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ONEIDA COLLEGE LACROSSE PLAYERS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE SACRED
GAME OF LACROSSE

by

Thomas James Reed

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2021

Dissertation Committee

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OF THE SACRED GAME OF LACROSSE

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DATE: March 31, 2021

ABSTRACT

Oneida college lacrosse players have an important perspective on the sacred game of lacrosse that needs to be heard. The Oneida are one of six tribes of the Haudenosaunee, or also known as, the Iroquois. Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in the world and the style played today is most similar to the Haudenosaunee style. Oneidas are traditionally orators and lacrosse players. There is a lack of literature on the Oneida, lacrosse, and education. Oneida college lacrosse players face a problem in attempting to preserve their traditional Indigenous knowledge at their respective university communities, while also seeking the best way to transmit that knowledge. Oneida college lacrosse players are challenged physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually when navigating Western education as Native American students. There is a Western educational disparity for Native American people, a distrust of Native Americans towards researchers, and additionally, an emergence of decolonizing ideologies of Indigenous researchers claiming a space in academia. This action research study included monthly talking circles and weekly journaling with 12 Oneida college lacrosse players as collaborators. This dissertation utilized action research and in particular, community-based participatory research, along with principles based on decolonizing practices and the sacred medicine wheel. One interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel is viewing the world through the lens of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, and this was used as a framework for sharing our perceptions' as collaborators in this dissertation. This dissertation created new knowledge on Oneida college lacrosse players' perceptions concerning the sacred game of lacrosse. Several themes emerged relating to retaining and transmitting traditional perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse to participants' respective university or college communities.

Finally, this research created unique and transformative spaces for community healing and growth amongst collaborators.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Julia, and my grandmother, Eleanor

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CHAPTER ONE

In the early 20th century, circa 1911, my Native American great grandfather Anderson W. Cornelius of the Oneida Nation, was forcibly removed from his home and forced to attend the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, where the saying went, “Kill the Indian, save the man” (Altaha, 2012; Bentley, 2012; Fournier & Crey, 2006; Haag, 2007; Peterson, 2013; Troutman, 2013). After having endured much abuse between the ages of 18 and 21, my great grandfather ran away from the school for a period of time, knowing he would be declared an enemy of the country for doing so (Anderson, n.d.). He eventually returned to the Carlisle Indian Boarding School in Pennsylvania to finish his education, and to help him endure his suffering, he played the traditional Haudenosaunee game of lacrosse (McLester, 2006). Anderson used lacrosse, at least in part, to stay connected to his cultural identity throughout his Western education (Lewis & McLester, 2005).

Over 100 years later, I, too, carried on the tradition in my family of being an Oneida lacrosse player while pursuing an education, first as an undergraduate student at Pepperdine University, then as a graduate student at California State University of Long Beach. I dropped out of school twice during my undergraduate studies, and it was lacrosse which motivated me to return to school and ultimately graduate. Being able to play lacrosse during my master’s degree program was the single biggest motivating factor for me to return to school. As a PhD student, I chose to do my dissertation about lacrosse, and it is my passion for the sacred game that motivates me to learn more every day.

Background to the Study

It is important to understand the background, what this study was about, and with whom it was conducted. First I discuss information about the Oneida Nation, then the confederation the

Oneida are part of. I then describe what it means to be Oneida, what leadership means and looks like within the Oneida community as well as the significance of the game of lacrosse for the Oneida. Thereafter I discuss the significance of talking circles, the significance of the sacred medicine wheel, and the difficulties many Oneida have had in negotiating—and succeeding in—what can seem like an alien environment (i.e., the education system). In this part of the dissertation, I briefly discuss each of these topics in an effort to set the stage for the discussion of the study.

Oneida Nation (“Ukwehu·wé” or “OnΛyote?a·ká”)

The Oneida people, similar to other Indigenous peoples, maintain and honor their own history, culture, and language (Powless, 2009). The Oneida call themselves *Ukwehu·wé*, which is pronounced phonetically as *Oo-gway-ah-way*, as well as, “OnΛyote?a·ká,” which is pronounced phonetically as *Oh-nah-yah-dah-ah-gah* and translates to “People of the Standing Stone” (Powless, 2009, p. 8). The name was derived from a story when the Oneida first came together as an independent nation, where it is believed a large stone came to the Oneida as a sign of protection (Powless, 2009; Shimony, 1994; Wallace, 1994). These terms of “Ukwehu·wé” “OnΛyote?a·ká” will be used interchangeably with the term Oneida for the remainder of this dissertation. While using terms interchangeably is not APA standard operating procedure, I use it intentionally in a decolonizing ideology of naming (Smith, 2013, p. 159), while also using Oneida for clarity and as a reminder to the reader.

The Oneida are one of 574 federally recognized tribal nations in the United States. The Oneidas and other Indigenous peoples referred to North America as Turtle Island (Aitken, 2018; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Bowra et al., 2020; Cachon, 2012; Folsom, 1980; Graber & Klassen, 2020; Hunt & Stevenson, 2017; Katrak, 2015; Lyons et al., 1992; Maynard, 2019; Pearce, 2005;

Zellars, 2020). The Ukwéhu-wé are one of the original five tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy (Powless, 2009). Originally, the Oneida had approximately 6 million acres of land in now modern-day upstate New York, slightly west of Albany (Powless, 2009). When the Revolutionary War took place, the Oneida Nation were the first Indigenous tribe, and further, first nation, to side with the colonists. This means the Oneida were the first and oldest ally of the United States (Oneida Indian Nation, 2020).

Since approximately the late 18th century and early 19th century, the Oneida have occupied three separate communities. One of the Oneida communities is still on the original homeland of modern-day upstate New York, the second Oneida community is in Ontario, Canada, about an hour to the east of Detroit, and the third Oneida community is just outside of Green Bay, Wisconsin. This last community was founded in 1821, when a large group of Oneidas followed a pastor as they migrated outside of Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they had a land deal with the Menominee tribal nation to reside in an area of land. The populations of the three Oneida communities are approximately 1,100 in New York State, 3,500 in Ontario, Canada, and about 14,500 in Green Bay, Wisconsin (Powless, 2009, p. 7). Of the Oneida community just outside of Green Bay, Wisconsin, roughly 5,000 people live on the reservation and the remaining 9,500 Oneidas are scattered across the world, predominantly within the United States (Joseph, 2002; Ogunwale, 2006; Powless, 2009).

The Oneida have a multitude of traditions and ceremonies to give thanks to the Creator for various occasions (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2018). The Oneida opening prayer, a prayer used to open different ceremonies as a way of acknowledging the Creator, recognizes people, the elements, and mother earth have the ability to, “be strong together through mutual care and stewardship” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2018, p. 2). A phrase in the Oneida opening prayer is

“Let’s put our minds together. So be it in our minds,” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2018, p. 2), which acknowledges the power of unity in mind and togetherness.

Haudenosaunee

Beginning in 1142, the Haudenosaunee were comprised of five warring nations: the Mohawk, the Oneida, the Onondaga, the Cayuga, and the Seneca. In 1812, the Tuscarora joined the Haudenosaunee, creating what in English is referred to as the Six Nations (Shimony, 1994). The Haudenosaunee originated in the modern-day regions of upstate New York and Canada, and have three sovereign territories located in New York, Canada, and Wisconsin (Powless, 2009, p. 8). As recognized by the U.S. government in House Concurrent Resolution 331, the Haudenosaunee hold the distinction of having influenced the system of U.S. governance of federalism, checks and balances, and the three branches of government (H.R. Con. Res. 331, 1988).

For clarification, the word Haudenosaunee, meaning “The People of the Long House,” (One Bowl Productions, 2017, 03:07; Powless, 2009, p. 8) will be applied interchangeably with the words Iroquois, the French word for Haudenosaunee, and the term Six Nations, the English word for Haudenosaunee. A key reason why Haudenosaunee is used in lieu of Iroquois is because Iroquois is derived from an Algonquin word which most closely translates to “snakes” (Powless, 2009; Tehanetorens, 1998); the Algonquin people are a trading rival of the Haudenosaunee. While the majority of people likely do not know this information, for the sake of this research, and as a form of decolonization through “naming” and “reclaiming” (Smith, 2013, p. 159), I will focus on using the term Haudenosaunee instead of Iroquois.

A Good Heart, a Good Mind, and a Strong Fire for the Onʌyote?·a·ká

From the beginning, the meaning of being Oneida has remained the same, “Have a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). The Oneida Nation describes, “To be Oneida is a heritage, a legacy, an identity. It’s a gift received from those who journeyed before us, shared with those who journey with us, and passed to those who journey after us” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Traditional ways and values, much like the ones mentioned here, are of paramount importance for the Oneida people, and they are manifested in every aspect in the lives of the Oneida people, including lacrosse.

According to the Oneida people, to have a good heart is understood as, “We seek to have harmony with ourselves, our families, our neighbors and all humanity” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Similarly, the Oneida understand “a good mind” to mean, “We value a healthy perspective on life and a generous sense of humor. We have good thoughts about ourselves, our Nation, and all People” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Finally, to have “a strong fire,” is defined as, “The heartfelt encouragement in each of us. It is understood that we have the ability to strengthen other people’s fires with a good mind and a strong fire” (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). A key point in this definition of a strong fire is the ability to strengthen other people’s fires (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1), which is a fundamental concept of leadership I used for this dissertation. These values are of utmost importance when discussing the perspectives of the Oneida people. As I reach new depths in learning about Oneida traditions over time, I further understand the sacredness and importance of having a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire. My co-collaborators and I discussed the prevalent concepts of a having a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire throughout our study.

Leadership for the Onʌyote?a·ká and Haudenosaunee

For the purpose of this research, leadership for the Oneida is defined as those who have a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire. This definition is specific to the Oneida, and each Native American tribe will likely have a unique definition. For example, Warner and Grint (2006) found leadership for the Comanche to be about persuasion. Persuasion is different from the kind of influence of having a strong fire to strengthen another's fire, as persuasion is not the sole purpose of having a strong fire. The purpose of having a strong fire is the ability to inspire others, which may or may not involve persuasion.

This specific definition of leadership for the Oneida builds upon the work of Jiménez-Luque in that “the creation of new paradigms and models of leadership thought from . . . decolonial perspectives cannot wait any longer” (Jiménez-Luque, 2018, p. 121). Instead of imposing a western model of leadership onto Oneida people, the research adds an Oneida paradigm of leadership. To expand, there is no one singular Native American definition of leadership, as, “. . . Indigenous leadership styles encompassed a continuum of styles that defy any simple reduction” (Warner & Grint, 2006, p. 232). Warner and Grint (2006) further clarified this as they stated, “. . . difference is as crucial as similarity and is the key to understanding American Indian models of leadership” (Warner & Grint, 2006, p. 232). What is unique to the Oneida from other tribes, and what lies at the core of an Oneida person's identity, is to have a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire, and is thus the definition of leadership for this research.

While academic documentation of the Haudenosaunee understanding of leadership is limited, the practice of leadership has been alive and well for as long as the Haudenosaunee have existed. For example, when I interviewed Chief Oren Lyons, a leader for Haudenosaunee people from the Seneca Nation, at his home on the tribal nation of Onondaga, near the city of Syracuse

in New York, in January 2017, he indicated leadership was easy to see. In the Haudenosaunee culture, 50 clan mothers from 10 different clans of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy pick male leaders to represent their clans politically in the *long house*, which serves as the official capital center of the Haudenosaunee and is where political decisions are made. The clan mothers possess the power to withdraw a leadership position from a male they appointed if said leader is inadequately representing his clan and community. When I asked Chief Lyons how the clan mothers would decide which males were the leader, he smiled from ear-to-ear and told me it was easy, the clan mothers would decide who the leaders were as they would watch the boys grow up and see who the rest of the children followed. Those individuals were the natural leaders, and it was these males who clan mothers appointed, and still, to this day, appoint (O. Lyons, personal communication, January 16, 2017).

The Haudenosaunee view circles as a fundamental part of human life (O. Lyons, personal communication, March 1, 2021). Chief Oren Lyons (personal communication, March 1, 2021) discussed how capitalism's bottom line is the dollar and how the Haudenosaunee have no bottom line. Our systems as Haudenosaunee revolve around the seasons of spring, summer, fall, winter, and then repeat. Our ceremonies throughout the year align with the seasons and circle of life, such as a ceremony for the sap in spring, a dead feast lasting all night in recognition of those who have passed, a planting ceremony consisting of 6 days of songs, speeches, and dances for plant life, a ceremony for the strawberries to recognize all the fruits, a ceremony for the beans, and so forth. Summer comes along, ushering a ceremony for the corn. As harvest comes, more ceremonies follow. We operate as Haudenosaunee people on a spiritual basis. There is not one specific day when we go to church as Haudenosaunee people, but rather, in every moment, we operate in the spiritual realm. Chief Lyons stated across Turtle Island, other Native Americans

had the same ceremonies, and in Onondaga, the Haudenosaunee still hold them in a traditional long house, our traditional location for ceremonies and decision making.

Chief Lyons (personal communication, March 1, 2021) voiced we, as humans, live in seasons: we are born, we are young, we are in our prime, and then we die. Our systems as Haudenosaunee people are cyclical, always revolving. Our lives are a part of nature, and as we move from young, prime, old and pass on, we move through the cycle of our life. Chief Lyons discussed two significant principles for the Haudenosaunee: sharing and respecting. We, as people, are to share equally with everybody. We are to respect ourselves, the Earth, and the trees. We are collectively part of nature. These are fundamental beliefs for Haudenosaunee people.

The philosophy of leadership for the Haudenosaunee people is exemplified in the traditional practices and protocol for visitors coming into their community. In an interview with Betty Lyons, President and Executive Director of the American Indian Law Alliance, Betty (personal communication, October 23, 2017) explained traditionally once a visitor arrived to the Haudenosaunee, they would be greeted with buck-skin q-tips to clean their ears, used symbolically and literally for listening on behalf of their community, and they would be given a cup of water to refresh their voice to symbolically and literally speak on behalf of their community. This act of leadership to me is a physical reminder of the duties and responsibilities we have for ourselves, our families, and our communities, and how we represent them in everything we do, say, and even in how we listen.

Lacrosse

Lacrosse is the oldest game in North America (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017; Vennum, 2017). The first game of lacrosse was played over 1,000 years ago on the other side of the stars in the spirit world while this world was filled with water. The assumption was and has been that

no matter who you were or where you came from, you could please the Creator with your game (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017). The popular contemporary sports of basketball (Hou, 2017) and hockey (Vennum, 1994) both derive from lacrosse. While other tribal nations across Turtle Island, the Oneida Nation and other Tribal Nation's name for North America (Aitken, 2018; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Bowra et al., 2020; Cachon, 2012; Folsom, 1980; Graber & Klassen, 2020; Hunt & Stevenson, 2017; Katrak, 2015; Lyons et al., 1992; Maynard, 2019; Pearce, 2005; Zellars, 2020), played a somewhat similar stickball game, modern day lacrosse is most similar to the Haudenosaunee style of play (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017).

Lacrosse is one of the fastest growing sports in California, the United States, and the World (Funnell, 2016). There are 62 countries across the globe that currently compete in lacrosse in the Federation of International Lacrosse (FIL, 2018). More countries continue to compete in each quadrennial lacrosse world championship (FIL, 2018). For outdoor lacrosse, the top three teams, in order of most recent finish, are the United States, Canada, and the Haudenosaunee. In indoor lacrosse, also known as box lacrosse, the game is played on an indoor roller hockey rink, or an ice rink with AstroTurf on top; the top three teams, also in order of most recent finish, are Canada, the Haudenosaunee, and the United States (FIL, 2018).

For many Haudenosaunee people, lacrosse is considered a religion (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017). At birth, male Haudenosaunee newborns are given a wooden lacrosse stick which they will keep throughout their life. Upon their death, Haudenosaunee men are buried with their wooden lacrosse sticks. As Haudenosaunee people, we believe that we are buried with our stick so that we continue to play the game of lacrosse in the afterlife. One of the most revered Iroquois leaders, Chief Oren Lyons of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, was the lacrosse goalie at Syracuse University from 1955 to 1958 (Syracuse Orange Sports", 2017). Among his many

accolades, Chief Lyons addressed the general assembly of the United Nations (Syracuse Orange Sports”, 2017), and served as a speaker at Mohammed Ali’s funeral. According to Chief Lyons, the Haudenosaunee played lacrosse “when this Earth was covered with water. And on the other side, the game was played before the Earth. It has that relevance in the Haudenosaunee as part of our spiritual process, as part of our ceremony” (Brewster, 2017, 03:21). The words of Chief Lyons affirmed the belief of the Haudenosaunee that the game of lacrosse was being played in the spiritual realm before the existence of the physical realm (Brewster, 2017).

The game of lacrosse is part of the creation stories of the Oneida and other Haudenosaunee tribes, including the creation stories of the Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, and Onondaga tribal nations (Brewster, 2017; Christjohn, 2020; Vennum, 1994). For the Oneida people, it is believed there were two twin brothers referred to as the right-handed and left-handed brother, and they played the first game of lacrosse as a way of deciding who would be the creator of all things on turtle island (Christjohn, 2020).

The Medicine Game, the Spirit Game, and the Creator’s Game

The game of lacrosse has many names. The Haudenosaunee call the game “Dehuntshigwah:is,” as well as, “O-ta-da-jish-qua-age” (Calder & Fletcher, 2011, p. 24). The Onondaga, one of six tribes of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy call the game “Dehuntshigwa’es” and the Mohawk call the game “Teewarathon” (Calder & Fletcher, 2011, p. 24). English translations for the game include the Medicine Game, the Spirit Game, and the Creator’s Game (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017). The game has also been traditionally referred to as they-bump-hips (Hou, 2017). The game is referred to as a Medicine Game, as it is good medicine for those who play physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, and is likewise good medicine for those who watch the game. Medicine games were played traditionally, as well as, in

current practices by Haudenosaunee people, where the game would be played for good medicine in honor of a community member who needed it (Calder & Fletcher, 2011). The game is referred to as the Spirit Game (Brewster, 2017) as it is believed for every game being played here on Earth, there is a simultaneous game being played in the spirit world (Hou, 2017). For Haudenosaunee people, it is important to play the game of lacrosse with a strong spirit for the Creator (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017). The game is referred to as the Creator's Game, as it is known as the game that pleases the Creator, and Haudenosaunee people play this game to entertain the Creator (Brewster, 2017).

Leadership and Lacrosse

Lacrosse has a specific tie to leadership for the Haudenosaunee (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017; Vennum, 1994). Haudenosaunee men, including the Oneida, are known to be lacrosse players and orators, traditionally and in modern times (Brewster, 2017). Freida Jacques, clan mother for the Haudenosaunee, discussed the depth to which lacrosse is part of the culture for the Haudenosaunee when she affirmed, "It is really something because our populations are not that huge, yet we have had quite a few world class lacrosse players" (Brewster, 2017, 04:12). To further understand the game's significance for the Haudenosaunee, when national teams are being drafted, Team USA draws from a vast pool of roughly 450,000 lacrosse players, while the Iroquois Nationals, a purely Native American team that competes internationally, draws from a pool of merely 400 players, yet the Iroquois Nationals remains one of the best and most competitive teams in the world (Brewster, 2017).

Different Haudenosaunee players have spoken about the importance of lacrosse from a leadership perspective. Haudenosaunee great and one of the greatest lacrosse players of all time, Lyle Thompson, has stated, "Every kid on the reservation tries the game- not because they want

to, but because it's a part of us" (National Lacrosse League, 2020). Lyle Thompson also shared, "Lacrosse is not like other sports, where people play to win. Yeah, I like winning, but that's not why I play the game. I play for my people, for my community, for my family, and for my heritage" (National Lacrosse League, 2020). Former defenseman for the Iroquois Nationals, Taylor Smoke, who graduated from St. Michael's College in 2009, discussed in an interview the meaning behind lacrosse and what it meant to represent his Tribal Nation by playing on the Iroquois Nationals Lacrosse team when he articulated, "Ever since you are a little kid, that is what you are working up to. . . I looked at my dad, you know, he played for the Iroquois Nationals. We wanted to be them. Wanted to represent our Nation" (Brewster, 2017, 26:41). For a person to represent their community, ancestors and future generations as a member of the Iroquois Nationals Team is an act of leadership and honor in itself. Landon Miller, Iroquois Nationals General Manager for the 2015 Indoor National Team, articulated, when talking about Rich Kilgour, head coach for the 2015 Iroquois Nationals Indoor Team and assistant coach Darris Kilgour,

At the peak of their career, there was no better warriors than them on the floor. They were guys that played both ends of the floor. They were guys that fought. They did it all when they played. And they showed [their style of play] in their championships, they showed [their style of play] in their leadership. I remember I looked up to those guys. (Brewster, 2017, 40:54)

Furthermore, Chief Oren Lyons (personal communication, January 22, 2017) noted that some of the top leaders for the Haudenosaunee were chosen for their positions of leadership because of their on-field presence. The current spiritual leader of the Haudenosaunee who fills the sacred role of Tadodaho, Sid Hill, is known as one of the best defensemen to ever play the

game of lacrosse (Brewster, 2017). The role of Tadodaho is to be the chief which presides over the Haudenosaunee Grand Council (Brewster, 2017) and this role was the early prototype for the role of President of the United States (O. Lyons, personal communication, January 16, 2017). Chief Lyons (personal communication, January 22, 2017) stated Sid Hill was chosen as Tadodaho largely because of his play on the lacrosse field, which led others to follow him on and off the field. Faith Keeper for the Turtle clan of the Onondaga Nation is Oren Lyons. A Faith Keeper's responsibility is to pass on and interpret the Haudenosaunee prophecies, legends, and traditions (Brussat & Brussat, 2006). Chief Lyons is a hall of fame goalie and respected as one of the best goalies of all time (Brewster, 2017). For over 1,000 years, some of the greatest leaders and orators of the Haudenosaunee, including the Oneida, have also been great lacrosse players (O. Lyons, personal communication, January 22, 2017). Chief Oren Lyons believed it is playing lacrosse which helped make the Haudenosaunee people great leaders (personal communication, January 22, 2017).

In the summer of 2017, I hosted a screening for the film *Spirit Game: Pride of a Nation*, which was hosted in the tribal nation of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. As an ambassador for the film, I was quoted in the official media kit for the film as saying, "Our screening will be filled with Oneida Community members, as well as, current players who hold dreams of serving both their community and their ancestors as members of the Iroquois National Lacrosse Team" (One Bowl Productions, 2017, p. 7). As stated by Mohawk Clan Mother Louis Herne, "[Lacrosse] is a statement about who we are. This is our game" (YouTube Movies, 2017, 1:04:09).

Because lacrosse is treasured as an esteemed and essential community practice due to the deep cultural, spiritual, and communal ties since the genesis of Haudenosaunee people, lacrosse

players are inherently groomed as leaders. Any Haudenosaunee person associated with the game of lacrosse, including as a lacrosse player, coach, or announcer, is naturally a leader for their community due to the cultural significance held in the game of lacrosse. In addition, these Haudenosaunee players and coaches are leaders in their approach and playing style for the game of lacrosse.

Being a leader on the field who plays with a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire is of utmost importance for the Haudenosaunee. Lacrosse players and coaches are a direct representation of the respect and connection Haudenosaunee communities feel to the physical and spiritual aspects of the sacred sport. What differentiated these Haudenosaunee men to become leaders was their passion, drive, and unity on the field playing their traditional practice. It is important to note this distinction of leadership is specific to Haudenosaunee leaders and is not a generalization across the span of all Indigenous communities, as every Indigenous tribe has its own culture, language, origin stories, and practices.

Sacred Medicine Wheel (Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual)

The sacred medicine wheel (see Appendix A) is a central concept to Oneidas and many Native American people (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Gray et al., 2019; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020) and was used as a theoretical framework for my research. The sacred medicine wheel describes human beings as physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (see Appendix B; Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Coyhis, n.d.; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Gray et al., 2019; Lavallee, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). One of the many meanings of the sacred

medicine wheel is the representation of human beings existing in four different quadrants simultaneously of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. This specific interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel was a central framework for this study. The physical is the here and now of what a person sees with their eyes and what a person can feel. The mental is the things a person can think about and ponder, be it both conscious and subconscious, it is that which is cerebral and what a person can think about in their minds, between their ears. Emotional is what a person feels in their heart and these are feelings, these can be anger, happiness, joyfulness, sadness, and they can be a knee-jerk reaction. It can be something that is visceral, but is what you feel on a deep level, on an emotional level. The spiritual level is something that is mystical and mysterious, yet a person knows more than anything at the core of their being is real. The spiritual can not necessarily be described in the physical form, or the mental, or emotional, or even make sense rationally, but the spiritual exists on a deep level, on a profound level of a person's soul and an understanding of what it means to be a human being and exist, a feeling of an existence of a spirit independent of a person's body that happens to live inside their body (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Coyhis, n.d.; Gray, Schrader, et al., 2019; Lavallee, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). At the center of the medicine wheel is volition (see Appendix C), the choice or will a person has in forming the four aspects of our nature, which can be learned by exercising the five steps of "attention (concentration), goal setting, initiating the action, perseverance, [and] completing the action" (Bopp & Bopp, 1989, p. 14). Vision (see Appendix D) is described as a magnetic-like force that pulls us towards what we can become; we as people draw towards that force through volition (Bopp & Bopp, 1989, p. 15).

While the teaching about volition is one of the teachings of the sacred medicine wheel, the symbol has multiple meanings. For example, the book *The Sacred Tree* depicts some paramount points of importance for many different Native American tribal nations and peoples, which include the meanings of the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire (see Appendix E), as well as, the four symbolic races being one family (see Appendix F), which are described as the brothers and sisters of white, black, red, and yellow (Bopp & Bopp, 1989, p. 10). The sacred medicine wheel further stands for the four directions of north, south, east, and west (Coyhis, n.d.; Pranis, 1996) which was important to the research because the four directions inform and are vital to Native American people as it reflects the interconnectedness and inner-relatedness central to Native American philosophy.

Talking Circles

The practice of talking circles is a Native American tradition with cultural significance to different Native American people (Arthur & Porter, 2019; Baldwin, 1994; Colmant & Merta, 1999; Conant, 2020; Doria et al., 2020; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Luna et al., 2020; Reed, 2021; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011; Wallace, 2019; Williams & Brant, 2019). The cultural significance of the practice of talking circles for Native American people aligns with the significance of the concept of circles as a symbol and as a framework for group communication (Colmant & Merta, 1999; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011). Talking circles hold an importance to Native American people, as well as provide lessons for all people (Arthur & Porter, 2019; Baldwin, 1994; Colmant & Merta, 1999; Conant, 2020; Doria et al., 2020; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Luna et al., 2020; Reed, 2021; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011; Wallace, 2019; Williams & Brant, 2019). Talking

circles and circle practices, when done correctly, create a sense of interconnectedness with others spiritually through a traditional Indigenous process (Brown & Di Lallo, 2020; Boyes-Watson, 2005; Hadley, 2001; Mackey, 2000; Melton, 1995; Meyer, 2002; Obie, 2016).

Granillo et al. (2010) listed the protocol of talking circles in a way I found effective, efficient, and encompassing of a grand idea in a short amount of text. The protocol procedures are as followed,

Traditional Native American Talking Circles are commonly composed of 5–10 participants who sit shoulder to shoulder in a circle facing one another. A facilitator opens a session with a traditional story and... topic, and then the floor is opened to the participants for discussion. Each member is typically afforded the opportunity to share information, ideas, and stories without fear or challenge of interruption by other members. The process is initiated by the facilitator and typically a stick, arrow, feather, rock, or other talisman is passed around the circle. The participant who wishes to talk holds the talisman and when finished, he or she passes it on. The sharing of information among participants is in a supportive, comforting environment. (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010)

This basic structure has similarities to what western academics call a focus group, where focus group participants take turns speaking one-at-a-time in a clockwise motion on different subjects and how it pertains to a person's whole self—their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self. When executed correctly, the talking circle process extends beyond merely bringing people together physically, as it is a deeply spiritually practice of interrelation and interconnection where deep trust and community emerge within participants (Coyhis, n.d.). A guideline in the

practice of talking circles is acknowledging circles as sacred and honoring this notion during use (Coyhis, n.d.).

There is protocol for talking circles. Talking circles must go around and hear from each participant completely once it has started and should not be timed (Coyhis, n.d.), aligning with my understanding of Indigenous peoples' concept of time in general. Talking Circles may have different interpretations between certain tribes, such as the Apache Talking Circle (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010); however, overall the talking circle core themes of sharing honestly in a circle while using a talking piece and being led by a circle keeper remain consistent (Coyhis, n.d.; Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010).

Further, a seminal point regarding talking circles is how participants come to the talking circle presenting their whole selves. In an effort to be able to gain greater self-awareness (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015), researchers encourage circle participants to be particularly mindful with their actions and thoughts for the 30-minutes prior to joining a talking circle (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015). Some participants may enjoy going for a walk, others may enjoy listening to music, or others may want to intentionally spend time meditating. It is encouraged to spend the 30-minutes before the talking circle engaging in an activity one loves in order to bring about a more spiritual side of an individual (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015). I found this to be true in my past experiences with playing lacrosse on my own prior to entering a talking circle in order to show up as a more centered person and better connect to my true self and others during the talking circle.

Talking circles are additionally known for their ability to heal people (Becker et al., 2006; Degagné, 2007; Hunter et al., 2006; Khayat Kholghi et al., 2018; Mehl-Madrona & Mainguy, 2014; Obie, 2016; Regnier, 1995; Stevenson, 1999; Umbreit, 2003; Wilbur et al., 2001; Wolf & Rickard, 2003). Kirmayer et al. (2009) recognized the distinct practice of healing circles

differing from talking circles in the expectations and protocol of focusing on themes of trauma, grief, and loss. Talking circles have too been used as a tool for counseling (Mehl-Madrona & Mainguy, 2014; Trimble, 2010; Vemireddy, 2020). Talking circles are an Indigenous mode of communication designed for healing.

Family members who have used talking circles on the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin shared with me about talking circle expectations and protocol. My grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, shared stories with me of people doing talking circles in Oneida, Wisconsin, where the leader of the ceremony, also known as the circle keeper, would bring an eagle feather or other sacred object, and it was told by the circle keeper whoever was holding the feather was unable to tell a lie (E. Bailey, personal communication, February 3, 2020; Reed, 2021). This oral tradition is valid in Indigenous ways of knowing as it deals with the sharing of information from an elder through a family resource. My grandmother's oral tradition knowledge of the importance of honesty in circle practices is similar to literature noting how being honest is transforming (Pranis et al., 2003; Reed, 2021).

My cousin, Edi Cornelius-Grosskopf, uses talking circles and told me how amazing the things you would hear when you truly listen to others and allow them to speak (E. Cornelius-Grosskopf, personal communication, February 2, 2020; Reed, 2021). Edi stated Native and non-Native people talk about abuse, trauma, addiction, among other troubling issues. Edi shared the greatest gift a person is able to give to others is the gift of empathy, which is taught through talking circles. Edi shared by going down into the figurative hole of another person's life and looking through their eyes, a person can help develop a skillset that will be a life-long benefit (E. Cornelius-Grosskopf, personal communication, February 2, 2020; Reed, 2021).

Native American Educational Disparity

There is a disparity in educational attainment for Native American students. In understanding and framing this issue, it should be recognized that Native American problems are not Native American problems, moreover they are problems from colonization as noted in an earlier literature review section (Jimenez-Luque, 2018; Smith, 2013). That being said, Native Americans have the lowest college enrollment rate, at less than 1% nationally, as well as, the lowest graduation rates compared to any other student demographic in the U.S. university system (Guillory, 2009). Native Americans comprise 0.6% of all associate's, bachelor's, and advanced degrees completed in the United States (Guillory, 2009), despite encompassing 2.09% of the U.S. population (World Population Review, 2020). According to a Bureau of Indian Affairs Report Card for 2004 to 2005, Native Americans had a 57% high school graduation rate (Ladson-Billings, 2006), as opposed to the national average of 84.6% (Kerr & Boyington, 2020). According to a 2010 U.S. Census, only 13% of Native Americans have a bachelor's degree compared to the national average of 27.9% (Ogunwole et al., 2012). Native Americans were the only ethnic group that did not earn more doctorates over the past two decades compared to any other ethnic group (Patel, 2014).

In a study examining Native American high school dropouts, reasons for dropping out of school ranged from perceived cultural insensitivity to feelings that their culture was irrelevant to the curriculum (Coladarci, 1983). Also, Native American students who dropped out articulated a perceived lack of teachers' investment in their education (Coladarci, 1983). With a lack of Native American role models in academia, Native American students often feel a lack of belonging and representation in the educational system (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015). Walton and Cohen (2007) stated:

Native American students encounter limited exposure to positive representations (i.e., role models) in the academic domain. This underrepresentation threatens students' identities in the classroom, subsequently decreasing feelings of school belonging and negatively impacting academic performance. (p. 439)

A lack of role models in education plays a role in the success of the Native American students. For some studies on ethnicities in education, there have been so few Native American students that there was deemed insufficient information for detailed analysis (Perna, 2000).

The history of western education in Native American communities dates back to the early 20th century in the Indian boarding school systems, which have now been recognized for their negative impact (Adams, 1995; Boyer, 1997). To get a sense of these educational institutions at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, it is important to note Indian Boarding Schools had cemeteries on site for children who passed away during their schooling, as well as, jails for those students who did not abide by the rules (Adams, 1995). The slogan of kill the Indian to save the man (Altaha, 2012; Bentley, 2012; Fournier & Crey, 2006; Haag, 2007; Peterson, 2013; Troutman, 2013) emphasized the belief that boarding schools must get rid of traditional clothing, hair, language, and culture of the Native American students, including my great grandfather who was a member of the Oneida Nation (Adams, 1995).

In addition, there is evidence in research supporting the notion that while there is not a college access problem, there is a college participation problem (Adelman, 2007). In families from a lower socioeconomic status, evidence suggests it is much more difficult to complete college as the parents of students often lack the tools, resources, or information to support their child (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2001). Native American families of low socioeconomic status or from low educational attainment may not possess tools or resources needed to provide college

decision-making information to their children. In some situations, when the parents are not informed about the college application process, siblings who have been through at least some part of the college process are often better equipped as a resource for their college-bound siblings (Ceja, 2006). Importantly, for the Oneida lacrosse players in Wisconsin, there is a wide range of parental education level. Some Oneida college lacrosse players are part of the first generation to attend a 4-year university, some are the first to attend a university that is not a Tribal College or Tribal University (TCUs), and some are the first in their immediate family to go out of state for a higher education.

