


Article

Vicky Boldo/*kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* (Gentle Wind Woman): From Individual to Intergenerational Healing

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Abstract: In this article, the authors highlight Indigenous helper Vicky Boldo/*kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*'s (Gentle Wind Woman) approach to healing knowledges. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*'s background of Cree, Coast Salish and Métis ancestry, in addition to living a scarring experience as a trans-racial adoptee, created a ground of insight and self-care that sparked her awareness and reliance on Mother Earth as part of her survival. This chapter documents *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*'s insights into the sacred and inseparable relationship to Earth and all beings as crucial to overall wellbeing. The authors discuss *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*'s teachings about connection, embodiment and utilizing inner resources to move through the pain and trauma of separation from the self and sacred. Ultimately, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* exemplifies the need to centre the ways in which people respond to hurt assisted by positive social environments that challenge and stop structures of abuse. This understanding gained as a "wounded healer" in turn creates spaces for individual learnings extending into intergenerational teachings on healing and dignity.



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1. Introduction

Practices of connection can be considered a form of resistance and healing, particularly for those who have been targeted by acts of violence (Richardson and Wade 2008; Wade 1997). While resistance seldom stops violence, due to the pre-existing power imbalances, it does re-assert the dignity of the individual in the midst of degradation and humiliation. Dignity is interactional and takes many forms, including creating and offering space for others who are finding their way back to self and wholeness. Resisting disconnection is something Indigenous children have always done, whether in the internment camps for Indigenous children, in foster homes or in the midst of family separation (Wade 1997). For Indigenous Peoples, the process of moving back towards one's culture, ancestry and community can be fragile and requires support and displays of caring or 'holding'. In this regard, we introduce to readers a woman and Cree-Métis healer/helper who enacts these dignifying, holding and supportive practices in her everyday life. Vicky Boldo/*kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* (Gentle Wind Woman), born Shelly Lynn to a mother of Cree-Métis ancestry and a father of Salish and Métis ancestry, was raised as Vicky Lynne by her adoptive family on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Her adoption took place in 1967. Throughout her early life, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* learned the importance of caring, supportive, uplifting interactions in relation to personal growth and in relation to identity consolidation. She learned these lessons from its absence and, therefore, has dedicated her life to offering these important gestures to others, including the First Nations, Métis and Inuit students where she works at Concordia University's Otsenhákta Student Centre.

1.1. Research Methodology: Storytelling, Narrative Biography and Thematic Analysis

This article is based on Vicky Boldo/*kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*'s transcribed teachings conceptualized through an interview conducted by Zeina Allouche as part of the Indigenous Healing Knowledges project led by Catherine Richardson at Concordia University in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, Northern Turtle Island (also known as Canada). Research methodologies used are in line with Indigenous epistemologies of narrative research and storytelling, in which oral retelling of experiences are regarded as valid means for analysis (Wilson 2008; King 2003; Couros et al. 2013). A thematic analysis of the interview using Braun and Clarke's six-step method, in which patterns, codes and broader themes are categorized, resulted in this final paper (connected to existing research) written by Elise Kephart (Braun and Clarke 2006; Randle 2016). In collaboration with Vicky Boldo/*kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*, Catherine Richardson and Zeina Allouche, careful review and editing was completed, with *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* having the final say and validation on the findings presented in correlation with her teachings. It is important to note that within the standard Cree writing system, words are not capitalized (Vowel 2016, p. 13). As such, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* /Vicky Boldo will follow these guidelines by not including capitalizations within sentences and titles.

