspective; and disseminate findings and knowledge gained equally to all partners (Israel et al., 1998). Elder Sarah Rogers, who was also a member of the research advisory team, in addition to Peggy Day (IRC counsellor with Project Jewel), Ruth Goose (IRC cultural support worker), Nellie Elanik (Project Jewel participant), and Esther Ipana (Project Jewel participant), formed the community advisory board. Each decision and process was determined by all members of the community advisory board with the research advisory team. We used CBR to enable power sharing throughout the research process, a practice emphasized by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national representational organization for Inuit in Canada, in their published *National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR)* report (ITK, 2018). Importantly, CBR best practices are rooted in the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession™ (OCAP) for data management that align with *NISR* (ITK, 2018; The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014).

Approval for this project was granted by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa and the Aurora Research Institute, which is responsible for issuing research licenses for the NWT on behalf of the Government of the NWT.

Methods

To collect data from current participants, the first author attended five on-the-land camps with Project Jewel. The first two occurred in 2017: a five-day fish camp outside of Paulatuk (August, 2017), which was attended by the second author and three other members of the community advisory board, and a two-and-a-half-day camp at a historical cultural site outside of Inuvik, Reindeer Station (September, 2017), which was attended by the second author and five members of the research advisory committee. The first author then lived in Inuvik from July – September of 2018 and was able to attend three day camps, each with two other community advisory board members: one fishing camp on the Mackenzie River Delta (July, 2018), and two berry-picking day camps on Inuvialuit land north of Inuvik (August, 2018). In addition to gathering data at these camps, she also conducted interviews and collected data from Project Jewel stakeholders and former program participants in Inuvik. The community advisory board determined the use of three research methods to address our research questions: sharing circles, semi-structured interviews, and photovoice.

Sharing Circles

Sharing circles are used to gain insight into people's experiences (Lavallée, 2009). Sharing circles were an appropriate method of data collection because they have been shown to generate rich data and are rooted in Indigenous culture (Berg, 1995; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Parker & Tritter, 2006; Lavallée, 2009). With the help and guidance of an Elder, the first author co-facilitated two sharing circles. The first sharing circle with three Project Jewel

participants during a fish camp in Paulatuk (n=3). The second sharing circle was with nine Project Jewel participants and one cultural support worker at the weekend camp at Reindeer Station (n=10). We audio recorded the sharing circles and transcribed them verbatim.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews use pre-structured questions to maintain the research focus while also enabling space for organic conversation and open dialogue to take place (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis, & Dillon 2003). We determined that semi-structured interviews were an appropriate data collection method because the flexibility for open dialogue enables the researcher to respect the knowledge and expertise that the interviewees feel are important to share (Spencer et al., 2003). Sample questions included, do you think the land plays a role in the healing process for people? How would this program be different if it were offered in a community centre or another location (not out on the land)? Is it important to re-connect with the land to learn about your culture? Does being on the land connect you to your culture? What is the importance of the connection to the land?

The first author, with the occasional help of the second author, conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 Project Jewel stakeholders (10 women, four men), 13 Project Jewel participants (10 women, three men), and three past Project Jewel participants (three women). Stakeholders included five IRC and Project Jewel staff members, three Inuvialuit Elders, and three professionals who reside in Inuvik (one dietician, one community health worker, one educational counsellor), and two professionals (experts in forgiveness) who had previously collaborated with Project Jewel. The first author audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim. All participants received copies of their transcripts and were invited to make

clarifications and edits as they deemed necessary before their data were included in the analysis; only one participant made changes to the transcript.

Photovoice

Photovoice is an innovative data gathering technique that blends both images and words with the purpose of allowing marginalized populations to be empowered to share their knowledge and implement change (Palibroda et al., 2009). Those who employ photovoice seek to achieve three main goals: enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion, and reach an audience of policy makers (Wang & Burris, 1997). We deemed photovoice to be an appropriate method because it can enable Indigenous people to direct the research agenda in a culturally appropriate way (Maclean & Cullen, 2009). We conducted Photovoice with 13 Project Jewel participants, one cultural support worker, and one Elder, all of whom had access to a digital camera throughout their participation in a Project Jewel camp. At the end of each camp, the first author – with the occasional help of the second author, interviewed the participants about their photographs. We audio-recorded and transcribed these interviews verbatim. As with the semi-structured interview data, all photovoice participants received copies of their transcripts and were invited to make clarifications and edits as they deemed necessary before their data were included in the analysis; participants did not make any edits to their transcripts. We compiled participants' photos and associated quotes into photobooks. We sent draft photobooks to participants, who we invited to make edits as they deemed necessary. They did not suggest any edits. We then gave each participant copies of the photobooks to keep.

Analysis

Following CBR best practices, three members of the community advisory board, a cultural support worker and two Project Jewel past participants, and the first author co-analyzed the data. We used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis. Thematic analysis offers a robust, reflective, systematic, and flexible approach to analyzing applied research data that is well-suited to this research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a way of organizing data in rich detail to identify patterns of meaning; these patterns are rigorously coded and reported as themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Together, we read through each transcript to familiarize ourselves with the data. We then discussed the data in order to generate initial codes, which we attached to sentences or paragraphs in each transcript as a way to organize the data. During our discussions, we used the NVivo11 software program to document and organize the codes that they created. Some examples of codes that we identified during this stage were "effects of Project Jewel," "program structure," "privacy," and "values in the bush." Next, we organized our codes to generate initial themes. Finally, we identified and named two key themes to present in this report: the important elements for the success of Project Jewel, and the benefits experienced by program participants as a result of their participation in Project Jewel. We also identified several sub-themes within these two main themes. These results were then shared with the community advisory board and the research advisory team via a day-long, in person meeting. After reviewing the data, the community advisory board and research advisory team approved the themes and sub-themes, while also providing slight refinements.

Results

Theme 1: Elements of Success for a Project Jewel Camp

Based on the results, we identified Inuvialuit cultural practices, local programming, distraction and judgement-free environment, comfort and support, and confidentiality as elements of success for a Project Jewel camp on the land.

