

“PUT ON THE KETTLE:”

Study on Identifying Theoretical Premises of Muskego and Asini Cree Counselling

Methods

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of
Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master’s in Education
in the Department of Educational Psychology
and Special Education
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon**

by

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Fall 2000

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Abstract

This qualitative study was based on the premise that there exists numerous methodologies of counselling that are grounded in non-Western forms of counselling psychology. The problem is that there is very little information to be found on Indigenous forms of counselling. The intention of this study is to begin the process of identifying the theory that underlies Northern Manitoba Cree counselling methods. This study, however, only begins the task of documenting the theoretical premises underlying Muskego (Swampy) and Rock (Asini) Cree counselling and there is much more to done.

The research methodology used for this study incorporated a blend of Western academic theory and Indigenous Research approaches. The Western theories adopted for this study were Ethnography and Naturalistic Inquiry. The Indigenous research was primarily Oral Tradition, as it had been taught to the researcher in her home territory of Northern Manitoba. Both the data collection and analysis phases utilized a blending of Western and Indigenous approaches to identify relevant information regarding theoretical premises of counselling.

Indigenous forms of counselling are grounded on animism and are predominantly intuitive in nature. Although this philosophical basis is in diametric opposition with Western academic psychology, it is no less valid, just different. This study identifies methodologies to demonstrate that there are methods of counselling other than Western psychological methods. The study documents five theoretical premises; the role of language in learning to become and carrying counselling, the role of spirituality in counselling, Indigenous counselors receive training that is structured and systematic, becoming a counselor requires specific inherent personal qualities, and looks at a few techniques of counselling utilized by the Muskego and Asini Cree people.

Acknowledgments

Post secondary education as a process is a journey that one does not travel alone. In my journey, there have been numerous individuals and organizations that have provided various levels of support and deserve recognition as this portion of the journey is completed. First on this long list are the participants of this study, without whom it would not have been completed. These individuals include: my father, the late Charlie Moore of Opaskwayak First Nation, Marie Ballantyne of Nelson House, Manitoba; Alvin Moody of Nelson House, Manitoba, Betsy Buck of Moose Lake, Manitoba, Matilda Apetagon of Norway House, Manitoba; the late Annie Chartier of Chemawawin First Nation; and James Martin of Moose Lake, Manitoba. Thank you all for all you have shared with me.

For their encouragement and financial support, thank you to the Opaskwayak Education Authority of The Pas, Manitoba. The words of encouragement from the staff, particularly Diane Dorian, for encouraging me to complete my studies and Marlene Head for her technical assistance. Similarly, a debt of gratitude is owed to the Department of Educational Psychology for providing me a place to further my education. A special thank you to Dr. W. Pawlovich for his encouragement and support.

To the members of my Thesis Committee, I express my deep gratitude for your contribution to the completion of this thesis. Thank you to Dr. R. Katz for encouraging me to enter a graduate program and for participating on this committee. A big thank you to Verna St. Denis and Dr. Linda Wasom-Ellam, for taking the time out of their busy

schedules to help out on this committee, your feedback was greatly appreciated. A special acknowledgment to Maria Campbell for being a sister, mentor, language and cultural consultant throughout this process. To Dr. Mark Flynn, thank you for believing in my work and helping me to find direction when I was feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. To my friend and colleague Michael A. Hart, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to work on the editing of this manuscript.

To my family, there is no way I can begin to express my love and gratitude for your love and support through my education, both in life and academia. My children April, Michael, Jamie, and nephew Jeremy, you have been my inspiration, motivation and teachers in life. To my brothers, Dan, Zacc and Pat Moore, along with my sister Leona your love, protection and support throughout my life has helped me to accomplish my goals in life. To my brother John, sister-in-laws Maria and Patricia, along with the rest of the family, your love and support is an important part of my life. I am very proud and grateful to be a part of this family.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement, support and dialogue provided by my friends through my post secondary education process. A big thank you to my friends who have accompanied me on this journey: Winona Stevenson, Judy Head, Cindy Sparvier, Joanne Broomfield, Marlene Davey and Kim Ross. There are several other people who have played some part in this process, I apologize for those whose names I inadvertently omitted. Thank you for your friendship and support

Dedicated to the memory of
my parents, Charlie and Myra Moore
and to my children
April, Michael and Jamie

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Chapter One

Introduction

To properly observe an eagle one must endeavor to know not how the eagle appears to the observer, but, how the observer appears to the eagle. (Iroquoian Healer Mad Bear, cited in Doug Boyd's Mad Bear, 1994).

Background

Studying counselling at a university stimulated my interest in investigating Indigenous theory. An article by R. Cockburn (1984) on P.G. Downes' research on northern Cree along with archival documents from the Church Missionary Society were particularly influential in choosing this particular research topic. P.G. Downes' work provided documentation on the existence of Inîñew (*Cree*) counselling methods, archival documents provided supporting cultural information. These documents, along with observations made while visiting with the Kêtêyak (*old people and spiritual leaders*), studying under a traditional Cree counsellor and the encouragement of my mentors lead to the carrying out this study. Studying Western counselling theory helped me to recognize that the Indigenous people I had observed conducting counselling processes were operating from methodological premises. Cockburn's article on Downes' research provided documented evidence on the existence of theory. I wondered why no one had ever written on the theory and methodology that underlies Indigenous counselling approaches. Reading Mad Bear's statement on the eagle, was a reminder that all too

often Western based research is conducted a perspective of how the subjects appear to the researcher.

The study of Indigenous people and their cultures is all too often about “how the subject appears to the observer.” These studies are often conducted out by non-Indigenous professionals wanting information for academic purposes (Meiler, 1991; Kazarian and Evans, 1998). Similarly, this approach is how counselling methodology is taught within Western academia. A counselor is required to observe objectively, to probe and analyze the client and their problem according to their preferred theoretical framework. The goal of the process is to guide the client to some form of resolution on the problem that brought them to seek the aid of a counselor. This clinical methodology is good and often works well. However; all too often it does not work as well for people of Indigenous cultures (Laframboise, Trimble and Mohatt, 1990). As a result of psychological research and clinical practice amongst Indigenous populations, the perspective that has developed amongst many Indigenous populations is that mainstream psychology and research is not to be trusted (Trimble, 1981).

The concept of clinical practice as it is practiced in the Western paradigm is very different from the observations and experiences of “helping” within a cultural setting. Western counselling is usually conducted in an office and a step by step process of assessment, diagnosis and treatment are applied. Historically, the Western paradigm of counselling methodology has not been successful with Indigenous people because Western psychological theory and therapy often conflicts with the cosmology of different

cultures (Katz, 1982; Young, Ingram, and Swartz, 1989; Matsumoto, 1994). This is an indication of the fundamental differences in the epistemologies of Western and Indigenous counselling methods. Western counselling modalities are branches of psychology, as such it is part of the field of social sciences, therefore, western counselling approaches are also rooted in science and scientific truths (Matsumoto, 1994; Kazarian and Evans, 1998).

Historically, when one needed counselling, an ontawîwêw or kêtêyiw (*an old person who is a spiritual leader*) was sent for, or visited at their home and counselling would occur. No formal clinical setting was required. Yet, as my studies progressed and I began to understand the concept of theory, a recognition evolved that the kêtêyak (*old people*), ontawîwêwuk, (*medicine people*) and kiskinawamâkêwak (*traditional teachers*) were utilizing methodological processes in their practices. I had undergone counselling and had the opportunity to observe kêtêyak counselling people from a conclusion was made that, what I saw and heard were specific methodologies that are uniquely Inînêw (*Cree*) orientated. Indigenous methodologies evolved out of cultural philosophies grounded in animistic spirituality. Animism in spiritual practices means that everything in creation has a living spirit that resides within each life form. The beliefs systems of Indigenous people have been viewed as pagan and less civilized than that of European belief systems. Thus, Indigenous people are more apt to seek out counselling within their family or community system because they feel that they will be better understood (Sue and Sue, 1990). When a person is experiencing problems the ontawîwêw does not need

an appointment when to help the person/s. Psychological theories often do not take into account such cultural differences and generally do not accept the psychological paradigms of other cultures (Ridley, 1995). This results in a myopic approach to therapy, where the client becomes uncomfortable and exists the therapy prematurely.

This study presents a different way knowing, one that is not scientific as defined by Western society, but as defined by Indigenous societies. Collins and Colorado (1987) define Indigenous science as being subjective (putting the self into it) and spiritually based. Indigenous scientific methods include talking with Elders, prayer, and ceremonies. This way of looking at science is very different from Western Science. This however, does not mean that one way is right and the other wrong. As stipulated by Kierkegaard, knowledge is not a commodity that is monopolized by one society.

Rheinartz (1991) describes Kierkegaard's thoughts on different forms of knowledge as:

Kierkegaard was not unidimensional but suggested that different ways of knowing are appropriate for different problems. The subjective approach is appropriate for matter concerning society, values, religion and human life. Truth is not merely a matter of the intellect but of the whole person (p. 243).

Kierkegaard's perspective reminds one to be open to alternative perspectives and accept that there are numerous truths. This study looks at knowledge that is different from Western knowledge forms and presents alternative ideas and methods that may strike some as being too alternative or "unscientific" to fit within the confines of Western psychology.

The goal of this study was to seek out and identify some of the philosophies and principles provide the guidelines on how to apply the philosophy. The philosophies and

their guidelines form theoretical premises for conducting counselling among Northern Manitoba Ininewuk (*Cree*). Specifically, the research goal was to obtain data from two Ininêw groups to begin the documentation. The Assini (*Rock*) and Muskego (*Swampy*) Cree were selected as these two groups are geographically similar, and historically have maintained positive relations and share some cultural similarities as a result. Participants in the study included: a healer or, as will be referred to in this thesis ontâwiwêw, kiskinawmâkêwak (*teachers*), and Kêtêyak (*old people*) who have historical knowledge on healing practices. These three groups of people have had traditional knowledge and skills passed on to them through oral tradition and life experience. Part of their responsibility is to teach others the knowledge they have been given. They are the type of oral sources one would go to when searching for cultural information.

The Problem

When I began my studies in western academia, I encountered a number of cultural dilemmas because much of what I was learning conflicted with the cultural teachings that are a part of my identity and life as a Muskego Cree individual. For example, Natural Law is a philosophy that is considered a cornerstone on which Indigenous societies are grounded. It states that all creation is equal, that no man is greater than any other form of life. We are charged with the responsibility to respect and take care of one another, to ensure the survival of all creation. Culturally, I had been taught that growth and development was cyclical and holistic. Euro-Canadian society views creation from a hierarchical perspective with man at the top and, therefore, ruling over nature.

Consequently, psychology views the concept of human growth and development from a hierarchical and linear perspective (e.g. Piaget's stages of cognitive development or Erickson's eight stages of life span development). In order to begin to understand Western psychology, I had to set aside much of my world view as a Muskego person.

In the years spent studying psychology, one of the dilemmas that has recurred for me as a Muskego Cree person is the sense that Indigenous cultural knowledge is not recognized as valid. One instance occurred during a class when Dr. R. Katz (well known for his studies on Indigenous people) was guest lecturing. A student asked Dr. Katz a question on "hallucinations and aboriginal people." Dr. Katz responded to the question by asking why he was being asked the question when there was an Indigenous student present who could answer. I shared the teaching that I had received on such situations. First, a counsellor has to find out whether the person experienced a vision that is a teaching or a hallucination. What appears to be a hallucination, may not necessarily be one, it is important not to jump to premature conclusions. One of my cultural teachers, Marie Ballantyne once stated, "One needs to be very careful because if you tell a person they are crazy, they are going to be crazy." Without Dr. Katz's validation, my response would have been brushed off because Indigenous knowledge systems are not given the same weight as Western academic knowledge. This is the result of Indigenous knowledge systems being for the most part, invisible or non-existent to Euro-Canadian society. Mainstream society is not aware that an Indigenous counselor must undergo years of training in order to gain this knowledge. Recognition and respect as

kakêkiskimiwêw (*counsellor*) or ontâwiwêw (*healer*) can only be gained through years of study with the kêtêyak (*old people*), who are the keepers of such cultural knowledge. This knowledge has been part of Indigenous knowledge systems for thousands of years. It has been passed through the generations encapsulated within the realm of oral tradition.

Whenever I have sat and listened to Kêtêyak (*old people*) speak, one concern that is almost always brought up is the fear that Indigenous cultures will be lost. The problem the kêtêyak are referring is the dilution of Indigenous culture as a result of colonization. As Indigenous communities become more bicultural, traditions are often left by the wayside. Dr. Edward Connors (1994), a Clinical Psychologist, who is from the Iroquoian Nation reiterated this concern when he stated:

It has become evident that the ways of thinking, beliefs and accompanying lifestyles that Europeans brought to this land carry many negative consequences for all people and all of creation. As we have adopted their ways of thinking and acting we become increasingly disconnected from knowledge that allowed us to maintain wellness (p.4).

This point was poignantly made clear to me when I began this project. I asked my father for his help and after he had thought about my request, he agreed to give me guidance. He said, "I will help you because you need to do this work, but, you think like a Whiteman, you cannot think like a Whiteman when you do this work" (Translated version, personal communication, Fall, 1994). When I first heard those words, my immediate thought was, "How could he say that to me, after all the years I have spent learning from the old people and going to ceremonies?" After much contemplation on

this statement, I understood that what my father was saying was that my education and lifestyle would influence how I interpreted the information that I would be given because I was not immersed in Muskego (Swampy Cree) culture. In order to overcome this problem, I had to return to my home community and immerse myself culturally. I had to decolonize my thinking, as my father had intimated.

Another dilemma encountered was that of being a Muskego (*Swampy Cree*) speaker. My fluency was weak, as a result of it was often very difficult to translate and articulate cultural concepts into English. For example, when the research for this study first took form, it was difficult to find the appropriate English translation and once the translation was identified, a problem of articulation arose. The concept that I was attempting to articulate was that in my understanding all societies have a philosophical basis that provide the cultural parameters that govern how life is to be lived. Accompanying the philosophies to govern cultural parameters are instructions on how to apply the philosophies. In Muskego pikihs kêwin (*Swampy Cree language*), I understood these cultural philosophies as onasowêwana (*laws*), and their accompanying guidelines or principles on their application as kiskinawmakewina (*teachings*). Preliminary research indicated that onasowêwina and kiskinawmâkêwina are also present in cultural constructs such as healing.

The problems that were encountered in attempting to frame these cultural concepts in Western terms. There is no literal translation that can truly explain what these concepts mean to me as a Muskego person. The closest translations that has been able identified

to this point in time are the terms: *philosophies* and *principles*. The Gage dictionary (1983) defines the term philosophies as, “the study of the truth or principles underlying all knowledge; or a system for guiding life; such as a body of principles of conduct, religious beliefs, or traditions (p.848).” The term principles is defined as, “a fact or belief on which the ideas are based or a rule of action or conduct (p.894).” While these definitions do not portray the breadth of meaning underlying *onasowêwina* (*laws*) and *kiskinawmâkêwina* (*teachings*), they provide context. From a cultural interpretation a deeper translation of the term *onasowêwina* refers to the ancient laws given to the people by the Creator. These laws or philosophical guidelines have provided the cultural infrastructure of Muskego people since they were put on earth by the Creator. The term principles refers to the concepts that provide the “how to” for applying the philosophies into everyday life and healing. It is from this understanding that the study was conducted and documented in the form of this thesis.

Glossary of Cree Words

As the focus of this study is to identify an Inînw form of counselling, the Muskego and Asini Cree words such as “ontâwiwêw” will be used when referring to a healer or counselor. The terminology is presented as it is used in modern Cree. While the English translation will appear with the word when it is used, to provide a clearer explanation of words used in this study the last portion of this chapter will provide explanations of the terms used in this thesis.

Kêtêyak: Literal translation is elderly people. As the word “elder” does not

exist in the Muskego language, therefore, for the purpose of this thesis the kêtêyak will be used in place of the accepted practice of using the word elder. When referring to spiritual leaders there will be direct reference to this factor.

- Ontâwiwêw: One who heals, an Indigenous medicine man
- Okakwêskimiwêw: One who counsels people
- kakwêskimêw: A person who provides counseling. Historically, this role would have been filled by a kêtêyiw who is a spiritual leader in the community. In modern society academically and culturally trained persons also provide counselling services.
- ahcâk: The living spirit that resides in everything in creation.
- ahcâko pimâtisiwin Spiritual living.
- ackâmi pimâtisiwin: Rock Cree term, akâmiwâtisi pimâtisiwin is the Swampy Cree term, which makes reference to living a serene life.
- Ê-innisiwit: A person born with an innate wisdom and intimate knowledge of the environment.
- kitos: To provide guidance.
- kiyâm: “That’s okay.”
- Maskihkî Ininêw: Medical doctor.
- Onasowêwina: Literally translates to Laws. In traditional societies there were no laws created by man. The laws are called Natural Laws today

because they came from the Creator. These Laws set down regulations on how to relate.

wina awa	“It is that one.”
mwâ nîna:	“It is not me.”
wakohtowin:	Kinship. It is also used to infer that all are related, man, animals, plants, etc.
nôsisim:	“My grandchild.”
ka ocinânâwâw:	Plural form that says that if you do something wrong, you will in turn suffer the consequences of your action.
Oskâpês:	A young man. Also used to refer to the person who helps kêtêyak prepare and conduct ceremonies.
ka mamâtâysicik:	Those who have the ability to perform feats outside of normal human capability.
ka opawâmicik:	Those who have spirit guides or guardians. The spirits most often communicate through dreams, thus the reference to the state of dreaming.
Kiskinohta`wikêwina:	Guiding principles or directives.

Stipulative Definitions

Healing:	The process of counselling falls within the realm of healing, therefore, the term healing will be used interchangeably with the term counselling.
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Philosophies: Is used to refer to the concept of the laws or Onasowêwina that would govern the practice of counselling.

Principles: The operative term used when referring to the Kiskinohta`wikêwina (*guiding principles*) that underlie the philosophies of Inineew counselling methodology.

Summary

Cultural relevancy in counselling approaches is an important factor among Indigenous people. As Dr. Edward Connors stated at the 1994 Native Mental Health Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba: “. . . the faith and confidence of the healee in the healing procedure can be more easily attained when the world views of the healee and the healer match.”

The type of matching that Dr. Connors was referring to is psychology’s belief that when people see and/or hear things of the paranormal they are hallucinating. Psychologically, experiencing hallucinations is considered a psychiatric disorder. Within an Indigenous cultural context, however, this “hallucination” could be a vision with a message or teaching. A counsellor providing culturally relevant counselling services would guide the person to a knowledgeable resource person who would understand what the vision is about. How an Indigenous ontâwiwêw (*healer*) determines whether the person is experiencing a cognitive disturbance or an intuitive message from the Creator is not a haphazard process. This thesis will begin the process of documentation by identifying some of the philosophical premises underpinning the Inineew counselling methodology.

In order to document a theoretical framework of counselling that is philosophically Inînew (*Cree*), one has to deconstruct the existing documentation from a world view that is Inînew and incorporate it within existing oral sources (Decker, 1996). This means that one has to search for relevant documentation, review the material, dissect it from a cultural perspective, and finally begin to assemble the model from all the sources. This step is necessary as there are not as many oral sources available today. It is necessary to do this type of study if Indigenous people are to overcome the adverse effects that the colonization has inflicted upon us.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Cultural variance is a means here and not an end. An experience not expressed to be simply validated, but so it might inform and be informed by other experiences. (Greg Sarris, Keeping Slug Woman Alive, 1993).