1.2. Contextual Literature: The Sixties Scoop

Many researchers have studied the unjust history of the government-instituted forced removal of Indigenous children from their homes facilitated by social workers (Sinclair 2007; Richardson et al. 2017; Boldo 2016; Trocmé et al. 2004; Farris-Manning and Zandstra 2003; Fournier and Crey 1997). Although Indigenous children represented about 4% of the total Canadian population at the time of the "Sixties Scoop", 30–40% of all children in the child welfare system were Indigenous (Fournier and Crey 1997 cited in Boldo 2016; Richardson et al. 2017). The allure of adoption was striking for Canadians who were interested in helping "in need" children, creating a dynamic of settler saviourism to accomplish the Canadian government's assimilation agenda (Sinclair 2007). Child welfare agencies even put ads in the newspaper, showing shiny faces of adorable children needing "good homes" or, more recently, "forever families". Many children within these White homes faced heightened levels of abuse and neglect (Sinclair 2007). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* is amongst the "Sixties Scoop" adoptees who faced violence and prejudice at the hands of social services. She notes that when she was 26, she put in a request to the office of Freedom of Information in Victoria for copies of her adoption files (Richardson et al. 2017; Boldo 2016). One note from the caseworker on 23 June 1967 indicated that "Vicky is a very attractive child, although still somewhat Indian looking" (Richardson et al. 2017, p. 192; Boldo 2016, p. 20). This single statement holds the power of exposing the systemic assimilationist policy within the social services during the 1960s, with children of Indigenous descent being forcibly taken into Eurocentric homes.

It is important to additionally note that the colonial legacy of disproportionate Indigenous representation within the foster and adoption services continues to the present day with many children forcibly taken from their parents facing abuse and ill-treatment within their adoptive or foster families (Talaga 2017; Carriere and Richardson 2009; Sinclair 2007; Richardson and Wade 2008; Farris-Manning and Zandstra 2003; Trocmé et al. 2004). The Sixties Scoop not only exposed the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in state "care" at the time, but it also hinted to the longevity of this pattern. This is exemplified by the fact that 20 years later, 40% of the 76,000 children and youth were put into adoption or foster care (Farris-Manning and Zandstra 2003; Trocmé et al. 2004; Carriere and Richardson 2009). This provides insight into how the Sixties Scoop has turned into what is known as the "Millennial Scoop" (Sinclair 2007, p. 68; Carriere and Richardson 2009; Talaga 2017).

1.3. Chapter Aim Connected to Literature

Although research presents documented historical atrocities against the Indigenous population in Northern Turtle Island (also known as Canada), there is a dearth of literature

on the healing ‘success stories’ of those who not only survived the Sixties Scoop, but also revived their cultural integrity through reconnection. As Sinclair (2007) notes, “resiliency amongst Adoptees is an area that beckons inquiry” (p. 75). For many survivors, exploring the truth within their Indigenous heritage proves to be a great source of strength, healing and renewal (Sinclair 2007). Other researchers question the individualization embedded in the notion of “resilience” and point to the need for positive social responses to assist those who have been victimized to see that it was not their fault and that they are still an inherently good and worthwhile person. In other words, working outside of the individualized prescription of resiliency shows the person experiencing harm that they are not a damaged person identified by their deficits. It is problematic to increase “resiliency” if only to increase one’s capacity to endure more abuse. The focus needs to be on stopping interpersonal and structural violence, such as racism and the ongoing and disproportionate high levels of Indigenous child removal, through positive and supportive networks built on respect, reciprocity and dignity. Recent literature “calls out” the psychological and neuropsychological approaches that reduce social suffering to issues of individual functioning and that cast Indigenous people as “damaged beyond repair” rather than seeing the social world as the point of intervention (Jiwani and Young 2006; Vowel 2016; Wade 1997; Million 2015).

As such, the aim of this chapter is to explore *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*/Vicky Boldo, trans-racial Sixties Scoop adoptee’s journey to reconnecting, assisted by Mother Earth, as an integral tool for healing. Ultimately *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* exemplifies how coming into oneself creates space for others to also connect to themselves. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s healing practices with others include working outside of the colonial narrative surrounding “needing to be fixed” and understanding the dynamics of being a “wounded healer” (Todd and Wade 1994; Laskowski and Pellicore 2002). Her work informed by her individual responses to pain resultantly has a positive intergenerational impact on those also experiencing hardship and interpersonal or systemic abuse.

1.4. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*/Vicky’s Present Day Influence

