

In the North & Across Turtle Island

INDIGENOUS LAND-BASED LEARNING

In the Era of Covid-19

2021 | MARCH



DECHINTA
Centre for Research and Learning

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has drastically altered the landscape of education across Turtle Island. For Indigenous land-based educators, whose immersive programs require that students be out on the land together, these changes are particularly concerning. In response to these concerns, Dechinta hosted a COVID-19 Webinar Series in the summer of 2020 to examine the risks of moving Indigenous land-based education online and to offer possible solutions, mitigations or alternatives to carrying out immersive group learning in land-based education during the pandemic. Participants agreed that the wisdom of the land, and its centrality to Indigenous life and politics, provides the foundation for land-based education and that online learning cannot replace this mode of pedagogy. Participants also discussed opportunities and barriers to queering land-based education, the unique issues land-based educators in the North are navigating, and the benefits of returning to the land during a pandemic. This report is an analysis and response to these conversations, as well as a toolkit and resource to assist educators and students who are continuing their land-based programming during COVID-19.

PARTNERSHIPS

Dechinta was able to carry out this project in partnership with the **Mastercard Foundation**. Learn more about their work at mastercardfdn.org



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ILLUSTRATION CREDIT

All photography courtesy of *Morgan Tsetta Film and Photography*. Morgan is a Vancouver-based Dene freelance photographer and videographer from the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, with a passion for film and her Dene culture. Her website is: <https://www.morgantsettafilms.com>.

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WEBINAR ACCESS

This report is intended to be a supplement for the *COVID-19 Webinar Series* that Dechinta hosted in 2020. To access these videos, visit www.dechinta.ca/covid19 or view them on the [Dechinta Centre YouTube channel](#). Written transcripts of the webinars are also available on our website.

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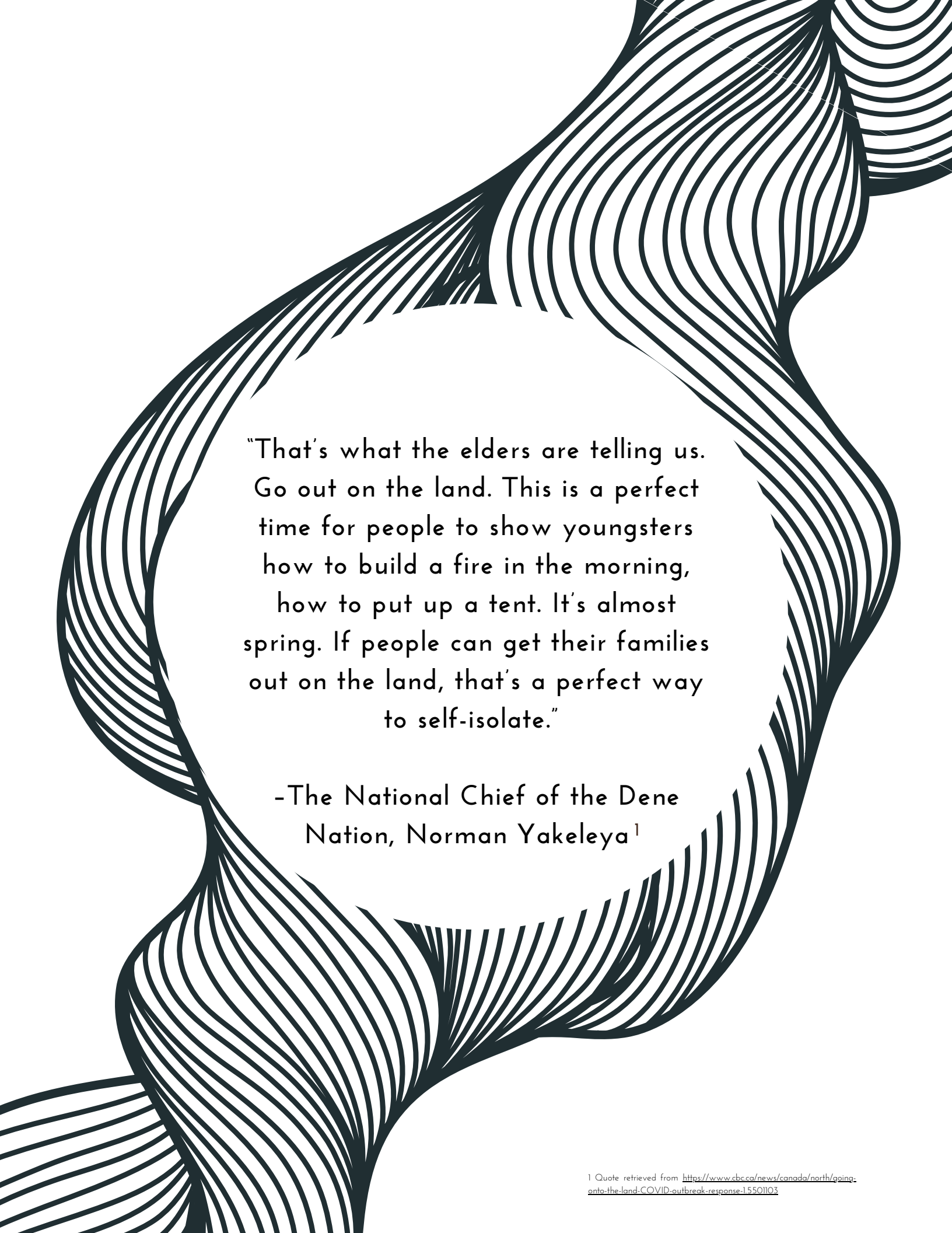
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"That's what the elders are telling us.
Go out on the land. This is a perfect
time for people to show youngsters
how to build a fire in the morning,
how to put up a tent. It's almost
spring. If people can get their families
out on the land, that's a perfect way
to self-isolate."

-The National Chief of the Dene
Nation, Norman Yakeleya¹

¹ Quote retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/going-onto-the-land-COVID-outbreak-response-1.5501103>



Introduction

In the North and across Turtle Island, the impact of Indigenous land-based education extends beyond the boundaries of 'school' and is a critical component to nation-building, political and cultural resurgence, decolonization, and addressing gender-based violence. It also plays an important role in both physical and mental health, empowering students, educators, and community members to (re)connect with Indigenous ways of knowing and being, centering them within their own educational programs and giving them the tools to care for themselves and their communities using Indigenous practices. Land-based learning has always, and continues to be, an increasingly important source of social, political, economic, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing for Indigenous Peoples.



In early 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic shut down the world for everyone. For Indigenous Peoples, the subsequent stay-at-home orders and the move towards online work and school posed a specific set of challenges and consequences. In recent months discussions of COVID-19 and its impact on Indigenous communities have primarily focused on determinants of health, with an emphasis on the disproportionate health and safety risks Indigenous people face because of the virus. Additionally, some discussions have emerged around the federal government's obligations to Indigenous Peoples in areas of health and safety. This report will expand upon these discussions by addressing how the COVID-19 restrictions have prevented Indigenous Peoples, and especially students, from engaging in activities and forms of education that are critical to their well-being, including the ability to practice and learn cultural knowledge and traditions, have land connection, and to participate in community events. Though being out on the land immersed in land-based practices and Indigenous ways of knowing has the potential to foster resiliency and security among Indigenous Peoples struggling against coronavirus, government restrictions and the move to 'online learning' has made doing so difficult and in some cases, impossible.

Our aim with this report and toolkit is to address the specific impact of the pandemic on Indigenous land-based education, while providing resources that bridge some of the specific educational gaps the coronavirus pandemic has produced for Indigenous people in both the North and across Turtle Island. Dechinta hopes that in doing so, we can provide both theoretical and practical tools to educators, students, and community members to support them in navigating their own relationship to Indigenous land-based education and practice in the era of COVID-19.

Report Overview

Indigenous land-based education fosters the health, safety, empowerment, resilience, and holistic wellbeing of Indigenous nations. Dechinta understands the significance of learning and connecting to Indigenous Knowledge, traditions, and practices for Indigenous communities and students. This project was created in response to the urgent needs of Indigenous communities in the North during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as more broadly across Turtle Island.

This report is both a research endeavour and a community resource. The contents of this report generate important knowledge around the ethical and practical challenges (and possibilities) of conducting land-based education remotely during COVID-19, while simultaneously acting as a practical resource that educators and students can learn from while in-person, land-based education is prohibited. It aims to understand and model how land-based education can be moved to remote delivery in an ethical, accessible way.

The project has been guided by the following key questions:

- Can Indigenous land-based education be moved online?
- What could virtual land-based education look like?
- What new insights has the pandemic revealed about Indigenous land-based education?
- What does it mean to increase the accessibility of Indigenous land-based education? What are the potential benefits and risks?
- How do we create pedagogical tools that enable individuals to participate in land-based education remotely, while maintaining the important decolonial, political and Indigenous legal significance of land-based education?
- How can the distribution of these online materials maintain the intellectual property rights of communities and knowledge holders?

To answer these questions, and generate resources in response to these questions, Dechinta hosted a COVID-19 Webinar Series with key stakeholders in community-based programming, Elders and Knowledge Holders, those in positions of academic leadership, and students involved in land-based education initiatives. The result was a number of critical conversations that generate the framework of this report:

Part One: Navigating Land-Based Education and Pandemics in the North

Part Two: Removing the Land from Indigenous Land-Based Education

Part Three: Queering Indigenous Land-Based Education

Part Four: Returning to the Land During a Time of Great Sickness

Each of these sections in this report include several tools and resources for students and educators. These consist of:

- A summarized version of the COVID-19 Webinar Series
- Lesson plans and reading lists for each webinar
- Recorded interviews with Elders and knowledge holders
- A curation of additional resources on COVID-19 and land-based education

Through the webinars, interviews, and curated lesson plans included in this report, we hope to get students and educators to think critically and creatively about carrying out land-based education remotely during the coronavirus pandemic. It is also our intention to illuminate the unique qualities of Indigenous land-based learning, teach students the history of colonialism and pandemics in the North and elsewhere, provide educators and students with accessible and otherwise unavailable lessons from a diverse group of Indigenous leaders, and aid Indigenous educators by providing a variety of land-engaged teaching tools compatible with online/remote delivery.

COVID-19 Webinar Series

In the summer of 2020, Dechinta hosted a series of webinars and interviews that led to the creation of this report. The informative conversations that took place through this endeavour produced valuable knowledge on the possibilities and limitations of adapting Indigenous land-based education to online, socially distanced formats. Our analysis of the discussions which took place through the COVID-19 Webinar Series led us to create a series of general themes on the topic. We have summarized the main points of discussion for each theme below:

Part One: Navigating Land-Based Education and Pandemics in the North focuses on the specific challenges that Northern community members are facing when trying to conduct land-based education during the imposed restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The foundations of Dene laws and ethics (including relationships, respect, responsibility, and consent) are also discussed, along with the opportunities, risks, and challenges of doing Indigenous education online in the North. As well, an interview with Yellowknives Dene Elder Fred Sangris discusses the history of pandemics in the North.

Part Two: Removing the Land from Land-Based Education focuses on what it means to remove the physical land from land-based education. The participants discuss the limitations of western education institutions and the risks of moving land-based learning online amidst the restrictions of COVID-19. The foundations of Indigenous land-based education are discussed, including the relationship between land-based education and Indigenous resurgence, and the political nature of Indigenous land-based learning as a foundation of personal and community governance.

Part Three: Queering Indigenous Land-Based Education rethinks what land-based education

is, and can be, from a queer perspective. This theme draws attention to how queer Indigeneity allows for traditional ideas and practices around land, nation, relationality, pedagogy, and politics to be creatively transformed and reconceptualized, and why this is important to pursue during the restrictions of the Covid-19 shutdown. As well, the foundations of 'queering' and Indigenous queer theory are discussed.