Inuvialuit cultural practices. Participants indicated that it was important for Project Jewel to enable them to engage in Inuvialuit cultural practices. Having opportunities to participate in land-based cultural activities like hunting caribou, fishing, making dry meat, or picking berries were highly valued, especially amongst participants who did not have the money or equipment to do these activities on their own. Project Jewel stakeholders said that participants were motivated to attend Project Jewel camps primarily so that they could be immersed in such cultural activities.

The participants expressed that Project Jewel's camps connected them to the lifestyle of their elders and ancestors. A Project Jewel participant, Jane*¹, explained that her connection to Inuvialuit cultural practices during a Project Jewel camp: "You have so much freedom, [you] live healthy, sleep good, help and share, talk just like long ago, how the Elders and Inuvialuit and Gwich'in used to get together, talk, share, help each other, do everything."

Similarly, Dawn, a locally hired research assistant for Project Jewel, used photovoice to describe her connection to her culture and the land while attending a Project Jewel camp:



I just think that [this photo] shows a connection - but it also speaks to survival, because it's also the food that sustains you when you're hunting, but it's connected to the land, so this whole cycle - everything is interconnected, and this kind of maintains those connections, on different levels.

Shirley, an Inuvialuit Elder and Project Jewel participant, expressed that it was important to her that Project Jewel's camps helped her learn about her own culture and share her culture with other participants: "I think having this workshop really helps me in identifying [my culture], well it is important you know it, and it does have an effect. In one sense you're learning, another sense you're sharing culture."

Local programming. Through photovoice, Dorothy, a Project Jewel participant, emphasized that it was important to her to receive programming in the Mackenzie Delta region because it made her feel more comfortable; the land on the delta is where Dorothy grew-up.



This one [photo] is important because, when I was growing up, I was in the bush with my parents. It's important to me because it's where we came from, on the land, and where we spent time on the land, and with, with my partner now, we go out hunting and we go out fishing and we go out camping, and it's important to me because we still go out on the land.

Both Project Jewel participants and stakeholders also emphasized that, in addition to feeling more comfortable in their traditional territory, local programming is important because there are currently no formal local treatment centres for addictions or mental health. When residents of the ISR seek these services thousands of kilometres away in the South, in an unfamiliar culture and environment, they experience feelings of fear and discomfort.

Distraction and judgement-free environment. Project Jewel participants indicated that being out on the land with Project Jewel helped them avoid alcohol, drug use, technology (i.e. cell phone use, internet use), and scheduled responsibilities in town (e.g., appointments, work, child care) that would otherwise distract them from focusing on their own health and healing. Agnes, a Project Jewel Participant, described how she preferred a land-based environment over programs in town because it is removed from the adverse influences of alcohol, trauma, and stress:

It's so much better out there -you don't have the skids coming in with alcohol. If there are other things that are bothering you in town, you have a chance to forget them for a few days out on the land.

Without the distractions of alcohol, drugs, and technology, participants felt that they were able to relax and find the freedom to focus on themselves.

Project Jewel participants emphasized that being on the land during Project Jewel camps fostered a judgement-free environment. Sarah, an Inuvialuit Elder and cultural support worker for Project Jewel, used photovoice to describe how she is able to communicate her thoughts and feelings freely on the land:



If we have issues that bother us that are not healthy, sometimes I would go to someplace to de-stress, whether it be with other families to just not talk about my issues, or else I would stay alone in my room to not be a bother to anybody else. But out here, I'm on the land - it feels like I am free! I am free to talk how I want to talk and say what I want to say.

Participants expressed that being on the land made them feel more comfortable because they are less judgmental of others, and perceive others to be less judgmental of them. Keith, a program participant spoke to this:

I find that out on the land is ten times - a hundred times - better than being in town doing it. If you're talking to someone, you don't have to worry about who's listening behind that door on the outside, or who is going to go gossip about you and make you look bad because you're trying to help yourself, because you're trying to accept that yes, I have demons that I am going to have to work on.

Confidentiality. Participants and stakeholders identified that respecting the privacy and confidentiality of people who participate in Project Jewel was a key element of a successful camp. Jo-Ellen, a counsellor for Project Jewel, described how Project Jewel staff and participants maintain confidentiality when they return to town after completing a camp with Project Jewel: "I've never heard anybody ever come back and say, 'I shared that and now it's all over the community.' You know, it's beautiful how people really respect each other."

Comfort and support. Project Jewel participants and stakeholders identified that a key element to a successful on-the-land camp is creating a comfortable and supportive environment through providing food, transportation, accommodation, equipment, and gas. The camp further helps participants to feel supported by providing a caring team of Elders, cultural support workers, and social workers. Jimmy, the on-the-land coordinator for Project Jewel, elaborated on Project Jewel's services:

Project Jewel provides all facets of comfort and care...The only thing that they have to focus on is themselves. We take all of the guesswork out of the day to day...But we just create this environment that is just so nurturing and in addition to being in a ...culturally relevant setting – it's just a great recipe for success, for rest, for relaxation, for providing an opportunity to revisit trauma, to also celebrate successes.

Dorothy, a participant at the Reindeer Station camp, emphasized that it was important to her to receive one-on-one support from Project Jewel staff and cultural support workers: “I took Ruthie [cultural support worker] and Jimmy [on-the-land coordinator] aside...I just said I needed somewhere to cry...so we went to Jimmy’s cabin. [It’s nice] to work one-on-one with Ruthie or Jimmy, you know, just one-on-one to see how you’re feeling from when you first started and right to the end [of camp].”

Theme 2: Benefits of a Project Jewel Camp

The benefits of participation in a Project Jewel camp were identified as being (re)connection to land, culture, heritage, and identity, strengthened systems of social support, and enhanced skills and self-esteem.

(Re)connection to land, culture, heritage, and identity. Through on-the-land camps, Project Jewel enabled participants to feel (re)connected to their land, which fostered (re)connection to Inuvialuit culture, heritage, and identity. Denise, a Project Jewel participant, used a photo to show that re-connecting to the land during a camp made her feel more connected to her culture and heritage, which enabled her to feel hopeful and supported by fellow community members.



