

The Importance of Culture and Physical Activity for Carrier Elders

Major Paper Assignment

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Executive Summary

This paper discusses how incorporating culture and traditional activities in physical activity programs for Indigenous Elders enhances programs service delivery in Carrier communities. Within Indigenous communities there is a cultural connection between physical activity, and traditional culture, particularly land-based activities. The effects of colonization have impacted cultural continuity of many Indigenous communities across Canada, including the Carrier communities in Northern BC. Despite this, Indigenous culture has persevered and is beginning to recover with the help of truth and reconciliation. It is well documented that Indigenous communities want more culture and tradition opportunities, and are heavily interested in traditional land-based and cultural activities that reflect strong pieces of their cultural identity and history. Traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, fish-netting, snaring, berry picking, and gathering are highly sought after in these communities; activities that support the longevity and survival of the community. Findings from primary research in Carrier communities support the desire for more access to culture traditional activities; opportunities for passing on traditional teachings and knowledge to younger generations are also highly valued. Current programs studied were notably absent in culture and tradition, though participation and engagement levels were strong in observed programs despite a decidedly westernized approach to program design and instruction. Offering programs and events that include tradition and culture, and using the Two-Eyed Seeing approach to bridge the gap between western and Indigenous culture emerged as a recommended tactic to create sustainable programs for Elders in Carrier communities. Fostering connections between relevant western and Indigenous practices to help cultivate greater participation and enriching experiences that enhance physical activity programs and services offered in Carrier communities.

Introduction

Physical activity and its' connection to culture and tradition is becoming highly recognized as an important element for Indigenous communities. The past several years have

seen steps towards Truth and Reconciliation in Canada for Indigenous people. Within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action document, under Sports and Reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are calling for policies that endorse physical activity as an essential component of holistic health and well-being for Indigenous peoples (2012). Physical activity and holistic health of Indigenous peoples has been severely impacted by colonization; stripping away land and access to traditional activities has disrupted cultural continuity and led to poorer holistic health outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2021; Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020; Lavellee, 2007; Hossain & Lamb, 2020). This historic trauma has created disconnect between Indigenous peoples and their culture, values, and traditional beliefs (Ironside et al., 2020). However, in spite of systemic trauma and colonialism, cultural teachings, traditional activities and connections to the land have persevered in many Indigenous groups (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020). The purpose of this paper is to help understand how incorporating tradition and culture into physical activity programs for Indigenous Elders can enhance service delivery in Carrier communities. Elders are the community knowledge keepers and leaders and they play a crucial role in the overall wellness of their communities. Maintaining the health and wellness of Carrier Elders allows them to pass on their culture and traditional teachings, and provides positive role modelling to younger generations leading to cultural continuity within the communities. There is a deep connection between physical activity and holistic wellness. An increased understanding about incorporating culture and tradition in physical activity programs could lead to better holistic health outcomes for Elders on both an individual and community level. A strong knowledge base of how to effectively offer culturally relevant, competent, and appropriate programs, and to engage Elders in regular and sustainable physical activity programs leads to strong and healthy Carrier communities. This paper will answer the following research question:

How does incorporating traditional culture in physical activity enhance programs service delivery for Carrier Elders in Northern BC?

Operationalization of key concepts

- **Traditional culture** - “A network of knowledges, beliefs, and traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time” (Bruchac, 2014, p. 3814)

- **Physical activity** - Active movement that includes “aspects of culture, tradition, [and is] supported by the theme of cultural identity” (Tang & Jardine, 2016, p. 211). Includes activities such as berry picking, checking fishnets, walking the land, traditional games, and “participating in the community” (p. 211).
- **Programs service delivery** - The process of planning, implementing, and facilitating programs that meet the needs of the community.
- **Carrier** - “Dene people traditionally occupying areas in north-central British Columbia” (Hudson, 2024)
- **Elder** - an elder is someone with life experience and knowledge of Indigenous culture and traditions, who is grounded in those traditions and will use that experience to teach to younger generations (Hele, 2021). For the purposes of this paper, an Elder is age 65 or older.

Background and Context

This research project was conducted to focus on Carrier communities of Northern BC, specifically the 11 member nations that Carrier Sekani Family Services provides service to. Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS) was the sponsoring agency for this research project, a social services organization “created to reassert First nations control of justice, health, social, and family services” (About Us Overview, n.d). Culture is the core value at CSFS, and is the foundation that programs and services are built on following the Carrier life cycle approach (Carrier Sekani Family Services, n.d). The Carrier communities that CSFS serves are located in North Central British Columbia across an area that spreads over 76,000 square kilometres. They follow a governance system known as the “bah’lats or potlatch” (CSFS Member Nation, n.d., para 6); the four clans that make up Carrier society are “Likhu ji bu (Bear), Gilhanten (Caribou), Jihl tse yu (Frog), and Likh sta Mis yu (Beaver)” (para 6).

The CSFS Health Promotion and Physical Activity (HPPA) team supporting this project builds capacity for physical activity and movement through sports, recreation, and fitness programs (Health Promotion and Physical Literacy Program, n.d.). Gaining an understanding of how to improve programs and services through the inclusion of culturally competent, safe, and

relevant programs will help the HPPA team tailor programs to encourage participation and participant retention. An increase in participation and decrease in program attrition would indicate that including culture and tradition in physical activity programs meets the needs of the client, therefore enhancing services. Key areas covered are enhancing service delivery through the incorporation of culture and tradition and ensuring that these elements are culturally competent, relevant and safe. Enhanced service delivery is defined by an increase in participation and retention, which is indicator that participants find the program worthwhile. Through attending programming consistently, participants receive the primary benefit of services offered, as well as secondary benefits of social support and nutrition, therefore reinforcing the foundation of holistic wellness. An overarching goal of this project is to understand how to effectively improve participation rates of Elders and encourage increased engagement in regular programs. Increasing Elders' regular participation in physical activity can lead to numerous personal health benefits across a holistic health model and the five pillars of health: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual (Dimensions of Health, 2024). Promoting personal health, wellness and physical literacy is a major part of the sponsoring agency advisor's role. It is important to understand how to include cultural elements as a foundation to the programs offered in a way that is appropriate, relevant, safe and competent to meet the needs of the participating Elders, and the communities at large.

Amy Merritt is the Director of Health Promotion and Physical Activity, and the agency advisor providing guidance, advice and support for this project. Amy has been working with CSFS for 20 years and has held various positions throughout her tenure, including guardianship, jurisdiction, and youth services. She holds bachelors and masters degrees in social work and has a wealth of knowledge about the agency, the communities served, and the needs of those communities. The researcher on this project is employed by CSFS as the current Physical Literacy Coordinator with the HPPA team, and reports directly to Amy Merritt. The researcher is heavily invested in this project as the communities and their members' are the same communities and people that the researcher creates and facilitates programs for in their professional role. The outcome of this project will influence future program and event design, planning, and implementation for the researcher and the team they lead. It should also be noted that both Amy Merritt and the researcher are non-Indigenous.

Literature Review

Importance of incorporating tradition and culture

Including culture and tradition in physical activity has been identified as an important component of developing sustainable programs, particularly when it emphasizes traditional activities with connections to the land (fishing, hunting, berry picking, gathering, etc.) (Indigenous peoples' physical activity, 2023). Connection to culture, and culturally relevant and competent programs has been found to lead to a sense of pride, self-confidence, and positive health outcomes for Indigenous people, both at an individual, and a community level (Indigenous peoples' physical activity, Hossain & Lamb, 2020). There are many collective benefits of cultural inclusion to all community members across the generations; a sense of connectedness, self, and cultural identity is built through cultural and spiritual teachings (Hossain & Lamb; Viscogliosi et al, 2020).

Incorporating culture must be done the right way, programs should be culturally safe, relevant, and competent. Cultural competence cannot be generalized across all Indigenous communities and program facilitators need a keen awareness, understanding and knowledge of the culture within different communities (Giordano & Edwards, 2024). Participants understanding that their cultural identity, beliefs, and values are respected indicates a sense of cultural safety (Viscogliosi et al., 2020). Incorporating culture leads to a positive effect on program attendance due to feelings of inclusion and feelings of connection to community and other participants (Gidgup et al., 2022). Culture is one of the ways that Indigenous people identify as part of the community. Providing the culturally competent and appropriate space fosters community connection and shapes relationships between community, self, and family (Gidgup et al.). Continuity of culture is imperative, the Indigenous population in Canada is growing, the 2021 census reporting over a million Indigenous people in the country, and British Columbia reports 5.9% of the population as being Indigenous (Government of Canada, 2022). The Bulkley-Nechako region (where many of the Carrier communities are) of British Columbia is home to 7410 Indigenous people (Statistics Canada, 2021). With a growing population, incorporating culture and tradition in meaningful ways into physical activity programs, and

fostering mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples is an important step towards Truth and Reconciliation.

Holistic Health

Indigenous peoples' view of health and wellness is fundamentally different from the Western biomedical model. Indigenous people believe the definition of health encompasses more than sound physical health; it includes community stewardship and contributing to passing on generational knowledge (Brooks-Cleator & Giles, 2016). Incorporating the Indigenous view of holistic health and the dimensions of holistic health – spiritual, mental, social, physical, and emotional (Dimensions of Health, 2024) – is an important consideration for physical activity programs to show recognition and respect for the implications it can have on Indigenous Elders overall health and wellness (Brooks-Cleator & Giles; Viscogliosi et al., 2020, Ahmed et al., 2021). In a physical activity program, it is important to emphasize a focus on holistic health rather than just the physical health and fitness. Better outcomes are likely when using a holistic approach that considers individual and community strengths as well as the interactions between dimensions of health (Viscogliosi et al., 2020). Culture is a key component of this overall holistic health model. Carrier Sekani Family Services holds culture at the foundation of all programs and services (About Us Overview, n.d.). It is well defined within “The Life Cycle approach [which] recognizes that everyone and everything is interconnected and interdependent, and that there are multiple determinants of wellness for people in each age group” (About Us Overview, para 3). All this to say, the research shows an overwhelming conclusion that culture and tradition, physical activity, and holistic health are all pieces of the same puzzle, they are all connected and depend on one another to sustain the whole. These are all necessary pieces to incorporate in physical activity programs for Elders when considering enhanced programs service delivery.

Elders Participation

Elders' participation in physical activity is an essential element for Indigenous communities. Their participation, and subsequent health benefits supports community health as a whole. They are the knowledge keepers in the community and the ones that younger generations

look to for traditional teachings and cultural continuity (Viscogliosi et al., 2020). Maintaining the health and wellbeing of Elders means the Elders can in turn nurture the health, wellbeing, and cultural endurance of younger generations. Stated on the CSFS Home, Ages 60+ page is a mandate encouraging Elders to uphold “traditional roles as community knowledge holders” (para. 1). Strong intergenerational connections and family ties are linked with improved psychological wellbeing for all (Hossain & Lamb, 2020). Elders are well respected in their communities and looked up to as role models and community leaders in traditional physical activity (Tang & Jardine, 2016). In turn, elders appreciate intergenerational knowledge sharing that goes both ways, with younger generations sharing their expertise with technology (Tang & Jardine).

Controversy and Gaps in the Research

The literature has demonstrated strong support for incorporating tradition and culture in physical activity programs for Indigenous Elders. However research that includes data and content from Elders’ themselves is very limited; perhaps due to oral tradition being the primary method of knowledge transmission (Viscogliosi et al., 2020, Ahmed et al., 2021). The written word is commonly accepted as having great validity among Western culture, this creates a gap between Western researchers and Indigenous people. In order to gain accurate information from Indigenous peoples, particularly Elders, a relationship and element of trust must be established (Viscogliosi et al.). Measurement tools for data collection and analysis are also likely to have been developed without the input from an Indigenous person, thus relevant information could be unaccounted for (Viscogliosi et al.). It is a plausible assumption that there is potential risk for acquired results to be diluted or misinterpreted by non-Indigenous people; the cultural significance of the research findings could be missed simply due to a lack of knowledge or awareness. As a non-Indigenous person, truly understanding the cultural significance of something could be nearly impossible. This Eurocentric perspective of Indigenous culture and tradition may only be understood from a theoretical or academic standpoint.