Introduction

This literature search initially focused on Inîñêw (*Cree*) healing practices, particularly finding documentation on counselling methodologies. It was hoped that the literature would provide some indication on the theoretical premises underlying Inîñêw (*Cree*) models of counselling. After an extensive search the researcher concluded that, while there is a lot of information on the Cree, there is very little that discusses Inîñêw approaches to counselling. The documentation that exists is problematic as: a) does not recognize the scholastic value of Cree approaches to helping; b) it categorizes all groups (and dialects) under the umbrella term of Cree; c) it is not written from a psychological or counselling discipline; and d) is mostly written by non-Cree people. To overcome the problems imposed by the limitations in literature a broader approach was utilized. The literature search was widened to incorporate documentation from other Indigenous groups of North America, as well as Indigenous cultures globally.

The literature found on theories that would underlie counselling methodology was often in obscure form, written in other academic disciplines and not in the vein of

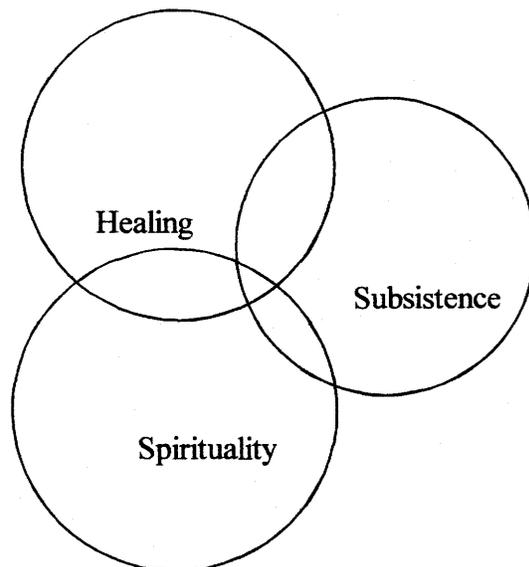
counselling psychology. Healing/counselling constructs are embedded into the fabric of Indigenous cultures, therefore, one has to look into cultural concepts to identify specifics of healing models. The first part of this chapter will look at the Indigenous concepts of spirituality, subsistence, and healing in order to begin to identify the philosophies that underlie counselling methodology. The second part of the chapter looks at some Indigenous cultural principles and knowledge systems that are encapsulated within healing philosophies. The final portion of the chapter looks at some of the key issues that Western psychological theories and counselling methodologies face in providing services to Indigenous people.

The Literature

It is important to recognize that First Nations groups are not all the same. While they share some philosophical similarities, each group is quite different. Hultkrantz's (1987) study of Native American religions found that while Indigenous forms of worship are quite different from Christian forms, the diversities within Indigenous forms of worship are also as diverse as the tribes themselves. This variance in culture and religion is also supported by numerous Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics including: Moore, (1998); Duran and Duran (1989); Sarris (1993); Knutson and Suzuki (1992); and Hart (1997). A more recent trend in the literature demonstrates a recognition of the uniqueness and individuality of Indigenous groups in North America. This is an important step in preserving the diversity and individuality of Indigenous cultures.

To begin to formulate a conceptual framework for identifying philosophies that might

underlie counselling methodology of Asini (*Rock*) and Muskego (*Swampy*) Inineew (*Cree*) groups in northern Manitoba, an understanding of how cultural concepts are constructed is required. In addition, one needs to keep in mind that cultural concepts tend to be so interwoven that it is impossible to explore any one of these concepts in isolation. My understanding of Indigenous theoretical foundations is that all paradigms (science, history, spirituality, politics, etc.) are encapsulated within the cosmology of the people and, thereby incorporated into daily life. To further explore this notion the next portion of the chapter will look at the concepts of spirituality, subsistence and healing. Each of these concepts is an integral aspect of Indigenous cultures. Yet within each concept, dimensions of the other two can be identified. Thus the philosophical basis of each paradigm is overlapping and intrinsically connected to the others. See diagram below:



The diagram depicts the interconnectedness between the three aspects of culture. As this same type of interconnection is found throughout the entire cultural landscape of Indigenous cultures, it is impossible to compartmentalize cultural concepts into isolated categories. This is particularly so with spirituality; as it permeates through the entire culture.

Spirituality

Throughout the history of man, a common thread in all societies is the propagation of religion (Hultrantz, 1987, p.10). North American Indigenous people commonly referred to their form of worship as “spirituality.” Gage Canadian Dictionary (1983) defines spirituality as “a devotion to spiritual things; a state of being spiritual” (p. 1083). It also defines the term spiritual as “having to do with spirits; supernatural” (p.1083). The above description falls short of providing a clear understanding of Indigenous conceptualizations of spirituality. Vine Deloria Jr. (1994) stated that, “Tribal religions are actually complexes of attitudes, beliefs and practices fine-tuned to harmonize with the land on which the people live” (p.70). Spirituality, as the writer has come to understand, is a belief system that guides the process of life.

For Indigenous people, spirituality is more than religion; it sets the basis on how one is to carry out life. Tuesday and Tuesday (1998) describe Anishinaabe perspective on this:

The Anishinaabe people’s spirituality was based on their intimate relationship with the animals and land. The Medicine Society was based on relationships with important animal spirits. Family systems and relations were structured according to the qualities of certain animals(p.104).

The Lakota people also interpret spirituality as faith: "As in all belief systems, faith in a spiritual reality beyond this physical world is essential" (St. Pierre & Long Soldier, 1995). In their treatise on spirituality, St. Pierre and Long Soldier (1995) quote Lakota spiritual leader Standing Bear Paxton: "When I am asked about my religion, I talk about being Episcopalian, but for my spirituality, I go with my Indian ways" (p.20). Spirituality is more than an abstract belief system, spirituality is, and can be experienced as ". . . an everyday tool for basic survival . . ." (St. Pierre and Long Soldier, 1995, p.207). Spirituality is a vital component in the lives of Inînêwak (*Cree People*). In Wolfhart and Aheneke's (1993) The Cree Language Is Our Identity, Sarah Whitecalf states that the Cree culture was given to the people by the Creator (p.53). Within culture are the guidelines on how the process of life is to be carried out.

Within the context of spirituality there are philosophies such as Natural Law that define the parameters of how spiritual practices are to be implemented. These parameters are the foundation on which the relationships between man and other forms of creation are built upon. Rupert Ross (1996) quotes Basil Johnston's statement on how this understanding is embodied within the culture: "From the last to the first, each order must abide by laws that govern the universe and the world. Man is constrained by this law to live, and learn from the animals and the plants . . ." (1996, p.77). This relationship is bound together in a reciprocity that incorporates values such as kindness, sharing and strength that ultimately result in an unconditional respect of all life forms (Katz, 1982; Knutson and Suzuki, 1992; Janzen, Skakum and W. Lighting, 1994; Young, Swartz and Ingam, 1989). Through Natural Law Indigenous people are instructed that

man's role in this reciprocity is to ensure the continuation of life in nature and all other forms within creation.

According to Knutson and Suzuki (1992), "spirituality from an Indigenous perspective is more than what is commonly referred to as demonstrating respect, reverence and humility of the environment" (p.13). Hultkrantz (1987) found that Indigenous people believe that all creation, animate and inanimate has a living spirit in as much as human beings do, and that Indigenous societies have maintained a form of spirituality that is entrenched in animism (see also Knutson and Suzuki, 1992,). All creation, man, animals, plant, insect, along with all that is on and in the earth is reliant on each other to insure the continuance of life. Knutson and Suzuki's example of the Waswanipi hunter is demonstrative of this interdependence:

For the responsible Waswanipi hunter has been instructed by his elders, the body of the animals the hunter receives nourishes him, but the soul returns to be reborn again, so that when men and animals are in balance, the animals are killed but not diminished, and both men and animals survive (1992, p.88)

The environmental perceptions of Indigenous North American people has been encoded in a set of protocols that reminds the people that each person is to respect all life forms and recognize their ". . . spiritual tie to the natural world (Cornell, 1994, p.28)." Every life, animate and inanimate, has a role in the cycles of reciprocity that guarantee the continuance of life on this planet. It was for this purpose that spirituality evolved based on animistic beliefs.

Nature's role in reciprocity is to provide for the perpetuation of human life. In terms of spirituality, nature acts as spirit guides that protect and guide man through the process

of life (Brown and Brightman, 1988; Beardy and Coutts, 1996; Silko, 1996). Nature also acts as an intermediary in the communication process between man and the Creator (Young, et al, 1989, Waugh 1996). An example of how the role of nature has been maintained over the centuries is in how; Sweetgrass, sage, cedar and other plants are still used in prayer and healing ceremonies by Indigenous people because they purify the body, mind and spirit in preparation for prayer. They then carry the prayer to the Creator (Bentley,1998; Young, Ingram and Swartz, 1989). Indigenous kêtêyak (*old people*) continue to teach how nature provides these mediums for communicating with the Creator (Wolfhart and Ahenekew, 1993). There is an abundance of literature that discusses how nature has had a crucial role in the survival and spiritual practices of Indigenous people.

Subsistence

Evolving out of spiritual principles, nature has provided for man's sustenance needs since the dawn of time. As Momaday (1997) wrote, "In the natural order man invests himself in the landscape and at the same incorporates the landscape into his own most fundamental experience. This trust is sacred" (p. 39). This is also demonstrated in the Anishinaabe teaching which Rupert Ross (1996) quotes Basil Johnston in Return to The Teachings: "From the last to the first, each order must abide by laws that govern the universe and the world. Man is constrained by this law to live by and learn from the animals and the plants . . ." (p.77). The Hopi also had similar teachings that referred to a spirit in all life forms: "...not only the heart of man, but the heart of animals, plants and things, and behind and within all forms . . ." (Whorf, 1992, p. 124). Such teachings

provide an indication of the importance of animism in the world view of Indigenous people. Milloy's studies (1991) found that Indigenous people the view of creation as a circle that connects man, land and the Creator and that this circle has never been broken.

This view is embedded in Natural Law, stating that all entities within creation hold a responsibility not only to themselves but to the other species in the world around them. The benefit of following this law was the well being of the people. Joseph Dion (1993) wrote of his fellow Cree: "He was seldom sick and the great outdoors provided him with dependable remedies for his few ailments (p.9)." Dion also noted the vast extent of knowledge the Alberta Cree had of their environment. The writing of academics such as Spry (1991); Milloy (1991) along with Beardy and Coutts (1996) have also noted similar knowledge and relationships with the environment among the Cree in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Martha Johnson's (1992) studies of traditional environmental knowledge corroborates how these systems have survived: "With its roots firmly in the past, traditional environmental knowledge is both cumulative and dynamic, building to the new technological and socioeconomic changes of the present (p.4)." Although there has always been variation in the method of subsistence between tribes, the underlying philosophies of subsistence being rooted in spirituality appears to have been and continues to be a consistent practice among Indigenous people.

Spiritual principles also lay the foundation for the procurement of sustenance materials. Every life form, whether animate and inanimate, has life; therefore, all creation has a living spirit within it (Knutson and Suzuki, 1992, p.102). Respect must be demonstrated by following appropriate protocol in taking plants or animals. Kidwell and

Nobokov (1998) summarized the need for protocol:

In Native American cultures, however, human beings affect the ultimate outcome of natural processes. Appropriate symbols of reciprocal exchange and proper adherence to ritual protocols assure that the spirits will respond appropriately (p.358).

Before taking the life of another entity man as the procurer must recognize and respect the gift the life form is providing. This is done by humbly asking the spirit for aid and not taking more than what is needed (Brown and Brightman, 1988; Milloy, 1990; Mandelbaum, 1987; Young et al, 1989). This recognition of the spiritual entity in life forms was seen in rituals petitioning the spirits of the life form before hunting or harvesting.

Dreams, visions and ceremonies were utilized to maintain subsistence needs.

Documentation by George Nelson in the 1800's, recorded accounts of Cree hunters reliance on rituals and dreams to enlist aid in hunting (Brown and Brightman, 1988).

Petitioning the aid of the spirits could also be sought through dreams, prayer and ceremonies (Young, et al, 1989; Brown, 1996). Petitioning was done with humility and respect for the life of the animals as was instructed by spiritual protocol:

my grandfather we are glad to see you and happy to find that you are not come in a shameful manner for you have brought plenty of your young men with you; be not angry at us; we're obliged to destroy you to make ourselves live (Milloy, 1990).

This prayer exemplifies the acknowledgment of the animal spirit and the reliance of the generosity of that spirit. Both the Plains and Woodlands Cree believed that if protocol was not followed or if animals were mistreated in some way there would be retribution for the disrespect. Robert Brightman's (1993) The Grateful Prey documents the Asini (*Rock*) Ininew (*Cree*) principle associated with breeching protocol: "These offenses are

the type case of pastahowin (noun), the process through which people antagonize the spirit beings . . . (p.103).” In order for the people to survive, there had to be strict observances of the laws that set the parameters on procuring subsistence needs.

The multifaceted nature of the philosophies and principles of “Indigenous spirituality” are conceptually simplistic because it is about the equality in status of all life forms within creation. All forms of life (including the inanimate) are equal and all must share space and the resources of the earth. Katz (1982) found that among the Kung of the Kalahari sharing not only insures a distribution of resources, it nurtures gratitude, collegiality and promotes group cohesiveness between family and community members (p.13). Sharing is a value that exists to ensure the well being of the individual as well as the entire community (Brandt, 1990; Katz, 1982). The principles of sharing applies to all species of creation. Sharing is one of the foundational principles within Indigenous cultures that insures the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of all who inhabit the earth. Principles such as sharing remind people that in order to sustain life we must care for the earth and all who inhabit her.

Healing

Within the context of Cree and other Indigenous cultures, health is viewed as a holistic principle, that encompasses physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being (Morrisseau, 1998; Bopp and Bopp, 1984; Ross, 1996). Traditional teachings on healing among the Cree also infer that the four areas: the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of man are intrinsically connected. In order for healing to occur, one must address all four aspects (Young, et al 1989). Meili (1992) also found a similar

teaching among the Blackfeet expressed through the symbolism of the number 4: four seasons, four directions, four phases of human development and the four decision making phases incorporated in the process of life (p.48). This symbolism is a way to remind people of the need for wholeness in life. In addition, the healing process must also involve both the physical and spiritual worlds (Duran and Duran, 1995).

As a cultural paradigm healing is a process that is acknowledged to be reciprocal, benefitting not only the person seeking help but all involved. Katz (1993) describes the holistic nature of the healing process as an “exchange.” This means that the participants of a healing ceremony are in a giving and receiving communion with the Creator, the spirits and each other. In this exchange, each participant receives healing in some way (Boyd, 1994; Ross, 1996; Duran and Duran, 1995; St. Pierre and Long Soldier, 1995). It is an empowering process to those who participate (Aitken and Haller, 1990; Katz 1982, 1993; Young, et al, 1989). This type of reciprocal exchange maintains and promotes the well-being of each participant as well as the entire community.

In any healing process the healer recognizes that without intervention from the spiritual realm healing cannot occur. All healing, even the simplest form of treatment, has been given to man by the Creator (Ahenekeew, 1987; Brown and Brightman, 1988). These gifts are given through various mediums such as dreams, visions or may be passed on through teachings (Caduto and Bruchuc, 1995; Brown and Brightman, 1988; Brightman, 1993; Katz, 1993; Ahenekeew and Wolfhart; 1993; Morse, Young and Swartz, 1991). This demonstrated in the making of medicine, there is strict protocol that must be adhered to when acquiring the items for making medicines. Indigenous people

understand that there will be retribution if one takes these resources inappropriately (Knutson and Suzuki, 1993, p.13). The retribution may be in the form of the medicine not working or some other form of penalty results for disrespecting of nature (Caduto and Bruchuc, 1995). When a person enters into a healing exchange, whether they do it on their own or go to a healer, she or he understands that spiritual intervention is needed for healing to occur.

The paradigm of healing/medicine was and continues to be a field where general knowledge is accessible to the community-at-large. However, it is acknowledged that a select few are gifted to be Healers and/or spiritual leaders. Meili's (1991) research on Alberta Elders quotes Cree Elder Abbie Burnstick: "Creator gave each person a special talent, and if they are in touch with their spirit and know their special work on this earth, they will flourish (p.143)." Brown and Brightman's (1988) study of HBC trader George Nelson's journals identified healers and/or spiritual leaders to be more gifted as communicators between the secular and the spiritual than the average person (see also Aitken and Haller, 1990; Huntley, 1998; Beardy and Coutts, 1996, Hultkrantz, 1987). On the Plains Cree, Mandelbaum (1988) stated, "The administration of medicinal plants is often classified apart from shamanistic curing proper, but forms of treatments are usually believed to be of vision origin," (p.342). Similarly, Joseph Dion (1993) documented the belief that people had spirit helpers, but that, "few were gifted with the power of communicating with the spirits, (p.55)." Indigenous people generally acknowledge healers as part of the select few who have the ability to work with and to mediate between the secular and supernatural (Katz, 1982, 1993; Aitken and Haller,

1990; Brown and Brightman, 1988; Pomedli, 1996; Moore, 1998). While healers are seen as being inherently gifted as mediators between earthly and spiritual matters, they must be trained and educated to use this gift (St. Pierre and Long Soldier, 1995; Moore, 1998; Brightman 1993; Meili, 1991). In addition to being gifted to heal, healers must have an intimate knowledge of their environment. This training takes many years, despite their inherent gift.

Transmitting Cultural Knowledge

The following section will review literature that discusses and demonstrates how cultural concepts such as spirituality, subsistence and healing are integrated into Indigenous cultures. A consistent observation in literature has been about the predominance of spirituality within Indigenous cultures. The spirituality of Indigenous people was woven into every aspect of daily life, so much so that it was less a religion than a way of life (Waugh, 1996). The spiritual principles were incorporated into the culture through value systems that are transmitted through the language and oral tradition.

Moral values such as respect, kindness, sharing, humility, etc. are ethical principles instituted to ensure that human life is healthy and to promote harmony within oneself, the community and Creation (Janzen, Skakum and Lightning, 1994; Flannery, 1995; Morrissette, 1998). Ellen Smallboy, the subject of Regina Flannery's (1995) ethnographic study, provided the example of greed being looked upon as very undesirable and deserving of a rebuke: "To be greedy was of great fault" (p.38). Freda

Ahenekew quotes the late Joe Duquette discussing how Cree teachings promote the concept of living a clean life:

The Crees after all lived a clean life. They made everything for themselves, for their livelihood, for their life. They also had such respect for children and their grandchildren, telling them how to survive here in the future, (1987, 42).

Living a clean life means that one applies the ethical principles as prescribed by each value. Applying these principles leads to balance in life. Hart's study (1997) refers to this as: "... people striving to become more balanced and in harmony with each other and the environment (p178)." Meili's (1991) study on Alberta Cree Elders found that the old people also shared similar views. "In living life ethically, one's life reaches a point of serenity and acceptance that the material trappings of the world become unimportant (p.67)." Other writers such as Brightman (1993), Hallowell (1992) and Hart (1997), referred to this concept as *pimâtisiwin*, which literally translates to life. The concept that these writers are referring to is living a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Chapter Four will discuss more specific terms for the concept of *pimâtisiwin*. The purpose of the parameters set by the cultural value systems of Cree and other Indigenous people was to set down guidelines for living a good life (*mino pimâtisiwin*).