When you're out on the land, it does bring people together. We may not talk at home in our community, we may not mingle. We could say hi. But when you're out on the land, it's a totally different story: everyone comes together. It's that warm humble feeling everyone has when you're out. This is our background. This is where we grew up.

By participating in a camp at a culturally significant site or at a traditional Inuvialuit bush camp, participants felt connected to their Elders, ancestors, and cultural traditions. Zenephia, a Project Jewel participant, described how being at Reindeer Station, a historical site where Inuvialuit reindeer herders lived, during a Project Jewel camp enabled her to feel connected to her grandfather.



I know my grandpa was here one time, he was one of the reindeer herders...and I could just picture myself seeing my grandpa here...it makes me think about a connection to someone that was here before me, years before me, before I was even born...I feel connected here.

Dawn used photovoice to describe how participating in traditional sewing activities at a camp made her feel (re)connected to her cultural heritage:



When you do the sewing projects, they are your connection to a past, but they are a connection to a future. It is a way of ensuring that what your ancestors did - that you carry it forward. It also allows for those times for sharing and telling stories... It's that time when you sit there and you can just tell stories while you're all sitting down together telling stories and sharing information and building those relationships, that trust.

Participants expressed that when they go out on the land and participate in cultural practices, they strengthen their identities as Inuvialuit. Shirley described how learning to make dry meat during a Project Jewel camp reconnected her to her cultural identity and family:

Dry meat is a traditional meat from our animals. When we hunt our animals, we try to use every piece of it. [The meat] comes from the hind quarter of the reindeer, so whatever meat was left on it we made dry meat with it, and there's a special way of cutting dry meat and a special way of drying it. [It is the] first time I've tried cutting up dry meat and I feel really proud.

Strengthened systems of social support. Participants described that participating in Project Jewel strengthened their systems of social support. Being on the land with peers, staff, and support workers fostered an environment where clients felt connected to each other. During Project Jewel, participants described how they were able to focus on their communication with family members and/or spouses. Denise from Tuktoyaktuk displayed a photo that she took as part of photovoice to describe how participating in Project Jewel affected her communication skills and improved her relationship with her husband:



We're a lot closer...it [Project Jewel] brought my family, you know it got my family happy...we're talking you know, not so silent any more, that's what I see, now we're, you know, saying "goodnight" or, you know, "I love you."

During sharing circles, participants expressed that participating in Project Jewel camps provided them with the opportunity to develop existing social relationships with family and friends and also fostered the beginning of new systems of support by building trust with other participants, which they viewed as being very beneficial in healing. As one focus group participant noted, "We don't need doctors and hospitals for the most part to heal our human condition. We need each other."

Enhanced skills and self-esteem. Participants described that participation in Project Jewel camps enhanced their skills and self-esteem. By engaging in cultural practices, participants expressed that they learned new skills and enhanced existing skills. Evelyn, Inuvialuit Elder and Director of Community Development at the IRC, described the skills and experiences that Project Jewel participants gain during camps:

I think it instills in them that pride, and some of them might have had that experience, say when they were younger with their families, but for whatever reason they haven't been able to get back out there. And when you see these people working with food, or being involved with going out and setting snares, traps, fish nets, and you see how much pride they put into that – that speaks volumes.

Keith, a program participant, described the effects of learning how to hunt beluga whale with his two sons at a past whaling camp with Project Jewel:

I learned [how to hunt whale]. And [my sons] saw the whale, how to harvest the whale, so they're learning about their tradition. I couldn't offer that to them because I didn't know it myself. If I don't know it, how can I pass it down? So, with this whaling camp I did learn some stuff that I can pass down and they learned some stuff that they can help me with. It works both ways.

Discussion

Project Jewel addresses ongoing barriers to accessing the land, such as resources and knowledge, enables participants to remove themselves from colonial spaces in town, and acknowledges a colonial history of displacement through prioritizing local programs. By addressing these elements, Project Jewel contributes to processes of decolonization and healing

in the ISR. We argue that the benefits of attending Project Jewel camps, as identified by participants, hold important implications for improving mental health in the region.

Elements of Success for Project Jewel Camps

Our findings demonstrated that part of Project Jewel camps' success came from the fact that it addresses colonial legacies by providing ways to deal with barriers to accessing the land and engaging with Inuvialuit cultural practices. Many participants identified that Project Jewel enabled them to engage with practices like trapping, whaling, berry-picking, tool-making, sewing, carving, harvesting traditional medicines, or fishing; they emphasized that they experienced difficulty accessing, no longer, or never had access to these opportunities. It is well-documented that colonization and colonialism led to and continues to contribute to poverty and lifestyle shifts among Inuvialuit (Dowsley, 2015; Searles, 2010). Today, money to buy equipment and time off of work are needed to access the land; the research participants identified both of these issues as significant barriers. Project Jewel challenges the impact of colonialism by addressing these barriers, albeit for a short period of time: vehicles, fuel, food, and help for participants to receive time away from work are provided by Project Jewel.

Another barrier to participating in on-the-land activities that relates to colonialism is participants' lack of knowledge about or comfort with Inuvialuit cultural activities. Staff at residential schools in the ISR punished children who practiced their traditions in an attempt to assimilate them into Western culture, which created a legacy of shame associated with engaging in Inuvialuit cultural practices (Kolausok, 2003). These schools also removed Inuvialuit children from their families, including Elders. Project Jewel responds to this legacy by basing its programming around seasonal traditional activities on the land with cultural support from Elders,

thus reintroducing some participants to aspects of their culture in a physically and emotionally safe way.

Another element of success that participants identified for Project Jewel camps was that they remove program participants from the in-town environment that prioritizes wage-economy and technology – elements that participants referred to as distractions. In town, the wage-economy places emphasis on the Western, capitalistic value that time equates to money; daily life is consequently structured by scheduled work hours to maximize profit. Opportunities to engage in Inuvialuit culture are limited by work hours, childcare, and technology. This value system and associated practice conflict with Inuvialuit culture, where value lies in good weather and resources that make it possible to reap the benefits of the land, and children accompany parents on the land (Aglukark, 1999; Alunik, 2003).