Another piece identified is the control over how programs are created and delivered. A reasonable notion would indicate that programs should be created and implemented by an Indigenous person with a good understanding of the community traditional culture; this is often not an option. A non-Indigenous person cannot approach programming from a Western

perspective for risk of accidentally reinforcing colonial discourse (Brooks-Cleator & Giles, 2016). Elders' need to have a sense of ownership and should be involved in the creation and development of programs to ensure autonomy, and cultural competence and relevance (Brooks-Cleator & Giles, Giordano & Edwards, 2024). Otherwise they may resist participating in programs that are not focused on or relevant to traditional activities (Brooks-Cleator & Giles). This goes back to the importance of building trust and relationships.

One point that could be seen as controversial is clearly demonstrated in the research paper *Connecting and Reconnecting to a community, with a sense of belonging – Exploring Aboriginal Elders' perspectives of engaging in a physical activity program* by Gidgup et al. The focus of this research was with Elders in Western Australia. Participating Elders saw huge benefits to participating in physical activity programming, including feelings of inclusion, connection to self and community, and social and emotional health benefits (2022). The physical activity was followed by a yarning circle – a dialogue circle where participants can share ideas, experiences, cultural knowledge, and build relationships, respect, and mutual understanding; a common cultural tradition amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia (Yarning Circles, n.d.). Through the progression of the project, some participants reported developing an interest in the pursuit of more Western physical activity programs such as yoga or Zumba (Gidgup et al.). From a Western physical activity and physical health perspective this is a fantastic outcome, but it leans away from reconciliation, reconnection, and Indigenous cultural continuity.

Best Practice

When considering best practice for the collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people – in any field, adopting the Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptumumk) perspective is essential. Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall developed this concept as a guiding philosophy to groom one common path for both the Indigenous and Western perspectives. Two-eyed seeing is a perspective approach where one views the world through one eye with an Indigenous lens, and the other through a Western lens (Guiding Principles, n.d.). One is expected to use both these eyes (views) together to merge differing understandings and avoid a “clash between knowledges” (Guiding Principles, para. 21). Aligning these Indigenous and Western views has

the intended outcome of benefitting all (Guiding Principles). Given that there are many non-Indigenous people working with Indigenous communities and groups, this is a best practice to help bridge the gap between cultures and find mutual understanding and respect that leads to cohesive programming and enhanced service delivery. This practice is highly applicable to the area of incorporating traditional culture in physical activity programs for Carrier Elders. Many traditional activities are physical activities that are tied to the land and steeped in survival (Tang & Jardine). Two-eyed seeing includes the diverse understanding of two perspectives that lead to the best possible outcome.

Methodology

Three types of primary research were used to draw out the most current and relevant information pertaining to the research question. A detailed framework has been created to perform a qualitative analysis to unveil overarching themes that link all three methods of primary research. These methods are inclusive of: special status observations, interviews, and contents analysis.

Special status observation – Four observation sessions were scheduled; three Elder-focused programs: mindfulness session, a walking group, and a tai chi and mindfulness session (taught back to back on the same date, both elements observed and documented). The fourth observation was a planning meeting for a women’s wellness gathering that will serve women across several Carrier communities. The meeting was included because it is demonstrative of how wellness gatherings or conferences are planned, and what is deemed important enough to include when holistic health and wellness of the Carrier communities is concerned. The observations schedule is below:

1. February 20, 2025: Mindfulness program – Southside Wellness Center
2. February 26, 2025: I am – Women’s Wellness Gathering Meeting. CSFS virtual meeting.
3. February 27, 2025: Elder Walks – Nadleh Whut’en
4. March 6, 2025: Tai Chi & Mindfulness – Southside Wellness Center

When observing activities, the researcher had a checklist and looked for the following key pieces of information: participant numbers, participation minutes, perceived participant

engagement, and traditional or cultural components included (or lack thereof). Perceived participant engagement was assessed by the researcher by observing if the participants followed instructor directives, completed all components or movements, or if they appeared distracted or disengaged. Engagement scale is as follows: 1) somewhat engaged, 2) engaged, 3) fully engaged. Traditional or cultural components the researcher was looking for include an opening prayer, or smudging ceremony, discussion of culture, ceremony, or traditional or land-based activities. A lack of these things was also noted, as well as if the instructor was Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Observation field notes can be viewed in Appendix A. The I Am Women's Wellness Gathering is an event for women to focus specifically on wellness, connection, and resilience amongst other women. The schedule includes keynote speaker Madelaine McCallum, a motivational speaker, dancer, and MC who created a powerful 'As I Am' campaign to help women recognize that who they are, in any moment, is enough (About, n.d.; As I Am is Enough, n.d.). Other things included in the three day event are workshops, health booths, presentations and speeches, and beauty and relaxation sessions like hair braiding and massage. It is an event for women to be able to care for themselves without restriction and to celebrate the beauty of being women.

Interviews were conducted with three staff working for different Carrier communities, and one staff working for CSFS for a total of four interviews. Interview schedule is below:

1. February 24, 2025. Community Health Representative (CHR A); Nee Tahi Buhn Indian Band.
2. February 27, 2025. Community Health Representative (CHR B); Cheslatta Carrier Nation.
3. February 27, 2025. Special Projects (Subject A) – Carrier Sekani Family Services.
4. February 27, 2025. Recreation Coordinator (Subject B) – Nadleh Whut'en.

Interviews were initiated either verbally or via email request, and included a brief overview of the project; dates and times were scheduled once interviewee interest was confirmed. The researcher sent a follow up email confirming the appointment, including further information about the project: what the interview material would be used for, who would be reading the project paper, and information that a course instructor may reach out to verify the interview took place.

Two interviews were facilitated by video call and two were in-person. All interviews began with the researcher summarizing the purpose of the study, the research question, what the information would be used for, and the request for permission to record the interview. Consent was requested to disclose the interviewees name and email address to the course instructors. The interviewee was asked to introduce themselves, name their employing organization or band, and a brief overview of their day to day work-related activities. Interview format was relatively informal to ensure the comfort of the interviewee. All participants were asked the same eight questions and given as much time as needed to reflect and answer. Some questions were re-worded when necessary, or clarifying questions answered. Questions were focused on working with Elders and their participation habits during community activities and events, as well as tradition and culture – what it means, how it connects to overall health, and how it can be incorporated in programs to encourage participation. A full list of interview questions, and interview transcripts can be viewed in Appendix B.

Content analysis consists of different materials obtained from CSFS.

1. Health Service Department webpage from Sus Yah (CSFS staff intranet) – four pages were selected: Health Promotion and Physical Activity, Women’s Groups, Community Health, and Primary Care.
2. CSFS public webpage www.csfs.org – four pages selected: History, Mandate, Objectives & Mission, Overview, and Home: Age 60+.
3. Goozih Dust’lus newsletter: Mar/Apr 2024 & Nov/Dec 2024.
4. Whu Neh Nee (Wise Ones) Carrier Leadership Traits and Practices by a research paper by Marlaena M Mann, Executive Director of Communications and Technology at CSFS.

These documents were chosen to give a broad spectrum of qualitative data. The web pages and the newsletter should demonstrate the position that CSFS takes when it comes to culture and tradition in community programs. The research paper ‘Wise Ones’ is prior research conducted in the same Carrier communities that are part of this project. The data will be obtained through a methodical analysis of all documents. Key words and terms will be documented and categorized to pinpoint overarching themes. These themes will be analyzed to identify interconnections and how they relate to the research subject. This information will then be used to help answer the

research question, identify gaps, and determine where further research is needed. A summary table of all content analysis data can be found in Appendix C.

Some challenges were encountered during the collection of the primary research. During the observations sessions, the groups trended towards the smaller side, and an observer simply watching the group could create discomfort for the participants. Thus the researcher (in all activities observed), also participated and took field notes during breaks and immediately following the activity. The walking group observation, in particular, presented a challenge because all participants were familiar with the researcher from previous events and programs and there was an expectation that the researcher was there to lead or co-lead the program. The researcher engaged in light conversation with the group members, followed along with the warm up exercises and engaged in some walking intervals. Two small children were present, and the researcher chose to engage the children by chasing them around, which allowed for viewing the program from different areas, avoid further conversation, and allowed the participants to fully engage in the program without concern for parenting duties. During walking breaks, the researcher took preliminary notes and recorded observations; rough field notes were completed at the end of the program (available in Appendix A1 to A3), and later transferred to a word document.

During the fourth interview conducted, the interviewee displayed signs of nervousness such as rocking in the chair, interviewee also verbally expressed their nerves by indicating that they felt as if they were in school. The researcher gently reminded that the interviewee was there voluntarily and that their participation is appreciated, but not mandatory, and that they were not being assessed on their answers. The researcher gave the interviewee as much time as needed to settle and answer questions. In three of the four interviews, some questions were answered from a personal perspective, and included identifying other nation members; these answers and all identifying information was eliminated from interview transcripts and not included in research results. All interviewees were conducted with Indigenous people, three of four were both employees and members of CSFS member nations. The fourth was an employee of CSFS, and a member of a different Carrier nation. The researcher noted a tendency for interviewees to answer questions from the 'we' perspective rather than from the employing organization perspective. This was determined to be acceptable, and not personal perspective answers because of the close

connection between employment and nation identity of the interviewees.

Research Findings and Analysis

Primary Research Findings

Observations that were conducted consisted of three activities (two of them physical), and one planning meeting for an upcoming for the ‘I Am’ Women’s Wellness Gathering (promotional poster can be viewed in Appendix A6). Of the three activity-based programs, one had two separate components: tai-chi, followed by a mindfulness session. The researcher observed this session and took field notes independently for both components, including attendance, and took separate engagement-level readings for each element. The observations summary table in Appendix A4 reflects this charting format. Both the mindfulness sessions were taught by the same non-Indigenous instructor. During the first session the instructor began with a land acknowledgment and asked if any of the participants would like to say a prayer. One participant obliged and said a prayer; these pieces were not included in the second mindfulness session. It should be noted that a land acknowledgment is not considered culture or tradition. It is a response to truth and reconciliation and a recognition of the land, and Indigenous people who lived there prior to the colonization of Canada (Gehl, 2022). This singular request for an opening prayer was the only piece of culture observed across all the activity programs. It was a deliberate attempt to show respect to the community and its’ members by a non-Indigenous instructor, and was well-received by the participants. Of the four activities observed (across the three programs), two of the instructors were non-Indigenous, one was Metis, and one was Indigenous. Despite the evident lack of cultural content, the programs consistently saw participants attend and engage in the activity. The researcher noted perceived levels of engagement in each of the programs, and determined that in each activity, over 50% of participants were fully engaged throughout the session. When looking at participants ranking in both the ‘engaged’ and ‘fully engaged’ categories combined, three of four activities indicated at least 85% of participants fell into these categories. Clearly there are many different reasons for Elders to participate in physical activity programs, and including cultural content alone is not a solely deciding factor when it comes to

attendance and participation. Reasons for participation were not part of this project or part of the observations assessment, and given the restriction that prevented the researcher from speaking with participants, how important culture is during activities was an undetermined factor from the perspective of these participants. Further research would be required for a conclusive answer.

The walking group that was observed was the only program that was facilitated by an Indigenous instructors, who also is a member of the nation that employs them. Despite the close connection between instructor, the nation, and the participants, the program was highly westernized in its' planning and facilitation. Western influences appear to be highly prevalent even on Indigenous reserves. However, participation and engagement level did not appear to suffer despite the lack of culture. It is consistent across all activities that including culture in programs is not necessarily a deciding factor when it comes to choosing to attend or participate. Other factors appear to make up enough ground to overlook the lack of culture and Elders' are still showing a high level of engaged interest.