Being able to live life in a healthy manner is a learning process. In a traditional lifestyle this learning process would begin in early childhood (Mandelbaum, 1987). Duran, Duran and Braveheart (1998) believe that language cultural philosophies and their continued practice have sustained Indigenous people through the colonization process. N. Scott Momaday (1997) describes language as the vehicle that carries a people and their culture through the generations. He states that "language does indeed represent the

only chance for survival” (p.12). Language provides the cohesive ingredient that enables the people to maintain their connectedness with cultural dimensions such as spirituality, subsistence, healing, relationship with the environment, social structures, etc. (Jenszen, Skokum and Lightning, 1994; Kinew, 1996; Harjo and Bird, 1997; Gomez, 1999; St. Pierre and Long Soldier, 1995; Ross, 1996). Duran and Duran’s (1995) study also found that everything about culture is encapsulated within language through the myths, symbols and images of Native American cultures (p.141). Indigenous languages continue to be the storehouse in which the instruction for maintaining balance in life is preserved.

Through language, cultural transmitters such as storytelling are the vehicles that transport knowledge from one generation to the next. Johnson (1992) identifies the historical use of storytelling as a “traditional knowledge system.” As an educational tool storytelling is a “precise art because of the nature of Indian languages” (Deloria, 1995, Brightman, 1993). Maria Campbell’s, Achimoona explains the paradigm of storytelling:

In our old ways, *achimoona* were never written down because we are what is known as an oral people, that means we talked, we didn’t write. All our history, our legends, our way believing, everything was passed down to each generation orally. We had people whose job it was to tell stories. They were our teachers and historians and they had a special and important role in our communities.

There are different forms of stories. Each has a specific purpose. Winona Stevenson (1999) discusses these forms and what researchers need to learn about them:

atayohkewina are sacred stories of the mystical past when the earth was shaped, animal peoples conversed and Wisakejac transformed the earth and its inhabitants through misadventure, mischief and love into the world we presently know. Atayohkewina are the foundations of Cree religion, philosophy and world-view. They would learn that *acimowwina* are stories of events that have come to pass since Wisakejac’s corporeal beingness transformed into spirit presence. That

there are many different kinds of *keyas acimowina* stories about long ago that are often infused with the sacred, because in our traditions, experience and knowledge are not compartmentalized, they do not adhere to modernist fact/fiction, truth/myth binaries.

Stevenson's article explains the role of oral tradition and clearly articulates the protocol that is necessary to access this knowledge.

The stories, in whatever form (*atayohkewina, acimowina or keyas acimonwina*) are told to you to teach you something. Storytelling was a method of education (Lanigan, 1998; Ermine, 1998; Dion, 1993; Dion Buffalo, 1990). Flannery's (1995) ethnographic study on Ellen Smallboy describes how Ellen began learning survival skills in early childhood through stories and observation. "Listeners are challenged to learn" (Archibald, 1993, p.191) because the stories that are told require introspection by the listener. As Elder Jimmy Meneen stated in Meili's (1991) study, "If you are given something from an elder, it's not finished there. What really matters is what you do with it" (p. 60). The teaching is in the story and it is up to the listener to extract the lesson. Through language and storytelling, the cultural philosophies underlying healing processes such as counselling can be explored more extensively.

An Indigenous Perspective of Western Psychological Counselling Approaches

In searching the literature on this topic, one finds that there is a lack of data on culturally relevant methods of counselling from an Indigenous perspective. This is pointed out in the writing of Kazarian and Evans, (1998); Laframboise, et al, (1990); Trimble, (1981); Sue and Sue, (1990); Katz, (1982); Matsumoto, (1994) Flynn, (1992, 1997, 1998) and numerous other scholars. As a result, of academia (particularly

psychology) ignoring traditional knowledge systems the historical relationship between Indigenous people and the practice of Western psychology has been a tenuous one (Darou, 1993; Trimble, 1981; Duran and Duran, 1989). Much of the literature in this genre discusses how the profession of Western psychology has assumed a superiority in knowledge and understanding of mankind, as if it had all the truths. The effect of this bias is that Western psychology has alienated Indigenous people by discounting their cultural knowledge systems and assuming that the understanding of people and their cultures can be universalized (Katz, 1982).

The epistemologies on which Western and Indigenous paradigms of counselling are based are fundamentally different. The epistemology of Western counselling methods are *monocultural* in that it is rooted in European definitions scientific of truth (Matsumoto, 1994; Kazarian and Evans, 1998; Thomas, 1993). In regard to child development, Santrock (1996) wrote, “For the most part, the study of children has been ethnocentric, emphasizing American values, especially middle-class White, male values (p.577).” Edmund Sullivan’s (1990) pointed out psychology’s shortfall in its attempt to explain human phenomena:

Thus Western thought may be said to be limited to a fund of basic schemes of explanation; they can with all their variations, be boiled down to two ideal types – logical analysis...and causal explanation (1990, 21).

Sullivan is inferring that this limitation is due to Psychology’s foundation being constructed on scientific theory. For example, the study of human behavior and

development in Western psychology focuses on the mind because, it is believed, it can be measured and rationalized when captured in abstract form (Flynn, 1997).

This focus on measurement and rationalization in the study of human behavior has been the result of establishing the field as a legitimate science. Flynn (1997) found that, in the movement to legitimize psychology as a profession, a rigid focus on being “scientific” developed artificial definitions for the study of people and their unique experiences . Flynn (1992, 1997, 1998) asserts that studying behavior and cognitive functioning does not provide the whole picture of a person. In addition, not all cultural groups agree with this type of science. Belenkey, et al (1986) also points out that, as a gender, women have different ways of knowing from their male counterparts, and that these differences are not taken into account in psychological definitions of human behavior. The rigidity of Western science does not accept Indigenous perspectives which postulate that science can be carried out from a totally different perspective.

Indigenous scientific epistemologies are grounded on holistic perspectives. The philosophies involved recognize the interdependency of all life forms and they evolve out of spirituality. More recently, Indigenous academics such Dr. Pam Colorado (1988) and Dr. Lillian Dyck (1998) have referred to this concept as “Native Science.” As described by Dr. Colorado, Native Science is:

. . . often understood through the imagery of the tree, is holistic.
Through spiritual processes, it synthesizes information from the mental, physical,
and social/historical realms. (1988, p.50).

Similarly, Dr. Dyck’s (1998) article, “An Analysis of Science through the Medicine

Wheel,” discusses how the holistic principles of Aboriginal science can be incorporated into mainstream science (see also Ross, 1996). An additional philosophical difference between Native science and Western science is that in Native science, truth and knowledge are found through “studying cycles, relationships and connections between things,” not dissecting, categorizing and compartmentalizing (Colorado, 1988). Kidwell and Nobokov (1998) noted that the process of scientific study included “systematic observation and recording cyclical patterns. Native science also endeavors to work with and preserve the environment to ensure the continuity of the life cycles of all animate and inanimate life forms (Kidwell and Nobokov, 1998). Based at opposite ends of a spectrum; scientific and spiritual, it is apparent that Western and Indigenous paradigms have different theoretical focuses on counselling.

Unlike Western counselling approaches, Indigenous teachings instruct that there can be no isolation of the mind/cognitive from the body and the spirit within. Studying only one, two or three aspects does not provide a whole picture. Therefore, an incomplete understanding is formulated from studying human behavior pragmatically (Laframbroise, Trimble, Mohatt, 1990). Dion Buffalo’s (1990) article states the Plains Cree perspective on this topic as: “The Plains Cree approach emphasizes process, symbolism and energy flow, rather than the labeling and prescribing characteristics of Western methods of treating people (p.118).” Western mental health therapists’ refusal to recognize holistic concepts short circuits the helping relationship, making it too sterile and clinical for clients who do not share the same value system (McWaters, 1977; Trimble, 1981). This type of relationship could also disempower the person who sees their problem as more

than singularly rooted (Katz, 1983; Duran and Duran, 1989; Janzen, Skakum and Lightning, 1994; Hart 1997). Within a holistic counselling approach, it is important to ensure that all aspects of personhood,(spirit, mind, body and emotion) are addressed in the therapeutic process. In addition, other factors such as family, community, are all integrated into the therapy (Sue and Sue, 1990). When the *kêtêyak (old people)* counsel, they look at all facets of life not only one or two aspects, such as behavior and/or cognition.

Contrary to the Western paradigm, Indigenous counselling approaches are imbued in spiritual principles. Indigenous perspectives view the development of spirituality in a person's life as crucial; without spirituality, development is not holistic. The result is that the individual's life will remain unbalanced (Hart, 1997). In his study of the Kung, Katz (1982) learned that healing cannot occur without spirituality as it is the synthesizing factor in the healing process. Spirituality connects man with the Creator so that the healing can occur for all who are a part of the process. Western trained therapists or counsellors need to acknowledge and recognize that when counselling Indigenous people, it is crucial to deliver culturally sensitive services.

Psychology, particularly Cross Cultural Psychology, is now recognizing that Western therapists' education is not permeable to incorporating the broad definition of reality as it exists for culturally different people (Katz, 1981; Sullivan, 1990; Kazarian and Evans, 1998). Hogan and Barlow's (2000) study on a counsellor training program in Alberta found that:

The data demonstrates that it is possible for educators to develop a greater

sensitivity to First Nations community values and learning needs. In addition, heightened awareness of different learning styles and appreciation for First Nations traditional teaching methods could go a long way toward building bridges between the two cultures and achieving more effective learning opportunities (p.65).

In 1988, Laframboise argued that the training of psychologists focuses too much on the “university model that emphasizes lecture-dominated and cognitive-centered pedagogy” (p.393). Globally, other Indigenous academics are also critiquing the lack of cultural sensitivity training that counsellors receive in Western academic training. The result is that the training counsellors receive is most often culturally inappropriate to work among culturally different people (Thomas, 1993). Some examples of cultural inappropriateness include: asking probing questions, taking case notes, interpreting client defenses, and providing feedback, (Ridley, 1995; Sue and Sue, 1990). One reason these may be inappropriate is that the Indigenous experience with people asking probing questions, take notes, etc., has been very negative. Some cultures consider such conduct rude; therefore, these behaviors are offensive to many Indigenous people.

There is very little documentation on the training process ontâwiwêwak and kêtêyak (*healers and old people*). Despite the lack of documented material on the training of healers, one can conclude from existing literature that the training process of healers/elders would be quite different from the university model of education. The biggest difference would be that education and training within a Cree or other Indigenous context is based on spiritual principles that are animistic (Cockburn, 1984; Young, Ingram and Swartz, 1989; Morse, Young and Swartz, 1991, Colorado; Katz and St. Denis, 1991). Ontâwiwêwak/kêtêyakê are taught that human knowledge by itself is not

enough to attain growth and development. The Creator is the source of all knowledge and only through connection with the spiritual realm can this knowledge be accessed (Dyck, 1998; Deloria, 1995; Colorado, 1988; Dion Buffalo, 1990). The healer/elder liaises between human being and the spirit world, the spirits communicate through the healer. In turn the Healer interprets the messages from the spiritual realm for the “patient, the patient’s family, or, on some occasions the community (St. Pierre and Long Soldier, 1995; Meili, 1991; Morse, Young and Swartz, 1991).” The training or apprenticing period of a healer/elder is extremely lengthy. Stevenson’s article refers to the Indigenous education process being life long (1999). The education process of a traditional healer is a life journey that begins in childhood and only ends with death. True enlightenment on the teachings are not really understood within the first fifty years of life (Lighting, 1992).

Another major philosophical difference is that the field of psychology, being based on a “scientific” foundation has a tendency to universalize therapeutic expectations (Sue and Sue, 1990). Flynn (1997) writes that this universalization is a result of the psychological practice of abstracting human qualities such as intelligence into clusters of “functional behaviors.” Flynn states that the problem is that the clusters of functional behaviors are specific to the dominant culture. Culturally different people could easily be misdiagnosed because they do not meet the expectations of the therapist or the requirements of therapeutic conditions as prescribed by ‘science’ (Trimble, 1990). Bohart and Todd (1994); Flynn (1992); Laframboise, (1981, 1988); Trimble, (1990); Murdoch (1988); Kazarian and Evans (1998); Santrock (1996); Ridley; (1995) are researchers whose

studies have found that children are so often mislabeled by the culturally biased designs of psychological assessment. Cossom (1998) states that while counselling does have its benefits for some from culturally different groups, it also “generated a great deal of anxiety and fear” when the counselor was unable to deliver culturally sensitive services. “Counselling and psychology has frequently been referred to as “talk therapy” because one’s ability to verbalize is the primary condition for counseling (Sue and Sue, 1990, p.29).” This means that if the client comes from a predominantly nonverbal culture, that person will be disadvantaged by the conditions required by Western therapeutic process.

The therapist who lacks understanding of cultural constructs, such as a holistic view of mental health cannot adequately address the needs of their Indigenous clientele (Tyler and Suan, 1990). The problem has not been totally alleviated with the advent of cross-cultural psychology, because this discipline also tries to identify commonalities and establish standards that can be universally applied (Sue and Sue 1990; Murdoch, 1988; Kazarian and Evans, 1998). The hope of cross-cultural psychology is that by researching a number of different cultures, enough commonalities will be found and the development of a theory on personality can be incorporated within the theoretical premises of psychology (Kaplan, 1961; Sue and Sue, 1990). While it is true that many Indigenous cultures have similarities, they are also very different intertribally (Hultkrantz, 1987; Moore, 1998; Hart, 1997; Bruchac, 1994). The field of psychology needs to recognize and respect the uniqueness of Indigenous peoples and their world views.

Another assumption that is often made is that Indigenous people are acculturated. While there are certainly some Indigenous people who may be considered acculturated,

most are more accurately bi-cultural. The literature demonstrates that most cultural practices continue in somewhat different form as the culture evolves (Boyd, 1994). Indigenous people carry the history and cultural philosophies of their ancestors with them through the languages and oral tradition (Stevenson, 1999). The socialization process was and to some extent is still, permeated with concepts based on reciprocity and aspects of egalitarianism. "Psychologists should recognize that the term American Indian is an imposed social and political ethnic category with little relevant meaning, (Trimble, 1990, p. 48; Duran, Duran and Brave Heart, 1998). Western psychological epistemology needs to recognize that "...culture and ethnicity, too, can no longer be perceived as a frivolous venture (Trimble, 1990, p.59)." Too often society perpetuates their own conceptual image of what is an "Indian," as a result many Euro-Canadians, including counselling therapists do not understand First Nations people and their cultures.

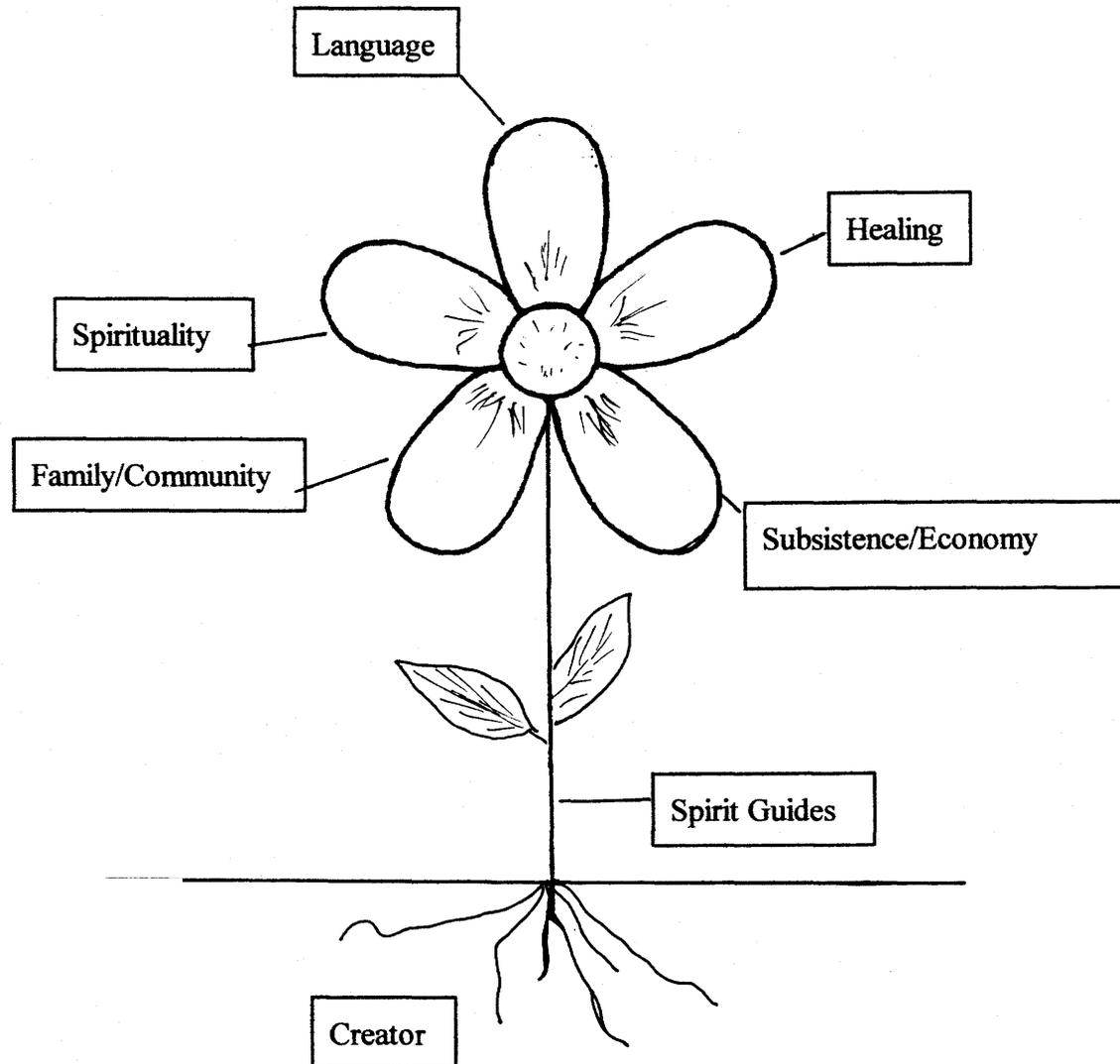
Summary

The literature review for this study found that Inîñêw (*Cree*) and other Indigenous groups who have maintained their hunting/gathering traditions have preserved a number of cultural philosophies despite the impacts of colonization and modernization. The extent to which the philosophies are practiced varies among the groups, however, vital cultural information has been retained through written documentation, oral tradition and in art forms. The literature review also concluded that while there is very little direct reference to theoretical premises that underlie constructs such as counselling, there is enough to support the goal of this study. For example, the literature shows how Inîñêw and other Indigenous cultures are rooted in spirituality (Hultkrantz, 1987; Wolfhart and

Aheneke, 1993). As such, all aspects of culture are tied to spiritual principles. This is exemplified in Natural Law, in which all creation whether animate or inanimate, is connected in a reciprocal relationship (Connors, 1994; Duran and Duran, 1989; Young, et al, 1989; Deloria, 1994). The theoretical premise underlying Natural Law is that within the context of spirituality all aspects of culture meet. The value of philosophies such as Natural Law and principles such as respect is that they provide direction for the roles and responsibilities each entity of creation has in maintaining balance and health in life. The literature indicates that these belief systems are still maintained by numerous Indigenous groups.