Finally, participants identified the benefit of Project Jewel camps being offered near each ISR community. Again, this must be understood in relation to the colonial legacy of forced displacement and relocation that was violently imposed upon Inuvialuit. Beginning the 1950s, the federal government systematically forced Inuvialuit families to permanently move off the land to community settlements (Alunik, 2003; Kolausok, 2003); with the collapse of the fur trade industry, families began to rely on welfare, government employment, and child tax allowances to survive, which were only available if they relocated to town (Kolausok, 2003). In a contemporary context, health and wellness programs within the ISR need to acknowledge this history of forced displacement between communities, and subsequent associations of discrimination and racism. When Inuvik was established in 1958, Inuvialuit widely viewed it as a town “built by and for Southerners” (Kolausok, 2003, p. 174). While Inuvik remains the administrative centre of the ISR, those who operate health and wellness programs need to

acknowledge that forcing residents to travel from their home communities to participate in programs in Inuvik may not be emotionally safe and viable for some participants. Project Jewel addresses this legacy by offering both regional camps and visiting each community, rather than only providing programming on the land surrounding Inuvik and requiring participants from smaller communities to leave their local lands to attend a camp.

Decolonization and Healing

Our results showed that Project Jewel's programming plays a role in addressing colonial legacies and can help to improve mental health and wellbeing of ISR residents.

Decolonization through (re)connection to land, culture, identity, heritage. On-the-land programs are decolonizing because they enable (re)connection to the land, culture, identity, and heritage – key benefits that were identified in this study. While the residential schools in the ISR have closed, their legacies continue today (Alunik, 2003). Indigenous scholars have drawn attention to not only the physical colonization of their lands at the hands of settlers, but also processes of colonization imposed upon their minds and spirits by residential school and colonial acts of violence that devalued Indigenous cultures (Alunik, 2003; Lyons, 2009; The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Therefore, to address the ongoing legacies of colonization, the tools of decolonization must come from Inuvialuit. By enabling ISR residents to have the opportunity to (re)connect with their culture, identities, and heritage, Project Jewel's camps can help to restore traditional knowledge that was devalued and lost because of residential schools and other colonial practices. By centring the land in Project Jewel programming, the emphasis is placed on (re)vitalizing Inuvialuit cultural practices, thus making Project Jewel distinct from conventional mental health, wellness, and suicide prevention strategies.

The findings from this study support Redvers' (2016) assertion that revitalizing connection to the land, culture, and heritage promotes wellbeing amongst on-the-land program participants. Therefore, healthcare policy makers, such as Indigenous governments, politicians at the territorial, and federal levels, as well as practitioners and administrators like community health representatives, healthcare and hospital managers, and physicians, should advocate for the continuation of Project Jewel – and other on-the-land programs - as essential wellness strategies in the ISR, and likely in other communities.

Indeed, beyond the ISR, our research findings contribute to ITK's (2016) objective to prevent suicide and improve wellbeing among Inuit. As stated in ITK's National Inuit Suicide Prevention Plan (2016), knowledge that supports culturally safe mental wellness programs *at the community level* is crucial in addressing suicide and mental health struggles among Inuit. We assert that Project Jewel contributes to decolonization, and – further, that land-based programs can help build a continuum of local, culturally safe mental wellness services. To effectively address mental health and suicide among Inuit, and specifically among Inuvialuit in the ISR, we must continue to emphasize the linkages between decolonization and healing; through supporting decolonization, on-the-land programs can promote healing.

Healing through systems of social support, enhanced skills, and self-esteem. By taking participants out on the land during a camp, Project Jewel creates a space for healing that is as physically as it is metaphorically removed from ongoing sites of colonization in town. On the land, participants are able to experience healing together as a group, which, by consequence, (re)builds social support. Elders have taught that strong social relationships are necessary to survive on the land; they lie at the core of Inuit life and, thus, cultivate healthy wellbeing (Alunik, 2003; Karetak et al., 2017). In Project Jewel, healing is not just discussed between

participants and trained counsellors on the land, but actually practiced, albeit for a short time, when participants and staff work together to hunt, trap, fish, and cook traditional food throughout the camp, as their ancestors would have done together on the land.

Beyond the benefits of social support that came from practicing traditional activities together, we found that (re)learning or enhancing the Inuvialuit land-based skills fostered positive self-esteem among participants. In her research with Dechinta, a land-based university in Dene territory, Ballantyne (2014) described how many Dene students experience guilt for lacking knowledge about traditional skills:

It is the guilt of having been raised in small communities and not having the land-based skills by which so many thinkers ground Indigeneity and Indigenous-ness. Some students have never actually lit a fire, let alone spent significant time in the bush. (p. 76)

While the Dene and Inuvialuit have distinct histories and experiences of colonization, the sentiments of these students resonate strongly with the results of this research - guilt surrounding the loss of traditional knowledge is accompanied by anger towards the colonial powers responsible. These are feelings that can be followed by feelings of validation and self-worth when these skills are re-learned (Ballantyne, 2014). By fostering traditional skill-building, Project Jewel enabled participants to (re)claim pride in their culture and identity, which contributed to a process of healing.

Conclusion

This research addresses a call from ITK (2018) and GNWT health policy-makers (GNWT Social Services Research Agenda, 2016-2017) for more information about the effectiveness of on-the-land programming. Through using a CBR approach we experienced bidirectional learning; local people in the ISR were trained to conduct research that meets an

academic standard (i.e. writing a manuscript), while the southern researchers on the research team were trained to conduct research that meets Inuvialuit standards. Thus, we were able to build local research capacity during this study, a key component of research with Inuit communities as identified by the *NISR* (ITK, 2018). In light of the paucity of literature specific to the ISR, the results of this study enable us to better understand what makes Project Jewel camps effective and beneficial from an Inuvialuit perspective.