There were some similarities between all the programs, and elements that seem to be standard in Indigenous communities that are, quite simply, not part of western practice. These things included time to socialize and share space, sharing food, and though all programs had Elders as their target audience, all were open to multiple generations. The walking group had two young children in attendance, who had been brought by a parent. The other notable piece that was included in all programs was the inclusion of food, prizes and incentives. This appears to be a standard practice that is expected of any program or event, and corresponds with information from two of the four interviews that were conducted. Gift-giving is a common practice in Indigenous communities and shows respect, belonging, and appreciation (Hobenshield, 2022).

The 'I Am' planning meeting for the Women's Wellness Gathering also demonstrated an absence of discussion for cultural components to be included in the three day event. However, the observed meeting was only one of many for planning a big event, and these specific cultural pieces may not have been discussed at this meeting because they were already arranged and confirmed, therefore the lack of specific traditional or cultural discussion is not conclusive of its' absence in the event. Given the purpose of the three days, it is highly likely that culture is a big component and will be very present throughout the event.

The interviewees who participated in this project are all Indigenous people, three work for different nations that CSFS provides services to, and one works for CSFS. As previously mentioned, there was a tendency for interviewees to answer questions from a ‘we’ perspective. However, given the background of all interviewees, this perspective was determined to be the same as answering from a nations’ employee perspective. The general consensus from the interviews was that a cultural affiliation between physical activity programs and traditional culture would be highly welcome amongst the Elders’ in Carrier communities. Subject A spoke of “land-based healing, get out into the land ... [and] really connect with nature”. This is well supported by the literature that indicates that connecting culture through relevant and competent programs leads to a sense of pride, self-confidence and positive health outcomes (Indigenous peoples’ physical activity, 2023; Hossain & Lamb, 2020). Traditional, land-based activities were referred to the most by all interviewees: fishing, setting and maintaining fishnets (also referred to as fish-netting), hunting, gathering, and berry picking; all skills that are rooted in survival (Tang & Jardine, 2016). Three categories of culture and tradition emerged from the interviews: 1) traditional activities such as those mentioned above, 2) ceremonial activities such as powwows, potlatch, dancing, singing, drumming, and smudging, and 3) oral traditional such as storytelling and knowledge sharing. It is the first category that is most relevant to this project. Culture is broadly seen as a main component of holistic health and serves as a foundation for community identity (Hossain & Lamb, 2020; Viscogliosi et al., 2020; Ahmed et al., 2021). Land-based activities nurture all aspects of health, and Elders are a key piece of cultural continuity as they are the knowledge keepers in the community and the ones who hold the fundamental teachings that guide cultural stability and endurance (Tang & Jardine, 2016; Viscogliosi et al.). Both CHR B, and Subject A highlighted the importance of listening to Elders during their interviews, CHR B stated “it’s a tradition for them to teach our ways ... you really have to be present ... take a good amount of time out of your day to really sit and listen and learn”; Subject A advised to “give them a ride and start talking to them ... drive in the backroads, that’s our thing”. CHR A spoke of how stories become stories to teach younger generations “we tell the kids this is a story. Who was all beside us, how we got that, like how we ended up having a fire and why we have a fire”. Giving time and space to allow for thought processing and really listening to stories that they share is a key factor in building relationships and trust (Viscogliosi et al., 2020).

A content analysis of documents and webpages from CSFS revealed consistency with the declaration that culture leads their service delivery; it is valued and upheld as a fundamental component of all services across the organization. The documents analyzed reflected this position with culture showing to be the highest relevant theme analyzed, confirming the statement “culture is at the core of all that we do” (Carrier Sekani Family Services, n.d., para 1). All key themes analyzed (inclusive of: culture, physical activity, holistic health, land-based activity, intergenerational knowledge, and oral tradition – see Summary Table of Content Analysis Key words/terms in Appendix C) were reflected across the documentation demonstrating the importance of culture on holistic health and wellness, and that they are deeply connected to one another (Ahmed et al., 2021). Though culture showed the highest number of markers across all documents analyzed, health and wellness was also very well distributed across all documentation. The researcher not only assessed documents for how often terms were mentioned, but also considered the spread across documents. Culture and health were the two that very consistently appeared across most documents analyzed. The other four categories (physical activity, land-based activities, intergenerational knowledge, and oral tradition) appeared in between two and four documents or web pages each. Where the key terms appeared correlated highly with the type of webpage or document they were in; all physical activity references were either on the Health Promotion and Physical Activity webpage, or in the Goozih newsletter that feature the HPPA department. Therefore, though well represented in the documents analyzed, those documents had a section dedicated to physical activity. It was of interest, however, that the HPPA department page did not reflect any markers for culture. This is notable because it is specifically physical activity programs that are in question in regards to including relevant cultural components.

Primary Research Analysis

Throughout the observation, it has already been determined that there was a noticeable lack of cultural or traditional components included in the programs. However, there was still interest and willingness to participate in activities, despite the noted absence of culture; this is, a positive step which is supported in a research article by Gidgup et al. in 2021, where it was indicated that Indigenous people participating in culturally relevant programs and spaces

sometimes do eventually start to develop interests in further (western) physical activity programs such as yoga as a way of benefiting their physical fitness and overall holistic health. The culturally relevant space and programming led to an increase in confidence, which in turn opened the door to new perspectives and the desire to try new activities. (Gidgup et al., 2021). This is in line with the two-eyed seeing approach, which is considered a best practice method when looking at the blended path forward for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Guiding Principles, n.d). While it is important to push forward with offering programming with strong, relevant, and competent cultural components, being able to link this with some western physical activity practices could lead to greater health benefits for Indigenous Elders and their communities in turn. This theory was supported in the interview with CHR B, who indicated that while initially there may be some hesitation, the Elders would likely be willing to try a more westernized approach if the link to the benefits of improved participation with traditional activity are recognizable; “you gotta ask them. You gotta feel it out ... You definitely have to ask and feel”. Based on the evidence so far, there is support for connecting traditional activities to westernized physical activity and fitness to enhance or improve abilities to participate in traditional land-based activities. It would be highly valuable to include tradition and culture into physical activity programs as they relate to traditional activities. If an indoor fitness session could be linked to traditional land-based activity, and the benefits of how activity A could make activity B easier, it is far more likely that Elders’ will be open to participating regularly, and recognize the advantage of consistent physical activity involvement. The purpose of the research was not to determine how to bring Indigenous Elders’ around to westernizing their physical activity, but to determine how including tradition and culture in physical activity to enhance service delivery of physical activity programs to Carrier Elders. The connection between improving physical fitness and increased ability to participate in traditional activities has emerged as one of the ways to enhance service delivery.

There was some inconsistency between the findings in the observations and interviews. The conclusions from the observations indicate that participation in programs is not contingent on culture being included, while the overall consensus from the interviews is that culture is highly important when considering a desire to participate in programs or attend events. It should be noted that further research is needed to clarify this discrepancy. It is entirely plausible that more participants would be willing to join if the program was more tailored to include traditional

or cultural practices, or involved land-based activities. Time was a limiting factor when conducting primary research for this project, and further research is needed to reach solid conclusion on this matter. The conclusions drawn from reviewing interview transcripts weighed heavier on the side of including far more culture and tradition in physical activities. Culture is seen as a key element of holistic health and serves as a foundation for community identity, and land-based activities nurture all aspects of health. Subject A spoke of land-based healing “get out into the land ... really connect with nature”, being outdoors gives Elders “a chance to relax and start telling their stories”. Subject B had a similar perspective saying “it’s the way we used to live back in the day and being outdoors more, being more involved with our culture and with our food ... feels like home”. This perspective is supported in the literature that being out on the land fosters a deep connection to culture and community (Johnson-Jennings et al., 2020; Tang & Jardine, 2016). While the literature and most of the primary research are aligned, the observations indicate that there may be a different conclusion to the importance of incorporating culture in physical activity programs. An important identifying factor is that this discrepancy lies between what the interviewees (particularly those who work for the nations) are saying that the Elders’ look for in program content (i.e. culture and tradition), and what is currently being offered during programs. As mentioned, further research is needed in this area.

Another finding that emerged is the importance of listening, being respectful, and including feedback and perspectives from Elders’ when planning and considering program content. This is particularly relevant if the intent is to include cultural components to programs, and the instructor is non-Indigenous, or from a different Indigenous community. This was made clear in the content analysis document *Whu Neh Nee (Wise Ones) Carrier Leadership Traits and Practices* by Marlaena M Mann, understanding the history and culture of a community is a highly important trait for Carrier leaders. While an instructor coming to community to teach physical activity is not the same as someone looking to lead a Carrier community, it reinforces that listening, respecting the culture, and being open to feedback is an essential element in working with Carrier Elders. A non-Indigenous instructor, or an Indigenous instructor from another community should proceed with intent, and seek guidance and permission from the Elders before introducing any cultural components (Giordano & Edwards, 2023). A non-Indigenous instructor must proceed with cautious respect, and never assume what the community needs are as this could lead to reinforcing colonial discourse and have adverse effects on the outcome of the

intended program (Giordano & Edwards). There needs to be a clear understanding of intellectual ownership over cultural or traditional activities, heritage, and knowledge (Indigenous People's Physical Activity, 2023). This is why it is extremely relevant to seek guidance from the community members themselves. A demonstration of actively listening to what the community wants, and responding in ways that serve those needs should lead to a positive response to programs and events. Including the opinions of community and a demonstration of incorporating the feedback received is likely to result in higher attendance and participation in programs and events, and to lead to creating continuity for programs in Carrier communities; this would be a demonstrable enhancement to programs service delivery.

A major conclusion that emerged from the primary and secondary research, is that when moving forward with physical activity program planning and facilitation, incorporating the identified best practice of the two-eyed seeing (Etuaptumumk) approach would be a highly beneficial element to embrace. Once again it is worth mentioning that the researcher is a non-Indigenous person, and as the physical literacy coordinator on the HPPA team at CSFS, is responsible for both planning and facilitating physical activity programs for Elders in Carrier communities. The two-eyed seeing approach could be applied to every aspect of the planning and facilitation process, and being open to the different perspectives of both the western and Indigenous way of doing things, could lead to creating highly valued and sustainable programs across all the Carrier communities that CSFS serves. Using this approach could potentially open doors to building relationships and trust with nation employees as well as community members and develop a level of mutual understanding and respect that will naturally enhance services delivery of physical activity programs for Elders.

Recommendations

1. **Indigenous-led approach to program design:** ensure community knowledge keepers are included in every step of programming: planning, implementation and evaluation.

Engage knowledge keepers and Elders in programs design, communicating regularly to ensure clear transmission of information and incorporating feedback as it relates to the progression of

the program. The open willingness to listen and constructively use the feedback given by Elders and knowledge keepers in the community should help align goals and values of both CSFS and the nation to bring forth continuity of service and therefore enhanced service delivery.

2. Integrate Indigenous ways of knowing with Western practices where appropriate:

Engage the Two-Eyed Seeing approach (Etuaptumumk) to view programs and events design and implementation simultaneously through both an Indigenous and a western lens.

Particularly for non-Indigenous instructors this recommendation is relevant. Making the connection between Indigenous land-based activities, and the benefits that western physical activity training can bring. For example: language revitalization; using Dakelh words or phrases within fitness or physical activities to help connect physical activities with land-based learning opportunities.

3. Continued cultural training for instructors and facilitators: Ensure instructors and facilitators, particularly non-Indigenous or those from different Indigenous communities receive ongoing training regarding community culture to help build trust between CSFS, nation employees, and community members.

Currently all CSFS staff attend the Nowh Guna training; a Carrier culture training session that includes general information to help staff provide culturally competent programs and services (Nowh Guna Carrier culture training, n.d). Training could also include culturally appropriate communication and learning relevant words and terms in Dakelh language to enhance communication between CSFS instructors and nation employees and program participants. Service providers should have access to learning opportunities specific to carrier culture and individual Carrier communities, recognizing that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not culturally competent.

4. Intergenerational physical activity and land-based programming: Regular programming should include intergenerational events.