Part Four: Returning to the Land During a Time of Great Sickness is a general collection of resources and voices from across Turtle Island that discuss the importance of maintaining Indigenous ways of living and being during the pandemic, while offering some practical ways to do so. This theme also draws from an interview with Curve Lake First Nation Elder Doug Williams, who speaks about the importance of returning to traditional understandings of health and safety and emphasizes the centrality that land has to Indigenous survival in the present

While this report reflects a synthesized version of this knowledge, it is our intention that the recorded videos of these discussions remain the central component of this project. These videos can be accessed at the following locations:

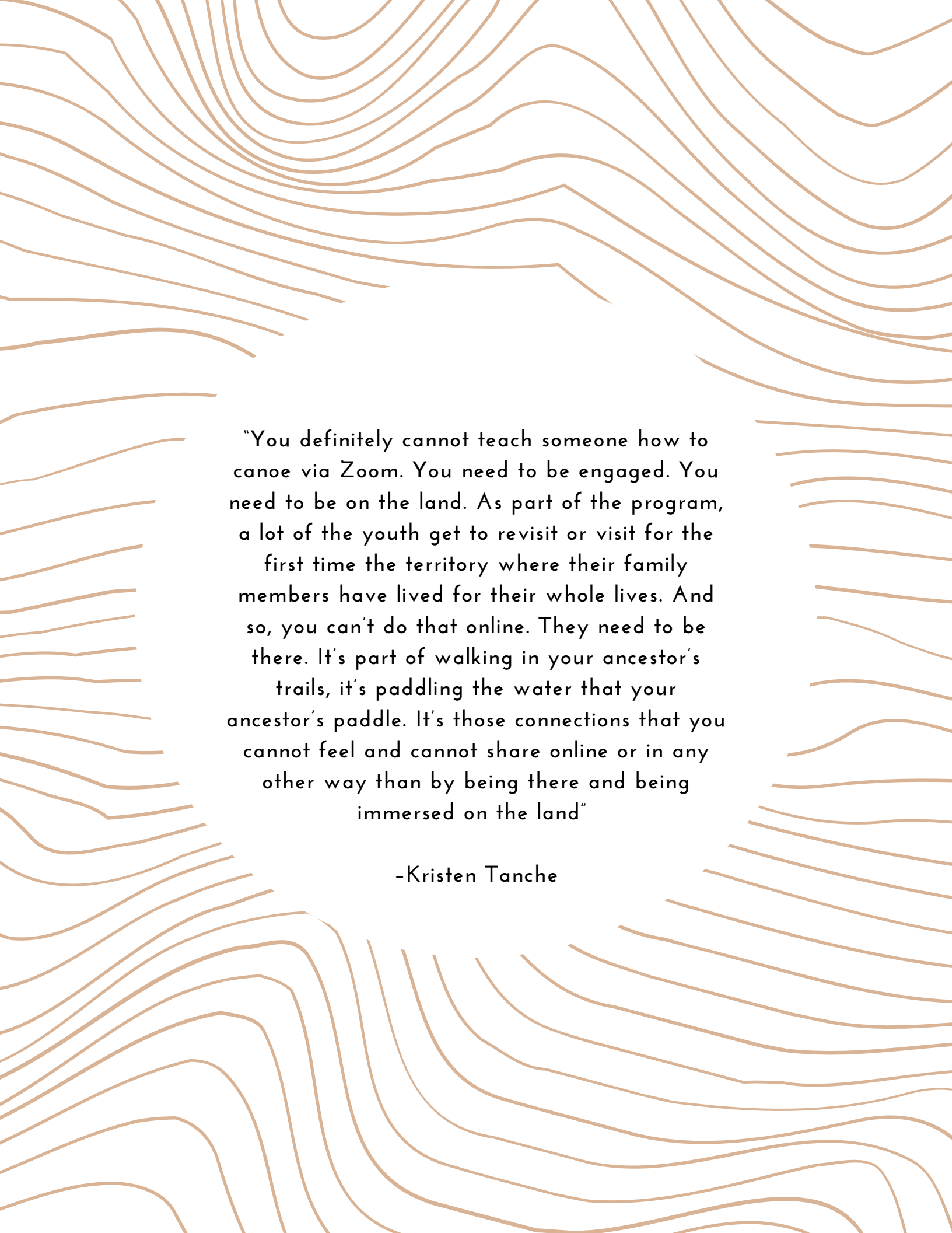
- **[Dechinta Centre YouTube Channel](#)**
- **www.dechinta.ca/covid19**

If you have any questions about accessing these videos, or any trouble viewing them, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at admin@dechinta.ca and we will be happy to help you.

It is also important to us that the recorded webinars and interviews are accessible for everyone. We have created written transcripts of these videos to provide an alternative way to enjoy the conversation. These transcripts are available to view or download on our website at: www.dechinta.ca/COVID19.

PART ONE: **Navigating Land-Based Education and Pandemics in the North**





"You definitely cannot teach someone how to canoe via Zoom. You need to be engaged. You need to be on the land. As part of the program, a lot of the youth get to revisit or visit for the first time the territory where their family members have lived for their whole lives. And so, you can't do that online. They need to be there. It's part of walking in your ancestor's trails, it's paddling the water that your ancestor's paddle. It's those connections that you cannot feel and cannot share online or in any other way than by being there and being immersed on the land"

-Kristen Tanche

"Here in Ross, there's not really a way of translating a Dene law [online], it is comprised of respect. It's all based on respect and reciprocity and our connection to the land. When you harvest moose or caribou as a person... it's by respect that you give away your first big kill. That's your introduction into the practices that we practiced throughout history"

- Robby Dick



Indigenous communities and educators in the North face a specific set of challenges amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Talking to Northern community members, with a specific focus on the Dene curriculum of Dechinta, revealed the incommensurability of online learning and Northern land-based education. The risks and concerns that were discussed included:

Learning Law/Ethics Online: The overwhelming concern amongst participants was that teaching Dene law, ethics, and being is an embodied experience for students that requires them to be in a direct relationship to the land, with each other, and with their instructors and Elders. The ethical practices associated with offering tobacco and praying, harvesting moose or caribou, setting up camp, or harvesting fish can only be learned on the land. It was also emphasized that one of the most important parts of immersive land-based education is having students participate in communal life. The lessons of consent, reciprocity, care, and connection that come from this experience cannot be replicated in isolation or online.

Community Concerns: Elders have expressed concern with the risks of making land-based knowledge and traditional practices available online. There could be unforeseen consequences of doing so and the risk of exploitation and cultural appropriation must be considered. As well, land-based education in the North is deeply rooted in redistributing resources to the community, a process that has been disrupted by the safety regulations of COVID-19.

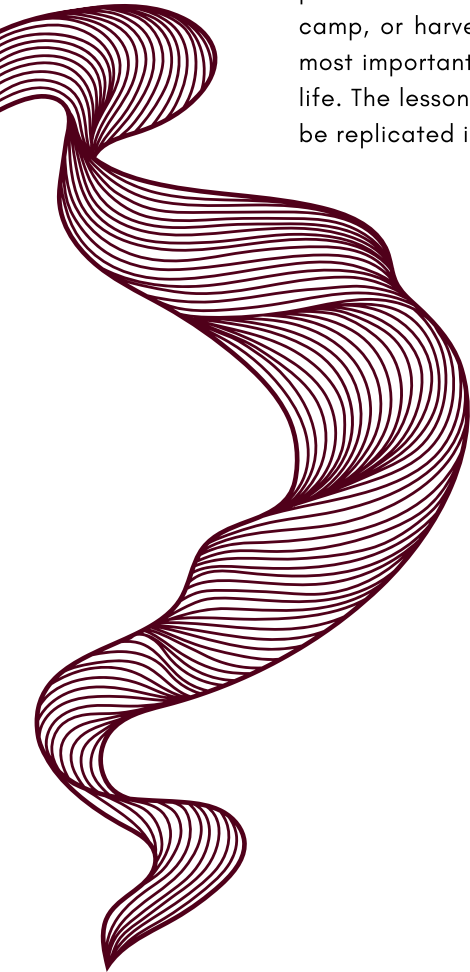
Access to Internet and Technology: The move to online education poses an accessibility issue to students in the North that is often overlooked. Not everybody in the North has access to high-speed quality internet or computers, especially those in remote communities. As well, affording the cost of internet when entire families are working from home can pose a barrier to accessing education.

Memories of Past Epidemics: As the panelists and Elder Fred Sangris discuss, the pandemic has brought back the history of invasion and colonial dispossession in the North, where Indigenous communities have historically been exposed to devastating epidemics of illness. This history can be traumatic for individuals and families to re-live. The ethics of asking students to process this history in an isolated online setting, while also surviving the current pandemic, must be considered.



"...when we engage in online spaces, these are exclusive spaces, these aren't spaces that everyone has equal access to. So many of the communities that I've worked in have only gotten electricity in the last couple years, let alone internet, let alone Zoom"

- Kyle Shaughnessy

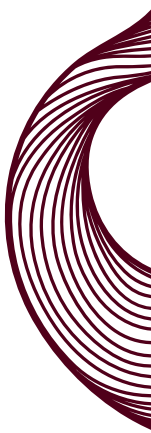
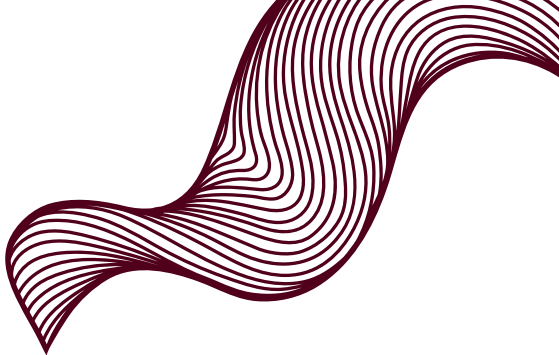


Despite these concerns, the participants also spoke about COVID-19 as presenting a set of possibilities for land-based and Indigenous learning in the North. These included:

Self-Isolating Outside: The landscape of the North offers potential opportunities for land-based education to continue in alternative ways that abide by social distancing regulations. Elders and knowledge holders have emphasized that returning to the land in the North is a form of self-isolation that can encourage people to engage in cultural practices and connect with the land and who they are as Indigenous people.

Strengthening Particular Aspects of Indigenous Knowledge: We might use this moment to focus on learning and documenting history, stories, and language learning in ways that abide by COVID-19 restrictions. Online platforms offer a way to connect with students who may not otherwise have access to land, and educators and educational videos might inspire youth to ask questions, go out on the land around them, and get involved in learning their culture. When doing so, asking Elders and community members what knowledge they want to share is essential. We must have serious conversations about the risks of distributing knowledge online and ensure that we take care of our Elders and Knowledge holders when doing so.

Learning from COVID: The slowed-down pace of pandemic life offers an opportunity for us to reflect and learn from the land in safe and distanced ways. For example, as we observe animals and wildlife returning to our backyards and our cities amidst stay-at-home protocol, we can learn lessons about having respect for the land and consider our relationship to the non-human world.



"I think videos and making things online can be really great if it's done in a really appropriate way. By the people, for the people, and on the people's terms, showing what they want to be shared. But there are always risks. There are always risks with cultural appropriation and access to our knowledge. But the knowledge holders have the power of sharing that knowledge and they know if they want to share it with people beyond those in their community. It depends on the situation and it depends on what's being taught"

– Kristen Tanche



Webinar One:

Community Considerations of Online Land-Based Education in the North

This webinar examines what it means to remove the land from Indigenous land-based education in the North, and how this impacts the ability to learn relational ethics and politics from a Northern Indigenous worldview. The panelists, a group of students and young professionals who are involved in Indigenous land-based learning in Northern communities, discuss the unique ethical concerns and considerations of doing online land-based education during COVID-19. The speakers talk about how they have engaged in Indigenous land-based learning in the past, how they have adjusted their approaches during COVID-19, and the politics of colonial knowledge production that is illuminated by online learning. They also touch on the wisdom of the land, its centrality to Dene life and politics, and why online learning cannot replace land-based pedagogy.

Panelists:

Kristen Tanche (*Łíídlı́ Kúé*), Regional Health & Wellness Coordinator, Dehcho First Nations
Josh Barichello, Dechinta Regional Coordinator at Ross River
Robby Dick (*Kaska Dene*), Ross River, Dechinta Alumni
Christina Gray (*Tsimshian and Dene*), Associate Lawyer at JFK Law Corporation and Master of Laws Student at UVic
Siku Allooooloo (*Inuk/Haitian Taino*), past alumni, land-based coordinator, and Dechinta Board Member

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop an understanding of what land-based learning is, and does, from a perspective of Dene law and ethics. Gain awareness of how the land teaches governance, law, ethics, and overall ways of being that cannot be replicated through online learning formats. Reflect on the limitations and possibilities of shifting to online learning, and the different ethical considerations of sharing Indigenous knowledge online.
2. Reflect on the practical limitations of doing online Indigenous land-based learning in the North. This includes understanding internet inaccessibility and the limitations of moving to an

online learning format for people living in rural and remote communities.

3. Understand how the internet might impact traditional values of responsibility and Indigenous/Dene ways of being. Think through the ways the internet, as a central mode of learning in Western educational institutions, perpetuates Eurocentric modes of thinking/being that are non-relational and individualistic.

Discussion Questions

1. At different points in the webinar, each of the speakers argue that you cannot write a code of Indigenous and/or Dene ethics down on paper. According to the panelists and the readings, what are Indigenous and/or Dene ethics, how are they generated, and how are they learned?
2. Each of the following terms were discussed in the webinar as important aspects of Dene/Indigenous ethics that are learned through land-based education. Define each, provide an example of how the land teaches and embodies these ethical principles, and reflect on the limitations of learning these values online:
 - a. Consent
 - b. Interconnectedness
 - c. The 4 R's: Responsibility, Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity
3. In the webinar, both the possibilities and limitations of posting traditional knowledge on the internet are discussed.
 - a. What are the risks of moving land-based learning online? What are some of the possible benefits?
 - b. What are some of the specific challenges that Northern communities face when trying to conduct online land-based education amidst COVID-19 protocols?
 - c. If traditional knowledge is posted online, what are the conditions that must be in place to ensure that it is done in an ethical way?