Importantly, these findings draw attention to the ways on which Inuvialuit relationships to the land continue to be vital for Inuvialuit wellbeing. Project Jewel is successful because it is embedded within relationships to the land and addresses some of the ongoing legacies of colonization. The benefits that participants experience through participating in Project Jewel contribute to a larger process of decolonization and healing. Our findings provide direction for health policy makers in the IRC and may inform aspects of other land-based healing programs in Inuit Nunangat. Future studies should examine the potential benefits of on-the-land programming for specific sub-populations, such as families, children, and those who experience addiction. We hope that health policymakers and on-the-land program developers and facilitators will be able to use our findings to support further funding for the development and evaluation of land-based programs specific to their own regions and cultural practices.

Footnotes

^{1*} indicates a pseudonym. Some participants wanted their real names to be used. To respect their expert contributions to this research, we have used their names.

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Chapter Four: Conclusions

Throughout the research process with Project Jewel, I was extremely fortunate to have community members guide me to better understand how - despite the legacies of oppressive colonial interventions on Inuvialuit lives, Inuvialuit values and ways of knowing continue to be strong and have important implications for the ways in which health and wellbeing-related programs are designed, implemented, and – most important for this thesis, evaluated. In this conclusion, I place the findings presented in chapters two and three into conversation with each other. Through discussing the results of these papers synergistically, I address the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this thesis research. I also describe the limitations of the research that we conducted, and then present recommendations for policy development, practice, and future research. I conclude with some final thoughts.

Summaries of Chapters Two and Three

In chapter two, we examined an Inuvialuit-informed approach to evaluating Project Jewel, a land-based wellness program for residents of the Beaufort Delta Region. Together, the research advisory team and community advisory board used a postcolonial lens that was informed by a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies to better understand how an evaluation of a land-based program, Project Jewel, could promote cultural safety. The findings enabled us to create an evaluation framework for Project Jewel that included centring the land, building relationships, working with words and pictures, and promoting benefits while minimizing harms through aftercare as elements identified by Project Jewel participants and staff that would enhance the likelihood of the evaluation being culturally safe.

In the second paper, chapter three, the research advisory team and community advisory board used the evaluation methods that we had piloted in the first paper to examine the elements of success and benefits of participation in Project Jewel. We used the same theoretical approach

as the first paper to understand the ways in which land-based programs promote wellbeing amongst participants. The findings identified that the elements of success for Project Jewel included Inuvialuit cultural practices, local programming, distraction and judgement free environment, confidentiality, and comfort and support. The benefits of participating in Project Jewel included (re)connection to land, culture, identity and heritage, strengthened systems of social support, and enhanced skills and self-esteem. We argued that land-based programs are effective approaches to Inuvialuit wellness because they contribute to decolonization and promote healing through social support, enhanced skills, a self-esteem in the Beaufort Delta.

Research Implications

When considered together, chapters two and three in this thesis address a key gap in knowledge that was identified by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Social Services Report (2016-2017): a need to provide more “research about the effectiveness of land-based programs” (p. 2). Importantly, by addressing this research priority, both papers have theoretical, methodological, and practical implications that are relevant to Project Jewel, Inuvialuit communities and, more broadly, other Inuit communities throughout Inuit Nunangat.

Theoretical Implications

The research presented in this thesis has two key theoretical implications: an Inuvialuit-informed approach to evaluating land-based programs resists colonial legacies by privileging Inuvialuit culture and land; land-based programs can be decolonizing. First, postcolonial theory has been used to examine the social determinants that shape Inuit health and wellbeing (Richmond, 2009); namely, it has been used to understand the ways in which colonialism contributed, and continues to contribute to, health disparities between Inuit and non-Inuit (and further, non-Indigenous) populations (Bjerregaard, Young, Dewailly, & Ebbesson, 2004;

Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Lavallée & Poole, 2009; Richmond, 2009; Tait, 2008; Waldram, 1997). While it is well-established that colonialism has negatively affected and continues to negatively affect Inuit health, postcolonial theory has been less frequently applied to the health and wellness programs that are meant to close gaps in health between Inuit and non-Inuit. Specifically, it has been less frequently applied to understanding Indigenous indicators of effective programs for positive health and wellness. By using a postcolonial lens in conjunction with decolonization and critical Inuit studies, both papers demonstrated that land-based programs support Inuvialuit understandings of health and wellness that are rooted in land and culture. Importantly, the themes we identified emphasized that a successful land-based program, and the indicators for evaluating it, need to be shaped by the land and culture specific to the region/community in which the program takes place, and not based on Euro-centric, southern understandings and measures of health, wellness, and success.

By using a postcolonial and decolonizing approach with critical Inuit studies, we ensured that Inuvialuit culture and land were at the forefront of the creation of our evaluation framework for Project Jewel, and we were able to better understand what makes Project Jewel effective from Inuvialuit perspectives. As a result, rather than having differences from Eurocentric cultures serve as markers of deficiency in the program and participants, they can instead be indications of success. Further, by focusing specifically on Inuvialuit culture, we were able to push back against the colonial belief that all Indigenous cultures are the same (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Second, the results presented in both papers demonstrated that land-based programs can be decolonizing. By informing our use of postcolonial theory with a decolonization framework and critical Inuit studies, we were able to understand the benefits of Project Jewel in a way that

considered how they contributed to decolonization. In the ISR, colonization is directly linked to the land; settlers occupied the land to establish a settler-colonial society that has had and continues to have a profound impact contemporary Inuvialuit life and identity (Lyons, 2009). Project Jewel directly contributes to decolonization because it physically brings participants to the land to address their wellbeing. Further, land-based programs can contribute to decolonizing by understanding Inuvialuit health and wellness through Inuvialuit-defined standards of wellbeing. Within a decolonization and critical Inuit studies framework, understandings of Inuvialuit health and wellness must centre the land to emphasize the interconnected relationship between land, culture, and wellbeing. When framed within Indigenous standards of health, land-based programs contribute to decolonizing how indicators of Inuvialuit health and wellness are understood and used in program evaluation.