Throughout the research it has been indicated that intergenerational knowledge transmission is a vital component of cultural continuity. Providing regular and relevant opportunities to allow for Elders and youth to connect through traditional and culturally relevant activities will enhance programs and create significant services that foster participation and inclusion of all ages.

- 5. Programming should naturally follow seasonal activities:** Ensure scheduling of programs connects well with the natural flow of seasons and events to ensure relevance and continuity of service.

Flow of programs or services should naturally follow seasonal cycles to ensure greatest benefit to program offerings. This could lead to intuitive program phases that are relevant to community needs and compliment the natural progression of the seasons. Seasonal teachings within each community should be identified to ensure cultural relevance to individual Carrier community needs.

Conclusion

This paper highlights how including cultural and traditional activities in physical activity for elders can enhance service delivery in Carrier communities. The literature strongly supports including cultural and traditional activities, particularly land-based activities in programming in Indigenous communities. The primary research for this project concurred with the literature that more culture, more tradition, particularly in land-based activities that are rooted in survival are highly relevant. In part because it is a piece of the cultural identity and make-up of the community members, it is not only what they do, but who they are. Contrarily, the primary research also uncovered a deficit of culture being included in current program offerings, even those instructed by Indigenous people. However, this lack was not found to be a downfall, and participant engagement remained strong despite the blatantly westernized planning and facilitation of programs. Therefore using the two-eyed seeing approach is strongly recommended to view program design and facilitation to foster the strongest connection between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous instructors and bring the best of westernized physical activity

programs to Indigenous traditional activities. This connection between western practice and Indigenous culture can enhance strengths and abilities and improve participation in traditional activities. By including opportunities for community members to participate in traditional and land-based activities, and blending generations to foster intergenerational connection and knowledge transfer, the communities benefit through strong and unified cultural endurance and connection.

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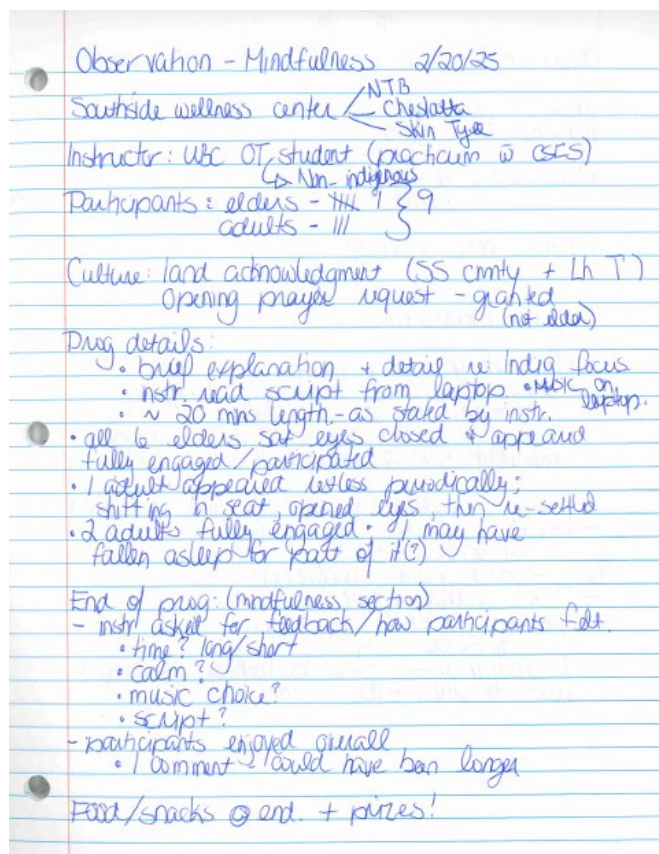
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Appendices

Appendix A – Observations

A1. Field notes: Mindfulness program – Feb 20, 2025



OBSERVATION - MINDFULNESS Feb 20, 2025 - led by a UBC occupational therapy student completing a practicum with CSFS

- Location: southside of Burns Lake; three different communities have land there; all three were invited to participate in the program
- Program was Elder focused, not exclusionary to other age groups
- 9 participants: 6 elders, 3 adults.
- Instructor began with a land acknowledgement including the land they were currently on, as well as where they are from. Thanked the communities by name for having them for the program and asked if anyone would like to say an opening prayer (one adult participant said a prayer)
- Instructor asked if anyone had any questions and then began by asking everyone to find a comfortable position.
- Then proceeded with a mindfulness script and music that was designed with Indigenous culture in mind (not designed/written by the instructor)
- Mindfulness program lasted 20 minutes.
- When mindfulness portion was over, instructor asked how participants felt and initiated a discussion that welcomed feedback about the script, length of program, and asked them to reflect on their experience - they could share with the group (or not) depending on comfort and personal preference.
 - 1 participant commented that they would have preferred it to be longer
- Participants were then asked to share a meal and space with the instructor, 4 draw prizes were handed out during the meal.

Culture observed: opening prayer

A2. Field notes: Elders' Walking Group – Feb 27, 2025

Observations - Walking Group (elder walks) 2/27/25

Where: Nadleh gymnasium
Instructor: Tiana Ketlo

Participants: elders: 1111
adults: 1 children: 11

Culture: none observed.

Program details/notes:

- food set up before prog.
- began w/ seated warm-up stretches - only 2 people.
- 3 more + 2 kids arrive @ end of w-up.
- instructor set 2 walking + repeated w-up
- 5 min walking intervals (around gym - indoor)
- breaks approx 7-10 mins
 - snacks offered
 - participants socializing
- 3x walking interval.
- prizes @ end & last walk
 - \$25 GC.
- 1 participant slow to get up + start walk → does full 5 mins.

OBSERVATION – WALKING GROUP Feb 27, 2025 – led by Tiana Ketlo – recreation coordinator (Indigenous) in Nadleh Whut'en

- Warm up (5 mins) with chair stretches and mobility exercises. Done in two groups as some people came in late. First group of 2 finished warming up and started walking, second group then sat down to warm up before joining in walking.
- Walking was done in 5 minute intervals, separated by breaks and snacks.
- 5 participants + 2 young children; total 7 participants

Engagement scale: fully engaged | engaged | somewhat engaged

- Engagement: 4 fully engaged, 1 engaged.
 - 1 was often behind in beginning and ending the intervals
- 4 fully engaged completed all walking intervals, responded to the call for the next interval within one minute and began walking.
- 1 engaged, began walking later than the call for the next interval, but also continue walking into the next break to finish 5 minutes
- Between walking intervals participants sat and socialized, talking amongst themselves, no formal discussions or cultural components were initiated by the instructor
- Participants tended to cluster and socialize with those that they came with. One group of 3 were all immediate family members (the small children belonged to this family)
- Another group of 2 were husband and wife
- Gift cards handed out to each participant for attending; notification by instructor given that this was the final week of GC's and snacks – no longer in the budget.

Culture observed: none

no culture or tradition included, very loose format, no formalities made. Very accommodating to those who came late, warm up was repeated to accommodate and ensure they were prepared for walking.

A3. Field notes: Tai Chi & Mindfulness – March 6, 2025

Observations - Tai Chi 3/6/25
- Mindfulness

Where: Southside Wellness Centre
- serves New tahi bunn, Chaslatia, Skin Tyee

Instructors: Tai Chi: UBC Occupational Therapy student
→ both UBC OT practicum students
Mindfulness: UBC OT student
Non-Indigenous

CSFS Participants: Elders - III, Adults III

Program includes 30 mins of tai chi, followed by 30 minutes of mindfulness

Tai chi

- welcome + brief overview by instructor → participant to only do what they can + take breaks if need
- format: Instr. show moves x 3, participants join for same x 3, practice only x 3
- 3 dif series that built on each other (add moves)
- all elders fully engaged + participated to full ability → one stopped x 2 to rest arms
- 1 adult fully engaged, 2 engaged (1 left room for ~10 mins), 1 checked phone x 2

all well engaged during participation

SE X NE III FE III

OBSERVATION – TAI CHI March 6, 2025 - led by a UBC occupational therapy student (non-Indigenous) completing a practicum with CSFS

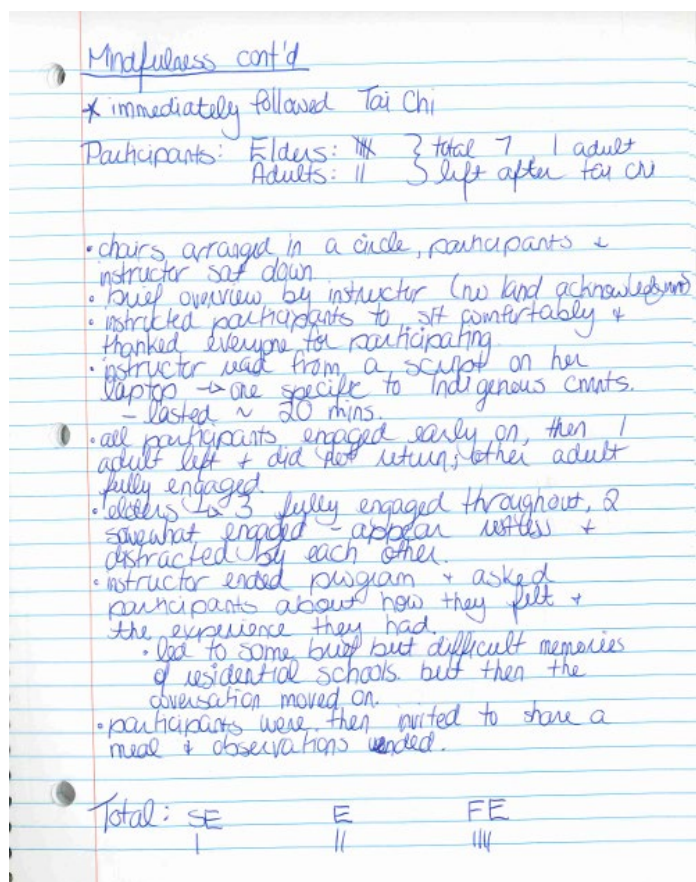
Location: Southside of Burns Lake; three different communities have land there; all three were invited to participate in the program

Instructors: Tai Chi - UBC occupational therapy student (metis) | practicum student with CSFS.

Participants: Elders x 5, adults x 3

- Instructor gave overview of tai chi, and explained how she would run through the move three times to demonstrate, then the participants should join her three times, then the participants do it on their own three times.
 - Three separate series that build on each other (i.e. series two is series one plus the new moves, etc).
- Instructor explained that moves do not need to be copied exactly; that participants should do what they can and they are welcome to take breaks whenever they need.
- All elders were fully engaged and were making their best efforts to follow the moves; one stopped twice to rest her arms, but did not sit down or leave the group (marked as fully engaged as rest periods were not related to any perceived lack of desire to participate).
 - natural breaks were incorporated when instructor would move on to demonstrating the next series
- 1 adult fully engaged and participated in all components of the activity; 2 adults were engaged - 1 left the room for approximately 10 minutes, the other checked their phone twice - otherwise both were fully engaged when they were participating.
- Instructor ended program when time required due to mindfulness session that was also scheduled
- Participants were happy with the length of tai chi and were happy to move on to the next part of the activity.
- Chairs were set in a circle to prepare for mindfulness.

Culture or tradition observed: none



OBSERVATION - Mindfulness - UBC OT student (non-Indigenous) | practicum student with CSFS.

Participants: Elders x 5, adults x 2 - 1 adult left in between tai chi and mindfulness

- instructor engaged participants in talk of how they felt after tai chi; then gave a brief overview of mindfulness and what the session would be like
 - No land acknowledgment or prayer as there was in the last mindfulness session - note: land acknowledgment is not considered culture; but is part of truth and reconciliation
- instructor thanked everyone for being there, and began the program by asking participants to ensure they are seated in a comfortable position
 - mindfulness script was read from a laptop; script was selected because of its specificity to Indigenous communities
- All participants were calm and fully engaged in the beginning of the program
 - 1 adult left after approximately 5 minutes and did not return (reason unknown); determined to be somewhat engaged (limitation is in the scale used & SE is the lowest category)
 - 1 adult remained fully engaged
 - 3 elders remained fully engaged throughout the program
 - 2 elders were observed to be somewhat engaged, made efforts to stay focused on the program but both seemed restless and distracted by each other (i.e. opening eyes, looking around, exchanging occasional words)
- When mindfulness script ended, instructor asked participants how they felt, and how they enjoyed the experience.
 - this led to some brief discussion about difficult memories being brought up that were linked to time in residential school; this was brief and the conversation moved on without issue.
- Participants were then invited to share a meal with the instructors and to spend time and share space - observations ended here.