Many Indigenous groups believe that it is these cultural philosophies that have sustained them for thousands of years and will continue as long as people continue to preserve them. For example, the flower is a recognized art symbol of the Woodlands and Muskego Inînéwak (*Swampy Cree people*). The flower can be utilized to present a concrete demonstration of the inextricable connection between all aspects of creation (man, animals, plants, birds, insects, rock, etc.). The petals represent aspects of culture. At the center of the flower is the bud which is representative of the role of spirituality for Indigenous people. Spirituality is central to the existence of creation, without it Indigenous people would not have survived. The stem represents the means of communication between the people and the spiritual realm. This link is provided by spiritual guides in the form of entities within nature (birds, animals, plants, etc.). The earth and environment symbolizes the Creator who is creator and giver of life. The

following diagram is an illustration how such concepts might be preserved and conceptualized from a Muskego Ininev perspective:



This diagram captures how culture can be captured in oral tradition and how these type of symbolisms are utilized by traditional knowledge systems retain and transmit cultural knowledge to future generations.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology and Design

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the research methodology adopted to carry out this study. The overall purpose of this study was focused on identifying and developing a basic understanding of the cultural philosophies underlying Asini (*Rock*) and Muskego (*Swampy*) counselling methodology. In addition to this, the researcher hoped to be able to identify the principles or guidelines associated with the application of these philosophies. While the degree of data on this subject is too vast to be covered in a Master's thesis, it does allow the writer to begin the process of documenting the ontology that provides the foundation of a Inînéw form of psychology.

The chapter presents the theoretical framework utilized to carry out the study. The first part of the chapter includes a review of the research theories that were explored in designing the study's framework. The second section of discusses what transpired in the data collection process. And the final section of the chapter presents the theoretical process applied to analyze the data gathered in the research.

Methodology

To choose the appropriate research methodology, one of the considerations was to ensure that this study satisfy the rigors of social science research. In deciding on a cultural study the author recognized that the process had to be guided by Inînéw protocol

for conducting such searches, otherwise the quality of data collected would be affected. The concern with this was that, Western science has a practice of resisting the validity of Indigenous science (Deloria Jr., 1995). Yet, social scientists such as Mishler (1990), proposed that the experimental model of research has not been successful in meeting its own standards of scientific rigidity (p. 417). As a result, in the search for appropriate methodology, several streams of research were considered in attempting to develop a sound research design. Glense and Peshkin (1992) recommend that the researcher take the following into account:

. . . choose techniques that are likely to (1) elicit data needed to gain understanding in the phenomena in question, (2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and (3) make effective use of time available for data collection.

Glense and Peshkin's suggestions were extremely helpful as it provided a criteria for selecting the most appropriate research methodology. In regard to the concern of creating a design that was academically sound, Ted Palys wrote:

It is true some social scientists are committed to the search for casual laws, but it is also true some are not. Some do rely upon experimentation as a preferred mode of investigation, but many others, equally deserving of the title "scientist", do not (1992, p.33).

Palys' statement infers that the parameter of what is considered scientific does not have to be positivistic or grounded within the concept of physical science to be considered scientific. Based on the recommendation of these authors' suggestions, the qualitative approach provided the most suitable research methodology, as this was to be a cultural study.

The process of selecting the appropriate qualitative methodology for this study included a review of several approaches, including: general social science research from Palys, (1992); Rheinharz, (1991); Glense and Peshkin, (1992); Williams et al, (1995), anthropological research from Alusuutari, (1995); Brizinski, (1993); Cruikshank, (1993); Starr and Wilson, (1980); and Guba and Lincoln's (1985) Naturalistic Inquiry; conducting ethnographic studies from Fetterman, (1989), Marcus, (1998); Spradley, (1979), Young et al, (1989); and Ellen; 1984. Equally important in the search for methodology was to look at work done on studies focusing on Indigenous people. Researchers whose work was investigated were: St. Denis, (1989 & 1995); Duran and Duran, (1995); Katz, (1993); Hart, (1997); Omani, (1992); Young, et al, (1989); LaFramboise and Plake, (1983); Darou, (1992). Studying the writing of Indigenous influenced the decision on choosing a qualitative framework for carrying out this study. As this is be a cultural study, the quantitative methodology could not meet the conditions for uncovering the data needed to begin the process of identifying cultural forms of counselling methodology. Quantitative research is also considered to be incompatible to Indigenous cultures (St. Denis, 1995).

Despite an abundance of documentation on the Cree people and their cultures, the ontology or theoretical premise underlying Indigenous counselling paradigms remains a phenomenon that is relatively unknown within the realm of academia. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that in a case such as this, a qualitative study is useful as it, "can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomena about which little is known." In addition, this form of inquiry is useful because:

. . . qualitative researchers deal with multiple socially constructed realities or “qualities” that are complex and indivisible into concrete variables, they regard their research task as coming to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p.6).

The lack of literature on the subject indicates the need for this study and that the qualitative method provides a strong avenue for carrying our cultural research. Williams et al (1995) propose that the qualitative approach is an excellent vehicle for “exploring and gathering facts” that satisfies academic standards for conducting research while maintaining cultural sensitivity in the process.

In their Master’s theses St. Denis (1989), Omani (1992), Hart (1997) and Bruyere (1998) found that it is important to utilize a methodology that is both flexible and culturally insensitive to the people participating as informants in the study. These researchers found that this methodology was useful when utilized within Indigenous approaches as it did not impose artificial parameters on the process. Similarly, Dr. Pam Colorado (1994) wrote: “Indigenous knowledge cannot be decontextualized or shared piecemeal because it loses its effectiveness.” Qualitative thought provides established principles that benefits both Western and Native science and, as a result makes it the most appropriate paradigm for this study.

A consideration in selecting methodology was the suspicion with which researchers are viewed by Indigenous people. Researchers, particularly anthropologists and psychologists, are not trusted by many Indigenous people (Darou, Kurtness and Hum, 2000). Researchers come into the community, are often disrespectful in their treatment of the inhabitants, then, once they have what they came for, they leave. The participants

generally never see the completed product, let alone have any say in the production of the final product and do not see the benefits of it within the community (St. Denis, 1989).

Ultimately, most research that has been conducted among Indigenous people has been for the benefit of other parties, not for the people who are studied (La Framboise and Plake, 1983). Conducting research in this manner among Indigenous populations is disrespectful and no longer tolerated by Indigenous people.

From this perspective, it is important for researchers to respect the people and cultural protocol while conducting studies (Sarris, 1993). In designing studies,

. . . researchers must seek to increase the compatibility between the research and the Native way of life, and ultimately promote the better understanding of the forces that restrict the Indian environment (Laframboise and Plake, 1983).

Research conducted among Indigenous people requires methodology that will be epistemologically compatible with the community. The researcher needs to consider how the research will benefit the people studied. As stated by St. Denis (1989), "For too long, the knowledge of Native people generated by research has been about or on them and seldom has it been for Native people." Other Indigenous academics such as, Sarris, (1993); Omani. (1992); Laframboise and Plake, (1983), and numerous others also stated similar views as St. Denis' on research and Indigenous people. Considering the recommendations of these writers, ethnography and Naturalistic Inquiry were selected to form the basis of the theoretical framework for this study.

Western Academic Research Methodology

Spradely and Fetterman's work on ethnographic research, along with Guba and Lincoln's Naturalistic Inquiry were identified as the Western academic research methods

most suited to the purpose of this study. While these methodologies share commonalities each has specific research techniques that were useful to this study. Ethnographic techniques address both the cultural and academic criteria required for this study. Fetterman (1989) states: "Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture." Similarly, Naturalistic theory is an unobtrusive empirical format that provides a vehicle for bringing forth knowledge that can contribute to existing knowledge and documentation on a subject (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The descriptive and permeable nature of these two techniques provided a good foundation for the task of documenting the philosophies underlying counseling methodology of Northern Manitoba Cree Healers and Elders. Both Naturalistic Inquiry and ethnography met the criteria the study needed for satisfying academic requirements, as well as addressing what would be expected from the researcher by the Indigenous participants.

One ethnographic technique most useful to this type of study is participant observation. Participant observation requires that the researcher spend time observing the informants in their natural environments as they go about the business of living and doing their work (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Fetterman, 1989; Spradely, 1979). In this study, the researcher participated involved in this style of learning since early childhood. Like participant observation, one of the earliest skills Inîñêw children were taught at one time was to, sit, listen, watch, and do not ask questions. Culturally, the skill of observation was crucial to learning, as a keen awareness of one's environment was crucial to survival. Once something had been learned from the observation, the child could ask questions, however, the child was required think about their questions

carefully. If you asked a silly question, chances were that you and your query would be ignored. As one of the primary teaching methods amongst Indigenous people, observation was instilled from infancy. An example of this is the tighinagan, or cradle board, which works not only to keep the child protected and warm, but also to develop the child's sight, smell, and hearing senses. These skills are a critical aspect of participant observation as it requires the researcher to watch and note details about the person/s being observed.

Childhood cultural education provided an advantage in applying participant observation as a research technique. In the learning process of a person who is engaged in an apprenticeship the person spends a lot of time observing and participating as a helper. This aspect was beneficial in learning about Indigenous counselling methods and research as this technique requires the inquirer to spend a period of time in the participant's environment in order to gain intimate knowledge of the participant and their world (Spradley, 1979; Fetterman, 1989; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Living as a Muskego (*Swampy*) has provided the researcher with the advantage of having learned participant observation, as well as a fairly substantive degree of intimate knowledge on the cultural nuances of the people who participated in this study. What was missing was detailed knowledge and comprehension of the theory on the learning processes ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) or kêtêyak (*old people who are spiritual leaders*) undergo in their training. This technique is one that is culturally compatible with the Indigenous groups that would be involved in the study as it is experiential and non-intrusive.

The other aspect of ethnographic methodology adopted in the design of this study is the framework for the interviewing process. To stimulate the interview Fetterman provides a framework that guides the interview from a panoramic to a detailed view of the subject. The interviews began with “grand tour” questions, which brought together an overview of the participant’s world (Fetterman, 1989, p. 51). The questions were intended to focus on the role of a ontâwiwêw or kêtêyiw (*healer or old person*), their designated capacity, how one becomes a healer, and if, the Inniwêw people (*Cree people*), ever had a way of conducting counselling? These questions are “designed to elicit a broad picture of the participant’s or native’s world (Fetterman, 1989).” In this study, grand tour questions included: How does one become a healer? How did you become a maskiki ininêw (*medical doctor*)? (Note: the use of this term created problems in how the question was responded to; this issue will be discussed further as a limitation later in the chapter.) In cases where the person was not a healer, the question was: How does one become a maskiki ininew? Did Cree people (Ininêwuk) ever have a way of Kâ kêskimiwêwin (*counselling*)? Once the focus of the interview has been established, or, as referred to by Fetterman, “the broad picture developed,” the details of the picture must be filled in.

Fetterman (1989) believes that in order to bring out specific information about the picture being created in the interview, the interviewer must ask specific questions on the subject being discussed (p. 52). To accomplish this task, the following questions were used in the study: What are some of the onâswanâ (*laws/philosophies*) that a healer must follow? How is counselling done by Ininêw (*Cree*) healers? What about teachings that

instruct you on how to apply the onâswanâ? What are the teachings that guide a healing process such as counselling? The goal of these questions was to elicit clearer details on specific teachings and protocol that is related to being a healer and how they guide the work of a healer. Initially the intent was to ask the questions in an orderly manner, asking questions one through five in order. To meet cultural protocol how and when these types of questions are asked was to be guided by the research process, not in sequential order as originally envisioned in the design process.

The interviews had to be carried out in a culturally appropriate manner. This required that the research process be flexible and allow for any adjustments that would be necessary. During the interviews, Guba and Lincoln's (1985) emergent design became useful as it allows the research process to unfold naturally. Emergent design is specifically intended for such instances.

. . . the very requirement of emergent design, in which succeeding methodological steps are based upon the results of the steps already taken, implies the presence of a continuously interacting and interpreting investigator. At times only simple refinements in procedure or a simple adjustment in questions to be asked may be called for. . . . (p.102).

The design of the research process required cultural protocol to guide the interview process. This meant that interrupting the speaker to ask specific questions would at times deviate from Indigenous research methodology. Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend that when the researcher encounters methodological problems, one should use the methodology most appropriate for the problem,(p.36). In this case, Lincoln and Guba's, "emergent design" seemed most appropriate.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that due to the nature of investigating human phenomena, it is not possible to design a study in detail because how the information gathering process unfolds in the field is unknown. The researcher must be thoroughly versed in the purpose of the investigation, so that he or she can follow the flow and formulate the appropriate questions as the process unfolds (p.102). This aspect of emergent design is theoretically appropriate for following cultural protocol regarding how one asks questions on cultural teachings. Emergent design was particularly useful in aiding the researcher when the participant was unresponsive to a question. In such cases, the researcher had to decipher whether the lack of a direct response was due to communication problems or that the respondent had a specific agenda in sharing information with the researcher. Allowing the participants to guide the process resulted in retrieving valuable data. Emergent design allows for the process to unfold naturally and is permeable for incorporating other forms of research theory into the process.

Indigenous Research Epistemology

With the advent of Indigenous scholars entering academic fields is that there has been a consistent lobbying toward recognizing First Nations scientific epistemology within this sphere. Academics such as Verna St. Denis, Leo Omani, Winona Stevenson, Yvonne Dion Buffalo, Pam Colorado, Michael Hart, Bonnie and Eduardo Duran Vine Deloria Jr., Roland Chrisjohn and many others have stressed the need to apply Indigenous theories of research when studying Indigenous populations. These scholars have also stipulated that research should benefit the community and the people who are the focus of study. The *kêtêyak (old people)* of Indigenous communities have been saying this for many years. It

is through Indigenous academics reiterating the words of the kêtêyak that their voices continue to be heard.

By applying cultural epistemology in conducting their studies, Indigenous researchers have moved this form of research theory into the academic realm. Research designs need to incorporate, if not, base their research theory on Indigenous epistemology to ensure that cultural requirements are maintained. The methodology must be unobtrusive, so as not to offend the participants (Katz and St. Denis, 1993). Non-indigenous academics such as Archibald, (1993); Katz, (1982 & 1993); Brizinski, (1993), have also discussed the need for research that is done in a manner that is respectful of Indigenous people and their culture. Darou et al (1993) listed a number of conditions for conducting respectful inquiry:

- (a) learn at least a little of the language (go as to understand their world view and simply to be able to greet people)
- (b) talk to a wide variety of people
- (c) specify the exact location and ethnic group when writing reports
- (d) do not write in a formal style
- (e) be careful in interpreting motives for behavior until you have a deep understanding of the culture
- (f) avoid generalizations based on impressions
- (g) read the same technical material that the local professionals must read

The list instructs on how to avoid fundamental errors in establishing research practices.

The precedent set by Indigenous academics conducting cultural research provides valuable resources for other researchers. More importantly, it promotes and supports the demand for respectful studies that are beneficial to Indigenous people.

These recommendations are procedures that need to be incorporated as part of the research design. This will ensure the field work and the final product of research are carried out appropriately. When conducting the actual data collection in a cultural study, the inquirer needs to follow specific protocol as cultural information is retained within the sphere of oral tradition (Marshall III, 1995, p. 134). Protocol is required because there are detailed steps for accessing this type of information from the *kêtêyak (old people)*. Failure to follow protocol, as pointed out by Stevenson (1999) in her article “The Social Relations of Oral History,” will result in an inability able to access the information that is being sought (p.32). The following section will discuss oral tradition in more detail and describe how oral tradition was incorporated into this study.

Oral Tradition in Research

Prior to beginning this research process it was understood that the information on counseling methodology being sought for was encapsulated somehow into oral tradition. Gee (1985) believes that through the gift of the “narrative or storytelling” human beings record personal and communal experience in order to make sense of their world, thereby making survival possible (p. 27). As stated in Chapter two, storytelling, otherwise known as oral tradition, is the method of transmitting history and cultural teachings from generation to generation amongst Indigenous cultures. In “Voices of the Hudson Bay Cree,” Flora Beardy and Robert Coutts (1996) state:

Oral tradition is as old as history itself and like the written word, is a form of expression with layers of meaning and intent. Ancient stories passed down through generations – usually referred to as myth – to description of daily life and subsistence strategies, oral narratives represent a continuity between the past and present

Oral tradition/storytelling provides is vital aspect of the Indigenous education process. Not only is it a valuable skill to have, it stores the identity, history, and entire culture for the people. As such oral tradition has an important role in research. The researcher need to keep in mind that one does not just request a story or information.

When a story is shared, whether it's a legend with some form of instruction, retelling of a past event there is almost always a purpose motivating the sharing. What this means is that when one receives a story or are told something from a *kêtêyiw* (old person) or a storyteller, the person must search for the lesson or the meaning in what the person has shared. In order to access teachings or stories from anyone one must:

1. Present the individual with an offering (e.g. tobacco or some form of gift) before you make any requests or questions.

When seeking cultural information from an individual who is a oral historian or an authority on culture there is protocol and pointers that the inquirer must remember. In addition, if you are asking a *kêtêyiw* or someone for information that is within oral tradition, these additional steps must be included.

2. After you have told the person why you have come and presented the tobacco, it is important to present a gift to the *ontâwiwêw* (*healer*) or *kêtêyiw* (*old person*) to demonstrate your appreciation of the knowledge she/he has shared with you.

3. The time frame of "how" and "when" the inquiry takes place is not decided by the inquirer. Instead, the person you are seeking information from decides on how the process will transpire.

4. The inquirer cannot ask “why” questions. If the person sits and says nothing you must wait until they are ready to speak. The respondent will give the information, and then it is up to the inquirer to find the teaching(s) in the information given.
5. It is acceptable to return and discuss the learning you have gleaned from the information or story shared by the person.
6. The inquirer cannot claim ownership of the information, but rather must acknowledge the source of the information.
7. Another important factor in utilizing oral tradition in research methodology is the issue of language. The researcher must be specific in the information seeking. It is important that the questions asked are framed correctly. Translation becomes problematic with incorrectly framed questions.

Following protocol does not guarantee getting the information requested or you may get the information in obscure form that will require some or extensive thought and exploration on the part of the inquirer. As stated by one teacher, “you get the information that you need. It is up to you to find the reason that you have been given the information you were given” (personal communication, Marie Ballantyne, circa 1992).

Data Collection

To address academic and cultural requirements, the following steps were incorporated into the methodological framework for collecting this study’s data.

1. As much time as possible was spent establishing relationships with each of the research participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1984; Spradely, 1979; St. Denis, 1989).

The participants were the primary sources of the study. Although additional data was

brought in from previous teachings, the information provided by the participants triggered the remembrance of the additional data.