Methodological Implications

The ways in which we used CBR to approach this research also has methodological implications. Most importantly, we believe that this research serves as an example of research that aligns with Inuit Tapariit Kanatami's (ITK) (2018) *National Inuit Strategy on Research's* (NISR) five priority areas to promote respectful and beneficial research for all Inuit. ITK President Natan Obed stated that the NISR,

outlines the coordinated actions required to improve the way Inuit Nunangat research is governed, resourced, conducted, and shared. This strategy builds upon the important strides taken by Inuit towards self-determination in research by offering solutions to challenges our people have grappled with for decades. It envisions research being utilized as a building block for strong public policies, programs, and initiatives that support optimal outcomes for Inuit that in turn benefit all Canadians. (p. 3)

The *NISR* calls for Inuit ways of knowing to be respected and supported in research and emphasized the poor regard that has been given to existing “intact and rigorous [Inuit] research paradigms” (ITK, 2016, p. 20). We endeavored to meet ITK’s demand for respect and support of Inuit knowledge through upholding CBR best practices. For example, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) approached the researchers with a proposal to conduct collaborative research, thus ensuring that the research was of importance to those in the region; local community members were fully integrated into the research team. Further, with input from the research advisory team, the community advisory board decided which methods to use in the research, which questions were asked, and its members were involved in data collection and analysis, and manuscript review, thus ensuring that the research approach was in line with local ethical values and practices. In addition, all data are owned, controlled, and possessed by the IRC, and it controls access to them. Finally, local people were trained to conduct research that meets academic standards, while southern researchers were trained to conduct research that meets Inuvialuit standards, thus building capacity to conduct research in the ISR. In this way, we were able to inform our approach to evaluating a land-based program and understanding its benefits for Inuvialuit wellbeing through an Inuvialuit-informed lens.

We explicitly described our use of CBR throughout this thesis with the hope that future researchers may find it useful as a resource to inform future CBR that centres Inuit approaches and ways of knowing in Inuit Nunangat. ITK (2018) has described the standards and implementation plan for research with Inuit. We endeavored to make our research as descriptive and transparent as possible, particularly by describing our process of the development of an evaluation framework in chapter two, so that we could provide insight into the strengths, challenges, and overall processes that occurred in our use of CBR to meet ITK’s standards.

Practical Implications

Finally, we believe that the research we conducted holds practical implications for Project Jewel and the Inuvialuit community that align with some of *NISR*'s (ITK, 2018) priorities. In the *NISR*'s Priority Area #4, ITK calls for research to “establish a mechanism or process to coordinate the development of Inuit-specific indicators” (ITK, 2019, p. 59). We were able to contribute to ITK's call by identifying Inuvialuit-specific indicators of a successful land-based program that meet Inuvialuit self-identified needs.

Further, not only did we identify indicators of a successful land-based program in the ISR, we also developed an evaluation framework for distinguishing if/how an on-the-land program was able to affect these indicators. This framework can be used by Project Jewel staff to further develop and refine its programming to meet the needs of the Inuvialuit community. While we argue that the framework identified in chapter two is only contextually specific to a land-based program in the ISR, it holds practical implications as a template for other land-based programs in Inuit Nunangat.

Limitations

Any discussion of our research's implications would be incomplete without considering the limitations to the studies that comprise this thesis: not all communities in the ISR were equally represented on the community advisory board or in the participant sample; I had a relatively brief time frame to engage in CBR; and my identity as a white, Euro-Canadian woman from southern Ontario affected my ability to conduct this research.

Community Representation

While the community advisory board included staff and Project Jewel participant representation, all members of the community advisory board currently live in Inuvik, and have

lived there for some time. While some members were not born or raised in Inuvik (i.e., Day was born and raised at Reindeer Station), these members settled in Inuvik. As an IRC program, Project Jewel is operated from the IRC headquarters, which is located in Inuvik; as such, Inuvik is the “home base” for Project Jewel and the program’s core staff. Further, while all six communities (Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, Paulatuk, and Sachs Harbour) are within the ISR, they are separated by vast expanses of land and water. Four of the communities (Ulukhaktok, Sach’s Harbour, Aklavik, and Paulatuk) are accessible primarily by costly air travel (some people boat or skidoo from Aklavik to Inuvik). Ideally, all six communities would have been represented on the community advisory board in this research; however, we recruited those who work with/for IRC and who were available in Inuvik because of the cost and feasibility of having face-to-face interactions with the members of the community advisory board. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that the perspectives of individuals from other communities may have contributed nuance to the research.

Participant Representation

Like the community advisory board, a large portion of participants in this research were also from Inuvik; this was in part because most Project Jewel staff and stakeholders live in Inuvik [approximately 58% of the total population of the ISR lives in Inuvik (IRC, 2019)] , but also because we did not collect data at a Project Jewel program in each community. While Project Jewel delivers local programs (not all of which are camps) throughout all six communities in the ISR, in addition to regional programs, we were only able to attend local programs in Paulatuk and Inuvik and two regional programs at Reindeer Station throughout the time frame of this research. During regional programs, staff attempted to recruit participants from each community, but we did not have the opportunity to work with participants from Sachs

Harbour; we acknowledge that the research lacks the perspectives of residents from this community. Therefore, the research is limited to perspectives of the individuals from the communities represented within the participant sample (Inuvik, Tuktoyaktuk, Ulukhaktok, Aklavik, and Paulatuk), with emphasis on a large representation of participants from Inuvik.

Time Frame

The research in my thesis was limited by the time frame of my Master's degree. Two years is a relatively brief period of time to undertake CBR, especially considering that I previously had no relationship with Project Jewel or any ISR communities. I endeavored to mitigate this limitation by working as a research assistant under Dr. Audrey Giles during the summer (2017) prior to beginning my degree so that I could begin building relationships with Project Jewel staff and participants. I also received funding from the Aurora Research Institute, the Northern Scientific Training Program, and Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada that enabled me to live in Inuvik for two and a half months over the summer of 2018. Before conducting any research related activities that summer, I volunteered with multiple community organizations and events to introduce myself to the general Inuvik community and build positive rapport. I volunteered with the Inuvik Community Greenhouse, the Arctic Market, the John Kiktorak Warming Centre, the Inuvik Public Library, and Inuvik's 60th Anniversary Celebration; however, two and a half months is a short period of time to build meaningful relationships. I am confident that my efforts to immerse myself in the community contributed to stronger relationships with community members, Project Jewel staff, stakeholders, and program participants, but I acknowledge that my approach to CBR would have been more effective if I had been able to live in Inuvik, and in a variety of ISR communities for a longer period of time.