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/MdBvW02dINI>

Learn More

"Turning to Traditional Processes to Support Mental Health", Ashely Cavil
<https://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/ashley-carvill-policy-paper/>

"Ways forward in addictions programming in Fort Simpson Northwest Territories Dene Gogõndié Voices of the People", Kristen Tanche
<https://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/ways-forward-in-addictions-programming-in-fort-simpson-northwest-territories-dene-gog%C7%abndie-voices-of-the-people/>

"Nunami Ilinniarniq: Inuit Community Control of Education through Land-based Education", Marjorie Kaviq Kalurqa
<https://gordonfoundation.ca/resource/kaviq-kaluraq-policy-paper/>

On the Land Education Deh Gáh Elementary and Secondary School, Indspire
<https://indspire.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/DehGah-on-the-land-Final-5.pdf>

"Why on-the-land educators see opportunity in a global pandemic", John Last
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/on-the-land-education-COVID-19-1.5571602>

"Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit", Government of Northwest Territories
<https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/en/services/liste-des-programmes-detudes-et-des-ecoles-des-tno/dene-kede-and-inuuqatigiit>

"Go back to the old way: First Nations return to land during COVID-19 pandemic", Kelly Geraldine Malone
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/go-back-to-the-old-way-first-nations-return-to-land-during-COVID-19-pandemic-1.4932927>

"Red Skins White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition" (Chapter 4 - For the Land: The Dene Nation's Struggle for Self-Determination), Glen Coulthard
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad0d247af209613040b9ceb/t/5dffba8a27eac52da18efcd3/1577040525580/%5BCoulthard%2C+Glen+Sean%5D+Red+Skin%2C+White+Masks+Rej%28z-lib.org%29.pdf>

McDonald, Mandee (2020). Moosehide Tanning and Wellness in the North. In Starblanket, G. & Long, D. (5th Edition) Visions of the heart: Issues involving Indigenous Peoples in Canada (pp. 220-236). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Redvers, J. M. (2020). "The land is a healer": Perspectives on land-based healing from Indigenous practitioners in northern Canada. International Journal of Indigenous Health, 15(1), 90-107.
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijih/article/view/34046/26829>

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/MdBvW02dINI>

Community Interview: Fred Sangris

In this video, Yellowknives Dene Elder Fred Sangris teaches us about the history of sickness and epidemic in the North. Fred Sangris is a member of the Yellowknife Dene First Nation. He is the former Chief of the Yellowknives Dene First Nations (N'dilo) and land claim negotiator. He is a community negotiator with the Treaty 8 Yellowknives Dene, a cultural historian, trapper, storyteller and hunter who cares deeply about the land. Fred lives in Tétzehdaà (Dettah).

"We know the story, us Dene, we know the story of what happened. We share the story with the other elders, we share the story with our schools. What we want to do is we want our families and other Dene people and other Indigenous people to know what happened to us, because Canada is not going to talk about it. Canada is not going to say anything"

Key Conversation Points

Fred recounts the story and history of the early 1900's epidemic in the North. He learned this history from his father and grandfather, who were the only two members of his family who survived the epidemic of that time.

In recounting this story, Fred touches on themes of:

- Indigenous sovereignty
- Land title
- Colonial settlement and its long-term impact in the North
- The limitations of reconciliation
- Dene resurgence and spirituality
- The importance of returning to the land during COVID-19

Discussion Questions

1. What can be learned from the history of pandemics that Indigenous people have faced? Why is it important to know this history?
2. How might this history be used as a guide to help us through the current pandemic?

Learn More

"GAHNAAANDAIH Unjoo kat degehnoo dai? anahgoogwaandak" or "We Remember the Coming of the White Man", Elizabeth Yakeleya, Sarah Simon and other Sahtú and Gwich'in Elders.

https://durvile.com/books/We_Remember.html

"The Hero of the Dene",

<https://www.uphere.ca/articles/hero-dene>

"When A Sacred Tree Falls, Everyone Hears About It".

<https://www.uphere.ca/articles/when-sacred-tree-falls-everyone-hears-about-it>

George Blondin, Yamoria The Law Maker

<https://newestpress.com/books/yamoria-the-lawmaker-0>

George Blondin, Trail of the Spirit

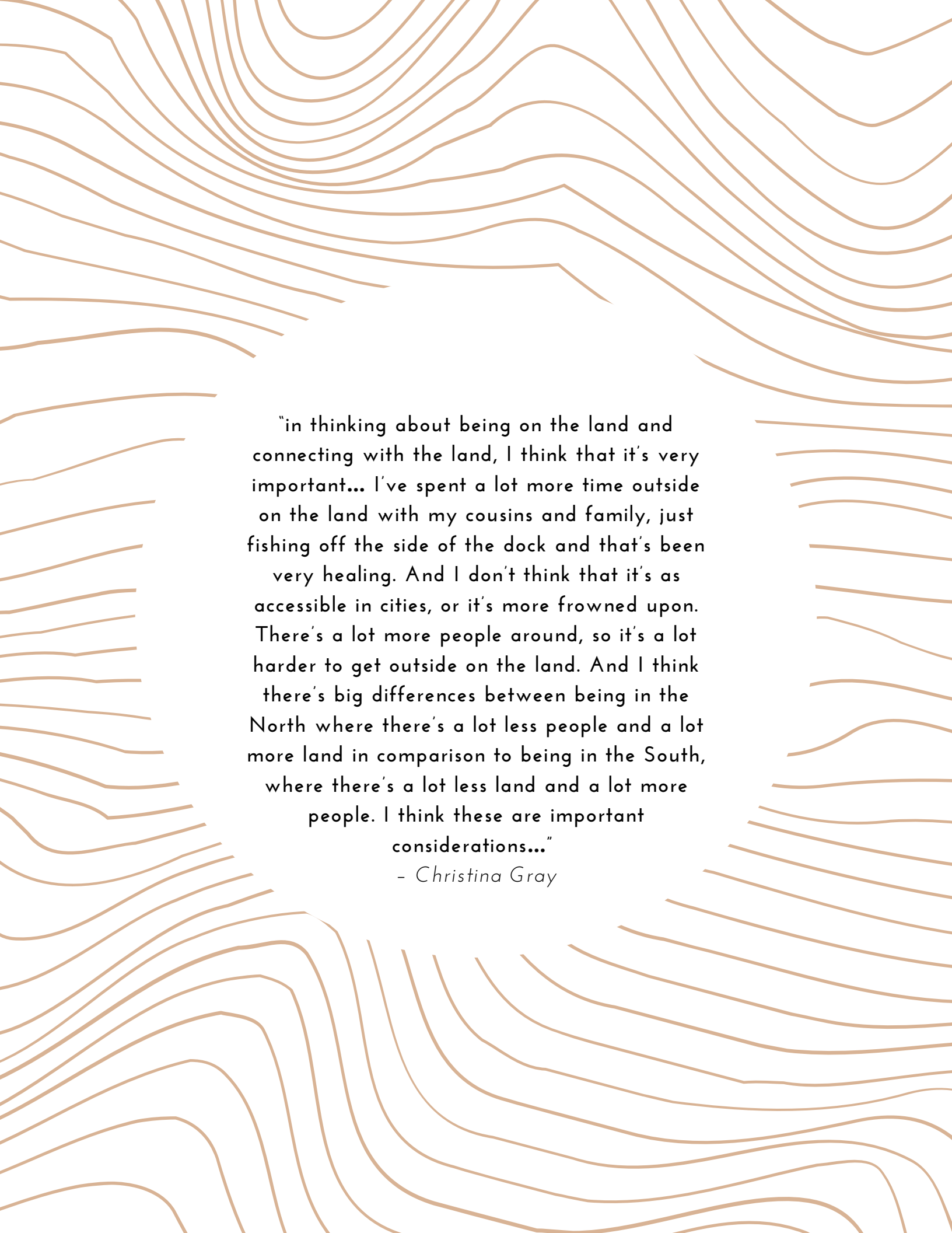
<https://newestpress.com/books/trail-of-the-spirit>

Johnny Neyelle, The Man Who Lived With A Giant

<https://www.uap.ualberta.ca/titles/950-9781772124088-man-who-lived-with-a-giant>

Interview Link:

<https://youtu.be/4vV0kdiKU-A>



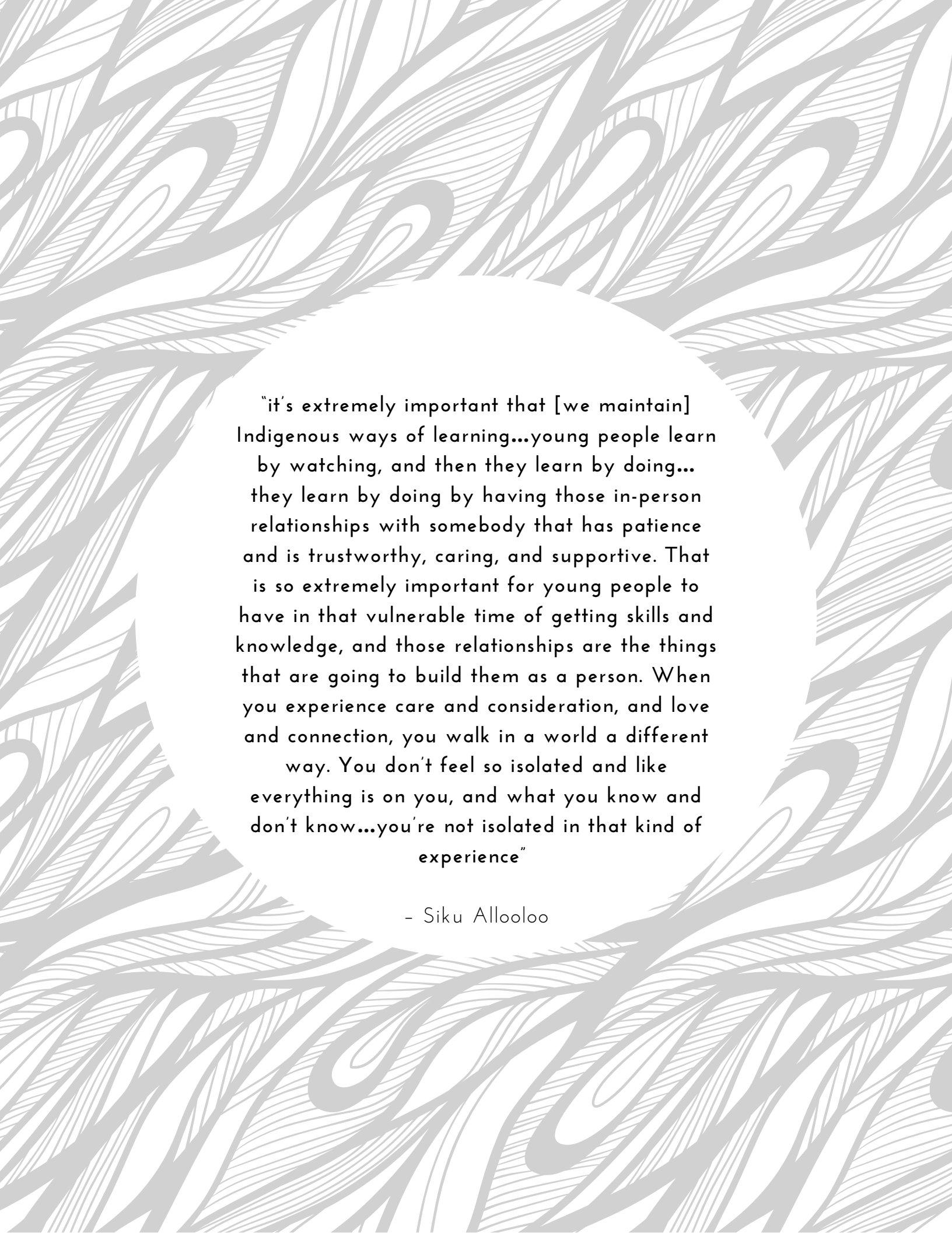
"in thinking about being on the land and connecting with the land, I think that it's very important... I've spent a lot more time outside on the land with my cousins and family, just fishing off the side of the dock and that's been very healing. And I don't think that it's as accessible in cities, or it's more frowned upon. There's a lot more people around, so it's a lot harder to get outside on the land. And I think there's big differences between being in the North where there's a lot less people and a lot more land in comparison to being in the South, where there's a lot less land and a lot more people. I think these are important considerations..."

- Christina Gray



PART TWO: Removing the Land from Land- Based Education





“it’s extremely important that [we maintain] Indigenous ways of learning...young people learn by watching, and then they learn by doing... they learn by doing by having those in-person relationships with somebody that has patience and is trustworthy, caring, and supportive. That is so extremely important for young people to have in that vulnerable time of getting skills and knowledge, and those relationships are the things that are going to build them as a person. When you experience care and consideration, and love and connection, you walk in a world a different way. You don’t feel so isolated and like everything is on you, and what you know and don’t know...you’re not isolated in that kind of experience”

- Siku Allooloo

The call to move education 'online' amidst the pandemic has required Indigenous land-based educators to consider a unique set of ethical and practical challenges. In the first two webinars Dechinta hosted, the panelists emphasized one point above all others -online learning *cannot* replace in-person, immersive land-based programs. It is not possible to remove the land from land-based education because the land itself is the teacher. Not only does it provide the foundation for teaching practical bush skills, but it also teaches students lessons of Indigenous ethics, spirituality, relationship building, self-determination, and nationhood that cannot be replicated on digital platforms. The land is, and must continue to be, the foundation of Indigenous land-based education.