2. Several hours were spent in informal conversations on various subjects with most participants subjects. For two of the participants this was not possible (Guba and Lincoln, 1985; Spradley, 1979). For the most part interviews were conducted within an informal visit setting.
3. For this study, three participants were taped in actual conversation for a minimum of 1-2 hours as they had agreed to taping their interview (Guba Lincoln, 1985; Spradley, 1979). Two participants chose not be taped but were willing to be included in the study. In addition, the data includes teachings learned from my father. I include these as they were passed to me to share.
4. Member checks were done with participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1985; Sprdley, 1979) when possible. I was not able to go back to ensure that my interpretation of the data was accurate or to follow up in any way with two of the participants as they passed on during the process of this study.
5. In an effort to capture the historical and contemporary perspectives of healing practices, this study included six participants: one ontâwiwêw, Alvin Moody is in his late 80's, two kêtêyak The late Annie Chartier and Matilda Apetagon who were in their 80's and had lived traditional lifestyles ways. These participants were identified by one or more of their community members as having knowledge of the old ways. Two were women who been taught about medicine and healing. Marie Ballantyne has spent over 20 years learning and practicing traditional counselling

methods, Betsy Buck was a midwife for the community of Mosahkiken (*Moose Lake, Manitoba*) prior to the arrival of medical personnel being stationed in their community. One participant James Martin was a younger man who has spent many years learning about culture and is academically trained Cree linguist. The selection of these participants was in accordance to Guba and Lincoln's (1985) and Spradely's (1979) recommendation of representative sampling.

6. The participants included people known as being knowledgeable and/or respected in their field of practice by their peers and/or the community in which they reside.

Each participant was recommended by someone in their community as a reliable resource.

7. Another approach to sharing knowledge that is required for conducting this study is oral tradition. It is, therefore, essential to include theoretical back ground on this perspective. Some sources for this documentation came from Sarris (1993), Finnegan (1992), Riemer (1984), Winona Stevenson (1996 & 1999), Maria Campbell (1985) and personal communication with numerous oral sources before and since 1995.

Both academic and cultural requirements were adhered to throughout the implementing the data collection process. The interview process; however, did not work according to my thesis proposal. There was a problem with the translation of the questions from English to Cree. The questions, as I had translated them were awkward and not clearly articulated, thus, the old people had some difficulty with understanding the questions I had asked. Despite this problem, the data collected from the interviews was important to

developing a conceptualization of Indigenous philosophy. The following is a narrative of how the data collection process transpired. This narration is demonstrative of how the process of oral tradition can develop.

The Research Process

Essentially, the old people conducted the process according to their way. For example, when the idea for the topic of this study was formulated, I went to my father to ask for his help. After I explained what I wanted to do and asked if he could help me, my father simply said “hmm” and responded no further. I could not do anything until he responded to my request. He phoned me two weeks later and said, “I have thought about what you asked and I will help you.” He also informed me that his reason for helping me was that I needed his assistance as I was not culturally prepared to carry out this process on my own without the appropriate guidance (translated version). From that point on, until he passed on, he made a point of spending time with me to instruct me on things I needed to be aware of for my research and writing. Similar experiences occurred with other participants.

On my first visit with Alvin Moody, his daughter, Clara Yetman, accompanied me to introduce me to her father. We walked in the house and when the old man saw me he laughed and said in Cree, “I recognize you, you came to visit me in my dream last night. You want to learn about healers.” He got up from his chair, went to the kitchen table and told me to sit down. I shook his hand and told him my name. He then proceeded to talk about how he received the ability to heal. He explained how he received his ability to heal through a dream and in this dream he was instructed on the process to follow.

During the first visit he spoke of the process that occurs when someone comes to him for healing. In the initial visit, he talks with the person and asks them to come back the next day. During his sleep that night he dreams of what is wrong with the person and what he is to do. In earlier conversations with his daughter Clara and granddaughter Jackie, I learned the old man had been a herbalist, yet he would not speak of this. When I attempted to probe this aspect of his healing practices he would not discuss this. He provided the information that he had been guided (through his dream) to give me. During this visit Alvin lamented on the power of healing and how it is not him that does the healing, it is the Creator. He spoke for about an hour, then said: "ekwani" (*that is all*), then got up and left the table we had been sitting at. I asked if I could come back and see him again and he agreed, then Clara and I left. It was not until after we had left that I realized that I had not followed the methodology or the questionnaire as set out in the thesis proposal.

The study began as set out in the methodological framework developed in the thesis proposal. I repeatedly struggled to apply the methodology as set out in the proposal. One difficulty was the interviewing process. It felt so unnatural because of the need to stay within the research parameters of the academic regime. It was a form of behavior that I was unfamiliar with when interacting with the *kêtêyak (old people)*, and it felt artificial. I felt compelled to ask the questions according to my proposal, but, in addition, there were epistemological problems with the questions (so I thought) because the interviews were not transpiring according to my design. I thought that I must have done something wrong either in the design or implementation. The interviewing processes of

the first two Elders and one old person did follow the questionnaire at all. The old people would answer some questions and not others. In one interview, the person related her childhood experiences and what she remembered in relation to the question I asked. Due to the cultural mores learned in childhood, I could not probe the reasons why no response was given to certain questions. It was not until later when analyzing the data that I recognized the important teachings the kêtêyak had provided to me and that they had provided the data I needed. Annie Chartier and the teachings she left with me through her humorous stories are a memory I will carry with me for many years. This is how oral tradition or storytelling works; it is done in a manner that implants the content of the teachings within your memory system.

Up to this point in the study, when seeking new learning, I would find the appropriate time to ask for the information for which I was searching. With a kêtêyiw (*old person*), kîskinawmakêw (*teacher*), or ontâwiwêw (*healer*) tobacco and a gift would first be presented. If it was a person whom I had spent a lot of time with previously I would offer a cigarette to ask a question or request to discuss the subject. Although as one often finds, it is not necessary to ask, because the person would see me make a mistake or pronounce something incorrectly. At this point, the person would talk to the individual and share a story or ask the person a question. Similarly in this study, by the time the interview concluded or upon reviewing the interview, I would realize I had received a teaching. It was like Marie Ballantnye had stated, I received the information I needed. After a couple of attempts at implementing the questionnaire, the conclusion was reached that the formal interview style was not working.

One methodological problem was that the questions were developed within a Western academic framework. As such, the questions were very difficult to translate conceptually, and sometimes the old people could not get a clear picture of what I was asking. I attempted to address this problem by enlisting the aide of a Cree linguist. First, Mr. Martin reviewed and translated the questions, however, the instrument was still too cumbersome. At this point, Lincoln and Guba's concept of design emerging out of the research process was very helpful. After much deliberation, I recognized that the process would have to rely on the cultural form of transmitting knowledge. The questions were set aside and replaced by conversation, which is what the old people had been doing despite my effort to stay within the research design. In most cases, I would state to the person what I was attempting to do with the study and the particular information I was seeking. At that point the participant would begin to relate oral tradition or personal memories of community events and history.

One of the cultural teachings that became an important guiding thought was that when a person is following their life path, the process for completing a task will unfold naturally even when one does not have a good grasp of what they are doing. Marie had stated: "...You will receive the information that you need . . ." And my father had said (translated), this work is important but you must do it right, you need someone to guide you. The data that was collected was in accordance with what my two primary teachers had predicted: that as long as the process maintained cultural integrity, everything would work out. When the study began, the enormity of the task carrying out this study appeared daunting. In addition, factor was that my conviction on the supernatural

aspects in which Inîwêw cultures are grounded in wavered, which resulted in impeding the data analysis process. This process of carrying out the study resulted in reinforcing my conviction of the value of the cultural teachings, particularly the importance of spirituality in all aspects of life.

Data Analysis

The data included in this study includes knowledge and information obtained through the research process, as well as teachings taught to the researcher throughout since childhood. The information stemming from teachings provided in early childhood is included as it relates to the data gathered during the process of this study. It is included because, in carrying out this research project, the realization came to light that many things I had been taught in child and adulthood were also relevant to the study.

The information in this analysis is only a beginning. As is so often the case when studying traditional teachings, there is much more to be gleaned from the data. The methodological process for analyzing the data incorporated the Naturalistic Inquiry method, as well as an Aboriginal framework which evolved during the process of studying the research data. The example of Annie Chartier's story on her experience in learning about how to use moss for diapering babies reminded me of several cultural teachings including the need for maintaining the cultural integrity throughout the entire study. To maintain cultural integrity this portion of the analytical framework also incorporated the experiences and writing of Indigenous scholars who have conducted research from a cultural perspective.

Data Analysis Methodology

The key identifying factors in analyzing the data was to find the relationships to either philosophies or principles that would indicate some form of theory in Asini and/or Muskego Cree counselling approaches. By applying the Naturalistic Inquiry analysis process, as well as an Indigenous framework, several themes were found in the data, five of which will be presented in this study. The thematic areas presented in this chapter demonstrate that there is a theoretical basis to counselling methods and that the theory underlying the methodology evolves out of cultural philosophies and the principles accompanying these philosophies. It should also be noted again that the information presented in this study only focuses on the Asini and Muskego Cree perspectives and is not intended to be representative of any other cultural group.

Western Academic Methodology for Analyzing Data

The Constant Comparison method in Guba and Lincoln's (1985) theory occurred naturally throughout the research process. According to Guba and Lincoln, "the process of data analysis is essentially a synthetic one, in which the constructions that have emerged (been shaped) . . . are constructed into meaningful wholes" (p.333). As each interview was carried out and completed, I would recognize similar data that had appeared in previous interviews and/or data that had been encountered in the process of the literature search. For example: (a) Both Marie Ballantyne and Alvin Beardy spoke of the special gifts of a person who was an ontâwiwêw (*healer*); (b) Mrs. Apetagon made reference to "gifted abilities" when she spoke of the medicinal knowledge that Ontâwiwêwak (*healers*) were given and how that knowledge seems to have disappeared with the old medicine people; (c) Mrs. Chartier used the term Kâmamatihîsichik

(*Healers*) when she referred to medicine people; and (d) while analyzing the data, I remembered hearing people sometimes using the term “*êkimamatisit*” (*referring to extraordinary or paranormal ability, or beyond human ability*) when they were telling stories. Through constant review and comparison of the content of the interviews, their similarities were identified and noted.

In some cases, something a respondent said was identical to something I had previously read. For example, when talking about her grandfather, Mrs. Chartier related how he used slivers of wood from trees that had been struck by lightning to heal toothaches. This information was identical to the information in Doug Boyd’s Mad Bear (1994). This type of information is very important in analyzing data because Mrs. Chartier, like most of the participants was not fluent in English and preferred to communicate in their own language, Asini or Muskego Cree. Mrs. Chartier, had within her childhood recollections the same knowledge an Iroquoian healer had related to Doug Boyd. Yet, she would not have ever met nor would she have any knowledge of this Iroquoian healer. These types of occurrences between data provided by the participants and published documents strengthened the validity of the data.

Upon completing the collection, the interviews were transcribed into English and reviewed several times. In addition, the tapes were reviewed several times to insure the translation was accurate. Reviewing the data in this manner resulted in identifying two distinctive patterns in the data. One pattern was that the data related to the actual state of being or becoming an *ontâwiwêw* (*healer*). The other strand of data related to the more abstract concept of the philosophical basis for the “healing process.” It is this

philosophical basis that provides the theoretical premises for being an ontâwiwêw (*healer*) and the process of healing. Guba and Lincoln (1985) refer to this process as unitizing; meaning the process of organizing the data according to the value it holds for the purpose of the study.

In order to complete the next step of analysis Guba and Lincoln (1985) recommend that the unitizing process fulfil the following criteria. First, the data has to be heuristic, in that it contains “some action or understanding the inquirer needs to have” (pg. 345). In the case of this study, the two streams of information identified in the data contain both the act of being or becoming an ontâwiwêw (*healer*). The theoretical information contained in the data also brought about a better understanding of this form of Indigenous psychology. An example of this when some respondents stated that an ontâwiwêw must be clean (referring to the soul) while other respondents also stated that a healer must live a good life. Secondly, Guba and Lincoln state that the data “. . . must be interpretable in the absence of additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out in” (p. 345). All respondents spoke of the role of dreaming and how the Creator communicates with through the dream process. A person who is to be an ontâwiwêw is informed through a dream of what will be their specific gift of healing. The unitizing process brings together related data such as the role of dreams in both the process of becoming a healer and in processes carried out by healers. Once the data was organized into units of meaning, the data analysis could move into creating categories in order to better understand the world view of ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*).

Categorizing is the second stage of the constant comparative method and requires organizing data according to their inter-relationships. The process of categorizing identifies, pools together and tests similar data to make sure each piece of data included in a category fits with like data (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p.347). For instance, one of the categories created was: Qualities of an ontâwiwêw (*healer*). All pieces of data pertaining to the type of characteristics (lifestyle, abilities, etc.) required of a person to become an ontâwiwêw are included in this theme. In this project, the themes that were identified resulted in the creation of five categories: The Importance of Language; The role of Spirituality in Counselling; Learning Processes; Qualities of a Elder/Healer; and, Counselling Techniques. The data for each category was taken from the interviews.

Other knowledge gained prior to the research process was incorporated during the data analysis process when appropriate. For instance, during the analysis, when looking at pieces of data that was focused on the gifts of healing of the kâmatihîschick (*those with extraordinary healing abilities*) or ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) were seen to possess. Also recall of childhood memories related to the term “êmatihîsit” being used to describe people capable of extraordinary abilities, such as being able to heal with their hands contributed to formulating this category. This type of information, or in some cases the research data itself, had similarities to something I had read previously in an article or book. Together, these pieces of information helped to formulate the themes for creating specific categories.

In addition to this, member checks were used to access additional information to fill gaps in the data. Guba and Lincoln (1985) describe this step of the research as

“...whereby data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected” (p. 314). This step was carried out when a more complete understanding of a particular term or statement from the data, or additional information was required to complete a category. In cases where one participant had said something that I had not heard before, such as when Annie Chartier first used the term “kámamatihíchik” (*healers*), I asked other participants if they also had heard of this term. This process is also part of what Guba and Lincoln called triangulation, where information is received from one source and confirmed out with another source. The translation process was instrumental in prompting memories of teachings received many years prior. Using additional sources of information and the member checks provided confidence in the accuracy of the data analysis.

An Indigenous Approach to Data Analysis

While working on analyzing the data from this research, my father’s (1994) advice played an important role in altering my way of thinking about the data. As he stated, “You think like a whiteman. You cannot think like a whiteman when you do this work.” These words were stated to remind me that the entire study had to be grounded in Muskego Cree culture and language. These words were a reminder to maintain constant vigilance and stay tuned to being Muskego Cree in order to preserve the cultural integrity in completing this study. To preserve the cultural integrity the data analysis process incorporated: (a) many hours with the participants of the study; (b) attendance of cultural events and ceremonies; (c) returning to live in my home community and

interaction with my culture and language on a daily basis; along with, (d) many years learning from Aboriginal and Western scholars on understanding human psychology and conceptual applications of counselling/healing methods. Analyzing data from an Indigenous perspective required a holistic perspective, that is, incorporating all aspects of life into the analysis process.

When pondering on how to demonstrate the process of analyzing the data from an Indigenous perspective, a story came to mind told to me by Annie Chartier on April 30, 1999. Mrs. Chartier did not want me to tape record any of the sessions I spent with her. I did, however, record our visits in my field notes journal upon completing each visit. Annie began the story by describing life at the Old Fort (the original site of the community of Chemawawin before being forced to relocate by the Manitoba government. She reminisced how they used to pick berries, how the *kisêniwuk (old men)* and *notokwêsiwuk (old women)* would make *wuski cimana (birch bark canoes)* and how some people still used *askiyaw (moss for diapering babies)*. She stated that the event she was sharing occurred when she was a young inexperienced mother. Her story also suggests that the church had already influenced major cultural changes in the community. This is demonstrated through her husband's instruction forbidding her from using certain cultural tools in caring for their child. He considered the old ways evil. Before she went into her story, however, she explained how the moss was picked during the day, cleaned and hung overnight to dry. She laughed and began to tell me her story about moss:

When she was a new mother, Annie used to wonder about using moss for diapering her baby. Her husband had forbidden her from using moss, it was too Indian (pagan). One day when her husband was playing baseball with the other

men in the community, she saw this old lady coming back into the community with a load on her back. She asked the old lady, "What are you hauling?" The old lady replied, "Askiyaw." Annie asked if she could have some and the old lady gave her some. She went into her house and wrapped the baby in the moss. Almost immediately, the baby began to cry. The crying got worse and the baby seemed to jerk once in awhile. One of her neighbors came to see what was wrong, Annie asked the person to run for her husband. The husband came home, took the baby and then began to unwrap the baby to check what was wrong. When he opened the bundle, there were ants crawling all over the baby's body (translated version).

The old lady and I sat and laughed over her story, it was very funny. Initially all I recognized was the hilarity of the incident. A few months later, a recognition of the importance of this story in relation to this research project and the treatment of the data evolved. From this story, I was reminded that you do not use anything you do not know anything about. It was a reminder that before taking and using anything, one must follow the protocols and take the time to develop a thorough understanding of its purpose, how it works, and what are the consequences of making errors or misusing the knowledge that has been shared. There will be repercussions for not following protocol or for not having adequate knowledge. This story was told to me so that I would remember to be thorough and careful when interpreting or using the data gathered for this study or any other learning process.

When analyzing the stories, one has to remember that *kêtêyak* rarely ever relate stories not meant to educate the listener. Another lesson interpreted from Annie's story was that the ants in the moss are like trickster stories such as the legends of *wisakêchak*. Gerrald Visenor (1994) instructed that when listening to stories the listener must look for what the person is wanting to teach you, for it is rarely obvious (p.68). Sometimes the

teaching may not come for months or years if the listener does not take the time to explore the information provided. It is believed that when you are entirely ready to learn, you will come to recognize the lesson(s) or the teaching will reveal itself to you (personal communication, Marie Ballantyne, 1992).

Analyzing data that is based on an Indigenous cultural perspectives requires the researcher to look at the data from an Indigenous point of view. This is necessary in order to bring out the Indigenous voices in the data. The data that is gleaned from such a process is far richer and provides greater benefits for the researcher, participants and reader alike. Incorporating this form of data analysis requires more time and effort, but the results and benefits of research are all the more valuable.

This study blended two culturally different approaches to research, as a result there were important lessons learned from carrying out this study. The last pages of this chapter will point out what the researcher learned on applying the blended model in a cultural study.

Limitations

1. This study can only begin the documentation process due to constraints of time and the completion requirements of a Master's thesis. Normally this process takes a lifetime of studying. Under normal circumstances, a Master's thesis is to be completed within a given time frame, and thereby limits the breadth and scope into which the topic can be delved. Essentially, the thesis demonstrates that the student can conduct a scientific study and write up the process in proper academic form. This is contrary to the Indigenous traditional learning process

2. The constraint of the time factor in completing a thesis in five years was a limitation that was not recognized in the development stage of this study. This time frame was culturally incompatible to the life and learning processes that occur in seven year cycles according to Northern Manitoba Inineu teachings. (personal communication, Charlie Moore, circa 1960's; Marie Ballantyne; 1999). This period is much longer than is allowed by a Master's program.
3. Language was a limitation in regard to the difficulty experienced in translating the questions from English to Cree. This is one of the problems my father had warned me about when he spoke to me about my thinking. He was telling me that my bi-cultural living and academic training would interfere with my ability to think culturally, thereby, creating problems in translation and interpretation.