Furthermore, many educational institutions fail to recognize Native American values. Guillory and Wolverton (2008) examined multiple case studies and identified presenting factors for persistence (e.g., family ties, giving back to one's tribal community, a sense of belonging on campus) and barriers (e.g., financial hardship, lack of representation and role models) as being major themes of hindrance in the education of Native Americans. Their research presents a lucid schism in educational attainment for Native American students, which encompasses students from the Oneida Nation.

However, there has been literature that has stood in support of Native American college students being able to attain a higher education while holding onto their cultural identity. More recent literature analyzed prior research and discussed trends on Native Americans in higher education. The researchers highlighted, "Indigenous knowledges have value and relevance to transforming higher education" (Waterman, 2019, p. 75). Western education, when executed with cultural sensitivity towards Native Americans, can be used to give confidence to Native American students in their identity and heritage. Western educators have the ability to empower students to connect with their culture (Waterman, 2019). For example, a Western education

assignment may be to do a research paper on said Native American student's own family history or heritage. While the author makes valid points on how Western education can be used to identify and incorporate Indigenous knowledge, I would argue that this is an idealistic depiction because it is nonrepresentative of all Western educators. In my experience, most Western educators could be better informed on Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as, the systematic oppression of Native American people since the dawn of Colonialism. Thus, there is a great opportunity within Western education curriculum to be culturally sensitive and tailor curriculum to be relevant to Indigenous ways of.

This background information prepares the reader to better understand the research conducted. Having outlined the Oneida, who they are, the importance of lacrosse, the meaning of the medicine wheel, what talking circles are and the Native American educational disparity existing in academia, I will now discuss my problem statement for the study.

Problem Statement

Currently, there is a lack of understanding concerning both the sacred nature of lacrosse for the Oneida and the role lacrosse plays in education. The literature on Oneida college lacrosse players is virtually nonexistent and systematic empirical research that has been compiled on the subject matter is very sparse. A subject-term search for "Oneida," "college," and "lacrosse" in an Academic Search Premier, yielded only one magazine article regarding two athletes by *Sports Illustrated*. The article contained the subject-term, but the terms were unrelated as the article briefly mentioned a wrestler from the Oneida Nation and separately mentioned a lacrosse player at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

A subject-term search using the same aforementioned terms yielded no results on any of the following: *APA PsycInfo*, *Education Resource Information Center (ERIC)*, in sports and

leisure databases such as the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, the *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, and the *Journal of Sport History*, as well as, in ethnic and cultural studies publications such as *The American Indian Quarterly*.

Furthermore, the Oneida, specifically, have scarcely been researched in academic study. One notable exception is the work of an Oneida researcher, Mark Powless, from Marquette University, who in 1999 published a study entitled, *Depression Among the Oneida: Case Studies of the Interface Between Modern and Traditional*.

Other notable Oneida academics and thought leaders include, but are not limited to, Norbert Hill, who, “is the retired director of the American Indian Graduate Center, American Indian Science and Engineering Society and former Director of Education for The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin” (“Project 562”, 2017, para. 1). In addition, David Powless is president of the Mountain Chief Institute (“About Us”, 2014) and Art Skenandore is the principal of Oneida Nation High School (Jarchow, 2019). An additional influential Oneida thinker was Charlie Hill, who was a stand-up comedian and activist and passed away in 2013 (Toensing, 2014).

It is noteworthy that most studies in academia focus on Native Americans in general, and rarely is there a focus on one specific tribe. There were over 2,000 tribes at the time of colonization in what is known as modern-day North America (C. Stone, personal communication, January 16, 2015). As already noted, many Native Americans refer to this continent as Turtle Island (Aitken, 2018; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Bowra et al., 2020; Cachon, 2012; Folsom, 1980; Graber & Klassen, 2020; Hunt & Stevenson, 2017; Katrak, 2015; Lyons et al., 1992; Maynard, 2019; Pearce, 2005; Zellars, 2020) and there are presently 574 federally recognized tribes, each with their own language, creation stories, and idiosyncratic cultures.

Therefore, there is demand for tribal-specific research, such as this dissertation study of Oneida college lacrosse players.

There has been academic study of lacrosse from a sports medicine perspective that focused on injuries that may occur as a result of playing the sport. A subject-term search of “lacrosse” in sports medicine databases such as *The American Journal of Sports Medicine* yielded 40 results, in which all were focused on injuries from the game of lacrosse. Conversely, the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine: Official Journal of the Canadian Academy of Sports Medicine* yielded no results with the search of “lacrosse.” Further academic literature detailing the history of lacrosse, and the sociological impact for African Americans playing lacrosse at Bard College in New York (Funnell, 2016) has been done in an undergraduate senior research paper. However, no researcher has examined Oneida college lacrosse players’ perceptions of lacrosse. While other literature has examined Native Americans and higher education (Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Guillory, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Noisecat, 2015; Ogunwole et al., 2012), there has been limited research studying Oneida college students, and even more specifically, the role lacrosse plays in their academic and personal lives.

Misconceptions in Knowledge about the Oneida

Not only is there a knowledge gap on Oneida, and more broadly, Native American leadership, but there is also misinformation present concerning Native American leadership. In Bass’s *Handbook of Leadership* (1990), a 914-page book has one page devoted to Native Americans, which stated, “The leadership of their many famous chiefs of the past is only a memory” (Bass & Stogdill, 1990, p. 755). This sentiment is erroneous and misrepresentative of Native American people. The Oneida and Haudenosaunee have a strong history of leadership since 1142 AD, which has survived colonialism, persevered through the official extermination

and termination policies of the U.S. government, and endures to modern-day. Despite a lack of published documentation in academia for Oneida and Haudenosaunee leadership, Haudenosaunee leaders have existed and continue to exist in Haudenosaunee communities and across the world.

Additional misinformation on the Haudenosaunee, also known as Iroquois, is present in seminal pieces of literature on Native American leaders. An American historian who specialized on writing about Native Americans, Alvin Josephy Jr. wrote in his 1961 book *The Patriot Chiefs: A Chronicle of American Indian Resistance*,

... in the generations of discoveries that had followed, the Indians had turned out to be Stone Age savages, considered so far below the intellectual level of white men as to deserve only extermination or the patronization and contempt of a superior race for an inferior one. The Iroquois had appeared to be no different. Their great numbers, military prowess, and ferocity had deterred the encroachments of whites on their lands, but the latter, while acknowledging grudging respect for their power, had continued to class them as unthinking savages, incapable of intellectual accomplishment. (Josephy, 1961, p. 6)

This sentiment from Josephy strongly reinforces a colonial mindset and epistemicide towards Native American people, and particularly the Haudenosaunee, also known as the Iroquois. The incorrect statement of information from Josephy is particularly alarming as "...this text was one of the most frequently adopted texts for courses in Indian History or Native Studies" (Warner & Grint, 2006, p. 232). It is of paramount importance academic literature recognizes value in the ways of knowing and knowledge from the Oneida Nation, as part of the Haudenosaunee, in reframing our understanding of Native American people and in creating space for intellectual contributions through academia.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to examine and understand the perceptions of Oneida college lacrosse players regarding the sacred, traditional game they play. This study attempted to determine how, if at all, playing the game of lacrosse aids Oneida college lacrosse players in preserving the traditional Oneida teachings of the game of lacrosse at their respective universities and how, if at all, they share their traditional knowledge with others at their respective universities. As noted in the literature, “Playing lacrosse in college increases the likelihood of graduating. Earning a college degree paves the way to better paying jobs and higher socioeconomic status” (Funnell, 2016, p. 79). In this dissertation study my co-collaborators and I examined the perceptions of Oneida college lacrosse players concerning the impact, if any, playing the game of lacrosse has on their academic achievement and likelihood of graduating. A further purpose was to explore if engaging through this research process with other Oneida lacrosse players encouraged and supported students in ways which might positively impact their overall success and possibly retention.

A further purpose of this study, otherwise stated, was to respond to the dearth of literature which currently exists on Oneida college lacrosse players. The educational system today has the capacity to empower individuals and communities (Guillory, 2009), and the existing literature suggests lacrosse can be a pathway for education (Funnell, 2016). There is evidence in research about the need for Native American youth to stay connected to their cultural tradition (Coladarci, 1983; Kanu, 2006; Ogunwole et al., 2012; Tierney, 1992). Researching Oneida college lacrosse players is relevant in academia as it explores an underrepresented ethnic group of Native Americans, specifically the Oneidas, in education.

Another purpose of this study was to use an Indigenous traditional method of talking circles in order to gather data as an intentional way to decolonize methodological approaches to understanding issues relevant to Indigenous communities. The purpose of this research was to utilize Indigenous ways of knowing to claim a space in academia through decolonizing practices of remembering a traditional way of expressing ourselves through talking circles. This research worked with Indigenous peoples, from the positionality of an Indigenous researcher, utilized Indigenous methods of a talking circle and the sacred medicine wheel, while centered around the sacred Indigenous sport of lacrosse.

To summarize, the purpose of the research was to understand Oneida college lacrosse players' perspectives on the sacred sport of lacrosse and how playing lacrosse might help players hold onto their traditional values, while also sharing their values with other people at their respective universities. For the purpose of this study, the definition of leadership was those that have a good heart, a good mind and a strong fire, which was an Oneida specific approach to leadership and will be expanded upon further in the literature review.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

RQ1. How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional sacred values of lacrosse within their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?

RQ2. How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities?

RQ3. How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?

RQ4. What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people?

RQ5. What impact do talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that those who have never been exposed to lacrosse or the Oneida Nation will be able to learn about this community, their culture, and their perspectives on the sacred game of lacrosse. Further, it is significant for elders and spiritual leaders of the Oneida to recognize the methods and procedures used, as well as, perceive the overall study as important Indigenous ways of thinking. An additional significance is the political importance of recognizing the Oneida Nation as a sovereign nation with their own history and culture. Furthermore, this study is significant because it can potentially create change in adapting academic curriculum to be culturally sensitive and include Native American philosophies. This might aid in further educating higher-education institutions, their administration, and staff, as well as, college lacrosse teams and coaching staff on the spiritual importance and sacred nature of the game of lacrosse for the Oneida. Additionally, the learning, growth, and development of the student co-collaborators must not be overlooked. This work impacted the minds and hearts of the co-collaborators in knowing they were conducting meaningful and purposeful work in representing their communities, leaving a legacy for their descendants, and reclaiming a space to have their voices heard in being their authentic selves.

Lastly, this research model could be used in the future with other Native American students in incorporating Native American knowledge and ways of thinking into academic research.

Summary

This background section included information about the Oneida Nation, the confederation the Oneida are part of, what it means to be Oneida, what leadership means and looks like within the Oneida community, the significance of the game of lacrosse for the Oneida, the significance of talking circles, the significance of the sacred medicine wheel, and the difficulties many Oneida have had in negotiating—and succeeding in—an educational environment. The problem statement for this study is the current lack of understanding concerning both the sacred nature of lacrosse for the Oneida and the role lacrosse plays in education. The purpose of this research was to examine and understand the perceptions of Oneida college lacrosse players regarding the sacred, traditional game they play. The research questions which guided this study were: (1) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional sacred values of lacrosse within their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (2) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities? (3) How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (4) What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people? (5) What impact does using talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse? The significance of this study was for an individual who has never been exposed to lacrosse or the Oneida Nation to be able to learn about this Tribal Nation,

their culture, and their perspectives on the sacred game of lacrosse, as well as, for a person who is an elder or spiritual leader of the Oneida to recognize the methods, procedures, and overall design as an Indigenous way of thinking.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the ease of the reader, the literature review topics are outlined in the headings of talking circles, colonization, and decolonization. Within the headings of talking circles, colonization, and decolonization, are various subheadings. My literature review topics work as a central framework in understanding the co-collaborators. The purpose of this literature review is to gain a greater knowledge of the issues and concepts within the study. In this chapter, there is an extensive review of the research methodology of talking circles, showcasing the complexity and adding a deeper understanding of them. These decolonizing ideologies are a fundamental concept in this dissertation and highlighting colonization is essential in order to gain an in-depth understanding. As a clarification of terms, Indigenous will be used interchangeably with Native, Native American, American Indian, and Indian, depending on how it is used in the literature and the context.

Talking Circles

Talking circles are used as a research methodology in this research, and there are four subthemes I will review. They are: the role of the circle keeper, the Native American importance of circles, the Native American importance of talking circles, and humans as storytelling animals.

The Role of the Circle Keeper

The circle keeper's role is to oversee the talking circle (Carr, Arcand, et al., 2020; Carr, Sedgewick, et al., 2020; Choate et al., 2020; Geske, 2019; Garnett et al., 2020; González et al., 2019; McPhail, 2019; Pentón Herrera & McNair, 2020; Rogers & Miller, 2018; Salm et al., 2017; Yusem, 2018). One of the first responsibilities of a circle keeper is to welcome everyone

into the space (Coyhis, n.d.). The circle keeper explicitly explains that as participants and as human beings, they are all interrelated and when sitting in the circle, participants recognize they are a small part of something bigger than themselves (Coyhis, n.d.). The circle keeper affirms a sole individual must not think the world revolves around them, for a participant must be able to see all things in the Universe as interrelated in order to enter the circle space appropriately.

Participants must willingly desire to be in the circle and have the ability to communicate. Pranis, Stuart and Wedge (2003) make clear the importance of starting the circle building rapport and trust through questions that participants feel comfortable answering. The keeper of the circle reaffirms all participants want to be at a place of interconnectedness with one another (Coyhis, n.d.). A circle keeper has a responsibility for looking over the talking circle (Carr, Arcand, et al., 2020; Carr, Sedgewick, et al., 2020; Choate et al., 2020; Geske, 2019; Garnett et al., 2020; González et al., 2019; McPhail, 2019; Pentón Herrera & McNair, 2020; Rogers & Miller, 2018; Salm et al., 2017; Yusem, 2018).

Native American Importance of Circles

While each Native American tribe has different views and perspectives, there is an articulation of beliefs by Black Elk in 1931, an Oglala Lakota medicine man, which encompassed a deep, spiritual understanding for Native American People,

“Everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be found. In the old days, when we were strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four quarters nourished it... Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the

earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. The life of a man is circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Our tepees were round like the nests of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests, where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children" (Neihardt, 1961, pp. 198–199).

The Oglala Lakota and the Oneida have some distinct cultural differences, such as the Oglala Lakota being a paternalistic society, and the Oneida being a matrilineal society, however, these spiritual concepts regarding circles ring true for many Native American cultures. The spiritual significance of circles for Native American people is another layer of why this research utilizes a talking circle, the sacred medicine wheel of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, as well as, the circular loops which also occur repeatedly in O'Leary action research model cycles.

Native American Importance of Talking Circles

Talking circles have been used in some way for many years by Native American people (Arthur & Porter, 2019; Baldwin, 1994; Colmant & Merta, 1999; Conant, 2020; Doria et al., 2020; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Luna, Malvezzi et al., 2020; Reed, 2021; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011; Wallace, 2019; Williams & Brant, 2019). For example, in a large-scale study with 400 American Indian women with cervical cancer, talking circles were used to deliver sensitive information (Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996). The researchers found that Indigenous women were much more likely to respond positively to culturally sensitive information, when delivered in a sensitive manner. This

study's methods included selecting eight different American Indian clinics randomly, with four rural clinics and four rural. In choosing to select 400 participants for the sample of their study, the researchers ensured stronger validity of the study, as well as, a better representation of their population. The talking circles were broken into groups of five to ten people who met periodically for support and to problem solve. There is additional literature that reflects the importance of circles as a symbol for Native American people, as well as, a framework for group communication (Colmant & Merta, 1999; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011). One article compared the traditional sweat lodge ceremony which was used in a residential treatment center on the Navajo Nation and compared it to modern group work (Colmant & Merta, 1999). In a sweat lodge ceremony, the people participating sit in a circle.

Another study found talking circles to be well received and it worked to significantly improve the training for Incident Command System, an emergency training response program (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010). Researchers found that Native American participants in tribal communities built trust through the storytelling component of the talking circles. The study utilized talking circles as a culturally accepted system to communicate the necessary emergency training. Oral tradition and storytelling are strong themes among talking circle literature, and this was reflected in the description of oral tradition and storytelling to convey their training information, in what otherwise could have been a written training format. (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010).

Humans as Storytelling Animals

Literature has recognized humans as storytelling animals (Bezanson & Sanders Pollock, 2015; Bowman et al., 2013; Calderazzo, 2014; Cheung, 2006; Chlopczyk, 2019; Chlopczyk &

Erlach, 2019; Diogo, 2020; Herreid, 2007; Matter, 1998; Mavroudi, 2020; Meretoja & Davis, 2017; Perreault & Paul, 2018; Sands, 2016; Shermer, 2000; Sjöblom, 2008; Stead & Stead, 1997; Waters, 2014; Weible & Schlager, 2014; Wesely, 2018). Humans differentiate themselves from the rest of the animal kingdom through storytelling. Smith (2013) described storytelling when she stated, “The story and the storyteller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story” (p. 146). As storytelling animals, we use stories to make sense and meaning of our world (Bezanson & Sanders Pollock, 2015; Bowman et al., 2013; Calderazzo, 2014; Cheung, 2006; Chlopczyk, 2019; Chlopczyk & Erlach, 2019; Diogo, 2020; Herreid, 2007; Matter, 1998; Mavroudi, 2020; Meretoja & Davis, 2017; Perreault & Paul, 2018; Sands, 2016; Shermer, 2000; Sjöblom, 2008; Stead & Stead, 1997; Waters, 2014; Weible & Schlager, 2014; Wesely, 2018). Storytelling is a large part of expressing ourselves during talking circles (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010). For example, when I was younger, I had difficulty concentrating, however, whenever a person would tell a story, I was hooked and engaged.

Colonization

Colonization is a key concept in understanding the literature because issues Native Americans face today stem from colonization. The subtopics included in this section are: Colonization, coloniality, and the myth of a post-colonial world and distrust of researchers in Native American communities.

Colonization, Coloniality, and the Myth of a Post-colonial World

Regarding the concept of decolonization, it is crucial to bring awareness to what colonization is. In understanding the extent of colonialism, “Western countries colonized the countries they conquered; members of their group became the country’s new power elite” (Chin

& Trimble, 2015, p. 10). Furthermore, what is considered appropriate and accepted knowledge for the humanities and social sciences derives from knowledge created by a few men from five different countries, which include Germany, Italy, England, France, and at a later point the United States (Grosfoguel, 2013). Knowledge from these few men from these five different countries is considered superior to other ways of knowing deriving from other parts of the world in a colonial mindset (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Colonial Matrixes of Power exist in every social structure and are defined by Ramón Grosfoguel (2010) as an intersectionality for hierarchies which include, “sexual, political, epistemic, economic, spiritual, linguistic and racial forms of domination and exploitation where the racial/ethnic hierarchy of the European/non-European divide transversally reconfigures all of the other global power structures” (p. 71). Dr. Antonio Jimenez-Luque emphasized this point of what colonialism is, as he noted that coloniality still occurs in the “minds and imaginative of both the oppressed and the oppressor” (Jimenez-Luque, 2018, p. 112). For those embedded in colonized culture, many people fail to recognize that most systems and modalities of thinking derive from a colonized standpoint through imperialism (Jimenez-Luque, 2018). Similar to a fish that does not recognize its presence in water, the social structure of asymmetric relations of power may be ubiquitous and difficult to notice for a person who has only experienced a colonial mindset (Jimenez-Luque, 2018). It is possible for decolonization to exist; however, it is a myth to believe we are in a completely decolonized society. If people believe the myth of a fully decolonized society, they are likely to accept the myth that the United States is a post-colonial society (Jimenez-Luque, 2018).

Therefore, it is necessary for a person to recognize their own positionality within colonization, for “...without an awareness of one’s own biased processes of symbolic power,

dialogue between cultures and knowledges will be impossible” (Jimenez-Luque, 2018, p. 114). It is further necessary to recognize that “...research still suffers from a historical bias that explores the leadership issues affecting Indian communities as if they are Indian problems rather than the consequences of historical displacement and cultural destruction” (Warner & Grit, 2006, p. 231). Thus, problems that occur towards Native Americans now are not necessarily Native American problems, moreover, they are problems created by colonization.

A concept of importance is what Santos described as epistemicide, which is the extermination of ways of knowing and of knowledge (Santos et al., 2007). The Western world has epistemic privilege due in part to the epistemicide that took place against the Indigenous peoples while in the conquest of North and South America (Grosfoguel, 2013). Through colonization, there has been a purposeful extermination of Indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge, and there is a great need for academic literature which amplifies Indigenous voices. There is a need in academic literature for amplifying Indigenous voices and recentering Indigenous knowledge. Recentering Indigenous knowledge is the goal of decolonization due to the effects of colonization, which decentered Indigenous knowledge through Western epistemicide.

Distrust of Researchers in Native American Communities

This study was conducted purposefully to establish genuine trust and relationship building with Native American people. Native American communities are traumatized, feeling mistrust and fear towards researchers because of the way researchers have historically treated Indigenous groups (Harmon, 2010; Mello & Wolf, 2010; Pacheco et al., 2013). Various Native American communities are hesitant to work with researchers due to a history of researchers who have committed transgressions which eroded trust within the Native American communities that

participated in studies (Harmon, 2010; Mello & Wolf, 2010; Pacheco et al., 2013). In the Havasupai tribe in the 1990's, for example, researchers took blood samples from tribal members saying they would do research on disease prevention and treatment for diabetes. In reality, the researchers used the results to attempt to disenroll the tribal members from their tribal group by using their own blood against them, as researchers argued the participants were not truly members of that geographic Tribal Nation. Further, they used the samples to study mental health issues without the participants' consent (Harmon, 2010).

In addition, during the 1970's, Native American people accused the Indian Health Service of sterilizing at least 25% of women between the ages of 15 to 44, while failing to inform the women that they were sterilized (Torpy, 2000) and used coercion and manipulation to obtain signatures on consent forms. Moreover, researchers did not provide the appropriate waiting period after consent forms were signed before they implemented surgical procedure (Lawrence, 2000).

These examples of researcher abuse are only two incidences of what many Native Americans perceive as disrespectful, inappropriate, and inhumane behavior by the research community when studying Indigenous communities. Given past abuses, it is understandable there would likely be trepidation and hesitancy from Native Americans to participate in a research study if a researcher approached the research process the way researchers have traditionally approached Native American communities. Trust and transparency are of critical importance in working with Native American communities and will help restore the deception associated with researchers. The collaborative approach I utilized, an approach which makes research subjects co-researchers, was essential for the success of this study. Such an approach is an indicator of cultural sensitivity, a vital factor in research with Indigenous communities

(Wilson, 2008). Thus, this dissertation research consciously worked to counteract trauma and was carried out in a co-collaborative approach versus participants feeling scrutinized under a microscope.

Decolonization

Decolonization is a process of dismantling the systems of oppression created through colonization, and the subthemes are: decolonizing ideologies, research as ceremony, insider status as an Oneida researcher, and cultural sensitivity.

Decolonizing Ideologies

One key philosophical foundation of this research is the notion of decolonizing ideologies (Smith, 2013). Linda Tuhiwai Smith, a Maori researcher, laid out 25 foundational ideas of decolonizing ideologies (Smith, 2013) which essentially overlapped with the research I conducted alongside my co-collaborators. For a full description of the 25 ideologies Smith (2013) presented, see Appendix I. All of the 25 decolonizing ideologies relate to how Indigenous researchers and practitioners are rising up as Indigenous people and creating a space for themselves as academics. For this dissertation, the five decolonizing ideologies predominantly used were: (1) claiming, (2) celebrating survival and survivance, (3) indigenizing and indigenist processes, (4) restoring and (5) reflecting. These decolonizing ideologies were some of the key ideas which surfaced during this study. Claiming is teaching Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people our collective story as Indigenous people (Smith, 2013). Celebrating survival and survivance is recognizing our authentic, spiritual ways amid colonization (Smith, 2013). Indigenizing and indigenist processes is being grounded in an alternative perception of the world (Smith, 2013). Restoring is healing physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually (Smith, 2013). Protecting concerns preserving the things and ideas Indigenous people produce (Smith,

2013). While these five decolonizing ideologies were the central focus during this dissertation, a case could be made for all of the decolonizing ideologies proposed by Smith (2013) being applicable to the study.

The Five Decolonizing Ideologies From Smith

Each of the five main decolonizing ideologies used in this dissertation will now be further examined, which are: (1) claiming, (2) celebrating survival and survivance, (3) indigenizing and indigenist processes, (4) restoring and (5) reflecting.

Claiming. Claiming is teaching non-Indigenous and Indigenous people their collective story as Indigenous peoples. Baldy (2015) used claiming as a way of taking ownership of Indigenous concepts and stories, particularly as they related to the trickster notion of a coyote. Claiming has also been used in understanding the role between the planner and the planned through claiming a decolonial, Indigenous way of understanding in urban environments (Barry & Thompson-Fawcett, 2020). Researchers found claiming to be used as a way for Indigenous people to create a space for themselves in academia (Shaw et al., 2006). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2013) stated for Indigenous peoples, claiming is “a history which has no ending because it assumes once justice has been done the people will continue their journey” (p. 145). These interpretations by researchers which understand claiming to be sharing and documenting the stories of Indigenous peoples for generations to come resonates with my own understanding of the term. It is with the intention of claiming that this dissertation seeks to add to a collective story of Oneida people, a story rooted in history which continues to be written.

Celebrating Survival and Survivance. Celebrating survival and survivance is the ability for Indigenous peoples to authentically hold onto their own ways of knowing and understanding. Celebrating survival and survivance was used in a doctoral dissertation which recognized the

strength and resiliency needed to overcome colonization for Indigenous peoples as well as the alternative ways Indigenous peoples hold onto their traditions. Medina used decolonizing ideologies as a way for the audience to assess their own relations to colonization and how colonization is normalized (Medina, 2018). I agree with the interpretations by Medina (2018) on the challenges of overcoming colonization as an Indigenous person as well as using celebrating survival as a way for audiences to check-in with their own relation to colonization. Another author, Sampson, highlighted and celebrated, “Indigenous women’s resilience, resistance, and the ways that their cultural values survive through their food practices” (Sampson, 2018, p. 10). This is a key example of celebrating, lifting up, and valuing survival/survivance. In an article examining the National Museum of the American Indian, survivance was described as, “re-defining ourselves. It means raising our social and political consciousness. It means holding onto ancient principles while eagerly embracing change. It means doing what is necessary to keep our cultures alive” (Conn, 2006, p. 71). This poetic definition is valid and rings true to my own understandings of survivance. These researchers’ interpretations of celebrating survival and survivance resonates with me. Celebrating survival and survivance is an aim of this dissertation.

Indigenizing and Indigenist Processes. Indigenizing and indigenist processes is a concept which Smith recognized is centered around identity and action as an Indigenous person. For non-Indigenous people, it is incorporating Indigenous processes and ways of knowing, and for Indigenous people, it is living the Indigenous processes (Smith, 2013). Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) examined indigenization occurring at Canadian institutions of learning in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action. Through an anonymous survey of 25 Indigenous academics and allies, responses varied from inclusion, to reconciliation, to decolonization. The majority of the responses were focused on inclusion, and Gaudry and

Lorenz suggested focusing on treaty-based and resurgence-based indigenization. I understand the points Gaudry and Lorenz propose (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). In my own experience in academia, I have noticed an effort in recent years to try and include Indigenous perspectives, which is usually lacking an action step toward reconciliation, of addressing past harms and working to address them, or in decolonization, of returning to Indigenous ways of thinking and living.

Furthermore, Indigenizing has been used in city planning in Saskatoon, Canada. The work of indigenizing in city planning for Saskatoon was to include Indigenous elders, and Indigenous systems and ways of thinking (Fawcett et al., 2015). This effort of indigenizing to incorporate both elders and ways of thinking is an appropriate use of indigenizing. A particularly relevant book chapter discussed true, indigenist research studies call for a scientific revolution. By having researchers focus on indigenizing processes, they, “can transform the structure and nature of knowledge production” (Walters et al., 2009, p. 157). I agree with the point of a scientific revolution needing to occur to incorporate more Indigenous world views and ways of knowing. As the Oneida opening prayer goes, “let us put our minds together, so be it in our minds,” (Oneida Nation, 2011, p. 2) and in this instance, there is a need for scientific researchers to put their minds together with Indigenous ways of knowing and seek out knowledge from Indigenous elders. Indigenizing is relevant in this research as this dissertation dealt with Oneida co-collaborators and centering our identity as Indigenous people.

Restoring. Smith (2013) described restoring taking place spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially. Restorative programs by nature focus on healing over punishing. Smith described restoring as a holistic approach to problem solving. I concur with the importance of addressing a person’s whole self for true restoration. Research was conducted by

using several comparative examples of how Indigenous peoples struggle for Indigenous freedom. Findings from the study suggested restoring could be done through sustainable connections to Indigenous peoples' homelands, and in ways which regenerate Indigenous nationhood (Corntassel, 2012). This is a valid point about creating sustainable connections to an Indigenous peoples' homeland. I see this to be true, and could be recreated through sending tobacco or sage pouches grown on an Indigenous land tied to a specific Indigenous people as a healing medicine of restoration. Literature discussed land resurgence as a key to restoration for Indigenous peoples (Wildcat et al., 2014). I do see the connection between Indigenous peoples' traditional homelands as a form of restoration, as I notice the efforts by my own Tribal Nation of the Oneida in Wisconsin to slowly buy back land in a form of land resurgence. Le (2020) examined restoration processes through recommendations in planning for the San Leandro/Lisjan Creek. Restoration was recommended through incorporating Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge, and included giving land back to Indigenous peoples. Restoration of the area was suggested for sustainable uses of the land in the future (Le, 2020). A connection to land is key for Indigenous peoples and is something I have heard reiterated from elders all across Turtle Island. As mentioned before, a pouch of tobacco or sage from a person's traditional Indigenous homeland could be used for restoration.

As Smith (2013) pointed out, there is a failure of public health occurring towards Indigenous communities. Some Indigenous communities are referred to as "Fourth World" living conditions (Smith, 2013, p. 156). This failure in addressing Indigenous peoples through public health has created a rise in restoration of Indigenous peoples motivated by an approach of self-help. This dissertation research was aimed at restoring ourselves as Oneida co-collaborators in

our Indigenous ways through Indigenous methods. Our work as co-collaborators could be described as a self-help approach.

Protecting. Smith (2013) discussed protecting being concerned with the protection of the things Indigenous peoples produce and all facets of our communities. Smith described protecting being able to be as expansive as protecting the Amazon rain forest or of protecting the life of a baby. Research has noted the importance of protecting Indigenous women in a study. Deer (2009), while examining the decolonization of rape law, articulated, “protecting women – the life-bearers and life-givers of nations – is central to the well-being of nations” (Deer, 2009, p. 4). I agree with this, as we all reside on Mother Earth and are born from women. Deer referred to the article as their personal form of decolonization and reclaiming through 15 years of research, teaching, and working with various Indigenous communities around the world. In an additional article, Datta stated decolonizing researchers in academia can focus on research ethics to help protect Indigenous knowledge (Datta, 2018). The author highlighted an importance of the research ethics of protecting Indigenous ways of knowing, and I do see this as a responsibility for decolonizing researchers. Another researcher outlined the importance of climate studies being influenced by Indigenous ways of knowing. The author called for a mutual relationship between scientists to Indigenous peoples instead of an exploitative relationship to help protect Indigenous ways of knowing (Whyte, 2017). Researching climate change, public policy, spirituality, or a number of other issues, would benefit from mutual relationships with Indigenous peoples in research as opposed to exploitative relationships. It was the goal of this research to ensure I was working mutually with my co-collaborators and not exploitatively. Smith (2013) described how protecting our Indigenous way of life, language, and the right to tell our own history, is crucial for the continued survival of Indigenous peoples.

Research as Ceremony

Also notable is Shawn Wilson, a Cree researcher who articulated eloquently how research as ceremony. In Shawn's own words,

Most ceremonies may be seen as a way to bring relationships closer together: to engage in ritual in order to achieve enlightenment. Through relationality and relational accountability, Indigenous scholars enter into a process of developing relationships with ideas, in order to increase understanding or achieve enlightenment. Indigenous research is a ceremony. (Wilson, 2008, p. vi)

Cree opens the door for Indigenous wisdom into academia by connecting these similarly related ideas of research and ceremony. Cree described in further detail,

Something that has become apparent to me is that for Indigenous people, research is a ceremony. In our cultures an integral part of any ceremony is setting the stage properly. When ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday and to accept a raised state of consciousness. You could say that the specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to get the participants into a state of mind that will allow for the extraordinary to take place. As one Elder explained it to me: if it is possible to get every single person in a room thinking about the exact thing for only two seconds, then a miracle will happen. It is fitting that we view research in the same way- as a means of raising our consciousness. (Wilson, 2008, p. 69)

I conducted this dissertation study holding this mindset of research as a ceremony. This concept that miracles arise when a group of people think about the same thing aligns with the teachings of the Oneida, in their idea of putting our minds together, so be it in our minds.

Insider Status as an Oneida Researcher

Further, as a researcher, I am leaning into my insider status as a member of the Oneida Nation and as a lacrosse player who tried out for the Iroquois National Indoor Team in 2015 using a wooden traditional stick. This concept of insider status is further explained by Warner and Grint (2006), as they asserted, “In research with Indigenous groups, the researcher is always cognizant of his/her status as an insider (or outsider), and the ability to collect accurate data are often dependent on the researcher’s ability to use past experiences to define his/her own status” (Warner & Grint, 2006, p. 234). My insider status and role within the Oneida community will positively impact my ability to collect accurate information. My utilization of my insider status is reflective of a trend in academia since the closing of the 20th century of American Indian scholars who used their insider status to describe their own cultures and traditions (Warner & Grint, 2006, p. 232)

Cultural Sensitivity

As previously noted, a pertinent issue when working with Native American communities is the concept of cultural sensitivity. Developing and displaying cultural sensitivity is difficult to do generally, not just in research contexts. Vine Deloria Jr. poignantly points out, “The fundamental factor that keeps Indians and non-Indians from communicating is that they are speaking about two entirely different perceptions of the world” (Deloria et al., 1979, p. 8). As a consequence of these different perceptions, for many Native American people, there is a large sense of distrust toward settler society. In *The Indian as Peacemaker* Mary Powers (1932), eloquently articulated,

It was only as the white man encroached more and more, as he drove the Indian farther and farther toward the setting sun, that the red man did retaliate and take a stand for

national existence. Every white man who fought for home, country, or religion is considered a patriot; but every Indian who did likewise is termed a murderous savage (p. 11).