"We have to be really honest about the risks [of online learning] and what can and cannot be done. You cannot do land-based education on Zoom. You miss everything that's important and everything that's meaningful..."

- Leanne Simpson

"As educators in the North who work in a land-based, very intimate community context, COVID puts us in a tricky situation. We have to continue delivering this decolonial sort of programming and redistributing resources from our organization back into the community so [community members] can feed their families, feed the community, and keep those traditions alive. But we're also having to adhere to this push in terms of safety regulations that want us to be able to offer this type of education in a virtual online context..."

- Glen Coulthard



The discussions that took place emphasized that online or socially distanced measures put in place to preserve land-based education amidst coronavirus must be viewed as a temporary stopgap. It will never replace the learning that takes place on the land. In thinking about potential solutions to this dilemma, the panelists talked about the possibilities of doing alternative activities in the meantime amidst the forced restrictions of COVID-19. Some of these included:



Focus on Community Needs: Land-based education has always been about giving back to the community. What do communities, knowledge holders, and students need right now? What land-based education resources can be re-directed to address these needs during the pandemic?

Language Revitalization and Oral Learning: There are activities and lessons that can ethically be done online that are not land-based, but still teach some of the lessons and skills that are related to land-based education, such as language learning, storytelling, and sharing history.

Small-Scale Learning: Land-based education does not require traveling to other territories. The idea of micro-travel is especially important right now. It can help students understand the context of the land they currently live on, even prompting them to form a relationship with the land in their own backyard.

Practicing Solo or Family Ceremony: The COVID-19 restrictions provide an opportunity to engage in less formalized ceremonial practices. It also prompts us to consider what ceremony means to us, and how we can participate in ceremony on our own or with our household.

One-on-One Mentorship: Educators might use this time as an opportunity to engage in one-on-one mentorship with students online, engaging in check-ins, talking about what they are learning, and answering questions about participating in land-based activities from home.

Webinar Two:

Navigating Indigenous Land-Based Education During a Global Pandemic

This webinar examines the foundations of Indigenous land-based education and the challenges associated with moving this type of learning online. To approach these concerns, the panelists unpack the meaning of land-based education and its relationship to Indigenous resurgence. This is followed by a discussion of the complications and potential risks of shifting land-based education to an online learning format during the forced restrictions of COVID-19.

Panelists:

Alex Wilson (*Opaskwayak Cree*), *University of Saskatchewan*

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
(*Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg*), *Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning*

Glen Coulthard (*Yellowknives Dene*),
University of British Columbia

Learning Outcomes

- Gain an understanding of what land-based education is, what is distinct about *Indigenous* land-based education, why land-based education is personal and contextual, the relationship between land-based education and Indigenous resurgence, and how land-based learning has changed overtime.
- Think critically about Western education systems and their co-option of Indigenous land-based programming. Understand the limitations and risks of

carrying out land-based education online (namely the appropriation, commodification, misuse, and misrepresentation of Indigenous knowledge).

- Understand the personal and contextual nature of Indigenous land-based education. Students are encouraged to think about their own positionality and how this impacts their relationship to the specific lands on which they live, work, and/or study.

Discussion Questions

1. What is specific about Indigenous land-based education? How is it different from other forms of outdoor education? Why is this distinction important?
2. How is land-based learning defined by relationships and relational ways of being? How does this inform personal and community governance?
3. What is epistemicide, how is it related to colonialism, and how has it impacted Indigenous peoples and their relationship to land? How does land-based education counter this ongoing legacy?
4. How has land-based learning changed over the years? What do these panel speakers outline as the risks of moving land-based education online? In what ways do Western education systems and institutions pose a risk to Indigenous land-based learning?

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/X-Oo4aeVL4U>

Learn More

"Reconnecting to the Spirit of the Language", Lana Whiskeyjack and Kyla Napier

<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/reconnecting-to-the-spirit-of-the-language>

"Becoming Intimate with the Land", Alex Wilson

<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/becoming-intimate-with-the-land>

"To Wood Buffalo Park With Love", Chloe Dragon Smith and Robert Grandjambe

<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/to-wood-buffalo-national-park-with-love>

"This Prairie City is land, too", Lindsey Nixon

<https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/this-prairie-city-is-land-too>

"Leanne Simpson and Glen Coulthard on Dechinta Bush University, Indigenous land-based education and embodied resurgence", Eric Ritskes, Leanne Simpson, and Glen Coulthard

<https://decolonization.wordpress.com/2014/11/26/leanne-simpson-and-glen-coulthard-on-dechinta-bush-university-indigenous-land-based-education-and-embodied-resurgence/>

"Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation", Leanne Simpson

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/22170/17985>

Videos

- **Elisapie, Arnaq:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz-iVxjOxGE>
- **Three Thousand, Asinnajaq:** <https://www.nfb.ca/film/three-thousand/>
- **Angry Inuk, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril:**
<https://www.cbc.ca/cbcdocspov/episodes/angry-inuk>
- **Amanda Strong, Biidaaban:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWjnYKyUB8>
- **Dene A Journey:** <http://deneajourney.com/episodes/>

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/X-Oo4aeVL4U>

Webinar Three:

Academic Perspectives on Indigenous Ethics and Online Land-Based Education During COVID-19

This webinar explores the unique ethical concerns of moving Indigenous land-based education online from the perspective of academics and university professors. Participants explore their own experiences teaching land-based education and how their role as educators has been impacted by COVID-19. They emphasize that land-based learning ethically necessitates face-to-face engagement and a physical connection to the land that cannot be replicated in a socially distanced, online environment. They also reflect on how land-based programming requires an environment that prioritizes relationships and student well-being and transformation, and that attempting to move this type of intimate and immersive learning online is unethical and potentially harmful.

Panelists:

Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua
(*Kanaka Maoli*), University of Hawaii at Manoa
Heidi Kiiwetinepinisiik Stark
(*Turtle Mountain Ojibwe*), University of Victoria
Lianne Marie Leda Charlie
(*Tagé Cho Hudän*), Yukon University
Jeff Cornassel
(*Cherokee*), University of Victoria
Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
(*Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg*), Dechinta Centre
Glen Coulthard
(*Yellowknife Dene*), UBC
Alex Wilson (*Opaskwayak Cree*), University of Saskatchewan

Learning Outcomes

- Gain a preliminary understanding of Indigenous ethics and how they are derived from an engagement with, and relationship to, land and the non-human. Learn about the central aspects of an Indigenous ethic that is learned and produced through land-based education, including: relationality, accountability, active practice, community, interconnectedness, physicality, emotional engagement, and spirituality.

- Consider the ethical risks of conducting Indigenous land-based education through online platforms. This involves the risks of knowledge commodification, the misrepresentation of spiritual knowledge, and the inability to engage with and compensate community actors who are involved in land-based learning. It also requires a consideration of how Indigenous ethics are lived through an ongoing relationship to land and how this type of ethical engagement and mode of existence cannot be re-created online.
- Think through possible ethical alternatives to doing Indigenous land-based education online until pandemic protocols are lifted, such as thinking critically about current ceremonial practices or focusing on language revitalization.

Discussion Questions

1. Define the concept of grounded normativity, as outlined by Leanne Simpson in her book *As We Have Always Done*. What does this concept have to do with a conversation around land-based education and ethics?
 - a. Though not explicitly stated, this idea of grounded normativity, or Indigenous ethics, is identified throughout the webinar as the reason why land-based education cannot be carried out online. Why is this the case?
2. In addition to the above concern, what other ethical issues were mentioned during the panel discussion? List them here and explain why these concerns exist from a perspective of Indigenous ethics (either as you learned it in the video or from your own experience and knowledge).
3. What were a few ethical alternatives to online land-based education that were mentioned in the webinar? Can you think of any other possible opportunities or avenues that could take the place of online land-based learning until the COVID-19 pandemic is over? Are there educational areas that you feel could be prioritized right now in Indigenous communities? In your own community?

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/7ghDa3eMiqA>

Learn More



"Creating Ethical Spaces: Opportunities to Connect to Land for Life and Learning in NWT", Chloe Dragon Smith

https://gordonfoundation.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2020/04/Chloe_Dragon_Smith_JGNF_2018-2019.pdf

"The Value of Hawai'i 3, Hulihiā, the Turning", Edited by Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Craig Howes, Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, and Aiko Yamashiro,
<https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/70171/1/9780824889159.pdf>

"Dreaming is an Everyday Act of Resurgence", Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua in Everyday Acts of Resurgence (p. 82)

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Natalie_Clark3/publication/326377819_Intimate_act_s_of_resurgence/links/5b48ba5a0f7e9b4637d5c508/Intimate-acts-of-resurgence.pdf?origin=publication_detail

"Recovering Place Names from Literature in Hawaiian", Noenoe K. Silva in Everyday Acts of Resurgence (p. 59)

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Natalie_Clark3/publication/326377819_Intimate_act_s_of_resurgence/links/5b48ba5a0f7e9b4637d5c508/Intimate-acts-of-resurgence.pdf?origin=publication_detail

"From where we stand: Unsettling geographical knowledges in the classroom", Michelle Daigle and Juanita Sundberg

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318513692_From_where_we_stand_Unsettling_geographical_knowledges_in_the_classroom

"Learning From the Land", Alex Wilson

<https://words.usask.ca/alexwilson/files/2012/10/LearningfromtheLand-AWilson.pdf>

"Baby Legs", Max Liborion

<https://civiclaboratory.nl/2015/05/31/babylegs/>

"As We Have Always Done" (Especially chapters 1 and 4), Leanne Simpson

<https://rampages.us/goldstein/wp-content/uploads/sites/7807/2019/08/Leanne-Betasamosake-Simpson-As-We-Have-Always-Done-Indigenous-Freedom-Through-Radical-Resistance.pdf>

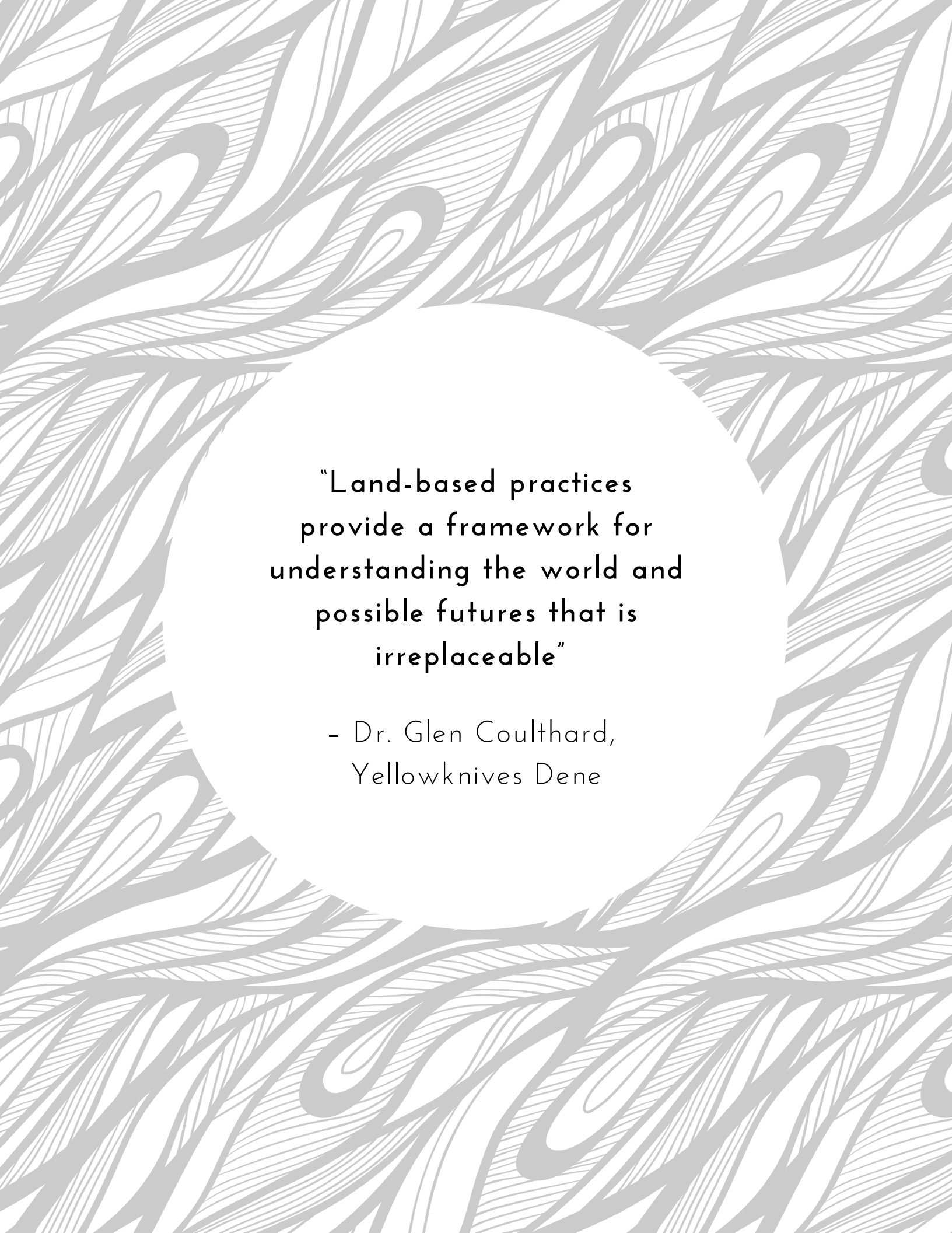
"Learning from the land: Indigenous land-based pedagogy and decolonization", Matt Wildcat, Mande McDonald, Stephanie Irlbacher-Fox, and Glen Coulthard