Delimitations

1. The study was influenced by my Muskego heritage and my ability to understand the Cree language fluently.
2. In addition, having a strong grasp of Northern Manitoba Cree traditions and culture was an asset in facilitating the research project. The cultural learning gained throughout my life helped me to recognize and fetter out important pieces of information that might otherwise have been missed.
3. Being a Muskego person from Opaskwayak Cree Nation allowed me easier access to the information which I was seeking. Because I returned to my community when carrying out the research, I believe the kêtêyak were more responsive to my inquiries.

Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodology adopted to carry out this study. Choosing the methodological framework required reviewing a number of Western academic methodological approaches to conducting research. This was necessary as the methodology was to be blended with Indigenous research methodology. Similarly, choosing the analytical framework for processing the data was also important. A personal goal in presenting this data was that the voices of the participants were the prominent feature of the data. It was therefore important to analyze the data from an Indigenous worldview in order to allow the cultural information provided in this study to be highlighted. Chapter Four will discuss the data in more detail.

Chapter Four:

Data Analysis

When the Creator created the plant world, he watched over them very carefully. He made sure that they did not get too much rain, sun, or wind, he kept the growing conditions just right. When plants are young they are very fragile, the conditions must be good for them to grow up strong. This is what the spirit is like, when you are young it is very easy for your spirit to be damaged, (personal communication, Charlie Moore, 1991).

Introduction

The preceding quote is a translated and summarized version of a story my father once shared with me when I was in need of guidance. While the purpose of the story was related to parenting, it is useful when considering the role of a counsellor. People seek out counselling when their spirit is wounded and in need of healing. When the spirit is wounded all aspects of the person are affected and the individual's life becomes unbalanced. The role of counselor is to assist the person(s) to figure out what is causing the imbalance in order to begin the healing process. This story reminds me that my role as a counselor is to assist the person(s) sitting with me to find their way of healing. In doing so, they can continue with their life in the best way possible. It is with this thought that I have tried to present the learning gained from carrying out this research. This chapter is organized into the five thematic areas that were introduced in the discussion on the data analysis process of Chapter Three. The five thematic areas discussed in this will focus on the theoretical premises underlying: (1) the significance of language within an

Ininêw counselling context; (2) the role of spirituality in Ininêw (*Cree*) counselling; (3) key points in the learning processes of ontâwiwêwuk (*Healers*); (4) personal qualities that are important to being an ontâwiwêw (*Healer*); and (5) a few of the techniques of Counselling identified through the research process and the data. Following the traditional process this type of discussion usually occurs, the discussion of the data is interwoven throughout the presentation of the data. The data is presented according to how it was presented in the research process, in discussions and stories, both throughout this research process and throughout the researcher's lifetime.

The Data

The data compiled in this study demonstrates that a model of counselling exists among the Cree of Northern Manitoba. This form of counselling is still practiced in varying degrees by the old people and the people who have been trained in traditional methods. This type of healing work has also been observed being practiced (in varying degrees) among grassroots people within Indigenous families and communities. This analysis contains a number of important Cree terms and concepts. These Cree terms were used to facilitate the translating of the knowledge encapsulated in the data into an academic counselling context. Not doing so would have resulted in the loss of the cultural significance expressed through these terms. The final section of the chapter focuses on the themes identified from the data provided by the participants.

The Language is Important/Ēkistênihcikâtêk nêhinowêwin

As discussed earlier in this thesis, one of the problems experienced in carrying out this study was the difficulty with English to Cree language translation on the part of a

researcher. My inability to clearly translate and articulate the research questions in proper Cree form was an impetus in recognizing the importance of language. This problem prompted the realization that without proper knowledge of the language the data loses meaning and, thereby, loses some of its instructional value. The data that had been given up to that point in the study was due to participants having had some intuitive prompting of the information being sought (e.g. Alvin Beardy had a dream about me coming to see him). When the problem was recognized, a secondary purpose for the study was identified. To begin the documentation of a glossary of Cree words and their definitions as they relate to healing and the healing process. In the remainder of the study a concerted effort was made to identify as many words as possible.

In order to begin to make sense of the words, each new word was reviewed and discussed with people like Maria Campbell (Plains Cree), Marie Ballantyne (Rock Cree) and James Martin (Swampy Cree) as they have an excellent grasp of the Cree language. The process that was followed was as new words and/or terms were discovered, a dialogue on meaning including comparing the words from one dialect to another, checking spelling and pronunciation would take place. From this type of exchange a clearer understanding of terminology related to healing was conceptualized. This process resulted in realizing that some of the language in the data related to the institution of healing is different from everyday Cree language. Some of the terms are used more commonly in daily communication, but many of the words are not words heard or used in everyday exchange in contemporary society. These words made reference to spirituality and lifestyle, they speak to how one needs to conduct one's inner life and instruct on healing.

During one discussion with James Martin, regarding my inability to find appropriate

words. The response he provided uncovered yet another purpose for this study. This discussion focused the search for the word “counsellor.” The word that had been identified was “kakwêskîmwêw,” which literally translates into teaching someone right from wrong, or to set them straight on a particular issue. Yet, this term did not seem to fit because a couple of the participants did not seem to understand the query when it was posed to them. James’ explanation for this was that, “Cree is very clear, there are specific terms or phrases, but it is very difficult to translate these terms fluidly into the English language.” He went on to say that, “Our jobs as academics is to find ways to translate the Cree terms related to our chosen fields, it is one avenue that will preserve the language.” What came out of this encounter was a deeper appreciation for importance for Cree language preservation. Another insight this conversation the value of continuing to explore and identifying proper Cree counselling terminology that relates to Counselling. This process continues and will continue upon completion of this paper.

The Role of Spirituality in Ininew Counselling/Ahcâkowi kakwêskîmwêwinihk

As discussed in Chapter Two, spirituality is completely interwoven into all aspects of culture. To such a degree that it is not possible to look at any form of culture without finding some aspect of spirituality. To discuss counselling or any other form of healing one invariably finds the discussion laced with the same spiritual concepts that are identifiable in other branches of culture. This is demonstrated in the philosophies (e.g. respect, sharing, etc.) that guide *pimâtisiwin* (life). These same philosophies to a large extent are what provides the theoretical basis that sets the guidelines for counselling methodology.

During this research, as well as time spent in counselling with ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*), kêtêyak (*old people*), or okîskinawmakêwuk (*teachers*), one of the teachings that has

repeatedly arisen is that there are inextricable ties between spiritual concepts and healing. For instance, ontâwiwêwuk always credit the Creator as the source of healing. They believe that without the Creator healing cannot occur. During my visits with Alvin Moody, he was adamant that, "his healing ability was not his ability, but rather the Creator." He was but a conduit. Alvin would point into the air while saying, "winahawa (*it is him; meaning the Creator*), mowinâ nîna (*it is not me*). Mrs. Chartier stated, "that in her childhood, healers were referred to as *kâmamafisichik*." Kâmamafisichik means that these people possessed abilities beyond the normal and that these abilities were given to them by the Creator. Mrs. Apetagon also stated, "that she remembered in her community, healers would do nothing other than healing work - that was their job, not just anyone could do the work."

These statements are similar to documentation that states that healing is grounded in spiritual beliefs. Young, Ingram and Swartz's (1989) research also found that healers in their studies believe that healing cannot occur without spiritual intervention (also see Wyrostok and Paulson, 2000; Meiler, 1991; Tuesday and Tuesday, 1998; Hart, 1997; Lamframboise, 1990; Hallowell, 1992,). There are also a few other Indigenous writers who for many years have been documenting, bi-lingually the knowledge of the *kêtêyak* (*old people*). One example is Freda Ahenekew who has published the old people's voices in Cree and English. The consistent theme among the old people is that strength of spiritual beliefs is an important component in a healer's practices. The participants in this research also pointed out that not everyone can be an ontâwiwêw, and that one needs to be gifted with special abilities in order to become an ontâwiwêw.

Generally, Indigenous groups share a common belief that spirituality lays the foundation for each culture. Origin stories speak of how each culture, in its own way,

was placed on the earth by a Creator, and that all things come through this Creator. There is also a general consensus that it is the same deity. In the process of creation, an entire set of philosophies on life and living evolved based on the premise of an ultimate Creator. An example of such a philosophy is Natural Law, which states that all creation is equal, and that people are in stewardship to all creation (Oren Lyons, 1988). For the Muskego (*Swampy*) Cree Natural Law is the philosophy that is encapsulated in the term Wakohtowin, (*relations or kinship*). Wakohtowin sets conceptual parameters for all social, cultural and economic relationships, including those that occur within the healing relationship. Similar to other philosophies that underpin Inînêw cultures, this philosophy has a specific set of principles that provide guidelines on how it is to be applied.

One such principle is that human-environmental relations are important because identity is stored in and grows out of the relationship that exists between man and nature. It is believed that Muskego Cree identity comes from the land. For the kêtêyak of our communities, a person's tribal affiliation provides a frame of reference for who you are as an individual. It is, therefore, a big part of one's identity. In January, 1995, when the formulating of this study had began, my father said to me:

When you are doing this work, you must remember that where the people are from tells you about them. Like us, we are Muskego Cree, we are different from other Crees, but our name tells about who we are as a people. Then there is the Asini Cree, they live in the rocky area and Puskwaki Cree who live in the plains. It is important to remember they are not the same as us, their names tell you that (translation).

The lesson taken from this statement was that the study needed to be culturally focused, not to assume all Cree groups could be generalized for being the exact same. When studying culture one recognizes the similarities, it is also just as important to acknowledge the uniqueness of all cultures.

This statement does not just relate to conducting research. It also says that in counselling, the tribal membership of the individual is a key factor in the counselling process. When working with a Muskego Cree person, it is important to remember details such as, Muskego Cree territory generally extends throughout most of the central Manitoba; they speak the “n” dialect; Muskegoes follow a matrilineal kinship system; and Muskego Cree culture evolves out the geographic area that they reside in which is predominantly muskeg or swamp. Water is a major influence in the culture of the people. When working with Inînéwak keeping in mind the role of human-environmental relationships in the person’s identity needs to be kept in mind. The practice of making reference to one’s territory as part of identity was observed both in the research process and other social settings. In sessions with Marie Ballantyne when referring to her people she would use the term: “ninthenan,” knowing where her home territory was, it was understood that she meant “we,” the Asini (*Rock Cree*) of the Pukatawagan area. A few years ago, when I met the late Smith Atimoyoo out at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, when he heard me speak Cree, he responded, Muskego, eh? When I replied affirmatively, his response indicated that he knew who I was by my tribal affiliation. He then asked where I was from I replied, “Opaskwayak,” he said: “aahh” and began to chat with me on my home territory. For the old people, place of origin or land where our people come from is an important aspect to the philosophy of “relationship.” In counselling it provides important information on cultural contexts such as tribal affiliation, language, social structure, primary subsistence sources and methods, all connected to the tribe to which the “client” belongs to. It is also laden with spirituality because all land is considered sacred; thus, all people come from a sacred place.

Traveling around Northern Manitoba collecting data, the old people would often refer

to me as *nôsisim* (*grandchild*). Based on previous experience that old people will usually say things intentionally to get you thinking, An exploration of this term demonstrated how language serves to teach and preserve culture. One of the numerous functions of the using the term “*nôsisim*” is to remind people how we are all related. This recognition brought to mind the term “*wakôhtowin*” (*kinship*). Within relational concepts such as kinship, there are reservoirs of teachings that are cultural and applicable to all forms of relationships including the process of counselling. The following quote from an Elder in Calvin Morrisseau’s book *Into the Daylight; a Holistic Approach to Healing* (1998) aids the process of putting to this term into context:

Our Creator created us as one family, your first, which includes all of creation, to which we are all connected through our families and our communities. None among us has to stand alone. We are not superior, nor did we pursue our own interests. We always cared for each other, sometimes by putting other needs before our own and only doing what was best for everyone.

Morrisseau is describing what is understood to be a major aspect of the concept of *Wakôhtowin*. In addition to providing guidelines for human relationships, it is a philosophy that provides a way of relating to everything in creation. It reminds one of their place in creation. When you begin to understand your place in creation, everything becomes relative. It is relative because in the big picture, we, as individuals, are nothing more than a blade of grass within a field. At the other end of this spectrum, as individuals a person has a significant role in the well being of our families and communities. The concept of *Wakôhtowin* reminds the individual to be mindful of their place in creation. One cannot survive alone, as individuals need others and reciprocally we are needed.

While the parameters of a Master’s thesis does not allow for an extensive review of the principles associated with “stewardship,” this paper will look at slivers of two other

principles associated with the philosophy of Natural Law. For example, associated with this philosophy is the principle of “respect.” This principle speaks to the way in which stewardship is to be applied, that humans are to respect all creation. In Cree this concept is referred to as *kistênitâmwîn (respect)*. This means that as a human beings it is our responsibility to take care never to mistreat any form of life. One must regard each and every human and/or any other species as special for each has a role in the continuity of creation. This is also sometimes referred to within the context of kinship as “*kakinôw kiwakotônanow*” (*we are all related*).

To remind people of the importance of the principle of “respect,” the concept, “*ocinêw (retribution)*” is part of the principle of *kistênitâmwîn (respect)*. What this concept says is that if you do anything wrong to another life form, some form of retribution will come upon you and/or your loved ones. These teachings were taught to a person in early childhood. An example is when my sister, Leona, and I were instructed on it as little girls. Our father found us playing with a spider and in a very stern manner, he said: *Ka ocinânawow (you will receive some form of retribution)*. A translated version of the lecture he gave us was: “that someday we would feel the pain we had inflicted on the spider we were playing with.” The lesson he was teaching us was, it is wrong to intentionally hurt any living form. He wanted us to learn that there is always a price to pay when you do wrong to people, animals, or insects, no matter how small or insignificant the life form may seem. What this infers in terms of counselling is that it is important as a counselor to incorporate the principle “*ocinew*,” along with other cultural principles, into the practice of counselling. It is also important to explore these types of cultural principles during the process of counselling, as they may be an issue and are an important lesson in how we as people are to relate to the world.

Within a counselling context, wakôhtowin (*kinship*) also incorporates aspects of human environmental relations. In February 1999, I was discussing with Marie Ballantyne the duration of time that I had already spent on this study and how after all that time I was only getting to the point of writing. Marie smiled and asked, "How long was it?" I mentally counted back and answered seven years. Marie responded, "Yes, it is the cycle of life." Later in reflecting on her response, an early childhood recollection of an exchange with my father about the seven-year cycle of life among animals reinforced Marie's words. I had said to my father that I wanted to eat rabbit, he replied:

This was not a good time to eat rabbit, that many of them were sick. He talked about how animal populations grow and grow and peak every seven years, during the seventh year many die of sickness due to over population and only the strongest survive. This happens so that the animal population will stay strong and continue to survive (translation).

Although I could not really grasp it at the time, that lesson on life cycles was never forgotten. As the session continued, Marie stated: "learning also occurs in cycles, it takes seven years of studying to truly learn to understand a subject." On previous occasions when listening to kêtêyak (*old people*) talk on this topic, they spoke of how the environment teaches us to be aware of life cycles and to stay attuned to those cycles. In relation to counselling, the lesson of nature's cycles instructs us that it is important to explore the cycles of an individual's life. Exploring where the individual is at in the cycle will provide some insight why the individual's life is where it is, at that particular time.

Another important aspect of environment is that nature can be used as a teaching tool or for helping a person gain insight. One of the teachings that I received during this process of learning about Cree counselling was that nature teaches all we need to know

about how life needs to be lived. An example of one method of teaching and/or counselling is to send an individual to sit in the bush alone, or sometimes the *kêtêyak* will go and sit with the person. The person needs to sit, watch and listen to nature for a period of time, a few hours, a day, however long the person needs to figure out the problem or find the information that they are seeking. It is amazing what a person can learn from sitting and watching ants all day; they teach about community and working together. Ants also provide lessons on work ethic, tenacity, strength and versatility, which are considered important personality traits among Inînéw cultures. An important aspect to becoming an *ontâwiwêw* (*healer*) is to develop a deep understanding of the environment, for it provides not only the medicines to heal, but also the teachings that are a vital part of the healing process.

The philosophies documented in this thesis are not complete presentations, for there is more content in each philosophy than can be discussed in a Master's thesis. It is also not possible to present all the philosophies; the philosophies discussed here only are the ones I have begun to understand. Learning about counselling from a First Nations perspective requires a seeking out of counselling theories from a traditional perspective which takes a lifetime to learn. It requires that the student seek understanding of the role of philosophies such as *wakôhtowin* (*kinship*) and how these philosophies set cultural parameters for human development, along with how they are utilized in counselling practice. For instance, one needs to understand that spirituality is the basis of all relationships human or human-environmental. Spirituality has been the sustaining source

for First Nations people since time immemorial. Spirituality continues to be the source of survival today, even when that spirituality followed is taken from another conceptual framework such as Christianity. As a Cree person wanting to provide counselling services from a cultural base, it was important to return to my heritage and begin to study in depth the philosophies that lay at the foundation of the culture. This was necessary in order to understand and apply traditional counselling methods successfully.

Learning Processes of Healers/Onatawîwêwak okiskinawamâkêwiniwâw

In 1985, I met an old man, the late Joe Duquette, he spoke to me of how traditional education processes occurred. I met this old man at a Cree cultural workshop for kids in Denare Beach, Saskatchewan. After we had been introduced Mr. Duquette, asked me, "What do you know about your culture?" My reply was; "Nothing. No one has ever taught me about my culture." To this he replied, "Uumm,." and continued to converse with other people in the group. At the end of the week Mr. Duquette asked me, "So, what do you know about your culture?" I responded, "Quite a bit, I guess, but I did not know." To this he replied, "That's because we Nehiyew (*Cree*) do not sit you down like you are in a classroom. [Note: The Plains dialect is used as Mr. Duquette was Plains Cree] You saw it in how your people lived." This was a very important lesson. It prompted me to begin to explore my childhood, what had I seen and what had I heard that taught me about my culture. This encounter taught me to look at my life from a totally new perspective; to utilize the teachings of my childhood in my daily life. The data

shows that learning processes for people who choose to take the path of becoming a ontâwiwêw or kêtêyak are similar to this experience.

During one visit with Marie Ballantyne, she spoke of how people who choose the traditional path first, have to learn to be helpers. The educational process is systematic and involves both theory and experiential learning. Even if you are born with a gift, you have to learn how to use it. The example she gave was of ceremonial camps. When one makes the commitment to become a student of traditional teachings, one does not automatically jump into helping to run ceremonies. Like others who have chosen this path, Marie studied and apprenticed with kêtêyak (*old people*) and ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) for 17 years before she earned the right to conduct Sweat Lodge ceremonies. Being a kêtêyiw or ontâwiwêw requires an individual to make a commitment to learning for one's entire lifetime. There is so much to learn that it is not until a person is well into middle age and beyond that one truly understands the full meaning of what they have learned.