This point is relevant for the context of this study as Native American people, in general, often perceive the world differently than members of “settler society” do. Native Americans face oppression from a colonial perspective forced on them by colonists which often contradicts the Native American peoples’ traditional ways of living. For example, Native American culture, in general, tends to be much more family oriented,

Practically speaking, such differences point to the need at the university level to shift away from dealing with Native American student persistence through purely monetary means and toward creating ways in which Native American students can connect with both the university and their home communities, (Guillory & Wolverton, 2008, p. 81)

Many Native American people value family and cultural tradition. For Native American cultures, life is not solely about capitalistic gain; it is more about family, tribal communities, and spiritual fulfillment. These differences require approaching research with Native American cultural groups in collaborative way which are showcased in this dissertation study.

Origins and History of the Medicine Wheel

Medicine wheels have been documented in literature, where the origins and history are discussed. Cohen (2003) created an overview of the origins and history of the medicine wheel. Cohen did this by exploring research on the architectural, geological findings of rock formations which predated the known use of the word medicine wheel in academia. Cohen (2003) recognized medicine wheels as architectural displays made of rocks, with 28 spokes emitting from the center like a bicycle wheel or a variant of a similar design. Sites of these medicine

wheels were speculated for ceremonial purposes and for being places of significant spiritual energy. Paul D. Barley, author of *The Sacred Sphere*, recognized the need to further investigate medicine wheel sites for evaluating the energy of the area and documenting it. Barley noted other Indigenous sites in North America had been studied for their energies, however, there is a need to examine the sites of medicine wheels (MegalithomaniaUK, 2019). There are roughly between 70 and 150 medicine wheels on Turtle Island. The oldest known medicine wheel is the Majorville Cairn in Southern Alberta, Canada, dated at 5,500 years old (Chapman, 1999). It was in the 1800's when the term "medicine wheel" was first used (Cohen, 2003).

Cohen (2003) shared the medicine wheels with their 28 spokes could be a reference to a lunar calendar cycle. Notable medicine wheels include, but are not limited to, the Big Horn medicine wheel in Wyoming in the United States of America, the Moose Mountain medicine wheel in southeastern Saskatchewan, Canada, and the Ellis medicine wheel built by the Blackfoot Indians in Alberta, Canada. Researcher's findings on these geographic, architectural medicine wheels act as a foundation for understanding the symbol of the medicine wheel as a sacred tool for understanding.

The coined term of medicine wheel with four quadrants derive from Hyemeyohsts Storm (1972), who noted the shared concepts between the medicine wheels comprised of stones with components of the Sun Dance ceremony, which used four sections relative as a compass point for the four directions. Storm's interpretation would be documented in the book *Seven Arrows* which outlined the sacred medicine wheel as "the way of life of the people" as well as "an understanding of the universe" (Storm, 1972, p. 5). Storm (1972) articulated the origin of the medicine wheel into academic literature. Storm repeatedly referenced, "our Teachers" (p. 5), referring to elders and spiritual leaders in Indigenous communities. Seeking knowledge from

elders in Indigenous communities is a valid course of information for Indigenous ways of knowing.

Different researchers and spiritual leaders applied different meanings to the medicine wheel (Jenkins, 2004). Literature highlighted how some of the interpretations of the medicine wheel used in a modern setting have very little to do with authentic Native American culture and beliefs (Jenkins 2004). Johnson (2006) noted how the medicine wheel provides a symbol, better helping people understand how to operate in a healthy lifestyle as well as recognizing our relation and connection to all things. This is a point which rings true with my own experience of family members' teachings of the medicine wheel. Johnson (2006) interpreted the medicine wheel to mean the four parts of self, which are the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, as well as the four elements and four directions. Johnson's (2006) interpretation of the medicine wheel as a representation of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual was a lens which resonated with my study.

Different studies have examined the medicine wheel through the lens of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Coyhis, n.d.; Gray et al., 2019; Lavalley, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). Physical is the realm we can see and interact with using our senses. Mental is the ideas which a person is able to think or ponder, the unseen thoughts in a person's mind. Emotional is a person's emotional state, whether with peace, angry, happy, anxious or a myriad of other emotions. Spiritual is noted as a connection to the Creator and all living things (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Coyhis, n.d.; Gray et al., 2019; Lavalley, 2007; McGabe, 2008;

Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). In understanding the synergistic relationship of these concepts, a person can use the talking circle as a mirror to see or examine parts of themselves they were not able to before (Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Storm, 1972). By using the medicine wheel and reflecting on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, we can better understand ourselves, how we internally process, or gauge our overall well-being (Mocassin Tracks, 2018).

The medicine wheel is a complex symbol with nuanced meaning to different spiritual leaders, Tribal Nations, and people. At a 2009 Pow Wow, a celebration of drums, singing and tradition for Native American people, I remember seeing a medicine wheel with the words physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual in the different quadrants. I excitedly told my great uncle Harrison I had learned the meaning of the medicine wheel. After I told him, Harrison (personal communication, July 5, 2009) corrected me, saying it means the four colors of all people on Mother Earth: black, red, yellow, and white. When I initially told my dissertation advisor about using the medicine wheel as a framework for my study, she was under the impression I was referring to the four directions of the north, south, east, and west (C. Getz, personal communication, September 26, 2019). For this dissertation, the collection of wisdom by elders across Turtle Island documented in the book *The Sacred Tree* was used as the framework for the medicine wheel in this study. While *The Sacred Tree* provides multiple interpretations of the medicine wheel, their interpretation this dissertation focused on is the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (Bopp & Bopp, 1989).

Summary of Literature Review

This literature review focused on three headings of talking circles, colonization, and decolonization. Within each heading, different subheadings emerged. This literature review acts

as a central framework for understanding this study. The purpose of this literature review was to gain a deeper understanding of the issues and concepts dealt with in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

As opposed to conducting the research as a single researcher intentionally standing apart from those being researched, I used the methodology of action research and co-collaborated with fellow Oneida college lacrosse players. As Oneida college lacrosse co-collaborators, we shared our descriptions of our perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse. This approach to research was especially appropriate because it was consistent with the Indigenous research methods which Cree scholar, Shaun Wilson, discussed (2008) in *Research is Ceremony* and which other Indigenous scholars have validated should be used to study Indigenous cultural groups (Smith, 2013). Further, I will subsequently discuss personal reasons for approaching the study through this research design.

Growing up, I lacked Native American role models within various education environments and in playing the Native American sport of lacrosse. Partly, my research provided an opportunity to be of service to the college-age lacrosse players who participated in the study by creating a space for the interactions I felt would have been beneficial to my educational career as an undergraduate. Given that only 13% of Native Americans have a bachelor's degree, it is likely that Native American youth do not have the resources from parents or, potentially, older siblings to learn how to navigate the college process (Census, 2012). Further, this study created a space to discuss embracing Native American identities and sharing traditional ways with others throughout our collegiate journeys.

Next, I will discuss how participant selection, data collection, and data analysis were carried out for this collaborative study and the unique relationship presented between the researched and the researcher.

The Participants: Oneida College Lacrosse Players

The participants in this study were 12 Oneida male college lacrosse players, some of whom are players I have previously coached while spending time in Oneida, Wisconsin. The study worked to create a space where Oneida college lacrosse players found community and wanted to remain in the study. The participants were all male identified, and this was due to traditional gender roles around the sport of lacrosse for Oneida people. While Oneida women also play lacrosse today as traditions have changed to allow women to play lacrosse, this study was focused on Oneida male perspectives in part, because I wanted to lean into my own perspective as a male Oneida college lacrosse player. Also, I had previous contacts that helped with access to these young men. These co-collaborators were from the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin specifically, as this is my family's tribal nation. As a member of the Oneida Nation, I began visiting the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin in the summer of 2009 at the age of 19. Since then, I have established rapport with community members and sustained meaningful connections, especially in the realm of lacrosse.

Some of the Oneida college lacrosse players in this study I had the opportunity to coach for an under-13 team in 2015 are currently freshman or sophomores in college at universities across the country, while others were incoming college freshman in the Fall of 2020 or 2021. Additional Oneida college lacrosse player participants included Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors in their undergraduate careers. This was done to diversify perspectives among participants. Within the last few years, Oneida Nation High School had to restructure their curriculum to become NCAA certified because many of their athletes have been attending different universities to play NCAA lacrosse. Until recently, Oneida Nation High School was not NCAA certified, meaning athletes could not then attend and compete at NCAA universities. This

is pertinent information for the purpose of this study as it reflects the nature of lacrosse in Oneida helping serve as a pipeline to higher education. The participants of this study were Tribal Nation members of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin who play lacrosse at any level, from the most competitive levels of NCAA, to club teams of the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association (MCLA), to players who are playing the game solely on an individual level as a medicine and as a spiritual practice. The participants could have played lacrosse for any amount of time prior to this study, however, many Oneida lacrosse players in Wisconsin have been playing since Elementary-aged years or prior. To request my fellow research participants to be part of the study, I contacted these participants via email, Facebook messenger, and Instagram messenger and attached a request form describing details of the study, their role in the study, and requesting their signature. All participants in the study were 18 years old or older and not considered minors, thus they chose to sign their own consent form to participate in this study (see Appendix G).

Some Oneida students attending college were moving away from the Oneida reservation for the first time and some of the students currently are or will be only one of a handful (or less) of Oneida students at their respective college or universities. Although limited research exists regarding Oneida college lacrosse students, studies are not necessary to grasp that these college students were likely to be vulnerable and challenged by their new environments. It was worth asking whether playing lacrosse, which connects Oneida college lacrosse players' present situation with their past experiences, would help them negotiate new and different environments.

These Oneida college lacrosse co-collaborators come from a community where their perspective on life is rooted in traditional ways. A prime example of how traditional ways are upheld would be that when students come of age at 13-years-old, traditionally and for some

Oneida people to this day, they enter into the woods for three days without food or water in order to mature spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally, and become more deeply connected to all living things. To remain tied to traditional ways, many Oneida college lacrosse players speak and learn the Oneida language and grow up learning the sacredness of lacrosse. When recruiting co-collaborators for the study, it was an outlier if a community member was disconnected to the Oneida traditional ways on the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin. A vast majority of my own knowledge regarding the history and meaning of the Creator's Game, I have learned from the youth lacrosse players on the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin, from the Oneida lacrosse coaching staff, and from the greater Oneida community. During my visits to the Oneida Nation, they have, in turn, taught me the significance of the Medicine Game, the Spirit Game, and the Creator's Game.

Data Collection Procedures

I employed an action research methodology. I utilized multiple processes to guide my research. The three designs I used were: the O'Leary model (O'Leary, 2004), Community Based Participatory Research (Becker et al., 2005), and an action research framework described by Dr. Cheryl Getz through which I conduct research like a fish inside a fishbowl (C. Getz, personal communication, December 16, 2016). I will now expand upon the various action research frameworks and designs I implemented for this study.

O'Leary Action Research Model

I used action research methods because I wanted to utilize my co-collaborators cultural knowledge of the Oneida, as well as, their traditional views of lacrosse. This research dealt with multiple action research cycles using the O'Leary (2004) model. An example of an O'Leary cycle is as follows. The first stage, *act*, was done through a talking circle. The second stage,

observe, I observed my co-collaborators as facilitator and circle keeper of the talking circle, as well as, through observing co-collaborators responses in a shared journal. While the logistics of observing and facilitating simultaneously can be difficult, the talking circle sessions on zoom were recorded for the purpose of me being able to watch the recording and observe the talking circle. The third stage, *reflect*, was done through my own personal journaling and critical reflexivity. My own personal journaling reflected on the processes of the nine principles of Community Based Participatory Research (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003), on five of Linda Smith's 25 decolonizing ideologies (Smith, 2013), and on O'Leary's action research cycles (O'Leary, 2004). While Smith's 25 different decolonizing ideologies emerged at different points during the study, this study focused on five decolonizing ideologies which emerged the most. They were: claiming, celebrating survival and survivance, indigenizing and indigenist processes, restoring, and protecting. The first talking circle was used as a pilot to see which of the five decolonizing ideologies I would focus upon. I reflected on which decolonizing ideologies resonated most after I reviewed the first recording of the talking circle meeting. The fourth stage of the O'Leary model is *plan*, where I at times adjusted the theme of the talking circle depending on my reflection from my observations. This cycle continued and was repeated for all four talking circles, leading up to our group analysis. This process can be seen in figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

Overview of an O’Leary Cycle of Action Research

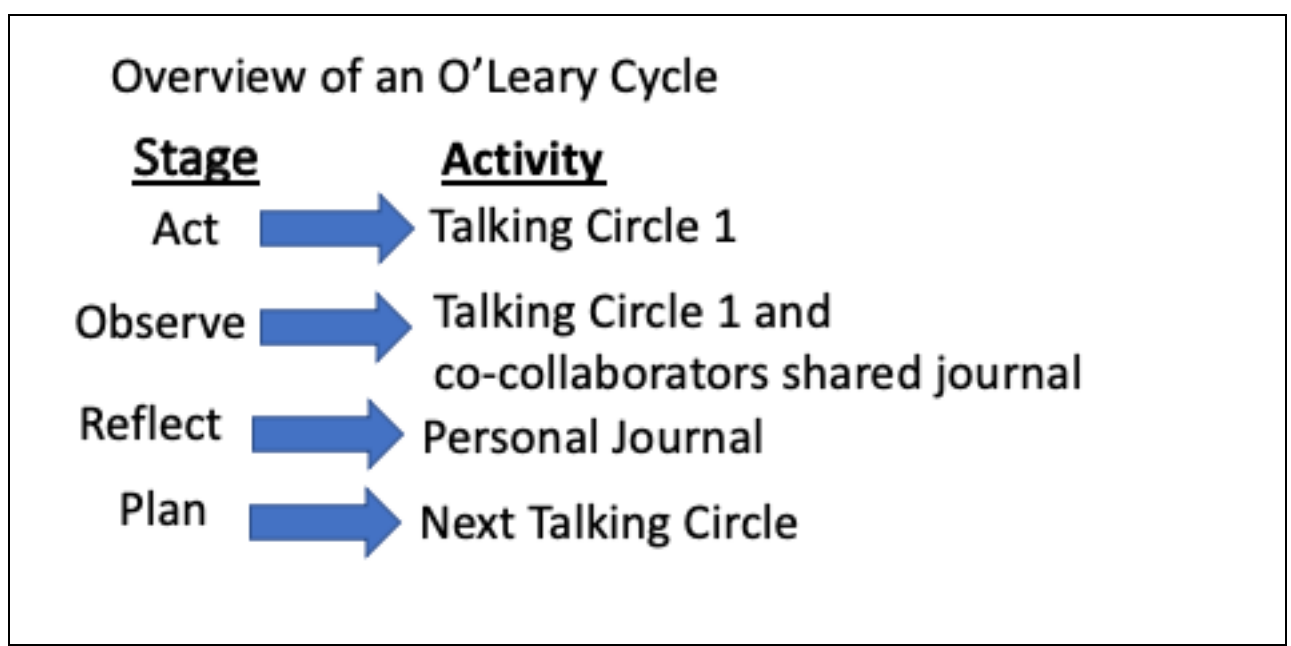


Figure 2

Example of Stage, Activity and What I did in an Action Research Cycle

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>What I did</u>
Act	Talking Circle	I created a talking circle to be centered on values
Observe	Talking Circle & Group Weekly Journals	Observed as I was facilitating the talking circle, observed the recording of the talking circle, and observed the co-collaborators shared Instagram group chat weekly talking circle responses
Reflect	My Personal Journal	I reflected on integrating and understanding responses of the talking circle and weekly journals
Plan	Between Talking Circles	The proposed theme was on preserving the traditional values of lacrosse, however other themes arose during the observe stage, such as long hair and connection to our ancestors, and were discussed as well.

Community-Based Participatory Research. Throughout this research, I utilized the nine principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR; Becker et al., 2005; Israel et

al., 2003). The first principle implemented in the research was to acknowledge the community as a unit of identity, and how we recognize ourselves as Oneida people within the research. The second principle of the study was to build on the strengths and resources in the community, which I did by seeking out an Oneida artisan in the Wisconsin community, Dana Isaac, who created miniature wooden lacrosse sticks for co-collaborators to hold onto while they were going through their education. The third CBPR principle this study used was the facilitation of a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research, which I enacted purposefully and intentionally through creating a co-collaborative space during the talking circle process. One of the attributes of talking circles is it recognizes individuals and their voices as equal and thus, shifts power away from one particular person. The fourth principle of Community Based Participatory Research embedded into this study was fostering co-learning and capacity building among all partners, which I did deliberately as the circle keeper and as the initiator of the research. I purposefully created a space where co-collaborators could learn from one another and practice working together. The fifth principle of Community Based Participatory Research is to balance knowledge generation and intervention of the mutual benefit of all partners which was done by creating a space of respect as a circle keeper and allowing individuals to authentically express themselves during their various life stages. I shared my perspective as an individual in the Millennial generation and allowed my co-collaborators to share their knowledge through the lens of Generation Z and in their various grades, from an entering college freshman to a recent 2019 college graduate who is now a volunteer assistant coach at the collegiate level. The co-collaborators who comprised this study offered nuanced and balanced points of perspective. Further, talking circles inherently allowed a balance of knowledge intervention by allowing each person to speak uninterrupted until they were finished. The sixth CBPR principle is to attend to

both local relevance and ecological perspectives, which was executed by listening to the perspectives of my co-collaborators concerning the harmony amongst them, their communities, and environments in Oneida, Wisconsin, as well as, at each student's respective university. The seventh principle of CBPR is to develop systems using a cyclical and iterative process, which was accomplished through the implementation of the O'Leary model of action research cycles of observe, reflect, plan and act (O'Leary, 2004). The eighth principle of Community Based Participatory Research is to disseminate results to all partners, and involve all partners in dissemination, which was done through repeated monthly talking circles on Zoom from October 11, 2020 to January 31, 2021 where each co-collaborator had a voice in the process of what knowledge is disseminated and how to disseminate it. Co-collaborators had access to transcripts of the talking circles generated by Zoom, as well as, the Zoom recordings of previous sessions. The ninth principle of Community Based Participatory Research is to commit to a long-term process and group sustainability, which was achieved by continuing to create a space for community which was beneficial to my co-collaborators and myself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The rapport I built with Oneida college lacrosse players has been sustained over many years, and this dissertation research was another example of working to sustain that group relationship. I plan to continue to support the individuals and community which was built during this research for the foreseeable future. This summarizes how the nine principles of Community Based Participatory Research (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003) were incorporated into my study.

In summary, the Community Based Participatory Research Model is described in detail in Appendix J (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). These nine components were a fundamental framework I utilized with my co-collaborators in conducting this study.

Research Within the Fishbowl. Action research is unique in that it is akin to observing what it is like to be a fish within the fishbowl, as opposed to, merely observing fish from outside looking in (C. Getz, personal communication, December 16, 2016). This articulation of my position within the research as a participant alongside my co-collaborators was crucial and was at the forefront of my mind as I conducted the research. Using an action research methodology in a co-collaborative manner with my fellow Oneida college lacrosse players was “a research strategy that privileges Indigenous experiences” (Rigney, 1996, p. 6) in an effort to document these experiences through academia. If I conducted my research from outside the figurative fishbowl, it would not have been a co-collaborative experience and there would be separation between me, as the researcher, from my participants. Research from outside the fishbowl creates a hierarchy where I, as a researcher, would have power over my participants, whereas research from within the fishbowl creates a shared power between co-collaborators. It could be argued in life we are all part of the same fishbowl as human beings, and our own bias and judgements disconnect us. However, as the researcher, I chose to determine the fishbowl as a group of Oneida college lacrosse players and conducted the research with the intention of being able to tell the story of my co-collaborators as figurative fish within the fishbowl.

Final Thoughts Related to Using Action Research. In action research, researchers focus on solving a problem. The standard type of problem researchers tend to focus on is typically a practical problem. The problem examined in this research were the challenges young men face in leaving their home environments and venturing off to a college community that may or may not understand Native American students’ perspectives or align with the student’s values. Action research can be either qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. The research conducted for this study was qualitative and focused on the stories of Oneida college lacrosse

players and their perspectives surrounding the game of lacrosse through the framing of one interpretation of a sacred medicine wheel.

Research Participants and Initial Process

As previously noted, there were 13 co-collaborators involved in this study. The co-collaborators were Oneida whose ages ranged from 18 to 31 years old. The study was comprised of four freshman, three sophomores, four juniors, one 2019 graduate, and myself working to attain a PhD.

The Covid-19 outbreak prevented me from traveling due to travel restrictions from the Center for Disease Control and general high-risk health and safety concerns. Thus, I engaged with my Oneida college lacrosse players through fully utilizing technology and started our initial electronic meeting via Zoom Sunday October 11th, 2020. Before our initial virtual meeting, I physically mailed each of my co-collaborators a box which included items to connect more deeply with ourselves, our fellow co-collaborators, and Mother Earth. The boxes contained sage and loose tobacco, as well as, a miniature wooden lacrosse stick that is roughly eight inches tall. These hand-made miniature lacrosse sticks were constructed by Oneida woodworker and artist Dana Isaac. The miniature wooden lacrosse sticks were small enough to easily hold in one hand or be placed in a pocket to be carried around, yet large enough to be visible on a video conference call screen. The wooden lacrosse sticks represent deep spiritual significance as a believed conduit to help us as Onʌyoteʔa-ká people connect to the spirit world.

Further, included in the box sent to my co-collaborators were Q-tips. Q-tips were sent as a reminder for my co-collaborators and myself to clean our ears before virtually gathering, so as to listen both literally and figuratively for ourselves and our Onʌyoteʔa-ká Nation. It was encouraged for co-collaborators to have a glass of water beside them during the talking circle, as

a reminder for us as co-collaborators to drink water so as to literally and figuratively prepare our voices to speak on behalf of our families and our Onʘyoteʘa·ká Nation.

Upon joining with my co-collaborators digitally, the talking piece was introduced (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015; Coyhis, n.d.; Pranis et al., 2003; Ross, 1996). The traditional miniature hickory wooden lacrosse sticks Onʘyoteʘa·ká artist Dana Isaac created acted as optional talking pieces, otherwise referred to as talismans (Granillo, Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010). These wooden lacrosse sticks exemplified a connection to our ancestors who played the Medicine Game before us and symbolized our connection with all living things (Hou, 2017). The wooden stick was constructed from hickory and the net lacing used from deer (Hou, 2017). It was an option throughout the talking circles to hold your miniature lacrosse stick when you spoke as a talisman, or to use in a way which would provide good medicine of healing, positivity, and enjoyment.

After introducing the wooden hickory lacrosse sticks and explaining their function in the talking circle, I then introduced and explained the Oneida grown sage bundles, which were used to ward off negativity and to pray for cleansing (E. Bailey, personal communication, September 16, 2020). For many Native Americans, it is believed sage has the ability to open up the passageway from the head to heart (Coyhis, n.d.) and has other traditional, medicinal, healing properties (E. Bailey, personal communication, September 16, 2020).

I then introduced to my co-collaborators the Onʘyoteʘa·ká grown tobacco bundles I sent them. Each of us co-collaborators individually had the option to pray by holding on to Onʘyoteʘa·ká grown tobacco bundles (E. Bailey, personal communication, September 16, 2020). Tobacco bundles traditionally for the Onʘyoteʘa·ká are held if you have an issue or problem, to pray for guidance, make requests, or give thanks (E. Bailey, personal communication, September

16, 2020). This holding of tobacco was done on behalf of the co-collaborators themselves, their communities, and for Mother Earth whose back we reside on in turtle island (E. Bailey, personal communication, September 16, 2020), what is commonly referred to today as North America (Aitken, 2018; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Bowra et al., 2020; Cachon, 2012; Folsom, 1980; Graber & Klassen, 2020; Hunt & Stevenson, 2017; Katrak, 2015; Lyons et al., 1992; Maynard, 2019; Pearce, 2005; Zellars, 2020). Tobacco was chosen as it is believed to be a sacred medicine for Onʼyoteʼa·ká people and the majority of, if not all, Native American tribes (E. Bailey, personal communication, September 16, 2020). For background on tobacco’s significance, tobacco is believed by Onʼyoteʼa·ká people to be a sacred medicine used before traditional “medicine games” by throwing tobacco into a fire while praying a sacred, traditional, Onʼyoteʼa·ká prayer over the wooden lacrosse sticks. Traditional medicine games are played solely with wooden lacrosse sticks as opposed to a modern metal and plastic lacrosse stick (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017). Before the traditional medicine game can commence, a specific prayer in Onʼyoteʼa·ká must be spoken as tobacco is placed over a fire.

After the ceremonial and introductory parts of the talking circle were completed, I put a speaking list for the talking circle in the Zoom group chat as an order for each of us to speak, one by one, about our values to create a shared consciousness. Ross (1996) and Pranis et al. (2003) emphasized the importance of building rapport and trust within the group as a foundation for future conversations. We voiced our values to help build connection and develop trust among us as co-collaborators. Fortunately, there was already rapport built with myself and several other co-collaborators, since some of the co-collaborators were those I previously coached, knew, or have sustained mentorships with. For the co-collaborators I did not know, they were brought into the group by snowball sampling from other co-collaborators or by Onʼyoteʼa·ká community

members. Furthermore, rapport was easier to create among the other co-collaborators because many of the Onʘyoteʘa·ká college lacrosse players who could participate in this study grew up alongside one another on the Onʘyoteʘa·ká Tribal Nation in Wisconsin and thus, were already familiar with each other.

In all talking circle sessions, co-collaborator responses were centered around the sacred medicine wheel and this specific framework which focused attention on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Coyhis, n.d.; Gray et al., 2019; Lavallee, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). The initial predetermined themes acted as guiding themes which were slightly adjusted due to reflection in an O'Leary action research cycle. The first talking circle session was dedicated to value sharing and establishing rapport. Our second session examined how we preserve our traditional values while playing the game of lacrosse at our respective universities. Our third session centered on how we share our traditional values of the game with others physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Our fourth talking circle session was based on a topic which emerged organically by my co-collaborators and myself where we asked the question: how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Onʘyoteʘa·ká youth lacrosse players for generations to come? During our fifth talking circle session, we focused on sharing, analyzing and confirming data which emerged from our previous talking circle sessions and journal entries. For all five talking circle sessions, I held the role of circle keeper, overseeing the dialogue with co-collaborators and encouraging them to frame their responses to topics using the sacred medicine wheel. Our initial session took place on October 11, 2020, and every subsequent session occurred on a monthly basis through January 3, 2021.

The talking circle sessions were done monthly out of respect for the time of my co-collaborators, so as not to be overly time consuming. Momentum and connection were maintained within the group between the monthly talking circle sessions through weekly collective journals through a talking circle Instagram chat group chat shared journal between co-collaborators.

To ensure participation from co-collaborators in the event they were unable to attend a session, I recorded each Zoom meeting and provided a link for co-collaborators to view or review every session. Co-collaborators who missed the talking circle meetings reflected on the given session's topic and shared a meaningful, written or video response in our shared Instagram group chat. Co-collaborators could choose whether to respond in writing or with video based on how they felt comfortable expressing themselves.

In addition to monthly, virtual talking circles, co-collaborators put responses into a weekly, written or video journal reflection in a talking circle through an Instagram group chat shared journal. The focus of each weekly journal entry was parallel to each monthly talking circle topic and responses were based on how these topics applied to our lives physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in each specified week. The talking circles over Instagram group chat served as a glimpse into how these topics relates to our lives in real time and helped co-collaborators bring a consciousness to their lives which they may not have had prior. For example, for the month of September, co-collaborators' weekly journal entries reflected on their values and how it applied to that specific week of their lives in spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical components. The topics for the talking circle over an Instagram group chat shared changed with each new Zoom talking circle session. From October 11th to February 6th, my co-collaborators and I met for a talking circle on the first Sunday of every month and then used a talking circle over an Instagram chat shared journal throughout the week as seen in Appendix K.

The topics for my Zoom talking circles began with focusing on value sharing, transitioning into how we preserve our traditional values of the game of lacrosse at our respective universities, followed by how we share these values with our respective communities, and further evolved based off emergent themes from my co-collaborators and myself to be how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education. We took turns discussing our perspectives through the sacred medicine wheel of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual components of life in both the talking circle sessions over Zoom and the weekly talking circle shared journals through Instagram.

Furthermore, my co-collaborators and I played lacrosse for 30-minutes prior to each talking circle, whether it was playing “wall ball” by throwing and catching against a wall using our lacrosse sticks, cradling a ball inside or outside, or doing any form of activity utilizing our lacrosse sticks. Playing lacrosse for at least 30-minutes before our Zoom talking circles was executed as a form of self-care for the co-collaborators and myself in order to gain greater self-awareness and enter the talking circle space most authentically (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015).

Data Collection and Talking Circle Questions

Each talking circle had a designated topic. We used each of the four values from one particular interpretation of the medicine wheel, which is the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, to discuss each monthly topic. The following questions acted as a guide for my research and were subject to change. These questions helped guide the co-collaborators to stay focused on the topics of the talking circle sessions and the four concepts of the medicine wheel. Each time around the talking circle, I modeled answers through one of the frameworks, either the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual, and my fellow co-collaborators, in turn, responded through the same lens of these frameworks. Participants were consistently reminded to share whatever their

authentic perspective was, even if it was in disagreement with any of the other statements. For each weekly talking circle, we would focus on either the physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. The medicine wheel acted as a defining framework from which we answered questions. Bopp and Bopp (1983) compiled wisdom from elders across Turtle Island and outlined the interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual in Appendix B, which acted as a guide during our talking circles over Zoom, as well as, our weekly talking circles through an Instagram group chat shared journal. Appendix K gives a detailed overview of the talking circle topics which changed every 4 weeks over Zoom, the weekly talking circle topics for our Instagram group chat shared journals, as well as, stating how co-collaborators played 30-minutes of lacrosse prior to each Zoom talking circle.

We did five talking circles over Zoom spaced out every 4 weeks. For example, each talking circle we had via Zoom focused on one specific topic:

1. Circle One: Values
2. Circle Two: Preservation of our traditional values of lacrosse
3. Circle Three: Transmitting our traditional values of lacrosse
4. Circle Four: Create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education for generations to come

5. Circle Five: Data analysis

And then we would discuss each topic using the medicine wheel framework, asking about the topic in relation to their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

The first topic for our talking circle was about our values on October 11, 2020. Each one of the following questions is a round in the talking circle. To help the co-collaborators shift their awareness from one part of the medicine wheel to another, I framed each talking circle round

around a specific distinction of the medicine wheel, as well as, used my own answers as a model for my co-collaborators. For the first talking circle about my co-collaborator's values. I asked: 1) what do you value physically? 2) what do you value mentally? 3) what do you value emotionally? And 4) what do you value spiritually?

The second talking circle topic over Zoom was on preserving traditional values of lacrosse and took place on November 8, 2020. The theme could have changed depending on feedback through an O'Leary action research following the first talking circle. We discussed, how do we preserve the traditional values of lacrosse: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally, and 4) spiritually?

The third talking circle topic over Zoom was on transmitting the traditional values of lacrosse and took place on December 6, 2020. The theme had potential to change depending on feedback through an O'Leary action research cycle following the second talking circle, however the theme remained the same. We discussed, how do we share the traditional values of lacrosse: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally, and 4) spiritually?

Our fourth talking circle topic over Zoom was an emergent theme from feedback of co-collaborators through an O'Leary action research cycle following the third talking circle, and it took place on January 3, 2020. The emergent topic was, how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education for generations to come? We discussed, how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally, and 4) spiritually?

For our fifth and final talking circle topic over Zoom, we discussed the results of the study on January 31, 2020. We discussed our results through the framework of the sacred medicine wheel of the 1) physical, 2) mental, 3) emotional, and 4) spiritual.

Weekly Shared Journal Questions

In addition to our monthly talking circles, my co-collaborators and I conducted weekly talking circles over a shared journal through an Instagram group chat. The purpose of the weekly reflections in a talking circle through a shared journal was for co-collaborators to have an awareness of how our values were being executed and a consciousness to see if lacrosse was engrained into our lives. It helped us recognize how we weave our values and beliefs into our daily lives, particularly by using specific examples and citing dates. These reflection questions acted as a bridge between our values and our actions in our lives. The journal questions invited storytelling and concrete examples in a place of mutual support which fostered the sharing of ideas.

The talking circles through a shared journal in an Instagram group chat used the following guided questions from October 11, 2020 to November 7, 2020 on a weekly basis. The questions we responded to were, in your life this week, how did what you value show up: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally, and 4) spiritually?

After the second talking circle over Zoom, the talking circle journals through a shared journal in an Instagram group chat used the following guided questions from November 8 to December 5, 2020 on a weekly basis. The questions we responded to were, in your life this week, how did you preserve the game: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally and 4) spiritually?

After our third talking circle over Zoom, our talking circles through shared journals in an Instagram group chat used the following guided questions from December 6, 2020 to January 2, 2021 on a weekly basis. We responded to the questions, in your life this week, how did you see yourself share the game: 1) physically, 2) mentally, 3) emotionally, and 4) spiritually?

After our fourth talking circle over Zoom, our talking circles through shared journals in an Instagram group chat used the following guided questions from January 3, 2021 to January 30, 2021 on a weekly basis. We responded to the questions, in your life this week, how did you see yourself creating permanent sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players: 1) physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually?

Personal Journal Reflections

An important aspect of this research was my own personal journal reflections. I journaled after each talking circle session, as well as, weekly in my own personal reflection and answered the talking circle questions over Zoom and Instagram group chat along with my co-collaborators. My own personal journal reflections reflected on the processes of the nine principles of community based participatory research, the four stages of the O'Leary model, and five of Linda Smith's 25 decolonizing ideologies to evaluate on myself and the group's adherence to these processes. The five decolonizing ideologies which were used were claiming, celebrating survival and survivance, indigenizing and indigenist processes, restoring and protecting. Table 1 details the list of processes reflected on during my journaling process.