My Positionality

As a white, middle class, Euro-Canadian woman from Grimsby, ON, I must acknowledge the effects that my positionality had on this research. As a non-Inuit person, I could not contribute to the research from a position of holding Inuit worldviews. While I was able to offer other skills and knowledge to the research, I recognize that community members in the ISR have experienced a long and painful history of being exploited by white, Western researchers from positions similar to that of my own. Research is a term that carries strongly negative connotations. I recognize that, as an outsider to Inuvialuit culture, traditions, and worldviews, and as a researcher, I risked making participants feel uncomfortable during my interactions with them.

I attempted to address these limitations by using CBR to prioritize Inuvialuit approaches to research. I did this by building relationships with the community advisory board, Project Jewel staff, research participants, and community members in Inuvik before and while engaging in research. While I feel that these steps enabled me to establish and maintain a level of trust with my collaborators and research participants during the research process that enabled them to feel comfortable in me asking for guidance and them critiquing me when I needed to adjust my thought process or behaviour, I will never claim to be able to hold an Inuvialuit perspective. Indeed, the work in this thesis can only be said to reflect Inuvialuit perspectives because of the deeply collaborative approach that we took to this research. While I played the lead role in writing up this research, it is not knowledge that belongs to or was produced by me alone, though I take responsibilities for the limitations that surely remain in this document, which has been submitted to a Eurocentric institution for evaluation that is Eurocentric in nature. Importantly, however, prior to its submission, it was approved by its co-creators, Project Jewel staff and the community advisory board.

Recommendations

After reflexively considering the implications and the limitations of this research, we were able to consider the ways in which this research can inform policy and practice. Below, we reflect on the results of this research, and make recommendations for the ways in which it can inform policy, Project Jewel's programming, and future research.

Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the NWT On the Land Collaborative are two key organizations that create policies for land-based programs in the NWT. The GNWT plays a large role in creating policy that funds and supports land-based programs in the territory. For example, in 2015, the GNWT established the On the Land Healing Contribution Fund; this large fund offers opportunities for Indigenous governments and non-government organizations to apply for and access support for land-based programs (GNWT Health and Social Services, n.d.). The GNWT also contributes support, from financial contributions and some dedicated staff, to the NWT On The Land Collaborative, which is a diverse collective that represents partnerships that includes

Tides Canada, Government of the Northwest Territories, NWT Recreation and Parks Association, J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Indigenous Leadership Initiative, Dominion Diamond Corporation, TNC Canada, Diavik Diamond Mine, The Gordon Foundation, and Community Advisors representing Indigenous governments from across the territory. (NWT On The Land Collaborative, 2017, p. i)

The Collaborative "brings together government, charitable, industry, and other partners to combine efforts and pool resources, including funding, expertise, tools, and equipment" (NWT On The Land Collaborative, 2017, p. 1).

The GNWT has expressed interest in the outcomes of this research, as it would like to develop an evaluation framework for the many land-based programs that it supports throughout the territory. While we understand the desire to evaluate the outcomes of government investments, we recommend that any policy that requires the evaluation of such programs attends to two main issues: 1) program specificity; and 2) the context(s) in which the program takes place. The results of this research affirm that Project Jewel is successful when it is tailored Inuvialuit land and culture, and driven by community needs; as such, the evaluation framework of the program itself must also be tailored to Project Jewel as a particular program in a particular cultural setting (Inuvialuit). We stress that the evaluation framework that was created through this research is by no means static. The current framework needs further piloting. In addition, the needs and values of Inuvialuit change over time, the land changes, participants change, and program foci change; thus, it is imperative that the evaluation framework, too, changes over time. In this regard, we recommend that evaluation should be approached as a process, rather than the use of a static tool. We strongly emphasize that the evaluation framework developed in this research *cannot* be generalized to other communities and programs. Rather, we recommend that our approach to the evaluation be used to inform policy that advocates for evaluation as a process that is tailored to individual programs and cultural contexts.

Project Jewel Programming

First and foremost, we emphasize that Project Jewel's approach to evaluation will need to be refined over time; this is because the evaluation tool that we created in this research is not perfect and, as noted above, it occurs in an ever-changing socio-cultural-geographical environment. Therefore, we recommend that a community advisory board continues to guide and be involved in program evaluation. Like the community advisory board that guided this research,

Elder, participant, and staff representation on the board is crucial to ensure that the evaluation, like Project Jewel itself, continues to engage in encouraging cultural safety by centring Inuvialuit voices and worldviews. We also recommend that representatives from more communities in the ISR be represented on the community advisory board, as this was a limitation in the research that could be addressed in future evaluation. Further, we recommend that the IRC designate a staff member responsible for evaluating Project Jewel. We learned through this research that evaluating Project Jewel takes a large investment of time and effort; while this requires resources, the quality of knowledge gained from an approach that promotes in-depth and culturally safe evaluation will lead to a program that best meets its clients' needs. We emphasize that the evaluation framework that we created in this research should be used to continually understand and develop aftercare services for participants. Through this research, we realized that participants have varying expectations of aftercare programming; aftercare also meant different things to each participant. The evaluation tool that we created can be used to clarify what aftercare is necessary for participants. Further, it can be used to develop and tailor aftercare services to meet the self-identified needs of Project Jewel participants.

While we maintain that our practical recommendations only apply to Project Jewel, there are points that can inform other communities that also seek to improve their approaches to understanding and evaluating land-based programs. In summary, community involvement in evaluation is critical, especially if non-Indigenous staff operate the program. A community advisory board will help promote an approach to evaluating and understanding the program's effectiveness that reflects Indigenous values and upholds the tenets of cultural safety. As such, evaluation frameworks can be created so that Indigenous communities cease to be harmed and misunderstood by Western knowledge systems and ways of knowing. Finally, good evaluation is

not quick or easy. Organizations that operate land-based programs should be prepared to approach program evaluation with adequate staff, time, and financial resources to ensure that high-quality, culturally safe practices are promoted.