The learning process for an apprentice who makes the commitment to learn begins very simply. Education or status in life does not matter - everyone begins by learning the basics, there are no short cuts through the process. The process described is an overview of the training that occurs, and is only indicative of the process which I was taught. The learning process outlined here is for females as that is the only area with which I have experience and learning. For a female the first job one begins with is working as a helper in the cooking area. It is here that one begins to learn about responsibility. One of the

first responsibilities that one is given is to prepare meals for the workers and the people who running the ceremonies. Working in the cooking area, the person begins to learn to prepare feast food by observing and helping out those doing the cooking. During this time, students learn about cleanliness, roles and responsibilities involved in preparing ceremonies. Once the student has learned how to run the cooking area, they are prompted to teach others what needs to learned about working in the cooking area. The time one spends in the cooking area is where you learn more about ceremonies and the protocol associated with different ceremonies.

When the person has completed their learning process in the cooking area, they begin to learn about preparing ceremonies such as the Sweat Lodge. In the beginning, the student is sent to observe an Oskapês (*person who is the helper of the Sweat Lodge holder*). After a period of observation, the student begins to help out in keeping the lodge area clean, preparing the fire, and gathering the materials needed for the ceremony. During this time, one learns the different roles of people in the ceremonies. Upon mastering the basic responsibilities students are given the opportunity to help out in the ceremony. The responsibilities of a helper are increased continually until the person is capable of conducting that particular ceremony. The preceding outline is an abbreviated version of the learning process a student. The learning process is very systematic, and a person is only given the responsibility if they have earned it. All of this learning occurs over a period of years, seven years or longer if the student is not learning constantly. The Creator determines when the students are ready and the teacher informs them when they

have earned the right to conduct certain ceremonies. Earning the right to conduct one ceremony does not give you the right to immediately conduct any other. There is a period of apprenticeship for each ceremony, thus the processes of becoming a healer is a lifetime of learning.

Qualities of a Healer/Onatawîwêw otisi ayayina

Who are ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*)? Ontâwiwêwuk are people who have spent an good a good portion of their lifetime living and learning their profession. Three of the women interviewed, Matilda Apetagon, Betsy Buck and Annie Chartier remembered medicine people being referred to as kâmamatisichik, the old people who were gifted with extraordinary healing abilities. These women also remembered from their childhood that making medicines was something everyone could do. Each one spoke of remedies for illness. Although I do not have the knowledge or authority to write on specifics about which medicines the participants spoke, the following are encapsulated versions of what was said: Annie talked about how the skunk was used as remedy for whooping cough. Matilda spoke of a particular tree that grew in the Norway House area and how people would use the berries. Betsy stated that long ago everyone learned about the plants in their environment and their medicinal property. Finally, the women pointed out that medicine people were only called upon to deal with illness that was beyond the ordinary and the cure was not readily available.

All the participants spoke on how people who had special gifts in healing, spirituality and leadership were expected to live exemplary lives. The interviews identified words in

the language that infer that these individuals' lives were different. The participants of this study provided the following terms that refer to an ontâwiwêw's (*healer's*) lifestyle:

Ê-inihnewisit:

James Martin stated that this is a Muskego Cree term. He was told that the term is used to describe a person who is born with the gift of having intimate knowledge of the land. This type of person has inherent knowledge. They know and understand the land without being taught. Marie Ballantyne stated that this was true and that these are the people who would become the spiritual leaders, provided the gift was nurtured. The Asini Cree term for this concept is e-akahcipimatisit (*a person who has knowledge of the environment and lives accordingly*).

Meno Pimâtisiwin:

This means living a good life, one that is healthy and balanced. It means that one works at developing all four aspects of personhood - the spirit, physical, mental and emotional. It is the lifestyle for which all people are to strive.

Achahko Pimâtisiwin:

This term means spiritual living, While all people are to work at living life in a spiritual manner those who are gifted in healing need to work harder at achahko pimâtisiwin. It is an important part of the development of their role of healers. If one does not strive for this lifestyle, the gift of healing will not grow strong.

Akamî Pimâtisiwin:

The term akami means calm and serene. The definition given to by Marie Ballantyne is that it means the person is serene and able to see life forces. (Note: I have not had enough life experience to come to a full understanding of the term; "able to see life forces," I understand it to refer to a person who has worked at their human development and is strong spiritually.) In referring to such a person in Cree one would say: "ke pe achako pimâtisiw" (*they have live a spiritual life*).

All of the terms refer to lifestyle, and its relation to spirituality. The terms identify the continuity between people, the environment and the spiritual realm. The terminology used indicates development as a healer. Maintaining a healthy life style is a crucial aspect

of being a ontâwiwêw, a kêtêyiw who is a spiritual leader.

Among kêtêyak and ontâwiwêwuk (*old people and healers*), pawâmiw (*term refers to the state of person experiencing dreams*) is a crucial aspect of healing. In addition to human tutelage, kêtêyak and ontâwiwêwak received instruction from their spirit guides. Thus, spiritual dreams have an important role in their healing practices. A quality that was identified by all participants was that those who are true kêtêyak or ontâwiwêwuk have intuitive or prophetic dreams. The dreams may tell them of someone who is coming for healing and what their need is, how they are to be healed, or it may be a dream that instructs them on a specific medicine or ceremony to be used as one of the tools in their practice.

Alvin Moody:

Alvin stated that he experiences dreams that instruct. He relies on his dreams to instruct him on what is ailing an individual who comes to him for healing and how to heal. He stated that when a person comes to him, he does not usually conduct any healing processes on the first visit. He tells the person to come for a second visit, he will dream about the person that night, and his dreams instruct him on what is wrong with the person.

Matilda Apetagon:

Told of how her grandfather, who was a Healer, would dream of how to treat people who had come to him for treatment. Matilda stated that Healers were told through a dream would that they were to receive a particular gift for healing.

Betsy Buck:

Stated that kâmamatahsîchik (*gifted healers*) would dream and they would receive a vision telling them they were to learn to be Healers. They might even dream about a specific medicine and how to use it.

Marie Ballantyne's:

A long time ago all people who would be called psychologists today were dreamers. What Marie was saying was that people who served the community in the capacity of psychologist were gifted with prophetic dreams. Dreams were the source of intuitive ability.

The spiritual dreams that Kêtêyak and Ontâwiwêwuk experience are profound. They recognized that the dreams were instructions from the Creator.

During the course of conducting the research I experienced the phenomena the participants spoke regarding dreams. The incident occurred after my second interview with Alvin Moody in December, 1995. Following the interview, I went winter camping with friends. After the camping trip, I was getting preparing to return to Saskatoon when Alvin's granddaughter, Jackie, came to me and said that her grandfather needed to see me and that I was not leave without seeing him. I sensed that there must be something seriously wrong with me, why else would the old man send for me? I became frightened and did not go to see the old man. Two weeks later, I went for an annual check up in Saskatoon. The doctor found lumps that were later diagnosed as cancerous. A couple of years later, when I spoke to Alvin about it, he laughed and asked what had I been afraid of? Alvin said he had a dream after my visit that told him I had cancer. This type of dreaming is considered a significant gift that is given to ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) from the Creator. Through the process of their learning to become healers, they have also learned to differentiate between a regular dream and prophetic dream.

The ability of Ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) have to interact with spirit world is one that most people do not have; that is why they are referred to as kâmamatisichik (*those with extraordinary ability*). Alvin Moody spoke of how kâmamatisichik discern others who have been gifted with the ability to heal. He spoke of how, "they can see from their soul/spirit." Alvin says, "One cannot always trust one's eyes, they can play tricks on you.

That is why you look [pointing to his chest] from here.” He says that this is how medicine people recognize each other when they meet for the first time. This ability is not something a person decides to develop; as with any other special skill, one must learn how to use the gift properly. This ability is more than intuition; it is very spiritually grounded. Being able to see with the spirit within is also not a quality that you can learn from someone. Either one is given the gift or it is not. It is a quality that distinguishes *kêtêyak/ontâwiwêwuk* as being gifted with something that most people are not.

Matilda Apetagon, Alvin Moody, Marie Ballantyne, Annie Chartier, Betsy Buck and James Martin also spoke on how the ability to heal is a gift. Each of the respondents stressed that the ability to heal is not a human ability; it comes from the Creator. When one inquires about how healers or *ontâwiwêwuk* enter their profession, old people will tell you, that these people were born with their special gift and identified as young children. The following excerpts indicate that becoming a healer or spiritual leader is a vocation that is more than a choice one makes on their own:

James Martin:

According to what the old people have taught him many are born with the gift. The old people say that you can tell that the person is special and generally, people can see the person is gifted. You would be recognized as a spiritual leader/elder or one who as to work with medicines early in life.

Matilda Apetagon:

Matilda said that *kipâwahmiwuk*, meaning that the person would dream about what their particular gift in healing was to be.

Betsy Buck:

Said that *kâmamafisichik* would dream, or that they would receive a message through a dream, telling them to learn to be healers. They might even receive a dream about a specific medicine and how they are to use it.

Alvin Moody:

Says that it is not his knowledge or skill that heals people, it is the Creator and that he received a dream that told him how he was to heal people. The Creator communicates to him through his dreams. He says that by himself he knows nothing, he is just an ordinary man.

Being gifted also does not guarantee that one will use or choose to become one of those *kâmamafisichick*. It means that they have been given a gift and what they do with it is up to them. Similarly, as with other forms of healing, counselling and the ability to counsel was identified in the research as skill that an individual is a natural gift. First, the individual is identified as having qualities that pertain to the counselling field, then they receive training to help the development of their gift.

In one of my discussions with Maria Campbell, she spoke of another quality that is very significant in identifying qualities of *kêtêyak/ontâwiwêwuk* (*old people/healers*). People who choose to follow this path also experience a lot of hardship in life. This, is not the type of hardship that one brings on themselves by making poor decisions and choices (e.g. trouble with the law, abusing oneself with alcohol and drugs, etc.). In my discussion with Maria, she stated, "That, in order to truly understand people's pain, they must experience it." How could they possibly help another if they do understand the pain that people experience? Marie Ballantyne spoke on a similar theme in regard to the a healer's lifestyle, despite the hardship they encounter in life, they continue to strive for "*Achahko pimâtisiwin*" (*spiritual living*).

Associated with the elevated levels of hardship is humility. True medicine people are the most humble that people I have ever met. They have a quality of humility and sincerity about them that most people never achieve. Marie Ballantyne referred to this as, "*ê-akamisit*," meaning that the person has a quality that is quiet, strong, humble.

These are the kêtêyak that might be easily overlooked, as their presence is so unassuming that they appear insignificant. In reality, these kêtêyak can see beyond those of normal eyes. Alvin Moody referred to this as, “looking with your spirit.” This type of insight comes from living life in a spiritual manner, they are able to see the big picture. They see how truly insignificant we are as individuals, and they are okay with that because living is not about them, it is about life.

Counselling Techniques/Tânisi kita kakwêskimiwâniwâk ,

“Put on the Kettle”

Whenever my father said, “Put on the kettle,” I knew that he was going to lecture me. Little did I know as a young person that these “lectures” would become a guiding force in my work. “Put on the Kettle” also meant that the lesson was going to involve a *long* story, usually about two or three hours long. Over a pot of tea, my father would talk, usually telling me a story of something that had happened in his life or a teaching story that was relevant to what I needed to know. In later years, I realized that this practice had several purposes: (1) to teach me something that I needed to know at that time; (2) it taught me to be still and to listen; (3) to remember the role of storytelling in counselling; (4) to take the time required by the individual needing counsel: and (5) to be patient and flexible as a helper because in order for me to learn people had to be patient and flexible with me. The phrase “Put on the kettle” not only has special memories for me, it is a method of teaching, and it is a technique for counselling.

Similarly, on numerous occasions when I have sought out counsel from kêtêyak (*old people*) or ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*), time did not appear to be a major factor. Each time, the person would take the time that was required to allow me to process and come to terms with whatever issue I had brought to the session. Marie Ballantyne spoke about

how she has carried out her duties as a traditional counselor, spiritual leader and now as Director of Treatment. She, as well as the other staff at the Nelson House Medicine Lodge, work according to the clients needs:

In our counselling time frames, time is not a factor. We spend all morning with an individual or the whole day if it is necessary. We take them away from an office environment, offer them a new environment. An example is to get them close to the water. Water is so strong for healing, it has that energy, even if they have never been close to the water

Learning to take the necessary time is a technique. One must learn not to rush the process and learn to utilize the time effectively. Marie stated, "that people know when they have done all that they can do, you follow their clock, not your own." In traditional modes of counselling, it is necessary to take the time to help the individual to understand and begin to heal from whatever is causing the imbalance in their life.

In observing *kêtêyak/ontâwiwêwuk (old people/healers)* conducting counselling sessions, one observation made is that they listen in very different manner from most people. The *kêtêyak/ontâwiwêwuk* that were observed generally, carry out their work quite differently than what my academic training has taught me. Often one might think that they are not listening because they do not make direct eye contact, they look at the floor or elsewhere. They may even be doing something else while you are talking, but they do not miss a thing. Sometimes during counselling, the traditional counselor will sit with their back turned from the person, usually when the person is in a lot of emotional pain and crying hard. This is done to give the individual the privacy to express their pain without becoming self-conscious. When the person is done crying and ready to start talking, the counselor will turn around. While analyzing the data, a connection was that this form of training is begun as a child, when children are taught to sit still and listen to

stories. As a counsellor in training, you are not allowed to take notes, you must listen and remember what you are told. Thus, the early childhood training becomes a useful skill in counselling as you are able to recall details about a case that you have not had anything to do with for some time. This type of listening also teaches you to sit and be silent, letting the “client” speak when they are ready.

During the course of the research, terms related to counselling came up that led to exploring how words that seem to be quite ordinary in nature are translated into counselling tools and techniques. One can take a word or concept for granted and never really consider the depth of meaning involved because it is used so frequently. One such concept or word is “*kiyam*.” It means, “it is done, finished, never mind.” It is in fact, one of those multi-purpose terms that can be applied in numerous contexts. I remember being told *kiyam* as a child when I was crying about something. In adulthood, I have heard old people say it in various situations, usually in regard to interpersonal relationships. It has been used when a person was hurting or angry from some injustice that occurred. It can also be used to stop a person from becoming too boastful. Conceptually, this term is a lecture unto itself. It tells you to, (a) let go of your anger, for anger is not good for the spirit; (b) do not get so upset about something not worth the time and energy, there are more important things you can be doing; (c) says let it go because there is nothing you can do about it without diminishing your own self esteem; (e) let it go, Natural Law will take care of it; (f) never mind, it is none of your business. These are all simple instructions, but very hard to carry out. It takes concentrated effort and strength to implement *kiyam* in one’s life. It is much easier to fight and be angry or stick your nose where it does not belong.

Another concept is *kitos*. Conceptually, this word is also a powerful counselling tool.

For most of my life, I always associated a negative connotation with this term. When I was a child, when I heard *kitos*, that meant somebody was in trouble. A couple of years ago, I heard, a audio tape of an old lady who explained the term from a somewhat different perspective. What the woman said in the tape came back to me as I was analyzing the data and looking for counselling methodology. The woman was saying that the word essentially means to give guidance. The guidance given may come in the form of a story, an object or something else that the person providing counselling uses to stimulate exploration and thought. On one of my visits to Marie Ballantyne, she spoke about such teaching tools. To demonstrate, she brought out a birch bark basket that she uses in counselling. There is an initial discussion on how the basket is constructed, the proper protocol and technique for harvesting birch bark. She speaks of how the bark cannot be taken from the tree at any time, for doing so will damage the tree. When a part of a tree is removed, the tree has to focus on repairing the damaged part and if the damage is great the tree will die because so much energy is directed at revitalizing the damaged areas. Marie uses the basket and the birch bark tree as an analogy for the healing process, and how healing (mental, emotional, physical and spiritual) needs balance. If you focus too much on one area, the other parts of your life will suffer. *Kitos* does not mean that the counselor provide all the answers, it means is to give guidance so that the person will think and explore the issue for themselves. For Marie the birch bark basket is a non-threatening way to get an individual to engage in deep contemplation. Using tools such as the birch bark basket is an empowering process.

In observing and participating in counselling sessions, one lesson that was taught is how physical activity is a technique that can be utilized. The physical activity can be carried out in various ways. Usually the person is sent off to do something on their own.

This can include going for a walk, cutting wood, doing some chore for the counselor, or any activity that involves physical exertion or concentration. Another form can be when the *kêtêyiw* or *ontâwiwêw* (*old person or healer*) engages the person in some activity that is conducive to contemplation (i.e., cutting cloth, carving, fixing something, etc.).

When I inquired about this to Marie Ballantyne, she stated that she uses this technique for several different reasons:

1. Sometimes the person is too scattered emotionally and mentally and needs to focus.
2. The person may be more comfortable talking while they are working on something the activity takes the focus off them, helping the person to be less self-conscious.
3. Sometimes the activity is part of a teaching that the person needs; the birch bark basket teaches the importance of a balanced approach to healing.
4. The person may need to be doing something with their hands in order for them to talk, when a person is under great psychological strain, they sometimes have difficulty clearly articulating. Putting an object in their hands can help to articulate.
5. When the person's trust level is too low, doing something with the person is a good way to build rapport and trust.
6. Get them to go and do something for old people. It puts the individual into another level of consciousness.

Marie Ballantyne was taught counselling techniques by teachers such as, her parents, grandparents, along with other *kêtêyak* and *ontâwiwêwuk* from whom she has had the opportunity to learn. Marie believes that some form of activity, whether solitary or done jointly, is a useful tool that facilitates the counselling process because the person may be so stuck in a problem that the activity occupies the mind on something else. The activity frees the individual to explore and find alternative solutions to their problems.

In several of my talks with Marie Ballantyne, the topic of ceremonies came up. The lesson that came from these discussions is that ceremonies are strong healers. Marie spoke of formal ceremonies, such as those in the Sweat Lodge, and talked about the role of other ceremonies. She also spoke of ceremony in everyday interactions between people and their environment:

Our great great grandparents were very spiritual, when they had the good knowledge, not like us today we are contaminated with too many things. We have never been the way they were, there are too many things in our surroundings that distract us. But for them they used to live a true spiritual lifestyle, 98% of their time was spent on prayer. Prayer is not sitting on your knees, even as we sit here talking it is a prayer. I understand that today. What we do, no matter what we do we should think of it as prayer. It is a gift from the Creator. The ability to be able to share and even the ability to speak is a gift from the Creator.

Ceremonies can be the formal activities that are conducted by Kêtêyak/ontâwiwêwuk (*old people/healers*), or it can be activities that an individual does by themselves. An example of this is feeding the spirits. Kêtêyak say that when you think of a person who has passed on or the person comes to mind when you are preparing food or eating you need to go and put food out for that person. Feeding the grandfathers is a way to demonstrate respect for those who have passed on. Ceremonies are one way to honor and give thanks to the spirit world. They are also a way of soliciting the aid of the spirit world. Ceremony is about life and living in a manner that honors life. Ceremonies are a healing technique, regardless of the form they may come in.