Culture or tradition observed: none

A4. Summary Table of Activity-based observations

OBSERVATIONS SUMMARY

	Participant s	Engmnt lvl	Culture included ?	Socia l time?	Health/wellnes s disc.	Multi- generational	Prizes/foo d included?
Walking group	4 Elders 1 Adult 2 Children	3 FE 1E 1 FE 2 FE	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Tai chi	5 Elders 3 Adults	5FE 0E 0S E 1FE 2E	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mindfulness	5 Elders 2 Adults	3FE 0E 2S E 1FE 0E 1S E	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mindfulness	6 Elders 3 Adults	6FE 2FE 1E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Engagement scale:

Fully engaged (FE) | Engaged (E) | Somewhat Engaged (SE)

Fully engaged: participates fully in all components of the program (to the best of their ability) interest and attending remain on instructor and program

Engaged: participates in at least 80% of program components, demonstrates some distraction from the program.

Somewhat engaged: participates in 50% or less of the program components, demonstrates distraction, boredom, or impatience with the program.

A5. Field Notes Planning Meeting: I Am women's wellness gathering Feb 26, 2025

Observation – Planning meeting women's wellness - CSFS

Planning meeting for women's wellness days: a three day event with keynote speakers, health booths, and workshops to promote women's strength, wellness, and empowerment. Surrounding Carrier communities are invited, it is a gathering for many to share, not just Stellat'en members

- 3rd planning meeting for the event that will take place in Stellat'en community April 8-10
- Confirmation of keynote speaker for event - Madelaine McCallum to speak and lead a dance workshop; *Madelaine is a motivational speaker, dancer, and model. She created the 'As I am' workshop to empower people to understand that they are enough as they are.*
- Adjustment of event time - to begin at 9:30 rather than 9 to accommodate those coming from other areas, and mothers, grandmothers, and guardians who will be dropping children off at school. (Attempt at reducing barriers to access).

- Program schedule updated and re-sent to planning committee
- Discussion with sexual violence program lead to determine if they would offer a workshop, or an information booth - determined they booth would be more appropriate because the public nature of the setting does not allow for the privacy or time for conversation that is likely needed for sharing difficult or traumatic personal events.
- Planning for meals and catering - still to be confirmed. Challenges for catering are presented as the community is 45 minutes away from nearest municipal township, and 1:45 away from nearest city.
 - Suggestion that offering breakfast before any speakers may encourage people to come earlier - food as incentive to arrive on time.
- Action items delegated to three different people, meeting closed and next meeting set.

Why include this in observations?

- planning processes and considerations for wellness events.
- includes holistic wellness: social, emotional support for women of all ages.
- encourages intergenerational support.
- will allow for health and wellbeing of different pillars of health and nurture the interconnections of health

GAP - observation of event planned by a nation - are they done differently?

Appendix A6 – Promotional poster for 'I am' women's wellness gathering



9:00 AM
to
4:00 PM | APRIL
8-10

I am Empowered
Resilient
Connected

Women's Wellness Gathering 2025
at the Stellaquo New Community Hall



Featuring special guest speakers including Madelaine McCallum,
Substance Use and Addictions panel,
Breaking the Silence Panel presentation,
Trauma, Glimmers & Self-Compassion presentation.

Braiding, massages, card readings, somatic therapy, waxing, and more!

Ages 16+

Registration Closed

Questions? Contact Renee John at rjohn@csfs.org

No Registration Fee: Please note that travel and accommodation costs will be up to your Nation contact your Health Staff.

Appendix B - Interviews

Appendix B1 – Interview questions

Please introduce yourself – your name, position, a brief overview of what you do for your community/organization, and any other information you'd like to share.

1. How often are do you work with Elders in your community?
2. What draws Elders to participate in programs?
3. How would you define tradition or culture? (How would you explain it to someone who is non-Indigenous?)
4. How does Carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?
5. What are some cultural or traditional practices that are part of everyday life for your community members?
6. How would you include culture in programs for Elders? (any programs, not just physical activity)

7. What are some cultural or traditional practices to include in physical activity programs?
8. How does including traditional activities impact Elders' willingness to participate in programs?
(Any programs, not just physical activity)

Appendix B2: Interview Transcript – CHR A – Feb 24, 2025

Dana Thorne started transcription

□

Dana Thorne 0:09

I just want to go over just a little bit about what we're doing here.

So this research project is for my degree in recreation management from Langara College and it's about incorporating culture and physical activity programs for carrier elders.

My research question is: how does incorporating traditional culture in physical activity, enhanced program service delivery for indigenous elders in carrier communities in northern BC.

The material that we are gathering here today will be used in my final project paper, which will be read by my instructors and Langara as well as Amy Merritt, who is my agency advisor on this project.

CHR A 1:04

OK.

Dana Thorne 1:07

So I am required to disclose your name and position and e-mail to my instructor so they can check that we actually did this interview.

But I can keep your name out of the research report if you would prefer that.

CHR A 1:20

Oh, no, no.

Dana Thorne 1:21

OK. So can you just introduce yourself?

Your name, position. Just a brief overview of what you do for your community and just any other information that you would like to share.

CHR A 1:41

OK, my name is **CHR A**. My band is Cheslatta band, but I currently work for the Nee Tahi buhn band. I've been in my role since October 2022.

I spend actually 30% of my time I'm driving and I'm hosting workshops for the members. I pick up members for any CSFS programs.

I pick them up and bring them home and...

I work with the, with the nurses I work with the ... oh, the ladies that clean elders houses. I also work with them.

Dana Thorne 2:39

Oh, the care aides?

CHR A 2:41

Yeah, the. Yeah, I work with them.

Dana Thorne 2:42

I see.

CHR A 2:47

Oh, that's a lot to say. I in my role I do a quite a few stuff. I do patient travel. I pick up meds only if it's convenient for me. Yeah, I do quite a bit of stuff.

Dana Thorne 3:14

That's actually a really, that's a really good description of what you do.
OK, so I have a series of eight questions here for you.

Dana Thorne 3:25

And they're all kind of related to either cultural elders or physical activity programming.
How often do you work with elders in your in the community?

CHR A 3:42

That all depends on what's happening on each week. I yeah, I work with elders. We do workshops for them. Or other programs that like other bands that invite them.

Dana Thorne 3:58

OK.

So it sounds like you connect with them fairly regularly on a daily or weekly basis.

CHR A 4:04

Yeah.

Dana Thorne 4:05

So what do you think draws elders to participate in programs?
Any programs, not just physical activity.

CHR A 4:16

Traditional programs like lacrosse or archery.
Some won't run, but they'll walk, canoeing, fishing, hunting, nature walks, or harvesting. And.
Some elders, they prefer to what do you call that? Fishnetting like you know how you fix the fishnet after when you fish, when you finish fishing.

CHR A 4:46

And you're using the. So they, they say exercising with your arms and stretching the fishnet out and

fixing it. That's exercise with their arms. 'cause. It's up.
You're holding your arms in the air, right? And you're stretching the fishnet across your head.

CHR A 5:08

They call that arm exercising or Berry picking 'cause you're pulling the berries towards yourself and off the Bush. They call that exercising.

Anything I was wanting to do like start walking with the elders from the stop sign to the building, that's even little bit of exercise with them there.

Preferably they like to be in the be in the nature, right?

When it's warming up, they they wanna start clean.

Dana Thorne 5:56

So how would you define traditional or culture?

Like, how would you explain it to someone like me who is non indigenous?

CHR A 6:17

I would probably would have to say.

It's all in our traditional we would like to like.

We would. Like to go out in nature, most all in nature. It's like really hard to be in the house when it's in the summer or spring time because that's where you start harvesting. Start the harvesting and gardening.

CHR A 6:53

Well, with Aboriginal it's really we like to do hard. We think of harvesting and food harvesting right away. What we try to do is try to get the kids to be involved with more of the food harvesting and like we do, try to keep them in the traditional games like. Canoeing and fishing, because that's like a lot of exercise, eh?

CHR A 7:24

Physical exercise.

But when they do like, we don't really try to do lacrosse 'cause, it's...

We just think games are not for us like when we're like, even setting up a Tee Pee.

That's an exercise right there. We try to do really like traditional games like how we can think of instead of games like we try to think of it as work like learning process for the kids and like oh, this is a this is like an exercise when you take a lot of berries off the tree, we'll see who has ... who has more berries than the other person? That's a contest. Even fire starting like when traditional like instead of, you know using the fire starter we use like we try to teach them instead of using fire starter go natural.

Dana Thorne 8:26

So it sounds like you're really linking the activities to...

CHR A 8:33

Learning techniques.

Dana Thorne 8:33

I guess to pieces of life that are like useful or functional?

CHR A 8:39

Yeah. And we're actually in the middle of trying to teach them rabbit snaring.

Yeah, 'cause, we never really. When my grandfather was alive, he used to teach us that. And we wanna teach the younger ones that 'cause that's exercising walk... nature walking.

Dana Thorne 9:08

How does carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

CHR A 9:26

Songs, stories and prayers.

CHR A 9:32

Yeah, yeah.

Feeling like different ceremonies on whatever is happening like, say somebody.

Shot an animal and it and it's their first animal and we do a story on like, you know, that's a story you can tell.

CHR A 9:54

The way you shot that animal and how you brought that animal and who helped you with that animal, that's a story right there for you to tell us. And that's like, tell us, tell us and make us a story about that.

Like, how do you? How did you go about doing that? That's ceremony thing.

Celebration for us right there or when we...

CHR A 10:18

Like when we hear prayers like over the over the weekend we just lost of we just buried a Community member and that's a story right there. Like, how did the community get together?

How did you tell the stories on the when? What was happening around the body like? Tell us a story about that. Like, stuff like that. That's a ceremony.

CHR A 10:41

Having when you build a fire for ceremonial activities like that, that's a story right there, and you tell us a story how you got that fire built.

That's a ceremony, yeah.

CHR A 10:57

Yeah, we do have one. When we tell somebody to build a fire, can you tell us a story and about that and then they'll tell us who was there with them and how you started that fire and where did you get the tree balls to start that?

Dana Thorne 11:14

I love it. So everything is really connected and included in those stories.

CHR A 11:23

Yeah, we try to.

We write down everything. What's happening around us, and we tell the kids this is a story. Who was all beside us, how we got that, like how we ended up having a fire and why we have a fire. And then little kids don't understand why we have to have a fire. Oh, it's just to keep warm, right? Oh no. There's more to it.

Dana Thorne 11:50

So I think we've covered this one a little bit already, but So

Q - what are some cultural or traditional practices that are part of everyday life for the community members? I feel like we did cover this a little bit, but.

CHR A 12:05

And. OK, hands on technique and the learning of the sweet grass.

Why we burn the sweet grass when there's prayers? Energetic therapies.

Oh, let me see... When we do, when we do sweetgrass, some of the Members are not really on believing on it, and some people of our Members do believe it. We try to teach the meaning of burning the sweet grass and... You know, when we have to bless ourself with the sweet grass, they always answer. Why do we do that? It's to keep the. The bad healing off of us, like when somebody has a bad feeling or like they're trying to put something on you and that's when we try to say we do a prayer. We take that away by the sweet grass. Energetic therapies.

Dana Thorne 13:45

What I'm hearing is that importance of intergenerational education and knowledge and participation.

Dana Thorne 14:29

We're at the last couple of questions here for you.

Q - how would you include culture and programs for elders?

CHR A 14:49

They like to do the hide 'cause that's arm exercise and your body.