Today, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s healing journey continues to inform her work and her approaches to healing. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* has lived as a guest/visitor for the past 34 years on the traditional lands of the Kanien’kehá:ka, people of the flint. She is trained in various therapeutic modalities, including narrative and response-based therapy, cranial sacral osteopathy, reiki, energy medicine and circle facilitation. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* also receives training from Elders, such as Joseph Naytowhow, to work as an *oskâpêwis* (helper). She is actively involved in the education, social service, health and justice sectors. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* has sat on numerous community boards and is a current board member for the newly formed Sixties Scoop Healing Foundation. She provides cultural support to the Otsenhákta Student Centre, the Indigenous Directions Leadership Council (IDLC) and the Concordia community at large. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* is also a writer who has authored and co-authored a number of articles on social work and her healing journey, a research coordinator and advisor, cultural educator/facilitator and a registered energy medicine practitioner. In terms of personal life, she is a daughter, sister, auntie, mother of four and grandmother to 11. Her individual healing journey extending into her work with others, personal and professional, demonstrates the importance of honouring one’s responses to hurt and resultant healing tools. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s responses to the hardships she faced as a Sixties Scoop adoptee in turn helps to create supportive structures that opens space for people experiencing harm. Individuals can then discover their own integral and ancestral healing possibilities when encouraged by community that is dedicated to stopping interpersonal and structural violence, creating intergenerational threads of healing.

2. Connectedness as Healing: Closing the Hole

kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew often speaks of healing as a way to close a hole, noting that “healing for [her] is closing the void or that gaping hole that resides within us” (Boldo 2020). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s statement aligns with collective sentiments from survivors of colonial abuse who note that there is an experience of longing. This is akin to Joseph Naytowhow (featured in this special edition of *Genealogy*) who contends that due to the conditions of state-instituted residential schools, he “must have wondered about love and affection because deep in some cavern of [his] mind and heart, [he] had an idea there was something missing” (Naytowhow and Kephart 2021). This recurring symbol of a gap, “hole” or part of one’s being that is “missing” provides insight into how one’s despair points to what they long for (Todd and Wade 1994; Wade 1997; Richardson and Wade 2008; Carriere and Richardson 2009; Richardson and Wade 2010).

According to *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*, connection is central to filling the gaping hole. The term “connectedness” has been used as an object of analysis for many researchers regarding Sixties Scoop adoptees and the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system (Carriere 2005; Carriere and Richardson 2009). This process of connecting to oneself, ancestors and more-than-human-kin can be considered a spiritual practice (Carriere and Richardson 2009). Connectedness is also closely linked with relationality, which serves as an integral concept within Indigenous epistemologies (Wilson 2008) and exemplified by the Cree concept of *mamahtâwisiwin*, or a loving connection to a larger whole (Ermine 2000).

One important manifestation of connectedness is understanding one’s relationship to Mother Earth, which *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* affirms is vital to finding her way back to her origin. She particularly notes the relationality between waterways and how they all flow together the “way it goes up into the Sky and comes back down. It is all circulating all the time” (Boldo 2020). During times of isolation and escape from abusive situations in her childhood, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* sought refuge in the forest, with the trees, and on the beach on Canada’s west coast.

Spiritual connection to land is central to *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s healing approaches. She notes that “it’s important to get your feet out on the ground,” especially in times of isolation such as the current conditions of the pandemic (Boldo 2020). This perspective is informed by *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s experiences as a child finding solace within the natural landscape of British Columbia where she resided with her adoptive parents. In terms of connectedness, as a young child, she built an incredible relationship with the land, creating a safe space to reflect through times of facing hardship and abuse (Boldo 2016). Much time was spent playing with tree friends, climbing high up on their limbs, daydreaming of taking flight or hiding away from danger within their hollowed-out trunks. The coastal rainforest provided examples of natural resistance, adaptability and evolution; observing how layers of mini ecosystems supported each other and new life formed regardless of natural or human impact. Moss beds gave her a safe place to rest. These moments along with connection to the seashore, winged-ones and four-leggeds gave her strength to persevere; hope to continue living. Her ability to kindle this relationship with the land from such a young age provides insight into her statement that “children are such gifts; they are gifts from the spirit world” (Boldo 2020). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s instinct as a child to find safety in Mother Earth deepens one’s understanding that connectedness is a spiritual relationship.

The concept of land, according to Glen Coulthard (2010) from a Dene Nation perspective, is a way of knowing, being and, most importantly, relating. Coulthard notes that people are mutually interdependent with the land and if obligations to the earth are met, reciprocity will occur (Coulthard 2010). Similar to Coulthard, Mi’kmaq professor Cindy Baskin also notes the relational spirituality to land. She notes that land-based spirituality central to her Indigenous nation involves relationships to the animate and inanimate, revealing the spirit in everything (Baskin 2016b). Resultantly, both Coulthard and Baskin touch on the land-based perspective that informs ways of being for many Indigenous peo-

ples. This perspective can be considered “grounded normativity” or Indigenous thought systems connected to a relationship to land (Coulthard 2010; Simpson 2019).