Table 1

Personal Journal Reflection Topics I Used on a Weekly Basis

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Personal Journal Reflection</h2> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Processes to Consider Throughout my Weekly Journal Reflections</h3>	
<p><u>4 Steps of the O’Leary Model (O’leary, 2004)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe 2. Reflect 3. Plan 4. Act 	<p><u>9 Principles of CBPR (Becker et al, 2005, p. 7-9; Israel et al, 2003)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acknowledge the community as a unit of identity; 2. Build on the strengths and resources in the community; 3. Facilitate a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research; 4. Foster co-learning and capacity building among all partners; 5. Balance knowledge generation and intervention of the mutual benefit of all partners; 6. Attend to both local relevance and ecological perspectives; 7. Develop systems using a cyclical and iterative process; 8. Disseminate results to all partners, and involve all partners in dissemination; 9. Commit to a long-term process and group sustainability;
<p><u>5 Decolonizing Ideologies to focus on (Smith, 2013, p. 144-162)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Claiming. 2. Celebrating Survival- Survivance. 3. Indigenizing and indigenist processes. 4. Restoring 5. Protecting 	

Data Analysis Procedures

In regard to data analysis procedures, I worked collaboratively with my research participants as co-researchers with an explicit intention to make sense of our data through the use of a medicine wheel. It was important steps to be taken to ensure the confidentiality of individual responses of co-collaborators, if they so wished. This study used Karen Kaiser’s (2010) “Alternative Approach” (para. 22) as a framework in ensuring the protection of privacy of my co-collaborators. Kaiser’s (2009) Alternative Approach allowed the co-collaborators to choose what information they wanted to disclose in a post-interview form (see Appendix H). While the co-collaborators names were also published along with my name in publication of this study, the individual co-collaborators were each given an option of what they choose to disclose or keep confidential through a post-interview confidentiality form, which was given to co-collaborators after the completion of the fourth talking circle on January 3, 2021. The post-interview confidentiality form (see Appendix H) allowed co-collaborators to choose from sharing

information as is, whether they wanted to use a pseudonym or change identifiable details in addition to using a pseudonym. Once this step was done to ensure the protection of privacy of my co-collaborators, the coding process took place. Also, in terms of securing the data throughout the research, I kept all journals, Zoom Video links and other pertinent information relating to the study in a folder on my laptop which was password protected.

For the coding process, first I invited other co-collaborators to join in the coding process, however due to the academic and work obligations of my co-collaborators it was an individual endeavor on my behalf. I realize that coding may not be an ideal or particularly fun activity for my co-collaborators, however I wanted to give my co-collaborators an opportunity to be a part of the coding process if they so choose. The intention of this study was to be as transparent as possible with my co-collaborators and for my co-collaborators to feel as included as possible throughout the study. I coded the talking circle Zoom recordings and the talking circle shared journals over Instagram group chat from the start of the study on October 11, 2020 to January 30th, 2021 into themes, which I further shared with my co-collaborators for feedback. On January 30th, 2021, I coded themes within the lens of one of the interpretations of the sacred medicine wheel, which is the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual frameworks. I synthesized data from each month's talking circle over Zoom, as well as, weekly talking circle shared journals through an Instagram group chat. For the physical frame, seven themes came up which were chosen from synthesizing talking circle responses. For the mental frame, seven themes arose which were chosen by being the most common themes amongst co-collaborators. Within the emotional framework, five themes arose which were most prevalent in talking circles. For the spiritual framework, six themes arose which represented major themes amongst responses from my co-collaborators.

Once I coded the themes within the frameworks listed previously, I brought the data to my co-collaborators for our last talking circle over Zoom on January 31st, 2021. In this final talking circle, I presented the data to the group. First, I sent each of my co-collaborators their biographies and asked if they preferred any information be left out, amended, or otherwise redacted so as to remain anonymous. I shared the major themes which I coded within each of the four frameworks of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. I further screen shared with my co-collaborators to show them a list of requests to be made for the Oneida Business Committee, the tribal government of the Oneida Nation, in helping build permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth for the future. I asked my co-collaborators if they had any additions to the list, which they did. I then invited my co-collaborators to share their thoughts or takeaways from being part of the study as a co-collaborator. We discussed our initial reflections and reactions, then co-collaborators had a week until February 6th, 2021 to add further reflection and response to the analysis.

This final talking circle of analysis served as its own action research cycle. The cycle consisted of observing a problem of the best way to disseminate data. This was a critical problem as we, as co-collaborators, had yielded pertinent data and wanted to do the data justice by presenting it in the best way possible. I observed this problem was prior causing me significant stress due to the enormous responsibility of executing an effective job in presenting the data we had created as co-collaborators. We then reflected on the data as a group and discussed our big takeaways from all the talking circles. We reflected on what we thought was most significant to share. We made a plan for sharing the data through social media accounts titled, “Standing Stone Lacrosse,” in Chapter 5 of this dissertation, requesting a multi-sport indoor training facility with traditional foods restaurant and lacrosse store, and creation of a big-brother-little-brother, big-

sister-little-sister mentorship program on the Oneida Nation, located next to Oneida Nation High School in Wisconsin. We acted on our plan by executing our delegated roles. I returned to writing and organizing our thoughts and data, Richard created a graphic for our Standing Stone Lacrosse social media page, others created our social media pages, and we prepared as co-collaborators to share our results of the study with the Oneida business committee in the summer of 2021.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the details and themes which arose during the coding process through synthesizing talking circle responses. The themes which emerged within the topic of the physical framework were: health, stress management, significance of using or having a traditional wooden lacrosse stick, significance of hair as part of identity, the leadership aspect of sharing lacrosse and coaching, a need for role models for Oneida youth, and the need for the creation of an indoor turf facility for lacrosse in Oneida, Wisconsin. Within the topic of the mental framework, the themes which surfaced were: brings a good mind, prepares our minds for what we need to do in life, relaxes our mind, remembering and thinking about the game, positivity which comes from lacrosse mentally, lifelong learners, and seven generations ahead. The emotional themes which arose in the study were: brings a good heart, sharing, relaxes, calms and brings peace to our emotions, makes us happy, heals us, and lifts us up, and a sense of community created in the study. For the spiritual framework, themes coded were: builds a strong fire, connection to our ancestors and generational knowledge, connection to our Creator, the first game of lacrosse and origin story of the game, real and sacred.

Summary of Methodology

This methodology section covered who was part of the study, how the study was carried out, and how the data were analyzed, and further, shared. In this section, I discussed the

participants of Oneida college lacrosse players, the data collection procedures with more detail of the action research approaches of the O'Leary action research model, community based participatory research, the overview of my methodology, data collection and talking circle questions, weekly shared journal questions, personal journal reflections, and data analysis procedures.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

I am now going to tell you a story through data. The results section of this paper focus on the major frameworks of one particular interpretation of the medicine wheel- the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual perspectives - and the different themes which emerged from our research process. The different frameworks and themes will be supported by examples and quotations from collaborators.

As a reminder, there are several purposes I hoped to address throughout the research process. First, it was to understand Oneida college lacrosse players' perspectives on the sacred sport of lacrosse physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and how playing lacrosse might encourage players to hold onto their traditional values, while also sharing their values with others at their respective universities. Second, it was to explore whether engaging in this research process with fellow Oneida college lacrosse players supported students to positively impact their overall success. Third, my goal was to respond to the dearth of literature which currently exists on Oneida college lacrosse players. Finally, I purposely used an Indigenous traditional method of talking circles to gather data as an intentional way to decolonize methodological approaches to understanding issues relevant to Indigenous communities.

The research questions that guided this study were: (1) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional sacred values of lacrosse in their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (2) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities? (3) How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of

a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (4) What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people? (5) What impact do talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse?

The methodology employed in this study was action research. Specifically, this study used the O'Leary Model of action research, which includes four stages to observe, reflect, plan and act (O'Leary, 2004). I further used the Community Based Participatory Research Model with nine principles, emphasizing empowering the community in the research (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). I also viewed my research like a fish from in the fishbowl, as opposed to, being an observer from the outside of the fishbowl looking in (C. Getz, personal communication, December 16, 2016; Dan4779, 2017). I recognized my insider researcher status as an Oneida lacrosse player in higher education.

As a general road map for this data analysis chapter, I will first talk about the financial impact of funding for Oneida collaborators as context for this study. Next, I talk about the significance and origins of Oneida names. Thereafter, I discuss the three different clans for the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and their meanings. Then, I discuss the use of real names in this study and why. Furthermore, I introduce the collaborators of this study and discuss each individual's essence as a human being. Next, I state how data were collected and how the group was formed. Then, I discuss themes that emerged in the study which are supported by evidence and quotations from collaborators sharing what lacrosse means to them physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually in an effort to build a better world for seven generations ahead of us for Oneida college lacrosse players and all people on Mother Earth.

Financial Impact of Funding for Oneida Collaborators as Context for Study

A recent temporary change in funding during the fall of 2020 semester caused some Oneida collaborators to go on a temporary break from school. The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin is one of few Tribal Nations, if not the only, across Turtle Island which significantly financially supports their Tribal Nation students to obtain various degrees in higher education. A caveat to this funding is a large portion of the Oneida Higher Education Scholarship derives from the Oneida Casino. Due to Covid and temporary casino closures, a significant amount of funds for higher education were placed on a temporary reduction due to the drastic decrease in revenue from Tribal gaming for the Oneida Nation. Due to this change in financial circumstances, some Oneida students chose to go on a temporary leave of absence from school.

Significance and Origins of Oneida Names

Some Oneida people have an Oneida name. To obtain an Oneida name, an Oneida person must be given the name by a specified female in the Longhouse, which is the traditional Oneida form of governance, or gifted the Oneida name by the eldest female of the family (E. Bailey, personal communication, February 27, 2021; N. Skenandore Primeau, personal communication, February 27, 2021). A person can get their name by an elder or specified female in the Longhouse, and then have the name registered at a ceremony at the Longhouse (E. Bailey, personal communication, February 27, 2021). The ceremony to get your name involves a gift, traditional foods, and tobacco (N. Skenandore Primeau, personal communication, February 27, 2021). One decolonizing ideology by Linda Tuohwai Smith (2013) is naming. Naming is important in decolonizing as the names we use construct our realities. By using our traditional Oneida names, we are reclaiming who we are as Oneida people, our history, our language, and

our ways. Presenting our Oneida names in the following biography section was done as an intentional decolonizing practice.

Clans and Meanings

The Oneida Nation of Wisconsin has three clans, the Turtle Clan, Bear Clan, and Wolf Clan. Clans are passed down matrilineally. If a person does not have a clan, they are able to be adopted in through a traditional process still used today (“The Oneida Trust and Enrollment Committee,” 2016). The Turtle Clan represent “the shifting of the earth and the cycles of the moon” (“Oneida Nation,” 2011, para. 3), seen as keepers of the environment and a well of information. The Bear Clan are seen as keepers of the Medicine, or the healers. The Wolf Clan symbolize the pathfinders (“Oneida Nation,” 2011). Oneidas traditionally have had nine clans, of three distinct clans in each of the Turtle, Bear, and Wolf clan, however, assimilation and colonization has had many people forget this, which has led to a simplification into three clans (“The Oneida Trust and Enrollment Committee,” 2016). Collaborators may or may not be one of the three clans.

Use of Real Names in the Study

Collaborators were given the opportunity to use a pseudonym or their real name. Each co-collaborator chose to have their real name published in this study. The postinterview confidentiality form (see Appendix H) allowed collaborators to choose to share information as is, use a pseudonym, or change identifiable details so as to remain confidential in addition to using a pseudonym (i.e., changing the name of their university or withholding details to a story). Each co-collaborator provided consent to use their real names for this study through the postinterview confidentiality form. Further upon direct questioning, the collaborators each notified me using direct message that they did not want to remain anonymous. Providing their true identity is an

important departure from typical methods of using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality, as this study was used to amplify the voices of my collaborators and their knowledge as experts in the field of being Oneida college lacrosse players. By using their real names, the collaborators shared with the intention of telling their stories for generations to come through documenting their experiences. Each co-collaborator was repeatedly asked if there was anything they wanted to exclude from the study. A goal of this study was to amplify the voices of my collaborators and recognize their knowledge. Our identities matter, and each co-collaborator deserved recognition for their contributions and knowledge, especially as we, as collaborators, will present the findings of this study to the Oneida Business Committee in the summer of 2021.

Biographies of Oneida College Lacrosse Collaborators

Fox Christjohn

Fox, whose Oneida name is “Skanahks^,” which translates to “Fox,” is on a temporary break from school as a sophomore in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Two program at Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) in Harrogate, Tennessee. Fox is currently undecided for his major. Although Fox was unsure of what he wanted to do for the future, I am confident he will be successful in whatever endeavor he takes on. An example of this was when I saw Fox play in San Diego, California in a lacrosse tournament in 2018, and watching his drive and intensity, playing on an elite club team, and playing with confidence against players from all over Turtle Island. Even though Fox’s team was losing in one of the games I witnessed, he never gave up and was relentless in his play. Fox is driven, responsible, and resilient. He excels on the lacrosse field and has been working incredibly hard during his break from school. Some days for Fox start as early as 4:30 am for his morning work shift. Fox can be serious, yet also playful. Fox is deeply connected to his family and loves his mom very much. Fox also has a huge heart. For

example, a few years before we conducted our study, my mother, Michelle Reed, was visiting Oneida, Wisconsin, and when Fox saw her, he asked if she was my mom. When my mom said yes, Fox then asked if he could give her a hug. This story represents the level to which Fox is loving when he puts his mind to something. I find it fitting that Fox's Oneida name is also Fox, as he is sly, smart, and resourceful. He is a good teammate on-and-off the field and can take a hit and keep going on-and-off the field. I am grateful for the perspective Fox brought to our study.

Jack Robert Mehoja

Jack Robert is on a temporary break from school as a sophomore in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Jack Robert is a criminal justice major. Jack was working 12-hour shifts or more during his temporary time off from school. Jack Robert is deeply connected to his family, with his sister Louisa who does competitive drag racing, and his mother, Debbie, and father, Jack. Jack Robert was also a player I got to see play in San Diego, California in the past and I was able to help show him the west coast for the first time. Being able to stand next to Jack Robert and his family the first time they saw the Pacific Ocean, laughing with his family and going to Ruby's Diner after is a memory I cherish. Jack Robert is also as serious as he is playful and has a contagious energy. I find myself with a large smile on my face whenever I talk to Jack Robert. He has an ability to see the field and life in a way which I believe few others are able to, like a hawk with cunning vision and composure. Jack Robert is a talented athlete, known as a friend amongst his peers, and has a good head on his shoulders. He is hard working, tenacious in the face of adversity, and does whatever he puts his mind to.

Richard Summers III

Richie, a member of the Bear Clan whose Oneida name is “Teha?stohslatenyés” which translates to “He Shakes the Feather” is a sophomore in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Richard is a graphic design major. He is a leader amongst his peers. Coaches at his college and his international club team coaches have noticed his exceptional composure and tranquility, especially in high pressure circumstances. Remaining calm under pressure is an advantageous skill set to have in lacrosse and in life. Richard comes from a family of leaders, as Richard’s dad, Butch, is one of the coaches for lacrosse in Oneida, and his mother, Lisa, has served on the Oneida Business Committee. Richard’s uncle is Curt Summers, who is co-collaborator CJ Summers’ dad. A visual and graphic artist, Richard has a vision of telling Oneida stories and legends through the medium of comic books. Richard and I bond over comics and our view on the power of the medium for storytelling. Richard has a presence which puts you at ease when you are in his company.

CJ Summers

CJ, a member of the Bear Clan whose Oneida name is “Lastohslaló·loks” which translates to “He Gathers Feathers” is a freshman on the club lacrosse team at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. CJ is an aerospace engineering major and stated, “I look forward to . . . obtaining my master’s degree in engineering with an emphasis in aerospace or physics as well” (NCSA Athletic Recruiting, 2020). CJ has a strong, radiating joy and overflowing happiness. You can find CJ with a big smile on his face. He is always representing his heritage. For example, when I had the opportunity to help coach CJ in lacrosse in the summer of 2015, he always had his long hair braided, played with smiles and laughter, and a played with

creativity which I have only seen few exhibit. Sporting number 74 and taking face-offs, CJ looks remarkably like a Native American professional lacrosse player named Jeremy Thompson who wears the same number and wears a similar long braid; however, CJ is very much his own player and own person. CJ's father is Curt Summers, one of the coaches in Oneida who have taught many of us Oneida lacrosse players what we know about our culture and about our medicine game. CJ is a light of hope and a strong, inspiring, wise spirit.

Austin Baillie

Austin's Oneida name translates to "I can." Austin is currently on a break from school due to decreased scholarship funding from the Covid pandemic. Austin is currently not sure where he wants to go for school is undecided for his major. He will be an incoming freshman at the collegiate level. When Austin puts his mind to something, he accomplishes it. An example of this would be in a traditional game on the Oneida reservation a handful of years ago, where the only rules were there were no rules, just do unto others as you want them to do to you. I remember some players chirping at Austin talking about him not going to score, and I remember he had this very serious look in his eye, and he said, "you'll see." Austin ended up scoring five or six goals in that traditional game, and to score a single goal by hitting a sewn leather ball against a skinny wooden pole takes a great deal of precision, accuracy, and dedication to the craft of lacrosse. Austin is also a leader through his actions. When Austin was a freshman in high school at Bay Port High School, he was making a serious impact on the varsity lacrosse team, which is a rare circumstance in high school lacrosse. Austin is another example of a resilient spirit. I had an opportunity to play in a traditional game in Long Beach, California a few years back with Austin, his older brother Patrick, and his dad Isaac. Patrick, as a high schooler at the time, rose to the occasion of going to a new state and representing his Oneida community in a medicine game.

Austin has a knack for finding his way through tight spaces on the field and coming out on the other end with a goal. I find Austin's ability to go through challenges and come out stronger inspiring. He makes me want to be the best person I can be. A genuine and authentic person, Austin says how he feels and means what he says. Austin has a heart of gold. He has an ability to rise as an emergent leader on the field and can take control of a game with his sharp observation skills.

Nate Padron

Nate is on a break from school and currently lives and works in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Nate is undecided for his major, however he intends on returning to school. He started playing lacrosse at 10 years old. Nate transferred high schools to play at Oneida High School as a sophomore because he wanted to play in Oneida. Nate plays on the indoor lacrosse team of the Milwaukee Muskies as part of the Great Plains Box Lacrosse League, a league open to all players in the Midwest area, alongside other Oneida collaborators Richard, Byran, and Dylan. When I think of Nate's spirit, I think of a magnificent, majestic, and powerful lion. Nate's hair is part of his identity and reminiscent of a regal mane. When Nate strikes on the lacrosse field with his shot, it is a sight of pure power. He puts his heart, soul, and spirit into whatever he does, whether on the lacrosse field or off. Nate has an ability to rise to momentous occasions on the field as if they were meant for him. I had the opportunity to come to Oneida, Wisconsin with a film crew in 2017, and Nate was one of the players the documentary naturally followed on the floor. When I got to help coach the Oneida youth teams over the summer of 2015, Nate played with a fierceness and intensity which reminded me of a flash flood passing through an area. He has a smile which reaches from ear to ear, and a spirit that shines like the sun. In response to our current global pandemic, Nate was quoted in an interview stating, "As far as COVID-19 goes

I've just been doing all I can to stay safe and stay healthy so I can keep playing. I am always thinking of a medicine game" (Ninham, 2019). Nate plays this medicine game for a higher purpose and is a deeply spiritual being.

Gavin White

Gavin, a member of the Wolf Clan whose Oneida name is "K^ nikalutá" which translates to "A Small Tree" or "Little Tree" is a junior in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Two program at Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, Georgia. Gavin's major is business sports management. Gavin has a strong presence on and off the field. Bouncing back from injury, Gavin is driven by a strong fire. He has a talent for harmonizing different people's voices and creating unity. Gavin shares the traditional culture of the game of lacrosse with his teammates, friends, and greater community. He is Oneida and Oglala Lakota and takes pride in his culture and ancestors. Gavin's Oglala Lakota name translates to "Standing Dawn." Gavin wanted to include other Oglala Lakota college lacrosse players, including Travis Braveheart. Though this particular study was for Oneida people, Gavin added Travis Braveheart to the Instagram group chat talking circle so as to be able to see what we were talking about as Oneida lacrosse players. Gavin has a big heart, and early on when people started talking about wanting to collaborate with the organization Turtle Island Lacrosse, Gavin was one of the first people to take concrete action in taking steps to make the dream a reality, and did so by reaching out to Travis Braveheart, who knows people at Turtle Island Lacrosse. Gavin is a visionary who has a gift to be able to see a future which could be and brings people together to make his vision a reality.

Floyd Silas

Floyd is a member of the Bear Clan whose Oneida name is “Tehatlatatenyes” which translates to “He Who Gathers the Leaves.” Floyd will be a freshman in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in the fall of 2021. Floyd will be a special education major and plans to work in special education as a career. Floyd has a heart for helping others, and he has a passion for helping people in special education. Floyd is excited to play at Marian in the fall of 2021, and he told me he is not going to take being able to play in college for granted. Floyd is very talented and knowledgeable in our traditional Oneida ways. He is a drummer, singer, and traditional dancer, sharing his good medicine of song with others. Floyd has created a traditional and drumming birthday song, which is my favorite rendition of any birthday song. Floyd has also created and sang traditional songs with a drum with his brothers, Ambrose and Carmine. There is a Facebook group called Social Distance Pow-Wow, a place where people from all across Indian country on turtle island share their stories, regalia, prayers, and other forms of good medicine, and Floyd has shared video. Also, in terms of clothing and hair, Floyd expresses himself through his style. Floyd is present and locked-in for whatever he puts his mind to. He is a leader and a natural influence over his peers. Floyd has a humble heart of service. He puts his family before himself and walks with his ancestors and Creator in everything he does.

Masen Powless

Masen, whose Oneida name is “Thalihwakwalíhsyus” which translates to “Man” is a junior in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Masen is a finance major. Other collaborators in our study talked to Masen about finances, and it was a consensus Masen should be running the

financials for the Oneida Nation one day. Masen is extremely diligent in school and strives for excellence. Masen makes sure his studies are his priority, and he knows a great deal about finance. An example would be when he told us during a talking circle had been studying hard for a test, and later informed us he received a 94% on that exam. Masen and his brother Hayden grew up off the Oneida reservation. I see myself in Masen in that we were both about 18 or 19-years-old when we started to discover the Oneida teachings surrounding lacrosse. Masen has a sense of humility and awareness which I have seen few others possess. Defensively, he is one of the fiercest defenders I have seen for Haudenosaunee players and all players alike. I would not want to go one-on-one in lacrosse against Masen, however, I would gladly have him on my team. It is powerful to see Masen open up about what the Spirit Game has meant to him as he has been quick to learn traditional ways.

Hayden Powless

Hayden, whose Oneida name is “Tekastóslake?” which translates to “Two Feathers” is a freshman in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Hayden is currently undeclared for his major. Hayden is the younger brother to Masen, and they live together in Green Bay, Wisconsin with other Marian college lacrosse players. Hayden grew up off the Oneida reservation with his brother Masen, similar to myself. Hayden has a contagious kindness, and a strong sense of optimism. Hayden displayed a sense of humility and respect which I wish I had when I was a freshman in college. Hayden also has a good sense of maturity and awareness. Hayden spent time focusing on papers he needed to for class, and has a talent at expressing himself through his words. Hayden is responsible and driven. Hayden is like a wolf which finds strength in the pack alongside his older brother. Hayden is able to feel the game on a spiritual level and articulate his feelings. Hayden

has a fun-loving spirit and can work just as hard as he plays. He is kind, considerate, and intelligent.

Dylan Granquist

Dylan is a member of the Wolf Clan whose Oneida name is “Loluhyaku” which translates to “He Pierces the Heavens” or “Breaks the Sky.” Dylan was a recruit for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Two program at Barton College in Wilson, North Carolina in 2018. Dylan was quoted in an interview stating, "I went on athletic and academic scholarships at Barton College, but the NCAA prohibited me from playing because they didn't count my Oneida language credits from high school as real credits, so I had to redshirt my freshman year" (Ninham, 2019). Dylan’s language classes were taught by Oneida lacrosse coach and community member Curt Summers, who is co-collaborator CJ Summers’ dad. Dylan ended up transferring universities and will be returning as a junior to the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Dylan also carries on our Oneida traditional ways of doing smoke dance, which is a fast-paced free-style traditional dance to race the drum beat against the footwork, to have the person stop dancing immediately when the music stops. Dylan made an impact in sharing Oneida culture during his time at Barton in North Carolina, an example being Dylan’s sharing of a smoke dance in his traditional regalia on an Indigenous people’s day. Dylan was quoted by the Marian University Sabres, “Division three lacrosse has given me the opportunity to play my ancestral medicine game while continuing my education at a higher level” (Marian University Sabres, 2020). Dylan is a criminal justice major and psychology minor. Dylan made this study possible through his leadership of recruiting and rallying the other men. Dylan is a leader when playing indoor lacrosse with the Milwaukee Muskies club team, alongside collaborators Byran, Nate, and

Richard. Dylan also carries on our Oneida traditional ways of doing smoke dance, which is a fast-paced free-style traditional dance to race the drum beat against the footwork, to have the person stop dancing immediately when the music stops. Dylan, a self-proclaimed light-skinned Oneida, like me, reminds us we walk with our ancestors and represent our culture in everything we do. Dylan's Oneida name is more than fitting of "He Pierces the Heavens" as it feels like Dylan is connected to the spirit world whenever he speaks. Dylan is constantly sharing his wisdom with those who will listen, and an example of this is him teaching me every time we speak, and in the way he taught me our ancestors walk with us in everything we do.

Byran Halona

Byran, a member of the Bear Clan whose Oneida name is "Lahsahk[^] sl[^]t_h_a" which translates to "He Knocks Off the Frost" is a volunteer assistant coach in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three program at Marian University in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Byran played lacrosse during his undergraduate in the NCAA DII program at LMU in Harrogate, Tennessee and received a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and Criminology from LMU in the spring of 2019. Byran is wise beyond his years and embodies our Oneida culture. I remember going out to the Oneida Nation to coach and visit over the years, and even though Byran was nearly a decade younger than me, I looked up to him a great deal in the way he led, and his humility. Byran was much better skill-wise than me in lacrosse in the summer of 2015, however while I helped the under 13 team, Byran coached the under 9-year-olds in teaching the game the right way with traditional teachings. Byran has a podcast called "Radiant Voices" with other Indigenous co-hosts and often highlights Indigenous issues (Halona et al., 2020). For example, in Byran's podcast *Radiant Voices*, guests have included cultural advisor to the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Bob Brown, and John Skenandore in fighting the opioid crisis in Indian

country, and Vice Chairman Brandon Stevens of the Oneida Business Committee. He is a living, breathing role-model for Oneida community members who want to pursue a higher education and use that knowledge to pour back into the community. Byran provided a generational bridge of knowledge to this study which added significantly more depth. As Byran graduated college in 2019, he was able to relate and speak to issues which I was not able to. Also, Byran was a volunteer assistant coach at a program where seven other collaborators were a part of. Byran's ability to connect as a player, coach, mentor, and friend was invaluable in this study in growing together and continuing to learn our Oneida ways. Byran is at the heartbeat of lacrosse in Oneida, and he is indeed an orator and lacrosse player like his ancestors before him. He has a vision of a better future for our community and he is actively contributing to it through his profound leadership.

Thomas James Reed

I am a member of the Turtle Clan and my Oneida name is "Lukwe'tiyó" (pronounced "lah-gway-dee-oh") which translates to "He is a Good Man." I played lacrosse during my undergraduate at the Men's Collegiate Lacrosse Association (MCLA) Division 2 program of Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication with an Emphasis in Rhetoric and Leadership in December of 2012. Upon graduating, I became a volunteer assistant coach for this lacrosse program at Pepperdine University. I further went on to play and be a volunteer assistant coach at the MCLA Division 2 program at California State University of Long Beach in Long Beach, California, graduating with a Master's in Public Administration and a Certificate in American Indian Studies in the spring of 2016. I started my PhD program at the University of San Diego on Kumeyaay territory in the fall of 2017. The Kumeyaay Nation are the Indigenous peoples who originally and

presently inhabit the territory on which the University of San Diego resides (Espinoza, 2017).

My spirit is real and it is how I make sense of the world. I am deeply connected to my Creator, ancestors, wife, dogs, family, friends, and leaving a legacy for seven generations ahead of me.

Map of Placement of Collaborators Across Turtle Island (North America)

Figure 1 displays a map of where the collaborators were located across Turtle Island, also known as North America, during our dissertation study together on the sacred game of lacrosse.

Figure 1

Map of Collaborators across Turtle Island (North America)



Description of the Study

Before my collaborators and I began the research process, I sent each co-collaborator a care package which included bundles of traditional medicines, put together and bundled by my grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, an elder in the Oneida Nation. My grandmother's participation in

helping prepare the study reinforced the second principle of community-based participatory research: to build on the strengths and resources in the community (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). Included in each care package was a bundle of Oneida grown sage and a bundle of Oneida grown tobacco as a medicine for the collaborators. The sage was held to pray for cleansing and ward off negativity. The tobacco was held if you had an issue or problem, to pray for guidance, make requests, and give thanks. Also, included was a miniature wooden lacrosse stick, made by Oneida artist Dana Isaac, to be used as a talking piece, also known as a talisman, during the talking circles. Dana Isaac's participation as a lacrosse stick maker for the study additionally incorporated the second principle of community based participatory research of building on the strengths and resources in the community (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). Lastly, the care package included a pack of q-tips, as a symbolic reminder to listen on behalf of our Oneida Nation. Figures 2 and 3 show the Oneida grown tobacco and Oneida grown sage sent in the care package. Figure 2 shows a message of the meaning of each of the Oneida grown traditional medicines explained in a note by my grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, an elder in the Oneida Nation.

Figure 2

Meaning of Oneida Grown Sage and Tobacco

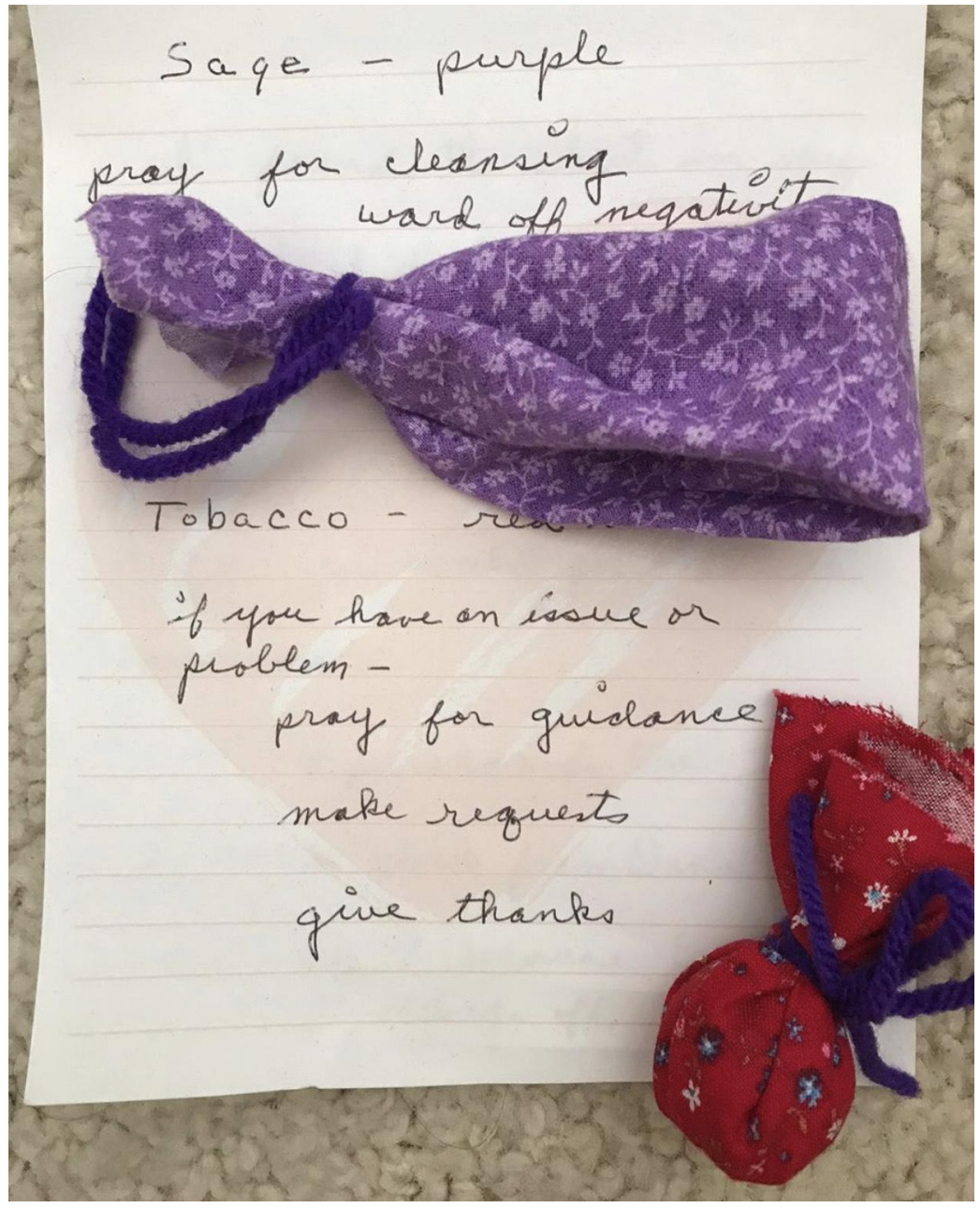


Figure 3

Care package sent to Collaborators



Overview of the Study

Leading up to our first Zoom talking circle on October 11, 2020, I felt I was riding an emotional roller coaster, as my personal reflection journals on September 19, 2020 revealed I was worried sick about not getting enough collaborators, even to the extent that I was having vivid dreams at night concerning this. I ended up messaging Oneida college lacrosse players individually on Instagram or through text through the end of September and communicated with Oneida community members via Facebook through snowball sampling to amount to having 12 collaborators willing to participate. Each talking circle on Zoom was executed by sharing a list of the speaking order of collaborators names in the Zoom chat. The talking circle speaking order varied each meeting, depending on when people showed up in the space. The benefit of this varying speaking order was allowing different voices to be heard at different times in the talking circle. I modeled my answers first as the circle keeper, and my collaborators and I would go around the talking circle four times per meeting together to recognize the four directions, and, to recognize one interpretation of the medicine wheel: the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

The five talking circles over Zoom took place every 4 weeks, and in between each Zoom talking circle were four weekly group chat talking circles through a shared journal in an Instagram group message thread to reflect and share answers relating to the prior Zoom talking circle's topic. There was a total of 20 weeks of Instagram group chat talking circles and each week the Instagram group chat talking circles were focused on either the physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual response to the specified topic. One week would be spent analyzing the physical, the next week would be spent dissecting the mental, the following week would focus on the emotional, and the final week would highlight the spiritual. Then the next Zoom talking

circle would occur, followed by another round of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual Instagram group chat talking circles. The five Zoom talking circle topics were: 1) what we value, 2) how do we preserve the traditional values of lacrosse, 3) how do we transmit the traditional values of lacrosse, 4) an emergent topic which ended up being how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players in the future, and lastly 5) a data analysis of our study as collaborators.