The last technique included in this analysis is not necessarily a technique, but it nonetheless provides very useful tools in counselling and healing. It is a tool that can be utilized by an kêtêyiw/ontâwiwêw or an individuals can do it for themselves. This tool for healing is the environment. In August, 1998, during a visit with William Dumas, in Thompson, Manitoba, we began talking about the land and how it can heal. William said

that the healing power of the land is the reason people spend so much time out in the wilderness. He went on to say that Native people seem to have an inherent understanding of this:

Even people who constantly abuse themselves with drugs and alcohol know this. Why do think they go and disappear into the bush for periods of time, because they feel better after they spend time out there. The land heals their bodies and they cannot get that from being in sober in town (personal communication, August, 1998).

Land or the environment is a tool in itself, in addition it contains it tools that can be used in counselling. In observing counselling, lessons were provided on ways the land and objects from the land can provide a mechanism for processing emotional pain. One example is: After the funeral of my children's father, my brother Dan, his wife Maria and my sister Leona and her family loaded my children (April, Mike and Jamie) and myself into a boat and took us down the river camping for a few days. The whole time was spent interacting with the environment; fishing, looking for eggs, sitting around telling stories. This trip was extremely healing after this traumatic loss in our lives. This act demonstrates that healing can be initiated by anyone, although, Inîñêwuk (*Indigenous people*) seem to have an inherent sense to turn to the land when in pain. In my observation, utilizing the environment in healing is common practice among the Muskego and other Indigenous peoples.

Another teaching was on how ordinary objects from the environment such as rocks can used in the counselling process. On one occasion, an kêtêyiw I was working with on a grieving issue took me to sit by a river, after talking for spent some time, we began walking back to my car. On the way there, she stopped and indicated for me to pick up this rock. She told me that I should talk to this rock when I was feeling a lot of pain

related to this grieving process. I followed her instruction. Later, when I was talking to the rock, I noticed a human image imprinted on side of the rock that had been facing the ground. The rock helped me to get on with the business of grieving and on with my life. These tools work well in stimulating the healing process. They provide the individual with a new tool to use when they need it, allowing the development of self efficacy. When speaking on the role of the environment as a teacher, Marie Ballantyne stated, "If you just look in your back door the answer is there" (Feb. 28/99). Nature not only heals, it provides tools to aide a person in their healing process.

Summary

Finding the theoretical premises of counselling contained in the data was a very difficult struggle. The difficulty I experienced was because I did not fully heed the instruction I had been given by my father, Marie Ballantyne and the other *kêtéyak (old people)*. My father had told me, "Think like an Inînêw (*Cree person*)."
Marie Ballantyne and the *kêtéyak* had said, "The Inînêw way is very simple." There was even had a dream that told me that what I was looking for was right in front of me. Instead, I tried to find some obscure and complex counselling methods hidden in the data. Finally, I realized that the problem was that the analysis was not grounded in Inînêw epistemology, thus, could not recognize what was right in front of me. At that point, I fully grasped what the late Joe Duquette meant by cultural knowledge being all around me throughout my life.

"Becoming a counsellor is becoming an *ontâwiwêw (healer)*," as Marie Ballantyne pointed out in a discussion on the role of a traditional Cree counselors. The process of becoming such a counsellor is not complicated, but it does take many years of studying. *Kêtéyak* and *ontâwiwêwuk* who follow the spiritual path help people heal from

events that damage their spirit. First, the student must understand the spiritual philosophies that ontâwiwêwuk and keteyak are to live by. The term used to describe this process is, “achako Wicêwiwêwin” (*the spirituality involved in counselling*). To fully comprehend this term, the student must study nânohwêwin (*the Cree language*). Understanding the language is a vital component to comprehending the theoretical premises that underpins this form of counselling. With guidance, one can learn to develop “ontawi - issêwapissêwan” (*a healer’s disposition or characteristics*) and “kakêskimiwêwin nahawinêkêwina” (*counselling methods*). Becoming an ontawîwêw is choosing to follow the principles of living a traditional “Ininêw pimâtisiwin” (*Cree way of living*) it is a way of life.

Analyzing the data included in this thesis has taken months and years of studying and reviewing the material. While much of the data in this study may be viewed as common knowledge among Indigenous people, it is because the data presented in this thesis is very basic. Many of the concepts discussed in this chapter are words or terms used in every language, yet very few people take the time to explore their deeper meaning. The manner in which they are expressed and applied by kêtêyak and ontâwiwêwuk is more complex. It comes from a helping perspective that is grounded in spirituality, which will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Summary and Recommendations

Every society needs educated people, but the primary responsibility of educated people is to bring wisdom back into the community and make it available to others so that the lives they are leading makes sense (Vine Deloria Jr., 1995, p.17)

Introduction

Counselling, or any other form of healing in the Indigenous world, has its own processes and methodologies for instruction. This study taking more than seven years to complete is exemplary of this. A significant portion of this this time was been spent re-immersing in Inîñê (Cree) epistemology in order to capture a perspective that culturally representative. This process began in the fall of 1993, when I entered the Master's in Education, Educational Psychology program. At that point, I recognized the need to balance my Western academic training with Cree epistemology in order to develop a counselling style that would be culturally appropriate. To facilitate this process, I approached Marie Ballantyne to assist me with learning about traditional counselling practices . I did not realize that this learning process would entail more time than a Master's program allows. The lesson in this is that I did not do enough research and analysis from a traditional perspective before embarking on this study. As a result, the request I made was too broad. As in Annie Chartier's story of the moss, I went into

something without being fully aware of the whole picture. As a result I made a request that was not feasible. What resulted was that I underwent an entire seven year cycle of learning traditional counselling theory and methodology.

Summary of Theoretical Premises

The teachings identified in this study are rooted in the philosophies and the guiding principles that are encapsulated in the world view of Northern Manitoba Inînéwak (*Cree*). This system of beliefs once permeated the entire fabric of the culture of these groups of Inînéwak. Much of this knowledge is thought to have disappeared in the last few decades. Fortunately, enough of these ancient beliefs still exist that it is possible to extrapolate and document cultural concepts such as counselling methodology. This study has only identified five premises that are a part of the methodological framework for this form of counselling. The following is a summary of the five premises that were identified through this research project.

Theoretical Premise on spirituality

As told by the participants in this study the primary philosophy underlying all healing is that the power of healing evolves from their relationship with the Creator. Ontâwiwêwak (*healers*) practices must be thoroughly versed in and guided by the same spiritual philosophies as those that set the cultural parameters on how life is to be carried out. Spiritual philosophies such as Natural Law have sustained Inînéwak (*Cree people*) for thousands of years. They provide the guidelines for living healthy balanced lifestyles. As indicated by the data analysis in Chapter Four, counselling, as it is carried out by Northern Manitoba Inînéwak, is quite different from Western practice. The most striking

difference is the spiritual component in both the life of the traditional ontâwiwêw (*healer*) and the degree to which spirituality is integrated into the practice of counselling. As the foundations of Indigenous cultures evolve out of spirituality, it is natural that the practice of healing would also be grounded in spirituality.

The philosophy of spirituality is applied through maintaining a relationship with the Creator. The relationship is nurtured through the guiding principles found in prayer, dreams, ceremony, and the spirit guides provided by the Creator. The process on how spirituality is applied is dictated by principles that guide kêtêyak and ontâwiwêwak through their relationship with the Creator. This relationship involves prayer as the communicative link between the kêtêyak/ontâwiwêw and the Creator. The Creator communicates and aids the healer through dreams, ceremonies and spirit guides. The spirit guides provided by the Creator are from the environment (animals, plants, etc.). The environment is part of the continuum of healing as it is not only provides remedies for healing, it is an intermediary in the relationship between man and the Creator. All ontâwiwêwuk, regardless of the particular stream of healing practices acknowledge that without the Creator complete healing cannot occur. This theoretical premise also applies to counselling practices.

Theoretical Premise on the Role of Language in Healing Practices

One of the key aspects in learning to be an Indigenous counsellor is having a strong grasp of the language. The philosophies that provide the foundations of healing/counselling are contained within the language. In the literature, Jocelyn Bruyere's (1997) study found that for the Inîwêwuk (*Cree people*) participating in her study, tribal language

played a major role in how they formulated cultural understandings. The data from this study also indicates that terminology applied in the counselling process are encapsulated in common terms used in daily exchange (such as *kitos (give guidance)*, *kiyam (a multifaceted term that means to let go)*, and *asini (rock)*, which can be used as a counselling tool in numerous ways. Tribal interpretation has a major role in how we conceptualize our environment, therefore, language is a very important element as this is where knowledge is stored.

Among Inînêw people knowledge is stored within language through various types of stories. *Atayohkêwina (sacred stories, wisakechak stories that are sometimes referred to in literature as trickster stories)*, *acimowina (historical events)*, and *kêyas acimowina (long ago stories which are infused with the sacred)* are three ways stories preserve knowledge. Storytelling or oral tradition provides the basis of all learning and how the history of the people is transmitted through the generations (Stevenson, 1999). Each generation in its turn was educated on their history, environment and all they needed to know to survive, a significant portion of the education process was carried out through story telling/ oral tradition. Because Cree language is very specific and some terms are very difficult to translate into English, meaning can get lost in translation. As a result learning becomes diluted, thus, having a language base is an important aspect to learning traditional counselling methods.

Theoretical Premise on Learning Processes of Ontawiwewuk and Keteyak

Another philosophy in the development of a healer's skills and knowledge is that there is a systematic learning process that is very specific. It is long, sometimes difficult, and

requires a life time commitment. Ontâwiwêwak/kêtêyak are born with their ability and are identified in childhood. Ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) must undergo a period of apprenticeship where they learn to develop their ability as a healer. Learning is a holistic process that incorporates the spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional aspects of life. Healing comes from the Creator; therefore, healers receive a significant proportion of their instruction on healing through dreams. There is little documentation on the learning processes that a healer undergoes. While some of this information can be extrapolated from the work of writers such as Joseph Dion (1993), Freda Ahenekeew (1987), along with non-Indigenous academics such as Cockburn's (1984) writing P.G. Downes' research among the Cree, it does not provide a comprehensive data base.

Within the philosophical basis underlying a healer's learning process there are numerous principles associated with becoming an ontâwiwêw (*healers*). While not all the principles associated to the philosophical premises on the learning processes of healers were documented in this study, those identified include: (a) listening and being still, if your mind is occupied on other things you cannot hear what is being taught to you; (b) the teachings' one receives usually take time to understand, so taking the time to understand what you are taught before trying to apply it is very important; (c) humility is important in learning because if your ego gets in your way, it is difficult to learn and your work becomes ineffective; and (d) learning how to learn begins in infancy. The cradleboard was instrumental as it began the process by teaching babies to use their senses. There are specific methods of teaching and learning that are associated with the education process a healer or a counsellor.

Theoretical Premise of Ontâwiwêwuk (*healers*) Needing Specific Personal Qualities

Spiritual leaders such as kêtâyak and ontâwiwêwuk are identified as having specific qualities that are an inherent aspect of their personality. The literature indicates that long ago, healers followed a particular path in life. This was necessary for maintaining their healing abilities. It was necessary, as the community often depended on their ability to heal and to act as an intermediary between the community and Creator (Bightman and Brown, 1988). To continue their work, ontâwiwêwuk/kêtâyak had to live a life that was spiritually grounded. These conditions are still in place today as demonstrated by the Inîñêw (*Cree*) terms identified in the research. For example, ê-inihêwisit (*having inherent knowledge of the environment*), mino pimâtisiwin (*living a good life*), achahko pimâtisiwin (*spiritual living*) and akami pimâtisiwin (*living a calm and serene life*) are all terms that refer to lifestyle. All of these terms allude to a lifestyle that is spiritually grounded. While these terms refer to a code of ethical living applicable to all people, it is particularly important for healers. Not following a spiritual path ontâwiwêwak/kêtâyak may lose their ability to heal or suffer some other form of retribution. It is through living this spiritual lifestyle that their gifts are nurtured and developed.

Following this lifestyle in today's world is probably the most difficult task. There are many things in this world that can distract one from the path they need to follow. Kêtâyak and ontâwiwêwuk are not saints; they have faltered in their life paths and continue to make mistakes because they are human. The difference is that a person who is striving for achahko pitmâtisiwin (*spiritual living*) does not intentionally cause harm or pain in any form to another person or living being (animate or inanimate). They

continually strive to be positive and helpful. An example of this is that, historically, a person who was an abuser (alcohol, physical violence, etc.) of any kind would not meet the requirements for becoming an ontâwiwêw (*healer*) or a kêtêyiw who is recognized as spiritual leader. This is why becoming a respected ontâwiwêw or kêtêyiw is very difficult task to accomplish.

A healer's life is to be lived humbly and selflessly in order to maintain their ability as a healer and be accepted in the role of healer. Those who are able to achieve this state of being usually do not get there until the middle or later stages of life. The data is supported by documentation that indicates that healers did not develop their full potential until later years. It is also believed that this process is impeded as a result of the effects of colonization on Indigenous people and their communities. In some areas culture has been decimated thus traditional knowledge systems have lost their significance. An additional factor is that Indigenous people live in dual societies. Thus, few people carry out lifestyles that are purely traditional and consequently, there are fewer people from whom to learn. As stated by the participants; there are those who are born with this ability, despite their inherent gift they too need to be taught how to nurture this ability. This appears to be particularly important because of the bi-cultural worlds in which today's Inînéwuk live. Despite all of the interferences healers are expected to develop and nurture personal qualities demonstrate they are worthy of a healer.

Theoretical Premise of Counselling Techniques

This study identified several techniques utilized by Muskego (*Swampy*) and Asini (*Rock*) counselors in conducting their helping processes. Some of the techniques within

this methodology include:

- (a) Utilizing the environment as a teaching tool (e.g. studying the activity of ants) or as a source of healing.
- (b) Physical activity (e.g. physical work, crafts, etc.) that is intended to promote contemplation, trust building with a client or to release pent up emotion.
- (c) Storytelling provides a nonthreatening avenue of self exploration and learning, and also presents alternative scenarios to problem solving.
- (d) Ceremonies provide a healing process.

The above techniques provide only a few of the culturally-based techniques observed during the course of this study. The techniques are nonthreatening, encourage self efficacy and are not conducted within a constrained time frame. Learning when and how to carry out these techniques requires apprenticeship, as they are carried out with specific learning and healing goals.

The philosophies and principles within this form of counselling are not applied in isolation from each other. They are dynamic processes that are interwoven and work most effectively when applied simultaneously. This is how the counselling methodology is applied within a cultural context, it is a holistic process. The process of getting to the point where one can apply this holistic process requires learning to live holistically.

Recommendations

In studying the literature relevant to the focus of the research question of this thesis, it was found that the degree of generalization on North American Indigenous cultures is

disturbing. It is a cause for concern because it not only denigrates the uniqueness of the cultures of the tribes, but also causes cultural confusion. For example, a person searching for their identity might read an article that claims that all tribes who conduct Sun Dance ceremonies also pierce their bodies, which is not true. A person reading such a statement might believe something about his or her identity which is untrue. When writing on particular cultural practices the writer needs to ensure that gross generalizations are not being made. A few writers state that the content of their writing is focused on a particular group and not necessarily representative of all Indigenous peoples in North America.

More research to identify all the philosophies underlying the various approaches of Indigenous healing/counselling methodology is required. Indigenous methodologies have a lot to offer in the development of culturally sensitive service delivery. Indigenous models of counselling are thousands of years old and present alternative approaches to working with people. In his studies of Northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan Cree, P.G. Downes documented examples of how people with mental health issues were helped in a systematic process by the old people (Cockburn, 1984). Downes' documentation provides examples of the rich information that research can provide when it is conducted respectfully. Researching cultural concepts also needs to incorporate the appropriate cultural terminology. Incorporating specific terms from Indigenous languages would ensure that the meaning is not lost and these languages preserved.

Finally, researching cultural concepts such as the theoretical premises underlying counselling practices, requires a multi disciplinary approach, one that blends both

Indigenous research methodologies and Western academic methodologies. In conducting the literature search, I discovered numerous important pieces of information relevant to this study as result of reading documentation from various disciplines. In order to maintain traditional paradigms of knowledge, Indigenous scholars need to search out all available sources. Maria Campbell stated in one of our discussions that, “the old people left a lot of information for us to find in various sources, both in oral tradition and academic sources” (personal communication, 2000). This information is sometimes obscure, and therefore needs to be explored from a cultural position that is Indigenous.

Conclusion

As was stated in the first chapter, this study is only a beginning. There is still much more work to be done in documenting the theoretical framework of northern Manitoba Inîñew counselling methodologies. In particular, further study is required to clearly delineate all the philosophies, along with the principles associated with each philosophy. This type of documentation can provide First Nations communities with the mechanism for implementing culturally appropriate therapeutic services that are community based. I have found that the people that I work with in the counselling setting are much more comfortable with accepting counselling that is offered from a cultural premise. In addition, my ability to offer bilingual services has provided a permeability that non-Cree speaking counselors lack. It is my hope that this study will encourage other First Nations students to learn traditional methods of counselling as part of their repertoire of counselling skills.

When I began my education process in Western academia, I came to learn how to be a good counsellor and to provide services that were not available in rural and remote Indigenous communities. At that point, I assumed that there were only Western methods of counselling. I had this belief because I did not understand the concept of theory, therefore, could not identify theory. Western academic training provided this understanding so that I could find the theory in the counselling methods of my own people.

In Voices From Hudson's Bay, (1996), kêtêyiw, Richard Beardy relates a teaching he was given as a young man:

We were told in the future things were going to be different; there would be changes. I see a bit of this today. We were also told that someday the Indian culture and way of life will be forgotten. There will be changes; things will happen differently. We were told in the past not to lose our way of life, our heritage, to practice it always (p.79).

As a counsellor, I have had the opportunity to see a little of what this kêtêyiw is referring. The extent of destruction that colonization has inflicted upon Indigenous communities is heart breaking. The young people in our communities are suffering because too many have lost sight of what it truly means to be Inînwêw. The knowledge of what it means to be Inînwêw is in the language that people speak on a daily basis. It is also in the Wisakechak stories and in the land, one does have to look far to find their as an Inînwêw person. Ininew teachings instruct that maintaining cultural integrity in the work we do is important. It is an important ingredient to preserving our identity as Ininewuk. Indigenous people must maintain their culture if we are to continue to survive.

As a young person, my father told me that I had to go to university, he said, "that

there I would learn the Whiteman's ways, this knowledge would help our people." He went on to say that, "the only way to overcome the destruction that their governments have brought to our communities is to learn their ways. The answers to our recovery is there in their schools" (English translation). Somewhere along this journey, I had begun to lose touch with my Muskego identity. Conducting this study has been a journey that has re-fortified my identity as a Muskego Inînwêw. Finally, this process has demonstrated the value of collaborating my education with my culture in order to make a contribution to my community. I am grateful for all that I have learned through both my Western academic and Inînwêw education. Ekosi!

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APPENDIXES

CONSENT FORM

I, _____
agree to be interviewed by (Shirley) Ida Brass who is doing research for a Master's
thesis. This interview will be taped. I give my consent for Ida Brass to use the material
from the interviews for the thesis, and any future publication by Ida Brass, that may result
from the information I share with her. I also understand that she will acknowledge me,
_____ as the source of this information.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 1996.

Signature of Interviewee

Signature of Interviewer

SAMPLE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. How does one become a healer?
2. What are some of the laws that a healer must follow?
3. How is counselling done by Cree healers?
4. What are the teachings that guide a healing process?
5. How have healing approaches changed