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/22248/18062>

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/7ghDa3eMiqA>





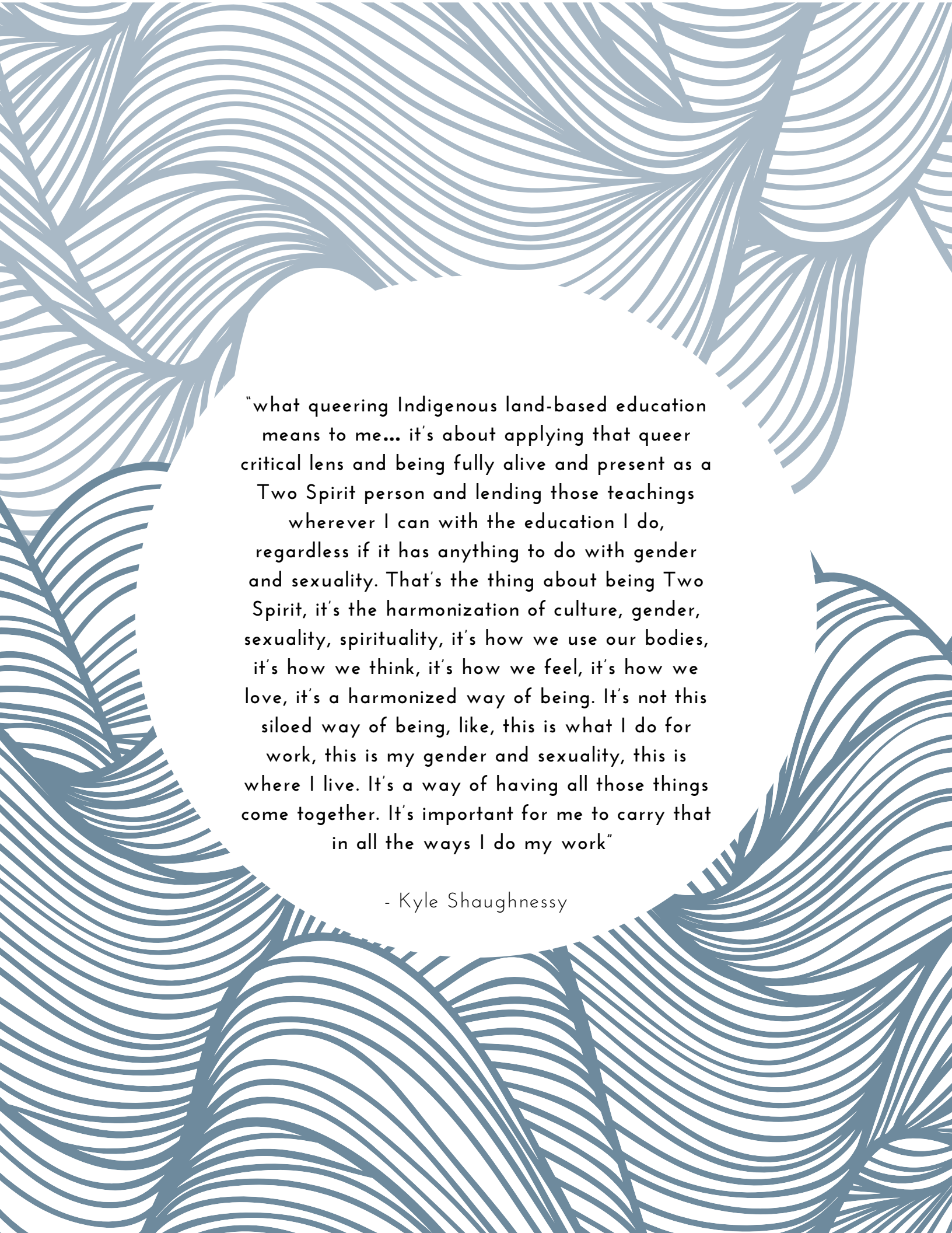
“Land-based practices
provide a framework for
understanding the world and
possible futures that is
irreplaceable”

- Dr. Glen Coulthard,
Yellowknives Dene



PART THREE: **Queering Indigenous Land- Based Education**





“what queering Indigenous land-based education means to me... it’s about applying that queer critical lens and being fully alive and present as a Two Spirit person and lending those teachings wherever I can with the education I do, regardless if it has anything to do with gender and sexuality. That’s the thing about being Two Spirit, it’s the harmonization of culture, gender, sexuality, spirituality, it’s how we use our bodies, it’s how we think, it’s how we feel, it’s how we love, it’s a harmonized way of being. It’s not this siloed way of being, like, this is what I do for work, this is my gender and sexuality, this is where I live. It’s a way of having all those things come together. It’s important for me to carry that in all the ways I do my work”

- Kyle Shaughnessy

Queering re-imagines what land-based education is and how it is practiced. The current context of COVID-19 has required educators to do just that: queer how we understand, practice, and engage with Indigenous land-based education in response to the changing environment of the pandemic. The speakers in this section emphasize the inherent centrality of queerness to Indigenous land-based education. They discussed how COVID-19 provides educators with an opportunity to draw from and incorporate the knowledge and brilliance of the Indigenous queer community in their pedagogical approaches, not only during the pandemic but in a way that centers and normalizes queerness in land-based education moving forward.



"The Indigenous queer community has this body of knowledge spanning back centuries of how to do ceremony differently and in a safe way. I feel like in COVID that is the body of knowledge that we can draw on. Those are the experts in figuring out how to meet our ethical obligations to our non-human relations while also staying safe."

- Leanne Betasamosake Simpson



This webinar was anchored around the question- what does queering land-based education mean? Our panelists had diverse and rich responses, leading to an informative conversation around what a queer approach to Indigenous land-based education looks like. The most prominent points from the conversation are summarized here:

The Land is Queer: The panelists spoke eloquently about how the land itself is queer. In this way, land-based education is (or ought to be) inherently queer as well. The land is not gendered, nor does it conform to heteropatriarchy. The land normalizes queerness as the natural state of the world and when students learn from the land, they are learning how to live and be in a way that is deeply informed by Indigenous ways of knowing and being and that is not ensnared in colonial binaries and gendered oppressions.

Creating safe spaces: Indigenous queer folks historically and continue to be excluded from a variety of spaces, including those centered around education and traditional practices. Queering land-based education creates a safer space for youth (and especially those who are two spirit, queer, LGBTQQIA+, and non-binary) to learn traditional knowledge and form relationships with the land and community members in ways that affirm and support who they are. It is the responsibility of land-based educators to resist and fight against anti-queer violence and provide educational spaces that allow students to fully be themselves.

Re-Thinking Education: Queering land-based learning reveals new possibilities for carrying out Indigenous education that does not rely on colonial and Western protocols. It allows educators to transform how knowledge is taught and delivered to their students in ways that affirm Indigenous approaches to living and being in the world. This could include a non-hierarchical approach to learning that breaks down teacher-student binaries, and/or approaches to education that value student emotions, well-being, and relationships as essential to the learning process.

Challenging tradition and colonialism: Queering land-based education allows for traditional Indigenous ways of knowing and being to be preserved and revitalized outside the colonial legacies of gender protocols, transphobia, and heteronormative thinking. It provides a critical lens to break down the legacies of colonial thinking and allows students to explore new ways of being and doing that embrace the fluidity and freedom of Indigenous life and politics. Though queering land-based education in community can be difficult, it presents new possibilities for engaging in multidirectional and cross-generation learning.



.....

"Queering land-based education should be about trying to find ways to work with the situations we're in, making them our own, and making the best out of those situations. Many of us had to do this in our own lived experiences. Queering land-based education is about being open to experimenting with new ideas and techniques that allow us to think differently and be different."

- Ryan Crosschild (Sikapiohkiitopi)

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In addition to their discussion of the nature and importance of queering land-based education, the panelists spoke to how this approach can offer new ways of approaching and carrying-out this type of learning during the pandemic, while also presenting examples of activities for educators to consider. A summary of these ideas is provided here:

Learning Skills from Home: Queering land-based education during COVID-19 requires us to consider alternative ways to get students engaged in learning traditional skills during the pandemic, however limited it may feel. Many Indigenous communities have pivoted to social media to share pieces of knowledge and get people excited about activities such as gardening or preparing traditional foods. This may also inspire students and community members to come together after the pandemic to engage in collective land-based projects. Educators might consider how land-based skills can be performed at home on a smaller scale, such as fish tanning, and mentor students through these activities in a way that helps them learn about the ethics and spirituality that accompany such activities.

Queering Ceremony: Two-spirit, trans, non-binary, queer and LGBTQQIA+ folks have been excluded from tradition and ceremony for a long time. They have responded by finding creative ways to sustain their own relationships to land and community in ways that are not performative and formalized. Given the restrictions of the pandemic, the Indigenous queer community holds a wealth of knowledge on how to continue with land-based and traditional practices in a socially distanced manner. Educators might take this opportunity to learn from this community and teach students how to engage in ceremony or traditional practices from their own homes.

Online Kinship: The internet and social media can provide generative and positive spaces for youth to explore their own queer Indigeneity. A queer approach to education embraces how kinship relations can be built through the power of online communities, social media, art, humour, and memes. These can provide positive online spaces to celebrate Indigeneity and the playfulness of Indigenous culture. While considering the risks and harms, educators might think about how these platforms can provide a generative social space for queer youth during the isolation of the pandemic.

Reflecting on Protocol: Many of the panelists identified COVID-19 as a time to engage in critical reflection, prompting students (and educators) to reflect on how the traditions or the protocols they follow in their everyday life may uphold colonial binaries or gender systems. COVID-19 provides a moment to slow-down and reflect on how we are teaching our students as land-based educators and to assess how our education may or may not be replicating colonial structures. Educators can ask students something as simple as: how has binary thinking shaped the way you think and talk? Getting students to question the binaries and gendered thinking in their everyday life is an important part of land-based education, even if we cannot be out on the land.



Webinar Four:

Queering Indigenous Land-Based Education During a Global Pandemic

This webinar is focused on the concept and practice of queering land-based education. The panelists, who have lived experience as Two Spirit, LGBTQIA+, and queer individuals, critically reflect on how Two-Spirit and queer Indigenous perspectives can inform thinking and approaches to doing online land-based education. The webinar begins by exploring what it means to queer Indigenous land-based pedagogy, while participants explain how they have queered their own work and approaches to land-based education. The webinar also explores how queering land-based education can support generative learning that rejects approaches to Indigenous knowledge rooted in binaries, toxic nationalism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy. As well, the panelists think about how we can approach Indigenous education and traditional practices in alternative and creative ways given the forced restrictions of the pandemic.

Panelists:

Max Liboiron (*Métis/Michif*), *Memorial University of Newfoundland*
Madeline Whetung (*Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe*),
Ryerson University
Ryan Crosschild (*Blackfoot - Kainai*)
Kyle Shaughnessy (*Dene*)
Riley Kucheran (*Nishnaabe*), *Ryerson University*

Learning Outcomes

- Gain an understanding of queering, queer Indigeneity, and Two-Spirit/queer Indigenous ethics and politics. This involves learning about relational thinking and being, rejecting binaries and unpacking categories of sex/gender, subverting exclusionary gender norms and traditions within community, thinking and being outside of colonial systems, and making safe ceremony spaces.
- Understand how Two-Spirit/queer Indigenous perspectives challenge traditionalized notions of gender and sexuality within communities and have the power to transform binaries embedded in colonial heteropatriarchy. Identify the meaning and intentions behind queer Indigenous theory and practice, and the importance of unlearning and undoing 'authentic/pure/traditional' conceptions of Indigenous knowledge that perpetuate rigid gender structures.
- Learn how queering can impact the theory and practice of Indigenous land-based education and reveal new ways to be in relation with the land and the non-human. Think critically about how the pandemic has impacted queer Indigenous life and work, especially in relation to land-based activities. Use Indigenous Two-Spirit and queer perspectives to think about how Indigenous land-based knowledge and traditional practices can safely proceed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion Questions

1. Define queer/queering (as a noun and a verb). Define gender, sex, and heteropatriarchy. How do these terms relate to the history of colonialism across Turtle Island and the impact that it had, and continues to have, on Indigenous people and their communities?
2. What does it mean to queer Indigenous land-based learning? How can it change our approach to education more broadly? How might doing so be helpful during the current restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Is the online/digital world solely a colonial one? How have online and digital platforms facilitated kinship among Two Spirit and Indigenous queer people? In what ways might it pose limitations or a risk to these relationships? Can online formats be utilized to queer Indigenous land-based education during COVID-19?