Medicine Wheel Elements

As previously noted, I used one interpretation of the medicine wheel to focus our dialogues. These four areas were the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Next I describe each aspect in more detail, then I indicate themes that emerged from these discussions and quotes from collaborators who describe the impact or influence of each element on their lives. The first area of focus was the physical, which are described as the five physical senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The second area of focus was the mental, which are the intellectual, rational, and cognitive parts of ourselves. The third area I used to frame the data collection was the emotional, which are the range of feelings we experience in our heart- anger, joy, sadness, fear, disgust, etc. The fourth area of focus I used to frame the data collection was the spiritual, which is the mystical and mysterious, deep sense of knowing. A person is sure of this spiritual reality at the core of their being and feels aware of an existence of a spirit independent of a body.

In each of these frames several themes emerged. In the following section, I discuss the physical frame, and the themes which emerged: health, stress management, the significance of using or having a traditional wooden Lacrosse stick, the significance of hair as part of identity, the leadership aspect of sharing lacrosse and coaching, a need for role models for Oneida youth, and finally, a need for an indoor turf facility for lacrosse in Oneida, Wisconsin. Then, I discuss

the mental frame, and the themes which emerged: bringing a good mind, preparing our mind for what we need to do, lacrosse relaxing our mind, remembering and thinking about the game, the positivity which comes from lacrosse mentally, being lifelong learners, and the idea of building for seven generations ahead. Later on, I discuss the emotional frame, and the themes which emerged: having a good heart, sharing lacrosse emotionally, lacrosse relaxing, calming and bringing peace to our emotions, lacrosse making us happy, healing us, and lifting us up, and, the sense of community which was created among collaborators in the study. Finally, I discuss the spiritual frame, and the themes which emerged: bringing a good fire, connecting to our ancestors and generational knowledge, connecting to our Creator, the first game of lacrosse and origin story of the game, the spirit being real, and the spirit being sacred.

Physical Frame

Through each of the five Zoom talking circles we discussed our responses at one point through a physical frame, and four of the 20 Instagram group chat talking circles discussed responses through the frame of the physical among the 12 collaborators and myself. The physical is defined in this study as the five physical senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch someone can tangibly experience.

Health. A common theme that revolved around the physical was how this game physically impacts our health. A recurring theme was the ability to play lacrosse, break a sweat, and exercise doing something we love. Gavin White stated,

This being the ‘medicine’ the game gives you to help keep in shape and improve your health overall. For me, I can’t really hit the pavement or treadmill just to run for hours.

It’s too boring, but for lacrosse I can turn my brain off for a few hours and run as long as my lungs will let me.

CJ built off this theme by noting he values lacrosse because it keeps his body in shape physically. As this study was completed during the Covid-19 pandemic, myself and other collaborators ended up catching Covid and used lacrosse as a traditional medicine for healing. At times, myself and Byran during our respective recoveries could not play the game, but just looking at our lacrosse sticks or watching lacrosse videos helped us heal and cope with the physical illness.

Stress Management. A common theme which emerged was the value of lacrosse physically as a stress management tool. Dylan Granquist revealed how the game helps him cope with stress, and Floyd Silas also divulged, “The game is a good way for me to release some tension because I know that when I need to be lifted up, I can use the game’s medicine to help me with whatever I’m going through.” Gavin expressed that in lacrosse you have that outlet for stress relief. Fox Christjohn affirmed,

I appreciate lacrosse because I have used it for medicine throughout my time playing and about 100% of the time it helps no matter the situation and this week, I have shot around outside to relieve some stress.

I shared my own experiences of lacrosse being a tool for stress management and how I value the escape that lacrosse allows in my life. No matter what is going on, I can turn to lacrosse to focus my emotions on, and harness my anxiety, anger, or sadness into pleasing the Creator. Stress management is categorized through the lens of the physical in this context, as it is the physical actions of playing lacrosse which promote stress relief.

Significance of Using or Having a Traditional Wooden Lacrosse Stick. The significance of using or having a traditional wooden lacrosse stick was a theme which arose in

the research. Collaborators shared the significance of having a physical wooden lacrosse stick and why it was so important. At one point in the study, Byran Halona shared,

I dreamed about lacrosse because I got Covid as well and no way physically can I even think about playing. It was nice seeing my traditional stick and gave me a reminder that once again I'll be able to play another day if I keep resting.

Byran stated how even if he could not play, just looking at his traditional wooden lacrosse stick was a reminder he would play again. I shared with my collaborators,

I ended up getting Covid so I have been resting and recovering a lot lately. I had a few days there of fevers of 102 and just really bad body aches. Today, this morning, for the first time in eight or nine days I was able to play wall ball against a mattress in the room ...lacrosse is a Native American traditional medicine which heals people...I was/am able to fight Covid with my traditional stick through this medicine of lacrosse.

Similar to Byran, the eight or nine days I could not play, I just had my traditional wooden lacrosse stick next to my bed as a traditional medicine. CJ, Dylan, and Austin also shared how they feel a connection to their ancestors and Creator when they use a wooden stick. All the collaborators were gifted miniature wooden lacrosse sticks as a talisman, also known as a talking piece, and the collaborators discussed this item as a medicine. Dylan shared, "I can hang this in my car," and I told collaborators to take it with them to class, work and anywhere else they went in life.

I talked about playing with a wooden stick and feeling a connection to my ancestors. CJ talked about getting the traditional lacrosse stick from his father, Curt Summers, and he says he truthfully feels better playing with a wooden stick than a modern stick. Dylan talked about using his wooden sticks for medicine games. A medicine game is a traditional ceremony of a lacrosse

game where only wooden sticks are allowed. For the ceremony of the medicine game, an Oneida prayer is said over the wooden sticks by a specific member of the community before the game begins, as this specified person puts tobacco over a fire while they pray. The medicine game is then played for healing purposes for someone or as a seasonal ceremony. Dylan also noted how some people just go around and hit people with wooden sticks like lumber, and that is not what it was intended for. He said he feels closer and more connected to the game and has a lot more fun while using a wooden stick. When talking about his traditional wooden lacrosse stick, CJ stated,

I go in the woods. Also, and I just walk in the woods with my lacrosse stick my hands and do whatever and just think about everything else that's been going on, and my ancestors majority of the time because of what I'm holding.

Wooden lacrosse sticks were seen as a symbol and a conduit to the deep connection to all living things, as the trees are living and are represented in the wooden hickory stick, and, all the animals of Mother Earth being represented on the leathers and deer guts used as stringing on his lacrosse stick. The wooden lacrosse stick was understood by collaborators as a living entity with energy which deserved to be treated with the utmost respect.

Significance of Hair as Part of Identity. A conversation and theme which arose was how hair is a part of our identity as Oneida men. Dylan and CJ spoke of their long hair, being able to braid their own hair, and educating people about it when they ask. I opened up about how traumatic it was for me when I used to have a braid and first visited University of San Diego because there were multiple instances of people joking about yanking my tail, whispering if it was real, or joking about cutting it off behind my back. I told my collaborators I hoped they were stronger than me. My collaborators created a space to discuss with their strength and resiliency. Dylan shared,

The thing for me, it's kind of cool because, you know, not everybody has one. You know, like not even on the rez, but like off, you know, even like predominantly Caucasian areas. You know, I live in Fond du Lac now so like it's all white people. But like every once in a while you see like that, you see that one, you know, wherever he's from. You could tell he's from somewhere because he's an old man, he's got the ponytail, you know, is rocking the ponytail. You know, the hair ties in his in his ponytail or you know he's rocking a braid, you could just tell it is like an elder and you just, you know. It's kind of cool because it's like all right there and you could tell, you know, he's Indigenous, you can tell. So it's kind of cool to be able to like pick people out of a crowd. Just because like, okay, he's got a braid. You know, we could be friends. It's like having, you know, like a military uniform or something. You know, it's kind of cool. It's kind of like a secret thing only Indigenous people know about or whatever.

CJ agreed with Dylan after he shared this statement. We talked about how we can always represent our heritage as best we can while we walk with our ancestors and Creator in everything we do.

Five out of 13 men in this group have traditional hair of braids. I have turned my back on the traditional hair ways out of social convenience, comfortability, or for my own ego. Hearing the knowledge that Dylan, CJ, and Jack Robert talked about makes me consider my hair, and what it means to me as a signal of my cultural identity. As Oneida men, it is believed our hair is part of our identity, is our connection to all living things, and it is usually only cut off when someone close to a person with the long hair dies. Even with shorter hair, it is still a part of how we express ourselves as Oneida men traditionally and to this day.

At one point, I created characters of our collaborators in a video game called *Casey Powell Lacrosse 18*. The collaborators were thrilled and grateful when I was able to add braids and long hair to their virtual players because I was able to incorporate this important part of who they are into their video game identities. Representation, hair, and identity matter.

Leadership and Coaching as a Way to Continue the Traditions of Lacrosse. A theme which arose during our talking circles over Zoom and Instagram was the importance of sharing lacrosse physically through coaching, which simultaneously retains and transmits the traditional values of the game of lacrosse. Leadership and coaching were grouped under the physical, as coaching is physically speaking words as an orator or giving instructions, or physically showing players how to do something, or even writing out plays physically on a white board. Byran Halona, volunteer assistant coach for Marian University lacrosse team, stated he learns new coaching techniques and philosophies that benefit the players to encourage their growth and game. Throughout the study, Byran articulated his own personal experiences with the medicine game while playing in college and transmitting the game to others on the sideline as a coach. Floyd Silas replied,

As far as spreading the game spiritually . . . my friend Angel . . . I got him to start playing lacrosse when I went to that private school in Green Bay. He is one of my really good friends and he didn't know nothing about lacrosse. He's Mexican, he's not Native American at all, and so I was explaining to him, you know, we play for the Creator. The Creator gave us this game to entertain Him. And it's also a medicine game, so it heals people. So, if you ever want to pray for somebody, when you go play that game, play with a good heart and a good mind. He was really interested in all of that, so that was cool for me, you know, because my best friend who has nothing to do with, like, Native

American culture always wants to know more about, you know, the game that we love so much.

Floyd's sentiment on sharing the game with others, whether Oneida or not, was a belief held by the other collaborators as well. Richard shared about coaching for Team Sconnie and he has been teaching youth about the box, also known as indoor lacrosse, aspect of the game. Richard has been teaching them different skills, techniques, and traditional perspectives to approach the game. Byran further talked about coaching and how he is able to teach the game to new people. As collaborators, we valued being able to physically communicate the teachings of the game. We valued how we could retain, and, transmit the traditional values of the game, in addition to helping build permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth pursuing an education for generations to come.

Richard shared in a talking circle how he can use his talents and knowledge around lacrosse as a goalie to verbally and physically instruct other lacrosse players as a coach. Richard stated,

I play keeper. So mentally, keeper is a position where you got to be mentally in the head good because it is a mental game. You're going to get scored on, or somebody is going to hit the game winner on you, you might make a good save, a game winning save. So, I think all these sorts of experiences of growing up playing keeper, I think it gave me an edge and gave me experiences that I can pass on to coaching now with the youth. If I see some kid going through it, I'll give them like a little pep talk or something, just reminding them to go out there and play with a clear head and just go out there and have fun. Make it act like you're in the back yard playing lacrosse. Because, that's when you truly perform the best is when you're having fun.

Richard's example was a resounding theme of doing whatever we can as collaborators to pass on our knowledge, experience, and stories around the game of lacrosse to the next generation.

Need for Role Models for Oneida Youth. A theme which arose in our study was a need for role models for Oneida youth. This theme was grouped in the framework of the physical, as role models are physical embodiments and tangible representations of leaders a person aspires to be. One idea motioned by Dylan, and agreed by CJ and later Gavin White, was to invite college, professionals, and specifically Turtle Island Lacrosse with Brendan Bomberry and Randy Staats to do a clinic in Oneida, Wisconsin. The collaborators shared that they still remember when Jeremy Thompson, a famous Onondaga lacrosse player, and famous Mohawk lacrosse coach Red Burnam came to visit. A repeated theme was the need and want for leaders from the organization of Turtle Island Lacrosse to spend time with the youth in Oneida, Wisconsin. Various collaborators journaled about it and voiced it over Zoom. I shared with the collaborators,

even as Dylan was saying, just trying to get more professional and college Lacrosse players out to Oneida . . . you know there's plenty of Native ones out there . . . To try to get them to come overnight so people can see these role models in person . . . when you have role models you feel more like you fit in, you have someone you look up to . . . so having role models who have succeeded in college, who've succeeded in the pros, I think that goes a long way.

The need for role models in Oneida became one of the emergent topics for being a key step in creating permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players in Oneida pursuing an education.

An idea which arose during our emergent theme on creating permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth for the future was through a mentorship program. Dylan recommended

we put together a big-brother-big-sister mentorship program. Immediately after this idea was brought up, collaborators Masen, Hayden, Byran, and Richard expressed their excitement and support for having a mentorship program. This mentorship program would provide tangible leaders Oneida youth could physically see and learn from. Masen recommended, “they could be like the mentors in Naruto,” which is an anime series and features people training one another.

Need for the Creation of an Indoor Turf Facility for Lacrosse in Oneida, Wisconsin

A recurring theme throughout the research was a call for the creation of an indoor turf facility for lacrosse and multisport use in Oneida, Wisconsin. A turf facility falls under the physical as it is a tangible place which is requested by the collaborators is built. As Byran noted,

what is the capacity that we can do stuff? What's our facilities? What can we use? The box addition is huge because it opens up a lot more possibilities, but we've always run into like the problem of like the capacity . . . once winter hits, it is nearly half the year for Wisconsin. So that's where we always run into the issue is that time constraint. And we don't really have a facility. We don't have like an indoor turf facility. Like we have the Civic Center, the high school and then also Oneida Family Fitness, but those are all small basketball gyms . . . I mean, at that point, if you want to try to convert that . . . it is a lot of money to invest into something when you could probably create another facility if you put a little bit more effort into it.

As winter and harsh weather take up roughly half the year in Wisconsin, there are few outlets for Oneida youth to play lacrosse and better themselves as athletes.

The collaborators discussed having a new, multisport indoor turf facility with a big-brother-little-brother and big-sister-little-sister mentorship program, a lacrosse store with an embroidery business inside, and, a restaurant which serves Native American foods. Richard

summers stated, “This is one step closer to being less reliant on the casino to generate revenue for our Oneida Nation.” For more details on all the requested specifications, traditional architectural design, and strategic placement in the Oneida community, see Appendix J. The requested multisport facility would also host traditional beadwork and artwork to be displayed yearlong to showcase Oneida artists. The proposed multisport building is requested to be named after Oneida leaders who have passed on from this Earth due to Covid or other causes.

Mental Frame. Through each of the five Zoom talking circles, we discussed our responses at one point through a mental frame, and four of the 20 Instagram group chat talking circles discussed responses through the mental frame. The mental is defined here as the intellectual, rational, and cognitive parts of ourselves.

Brings a Good Mind. For our research as Oneida collaborators, to have a good mind was defined as to value a healthy perspective on life and have a generous sense of humor. A good mind was defined as having good thoughts about ourselves, our Oneida Nation, and all people (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Lacrosse helped bring a good mind to all collaborators throughout this dissertation as was reflected in our responses through the Zoom and Instagram talking circles. Preserving the game emotionally was strongly tied to having a good mind. Lacrosse was a medicine for calming troubled minds and promoting inner peace. CJ shared “I’ve learned and noticed and experimented and seen it firsthand. It’s helped me a lot mentally when I’ve went through a dark part of my life.” CJ, Dylan, Byran, Richard, Austin, Masen, Hayden, Floyd, and I discussed how this game has helped us mentally out of dark places in life.

Various collaborators expressed how a good mind impacted them mentally throughout our study. Byran talking about how the mental is his favorite part of the game. Dylan vocalized

he was getting down on himself but reminded himself to have some fun around lacrosse. Dylan expressed if you play with a good mind, you will have a good outcome on the field. CJ shared having a good mind makes a difference in every aspect of life, including lacrosse. I talked about sharing the game with a good mind. Richard attributes his composure on the field to his good mind. Gavin discussed how he preserved the game of lacrosse, “by having a good mind,” and stated he did this by simply, “enjoying the game.” Having a good mind by having good thoughts about ourselves, our Oneida Nation, and all people, was a recurring theme throughout the talking circles over Zoom and the Instagram chat shared journal.

A common theme which arose in our study as collaborators was how lacrosse mentally prepared us for what we need to get done that week, month, year, and throughout our lives. CJ Summers commented at one point in our study, “playing wall ball every day of the week helped me get my assignments done in a timely manner and got my mind in the right place to get things done.” Dylan also shared experiences of lacrosse helping prepare his mind for what he needed to do that week. CJ further expressed,

For me, it takes a lot of stuff off my mind off my plate as you guys have said like during midterms. Here [in Syracuse, New York] I've been playing lacrosse as much as I can to get myself focused on what I'm supposed to do and get all my tests done. I feel like lacrosse. It just gets me mentally prepared for everything that's about to happen in future... I've learned a lot through my dad and what he's taught me through what lacrosse does mentally to us.

CJ pointed out how lacrosse calms his mind and helps him focus on what he needs to get done.

This theme of lacrosse preparing our mind mentally was a common theme in our research.

We observed how lacrosse was a powerful instrument in relaxing our minds. Dylan Granquist shared,

I value lacrosse mentally because of how big a stress reliever the game is for me. When I play it refreshes my mind and puts things into perspective for me. While I play it allows me time to think and relieve stress. It helps out all my problems by putting them in front of me instead of on my shoulders. After I play, I feel confident in my ability to get through my next obstacle.

The collaborators discussed how the game eased our minds. Jack Robert Mehoja declared, “Mentally, I’ve always learned to go into the game with a clear head.” The importance of a clear head was seen as helping relax our minds. Hayden Powless voiced, “While playing, emotionally everything was clear in my head, whenever I have my stick in my hands, I have a clear mind.” Lacrosse had a powerful ability to clear our troubled minds or racing thoughts. We observed lacrosse has the ability to relax our minds mentally.

Remembering and Thinking About the Game. A theme that surfaced in our research was remembering and actively thinking about the game. Floyd Silas said,

This week I preserved the game by simply remembering the times I’ve played. Most of the time I don’t even mean to think about it. I feel like when I need some medicine from the game it sends me memories from the times I’ve played. It truly is a healing game.

Mentally thinking about lacrosse was distinguished as a healing medicine for us as collaborators

I voiced the sacredness of remembering the values of the traditional game and stories of those before me. I discussed how different community leaders Curt Summers, Butch Summers, Dana Isaac, and Ernest Stevens III taught me about lacrosse’s cultural traditions, connection to our ancestors and Creator, and inherent relationship to nature. I talked about the 1940’s game of

Oneida versus Menominee, a game in which my great uncles played. Remembering the past as collaborators put into perspective the depth of this cultural tradition and the meaning we collectively felt.

Dylan Granquist expressed that his uncle, Brad Granquist, was the first one to give him memories of the game. Dylan says he was taught from CJ's dad, Curt, and CJ's uncle, Butch, about important life lessons through lacrosse. Dylan described learning like our ancestors did, through the medium of oral tradition. Dylan's message was one of encouragement: to let the younger generation be better than you.

One of the decolonizing ideologies proposed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith is protecting (Smith, 2013), which was done in our study by remembering the traditions and voicing them. Jack Robert shared, "This week, a thought came to my mind that I needed to watch myself play lacrosse, it just made me feel good inside watching me and my teammates run around enjoying the creators game." Remembering and thinking of the game was seen as a medicine mentally in our study. Thinking and remembering about the traditional medicine game of lacrosse was a mental theme for my collaborators and me.

Positivity Which Comes From Lacrosse Mentally. A theme which arose in the study was the positivity which comes from lacrosse mentally. Jack Robert Mehoja and other collaborators articulated a mirroring effect: when they think positively, they play positively. It was agreed upon by the collaborators that lacrosse helped us all endure dark times. Before and during the study, multiple collaborators, including CJ and myself, opened up about how the game has helped us soothe our minds when feeling overwhelmed. I shared how lacrosse helps ease my racing thoughts and takes away depression or sadness. During our talking circles, collaborators

shared about the positivity they experienced mentally while playing for 30-minutes before each talking circle, and, on their own and at practices throughout the weeks.

A positive mental state from playing and from thinking about playing lacrosse was a common theme threaded throughout our study. Jack Robert Mehoja stated, “Mentally, I’ve always learned to go into the game with a clear head and to think positive because then I’ll play positive.” Jack Robert Mehoja and other collaborators noted when they think positive, they will play positive. Floyd stated about lacrosse bringing positivity mentally, “when I play lacrosse, I’m not going out there to take someone’s head off, I’m going out there to enjoy the game and entertain the Creator.” Floyd talking about his enjoyment of the game reflects the positivity which this game brings mentally.

Lifelong Learners to Support Future Generations. A theme which arose through the various talking circles was being lifelong learners. Some collaborators were further along in their cultural, traditional Native American educational journey, and, their academic journey than others, however, the collaborators shared a mindset of humility in wanting to learn more and recognizing the infinite knowledge still yet to learn. Floyd Silas responded,

I definitely feel like as far as inspiring or talking to the youth, they need to know that, you know, school comes first and without the schooling, you can't play. You know what I'm saying, because that is something that I messed up when I was kind of younger, was getting bad grades. And good thing my dad kind of instilled that to me, like you're not going to play if you don't have the grades to play. So, I guess that's one thing I really want the younger generation to know.

This quotation by Floyd reveals an importance of role models, but also reveals a theme of continually learning as human beings. There was a space as well for collaborators to share if they

did not know as much about the Oneida culture. Masen and Hayden both authentically offered to the group they grew up off the reservation and are still learning. Masen shared,

I am still learning about the traditional Oneida teachings. If I'm being honest, I did not start playing lacrosse until sophomore year of high school and did not do anything with Oneida until my senior year, but I can explain what I go about from what I learned . . .

I connected with Masen's vulnerability, authenticity, and experience. The space created by the collaborators was that of trust, inclusivity, and no-judgements. Masen's story resonated with my own experience growing up mostly in Southern California. I had an introduction to my Oneida ways from my grandmother growing up, but once I visited the Oneida nation for the first time in 2009 as a 19-year-old, I began to deep dive into my heritage. From then, this was the tip of the iceberg to learn more about my Oneida ways. I continue to learn every day and realize how little I know with the more knowledge I attain.

I shared with my collaborators about our Oneida traditional ways, "I learn how little I know all the time." CJ Summers replied,

Same for myself...My dad taught me a lot about lacrosse, but I'm still in the learning process of my heritage also...My dad told me a lot of his stories that he had when he was growing up, also about him and around the game also and I'll just try to keep those memories in my head, too. So I could eventually tell the future generations of what I've learned through lacrosse and hopefully preserve everything that I've learned.

CJ Summers, who grew up learning from his father Curt Summers, one of the leaders in our Oneida lacrosse community, states he is continuing to learn his heritage and history about lacrosse. CJ tries to keep memories in his head so he can teach future generations his knowledge

of lacrosse. CJ's humility as a lifelong learner is inspiring, considering how much CJ already knows about our Oneida traditional ways and customs.

A recurring topic was building for seven generations ahead of us to make a better life for Oneida youth lacrosse players in the future. An idea which surfaced early and often among the collaborators was of taking action to create long-lasting change for the better for Oneida youth lacrosse players and their education, and, for seven generations to come. This thought process of building for future Oneida youth lacrosse players did not begin at this dissertation, as many of my collaborators were already brainstorming solutions amongst themselves and in the Oneida community. I have heard it said by Chief Oren Lyons, faith keeper for the Onondaga Nation and an instrumental figure whose ideas help structure this research, that when we make decisions, do not make them for yourself, or even for your family, however, make them for seven generations to come. Dylan brought up in our first meeting, "how can we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players for generations to come?" Though I had planned for an emergent topic such as this to be covered in our fourth talking circle topic, I observed, reflected, planned, and acted and brought up Dylan's topic throughout our research. Byran stated,

Well me and Dylan have had this conversation, a bunch of different times. Like, how exactly can we create change. What can we do right now to really start pushing for generations to come.

Dylan, Byran, and Masen have talked about this topic before the start of our study, and, other collaborators having this future oriented mindset of our community members yet to come and thinking of how we can build a better world for them. Thinking of seven generations to the future was theme in our research mentally.

Emotional Frame. Through each of the five Zoom talking circles we discussed our responses at one point through an emotional frame, and four of the 20 Instagram group chat talking circles discussed responses through the emotional frame. The emotional aspects that emerged in this study are defined as the feelings we feel in our heart of anger, happiness, joyfulness, sadness, etc. The subthemes in the emotional realm were brings a good heart, sharing, lacrosse relaxes, calms, and heals, and a sense of community created in the study.

Brings a Good Heart. For our research as Oneida collaborators, to have a good heart was understood as seeking to have harmony with ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and all of humanity (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Lacrosse helped bring a good heart to all collaborators throughout this dissertation and in our responses through the Zoom and Instagram talking circles. Having a good heart and good mind was found to be instrumental in the emotional framework. The distinction between a good mind and a good heart is a good mind focuses on having good thoughts of peace, holding no ill-will, and having a generous sense of humor, whereas a good heart is about having a love for yourself, your community, and your world. A good heart is more emotional state, and a good mind is more of a person's mental state. Lacrosse was seen as a medicine emotionally for calming troubled hearts and bringing about a good heart.

Collaborators stated the importance of having a good heart throughout our research. Dylan shared if you play with a good heart, you will have a good outcome on the field. CJ shared having a good heart goes a long way. Gavin discussed, "played the game with a good heart for me means going for crazy plays in shoot-arounds and not sweating mistakes, instead laughing it off." I talked about, "This week, I shared the game with my nephew Noah while having good heart."

Furthermore, Richard described how his composure and demeanor as a goalie and person is also due largely to his good heart. Having a good heart, which is to seek harmony for ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and all of humanity, was a common theme throughout the talking circles over Zoom and the Instagram group chat shared journals.

Sharing. A theme which emerged in our research was how we share the game emotionally. Sharing is certainly done physically through speaking. However, there is additionally an internal component of sharing the medicine game for others emotionally through our intentions and playing as a prayer. Collaborators discussed playing the medicine game for others who needed the medicine to lift them up.

Masen shared about the positive emotions created while playing lacrosse with his brother and enjoying the fun, competitive nature of the game. Some of their friends stopped by to say hi while they were playing, and this continued the spread of good energy. Masen recognized the energy and emotion around us interacting with other people, not just in ourselves,

I am a very emotional person so I have a lot of character when I play and I use that to my advantage. I played wall ball with my brother this week to create some emotion and definitely fun with some competition at the end and having some of our friends stop by to say hi. Good energy was spread.

As someone who identifies as an empath, I feel closely connected to the emotions of other people and preserve the game by playing with others to spread good energy. An important point not to be overlooked or underestimated in preserving the medicine game, lacrosse, otherwise known as the spirit game, is spreading positive energy while playing with a good heart, good mind, and strong fire.

Byran discussed sharing the game he loved as a player in college and transitioning to a new role as a volunteer assistant coach at a NCAA lacrosse program. Byran expressed, “So for me emotionally, the enjoyment is still there when I go to coach and it transferred from being on the field to being on the sideline now as a coach for the emotion for me.” Another experience of emotions in lacrosse was demonstrated by Richard Summers voiced sharing his art and graphic designs emotionally. Though the art and graphics are indeed physical, the sharing which Richard articulated supported the overall theme of sharing our emotions of the game with others,

So okay, I'm studying to be a graphic designer, right, and I'm learning new techniques and everything. And I know I haven't done this. Yeah, this is my goal for the future, to take what I know and share it through illustration. Or share it through whatever, you know, share the game and show its value with the traditional side and exposing our culture to the world, sharing it with the world. And that's my future goal, to share our game with the people through graphic arts, cool merchandise. I just want to share our game through graphics. That's my future.

Richard’s answer exemplified a sharing that occurs, which is transmitted through a physical medium, however, is rooted in the emotional realm.

Lacrosse Relaxes, Calms, and Heals. A theme which emerged from the research was the ability for lacrosse to relax, calm, and bring peace to our emotions. CJ Summers stated, “I escaped to lacrosse to get my emotions straight and in check. After having some time to be alone with my stick I felt so much better emotionally and got me through that week stronger.” CJ also articulated, “with my mind going a million miles an hour at times, I just pick up my stick to make things clearer to me and calm myself down.” Masen Powless added,

I was going through a tough time the last few months. I was lost and I was thinking of things I haven't done in a little bit and wall ball was one of them. So, I went back home to go to my wall. It was so calming and made the clouds clear from my head a little bit... made me feel more connected with myself.

Masen used lacrosse as a tool to lift himself up emotionally. CJ shared,

it's a medicine game for a reason. It's, it's called that for a reason. But what lacrosse does for me emotionally. It makes me happy. It's I'm at peace when I'm whatever I'm doing lacrosse wise, I'm at peace. I'm the happiest I can be, I'm calm. I'm just there in the moment, I'm just playing lacrosse. I love being in the moment, being my happiest with my lacrosse stick. It's definitely a different feeling though. It's an out of body experience.

CJ discussed how the game makes him feel at peace, and other collaborators agreed with this sentiment.

A common theme found our research was how the game of lacrosse makes us happy, heals us, and lifts us up. Floyd Silas stated, "Picking up my lacrosse stick always seems to make me feel good inside. I have so many good memories with the game and all the memories always come back when I pick up my stick. On Friday, I had a rough day and I pick up my stick for a few minutes and I felt better instantly." Floyd's response ties into the mental frame of remembering, however, the bleeding between lenses of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual was also a common occurrence. Jack Robert Mehoja responded, "Emotionally, I use lacrosse to help me be better, when I'm feeling down, I play lacrosse it always brings me back up." Gavin talked about how the success he experiences in lacrosse leaks over into other areas of his life. There was a sense of restoration from our study which was done through feeling restored

by being able to share about these beliefs and experiences in a comfortable place where we felt understood by one another.

Sense of Community Created in the Study. A theme of community was found by taking a step back and examining answers from the various talking circles over time. An authentic community was created through regular communication and trust. The first principle of community based participatory research is to acknowledge the community as a unit of identity, and we certainly continued to become a unit of identity as collaborators in conducting the study, drawing the conclusion, and in planning to uphold the created community in the future. The goal was regardless of the completion of this study, that we will continue to work together as a community of collaborators to create lasting, permanent change in Oneida to help the next generations of Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education.

I cannot stress enough how good it felt to speak about traditional, cultural, and spiritual values, be slightly unique in our own way, and be very connected to one another. Austin and Nate spoke about how some things had been hard on them and they had been busy with work, but were still grateful for the space to share and have community. I felt restored and excited from our talking circles as collaborators. I could tell from the responses of Dylan, CJ, Fox, Floyd, and others, they also looked forward to our talking circles.

I observed the collaborators felt an appreciation and reverence for the community we built as collaborators. I found that many of my collaborators knew far more about the traditional ways and knowledge than I do. I did not feel insufficient, but rather grateful for my collaborators being willing to take their time to teach me, speak their minds, and share their perspectives. This community had been very helpful for my own physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual

development, particularly during the time of lockdown. I wanted to cry tears of joy hearing the collaborators' responses on how lacrosse is a way of life and religion for us as Oneida people.

I found myself being validated through the co-collaborative process. Since I started my program at the University of San Diego, I had not felt like I truly belonged or was supported as an Oneida person. I did not feel able to fully express myself as a human being. This particular reflection was a breakthrough for my own personal development in the study. Dylan, in prior weeks of our study, said how we all as collaborators learn from the talking circles. I feel this process is helping restore us as people, as a community, and for generations to come. I look forward to continuing this community after the study is said and done.

Spiritual Frame. Through each of the five Zoom talking circles, we discussed our responses at one point through a spiritual frame, and four of the 20 Instagram group chat talking circles discussed responses through the spiritual frame among the 12 collaborators and myself. The spiritual for this research was defined as the mystical and mysterious, deep sense of knowing. A person is sure of this reality at the core of their being and feels aware of an existence of a spiritual realm independent of a body.

Builds a Strong Fire. For our research, a strong fire was defined as a heartfelt encouragement, which is in each of us. The Oneida definition of a strong fire is an understanding that we have the ability to strengthen other people's fires with a good mind and a strong fire (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). Byran, Dylan, Masen, Hayden, Gavin, Floyd, and I discussed sharing the game with a good mind, and in doing so, encouraging others to strengthen their own fires. Examples of this were seen in Floyd talking about sharing the game of lacrosse with his friend Angel who is not Native American and inspiring Angel to want to learn more about the spiritual concepts, ideas, and traditional practices from an Oneida perspective. Building

a strong fire was an overall theme throughout the research in working to build permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players for the future and in building a better world for all people. Building a better world was done through the medicine game of lacrosse and learning and sharing Oneida traditional knowledge.

In response to the question of how we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players who are pursuing an education spiritually, I replied,

I think sometimes the answer outward is inward and just trying to go inward by praying for these guys, by trying to have a good heart, a good mind and by leading that way. And hopefully they will be able to see something different, you know about me or just or just to see, you know, the spirit. If I have my strong fire, my good heart, good mind spiritually, that just manifests itself in like the like the physical.

The definition of a strong fire for the Oneida is the ability to inspire a fire in others. Byran shared,

And then like today, when you send out the message, I was like, oh yeah 30-minutes, you know, play some lacrosse. I was like, you know what, yeah, I will go downstairs. So, I went to the basement, grabbed one of the lacrosse sticks around for a while. I mean like it sparked the fire back up in me and I was like, damn, I need to do this more often.

This example of Byran having his fire sparked back up from our community accountability occurred with other collaborators as well. Building a strong fire was a common theme in our research as collaborators spiritually. Byran shared also what the impact of the game of lacrosse has been for us as Oneida people across generations,

Especially when you pick up the stick for a little bit . . . you just feel that power and just that deep connection that we have with it. Yeah, like that awareness . . . it seems like

small embers that used to be like you said, the Renaissance, here [in Oneida, Wisconsin] and now it's grown to a nice strong fire and then... each generation, they're adding on to the fire and I mean that's what I'm hoping to do too, is to continue to keep adding to the fire and keep growing the game and it's been awesome . . .