Within the context of being robbed of experiencing a more expansive definition of connectedness, one can begin to understand the spiritual and healing implications of connecting with one’s origin. Richardson’s view of Indigenous lifespan development and the importance of dignity across the lifespan illustrates the importance of these loving and supportive connections that help Indigenous people to grow in ways adaptive to their culture (Richardson 2019). Today, many Indigenous children are taught to live biculturally and do this proficiently, even if the dominant society continues to create structural obstacles for their wellbeing, including disrupting the important relationships between self, Indigenous culture, land, rights and ceremony.

kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew affirms that “it is hard to know and understand ourselves if we don’t know our origin and where we come from. But it is also—it is a human thing too, isn’t it—of navigating the world right from the beginning?” (Boldo 2020). Her note shows that knowing one’s origin is not only integral to healing but also a baseline need for all humans. She tries to create opportunities for the spiritual resonance that is often experienced when someone connects with their origin in response to being robbed of that understanding as a child.

In specificity to spiritual connectedness, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* notes the power of prayer as a form of connecting with needs and healing abilities. Informed by teachings from a Kanien’kehá:ka Elder, she affirms:

[Gratitude] is what brings you into the love centered energy and it’s from the love centered energy where the healing comes from. [The Kanien’kehá:ka Elder] was just saying stop praying. Stop asking for whatever because it’s already been given. All of that has been given and as humans, we take something so simple and make it so complicated and complex. But the fact is, that we are here Right! (Boldo 2020)

Subsequently, it can be understood that *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* calls for a shift in the connotation of prayer. Instead, she views prayer as a practice of expressing gratitude and recognizing what one already has. As such, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* affirms her integral powers of healing by taking the initiative to understand her origin and where she came from, which reside in her life experiences of coming back into herself, explored in her article “Finding the way back: a personal narrative of reclaiming lost identity and voice from transracial adoption”.

(Boldo 2016)

3. A Tool-Kit of Resistance: Reworking the Connotation of Resilience

Although, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* notes that it can be challenging to harness one’s integral tools of healing with the added weight of not growing up with traditional knowledge and mentorship. She notes the differences between growing up with this knowledge versus coming back into it:

I guess sometimes I wonder. I like to imagine what it would have been like if I would have grown up with those things. Those beautiful ceremonies [...] So, you start from the Indigenous land and you go off and do your journey and you come back to there. I look at the young women I get to work with who grew up being taught those stories and the importance of honoring who we are, honoring the physical body, honoring the mind [...] I think when you get raised up with those beautiful stories, they become tools. These are tools in your box that you carry with you to give you strength, courage and self-respect.

(Boldo 2020)

As such, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* draws parallels between her personal journey and the people that she works with. From acknowledging that coming back into her origin is different from growing up with this understanding shows that many Indigenous peo-

ples have experiences of hurt and harm, but respond in different ways depending on their situation, position or background. This is connected to response-based practices, which highlight the ways in which people resist acts of violence assisted by positive social responses (Wade 1997; Richardson and Wade 2008). Utilizing this approach can help people understand the importance of honouring their responses within a normative colonial framework or “code” that dismisses the importance of the victim’s experience (Todd and Wade 1994). Instead of pathologizing victims, response-based practitioners empower individuals to understand their integral strength through their responses to experiences of pain (Richardson and Wade 2008). As a result, these responses can be considered tools for healing when in supportive and encouraging environments that directly contrast colonial and victim-blaming structures.

In specificity to more broad experiences of pain, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* notes the importance of decolonizing the connotations attached to women’s health conditions. She specifically notes that teachings about menstruation as a celebration within Indigenous epistemologies work outside of the colonized criteria, which deems women are experiencing a syndrome or condition, rather than an experience through which they can gain strength and understanding. This offers a positive contrast of feminine reproductivity to negative patriarchal constructions that pathologize a woman’s body. Reworking the negative stigmatization of menstruation shows that “Indigenous menstrual customs conceptualize menstruation not as taboo or pollution but instead as being about power and responsibility” (Baldy 2017). Instead of viewing this experience as a “syndrome”, Indigenous epistemologies on healing assert that this experience is connected to understanding and connecting with oneself.