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/tEhUkCp2UZw>

Learn More

"Violence on the land, violence on our bodies", Women's Earth Alliance and Native Youth Sexual Health Network

<http://landbodydefense.org/uploads/files/VLVBReportToolkit2016.pdf>

"As We Have Always Done" (Especially chapters 2, 3, and 8), Leanne Simpson

<https://rampages.us/goldstein/wp-content/uploads/sites/7807/2019/08/Leanne-Betasamosake-Simpson-As-We-Have-Always-Done-Indigenous-Freedom-Through-Radical-Resistance.pdf>

"Indigenous Place-Thought and Agency amongst Humans and Non-humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a European Tour!)", Vanessa Watts

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/19145/16234>

"Queering indigenous education", Alex Wilson and Marie Laing

<https://sfsu.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/Wilson%20on%20Queering%20Education.pdf>

"reading land, querying land, queering land education", Alex Wilson

<https://vimeo.com/328673589>

"Our Coming In Stories: Cree Identity, Body Sovereignty and Gender Self-Determination", Alex Wilson

<https://ro.uow.edu.au/jgi/vol1/iss1/4/>

Queering the North: Inuksuk High School's Pride Week", Muskrat Magazine

<http://muskratmagazine.com/queering-the-north-inuksuk-high-school-pride-week/>

"Indigenous Governance is Gay", Emily Riddle

<http://gutsmagazine.ca/indigenous-governance-is-gay/>

"What Do We Mean by Queer Indigenous Ethics?", Billy-Ray Belcourt & Lindsay Nixon

<https://canadianart.ca/features/what-do-we-mean-by-queerindigenousethics/>

Pyle, K. (2018). Naming and claiming: Recovering Ojibwe and Plains Cree Two-Spirit language. TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly, 5(4), 574-588. doi:10.1215/23289252-7090045

Wilson, A. (2018). Skirting the issues: Indigenous myths, misses, and misogyny. In Anderson, K., Campbell, M., & Belcourt, C. (Eds). Keetsahnak: Our Missing and Murdered Indigenous sisters. (pp. 161-174). Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.

Hunt, S., Holmes, C. (2015). Everyday decolonization: Living a decolonizing queer politics. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 19(2), p. 154-172.

Webinar Link:

<https://youtu.be/tEhUkCp2UZw>

Interview: Queering Land-Based Education with Manulani Meyer and Melody McKiver

In this conversation, Melody McKiver and Manulani Meyer discuss how they understand queering land-based education and how they have been navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Melody McKiver is an Anishinaabe musician and composer from Sioux Lookout, Treaty 3 in Northwestern Ontario. They are also a youth worker committed to supporting Indigenous students. Manulani Aluli Meyer is the fifth daughter of Emma Aluli and Harry Meyer who grew up on the sands of Mokapu and Kailua beach on the island of O'ahu. The Aluli ohana is a large and diverse group of scholar-activists dedicated to Hawaiian education, justice, land reclamation, law, health, cultural revitalization, arts education, prison reform, food sovereignty, transformational economics, and music. Manu works in the field of indigenous epistemology and its role in world-wide awakening.

"What youth need is the land. Having this really gendered dynamic where education and access is very much oriented towards straight men is leaving out a lot [of people and knowledge]. When I go and visit Northern communities and there's a community fish fry, you are going to see all these Cree grandmas pushing away their walkers and picking up a filet knife and being extremely proficient in their land-based skills. And so you know that land-based knowledge isn't as gendered as it is now structured to be. So, in the educational capacity, how are we replicating patriarchy and these strict dynamics?"

- Melody McKiver

Key Conversation Points

- Communities have said that land-based education is important to the well-being and lives of Indigenous youth. It's important that we make sure this form of education is a safe space for queer and gender non-conforming young people.
- Queering Indigenous land-based education is about love, healing, and relationship. It exists beyond rigid Western conceptions of 'school' by prioritizing Indigenous values and life in the learning experience.
- Queering Indigenous land-based education means that gendered colonial systems are not replicated on the land or during ceremony. It celebrates both traditional knowledge/practices and queer Indigenous youth together.

Learn More

Check out Melody's music at <https://melodymckiver.bandcamp.com/> and <https://www.melodymckiver.com/>, and watch her episode on APTN's Amplify entitled "Episode 5: Spring Breakup", <https://amplifytv.ca/episode5.html>

Aluli-Meyer, Manulani (2014). "Indigenous Spirituality: Spirit Revealed" in Enhancing Mātauranga Māori and Global Indigenous Knowledge. NZQA publication: Wellington. Pages: 151-165.

Ho'oulu: Our Time of Becoming: Collected Early Writings Of Manulani Meyer
<https://www.ubcpublish.ca/hooulu>

The Past before Us: Mo'okū'auhau as Methodology
<https://uhpress.hawaii.edu/title/>

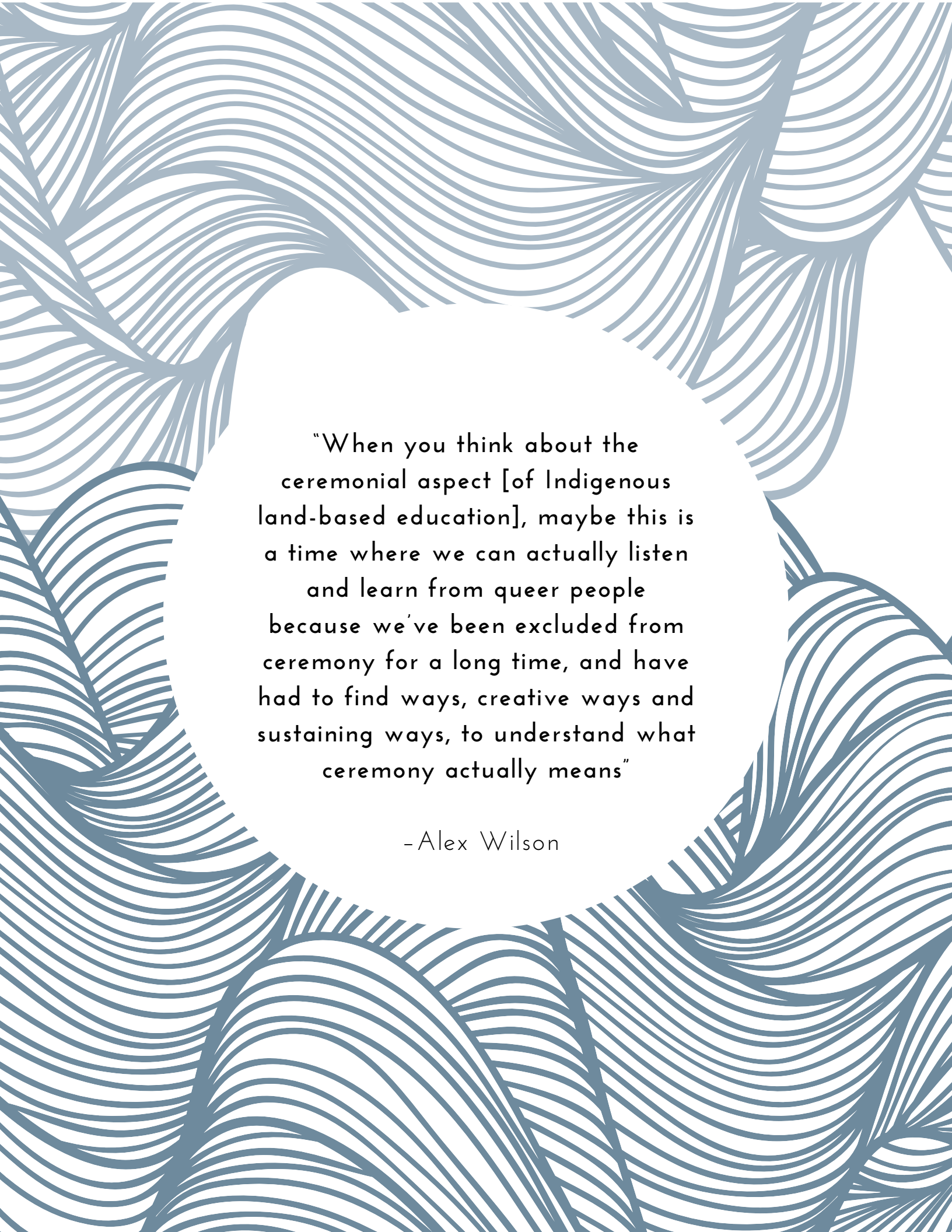
Interview Link:

<https://youtu.be/zZIZux48Euc>

Queering Indigenous Land-Based Education

Queering Indigenous land based education is an on-going process, a practice and a collective conversation with Two Spirit, Queer and Trans staff, Elders, instructors and students. The questions below are designed as a first step for programmers to begin to consider how their programs and workplaces can become more supportive for this community. This is not an exhaustive list or a comprehensive evaluation, but is a guide to begin this work.

- Review your program materials, website and recruitment strategies. Does the material speak to potential Two Spirit/Queer/Trans participants? Do you have a diversity of genders in your material? Is this diversity an honest reflection of your programming?
- Review your application form. Do you have room for applicants to indicate their preferred gender pronouns?
- Review your program evaluations. Have you had past students who identify as Two Spirit/Queer/Trans? What feedback did they have for your programming?
- How is your current programming and site logistics (washrooms, accommodation, division of labour) upholding a (colonial) gender binary? What can be done to make the space and your practices inclusive of all gender identities?
- Review your policies for creating safer spaces, harassment and discrimination. Do you have policies and procedures in place to deal with homophobia and transphobia with students and staff? Do you offer support and assistance to students in linking urban Indigenous queer spaces to rural and remote Indigenous communities?
- Review your orientation material and practices. Make sure students have the tools and skills to help create safer spaces and think critically about gender and sexual orientation. Include resources to assist them in this learning.
- Review your curriculum. Is it inclusive of Indigenous Two Spirit/Queer/Trans voices, Elders and Knowledge Holders?
- Review your professional development opportunities for staff. Does your staff have access to workshops and professional development in working with Two Spirit/Queer/Trans students in respectful, ethical and meaningful ways? Create open lines of communication regarding ceremonies, protocols and traditional practices before programming begins. Include Two Spirit/Queer/Trans land-based practitioners, Elders and Knowledge Holders as part of your staff.



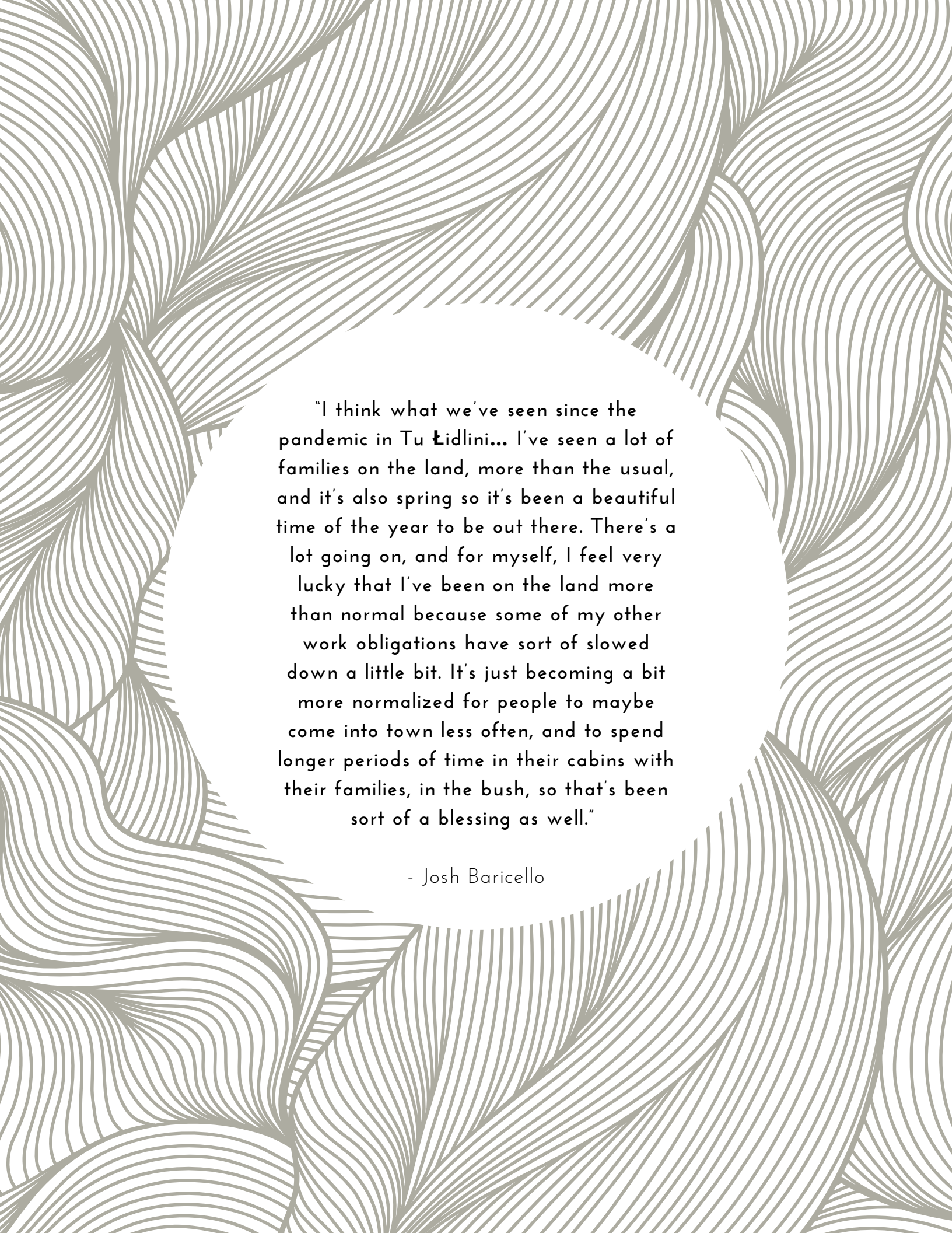
“When you think about the ceremonial aspect [of Indigenous land-based education], maybe this is a time where we can actually listen and learn from queer people because we’ve been excluded from ceremony for a long time, and have had to find ways, creative ways and sustaining ways, to understand what ceremony actually means”