You're using your body a 'cause. You're standing up, and then you're actually physically moving with the with the. Utensils that they're using to cut the height wonder.

CHR A 15:10

We're working on the hide. It's a whole body exercise they call that exercise.

Canoeing is another one. One 'cause. You're canoeing out to the fish, to the fishnet, and you're actually working with the fishnet. That's exercise arm exercise, and because you're pulling in.

CHR A 15:37

Yeah, and smoking your food?

CHR A 15:41

That's a yeah, that's a physical activity. 'cause. You're standing and bending. And you know when you're

bending over to keep the fire going, keep the wood coming onto the fire.
That's physical exercise and we lot of canning for our band with our elders and they teach us canning the proper way and how they think.

CHR A 16:06

It's safe for us kids, too, for the kids, for the small kids to learn.

CHR A 16:13

We always grab the young babies and teach them like this is how you do it.

Can you put this fish into the the can?

And they do help us.

Lot of canning, a lot of canoeing, a lot of fishnetting and walking, nature walks.

That's mostly they can do for now.

Dana Thorne 16:38

OK. And so my last question was very similar.

Here it was just So **Q** - what are some cultural or traditional practices to include it physical activity programs?

But I kind of feel like we've already covered that unless there's anything else you'd like to add.

CHR A 17:00

Oh, a big one for that one is harvesting food.

CHR A 17:05

Harvesting. It's a lot of physical physical activity in that and. That's the most biggie for our elders is harvesting. They put the nature walks in with the harvesting because I think that those two are 'cause you're walking right ... And... You're you're actually doing. You're actually doing.

Dana Thorne 17:36

Yeah. So are you talking about harvesting when you're going out onto the land and Berry picking and finding the medicinal plants and stuff or are you talking about harvesting through the gardens or both?

CHR A 17:47

Both, both garden and yeah, and the land.

CHR A 17:54

And the and another one is when we have fires most of the people would go out.

What do you call the mushroom picking that's that's harvesting today?

CHR A 18:09

We do have elders that all they go out for that.

That is another big one. When it's mushroom season picking time, they would go out for.

CHR A 18:23

Hunting is another one for the men's. And fishing what I mean about fishing is that. It's not only just the big fishing, it's some are like, what do you call? They go out and collect these carps or something.

Dana Thorne 18:54

OK, this has been fascinating, **CHR A**.

So that's like that was all of my questions. If there's anything else you'd like to add, please feel free.

Dana Thorne stopped transcription

□

Appendix B3: Interview Transcript – CHR B – Feb 24, 2025Transcript

February 27, 2025

INTERVIEW WITH CHR B – Cheslatta Carrier Nation

DANA: Is it okay with you if I record this interview?

CHR B: Yes that's fine.

DANA: This material will be used in the final project paper which will be read by my instructors at Langara, as well as Amy Merritt who is acting as my agency advisor on this project. I am required to disclose your name/position/email to my instructors so they can check that this interview took place. However I can keep your name out of the research report if you would prefer.

Would you prefer if I kept your name out of the research paper?

CHR B : no that's fine, it can be in there

Dana Thorne started transcription

□

Dana Thorne 0:50

So my first question is can you just introduce yourself your name, your position and just a brief overview of what you do for your community and kind of just any other information you'd like to share?

CHR B 1:04

So my name is CHR B. I'm from the Cheslatta Carrier nation. I am Beaver clan.

I am the Community health representative for children nation, so I mainly do patient travel.

I wear many hats. I tell people that all the time. I'm like a travel agent slash taxi slash counselor.

I also provide workshops for like HIV, just anything to do with Wellness. Drug and alcohol use fitness.

Healthy eating. Right now I'm working on having a health care day for our adults and elders. You know, after winter, you're kind of a little depressed.

So I'm gonna have like a foot massage lady and someone to braid hair, and we're just gonna have a nice brunch and just gather and have a good time together. 'cause. We've been stuck in the house all winter and. It's good to get out and see people again.

Dana Thorne 2:32

Thank you that was a really good overview. So how often do you work with elders in your community?

CHR B 2:46

Weekly, like once or twice a week. A lot of them, mainly for appointments, mainly for patient travel because they need dental work done or they need new glasses or they need a chiropractor. So it mostly revolves around their health. And me getting them to their appointment.

I also work with elders once or twice a week.

So I work at the Southside Health and Wellness Center Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and then I work down here at the band office Thursday and Friday.

But when they're usually at the Health Center, I like to mingle with them during classes or workshops that happen.

Dana Thorne 4:03

OK so. What draws elders in to participate in in programs? And I'm talking any kind of program or event.

CHR B 4:15

So a big one is, providing rides, another big one is having food. Like nobody wants to go to a workshop starving because most of the time like. We all have our own schedules and they're very busy. So if we take our time out of our day to join this program and get out of our comfort zone, it's always nice to just. Have something enjoyable to look forward to.

Door prizes is another big thing.

People like to come and visit and eat and talk and win prizes. And learn something new along with that.

Dana Thorne 5:04

Yeah, that seems to jive with my experience, yeah.

CHR B 5:04

So those are the three main big things, yeah. Also.

Good advertisement so posters Facebook writing it on the board anywhere they go, like at the Health Center at the band office.

Dana Thorne 5:31

Thank you. So, next question. How would you define tradition or culture?

Like, how would you explain it to somebody like myself who is non indigenous?

CHR B 5:47

OK.

Culture is the way we live. What our grandparents did and their grandparents did.

Culture is what we're raised with. Ways that we lived by. Our language.

Our art, our storytelling, our traditional practices like powwows, hunting, fishing.

Gathering berries. Our foods that we eat, like loose meat and rice, moose meat stew.

Fish like dried salmon. Indian ice cream, huckleberry jam.

You know bannok, all that good stuff.

Another part of our culture is just being respectful, respecting the land. If you're gonna take something, give it back.

Our potlatches there a way for us to gather together to feast together on our traditional food, speak our language?

And then I guess our blood line, your band your nation.

CHR B 7:26

The pride we carry with where we're from. All the way down to our clans like I'm Beaver Clan. My dad was Frog clan. Like, there's just so many things wrapped around our culture and who we are.

And for traditions. First Nation traditions. Very important to us, but our elders mostly.

Like from my generation, we're still learning, but we're losing our elders.

So for them it's very important to pass on that knowledge. It's a tradition for them to teach our ways and pass that on to the next generation, but times are so different now.

Everything's very technical and. For traditions, you really have to be present. You have to be there. You have to wanna take a good amount of time out of your day to really sit and listen and learn. 'Cause, we have many traditions like.

For example, there is a gathering once a year for archery camp out, and we do so many things there that include the elders. They tell us the history of our people and where we lived and what happened, how that flooded out, what it, what life was.

Other traditions is that we Berry pick during that time. So they like to take us out.

They like to tell us about the berries, what they're good for.

Another part of a lot of nations traditions around here is gathering the salmon during that time of year.

Just it's such a bountiful time we get to you know, you wait for it all year. And then finally, you have so much salmon. You're just baking it, smoking it. Whatever you can do just to enjoy and preserve that special part of that time.

Dana Thorne 10:21

Wow, thank you, you are a wealth of information.

So how does carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

CHR B 10:32

Culture and tradition.

So with Carrier, there are two.

Carrier language and then the carrier nation like a group of people.

So can I hear that question again so I can break it down?

Dana Thorne 10:51

How does carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

CHR B 11:49

How does carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

Oh, that's a big question. So actually our tradition and culture connect to our health and well-being in many ways.

CHR B 12:10

Traditions like collecting salmon berries. We're outside all the time.

We're connected to the nature everything around. 'Cause, we're working together as a people. It's very important for our well-being. Our culture connects to our health and well-being through physical activity spirituality and our mental health. By connecting us with healthy foods like food. Foods that have come from mother Earth, like fresh moose meat, fresh salmon, fresh berries. Bannock is delicious, but like flour and sugar and all that, that wasn't from us, that that was given to us. Like to survive off of in a point of time.

CHR B 13:12

We're more connected in a healthy way through the food that is provided to us through nature. And our traditions like going to powwows, that's really physically being active and it's helping our well-being. We're getting connected to our music, the people around us. We're gathering together. We're dancing. That's a lot of physical activity. Have you seen a Jingle dress? Do you know heavy that is?

CHR B 13:53

You have to go to a powwow.

Dana Thorne 13:56

I would love to.

CHR B 13:57

And just collecting salmon even is very physically draining 'cause, you're lifting Nets. You're pulling in all this weight and you're just you're nurturing yourself after that by eating the salmon and moose hunting. Have you ever skinned a moose?

Dana Thorne 14:21

No.

CHR B 14:23

It's very physically draining.

CHR B 14:39

Bear, moose meat. It's all a very wild taste. And then just I know I'm jumping around, but powwows like drumming. We get very connected to each other, listening to the beat of the drum, listening to the music. It's very healthy for our well-being to do that kind of stuff. Traditions and cultural things that we do that help our well-being. Gathering berries. You're out there. You're in the Bush. You're walking over logs. You're getting. You're pushing your physical fitness just to get to this patch of berries so you can pick him, and that also is nurturing to us 'cause we get to enjoy what we. Collected and it's healthy food that's from Mother Earth and. Yeah, there's a lot of connection there.

Dana Thorne 15:50

So what are some cultural or traditional practices that are part of everyday life for your community members?

CHR B 17:04

It's not so much meditation, it's prayer. I think as soon as we wake up in the morning, we're like thank you, creator, for this beautiful day.

Thank you for the food that you provide for us.

Thank you for this this body that I get to live in and thank. Thank you for everything that I have all the many blessings. That you give to us. So I think I think prayer as soon as we wake up. This isn't a everyday thing, but this this is sort of a weekly thing.

Maybe sometimes we're so busy and we can only do it once a month, but smudging?

CHR B 17:49

Smudging our workplace, smudging our dream catchers. Clearing bad energy from.

Places that we are everyday that we work everyday, that we live every day in.

Connecting with each other as well, like checking in on each other.

Being concerned about one another.

Aunties are always in there. Like what can we do for you?

Like, can we bring something by? Do you want to go out and have a coffee?

CHR B 18:38

Taking care of one another.

I'm trying to think of something physical that we would do every day.

CHR B 19:08

Yeah, just being there for one another. You know, even like here at the office, if we haven't eaten our secretary, make sure that she makes us a lunch.

So we're eating something like we're just that type of people that.

CHR B 19:26

We just take care of each other everyday and we make sure that we're aware of being thankful for everything that is provided for us.

Dana Thorne 19:36

That's beautiful.

Dana Thorne 20:04

How would you include culture in programs for elders?

So any programs, not just physical activity, but what are those cultural pieces to bring to a program?

CHR B 20:14

That is a good one.

I think making. Good food and just visiting with each other.

Traditional foods, if you can. You know, if it's not that time of season, you can always get canned salmon.

Or like there's always someone who has frozen huckleberries.

You just got to ask and look for it. If we can make huckleberry jam or something together, that would bring the elders together.

CHR B 20:55

Beading is a good thing.

If you just had a good sit down with them and a good teacher to teach them like some of us don't know everything about our culture, some of us haven't drummed a day in our life. Some of us haven't beaded. So if we could just do little programs to introduce this kind of stuff to them.

I think they would really benefit from it.

CHR B 21:27

So drumming, beading, cooking is a top three things that I'm thinking of right now.

Yeah. Yeah, that's all I could think of right now.

Dana Thorne 21:44

Yeah. So yeah, I'm hearing that that I guess.

Social connection and that sharing space is kind of the one of the biggest components here.

CHR B 21:54

Yes.

Dana Thorne 21:58

So what are some cultural or traditional practices to include in physical activity programs?

CHR B 22:34

You know what?

I don't see this anymore, but my dad used to do this a lot in the winter snowshoeing.

If we right and if we made that, if we made our own snowshoes.

CHR B 22:48

Think of how happy they would be just to stomp around in their own homemade snowshoes that they made.