Byran shared the importance of how we as Oneida people are able to inspire and ignite a strong fire in others.

Connection to Our Ancestors, Intergenerational Knowledge, and Our Creator. An evident theme was our connection to our ancestors and intergenerational knowledge. One example which occurred early on in the study, was when there was lightning during one of our Zoom talking circles. At the first loud crack of thunder, we immediately shared and understood that it was our uncles coming to greet us. We were able to share this traditional knowledge as collaborators and feel a connection to our ancestors. Where most people would not understand the reference and correlate the lightning to our uncles, we did as Oneida people. Byran discussed the historical and traditional uses of lacrosse when he said,

Lacrosse was used as a medicine society. It was also used as a political aspect for an alternative to war. And then also there was casual and recreational games going on. So, it was a multifaceted sport or way of life. Actually, lacrosse was intertwined with our life in a bunch of different ways. And a lot of times people kind of overlook the fact that it was used as an alternative to war or also was just like shooting around a basketball or throwing a football nowadays.

To clarify, a medicine society as stated previously, is a group of healing leaders in traditional Oneida practice. By practicing our traditional ways as Oneida people, we are reaching back through time and connecting with our ancestors

Talking about our connection to our ancestors was a common theme in our research.

When Dylan was talking about lacrosse and getting nervous before he games, he stated,

What helps me like get over that is like, you know, our, our ancestors are always with us are always walking with us. They're always watching over us. So, when I get on the floor, you know, I kind of think about that and I kind of lose my nervousness. I kind of just like, I get I get in the game. You know, I like trying to make my ancestors proud on my journey, you know, because we got all these people watching us, and you know, we got people who are still living. And then we got our ancestors who are always walking with us. And they're watching us so I want to make them proud. I want to play. And that's why you got to do, we always got to put like 110% into the game.

Dylan was constantly reminding us during his talking circle responses of our ancestors always being with us.

I shared with my collaborators, "I feel I'm connected to my ancestors and those who have passed. So just like trying to get guidance from them, trying continually to stay connected to all our ancestors." A connection to our ancestors and generations before us was a theme of our research.

As collaborators, we discussed this idea of bridging a connection to our Creator whenever we play lacrosse. Gavin White expressed,

I preserved the game by playing for the creator and having a good heart and mind. What that means to me in particular, is just simply enjoying the game. Going for crazy plays in shoot arounds and not sweating the dumb mistakes, instead laughing it off! Having fun and entertaining the Creator is what it's all about for me.

Gavin expressed how much this game means to him mentally. Byran contributed, “We're proud to play the game. We're excited we're playing for the Creator. We're playing for something that's bigger than ourselves. And it all comes back full circle.” Our connection to the Creator was a resounding theme in the research.

Dylan shared about his felt connections to the Creator every time he plays the sacred game of lacrosse,

This week I preserve the game spiritually by playing the game the way it's supposed to be played. Play with a good mind and a good heart. Play hard for all of creation and to entertain the creator. Before I play I always think about who, what, and why I'm playing this game. I take a moment to think about our peoples past and how we made it this far in the face of adversity with nothing but each other and our culture. Our way of life has been a key part to our survival since the beginning of colonization. It amazes me to think that this game among our teachings and songs has carried our people through these 500 years of tough times. So, when I do pick up my stick I like to think about all the young boys that turned into warriors who died defending our way of life. This game has done more for our people than we can ever do for it. That's the way I preserve the game spiritually by remembering and giving thanks to those who came before me and fought to preserve our way of life.

Dylan shared every time he picks up a stick he is playing for the Creator. Our connection to our Creator while participating in the medicine game was a key spiritual theme to our research.

The First Game of Lacrosse and Origin Story of the Game. A theme which surfaced was a remembering of the first game of lacrosse and the origin story of the game. Byran discussed the origins of the game and sharing it with others. A recurring theme was the origin of

the game as a message to anyone with a spirit, no matter how big, small, fast, or slow, can please the Creator with their game. The first game of lacrosse and origins of the game are constant reminders to ourselves and others of the spiritual significance of this game and how it is different than other sports or games, as it is part of our Creation story as Oneida people referenced in the background section of my research.

I shared with my collaborators, “I preserved the traditional Oneida teachings of the game mentally this week by thinking of the origins of the game and how it is supposed to be played while I was playing as well as throughout the week.” The origins of the game give us as Oneida people instruction on how we are to please the Creator with our game as a prayer. A theme through the spiritual framework was the importance of the first game, as it was talked about by Floyd, Dylan, and CJ at certain points during our study. Byran shared the importance about thinking about where the game comes from and the origins of the game when he would go through his college lacrosse training routine,

And . . . when you're at practice, it's like, hey we got to do this better, we got to do this better . . . and you kind of just forget sometimes . . . like hey you know, this medicine game, where it derived and just be mindful of that stuff.

When Byran discussed where the game derived from, he is referring to the origins of the game. By remembering the spiritual importance of the first game of lacrosse, we can hold on to and share the importance of the origin story of the game, which is not matter how big, small, fast or slow you are, you can please the Creator with your game.

The Spirit is Real and Sacred. A theme which arose in the literature was how real the spirit is. For me, the spiritual world is more real than the physical world. When I play lacrosse and exist in this spiritual state of consciousness, I feel whole and as if I am doing what I am

supposed to be doing. Jack Robert Mehoja expressed, “Spiritually, lacrosse is in my blood. It will always be a part of me and I’m grateful that I was brought into the game.” Dylan articulated,

You know, like I said, our ancestors are always with us, on and off the field. But on the field, I feel like that's where they're really watching me. And that's where I really try to try to show what I got, to make them proud. And I hope one day when, you know, my spirits up there, you know, watching my grandkids or something, they make me proud by giving me there 100%.

Dylan looking forward to being a grandfather and having his grandchildren play for medicine for him in the spirit world someday reinforced the theme of the spirit being real for us collaborators.

Throughout the study, I would occasionally pray for my collaborators when I would wake up, asking the Creator for guidance. I listened. I heard the Creator stating to reach out to each of the collaborators individually to continue their interest and responses. The Creator said to remind the collaborators of the good memories we all had together and of memories to come. I was told to be honest, vulnerable, and real. The Creator told me this community was happening at this time for a reason. At first, when I was going to break from the meditative trancelike state, I felt the connection grow stronger and bring me back in to continue the message I needed to hear.

Richard expressed,

I feel like all the Lacrosse players on the field share that game spiritually because it is at the end of the day, it is medicine, and people are there to watch a good game or have fun while watching so I feel like every time, we all step on the field, we all have that in us as Native Americans, we're all tied spiritually. We all go out there with a good clear mind, a good mindset and I feel like we share the game. When people are curious about the game,

I try to tell them how spiritually we're connected and how it's not just a sport to us. It's a way of life. It's our religion.

The theme of the spirit being sacred surfaced in our research. Our spirit as people existent of our body, which is real, and, sacred which deserves respect. Dylan Granquist responded,

This week I preserve the game spiritually by playing the game the way it's supposed to be played. Play with a good mind and a good heart. Play hard for all of creation and to entertain the creator. Before I play, I always think about who, what, and why I'm playing this game. I take a moment to think about our peoples past and how we made it this far in the face of adversity with nothing but each other and our culture. Our way of life has been a key part to our survival since the beginning of colonization. It amazes me to think that this game among our teachings and songs has carried our people through these 500 years of tough times. So, when I do pick up my stick, I like to think about all the young boys that turned into warriors who died defending our way of life. This game has done more for our people than we can ever do for it. That's the way I preserve the game spiritually by remembering and giving thanks to those who came before me and fought to preserve our way of life.

Dylan shared to preserve lacrosse spiritually as an individual is to play with the sacredness as aforementioned. Byran also articulated a story about his connection to the spiritual and sharing the sacred teachings of the game,

How I share the game spiritually is one of my favorite stories. It's actually the lacrosse story between the animals, about the mouse and the squirrel. And there's a lot of valuable lessons in that story and just understanding those lessons and conveying them to the next generation. Whenever I would have boys' groups in the school systems outside of

Oneida, I know there'd be a lot of different Native kids in those groups. And talking about that story, explaining how every animal has a unique skill, every animal was different, but they brought something to the table. And I always kind of compare that to school, to academically. I said, some of you might be really good at math, some of you might be good at reading, some of you may be really good at writing. But everyone has a unique skill. And when we come together collectively as a team, that's when great things can happen. And I think those values and that story are awesome. And that comes from our spirituality and having that connection to our ancestors. Because when we come into this world, we were given a lacrosse stick at birth, but then those skills and those different abilities are given to us from the sky world. It is said that when we were sent over from the sky world to this earth, we are sent there in a basket. When we are sent over in a basket, all our ancestors and relatives over in the sky world, they're putting in different skills and unique abilities that we're going to be able to bring to this earth. And so that's how I always love taking a look at it too. And whenever I'm coaching, to have that understanding that not everyone's going to be the same, everyone's going to have a different, unique skill set and they're also going to have different ways that they're being coached, too. It's not a one size fits all for coaching style.

Byran touched on many points on the first game of lacrosse, our ancestors, and coaching, but the main theme running throughout this narrative was the sacred nature of the spirit.

One of the biggest takeaways would be the theme of lacrosse as a medicine physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Lacrosse was seen as a medicine to fight Covid and calm anxiety, stress, and racing thoughts. It was a medicine to physically release energy and to emotionally release aggression. Lacrosse was a medicine mentally for calming troubled minds

and fostering a good heart and good mind. It was a medicine which keeps us connected to our ancestors and a medicine to help us pave the way for future generations. Lacrosse was a medicine to help us represent our heritage as a nondominant culture. Oneida traditional ways and teaching of lacrosse as medicine would thought to have been wiped out from colonization, when in reality, the Oneida people are resilient in maintaining their deep and complex cultural traditions.

Oneida Community as Community Based Participatory Research

Community Based Participatory Research was used in my research through communication with Tracy Williams, the Director of the Oneida Nation Language Department, who assisted in the translation and spelling of Oneida names for our collaborators. For my own Oneida name, Tracy was able to give me the proper spelling and pronunciation. Since receiving my Oneida name at 9 years old, I had been saying in Oneida, “he is a good boy” when in reality, my granted name was “he is a good man,” and Tracy helped me discover I had been misspeaking my name.

The second principle of Community Based Participatory Research, building on community resources and knowledge, was established by utilizing Oneida community member and artist, Dana Isaac. Dana created all 13 traditional, miniature wooden lacrosse sticks and I was able to fund him for his efforts. Dana creates incredible hand-crafted, authentic Oneida art which has a palpable spiritual feel. I would highly recommend supporting his work and finding him on Instagram @n8v_sweet_arts.

This research further used community based participatory research of building on community resources and knowledge through the assistance of my grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, maiden name Cornelius, who is a tribal elder in the Oneida community. My

grandmother, Eleanor, personally bundled sage and tobacco grown in Oneida and created 13 different miniature bags to be sent out to my collaborators. My grandmother, Eleanor, put together purple cloth bundles of sage to pray for cleansing, and, to ward off negativity, and a red cloth bundle filled with tobacco for if a person is having an issue or problem, to pray for guidance, make requests, and give thanks.

This research was additionally approved by the Oneida Business Committee. I reached out to the Oneida Nation Business Committee after gaining IRB approval to conduct my study, submitted my research proposal, and was informed by Dr. Jo Anne House, Chief Counsel to the Oneida Law Office, that my dissertation research request was approved. There will be an opportunity to present the findings of the study to the Oneida Business Committee, which I plan to present alongside my collaborators, if possible, in the summer of 2021.

Summary of Findings

Five research questions act as the foundation of this study; these include: 1) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional sacred values of lacrosse in their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (2) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities? (3) How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)? (4) What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people? (5) What impact does using talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse? Oneida college lacrosse players talked about holding on to the traditional values around the game by sharing it with

others. The traditional game of lacrosse was seen as a medicine physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for the 13 Oneida college lacrosse collaborators in this study. This section discussed how Oneida lacrosse players share their traditional values of the game, and will be expanded on further in chapter five. Chapter five will also discuss what the 13- collaborators think is most important to share with others. All 13 collaborators desired to be lifelong learners who shared the game of lacrosse with a good heart, good mind, and strong fire, while retaining the traditional values of the game. Talking circles through Zoom and a shared Instagram group chat from the dates of October 11, 2020 to January 31, 2021 allowed collaborators to express themselves and their perceptions of the traditional game of lacrosse through the frameworks of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, which was the chosen interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel used in this study. Furthermore, the importance of talking circles will be discussed further in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand Oneida college lacrosse players' perspectives on the sacred sport of lacrosse and how playing lacrosse might help players hold onto their traditional values, while also sharing their values with other people at their respective universities. 13 Oneida college lacrosse collaborators across Turtle Island, including myself, discussed our perspectives around how we hold onto, and, share our values concerning the traditional Haudenosaunee game of lacrosse. An emergent topic was how do we create sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education for generations to come. These collaborators ranged in ages from incoming freshmen in college to a doctoral candidate. We shaped our responses around a specific interpretation of the medicine wheel, which is the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, through the Indigenous based communication method of talking circles. The perspectives of Oneida college lacrosse players using the framework of the sacred medicine wheel through talking circles answered the following five research questions:

- 1) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse in their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?
- 2) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities?
- 3) How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?

- 4) What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people?
- 5) What impact do talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse?

The findings from the study presented in chapter four responded to research questions one, three and four, which I discuss at length in chapter five. In addition, in chapter five I examine and respond to research questions two and five.

Overview of Chapter Five

In this chapter, I present a discussion of the study's findings in response to the five research questions. I explore how this research incorporated the nine principles of Community Based Participatory Research. This is followed by dissecting five decolonizing ideologies prevalent in this research. This chapter reviews the limitations of this study and subsequently discusses the implications for public policy makers, public administrators, educators, the field of leadership in general, in addition to, implications for future research. In the implications for future research, useful findings include application for different populations and samples, an ability to build on the importance of relevant curriculum, role models, and representation, the spiritual being sacred and real. This chapter also discusses lessons learned as a researcher, practitioner, as a co-collaborator, as an Oneida person, and as a lacrosse player. This chapter then shares a clear path of knowledge for future research.

Discussion of Findings

Five research questions serve as the foundation for this study in examining the perspectives of Oneida college lacrosse players surrounding the traditional game of lacrosse using one interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel as a framework. In this section, I will

discuss my own interpretations from the data to provide answers to the study's research questions.

Response to Research Question 1

This study provided a response to the first research question: 1) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players preserve their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse in their respective university communities through the framing of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?

Collaborators shared how we held onto our traditional and sacred values. One of the recurring ways collaborators held on to the traditional, sacred values of lacrosse in their respective university communities was through remembering. By thinking about the medicine game and the spiritual significance of the game, we preserve the traditional values of the game when we practice, play, or coach. Even when we were not playing the game, we would think about the traditional, sacred values of the game, and it would bring us good medicine.

Furthermore, this research question was partially discussed in chapter four concerning preserving our values by sharing them with others. As collaborators, we discussed by sharing the game with others, we are preserving the traditional values for ourselves, our university communities, and ideally for generations to come. When we had the opportunity to share the game with a friend or teammate, we were also allowing ourselves to acknowledge the traditional, sacred teachings of the game of lacrosse.

Additionally, preserving traditional, sacred values of lacrosse in our respective communities was enacted through creating a strong sense of Oneida community. Having a strong sense of community acted as a tool to preserve values because it allowed us to feel confident being our authentic selves in sharing and learning from one another about our traditional ways.

There is an idea of strength in numbers, and this certainly was how it felt with my collaborators. By being able to share our traditional values with one another, we were able to remind one another of the traditional, sacred teachings of the game, as well as to hold one another accountable to think about the sacred teachings of the Creator's Game.

Why community mattered for overcoming imposter syndrome. Prior to starting the study, I subconsciously had an unsaid fear of not being accepted or liked by some of the collaborators who I did not know well. This fear was rooted in my own insecurities. As pointed out in the literature review, coloniality still occurs in the “minds and imagination of both the oppressed and the oppressor” (Jimenez-Luque, 2018, p. 112). In academia, there is a term called imposter syndrome (Clance & Imes, 1978, p. 241), and colonization can create imposter syndrome for Indigenous people, including myself, of sometimes not feeling Native enough. As referenced in the literature, the issues Native Americans face today are problems caused by colonization (Jimenez-Luque, 2018), and this example of imposter syndrome for Native American people not feeling Native enough was also from colonization. Recognizing the systems and structures which produce this syndrome is imperative, otherwise, it can be easy to be misled into thinking it is one's own fault in feeling like an imposter due to an inadequacy in themselves. For myself in the study, I was dealing with colonization; for women, it can be the construct of patriarchy; for working-class people, it can be systemic structure of classism; etc. (A. Jimenez Luque, personal communication, March 23, 2021).

I doubted myself thinking, “What if these people do not think I am Oneida enough? What if they do not like me or like what I am doing?” However, once we came together as a community, those fears melted away. Healing and restoration took place inside my own heart, inside my own mind (Smith, 2013), which aligned with the Oneida notion of leadership to have a

good heart and a good mind (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1). I felt a deep sense of gratitude to my collaborators in supporting one another, being vulnerable, and creating a space of growing together as human beings. I went from feeling like I was not going to be enough for these men to being in a position where I can really help them. A co-collaborator reached out to me after our talking circles for consultation on his theology project concerning our Oneida people and getting help in better understanding our traditional ways. My heart was full and grateful to be in a place in my journey that enabled me to help. By having a strong sense of community and trust with one another, we were able to support one another in preserving the traditional, sacred Oneida teachings of the game of lacrosse.

Response to Research Question 2

This study yielded a response to the second research question: 2) How, if at all, do Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities?

How Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional, sacred values of lacrosse with their respective university communities was discussed in Chapter 4, where the theme emerged of leadership and coaching as a way to continue the traditions of lacrosse through the framework of the physical. Oneida college lacrosse players share their traditional sacred values through the ways that the young men interact with their teammates, coaches, friends. We shared in talking circles about sharing our traditional sacred values of lacrosse with those we meet who are not Native American. In this way, we discussed how we share the Oneida culture more broadly. Sharing our traditional values included through dialogue, communication, and through media.

Standing Stone Lacrosse social media accounts for disseminating culture. One major point I refrained from going into heavy detail in Chapter 4 was one of the action steps taken from an action research cycle (O’Leary, 2004) with my collaborators of how we share what we feel is most important from our study as collaborators. During our fourth talking circle meeting on our emergent topic of how do we create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education, Dylan and other collaborators pointed out how heavily youth today get their information from social media, podcasts, or video games and may not be as likely to read a book, dissertation, or article. Dylan desired to create an avenue for disseminating information through videos. “Standing Stone Lacrosse” is the brand name for our various social media presence, with handle @StandingStoneLacrosse and logo designed by our own co-collaborator, Richard Stevens III. We built on the strengths and resources of the community, which is the second principle of community based participatory research (Becker et al., 2005, pp. 7-9; Israel et al., 2003), because the name of the organization was generated through group brainstorming sessions amongst the co-collaborative team. Standing Stone Lacrosse is a nod to our culture and translation of Onʌyoteʔa-ká, Oneida people, otherwise known as People of the Standing Stone. Our name derives from a story of when the Oneida first came together as an independent nation and a large stone came to our ancestors as a sign of protection (Powless, 2009; Shimony, 1994; Wallace, 1994). The intention of our social media account of Standing Stone Lacrosse as collaborators was to put our minds together to help others achieve a good heart, a good mind, and a strong fire (“Oneida Nation,” 2011, p. 1), correlating to helping others love themselves, their communities, their ancestors, and their Creator.

Response to Research Question 3

This study produced a response to the third research question: 3) How do Oneida college lacrosse players frame their perceptions of the sacred game of lacrosse through the use of a sacred medicine wheel (physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually)?

Collaborators shared their perspectives on the sacred game of lacrosse through the framework of the sacred medicine wheel, as noted in the findings in Chapter 4. Furthermore, a concept I assumed might be a connection, which was then validated in my study with my collaborators, was how the four major frameworks of the sacred medicine wheel of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Coyhis, n.d.; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2017; Gray et al., 2019; Lavallee, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum et al., 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020) all bled into one another. It was difficult to completely differentiate the physical apart from the mental, emotional, and spiritual frameworks. Similarly, it was arduous to entirely separate the spiritual apart from the mental, emotional, and physical, or any such combination. I became more aware of this takeaway through reflection and meditation by going into the spiritual realm to connect with my ancestors and our Creator. I brought myself into a physical trance-like state, through the physical practices of lacrosse, yoga, or meditation. Engaging in lacrosse, yoga, or meditation helped me align my physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual states (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015). Emotionally, I needed a space where I was simply observing my breath and not passing judgement on my emotions. Mentally, I needed to surrender control and have peace in an interconnected relationship with the Creator. To enact a spiritual state within, I aligned my physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual states through engaging in the physical activities of lacrosse, yoga, and meditation (Boyes-Watson et al., 2015). Feeling

grace and peace helped foster a spiritual state of connectivity to my ancestors seven generations behind me and ahead of me, and, with our Creator, which Oneida people refer to as having a good mind (Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, 2020, p. 1).

Dylan and Masen discussed how by sharing the game with others physically, they were simultaneously retaining it for themselves. This overall theme of sharing as a way of preserving was influential in my philosophy of pedagogy and helped shape me as a leader. For example, by sharing and speaking our traditional language, we used a decolonizing ideology (Smith, 2013) to reclaim, heal and restore a language and ways spoken by our ancestors (Aitken, 2018; Altamirano-Jiménez, 2017; Bowra et al., 2020; Cachon, 2012; Folsom, 1980; Graber & Klassen, 2020; Hunt & Stevenson, 2017; Katrak, 2015; Lyons et al., 1992; Maynard, 2019; Pearce, 2005; Zellars, 2020).

Life in Full Circles. Of my most profound lessons from this study was the idea life comes full circle (Colmant & Merta, 1999; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; O. Lyons, personal communication, March 1, 2021; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Verbos et al., 2011). In this study, I feel like I am talking to my younger self, being the role model and offering the guidance I wish I had growing up. Native American role models in academia are critical (Cohen, 2007; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015) and this study reaffirmed this notion. Having community support from my Oneida higher education colleagues during this study was influential during my time as a doctoral candidate. I felt isolated without Native American fellowship during my doctoral education, but this community was phenomenal for my own personal development and provided the fellowship I sought. I concur with Waterman (2019) that, “Indigenous knowledges have value and relevance to transforming higher education” (p. 75), in that I had this chance to grow, expand, and learn about myself, which allowed me to better

understand my culture, allowing me to better understand my world. Typically, Native Americans are susceptible to feeling as though their culture is not relevant (Coladarci, 1983), however, by utilizing an Indigenous mode of communication through talking circles, framing our answers through an Indigenous framework of the sacred medicine wheel, and discussing our Indigenous medicine of lacrosse, I felt my culture was of utmost relevance during my study.

The community we created as collaborators replicated the support systems siblings are able to provide (Ceja, 2006). The first principle of community based participatory research is to acknowledge the community as a unit of identity (Israel et al., 2003; Becker et al., 2005) and we created a community together of laughter, happiness, and connection. Most social activities were already limited due to Covid-19 quarantines and relationships were predominantly digital in this pandemic era, making our physical distance seem irrelevant. Even though we were on different parts of Turtle Island, it felt like we were all together, all the time. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of this community (Israel et al., 2003; Becker et al., 2005) and I do not want the community we created to vanish.

Response to Research Question 4

This study used the following research question as a guiding question: 4) What do the research participants and I think is important to share with other people?

Standing Stone Lacrosse Social Media Page. We plan to communicate our Oneida ways to help others have peace, a generous sense of humor, enjoyment of life, and strong ambitions, goals, and aspirations to change the world for the better. The Standing Stone Lacrosse social media accounts will allow us to create an avenue for sharing what we learned together during our dissertation study, about our traditional ways, language revitalization, and how to help build a better world for all people for generations to come. Our goals for our Standing Stone

Lacrosse social media accounts are to share our culture, knowledge, and ways with others, and, create active role models for our Oneida youth to look up to, emulate, and draw support from. Literature recognizes how important role models are for Native American people in academia (Cohen, 2007; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015), and we as Onʌyoteʔa·ká collaborators sought to be the change we needed in our world. Further, we planned to provide tips for getting into and succeeding in college, all while maintaining our identity as an Onʌyoteʔa·ká, a person of the Standing Stone. The social media account of “@StandingStoneLacrosse” will showcase Oneida youth lacrosse players, our traditional teachings, and, the Oneida community and culture. Standing Stone Lacrosse will offer guidance and instruction for Oneida lacrosse players going through the college application process, tips for succeeding in college, and showcasing career options. To clarify, the social media accounts for Standing Stone Lacrosse will be made at a future time across social media platforms and does not refer to our Instagram group chat we used to conduct talking circles during this study.

Oneida Stories Shared Through Art. Richard discussed storytelling by creating comics about the Oneida. He was inspired to create an Oneida-specific comic from a comic he acquired concerning a Mohawk lacrosse story. Richard questioned his fellow collaborators on stories we felt were most important to be told, and responses involved traditional Oneida stories. Using his talent, Richard designed our social media logo for Standing Stone Lacrosse. He has a passion and unique vision for letting our Oneida stories live on through art.

Recommendation for Action Ateps for Oneida Business Committee. After discussion through talking circles over Zoom and Instagram group chat, the following are recommendations to the Oneida Business Committee, assembled by the collaborators, on how to create permanent, sustainable change for Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education. These

recommendations were assembled starting with our first talking circle through our last talking circle as collaborators where we discussed the findings. For the last talking circle in particular, six of the collaborators were together on a Zoom call near Oneida, Wisconsin, and we spent a couple of hours sharing ideas for what we want to see in the Oneida community for generations to come, and, what ideas and concepts we find most valuable to share. To clarify, these recommendations are not merely the result of our collaborators and a storm of ideas, moreover, these recommendations are the result of research, the findings, and empirical research we conducted.

Mentorships.

- Create a mentorship program in the Oneida community, similar to a Big-Brother or Big-Sister program. Mentors would build up mentees by direct-messaging and communicating regularly.
- Co-collaborate with the organization, Turtle Island Lacrosse, to create more exposure for Native American college athletes and professional lacrosse players to be role models for Oneida youth.

Lacrosse/Training.

- Initiate lessons and training sessions for Oneida youth lacrosse players led by Byran, Dylan, Masen and others using facilities of the Oneida Fitness Center.
- Apply for grants or funding for an “11th man” goalie prop from Elevate lacrosse, 200 lacrosse balls, and a back stop to save missed shots from being lost used for training sessions.
- Create a high-school level preparatory lacrosse team which offers an instructional lacrosse program.

Multisport Training Facility, Lacrosse and Embroidery Store, and Traditional Foods Restaurant and Shake Bar.

- Request for the Oneida Business Committee to set aside and allocate future funds for the creation of an indoor lacrosse training facility for Oneida Nation High School to be used by our Oneida youth and community (examples being the Cattaraugus Community Center in Seneca, New York, and the Onondaga Nation Fieldhouse, also known as the Tsha' Thoñ'nhes Arena, in Onondaga, New York). Oneida could attract more top-tier athletes to Oneida Nation High School if they offer top-tier facilities. Richard Summers III says, “we should take a leap of faith and invest in the reservation school.” A facility of premiere quality would create exposure, pride in our community, and act as a symbol of the community growing together through our collective work. Oneida can take over Green Bay as the leader in premiere sports facilities.
- The creation of a new indoor training facility can create jobs for those needed to build and maintain the facilities.
- Search for local businesses to sponsor the creation of a new indoor facility for Oneida Nation High School.
- Search for possible federal grants to help with the implementation of this facility. One possible grant would be a categorical grant issued by the United States Congress. We are estimating the project to be approximately \$41.5 million based off estimates of similar projects.
- Oneida High School can attract local college lacrosse teams to use the turf field or box facilities. Local teams include NCAA DII program Concordia University Wisconsin and MCLA schools, such as UW Madison and St. Norbert College. New facilities could be

designed to host games for nearby colleges, bringing exposure to the reservation and generating revenue for the local community. The development of facilities which local colleges can use, or visit, will further bring coaches to the reservation for coaches to learn and understand the roots of lacrosse, and, to scout and recruit Oneida players.

- Plan for an Oneida Jamboree, a tournament with colleges playing in Oneida, and, a showcase of Oneida talent, culture, and traditional ways.
- A new indoor training facility can help develop the Team Wisconsin lacrosse program in preparation for representing our community at the next the Indigenous Games. Building a cutting-edge facility would be a turning point for our Standing Stone athletes and an investment for future generations.
- After the completion of a new facility, athletes will learn and carry forth their culture at Oneida Nation High School, allowing more Oneida people to learn their Native language. An investment in new facilities is part of the revival of our language, too. A creation of a premiere facility would ensure more kids will want to reside and be invested in the Oneida community.
- A new, indoor turf facility would create revenue from teams needing to rent a sports facility. This facility can be catered to multisport use. Soccer and football teams can use the turf, basketball courts can be constructed, hockey rinks can be included, and boxing facilities can be built. Inspiration for the hockey rink can be the Shakopee Ice Arena in Minnesota, next to the Mystic Lake Casino, where a whole ice hockey rink is included. Various Oneida organizations, such as Soaring Eagle Boxing Club, could use the facilities. The facilities can include a large weight room, a community swimming pool, a jacuzzi and sauna, similar to the IMG academy. The proposed multisport facility could

offer yoga classes, spin classes, basketball classes, soccer classes, etc. College athletes could hold a summer job as a “coach” at this new sports facility. Similar to “D1 Sports Training Green Bay” facilities, athletes can push weight sleds, do explosive training, and speed training with a coach, creating a new job for an individual in the community.

- The NFL organization of the Green Bay Packers could use the new facility as a satellite workout facility, as the Packers already have a working partnership with the Oneida.
- The newly proposed facilities could have a cafeteria or restaurant attached which serves Indian Tacos, corn soup, and various traditional foods, and, a nutritional shake bar to help fuel athletes. This further serves to create jobs for community members.
- Multisport store with emphasis on lacrosse. This newly proposed building could have a multisport store with an emphasis in lacrosse. This store could sell arm guards, cages, balls, etc. which could be bought in bulk from distributors at a discount and then sold to Oneida and the surrounding community for revenue for the Oneida Nation. This lacrosse store could use skilled community members by having custom embroidery for gloves, bags, etc. Dana Isaac and Richard Summers III could be hired to put designs on t-shirts which the lacrosse store could sell as additional revenue for the Oneida Tribal Nation. Further, traditional Oneida wood workers can sell wooden lacrosse sticks to add another traditional element to the facility and support local artisans. All traditional lacrosse gear can be sold in store and online, shipping internationally for Oneida artists to be represented around the world.
- This proposed facility could be used as a night school or for cultural education classes. The new building could offer financial classes, Oneida language classes, artwork classes, and blanket or basket classes. The new center could add parenting classes and childcare.

- While we, as collaborators, are grateful for our current Oneida Fitness Center, it is not designed as a multipurpose training facility. The “Fit” only has a basketball court and is dangerous for multiple sports to use simultaneously. This new center will have separate areas for lacrosse, basketball, workout classes, and weightlifting. Furthermore, the “Fit” allows people to come to work out, but it does not have a big-brother or big-sister program designed for our community on the reservation. We can create a job to develop, implement, and oversee the big-brother and big-sister program in the Oneida community.
- This is one step closer to being less reliant on the casino as the main source of generated revenue for our Oneida Tribal Nation.
- A proposed location for the facility would be using some of the space right next to Oneida High School. By having a location in the heart of Oneida, the proposed facility would be next to Oneida Nation high school, and, the pow-wow grounds.
- For the architecture and design of the facility, it would be conducted in a traditional style with a similar theme to the Turtle School, also known as Oneida Nation High School. Similar architectural themes would be used, showcasing and integrating the wampum belt. Each of these wampum belts tells a story to individuals when walking through the facilities. We recommend hiring Dana Isaac to work on art and wood burning designs in the facility.
- In the newly proposed facility, community artists could display their art for more exposure all year long. Camile, an artist in the Oneida community, can put her art in there. Malia and Norma Skenandore Primeau can put their beading on display, as well.

- Recently, we have lost people in our community, such as Loretta Metoxen, and this proposed multisport building with a lacrosse store and traditional foods restaurant could be named after community leaders who we have lost as a way to honor their memories.

These concepts of a mentorship program, lacrosse training, a multisport training facility, lacrosse and embroidery store, traditional foods restaurant and shake bar would be instrumental in investing in the youth of our Oneida community. Multiple collaborators emphasized the central importance of attaining a multisport facility for year-round use. In creating this proposal, the Oneida collaborators desired to share their vision for what our Oneida community could be. Funding for this project could be made possible through potentially setting aside future gaming revenue from the Oneida casino over a 20 year period of paying approximately \$2.1 million a year. Another option would be to apply for a federal grant to help with the implementation of this multisports, year round facility. A categorical grant issued by the United States Congress could be applied for a specific use, such as this facility and mentorship program, estimated at \$41.5 million based off of similar projects.

Response to Research Question 5

This study brought forth a response to the fifth research question: 5) What impact do talking circles have on enabling the participants to speak authentically about their heritage and experiences with lacrosse?

Why Talking Circles Matter and Why They are Effective. One crucial lesson from the study was the significance and importance of talking circles as an appropriate cultural method of communication for Indigenous people (Arthur & Porter, 2019; Conant, 2020; Doria, Momper, & Burrage, 2020; Luna, Malvezzi, Teixeira, Almeida & Bezerra, 2020; Reed, 2021; Wallace, 2019; Williams & Brant, 2019), and specifically Oneida people. The meaning making points in this

section are sending a care package intentionally, the importance of putting our minds together, the sacred silence which was embraced in our talking circles over Zoom, and the methodology of talking circles promoting unity and spirituality.