As such, experiences of pain can become tools to inform healing. Alike to this, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s experiences of pain and the ways in which she responded to these painful situations, even from a young age knowing that she could find safety in Mother Earth, shows how you can be informed by understanding your experience. It is also asserted that individuals experiencing pain understand themselves and their surroundings best (Richardson et al. 2017). This circles back to the aforementioned needed inquiry into the resilience of adoptees (Sinclair 2007). Reworking the connotation of resiliency to understand that this capability existed all along exemplifies how victims are not passive, but active in every aspect of their experience (Wade 1997). Shifting the connotation of resiliency also opens the door for understanding that victim’s responses are not just a product of personal resiliency, but rather resistance to the colonial structures aided by empowering networks, resulting in possibilities for social repair (Reynolds 2013; Richardson 2020). Reaffirming integral powers of healing and “inner radar” serves as the starting point for not only developing tools for healing, but also building spaces in which responses to violence are prioritized and honoured (Richardson et al. 2017).

4. “Wounded Healing”: Dynamics of Space-Making as an *oskâpêwis*

In efforts to build spaces where healing tools are prioritized, one must take into account the cultural safety of the environment. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* considers her healing journey to be a process of “finding that safe, nurturing space where we are loved and accepted, and then it grows us up” (Boldo 2020). The concept of finding a safe, nurturing space can be likened to the Cree word, *miskâsowin*, or finding one’s sense of belonging (Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000). This common experience of navigating the world towards finding a safe and nurturing space shows the space-making elements to cultural safety as a helper or *oskâpêwis*. Vicky notes the need to refrain from the reflex to “fix” or mend a person, as if they were broken:

I just do not want to fix or change [. . .] It is just listening and accompanying and I mean, I might say like, oh, that makes me think of when I lived this or that or whatever, but there is also something about [. . .] I have huge faith in my own children and my grandchildren, and then in the youth that I work with. I just have such incredible trust, I don’t doubt it, that they can do it, they can. They can

get through things and stuff because I look at where I came from and so I think that helps to keep me centered.

(Boldo 2020)

Refraining from the reflex to “fix” also works outside of the colonial code within the helping profession that poses social workers, therapists or a helper/*oskâpêwis* as the ultimate healers or “heroes”, and those who are experiencing violence as the passive victims (Baskin 2016a; Todd and Wade 1994; Laskowski and Pellicore 2002, p. 404; Makkik 2020). Informed by her work with Indigenous youth, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* calls for an active role in not trying “to fix [the youth] or arrange. It is just allowing them to share by holding the space, so that they can expand and grow because ultimately we all know what we need” (Boldo 2020). This provides a new meaning of one’s role as an *oskâpêwis*. As such, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* reaffirms Laskowski and Pellicore (2002) sentiment that “suffering, and feelings associated with suffering, should not be framed as something that could or should be fixed” (p. 404). Instead, opening space for listening and holding someone in distress is where real healing lies. This is also a concept explored by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in her novel *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies* (2020) in which a character notes their combative feeling that “they should be able to self-soothe and self-heal themselves” (Simpson 2020, p. 174). Rather, it can be understood that there is a balance between “self-soothing” and reaching out to someone who simply makes space to listen and hold them.

Making space for listening and holding also connects to the act of letting go. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* notes that she often tells the youth she works with to imagine letting go of tobacco in the wind where “you cannot go back and pick it up... like... you let it go” (Boldo 2020). As such, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* affirms the need to put some aspects of healing to rest and not pounce on the opportunity to “fix”. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* also affirms that this process of letting go (personally and professionally) does not equate to passiveness. Rather, keeping faith in someone’s ability to balance self-soothing and reaching out for help is an active oath to empowering individuals who experience hardship. Subsequently, viewing a journey as a space-making operation creates a more expansive definition of healing in which culturally safe spaces can be affirmed.

kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew notes that her own processes of putting things to rest and resisting the reflex to fix informs the work she does today with youth:

The more that I know and understand myself, the more that I disarm my own emotions and what I carry, the more I can be present in the moment for others because all that is within me. [All these layers are] all my years, every given minute. We are not exactly who we were the minute before, right? We’ve learned something, or we’ve lived something, so I am just starting to have those really deep reflections and lots of gratitude that I get to do this work with youth.