Snares setting snares. 'cause you have to get out there, you have to look for rabbit trails. You have to learn how to set a snare and then you just keep checking on it every day, and that that's a way just to get you out of the house and. Get you out there.

And even if you did find a rabbit, if you did catch a rabbit, that would be another good lesson.

Dana Thorne 23:17

Yeah.

CHR B 23:22

How to make rabbit soup or how to make something with a rabbit that's healthy for them?

Walking. Walking is good. Another way to incorporate physical activity is if you've ever been to a potlatch, they have this time where they sing each clan song, and if you're from that clan, you have to get up and move around. You have to try to dance.

CHR B 23:57

Even if you don't know how to dance, you just you gotta be up there to support your clan members. If we

had, like a class just to learn your own song and then afterwards have the other clan sing your song so you can be the one dancing and.

Moving. That'd be a great idea. It'd be fun too.

CHR B 24:24

Berry picking, getting out there and picking berries. It connects you to the land you're walking. You're just trudging through the Bush, and that's a good way to be outside and.

And it's bountiful. And it's fun if you get a good group, it is fun.

You just sit there and talk and pick berries.

That's all I can think of off the top of my head right now.

Dana Thorne 24:58

So I just have one more question for you.

How does including traditional activities impact elders willingness to participate in programs?

CHR B 26:21

How does including traditional activities impact elders willingness to participate in program?

I think including our traditional activities impacts our elders willingness to participate in the program is very important.

But then again, you definitely have to ask permission before you bring something cultural.

Dana Thorne 27:01

Knowing your community, would it be better attended if it was something that was, say snowshoeing or a walking group outside, something traditional versus something more westernized like yoga?

CHR B 27:20

They would be iffy at first. Just 'cause you're non indigenous, but I think they'd be willing to try. And if it was not too straining on them, I think they would enjoy it and they would be willing to come back for another.

CHR B 27:52

You just gotta try it. You just gotta like you just gotta throw it out there and see how it goes, type of thing. You gotta feel it out.

That's a tough one, you know.

Dana Thorne 29:14

Yeah. Yeah, that's kind of what I'm what how I'm trying to approach it is that any of those pieces.

It's how do you feel about teaching me something about this? And then from my perspective, I like to try and, you know, use my skills to link them to traditional activities.

CHR B 29:27

Yeah.

Dana Thorne 29:35

How we can make doing your outdoor activities and your traditional pieces easier. So that's why I like to think focus on things like weight transfer and balance.

And stepping over things because I think it's it translates well to those actual activities out on the land.

Dana Thorne 30:35

□ OK, so that is all my questions.

Dana Thorne stopped transcription

Appendix B4 – INTERVIEW WITH SUBJECT A: CSFS Special Projects

DANA: Is it okay with you if I record this interview?

SUBJECT A: Yes

DANA – thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. This research project is for my degree in recreation management from Langara College, and is about incorporating culture in physical activity programs for Carrier Elders.

I am going to read you my research question here, but you don't have to answer this question.

Research question: How does incorporating traditional culture in physical activity enhance programs service delivery for Indigenous elders in Carrier communities in Northern BC.

This material will be used in the final project paper which will be read by my instructors at Langara, as well as Amy Merritt who is acting as my agency advisor on this project. I am required to disclose your name/position/email to my instructors so they can check that this interview took place. However I can keep your name out of the research report if you would prefer.

DANA: Would you prefer if I kept your name out of the research paper?

SUBJECT A: Yup, don't put my name in there and I'm ok with the second part.

1. DANA: Please introduce yourself – your name, position, a brief overview of what you do for your community/organization, and any other information you'd like to share.

SUBJECT A: My name is Charlotte Alfred, I work with Carrier Sekani Family Services in the health programs and generally my responsibilities are reports, monthly reports, revising, review, agreements - annual agreements to the band for health and funds and coordinating meetings. Helping other programs like Jordan's principle and patient travel takes up a lot of my time.

DANA: You are also Indigenous, are you comfortable sharing which community you are from?

SUBJECT A: I am Indigenous, yes, and I'm from Witset, BC, formerly known as Moricetown.

2. DANA: How often do you work with Elders in your position?

SUBJECT A: Not too much lately, usually I was involved with Marilyn's program - the health and wellness program - extensive involvement with them before but now they've got other staff so not too much ... oh, no! Traditional medicines, I um, monthly review their traditional medicines to clients and then repeat them.

3. DANA: What draws Elders to participate in programs? Any programs, not just physical activity?

SUBJECT A: Unfortunately it's probably honorarium. They won't ... nowadays it seems like their knowledge, they won't pass knowledge unless you give them something, and it's always been that way, but I'm seeing more and more it's like ... money. So unfortunately that's the key, um, food of course, and I find elders they usually draw closer to you if you're really listening to their stories and a sense of humor. Really have a sense of humor, so if you have a sense of humor I think they'll really draw closer to you, that's what I think.

4. DANA: How would you define tradition or culture? (How would you explain it to someone like myself who is non-Indigenous?)

SUBJECT A: I think tradition or culture comes from where you're from, like I'm from Moricetown and our tradition or culture we practice the potlatch system, and then we practice our language, we do it like that and then ... we do a lot of gathering of foods, like it could be moose or fish or picking berries, we do those kind of things, we do those annually. Um, so if we follow what we did when our parents were alive, then it's usually ... with our population it's potlatch and fish. Yup, does that make sense?

DANA: It does, yes.

5. DANA: How does Carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

SUBJECT A: Oh, very. It really connects, to my knowledge if you're right into following your tradition, your culture, your being, who you are and you're being proud of it, it makes you more acceptable and belong to a nation and I think your health and wellbeing is very strong

6. DANA: What are some cultural or traditional practices that are part of everyday life for your community members?

SUBJECT A: For the Carrier members, I would think ... well it would depend on the environment, like if it's winter, probably ice fishing or something like that. I see a lot of them doing winter wellness, I know communities like Saik'uz and Nadleh, they did um, community wellness, they just played different games; snowshoeing or like I said, ice fishing or things that are outdoor. I'm not too sure about Cheslatta but I'm pretty sure they do a lot of events, um. ...

DANA: Would you think those things are a daily occurrence?

SUBJECT A: Oh, I was going to say, the summer, again it would be a gathering of berries or getting fish, preparing them, harvesting them, things like that and including moose meat, so it's all connected to food or shelter or the saving it for the winter months.

DANA: so that preserving of the ...

SUBJECT A: yes, preserving, yup.

7. DANA: How would you include culture in programs for Elders? (any programs, not just physical activity)

SUBJECT A: okay, I should go back to number 6.

DANA: Okay, let's go back to number 6.

SUBJECT A: culture and traditional practices, um, for instance, Nadleh has drumming, they have, um, potlatch, they are very connected with potlatch, they have drumming, they have traditional medicine and each community is different, just like with their environment, just like, Stellaquo is not even far from Nadleh, they [Stellaquo] just started practicing their potlatch, they do a lot of the gardening and then they, um, fishing. They have a fishing event that comes along, but if you go to Saik'uz, it's more like language or things to do with the elders, I think. So, each community is different on each season. and that would be the same for Moricetown.

SUBJECT A: Okay [reading question 7] how do you include culture and programs for Elders? Any program not just physical activity?

DANA: Yeah, any programs or events.

SUBJECT A: I believe in land based healing, get out into the land ... really connect with nature, you ground yourself, with the elders they probably ... wet'suwet'en, they always have their culture and you always seen the pictures of their elders sitting around, enjoying themselves and being outdoors and giving them a chance to relax and start telling their stories, I see that a lot in wet'suwet'en, land based. Get them out, but be careful, they're elders!

8. DANA: What are some cultural or traditional practices to include in physical activity programs?

SUBJECT A: Mmm, dancing, drumming, things like that, beading. Those are kind of... Saik'uz do a lot of beading, cultural and traditional practices, is that what you mean?

DANA: I think so, or just any pieces that would be included. It doesn't necessarily have to be a physical activity in itself, like dancing, it could be including things like a prayer, or a smudge, or something done before hand.

SUBJECT A: yup, they follow tradition, saying a prayer before you do anything, it used to be a one-person talking and I noticed when I first started we used to hand out, or use a rock and whatever person has the rock would talk, or use a stick and that person would talk until they hand it to somebody else, I seen that about 20 years ago, I haven't seen that lately.

DANA: I experienced that at a 2 day training convention - it was a crystal, it got really hot.

SUBJECT A: but that just shows that you're talking, nobody else should be talking until you're finished, that's what ... practice that includes physical activity? I think that what you're doing on Southside, the yoga I think that's right on because it's slow movements for them and even though it's slow movements it helps them a lot, like physically and their mind and are they enjoying themselves?

DANA: I think so, I'm getting some pretty good feedback.

SUBJECT A: yeah, so whatever you're doing out there, you should continue.

DANA: it is a little hit and miss, on days where money comes in, people tend to go shopping and stuff.

SUBJECT A: Yup, exactly, they don't do things on pension day.

DANA: sometimes I have to compete with other events that are out there.

SUBJECT A: yup pension day, don't do anything on pension they get annoyed actually, they get annoyed if you have to ask them on their shopping day or whatever. I can think more of this, can I think more of this and then I can let you know?

DANA: Yeah, sure.

SUBJECT A: okay

9. DANA: How does including traditional activities impact Elders' willingness to participate in programs? (Any programs, not just physical activity)

SUBJECT A: Oh they will open up to you, but when I was going to UNBC and we were doing traditional medicines and we went to interview some elders in their homes, and the first thing they ask is 'what are you going to do with this information?' They do not like their information going out there and then someone else taking credit for it so they will always ... just like plagiarism, they always want to be acknowledged ... because they were pretty reluctant to talk to use even though we were native but it didn't matter...

DANA: so that acknowledgement and that ownership of that information.

SUBJECT A: yup, yup. yea that's what I think so if you give them that time they'll start opening up to you. Um, like I said, if you have a sense of humor, use it, it goes a long way. Just the silliest thing you can think of and they always start laughing and you made it in ... repeat what they said, see if that's what they meant. Don't go straight in to the next question, give them time to absorb and start thinking about

what they want to say. We used to do that with Mabel, she stops talking and then you think she's done and start talking and then she starts talking again.

DANA: oh that time and space really matters, yeah that processing time.

SUBJECT A: yup, she did that a lot in meetings and people would just think she's finished and then start talking again and then she'd bring them all back and this is what I see too.

DANA: yeah, I guess we tend to be impatient that way, we think they're finished and jump right in.

SUBJECT A: yeah I don't like silence, I do the same thing, we're both quiet and it's uncomfortable, but it's their processing and they want to continue talking. But bringing them out, like even driving with them, um I heard a lot of good comments about Kulraj, he used to be a counselor on Southside, and he would just give them rides and they would talk and he would just go with them, he even went to their sweats so he was really engaged and even today since he's a manger now, SS still remembers him just because he did that, he made that connection.

DANA: that's interesting

SUBJECT A: yea, even a ride, give them a ride and start talking to them. We like to drive in the backroads, that's our thing, and being on the SS it's like being on the back roads all over the place.

SUBJECT A: as long as you have an elder they won't touch you, it's really funny when you give them a ride, they'll always point out things to you, this is where we were and our family, you'll learn a lot giving them rides.

DANA: They are the keepers of all the knowledge.

SUBJECT A: yup, my mom always ... we always brought her in the back and she'd tell me where her father ... [inaudible].

DANA: well that's all my questions, I wanted to keep it short and sweet ... so unless there's anything you want to add, we're done!

SUBJECT A: I think they're really still interested in traditional medicines, but not much of them make it from our Carrier end, it's Minnie Thomas, or Virginia Reynolds ... there's a thing for traditional medicine, and then there's a thing for what the Ketlo does, makes shampoo, makes soap bars, but she also puts in bear grease and things like that we tend to use a lot for pain medication. If you find those little soap or those that have bear grease in them, that will probably draw them in.... they like any kind of trinkets, they'll keep forever, that's their thing. You see their room it's all full of blanket and material and trinkets, and sometimes that catholic things, depending on where they are.