Importance of Sending a Care Package Intentionally. Sending a care package occurred prior to our first talking circle, yet was crucial in creating a shared consciousness as a group for the study. As people adjusted to learning and connecting remotely, digital communication has become the primary form of communication in this pandemic era. By sending a care package to my collaborators' addresses, we were able to share items physically in a digital realm. We held the same miniature wooden lacrosse sticks, created by Oneida community member, Dana Isaac, and were able to smell the same Oneida-grown tobacco and sage bundled together by my grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, in red and purple cloth. Having a physical care package mailed to my collaborators tied us together and fostered a sense of community because we all shared the same traditional items. This step of sending a care package was a key step in establishing the community as a unity of identity (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003), and in creating a tangible, shared, physical experience, even though we were connecting virtually from different parts of Turtle Island in different time zones. Further, sending a care package established a sense of credibility between me and my collaborators because they recognized the time and effort I spent to curate and ship their packages. Once the collaborators received their care packages, they were much more willing and excited to be part of the study, which I believe is a takeaway which could be replicated or used as a template for future research. A lesson learned was in how resounding of an impact the care package made in fostering a sense of community and creating excitement among my collaborators because the traditional items sent were of value to them as Oneida college lacrosse players. Had I sent these care packages to other

college lacrosse players who were not Haudenosaunee, I suspect this would have had little impact to them on a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual level. Being intentional in who I sent the care packages to and what was sent in the care packages allowed the tone of the study to be set prior to it beginning.

Let's Put Our Minds Together, So Be It In Our Minds. Talking circles are an effective tool for sharing information, engaging respondents, and creating a shared consciousness. As Wilson (2008) noted, "if it is possible to get every single person in a room thinking about the exact thing for only two seconds, then a miracle will happen" (p. 69). This notion rang true with my collaborators in the community created and the spiritual ideas shared. The refrain in our Oneida traditional opening prayer is, "let's put our minds together, so be it in our minds" (Oneida Nation, 2011, p. 2), and in this study, we accomplished putting our minds together. I will never forget the validating feeling of being able to talk about lacrosse, our traditional ways, our connection to our ancestors and Creator, all of which made me feel understood and seen in a way I had not felt prior. The ideas which emerged for the multisport facility, a big-brother and big-sister mentorship program in the community, and a restaurant attached to the facility which would serve traditional Oneida meals, was done through collaboration and teamwork of relying on community resources and knowledge (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). A greater understanding of these concepts and their origination through group brainstorming were discussed in response to research question four. My high school lacrosse team's motto was, "teamwork makes the dream work," which epitomized our experience as collaborators in this process with the minor edit that teamwork, alongside support from our Creator, ancestors, and community, makes the dream work.

Talking Circles and Sacred Silence. Another considerable lesson is the effectiveness of talking circles as a communication tool through the medium of Zoom. Of the biggest frustrations on Zoom is the lag during Zoom meetings, creating a situation where people might accidentally interrupt others when speaking. There tends to be an awkward, tense pause in deciding who should speak next. With talking circles over Zoom, however, there is a shared understanding of who is speaking and who is speaking next. To expand, Zoom talking circles enable each person to share to their heart's content, while in normal Zoom interactions, people tend to accidentally talk over one another. Also, the silence feels understood as sacred in Zoom talking circles. I have conducted talking circles with other college and high school students over Zoom outside of this study, however, the collaborators created a unique, sacred space which felt like ceremony. As Wilson (2008) observed, research is indeed ceremony, and this use of a talking circle to put our minds together felt undeniably sacred. Silence was not awkward, but instead met with a feeling of spirituality and interconnectedness, tying into previous literature on talking circles creating a spiritual space (Boyes-Watson, 2005; Brown, & Di Lallo, 2020; Hadley, 2001; Mackey, 2000; Melton, 1995; Meyer, 2002; Obie, 2016). The talking circles were spiritual, powerful, and connected us together, making it feel like we were all in the same geographic place simultaneously. We felt present and connected through talking circles over Zoom and the reminder that we were communicating remotely across Turtle Island was an afterthought for us.

The Methodology of Talking Circles Promoting Unity and Spirituality. There was not much disagreement amongst collaborators during the talking circles. I created a space, as circle keeper, to allow for disagreement by explicitly stating so during talking circle sessions. A point of disagreement occurred when Dylan stated some young people obtain their information and history through video games, while other collaborators questioned if people do absorb

information this way. Overall, disagreement did not largely surface because the nature of the methodology is sacred and traditionally promotes unity. Further, collaborators held shared values and similar perspectives of life. By using circles rather than a focus group, the collaborators were engaged with their spirituality. In doing so, collaborators were still allowed to disagree with one another. Whether the collaborators agreed with one another or not, they respected one another and built upon each other's wisdom.

Nine Principles of Community Based Participatory Research

This research used the nine principles of community based participatory research (Israel et al., 2003; Becker et al., 2005) throughout. Different examples emerged in this study which supported the importance of community based participatory research.

Recognizing the Community as a Unit of Identity

Every talking circle meeting established a greater unit of identity (Becker et al., 2005, pp. 7-9; Israel et al., 2003) among collaborators. Each meeting created a cohesive unit of 13 Oneida men putting their minds together. Collaborators shared support for one another vocally in the Zoom talking circles and digitally by liking each other's messages on the Instagram Chat talking circle. The participation of the collaborators to create a collective identity for the group was developed through a snowball effect of momentum, as some collaborators actively engaged, others became willing to chime in, creating excitement in discussion for all collaborators.

Use the Resources and Strengths in the Community

The second principle of Community Based Participatory Research, building on community resources and knowledge (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003), was established by utilizing Oneida community member and artist, Dana Isaac. Dana created all 13 traditional, miniature wooden lacrosse sticks and I was able to fund him for his efforts. Dana creates

incredible hand-crafted, authentic Oneida art which has a palpable spiritual feel. I would highly recommend supporting his work and finding him on Instagram @n8v_sweet_arts.

This research was additionally approved by the Oneida Business Committee. I reached out to the Oneida Nation Business Committee after gaining IRB approval to conduct my study, submitted my research proposal, and was informed by Dr. Jo Anne House, Chief Counsel to the Oneida Law Office, that my dissertation research request was approved. There will be an opportunity to present the findings of the study to the Oneida Business Committee, which I plan to present alongside my collaborators, if possible, in the summer of 2021.

An additional example of building off community resources was eight of the fourteen collaborators were located at or associated with Marian University, a university about an hour and a half drive outside of Oneida, Wisconsin. Having college lacrosse players local to the Oneida community allowed community members, including high school players, travel to watch their games. During the study, I would speak with friends who are Oneida high school lacrosse players who talked about going to watch Marian University Sabres play lacrosse in Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin. Marian University was a community resource local to Oneida, Wisconsin.

Host an Equitable, Collaborative Partnership During Every Phase of the Research

Our co-collaborative group co-created an equitable space where every voice had equal power. It was an intention of the study to create equal opportunity to share and have their voices heard. While I did facilitate the dialogue, every co-collaborator's voice mattered in this partnership. By first authentically contributing my stories about my own struggles, it allowed other collaborators to authentically share their own experiences. Through our talking circles, we created a place where people felt welcome to share their truth. The collaborators created a collaborative partnership in putting our minds together.

Encourage a Sense of Co-Learning and Capacity Building Between Collaborators

Everyone continued to learn throughout this study, including myself (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). We recognized wisdom in putting our minds together and learning from one another. Dylan articulated this point after the second talking circle over Zoom where he highlighted we all learned something from each talking circle. During this study, I acquired knowledge alongside my collaborators as lifelong learners. We as collaborators learned from one another whether it be on topics of our traditional ways, lacrosse, etc. For example, one evening after one of our talking circles, our face-off specialist, CJ, discussed tips, techniques, and strategy for facing-off in lacrosse.

Foster the Generation of Knowledge for the Mutual Benefit of All Collaborators

This research balanced generational knowledge for the mutual benefit of all collaborators (Becker et al., 2005, pp. 7-9; Israel et al., 2003). Having Byran, a 2019 alumni, aided in balancing knowledge generation. We were able to foster the generation of knowledge through our spectrum of ages as collaborators, consisting of undergraduate freshmen, a recent alumnus, and myself, a PhD candidate. Generational knowledge was fostered from our diversified age range of 18 to 31 years old, where each voice played a role and brought a unique perspective. CJ, Austin, Hayden, and Floyd brought fresh perspectives as first year college students. Dylan brought wisdom beyond his years as a Junior transfer student. Byran graduated undergraduate in 2019 and was a volunteer assistant coach at the same college seven other collaborators were attending. Byran's perspective as a 2019 alumnus was incredibly influential in creating a balance of knowledge generation.

We as collaborators generated some of the knowledge we gained through generational knowledge in our Oneida Nation. Balancing generational knowledge was executed through the

assistance of my grandmother, Eleanor Bailey, maiden name Cornelius, who is a tribal elder in the Oneida community. My grandmother, Eleanor, personally bundled sage and tobacco grown in Oneida and created 13 different miniature bags to be sent out to my collaborators. My grandmother, Eleanor, put together purple cloth bundles of sage to pray for cleansing, and, to ward off negativity, and a red cloth bundle filled with tobacco for if a person is having an issue or problem, to pray for guidance, make requests, and give thanks. Furthermore, my cousin Norma Skenandore Primeau, an elder born and raised on the Oneida reservation, helped me tremendously with clarification questions on Oneida traditions, ways, and community perspectives. Without the generational knowledge my grandma and cousin provided, I would not have been able to present the extensive ideas I did to my collaborators. Circulating generational knowledge is vital to Oneida people through oral tradition, a traditional way we hold onto our cultural knowledge through the sharing of stories. Furthermore, the Oneida Nation is matrilineal, and knowledge from female elders is highly respected, seen a valuable resource of information. My grandmother, Eleanor, and cousin, Norma, mutually benefited in contributing knowledge to this dissertation, in being recognized for their wisdom as documented in this dissertation and through my expressed gratitude and appreciation.

Consideration to Ecological Perspectives and Local Relevance

The sixth principle of Community Based Participatory Research is taking into consideration ecological perspectives and local relevance (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). Local relevance was attended to by seeking out counsel for Oneida language through communication with Tracy Williams, the Director of the Oneida Nation Language Department, who assisted in the translation and spelling of Oneida names for our collaborators. For my own Oneida name, Tracy was able to give me the proper spelling and pronunciation. Since receiving

my Oneida name at 9 years old, I had been saying in Oneida, “He is a Good Boy” when in reality, my granted name was “He is a Good Man,” and Tracy helped me discover I had been misspeaking my name. To be able to hear my name and speak my name as it is meant to be spoken give great healing and restoration to my spirit and confidence in understanding my own identity.

From early on in the study, it was clear the collaborators wanted to make an impact in the local Oneida community. Our first talking circles collaborators ended up talking about how do we help the local community of Oneida for generations to come, specifically Oneida lacrosse players pursuing an education. A recurring topic frequently revisited in our research was how do we create permanent, sustainable change in Oneida. The focus of our conversations kept revolving around our people in Oneida, land, ancestors, and how we can help preserve the culture and tradition for Oneida youth. The emphasis of our study was focused on local relevance and ecological perspectives. Further, we were attending to local relevance by using Oneida-grown sage and Oneida-grown tobacco sent out prior to the first talking circle for us to pray and make requests with.

Create Systems Utilizing an Iterative and Cyclical Process

This iterative and cyclical process was executed by using talking circles and the medicine wheel to frame each week’s responses (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003). We underwent cyclical processes of talking circles via Zoom and Instagram Chat. The frameworks of physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually were repeatedly discussed in a cyclical process. Further, the use of the O’Leary action research cycles of observe, reflect, plan, and act were an additional cyclical process. In speaking to the “create systems” aspect of this study, the

talking circles system I developed alongside my collaborators could possibly be used in other situations in the future.

Share Results to Every Co-Collaborator

I disseminated results to all partners by using our Instagram group chat. When needed, I individually messaged members for responses if they had not responded yet. If a co-collaborator did respond to me in a direct message concerning the study, I would ask for permission before relaying their response to the co-collaborative group. I ensured all collaborators had access to responses and were privy to pertinent communication. All collaborators had access to the shared group chat talking circle responses. Anytime we finished our recorded Zoom talking circle, I immediately shared it to our group communication on Instagram chat.

Carry Out a Continuous Process and Work to Sustain the Group

The idea pioneered by the collaborators was to make positive, permanent change for Oneida people in the future (Becker et al., 2005, pp. 7-9; Israel et al., 2003). One conversation was centered around professional and college lacrosse players, and acquiring more Native American lacrosse players to be involved in the Oneida community for visits, clinics, etc. The goal as collaborators was regardless of how this study went, we will all work together, as collaborators and a community, to create lasting, permanent change in Oneida to help the next generations of Oneida youth lacrosse players pursuing an education. Our hope is that we, as collaborators, create lasting change impacting seven generations from now. We were and are stronger together.

Our co-collaborative group created an established sense of community. I suspected prior to the dissertation starting there may be some semblance of community created during the study, however, I could not have asked for a stronger collaborative support program created as

collaborators. We plan to continue to develop our community in the future. The ninth principle of community based participatory research is to commit to a long-term process and group sustainability (Becker et al., 2005; Israel et al., 2003), which is the goal of our created group as Oneida college lacrosse collaborators.

During my PhD program at the University of San Diego, I failed to realize how lonely or isolated I felt as an Oneida person until having this strong sense of community among my collaborators. I had not felt connected in a community and reassured in my own identity while pursuing a higher education at any institution prior. The community created during this dissertation study is one I will cherish and continue to foster throughout my life.

Five Decolonizing Ideologies

This research enacted different decolonizing ideologies presented by Smith (2013, pp. 144-162). While there could be a strong case made for each 25 of the decolonizing ideologies, these are the five decolonizing ideologies this study specifically shed light upon. The five decolonizing ideologies focused on in this dissertation were claiming, celebrating survival and survivance, indigenizing and indigenist processes, restoring, and protecting.

Claiming

The first decolonizing ideology addressed in this study was claiming. Claiming means teaching new generations of Indigenous peoples, and, peoples who are not Indigenous, the collective Indigenous story (Smith, 2013, p. 145). Claiming was exhibited in the discussion in how we take back our traditional sport. The first talking circle exemplified new generations learning and teaching our traditional, Oneida ways. The new generations of Indigenous peoples, my collaborators, shared our collective story as Oneida people. Dylan spoke to lifting up the Oneida community through lacrosse. Austin shared the importance of growing our traditional

game. CJ discussed how he values our traditional ways and knowledge. All three of them talked about how younger generations of players, like Jonas Johnson, Oneida youth lacrosse player, who are reaching new heights. Jonas' older siblings taught him extensively and encouraged him to become the player he is. The thought of powerful generations to come was a striking notion. Dylan talked about how he looks forward to being a grandfather and being in the spirit world someday, having his grandchildren play for medicine for him in the spirit world.

Celebrating Survival and Survivance

The second decolonizing ideology reinforced through this study was celebrating survival and survivance. Celebrating survival is a purposeful recognition of surviving through genocide, and survivance is the practice of surviving through genocide. Celebrating survival and survivance means the level to which Indigenous peoples and communities have held on to cultural and spiritual values. Furthermore, celebrating survival and survivance is authentically resisting colonialism. The practice of celebrating survival is often done through a story or an event, in which artists and story tellers come together to collectively celebrate connection and life (Smith, 2013, p. 146). Celebrating survival is seen by talking about our ancestors, playing for them, and remembering them when using our wooden lacrosse sticks. We celebrated our survival by remembering our ancestors.

In our first talking circle, I remember it feeling like a grand celebration of our collective group identity, diversity of life experience, and connection to one another. I admired our ability to retain old, traditional ways and speak about it with one another who understood the significance. I cannot stress enough how satisfying it felt to speak about traditional, cultural, and spiritual values and be slightly unique in our own way, yet also be very connected to one another.

Indigenizing and Indigenist Processes

The third decolonizing ideology emphasized in this study regards having an alternative value system and conception of the world, as Indigenous people (Smith, 2013, p. 147). The study was conducted on the Indigenous tradition of lacrosse (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017; Vennum, 2017), carried out through the perspective of Indigenous collaborators (Becker et al., 2005, p. 7-9; Israel et al., 2003), utilizing the Indigenous methodology of talking circles (Arthur & Porter, 2019; Baldwin, 1994; Colmant & Merta, 1999; Conant, 2020; Doria, Momper, & Burrage, 2020; Garrett et al., 2001; Hodge, Fredericks, & Rodriguez, 1996; Luna, Malvezzi, Teixeira, Almeida & Bezerra, 2020; Tafoya & Kouris, 2003; Reed, 2021; Verbos et al., 2011; Wallace, 2019; Williams & Brant, 2019), and framing our responses around one of the interpretations of the Indigenous symbol of the sacred medicine wheel (Amundsen & Kent-Wilkinson, 2020; Bopp & Bopp, 1989, p. 12; Christensen, 2020; Coolidge, 2018; Fraser-Thomas, Green, Anderson, Auksi, Belshaw, Besito . . . & Wolman, 2017; Coyhis, n.d.; Gray, Schrader, Isaacs, Smith, & Bender, 2019; Lavallee, 2007; McGabe, 2008; Ragoonaden, 2017; Salloum, Trinh, Mondin, Hanna, Lofstrom, Randhawa, & Warburton, 2019; Sutherland & Adams, 2019; Tanner, 2020). One substantial conclusion from this study was the notion of using an Indigenous tool to share Indigenous information with Indigenous collaborators. Our indigenizing processes (Smith, 2013) aligned with our shared values which enabled us to authentically express ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Indigenizing is a decolonizing ideology from Linda Smith (2013) and is an effective tool in deconstructing colonization because it empowered us to use our traditional ways and take up space in academia. Research found Native American participants in tribal communities, built trust through the storytelling component of talking circles (Granillo,

Renger, Wakelee, and Burgess, 2010) and we can attest to this concept as Indigenous researchers expressing ourselves through the medium of talking circles.

Indigenizing our processes in the study through a talking circle was the most ideal medium for remote communication. By using an Indigenous process that was understood by us as collaborators, it felt organic, intuitive, sacred, and spiritual. They were, without hesitation, the most spiritual zoom calls I had ever been on. The spiritual energy would linger for over an hour after the talking circle was completed. Utilizing a talking circle format was spiritually electric and felt substantially different than calling the group communication a focus group. There was a sacredness about the talking circles noted in the collaborators reverence and respect.

Restoring

The fourth decolonizing ideology supported through this research was restoring. Restoring is about the well-being of a person, meaning how they are materially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. A restorative program by nature is healing rather than punishing (Smith, 2013, p. 156). Restoring is seen in how we lifted one another up. Austin and Nate talked about how some things had been hard on them and how they had been busy with work, but were still grateful for the space to share and have community. I felt restored and excited after interactions with collaborators, and I could tell from responses of Dylan, CJ, Fox, Byran and Floyd that they, too, looked forward to our talking circles. Restoring was done in creating a place of community to support one another. Collaborators were restored in being able to share about our traditional beliefs and experiences in a comfortable place where we felt understood by one another. While the students were dispersed across Turtle Island, it was healing to have a space where we, as collaborators, could connect with one another. By telling our stories of how we are

preserving the game of lacrosse mentally, we are restoring the memory of relatives and ancestors, and restoring a sense of self for one another.

I found myself being restored through the co-collaborative process. Since I have started my program at University of San Diego, I have been lacking a sense of belonging and support as an Oneida person. I had a breakthrough reflection that I had not been able to express myself fully as a human being. Dylan voiced early on in the study how we all learn from the talking circles. This Indigenous research helped restore us as people, a community, and ideally, for generations to come. Our time together as collaborators was rejuvenating, inspiring, and energizing after talking to collaborators, such as CJ, Austin, and Dylan. I genuinely look forward to upholding this community in the future. I wanted to cry tears of joy hearing our shared values and how other co-collaborator's perceive lacrosse as a way of life and religion for us as Oneida people.

Protecting

The fifth decolonizing ideology reaffirmed in this research was protecting. Protecting is defined as a concern for the protection of Indigenous "peoples, communities, languages, customs and beliefs, art and ideas, natural resources and the things Indigenous peoples produce" (Smith, 2013, p. 159). Our study embodied protecting. It was protecting by speaking the Oneida language and connecting as Oneida brothers all across Turtle Island. Lacrosse is an Indigenous art we are trying to protect. We were protecting ideas I had not felt understood talking about since I was back on the Oneida reservation, coaching in 2015 and visiting in 2017. This study was a protection of an Indigenous produced game of lacrosse. We protected the sacred tradition of lacrosse by remembering the traditions and speaking about them. Protecting the game emotionally and mentally is strongly tied to having both a good heart and a good mind.

Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation of the study was my own bias as an Oneida college lacrosse player and my own knowledge and beliefs prior to this study. It stands to reason that all research has some form of bias. One reason I chose action research was to lean in toward my own beliefs and possible biases. Thus, in actuality, I view my knowledge, insight, and positionality as a strength of my study. A possible bias in my study was my belief that lacrosse is a medicine and the possibility of looking to my collaborators for validation of that belief. A limitation of this study was a high risk of “social desirability,” meaning my collaborators may have possibly wanted to give me answers I wanted to hear. To protect against possible responses suffering from social desirability, I modeled answers first through my responses in talking circles using authenticity and vulnerability, which allowed my collaborators to feel welcome to tell their real stories. There was a possibility I could have influenced them to speak a particular response in agreement with mine, however, I strove to create a safe space which allowed collaborators an opportunity to authentically agree or disagree with whatever was spoken. I created a space for integrity by explicitly stating their opportunity to agree, disagree, or comment on any ideas being presented throughout the study. For example, in the Instagram talking circles, I would share what was real for me and would encourage others to share as little or as much as they wanted. I would also check in each week individually through a direct message on Instagram or text to see how the collaborator was doing in the process. Further limitations arose from the global Covid-19 pandemic, which interfered with in-person data collection. However, I am confident my care package design sent to collaborators created a unifying and interactive experience.

Furthermore, a limitation was the workload of my collaborators who, already being undergraduate student-athletes or in the workforce, did not have a surplus of free time to work on

this study. However, this limitation was combatted because a larger number of 12 collaborators were chosen to account for melt in the study, ensuring a higher probability of responses for data. My intention was to create a space which was beneficial to my collaborators' learning as a student, athlete, and person, benefiting their overall wellbeing. Though this was potentially a lofty consideration or goal, it was the ideal strived for nonetheless.

In addition, a possible limitation of the study would be my unique status as an Oneida researcher, meaning if a person who is not Indigenous tried to recreate the study, or even a person who is not an Oneida or not a Haudenosaunee person, they may likely yield different results due to their positionality. This brings about the point of cultural appropriation, which is a complex issue in the Native American community. I would estimate that if 10 different Native American people were asked about specific instances of cultural appropriation, there may be 10 nuanced answers from the respondents. For example, my former high school lacrosse coach, who is a white man, gifts his senior graduating players traditional wooden lacrosse sticks that were made by a white man as a senior gift. My reaction to this action as an Indigenous person is feeling a sense of honor and gratitude for people who are not Indigenous yet recognize the roots of the game with respect toward the traditional, hickory wooden sticks, which I believe are sacred and provide good medicine for those who use them with a good heart and a good mind. On the other hand, it is just as plausible an Indigenous person may see this act as white washing of the Indigenous sport, or as a continued form of colonization through appropriation. A third Native American opinion on the issue could be something else entirely or somewhere in between. Each person is different, each researcher is different, and each Indigenous tribal nation and community is different. The line between appreciation and appropriation has to do with a person's intent, a respect shown for the Indigenous peoples who the practice derives from, and,

an acknowledgment of the value of traditional practices and ways. My recommendation for researchers who are not Indigenous using Indigenous ideology is to keep in mind the following concepts: be present with a spirit of humility, use open and honest communication, act out of respect, and, observe cultural sensitivity of the specific Indigenous community you are learning from. Even as a person from an Indigenous community or tribal nation entering a different Indigenous community or tribal nation, I would recommend keeping those aforementioned concepts in mind, as every situation and circumstance will call for its own procedures and protocol. An additional example would be the use of smudging and use of sage for people who are not part of an Indigenous community or Tribal nation. My recommendation is to bear in mind the aforementioned concepts. The circumstance of me, as an Oneida lacrosse player, to have conducted research on Oneida people about our traditional Oneida game with Oneida college lacrosse players may be difficult to replicate unless a researcher is also an Oneida college lacrosse player. However, my recommendations for people who are not Oneida lacrosse playing researchers using these ceremonial objects, rituals, and traditions are to follow my aforementioned recommendations.

Furthermore, a possible limitation of this study is not being generalizable. However, this research is as generalizable as much as it relates to other researchers. It is possible a person could conduct a study with collaborators from a different tribal Nation around a different Indigenous tradition. This research could also be generalizable to anyone who relates to the spiritual concepts brought forth by the research. This will be further expanded upon in implications for future research.

Implications for Public Policy Makers and Public Administrators

Our research as Oneida collaborators has implications in the exercising of sovereignty by Oneida people. I recently heard Rex Lyons, son of Oren Lyons, former Iroquois Nationals lacrosse player and inductee into the Blues Archives Hall of Fame (The Ripcords, n.d.), speak on a Zoom call, and it was spiritually affirming to hear him describe spirituality in the same way I had described the definition of spiritual. It was surreal to hear the words come out of Rex's mouth along the lines of, "The spiritual is something that is mysterious and is difficult to explain. It is hard to put into words however you know more than anything that this is real." I listened to Rex speak for the Iroquois Nationals Development Lacrosse Team recently over a Zoom call and he envisioned the Haudenosaunee carrying out the Olympic torch for the Olympic games in 2028. Rex described how the Haudenosaunee are one of the best teams in the world despite economic, political, and systemic obstacles. It feels serendipitous to be doing my dissertation on lacrosse, the Haudenosaunee, and education.

This study matters on a sociopolitical level. My study was an exercising of sovereignty of our traditional ways, which were disallowed to be practiced for many years and generations. The collaborators supported one another with language revitalization, and this holds political significance as it was illegal for Native Americans to speak their own language until the Native American Language Protection Act of 1990. We shared about what this traditional practice of lacrosse means to us as part of our religion of Oneida people, and it was illegal until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 which allowed sacred ceremonies that were prior prohibited. As Oneida collaborators, we used lacrosse as a way of getting through our education while holding onto our traditional ways, similar to how our ancestors did at Carlisle Indian Boarding School where the motto was, "kill the Indian, save the man" (Altaha, 2012;

Bentley, 2012; Fournier & Crey, 2006; Haag, 2007; Peterson, 2013; Troutman, 2013). Native American students in the Indian boarding school systems from the late 19th and early 20th century, including my great grandfather, played lacrosse during their forced education as a way to play a game which is part of our Creation story as Haudenosaunee people (Brewster, 2017; Christjohn, 2020; Vennum, 1994). By playing our traditional game and speaking and learning our traditional Oneida language, we are supporting one another by exercising our sovereignty as Oneida citizens. By creating permanent, sustainable change for future Oneida youth lacrosse players, we are helping build a better world for seven generations to come.

Implication for Educators

The findings of this research provide implications to learn from for higher education faculty, staff, and administrators in supporting Indigenous peoples in higher education. In this section, I provide three implications from the findings of this research for educators to better understand Indigenous students: curriculum matters, role models matter, and representation matters.

First, an implication for educators is curriculum matters for Indigenous students. Native Americans often drop out of school due to cultural insensitivity in curriculum (Coladarci, 1983), and this study demonstrated the ability to claim a space in academia using Indigenous tools of talking circles, through an Indigenous framework of an interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel, about an Indigenous sport, as Indigenous collaborators. Curriculum relevant to Indigenous culture matters in feeling seen and represented, and in acknowledging the value of Indigenous knowledge and ways.

A second implication for educators is that role models matter for Indigenous students in education. Role models matter for Indigenous peoples (Cohen, 2007; Covarrubias & Fryberg,

2015), and this study demonstrated how role models are lacking and why they matter for us as Oneida people. Having other Oneida athletes in education working together as collaborators allowed us to be role models for one another. Being able to see someone walk through the realm of academia with a moccasin on one foot and a tennis shoe on the other was helpful in navigating our way through education. I was inspired to carry out this research by role model Mark Powless, who in 1999 at Marquette University published a study entitled, *Depression Among the Oneida: Case Studies of the Interface Between Modern and Traditional*. Role models are crucial in being able to visualize accomplishing a goal which may seem unattainable.

Third, an implication from this research was representation matters for Indigenous peoples in education. Representation differs from role models as representation is seeing other Oneida faculty, staff, administrators, or students in the education system, who may or may not be a role model specific to you. Representation matters for Indigenous peoples in education (Cohen, 2007; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015) and the findings of this study supported that representation is supportive to one's educational journey. In working together with other Oneida collaborators, there was a need to be seen and represented in academia on a larger scale. Indigenous people, and specifically Oneida people, need representation in academics to feel seen, validated, and to have a sense of belonging. This study allowed us as collaborators to feel seen as Oneida people, validated in our traditional ways, and created a shared sense of belonging in academia.

Implications for the Field of Leadership in General

A vast amount of Indigenous leadership has yet to be researched and documented in academia. For example, it is not well known the United States system of governance was founded on Haudenosaunee ideologies (H.R. Con. Res. 331, 1988). In addition, it is seldom discussed by academics how Oneida and Tuscarora warriors, led by Polly Cooper, aided George

Washington and his troops at Valley Forge in 1777 by traveling hundreds of miles to bring Washington's troops anywhere from 60 to 600 bushels of white corn, as well as leather to make moccasins for the troops who had bloody feet because they previously had no shoes in the icy winters. There is a greater need for research by academics on how the Oneida sided with the colonists during the Revolutionary War. Furthermore, there could be further research investigating how Native Americans have served in every major military conflict since the Revolutionary War, and serve at the highest per capita rate compared to any other ethnicity in the United States (Lyons et al., 1992). Studying Indigenous forms of leadership would enrich leadership studies, similar to how leadership researchers study ancient philosophies of leadership from cultures such as the Greeks and Romans. Indigenous leadership has yet to be unpacked in the academic realm, which does a disservice to the field of leadership studies by thwarting the opportunity of being positively influenced from Indigenous teachings.

Furthermore, similar to the idea of Joseph (1961) and Bass and Stogdill (1990), believing that Native American leadership is a thing of the past is a faulty assumption in need of revision, which this dissertation supports. There is this assumption that Native Americans are extinct, belonging in museums and history books. Those researching leadership need to delicately deconstruct Indigenous leadership, which is alive and thriving today. My dissertation reinforced the need to study Indigenous leadership and the importance of spearheading research in this field.

Implications for Future Research

This research was accomplished by standing on the shoulders of giants who are previous researchers, and leaves implications for future research. Further research would be useful in building from the findings of this study. In this section, I discuss implications for different

populations, continuing research on relevant curriculum, role models and representation, the spiritual being sacred and real, and a clear path of knowledge for future research.

Different Populations and Samples

This study is significant to use as an archetype for working with various populations. It is important to work with different populations, as we are all human beings who need a harmonious well-being physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. A community based participatory research model (Becker et al., 2005) of action research (O’Leary, 2004) using talking circles could be used for various populations. Some of these populations include Indigenous peoples, people of different ethnicities, people who identify as a certain gender or are nonbinary, people of a certain sexual orientation, people of a certain socioeconomic class, people from a specific university, people from a specific sports team, people from a specific organization, people from a specified state or province, people from a specified country, etc. A benefit of having affinity group talking circles where people are the same identity allows participants to be their authentic selves without having to be as concerned with judgement or being understood. By having members of the talking circles members of the same community, the talking circle participants are allowed to simply exist without having to explain to anyone who they are, as they are in a community of people of the same identity group.

Relevant Curriculum, Role Models, and Representation

Future research has the ability to build off the findings of these studies as it relates to relevant curriculum, role models, and representation. As studies have shown the importance of Native American-relevant curriculum in education (Coladarci, 1983), future research could develop from this study. For example, a research question for a future study could be: what are Indigenous college students’ perceptions of culture relevancy in their educational journeys? The

findings of this study indicate how beneficial it was to use an Indigenous research tool of talking circles, through an Indigenous framework of one interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel, discussing an Indigenous sport, with fellow Indigenous citizens, on preserving and sharing specific Indigenous values. Native role models are seen as impactful for Indigenous peoples in academia (Cohen, 2007; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015) and future research could build off of the findings of this research.

The Spiritual Being Sacred and Real

Future research on the spiritual being sacred and real would further be insightful as a follow up to this study. As mentioned previously, previous studies have noted an interpretation of the sacred medicine wheel to being the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Bopp & Bopp, 1989, Coyhis, n.d.) and, the spiritual capabilities of talking circles (Brown, & Di Lallo, 2020; Boyes-Watson, 2005; Hadley, 2001; Mackey, 2000; Melton, 1995; Meyer, 2002; Obie, 2016). Therefore, future research could develop from the significance of this study's findings of the spiritual being sacred and real. Future research could focus on the importance of the spiritual in how we make sense of the world. Future studies could focus explicitly on the spirit, what it means to different people, how people feel it, and how people manifest it

Lessons Learned

My co-collaborators and I learned so much as a result of this research experience. next, I discuss lessons learned as a researcher, practitioner, co-collaborator, as an Oneida person, and as a lacrosse player.

Lessons Learned as a Researcher

As a researcher, I learned the importance of co-collaboration. I appreciated the ability to amplify the voices of my collaborators. I gained insight to trust others in being vulnerable, trust

the process, and trust the Creator in all things. I discovered there is a vast amount of Indigenous knowledge I have yet to learn, and there is an opportunity for future researchers to continue to study Indigenous peoples and leadership. I learned it is vital to use a person's whole self as a research tool, applying all parts of oneself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, while conducting research. I learned the effectiveness of using Indigenous research methods to better understand Indigenous ideas, such as using talking circles to better understand the traditional game of lacrosse through an interpretation of the medicine wheel.

Lessons Learned as a Practitioner

As a practitioner of leadership, I learned leadership is executed in action. As leaders, we can dream a vision, and bring that vision into fruition. As a practitioner, I am reminded of the concept of strength in numbers. I rediscovered the beauty of being myself and not holding back with my identity or culture. I realized, as a practitioner of leadership, I have a responsibility to educate others as I continue to learn. As a practitioner, I gathered the importance of authenticity, vulnerability, and showing up exactly as we are. As a practitioner of leadership, I learned to trust my instincts and lean on my intuition to guide the way.