Future Research

We are confident that we did justice to CBR best practices and created an evaluation framework that better suits Project Jewel and its participants; however, we hope that future researchers continue to engage Inuit approaches to refine and redefine program evaluation. While we feel that our use of CBR meaningfully involved Inuvialuit community members in a way that enabled us to inform the research with Inuvialuit approaches, we acknowledge that this is not the same as an evaluation framework developed solely by Inuvialuit evaluators. Further, we recommend that future researchers examine how the nuanced differences that exist between diverse Inuit communities in Inuit Nunangat shape culturally safe evaluation. Again, we assert that the evaluation framework and understanding of Project Jewel's successes and benefits presented in chapters two and three only apply to Project Jewel's land-based program in the ISR; we hope that future research is approached with specificity and acknowledges that any evaluation framework that promotes cultural safety needs to be culturally specific. Future research should also examine land-based programs for Inuit in urban settings outside of Inuit Nunangat. To our knowledge, there is a lack of literature on the potential components and benefits of land-based programs for Inuit living in southern urban centres such as Ottawa or Montréal.

Overall, our recommendations for future research reflect that this is an emerging field of research with much work to be done. We hope that Inuit-led and Inuit-determined research that

meets the *NISR*'s (ITK, 2018) standards leads to the further development and documentation of knowledge on these topics.

Final Thoughts

Research has been, and continues to be, a site of colonization, but it is also a site of decolonization and Indigenous self-determination. The research presented in this thesis examined an Inuvialuit-informed approach to evaluating a land-based program in the ISR so that we, the research advisory team and community advisory board, could better understand how land-based programs can offer important opportunities to promote Inuvialuit wellbeing. After reflecting on the research process, and all it has taught me these past two years, I would like to conclude my thesis dissertation with some final thoughts on reconciliation.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (2015) stated that supporting Indigenous peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land are essential to a reconciliation process between Indigenous people in Canada and non-Indigenous, settler-Canadians (TRC, 2015). Fundamentally, I believe that land-based programs for Inuvialuit, and more broadly other Inuit, contribute to these processes of reconciliation. Land-based programs represent an opportunity for Inuit to self-determine their own healing through decolonization; non-Indigenous Canadians can support land-based programs to contribute to reconciliation from some of the harm that settler-Canadians have done to Inuit health and wellbeing. It is my intention that this research will help Project Jewel continue to effectively serve Inuvialuit communities in a culturally safe manner. I hope it helps to develop its services based upon a framework of value that was determined by ISR residents. Further, it is my aspiration that this research can help stakeholders, such as external funders, gain a better understanding and appreciation of land-based programs like

Project Jewel, so that their support can contribute to nation-wide efforts towards reconciliation. In particular, I emphasize that funders need to recognize the human resource capacity that is required to deliver and evaluate an effective land-based wellness program; financial support should meet the program's infrastructure and staff position needs. Finally, I hope that this research can contribute to the further development of land-based programs in a way that is determined and led by Indigenous people and their values so that their communities can receive the most meaningful benefits.

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Appendix A – Ethics Approval

File Number: H05-17-13

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 11/15/2018



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
 Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice Health Sciences and Science REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Audrey	Giles	Health Sciences / Human Kinetics	Principal Investigator
Francine	Darroch	Health Sciences / Nursing	Co-investigator
Meghan	Etter	Others / Others	Co-investigator
Tricia	McGuire-Adams	Health Sciences / Human Kinetics	Co-investigator
Mary	Ollier	Health Sciences / Human Kinetics	Co-investigator
Evelyn	Storr	Others / Others	Co-investigator

File Number: H05-17-13

Type of Project: Professor

Title: Project Jewel: Using Inuvialuit ways of Knowing to Understand How On-the-Land Programming Can Foster Wellness

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
07/10/2018	07/09/2019	Approval

Special Conditions / Comments:
 N/A

File Number: H05-17-13

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 11/15/2018



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <https://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Appendix B – Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Do you think the land plays a role in the healing process for people?

How would this program be different if it were offered in a community centre or another location (not out on the land)?

Is it important to re-connect with the land to learn about your culture?

Does being on the land connect you to your culture?

What is the importance of the connection to the land?

What role does the Elder play in connecting participants to the land?

What challenges do you have to accessing land based programs?

How does being on the land make you feel?

How does being on the land help you think through problems you may be having in your daily life?

Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Appendix C – Sharing Circle Guide

Why did you attend Project Jewel?

What were your expectations and desired outcomes of attending a PJ workshop?

Do you think the land plays a role in the healing process for people?

Is it important to re-connect with the land to learn? Why?

Does being on the land connect you to your culture?

What role does this program play in connecting participants to the land?

What challenges do you have to access land based programs?

How does being on the land make you feel? How does it help you think through problems you may be having in your daily life?

How would this program be different if it were offered in a community centre or another location (not out on the land)?

What was the best part about the program for you?

Did Project Jewel impact your wellness long-term, if at all?

Could you have done just as well if you received a similar program in town?

Did you receive aftercare?

Would you come back to this type of program if you needed assistance?

Would you recommend the program to others?

What changes would you like to in the program?

What is/are the best way/ways to capture this experience?

Appendix D – Photovoice Guide

Can you tell me which photos are most important to you (3-5 photos)? Why?

Appendix E - Contributions

Mary Ollier developed, designed, and undertook this thesis, its theorization, analysis, and writing. Dr. Audrey Giles supported all aspects of the thesis's development, theorization and analysis, and provided assistance and input into writing and reviewing the final product. Meghan Etter and Jimmy Ruttan also provided input into writing and reviewing the final product. For the research presented in chapters two and three (papers one and two), Meghan Etter, Jimmy Ruttan, Peggy Day, Sarah Rogers, Evelyn Storr, Dr. Francine Darroch, and Dr. Tricia McGuire-Adams supported the development and design of the research project; Meghan Etter, Jimmy Ruttan, and Peggy Day supported participant recruitment and data collection; Nellie Elanik, Ruth Goose, and Esther Ipana supported data co-analysis. Papers one and two will be published with Ollier as first author, Giles as second, Etter as third, Ruttan as fourth, Elanik as fifth, Goose as sixth, and Ipana as seventh.