END INTERVIEW

Appendix B5 - INTERVIEW WITH SUBJECT B

INTERVIEW

Is it okay with you if I record this interview?

Dana speak – thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. This research project is for my degree in recreation management from Langara College, and is about incorporating culture in physical activity programs for Carrier Elders.

Research question: How does incorporating traditional culture in physical activity enhance programs service delivery for Indigenous elders in Carrier communities in Northern BC.

This material will be used in the final project paper which will be read by my instructors at Langara, as well as Amy Merritt who is acting as my agency advisor on this project. I am required to disclose your name/position/email to my instructors so they can check that this interview took place. However I can keep your name out of the research report if you would prefer.

Would you prefer if I kept your name out of the research paper?

1. Please introduce yourself – your name, position, a brief overview of what you do for your community/organization, and any other information you'd like to share.

SUBJECT B: My name is [SUBJECT B] and I work for the community of Nadleh Whut'en and I am also from Nadleh Whut'en actually.

DANA: and so you are the recreation coordinator here in Nadleh? What do you do in your job?

SUBJECT B: well, I started working here November 9, 2023 and I had absolutely no clue how to do this job as it was my first office job, and also working for the band, I've never worked for the band, well besides as a summer student. I used to always be doing labor jobs before recreation so up and moving hasn't really been something new to me. I have been involved with elders walk recently and I bring healthier snack options for them to see healthier snack options like fruit and vegetables, meat and cheese plates and crackers, fruit juices that aren't too much sugar. I try to show them that eating healthy doesn't have to be boring either. And they've really been enjoying that as well and even with handing out the \$25 gift cards, it really helps them out too. This one lady told me that she's really happy that I put this program on because I've inspired her to eat a little bit healthier and stuff. They're doing the best they can to catch on to, to pick up what I'm putting down. She told me that she lost 5 pounds from quitting pop and that she's been looking forward to these walks every week. And I've had an elders tea party in the past that promoted the arthritis wellness program that you put on which was really great, the elders really enjoyed it, they liked the mini bingo. I like to do something like that if we're promoting something in the future. I think it's really fun.

2. DANA: How often are do you work with Elders in your community?

SUBJECT B: About once a week after putting these elders walks on, trying to get more involved with them though so once the summer comes I would like to start doing the walks more, like, outside of the gym so get them used to the ground and stuff and being out in

nature. I just got this idea from [removed] to get our language with our exercising with I think is an excellent idea and I would like to go forward with it, that's something that I would love to do.

3. DANA: What draws Elders to participate in programs?

SUBJECT B: Um, I think, if I started doing more programs culturally involved it would pull them in more and that's why I'm very thankful that [removed] gave me that idea to add language to our exercising movements and with the help of her of course if she was able to take the time to do that with me.

DANA: that would be so fun

SUBJECT B: That would be so fun

4. DANA: How would you define tradition or culture? (How would you explain it to someone who is non-Indigenous?)

SUBJECT B: traditional culture, like mine specifically...I would see it as something from different cultures outside of mine. I like to see that it's different from other cultures and to see like when I listen to traditional music and I see the dancing it feels like home in a way. And I really enjoy watching the support outside of the community who appreciate our traditional music and our traditional dancing and our traditional foods that we put out there when we hold our potlatches. It's really nice to see people wanting to be more culturally involved with us, I think it's a beautiful culture like we just want to celebrate it and we would like to include everyone as well, which I think is beautiful.

5. DANA: How does Carrier tradition and culture connect to health and well-being?

SUBJECT B: I think it connects ... because it's the way we used to live back in the day and being outdoors more, being more involved with our culture and with our food, um, it just feels like home and I think ... I think it connects with health and wellbeing because it's something that we're not doing on our phones and with technology and stuff and it's, it feels like healing when you are drumming and you are using your rattle and singing our traditional songs its something that we don't do on our phone and it brings it from feeling the outside world more feeling like we're back in our own world again I guess.

6. DANA: What are some cultural or traditional practices that are part of everyday life for your community members?

SUBJECT B: I say like our community gets involved with a lot of smudging, and cleansing, sometimes they do it here in the health center, like every morning they'll smudge the building and even like when we do our prayers together, it's another tradition that we keep going to be thankful for what creator gives us on our land and that's something that we

have here as the community to keep our lives going on a daily basis when it feel like life is getting heavy and stuff and it's a tool that you can use every day and I think it's awesome.

7. DANA: How would you include culture in programs for Elders? (any programs, not just physical activity)

SUBJECT B: yeah I think like going out and berry picking with the elders, or even doing some berry picking for them while even learning how to make bannok and cut fish, I think it's very healing and I've seen programs in the past bring that to our community because I do slowly see our culture dying down a little bit. Unfortunately, so when we have these things I think it's really important to really take in that knowledge when you're listening to your elder and they're telling you exactly how we do it and in our traditional way I guess so it's really important to listen to your elders when they're speaking.

DANA: so, side question, why do you think that culture is dying down a little bit, do you think it's a lack of interest from the younger generations?

SUBJECT B: I think it's has a lot to do with screens and everything that this world is offering instead of, you know, we're lacking what we could offer to our community which I thing is very sad but I think it very much has to do with technology being involved in our lives now. Like our TVs, our cell phones, our vehicles, that's why it's really hard to take it all in especially if we're trying to learn something from an elder and our phones are there, I think it's best if we don't, if our phones are off during that time.

8. DANA: What are some cultural or traditional practices to include in physical activity programs?

SUBJECT B: I'd say like fishing is one, setting net would be a good recreational, cultural practice that would be fun to do. We also I don't know if it's like very traditional, but snagging off the bridge for some salmon. We haven't done... I think it's just something that we started doing later on.

DANA: and this is in your community? I haven't heard that one.

SUBJECT B: I don't think it's just in my community but I remember when I was a child I used to go to the Nadleh bridge and I'd have my fishing hook on a line connected to a can and I would hold on to the can and I would twirl the hook around and throw it into the water and then wait until I'd see a fish swim across my hook and then you would snag it and then you would ...

DANA: how big is the hook?

SUBJECT B: I think it's about that big [indicates it's about 1 inch long]

DANA: that seems like some major hand eye coordination

SUBJECT B: yeah...

DANA: How does including traditional activities impact Elders' willingness to participate in programs? (Any programs, not just physical activity)

SUBJECT B: I think it's really good to include our language in any of our programs, like [removed] said including it in my exercise programs, I didn't think of it until she said it, and I think it's a really good idea. And like incorporating language into our cooking practices as well, it would be really beautiful one day to see using our language when we're doing things together. And even like playing lahal, that's another fun little thing we can get the elders involved in, and drumming and dancing. It's really nice to see. I think it really connects them back to who they are and brings them back to back in the day if we do cultural practices more. It would be really nice to see our younger generation to start doing more traditional practices.

DANA: do you think that would bring in, or bridge that generational gap a little bit.

SUBJECT B: I think if we got more of our younger generation involved with the elders, I think that would really bring them together and it would also kind of save our traditional ways if we did that, involved the younger generation with the elders.

END OF INTERVIEW

Appendix C

Summary Table of Content Analysis Key words/terms

	Key words or terms	Cultural relevance / knowledge / competence	Holistic health/wellness	Physical Activity/health	Land-based activity/ies (any of the following words): hunting, fishing, fishnet gathering, berry picking	Intergenerational knowledge / transfer (elders passing on information)	Oral tradition OR story telling
	Highlighter color	GREEN	YELLOW	BLUE	PINK	ORANGE	PURPLE
CSFS	Whu Neh Nee (Wise Ones) Carrier Leadership Traits and Practices	14	6	0	0	0	3
News letter	Goozih Mar/Apr '24	8	2	8	1		1
	Goozih Nov/Dec '24	3	1		8	2	3
www.csfs.org	Home: Age 60+		2			2	
	Overview	2	4				
	Mandate, Objectives & Mission						
	History	2	2				
Sus Yah (CSFS staff intranet)	Community Health						
	Health promotion & physical activity		4	5			
	Primary Care						
	Women's groups	1	1		1		
CSFS	2022-2026 Strategic Plan	4	2		1	1	

Appendix C1

Summary notes from contents analysis

MMW March p.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural acts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drumming, songs, healing fire talk of cultural acts to honour MMIW
Msg ED of ch + fam. serv.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fam interx + cult + Cmnty = health + wellness.
HPPA highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains phys lit + cnx to health + wellness.
Culture Corner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> navigating social work in Indig cmnts
Elder Youth Mentorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fams @ ongoing game - cultural acts/presentation: drumming, powwow dance
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural acts to cnx cmnts + fams - for fun + (+) engagement + events to grief + awareness.

Msg from CEO p.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> new facilities for land-based healing } generalizing cmnty health + wellness initiatives
elder teachings + intronx of life	
ceremony + shared customs	
Journey to Tachick Lk Healing Ctr. p.3	
all clan fast	} celebrating Ormond Lk healing center
- frog, caribou, bear + beaver	
oral tradition of potlatch	
Ormond Lk + work to culture + relationship to land	
- residential tx center, true wisdom of elders + ucnx to land	
land-based healing center + it's hx.	
went thru accreditation when feedback was (-)	
Jurisdiction ... p.6	
helping children in care - what do they need?	

Culture Corner - A seat at the table p.7

• interview w/ chef Andrew George re ~~receiving~~ being inducted into the BC restaurant hall of fame. Lifetime achievement.

Program Highlight: Mobile Diabetes...

• overview of diabetes, reducing risk

Calls for Justice Updates p.12

Stories of Hope + Strength SM. Campaign

• stories shared thru social media re: how to address 231 calls for justice to end violence against women

• elders are instrumental in teaching Carrier + Sekani ppl.

Overview

• necessitate 1st Nations control through holistic wellness services

- recover from effects of colonization

• programs built on cultural practices + in line w/ Bah'laas (postbitch) principles + values.

Sus Yah cont

Men's wellness → not included b/c this program is not currently active (no coordinator) - would be relevant

Primary Care Services → provides health care to community members: family drs, NPs, cmnty health nurse, MOA's, OT, PT, mental health clinicians, etc.

- integrated + interdisciplinary service coordination for client support

Women's Groups → safe + supportive enviro for women's empowerment + share experiences, positivity + pers. growth

- self-care - creative exp - mindfulness

- outdoor actv's - lit. engage - phys well

- cult. eng.

Mandate, Objectives + Mission

• est. health, legal, + social services, working towards Indig. self govt.

History

• CSFS created in response to concerns of elders + decisions had about the Carrier cmnts

- re: ↑ suicide rates, no health care, poverty

- began working w/ Carrier fams: nurses + SW

- foster children can now stay in culturally relevant enviro

- worked for culturally relevant dispute resolution → 1st ntns mediators

- ensure research on Carrier ppl meets their needs

Sus Yah - staff intranet

Health Services → link to several health serv. dep pages: some pages selected.

Community health: supports health transfer agreements, navigating funding + admin

- updating cmnty health plans

HPPA: supports healthy + active lifestyle thru bldg capacity for movement, rec + sps

Content Analysis:

- CSFS says that culture leads their service delivery; it is valued and is upheld as a fundamental component of all services across the organization
- The documents analyzed reflect this position. Culture showed to be the highest relevant theme analyzed; and the documents reflect the CSFS mission/mandate that culture is the foundation of "all that we do" (reference).

- Cultural relevance, cultural competence... was noted 30 times throughout all documents analyzed, health and wellness ... was noted 21 times, physical activity/health noted 13 times, land-based activities (or a named land-based activity) 10 times, intergenerational knowledge transmission or similar 4 times, and storytelling/oral tradition 7 times.
 - All key themes were reflected across the documentation demonstrating just how important culture is to holistic health and wellness.
 - Physical activity was very well represented within these numbers – HPPA is a new department within CSFS and has already begun to make a mark in the documents.
 - Links to what CHR A said about how physical activity is a way of life – through land-based activity, which are survival skills; rooted in who they are, how they live, and how they survive.