Lessons Learned as a Collaborator

As a collaborator myself, I learned from my fellow collaborators as they were able to educate me on information I had yet to learn, including topics about Oneida traditions, culture and language, lacrosse techniques, stories and coaching tips, and what it means to be an Oneida person. I learned from Dylan we walk with our ancestors in everything we do. I learned from being with my collaborators the confidence which arises of being together. 1894's *The Jungle Book*, presents the notion, "For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack" (Kipling, Kipling, Drake, & Frenzeny, 1898, p. 34). This quote resonated with me as

a lesson learned as a co-collaborator, as the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin has three major clans, the Turtle Clan, the Bear Clan, and the Wolf Clan. Even though I am a member of the Turtle Clan, which has been passed down matrilineally to me, “the clans have a relationship to each other. The Wolf Clan is considered a cousin to the Turtle Clan...” (“Oneida Nation,” 2011, para. 5). While Turtle Clan are considered keepers of the land, environment, and the well of information, Wolf Clan symbolize the path finders. The Wolf Clan’s, “responsibility is to guide people in living their lives in the way the Creator intended” (“Oneida Nation,” 2011, para. 7). To me, the referenced quote previously about how the strength of the pack is the wolf ties into what the Wolf Clan represents of guiding people in the way they were intended to live by the Creator. I am much stronger alongside my fellow collaborators of different clans than we are apart. We are stronger together as collaborators physically through our enriching conversations and encouraging accountability in playing lacrosse, mentally through putting our minds together, emotionally by supporting each other to be with peace, and spiritually in inspiring each other to connect with our Creator and our ancestors.

Lessons Learned as an Oneida Person

As an Oneida person, I learned more about my culture and identity. I have never been more self-assured in who I am as an Oneida person until having completed this study alongside my collaborators. I explored deeper into my Tribal Nations’ traditional language, different ceremonies, and different stories. I discovered more through this study about what it means to be an Oneida person, representing my ancestors and making decisions benefiting seven generations from now. Through this study, I explored leaning into my traditional gifts as a lacrosse player and orator, which is what Oneida men were known for traditionally (E. Bailey, personal communication, March, 25, 2021). I learned gratitude for my culture in every aspect of life, and

thankfulness for all things to the Creator of our universe. I recognized the depth of my spiritual identity and being closely connected to the Creator in all things. Through this study, I learned as an Oneida person we are the ancestors wildest dreams (Native like water, n.d., 04:29) by having carried out this study on our Oneida traditional practices and ways.

Lessons Learned as a Lacrosse Player

As a lacrosse player, I reaffirmed the notion each player brings different skills to the table like each animal in the first game of lacrosse brought distinct gifts. I learned to play with the confidence from thousands of years of my ancestors playing with me spiritually and their memories running through the blood in my veins. I grasped the need to further nurture each aspect of myself as a lacrosse player, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I learned face-off techniques when CJ taught Dylan tips after one of our talking circles. I was reminded to always play for the Creator, my ancestors, and seven generations in the future. I was reminded to play lacrosse with a purpose, and to let my play be my prayer to the Creator. I was reminded the importance of carving at least 30-minutes each day to create space to play lacrosse. I had previously recognized the importance of playing lacrosse for myself daily, however, it was not until I had conducted this study alongside my collaborators when I realized the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefit for myself, and an increased confidence in stick skills and overall skill level. As a lacrosse player, I now understand the power of consistent effort matched with spiritual and emotional discipline. I was reminded to always have my wooden lacrosse stick with me because of the powerful spiritual energy that emanates from it, either to warm-up prior to using a modern lacrosse stick or use as my primary stick. The power of all trees and all living things lives in those hickory wooden lacrosse sticks (O. Lyons, personal communication, March 1, 2021). Furthermore, I have learned to appreciate the sophisticated engineering of the

traditional wooden lacrosse sticks which date back thousands of years and are the archetype design used all across the world today (Brewster, 2017; Hou, 2017).

Clear Path of Knowledge

This study aligned a clear path of knowledge to current research I seek to conduct. I am working on related research of studying appropriation versus appreciation, which relates to other researchers who are not Indigenous replicating either this study or Indigenous concepts used in this study. I am further working on research outlining impactful legislation against Native American people and recommended policies for the future. I am additionally working on research studying the representation of Native Americans in the various entertainment media outlets of video games and comic books, as it relates to the findings of this study on the importance of representation. These two concepts of video games and comic books were both ones which arose through observation in action research cycles. Dylan mentioned during our study that youth today were likely to obtain their information through social media, podcasts, and video games. One of the other collaborators asked, “Video games? Seriously?” which Dylan then replied, along with a chorus of other collaborators, “Yes, seriously.” Being an electronic gamer and consumer of video games myself, I was acutely aware of different video games acting as sources of information for knowledge, such as the game *Assassin’s Creed III* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2012), which blends fiction and nonfiction from the point of a Mohawk person during the Revolutionary War. Regarding comic books, I have thoroughly enjoyed the medium and have scoured for Indigenous representation in graphic novels since my undergraduate. After conversations with Richard, I have a reinvigorated passion and perspective on Indigenous voices and representation in comic books. As an Oneida comic book artist, conversations with Richard provided the inspiration I needed for further research into Indigenous representation in comic

books. There is a great deal to be said about past examples of Native Americans in comic books, and, avenues for the future in telling Oneida and other Indigenous stories.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided a discussion of the study's findings. I presented a discussion of the findings as a response to the five research questions. I discussed how this research incorporated the nine principles of Community Based Participatory Research. I spoke to five decolonizing ideologies prevalent in this research. This chapter explored the limitations of this study and discussed the implications for public policy makers, public administrators, educators, the field of leadership in general, and implications for future research. In the implications for future research, useful findings included application for different populations and samples, an ability to build on the importance of relevant curriculum, role models, and representation, and the spiritual being sacred and real. This chapter shared lessons learned and a clear path of knowledge for future research.

In review, the purpose of this qualitative study was to understand Oneida college lacrosse players' perspectives on the sacred sport of lacrosse and how playing lacrosse might help players hold onto their traditional values, while also sharing their values with others at their respective universities.

Closing

I recently had an opportunity to speak with Chief Oren Lyons about the study I conducted with my collaborators. He shared how when he was going to school in the 1930s and 1940s, getting to the sixth grade was a big deal for Haudenosaunee people. At that point after sixth grade, Haudenosaunee people would usually enter the workforce (O. Lyons, personal communication, March 2, 2021). In 2021, times have changed and we, as Oneida collaborators,

have these opportunities to pursue our traditional ways in academia. Chief Lyons voiced that life happens in circles, like the seasons of life: spring, summer, fall, and winter. We ourselves, as human beings, go through seasons of life. We are born, we are young, we are in our prime, and then we die (personal communication, March 2, 2021). In this study, we shared our knowledge as Oneida collaborators through talking circles, about an Indigenous practice of lacrosse, where the ball is a circular object, and we put our minds together. Each of us from a different perspective, from a freshman in college, to a recent undergraduate alumnus, to myself as a doctoral candidate. This process of recognizing the seasons of life notes our time on earth being finite and calls us to make the most of the gift of life.

As Oneida college collaborators, we are carrying forward our ancestors' traditional, sacred ways when we share them with others physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Floyd Silas shared a response which I felt encapsulated our time together as collaborators working on this dissertation,

I was honored to be asked to help you out. And it was really fun. Like it opened my eyes a lot, too. Because some of the questions you asked aren't really things you ask yourself or think about every day. So, just to get the chance to think about it again, and really put some time and thought into my answers to your questions. It was just, it was nice. It was a good change of pace to just actually talk about it, instead of just doing, doing, doing . . .

Floyd spoke to a point which others, such as myself and Dylan, connected to as well. After our first talking circle, Dylan stated,

I think what you're doing is really cool. I like this, because I never really asked anybody their perspective on it. I never sat down to ask anybody really any of any of these questions. What I find really interesting is I had a college professor last semester talking

about how the more minds you get together, you add all those years up, you take all of our ages, add them up, and that's how many years of experience we have. Not one person is smarter than all of us bringing our minds together.

This notion, mentioned in the Oneida opening prayer, “let’s put our minds together, so be it in our minds” (“Oneida Nation,” 2011, p. 2) summarized the experience of our Oneida collaborators as we shared our perspectives on the game of lacrosse physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually through talking circles. We, as Oneida collaborators, will continue to build a better world for Oneida lacrosse players pursuing an education for generations to come. Let’s put our minds together, so be it in our minds.

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Appendix A
Medicine Wheel



The Medicine Wheel

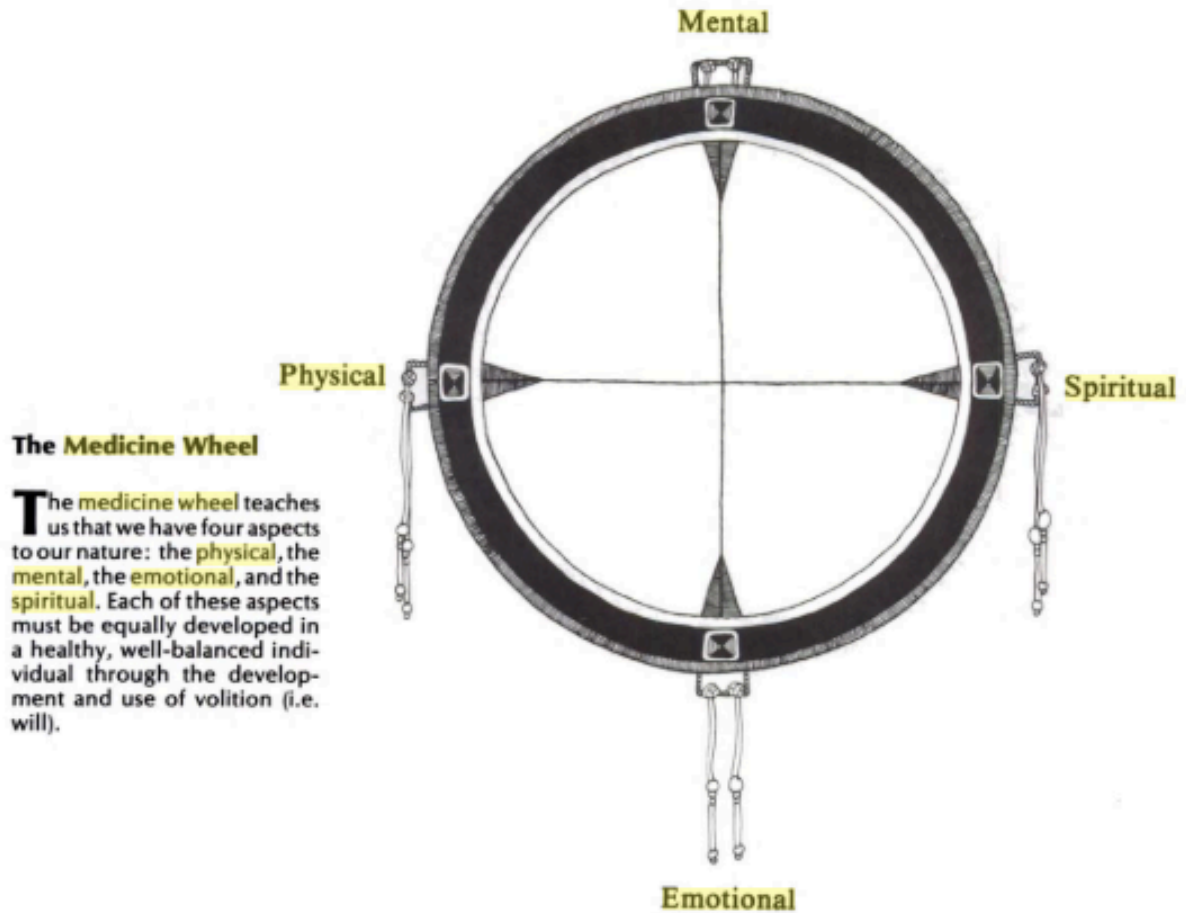
This is an ancient symbol used by almost all the Native people of North and South America. There are many different ways that this basic concept is expressed: the four grandfathers, the four winds, the four cardinal directions, and many other relationships that can be expressed in sets of four. Just like a mirror can be used to see things not normally visible (e.g. behind us or around a corner), the **medicine wheel** can be used to help us see or understand things we can't quite see or understand because they are ideas and not **physical** objects.

9

Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 9), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprint with permission.

Appendix B

Medicine Wheel (Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual)



Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 12), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprint with permission.

Appendix C

Volition

Volition

We can use our volition (i.e. our will) to help us develop the four aspects of our nature. Volition is the force that helps us make decisions and then act to carry out those decisions. We can learn to exercise our volition by carrying out each of its five steps:

1. attention (concentration)
2. goal setting
3. initiating the action
4. perseverance
5. completing the action

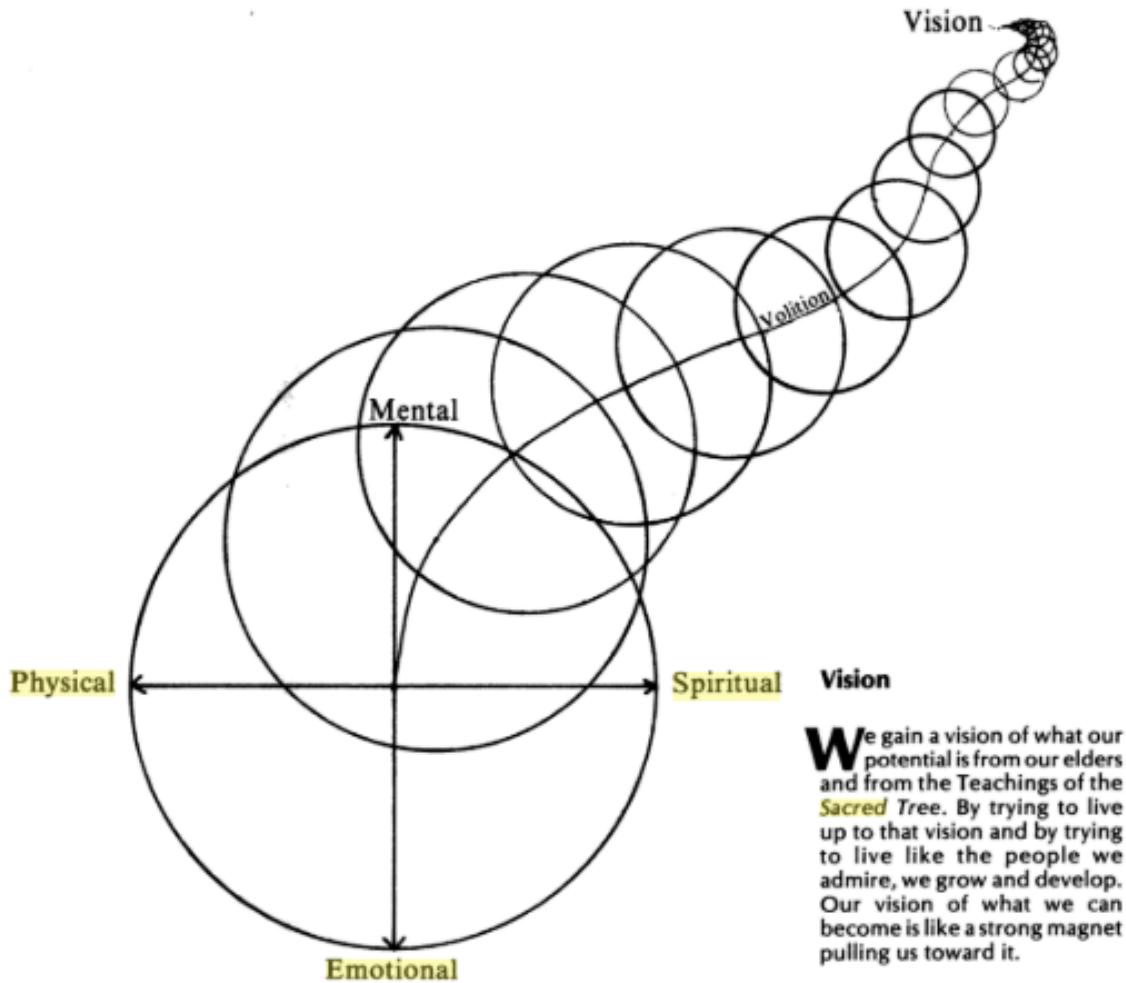
Since volition is a primary force in developing all of our human potentialities, it is placed at the center of the **medicine wheel**.



Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 14), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix D

Vision

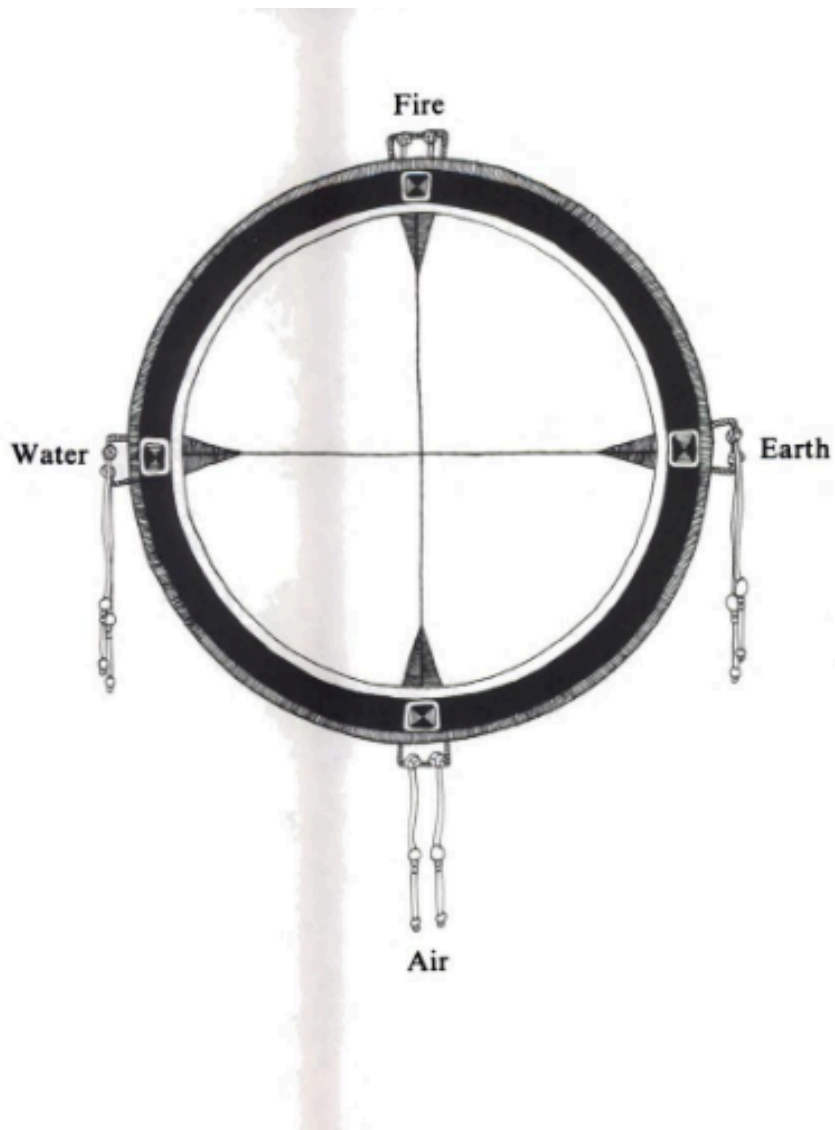


15

Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 15), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix E

Medicine Wheel (Fire, Earth, Air, Water)

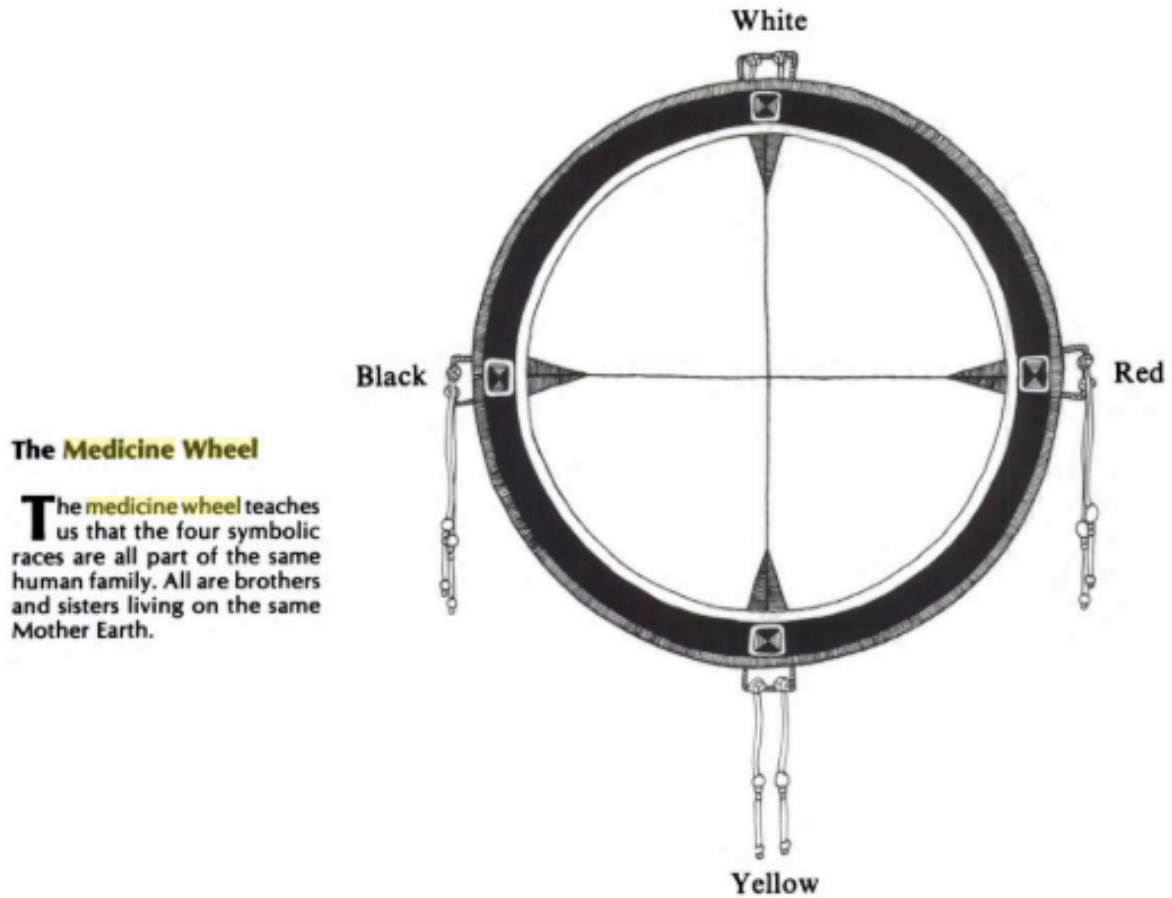
**The Medicine Wheel**

The medicine wheel teaches us that the four elements, each so distinctive and powerful, are all part of the physical world. All must be respected equally for their gift of life.

Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 11), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix F

Medicine Wheel (White, Red, Yellow, Black)



10

Note. From *The Sacred Tree* (p. 10), by J. Bopp and M. Bopp, 1989, Alberta, Canada: Lotus Press. Copyright 1984 by [Four Worlds International Institute]. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix G

Informed Consent Document

PROJECT TITLE: Oneida College Lacrosse Players' and their Perspectives of the Sacred Game of Lacrosse

INTRODUCTION:

You have been invited to join a research study to look at Lacrosse and Education for Oneida college Lacrosse players. Please take whatever time you need to discuss the study with your family and friends, or anyone else you wish to. The decision to join, or not to join, is up to you.

In this research study, we are investigating how to preserve the traditional aspects of the game and how do we share that knowledge with our university communities.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

Your will be asked to join a co-collaborative research where we will learn from another and discuss the traditional aspects of lacrosse while using a talking circle. This will be done online through Zoom and Instagram. This study will start on October 11, 2020 with 1-hour meetings once a month through January 31st, totaling 5 hours from October 11 to January 31, 2021 with journaling and messaging continuing through February 6, 2021. You are requested to hold your sage you are sent, and your Oneida grown tobacco, at the beginning of every digital talking circle and you are asked to play lacrosse in any capacity for 30-minutes before the video conference call.

The investigators may stop the study or take you out of the study at any time they judge it is in your best interest. They may also remove you from the study for various other reasons. They can do this without your consent. You can stop participating at any time. If you stop you will not lose any benefits.

RISKS

This study involves the following risks.

Risk of stating something at one point and changing your mind later. This is a minimal risk.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

It is reasonable to expect the following benefits from this research: becoming aware of the relationship between the traditional game of lacrosse and how it can be a tool for educational success. However, we can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be used when data from this study are published, unless you chose to do so, in which case you will be added as one of the authors to the research. Every effort will be made to keep clinical records, research records, and other personal information confidential.

We will take the following steps to keep information confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage. The data files will be kept in a computer program that is password protected which only I have access to.

INCENTIVES

Participants receive a care package, including tobacco, sage for smudging, a wooden miniature handheld lacrosse stick, as well as, their name listed as a researcher in a published academic paper.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is entitled.

If you decide to leave the study, the procedure is to ensure contact with you all and to be with them until you were to take your child away.

For those with Mental Health issues in need of help, call Oneida Behavioral Health [\(920\) 490-3790](tel:9204903790)

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

Contact Thomas "TJ" Reed by email at thomasreed@sandiego.edu. if you have questions about the study, any problems, if you any unexpected physical or psychological discomforts, any injuries, or think that something unusual or unexpected is happening.

Permission to Participate in Research, I authorize myself _____ (your name) to become a participant in the research study described in this form.

Date of Birth

Signature

Date

Upon signing the participant will receive a copy of the letter, and the original will be held in the subject's research record

Appendix H

Post-Talking Circles Confidentiality Form

It is the goal and responsibility of myself as a researcher to use the information that you have shared responsibly. Now that you have completed our first four talking circles, I would like to invite you the opportunity to provide me with any additional feedback on how you prefer to have your data handled. Please check one of the following statements:

___ You may share the information just as I provided it. No details need to be changed and you may use my real name when using my data in publications or presentations.

___ You may share the information just as I provided it; however, please do not use my real name. I realize that others might identify me based on the data, even though my name will not be used.

___ You may share the information I provided; however, please do not use my real name and please change details that might make me identifiable to others. In particular, it is my wish that the following specific pieces of my data not be shared without first altering the data so as to make me unidentifiable (describe this data in the space below or use however much information you need on an additional page): _____

Modeled after the “Post-Interview Questionnaire” in Appendix A of Kaiser, K. (2009). Protecting respondent confidentiality in qualitative research. *Qualitative health research*, 19(11), 1632-1641.

Appendix I

Linda Tuhwai Smith's (2013) Decolonizing Methodologies

Listed in no particular order of significance, the 25 foundational and seminal decolonizing ideologies are:

1. "Claiming... They teach both the non-Indigenous audience and the new generations of Indigenous peoples an official account of their collective story" (p. 145).
2. "Testimonies... they are a means through which oral evidence is presented to a particular type of audience" (p. 145).
3. "Storytelling... The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story" (p.146).
4. "Celebrating Survival-Survivance... survival and resistance... accentuates the degree to which Indigenous peoples and communities have retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity in resisting colonialism. The approach is reflected sometimes in story form, sometimes in popular music and sometimes as an event in which artists and story tellers come together to celebrate collectively a sense of life and diversity and connectedness" (p. 146).
5. "Remembering.... The remembering of a people relates not so much to an idealized remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past, remembering in terms of connecting bodies with place and experience, and, importantly, people's responses to that pain" (p. 147).
6. "Indigenizing and indigenist processes... The term centers a politics of Indigenous identity and Indigenous cultural action... being grounded in the alternative conceptions of world view and value systems" (p. 147).

7. “Intervening... takes action research to mean literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change...Intervening is thus directed at changing institutions that deal with Indigenous peoples, and not at changing Indigenous peoples to fit the structures” (p. 148).

8. “Revitalizing and regenerating. Indigenous languages, their arts and their cultural practices are in various states of crisis...a language does not die and need to be brought back to life; rather, the generations of people who speak the language die, and the new generations need to make the language live by speaking it” (p. 149).

9. “Connecting...positions individuals in sets of relationships with other people and with the environment...To be connected is to be whole” (p. 149).

10. “Reading...The rereading of imperial history by post-colonial and cultural studies scholars provides a different, much more critical approach to history than was previously acceptable. It is no longer the single narrative of important white imperial figures...” (p. 150).

11. “Writing and Theory Making. Indigenous People are writing and theory making” (p. 150).

12. “Representing. Indigenous communities have struggled since colonization to be able to exercise what is viewed as a fundamental right, that is to represent ourselves” (p. 151).

13. “Gendering... Colonization is recognized as having had a destructive effect on Indigenous gender relations that reached out across all spheres of Indigenous society” (p. 152).

14. “Envisioning. One of the strategies that Indigenous peoples have employed effectively to bind people together politically asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present-day situations which are generally depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision” (p. 153).

15. “Reframing... is about taking much greater control over the ways in which Indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled...Many Indigenous activists have argued that such things as mental illness, alcoholism, and suicide, for example, are not about psychological and individualized failure but about colonization or lack of collective self-determination” (p .154).

16. “Restoring... well-being- spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially...Restorative programs are based on a model of healing rather than punishing” (p. 156).

17. “Returning....It involves the returning of lands, rivers and mountains to their Indigenous owners...Returning also involves the living” (p. 156).

18. “Democratizing and indigenist governance...in Indigenous terms is a process of extending participation outwards through reinstating Indigenous principles of collectivity and public debate without necessarily recreating a parliamentary or senatorial style of government” (p. 157).

19. “Networking... has become an efficient medium for stimulating information flows, educating people quickly about issues and creating extensive international talking circles” (p. 157).

20. “Naming... This means renaming the world using the original Indigenous names” (p. 158).

21. “Protecting... is concerned with protecting peoples, communities, languages, customs and beliefs, art and ideas, natural resources and the things Indigenous peoples produce” (p. 159).

22. “Creating... is about transcending the basic survival mode through using a resource or capability that every Indigenous community has retained throughout colonization- the ability to create and be creative” (p. 159).

23. “Negotiating... is about thinking and acting strategically. It is about recognizing and working towards long-term goals...Negotiations are also about respect, self-respect, and respect for the opposition” (p. 160).

24. “Discovering the beauty of our knowledge... is about discovering our own Indigenous knowledge and Western science and technology, and making our knowledge systems work for Indigenous development” (p. 161).

25. “Sharing...is about sharing knowledge between Indigenous peoples, around networks and across the world of Indigenous peoples...For Indigenous researchers, sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community (Smith, 2013, p. 162).

Appendix J

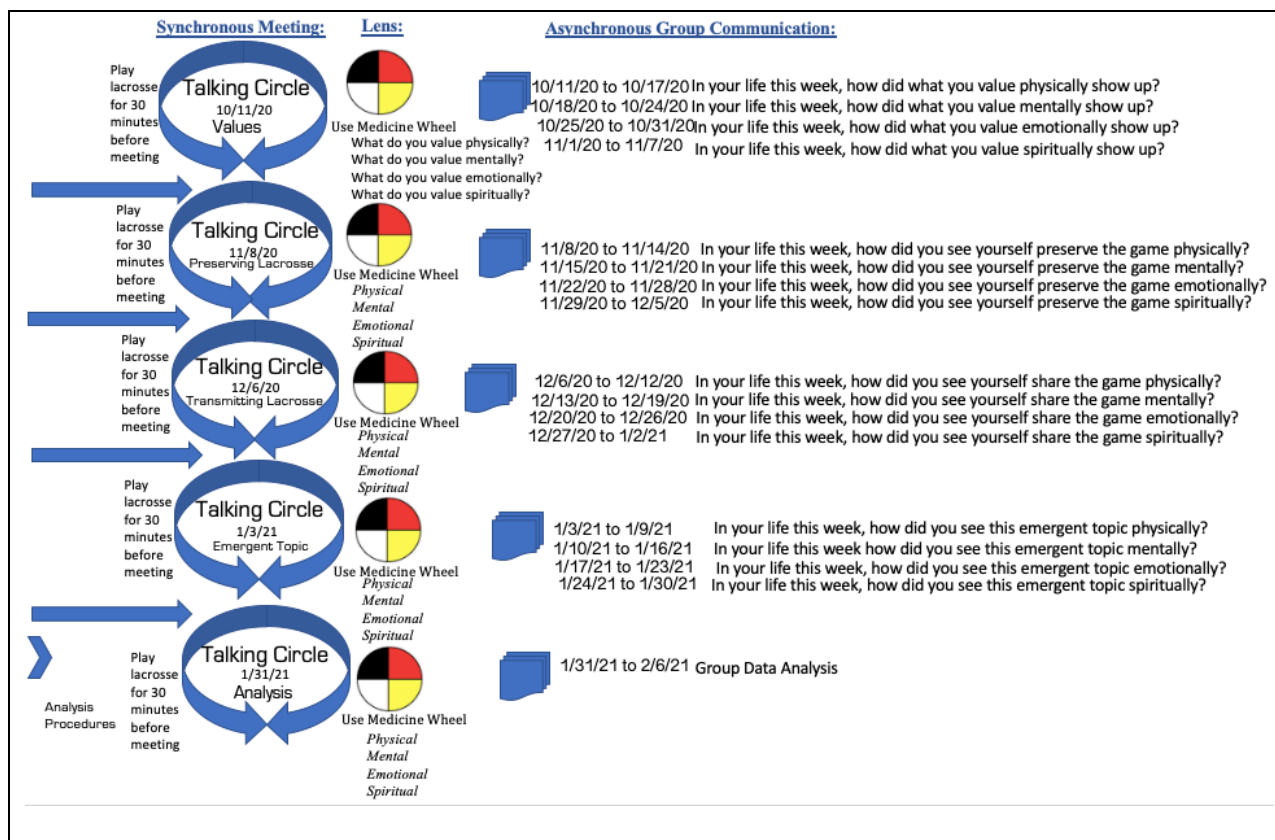
Nine Principles of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Listed are the nine principles of Community Based Participatory Research (Israel et al, 2003; Becker et al, 2005):

1. Acknowledge the community as a unit of identity;
2. Build on the strengths and resources in the community;
3. Facilitate a collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research;
4. Foster co-learning and capacity building among all partners;
5. Balance knowledge generation and intervention of the mutual benefit of all partners;
6. Attend to both local relevance and ecological perspectives;
7. Develop systems using a cyclical and iterative process;
8. Disseminate results to all partners, and involve all partners in dissemination;
9. Commit to a long-term process and group sustainability (Becker et al, 2005, p. 7-9; Israel et al, 2003).

Appendix K

Overview of Data Collection



Date: 3-30-2021

IRB #: IRB-2020-511

Title: Oneida College Lacrosse Players' Perspectives of the Sacred Game of Lacrosse

Creation Date: 8-7-2020

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Thomas Reed

Review Board: USD IRB

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved
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Key Study Contacts

Member	Thomas Reed	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	thomasreed@sandiego.edu
Member	Cheryl Getz	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	cgetz@SanDiego.edu