– Alex Wilson



PART FOUR: **Returning to the Land During a Time of Great Sickness**





"I think what we've seen since the pandemic in Tu Łidlini... I've seen a lot of families on the land, more than the usual, and it's also spring so it's been a beautiful time of the year to be out there. There's a lot going on, and for myself, I feel very lucky that I've been on the land more than normal because some of my other work obligations have sort of slowed down a little bit. It's just becoming a bit more normalized for people to maybe come into town less often, and to spend longer periods of time in their cabins with their families, in the bush, so that's been sort of a blessing as well."

- Josh Baricello

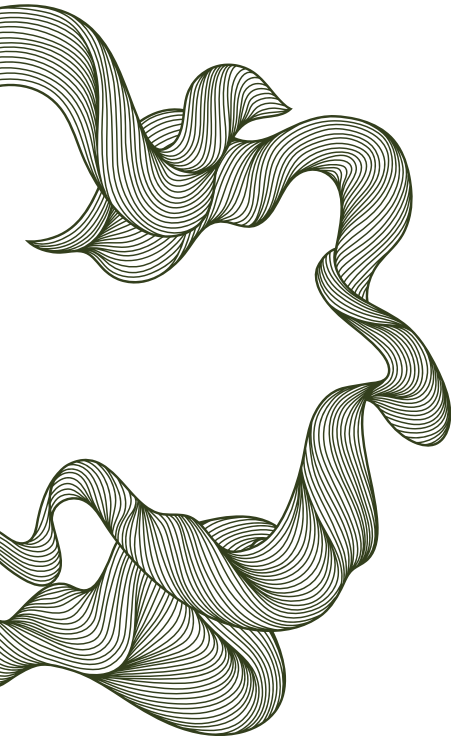
The COVID-19 Webinar Series was created to prompt educators, students, and community members to think critically about what makes Indigenous land-based education Indigenous, and to consider the difficult ethical questions that arise when Indigenous people are asked to convert their ways of knowing and being to an online format. The first part of this final section involves an interview with Curve Lake First Nation Elder Doug Williams, who reminds us of the importance of centering land and tradition in our responses to COVID-19 as Indigenous people. Doug echoes what many of the other webinar participants also emphasized: we must find alternative ways to get outside and to practice traditions, while still prioritizing our safety and health. Returning to the land will look different during this time, but when done in a safe and isolated way, can be a source of healing and well-being for our communities.

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“Now is the time to reflect, to find grounding in Indigenous ways, and to consider what Indigenous strategies to support the health and well-being of families and communities could look like”

- Yellowhead Institute, 2020 ²

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The second part of this section is primarily focused on providing resources to educators, community members, and/or students who are grappling with the challenges of carrying out land-based education during the pandemic. As the restrictions of coronavirus have prevented Indigenous educators and students from accessing the land, Indigenous educators and communities have adapted their programs and approaches to land-based learning to adhere to pandemic protocol.

Though not comprehensive, we have compiled a list of other video and webinar resources, as well as a small list of readings, toolkits, and teachings that may be helpful to those who cannot return to the land at this time or can only do so in a limited way. We have organized the resources as followed:

- **Other Webinars on Covid-19 and Land-Based Education**
- **Webinars and Podcasts on Indigenous Land-Based Education and videos on Traditional Knowledge and Practices**
- **Readings and Other Toolkits**

This list of resources is also part of the *Making the Shift Covid-19 First Nations Intervention* Research Project led by Dr. Alex Wilson. You can learn more about this project here:

<https://makingtheshiftinc.ca/projects/>

² Yellowhead Institute. (2020). Highlights from a Covid-19 Fireside Chat with Indigenous Health Professionals. Retrieved from: <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/resources/highlights-from-a-covid-19-fireside-chat-with-indigenous-health-professionals/>

Community Interview: Doug Williams

This video provides a conversation with Curve Lake First Nations Elder Doug Williams who discusses the importance of returning to history, tradition, and the land during COVID-19. Gidigaa Migizi (Doug Williams) is from the Mashkinonzheh (Pike Clan) of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg nation. He is from Curve Lake First Nation, he is a pipe carrier, a sweat lodge holder, a ceremonial leader, a past chief, a hunter, a fisher, a trapper, a ricer, and a sugar-busher. He is a knowledge holder and is fluent in Nishnaabemowin. Doug is an Associate professor and Director of Studies for the PhD Program in Indigenous Studies at Trent University and teaches the land-based course for the PhD program. He is also the author of *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This is Our Territory*, which was published by ARP books in 2018.

"We always trust our territory; we trust that our territory will keep us healthy. Anything that our land provides us is medicine for our bodies... It is important that we go to the land, it's the land that has all, everything. The basic philosophy of Nishnaabeg says 'there is nothing that can happen to us that we cannot find an antidote on our land'. We got to remember that"

Key Conversation Points

- Doug explains the history of pandemics among the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and other neighbouring nations, including the Huron Wendat and the Haudenosaunee or Iroquois. He reflects on the wisdom that can be learned from these past experiences.
- In light of the current pandemic, Doug talks about the importance of returning to traditional understandings of health and safety. He emphasizes the centrality that land has to Indigenous survival in the present.
- Doug ends the conversation by touching on the complexities of teaching this type of land-based

knowledge online in a university setting.

Discussion Questions

Have you witnessed or observed any changes with the land since the COVID-19 shut-down? What do you think the land is teaching us right now in this time of pandemic and physical distancing?

What do you think can be learned from the history of pandemics that Indigenous people have faced? How can this history be used as a guide to help us through the current pandemic?

Learn More:

"Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg: This is Our Territory", Doug Williams. For purchase
: <https://arpbooks.org/Books/M/Michi-Saagiig-Nishnaabeg>

The Gift is in the Making, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
<https://www.portageandmainpress.com/product>

Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson
<https://www.upress.umn.edu/book>

Webinar on Wild Rice, Pine Tree Talks:

<https://www.trentu.ca/indigenous/experience/academic/pine-tree-talks>

Dancing on Our Turtles Back, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson:

<https://arpbooks.org/Dancing-On-Our-Turtle-s-Back>

Interview Link:

<https://youtu.be/VErwXc5dpao>

Additional Resources

Webinars on Covid-19 and Land-Based Education

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Webinar on COVID-19 and Indigenous Communities (*Indigenous Climate Action, Idle No More and NDN Collective fellows, Waasekom and Jesse Cardinal.*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K57p0gApbz4>

Building Communities of Care During COVID-19: Ceremony (*Indigenous Climate Action and Indigenous Rising Media (a project of Indigenous Environmental Network)*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITUQmRISz5c>

A COVID-19 Fireside Chat with Indigenous Health Professionals (*Idle No More and Indigenous Climate Action*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKex-Oa9ZJM>

Indigenous Education in the Time of COVID (*COVID19 Indigenous, Kitatipithitamak Mithwayaw*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujnMws6GJ6A>

Our Changing Worlds: A Documentary by Steven Thomas Davies

This documentary is available at: <https://vimeo.com/steventhomasdavies>

Moving from Patchwork Pandemic Pedagogy to a Pedagogy of Peace (*Lindsay Brandt, Centre for Teaching and Learning at Queen's University*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/webinar-indigenous-ways-knowing-webinar-series>

A Conversation on Land Based Education (*COVID19 Indigenous, Wa Ni Ska Tan, Kitatipithitamak Mithwayaw*)

This webinar is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ2BU62a_uw&t=4533s

Decolonizing the Land and Food System: Indigenous Resilience in Times of Crisis (*UBC Farm, BC Food Web, UBC*)

https://ubcfarm.ubc.ca/june-11-decolonizing-the-land-and-food-system-indigenous-resilience-in-times-of-crisis/?fbclid=IwAR3fEDA_LkaKMVlg3v_iBc0FSsDwVyGc5PbHpc0WahYrpKZNSDjVATITWQ

General Webinars and Podcasts on Indigenous Land-Based Education

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Indigenous Moose Teaching Webinar (*Keepers of the Water, Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre, kâniyâsihk Culture Camps, and Indigenous Climate Action*)

o Webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPvY3mtJT8I&t=3665s>

Indigenous Bear Teaching Webinar (*Keepers of the Water, Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre, kâniyâsihk Culture Camps, and Indigenous Climate Action*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kz3uPsfpMBg>

Indigenous Knowledge on Mountains Webinar (*Keepers of the Water*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.keepersofthewater.ca/news/indigenous-moose-teachings-webinar>

Knowledge Exchange Gathering: Land Based Knowledge (Indigenous Centre of Excellence)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0owNapP7o0w>

"Indigenous Land Based Education" with Sekwun Ahenakew (*Rising Warriors Rachael Kulei*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UH0FdMOzW5c>

What is Land-Based Learning? A Digital Forum (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOUBbsNswLY&t=294s>

Indigenous Land-Based Education Pedagogy (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This webinar is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEWwQGj6z6g>

Introduction to Land-Based Education (*Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F6hg8uwZuQ>

Elements of Art –Textures in Our Environment (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h20pQwMMj-M&feature=emb_logo

Fort Good Hope Fish Camp –The Importance of Camp (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-lUIfsyUCc&feature=emb_logo

Luge k'e rahtse deh – "We live with the fish" (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: <https://www.nccie.ca/story/luge-ke-rahtse-deh-we-live-with-the-fish/>

Reciprocity: Dene Relationships with Fish (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5Nk1Vujli0&feature=emb_logo

Ziinzibaakwadgummig –The Sugar Bush (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

This video is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDzXo4X6_og

Reclaiming Our Roots Land Based Learning for Urban Indigenous Youth in Halifax (*National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education*)

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjgFSGR-zas>

Jesse and Ian are joined by Indigenous land-based educator and water protector, Dr Alex Wilson! (*Homies Chatting*)

Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqq0Jdhlq_s

Webinar: Land-Based Education and Reconciliation (*Conservation Ontario*)

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rz2mpSAeSpA>

Podcast Link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5rlULcGoLSBqzel0H6wncU>

Podcast Link: <https://umfm.com/programming/shows/akiiwan>

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Link: https://www.nccie.ca/lesson-plan-search/?topics=on_the_land

Link: <https://landlearning.ca/resources/articles-tools/>

<https://ndncollective.org/indigenizing-and-decolonizing-community-care-in-response-to-covid-19/>

<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2020/03/30/highlights-from-a-covid-19-fireside-chat-with-indigenous-health-professionals/>

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Simpson, L. B. (December 16th, 2020). May 2021 be the year land is once again refuge for Indigenous people. Macleans. <https://www.macleans.ca/opinion/may-2021-be-the-year-land-is-once-again-refuge-for-indigenous-people/>



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Indigenous communities are resilient. Amidst the ongoing forces of colonialism on Turtle Island, we have continued to (re)claim, (re)generate, and (re)connect with our history, traditions, and ways of living and being. As we now face the challenges of a global pandemic, we continue to find creative and alternative ways to carry out our land-based and water-based cultural practices, be in community with each other and participate in ceremony, and engage in learning and education that is beneficial to our mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. The conversations which generated this report have made clear that amidst the uncertainty and stress of COVID-19, we continue to demonstrate our strength and tenacity as Indigenous people.

Rooted in a priority to build innovative educational programming that prioritizes Indigenous knowledge and self-determination, we hope the information and resources in this report contribute to the work Indigenous communities are already doing in adapting their traditional approaches to land-based learning and cultural practices in the era of COVID-19. This project, though originally undertaken to work towards generating the best possible outcomes for land-based education amidst COVID-19, also led to generative conversations about the importance of land-based education for Indigenous students and communities. We thus view this report as a starting point for future conversations around the possibilities of Indigenous land-based education, the increasing move towards remote and online learning, and the prioritizing of Indigenous health and wellbeing through COVID-19 and beyond.