(Boldo 2020)

kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew’s statement connects to the dynamics of helping oneself while helping others. Romani Makkik notes in her documentary “Wounded Healers” (Makkik 2020) the positive impact of instilling community-led healing practices where individuals in Clyde River, Nunavut are given the opportunity to become counsellors as part of their healing process through Ilisaqsivik, a community-led centre for rehabilitation and group counselling. The term “wounded healer” has been used by many individuals to denote the experience of understanding a patient, victim or individual due to the “helper” having firsthand knowledge informed by their own experiences (Hudzik 2019; Barnett 2007; Watt-Cloutier 2015). First coined by psychologist Carl Jung (1979), this term denotes the process of sharing hurt within the helping profession. This definition was then expanded upon by Guggenbühl-Craig (1999) who notes that both the patient and physician can benefit once the “inner healer” is brought forth (Conchar and Repper 2014). It can be noted that colonial psychology does not expect or encourage this archetype, viewing it as hindering the process of healing (Conchar and Repper 2014). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* and other individuals in the helping profession challenge this notion. As such, they do not

reduce the “wounded healer” role to one free from difficulties and challenges (as is with any role in the helping profession), but rather understand the benefits of helping when coming from first-hand experience.

An example of an instance in which *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* faced her need to heal herself before others is through anger. She notes that there is a need to rework the connotation to “righteous anger”:

And the anger, I guess, it was a big part of the healing journey for me. I remember somebody wise telling me that, it was the first time somebody had really said, that is righteous anger. And I had always equated anger to a bad thing, especially when you are adoptee and disconnected and trying to find your place to fit in, as you have to be good. You have to be a good girl.

(Boldo 2020)

Subsequently, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* notes the role of mentorship towards understanding “righteous anger” as a multifaceted insight into healing. By recognizing that the anger stems from a place of valid hurt due to structures of colonialism and inflictions of harm, one can begin to untangle and process the deep emotions residing under the layer of anger. She also notes the dynamics of attempting to unravel anger stemming from hurt, while aiming to move through the world without harming others. Although one may aim to not direct their anger at others, it may then become directed at themselves, which results in self-destructive behaviours. This creates a more understanding and compassionate view of those who experience addiction or self-harm, as it may stem out of unprocessed or untended anger. Since one cannot direct their anger at others or themselves, where can this emotion go? *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* believes that creating a safe space assisted by empathetic and collaborative mentors can help people honour the ways in which they respond to hurt by facing their anger with self-empathy, ultimately allowing them to process their underlying pain.

Therefore, *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* affirms the intergenerational and cross-community impacts of personal healing. Not only does healing help the individual, but this journey also helps others by opening up culturally safe and informed spaces. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* affirms that “the more we do our own healing, then we are disarming those emotions, so they don’t have to be taking up space when we’re working with others” (Boldo 2020). This is central to capacity building within culturally safe spaces (Blanchet-Cohen and Richardson 2017; Eade 2000). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew*’s initiatives can be considered to have great capacity through grassroots initiatives reaching the “real people” where they are, reasserting humanity and a realization that everyone is healing (Sparr and Moser 2008).

5. Conclusions: Intergenerational Healing

As such, it is clear that personal healing extends into community and generational healing at large. Response-based practice focuses on intergenerational resistance rather than putting everyone in the same basket of intergenerational affectedness (Wade 1997; Richardson and Wade 2008). It is the support one receives that constitutes safety and positive social responses (Richardson and Wade 2008). *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* realizes that much harm was done and that each person, with support and love, can activate that healing light and can grow when connected with the collective healing spirit. It is the individual and collective resistance that has kept people alive to this point. When individuals come together, healing can be carried into the future for others, including the next generations.

By shifting the discourse on intergenerational “effects” of trauma, one can begin to open up to the concept of intergenerational healing in which individuals’ responses to violence are prioritized (Richardson and Wade 2008). In a sense, it can be understood that it is not solely the hurt to be focussed on, but rather the ways in which one responds to hurt assisted through supportive networks. *kisêwâtisiwinyôtin:iskwew* exemplifies the ways in which responses to hurt can open up space for “closing the hole” through connectedness, tool building and asserting space for cultural safety (Boldo 2020). All of these factors are

a part of the larger tapestry of healing, opening up the opportunity for others to weave in their healing journeys.

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