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Participant Bios

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Siku Allooloo is an Inuk/Haitian/Taíno writer, artist and community builder from Denendeh (Somba K'e and Tthebatthi) and Mittimatalik, Nunavut. She is a Dechinta alumni and often joins the staff team as a land-based coordinator, facilitator, and educator. She has been leading Indigenous resurgence and decolonial work since 2012 through her artistic practice, advocacy, and cultural programming on the land. Her writing and multimedia work have been featured in Canadian Art magazine, The Capilano Review, The Malahat Review, Briarpatch Magazine, The Guardian, and Graphic History Collective's Remember | Resist | Redraw series (along with Dechinta Instructor and artist Lianne Charlie).

Josh Barichello is a settler who grew up on the territories of the Kaska Dena, Shúhtaot'ine, and Kwanlinn Dunn. For the past 10 years, Josh has worked with the Ross River Dena Elders Council on various Indigenous Knowledge projects, and on developing and facilitating land-based education programs. He is also currently pursuing an MA in Geography at UBC. Josh currently works for Dechinta from the Dena community of Tu Łidlini (Ross River) where he lives and works, as a regional programmer.

Lianne Marie Leda Charlie is Wolf Clan and Tagé Cho Hudän | Big River People (Northern Tutchone speaking people of the Yukon). Her maternal grandparents are Donna Olsen (first generation Canadian of Danish ancestry) and Benjamin Larusson (first generation Canadian of Icelandic ancestry) and her paternal grandparents are Leda Jimmy of Tánintsę Chú Dachäk | Little Salmon River and Big Salmon Charlie of Gyò Cho Chú | Big Salmon River. She was born in Whitehorse to her mother, Luanna Larusson, and late father, Peter Andrew Charlie. Lianne grew up on the unceded Lekwungen territories in what is commonly referred to as Victoria, BC, where she went to school and university. She is a PhD Candidate in the Indigenous Politics Program in the Political Science Department at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). Her research focuses on modern treaty politics in the Yukon. Lianne is mom to Luka Gyo and a multimedia artist. She has created community murals in Whitehorse, Łu Ghą, and Mayo and co-created four pieces for To Talk With Others (Valerie Salez), including a life-size hot pink papier maché bull moose made out of the Umbrella Final Agreement. Lianne is a faculty member in the Indigenous Governance Degree Program at Yukon University and on the board for Dechinta: Centre for Research and Learning.

Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee Nation), received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Arizona in 1998. His research and teaching interests include Indigenous political movements, community resurgence, and sustainable self-determination. In 2008 Jeff was awarded the Faculty of Human and Social Development Award for Teaching Excellence. Jeff's first book, *Forced Federalism: Contemporary Challenges to Indigenous Nationhood* (2008, University of Oklahoma Press), examines how Indigenous nations in the US have mobilized politically as they encounter new threats to their governance from state policymakers. Jeff's next book is a co-edited volume (with Professor Tom Holm) entitled *The Power of Peoplehood: Regenerating Indigenous Nations* (forthcoming), which brings together native scholars from Canada and the US to discuss contemporary strategies for revitalizing Indigenous communities. Other works in progress focus on notions of sustainable self-determination, practicing insurgent education, and a comparative critique of state apologies/truth and reconciliation efforts as they impact Indigenous nations in Canada, Australia, Guatemala and Peru. Jeff is an Associate Professor in Indigenous Studies at the University of Victoria.

Glen Coulthard is Yellowknives Dene and an associate professor in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program and the Departments of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), winner of the 2016 Caribbean Philosophical Association's Frantz Fanon Award for Outstanding Book, the Canadian Political Science Association's CB Macpherson Award for Best Book in Political Theory, published in English or French, in 2014/2015, and the Rik Davidson Studies in Political Economy Award for Best Book in 2016. He is also a board member and instructor at the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning.

Ryan Crosschild is Blackfoot from the Kainaiwa (Blood Tribe) and a member of the Fish Eaters Clan and Grey Horse Society. He identifies as Aakiinaa which is a queer Blackfoot gender variant. He is currently completing his PhD in Political Science at the University of Calgary where he studies Indigenous (Blackfoot/ Siksikaitsitapi) ways of knowing/being with an interest in understanding Indigiqueer standpoints on inter-being resurgence and relationality. He is also a research assistant with the Prairie Relationality Network, an Indigenous led research group that supports projects on Indigenous kinship relations, Indigenous gender and sexuality, land and water-based education, Indigenous diplomacies, Indigenous political orders, community engaged research, community leadership, self-determination and sovereignty.

Robby Dick is from Ross River and is a Dechinta alumni. Robby Dick is a member of the Kaska Dene First Nation and he grew up in Tuleilini all his life. He has been working closely with the Elders of his community for the last five years. He is passionate about revitalizing his language and sharing aspects of his Indigenous culture through visual storytelling.

Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua is a Kanaka Maoli who was born in and raised by Hawai'i. Her genealogy also connects her to Southern China and the British Midlands. A lifetime participant in Hawaiian movements, Noelani's research has involved documenting, analyzing and proliferating the ways people are transforming imperial and settler colonial relations through Indigenous political values and initiatives. She works as a Professor of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her courses focus on Indigenous and Native Hawaiian politics. Noe is an award-winning university teacher and a dedicated volunteer in the Hawaiian community. Her commitment to Indigenous education spans the last two decades. Noe is a co-founder of Hālau Kū Māna public charter school and a board member of the Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy. Her writing is one aspect of a steadfast commitment to and practice of aloha 'āina.

Christina Gray is a Ts'msyen and Dene citizen. She is an Associate at JFK Law Corporation where she practices in the area of Aboriginal law. She is currently completing her Masters of Law at the University of Victoria, where her research focuses on issues of gender within the Ts'msyen legal tradition. She has a law and art history degree from the University of British Columbia.

Riley Kucheran is an assistant professor in Fashion at Ryerson University. As an Indigenous fashion researcher and academic he supports a global community of Indigenous makers who are leading design resurgence. Riley's experience in fashion retail and entrepreneurship and his knowledge of Indigenous theory has led him to see fashion as a powerful tool for decolonization. Indigenous design is sustainable because it relies on communities to collectively make clothing in a respectful and reciprocal way. Riley bridges Indigenous methodology with research in the creative industries and fashion management while connecting industry partners to communities in mutually beneficial ways. He also has responsibilities in his own community, Biigtigong Nishnaabeg, and is currently completing a PhD with them about how Indigenous creative industries, like fashion, can mobilize cultural and economic resurgence. Riley is a past Dechinta alumni and academic coordinator.

Max Liboiron is a well-known leader in both developing and promoting anticolonial research methods into a wide array of disciplines and spaces. As founder of CLEAR, an interdisciplinary plastic pollution laboratory whose methods foreground humility and good land relations, Liboiron has influenced national policy on both plastics and Indigenous research, invented technologies and protocols for community monitoring of plastics, and led the development of the interdisciplinary field of discard studies. Liboiron's book, *Pollution is Colonialism*, to be released by Duke University Press in April 2021, bridges Science and Technology Studies (STS), Indigenous studies, and discard studies while providing a framework for understanding all research methods as practices that align with or against colonialism. Focusing on plastic pollution, the text models an anticolonial scientific practice associated with Métis concepts of land, ethics, and relations, and demonstrates that anticolonial science is not only possible, but it is currently being practiced. One reviewer for the book wrote that the text "is at the leading edge of a significant turn in STS towards thinking with settler-colonialism as a structure and terrain and contributes significantly as well to thinking about how ethical principles related to lab science and studies of pollution and shorelines. There are exceedingly few texts of this kind that ask, how might we consider relations with land/waters and science – and still practice 'good' science?" Dr. Liboiron is an Associate Professor in Geography and is formerly the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Research) at Memorial University. Liboiron is Métis/Michif (Woodman via Red River) who grew up in Lac la Biche, Treaty 6 territory. Gender pronouns: they/she. Liboiron is pronounced: Lee-Bwah-rohn.

Manulani Aluli Meyer is the fifth daughter of Emma Aluli and Harry Meyer who grew up on the sands of Mokapu and Kailua beach on the island of O'ahu. The Aluli ohana is a large and diverse group of scholar-activists dedicated to Hawaiian education, justice, land reclamation, law, health, cultural revitalization, arts education, prison reform, food sovereignty, transformational economics, and music. Manu works in the field of indigenous epistemology and its role in world-wide awakening. Professor Aluli-Meyer obtained her doctorate in Philosophy of Education from Harvard (Ed.D. 1998). She is a world-wide keynote speaker, writer, and international evaluator of Indigenous PhDs. Her book: *Ho'oulu: Our Time of Becoming*, is in its third printing. Her background is in wilderness education, coaching, and experiential learning and she has been an Instructor for Outward Bound, a coach for Special Olympics, and a cheer-leader for the Hawaiian Charter School movement. Dr. Aluli Meyer has been an Associate Professor of Education at University of Hawai'i at Hilo and spent five years in New Zealand as the lead designer/teacher for He Waka Hīringa, an innovative Masters in Applied Indigenous Knowledge degree at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, the largest Māori university with 30,000+ students. Dr. Aluli-Meyer is currently the Konohiki for Kūlana o Kapolei (A Hawaiian Place of Learning at University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu).

Melody McKiver's musical work integrates electronics with Western classical music to shape a new genre of Anishinaabe compositions. Their debut EP 'Reckoning' was nominated for an Indigenous Music Award, and they were a participant in the Banff Centre for the Arts' inaugural Indigenous Classical Music Gathering. A frequent performer across Turtle Island, Melody has performed at the National Arts Centre, Luminato Festival, Vancouver's Western Front, and the Toronto International Film Festival. They have shared stages with Polaris Prize winners Lido Pimienta, Tanya Tagaq, and Jeremy Dutcher, and performed with acclaimed filmmaker and musician Alanis Obomsawin. As a composer, Melody was commissioned by Soundstreams and Jumbies Theatre to write a string quartet responding to Steve Reich's *Different Trains*, drawing on interviews conducted with local elders. Melody was invited to the Berlinale Talents Sound Studio as a music and composition mentor for the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival. They also re-imagined Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* through an Anishinaabeg lens alongside choreographer Brian Solomon. Melody is also employed as a youth worker in Sioux Lookout, providing mental health and cultural supports to First Nations students. Upcoming projects include a song and music video premiering on Amplify, a new APTN show that explores musicians' creative processes, and a full-length album in 2021.

Fred Sangris is the former Chief of the Yellowknives Dene First Nations (N'dilo) and land claim negotiator. He is a community negotiator with the Treaty 8 Yellowknives Dene, a cultural historian, story-teller, trapper and hunter who cares deeply about the land. He lives in Tétzehdaà (Dettah).

Kyle Shaughnessy is a Two-Spirit, trans person of mixed Indigenous (Dene) and European (mostly Irish) ancestry. He is a social worker and writer from all over the Northwest Territories and rural BC. Kyle has worked with trans and Two-Spirit youth since 2001, has a strong background in group facilitation and community building, and has toured the US and Canada as an award winning slam poet. Kyle is now on the Education Team at Trans Care BC and a Master of Social Work student at Dalhousie University. He comes from a family of gifted Indigenous artists and performers, and is very excited to be a part of this project.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson is a Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, musician and member of Alderville First Nation. She is the author of seven previous books, including newly released, *A Short History of the Blockade*, and the novel *Noopiming: A Cure for White Ladies* which was released in the US in 2021 by the University of Minnesota Press. Leanne has released four albums including *f(l)ight* and *Noopiming Sessions*, and her new work *Theory of Ice*. Her latest book, co-authored with Robyn Maynard and entitled *Rehearsals for Living: Conversations on Abolition and Anti-Colonialism* is forthcoming in 2022. Leanne is a visitor to the north, and works with the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning. She served as a mentor and editor on this project.

Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe) received her Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, in 2008. Her doctoral research focused on Anishinaabe treaty-making with the United States and Canada and serves as the foundation for her manuscript *Unsettled: Anishinaabe Treaty-Relations and U.S./Canada State-Formation* (In progress, University of Minnesota Press, First Peoples Series). Her primary area of research and teaching is in the field of Indigenous Comparative Politics, Native Diplomacy & Treaty and Aboriginal Rights. She is the co-editor of *Centering Anishinaabeg Studies: Understanding the World Through Stories* with Jill Doerfler and Niigaanwewidam Sinclair (Michigan State University Press, 2013) and is the co-author of the third edition of *American Indian Politics and the American Political System* (2010) with Dr. David E. Wilkins.

Kristen Tanche is Łı́ı́ıııı ǰıǰé' First Nation, Dehcho Dene from Łı́ı́ıııı ǰıǰé'/Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories. She was raised in Southern Canada and the Northwest Territories. As a young adult, she returned to her mother's home community of Łı́ı́ıııı ǰıǰé'/Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories to re-connect with her family, community and Dene culture. Kristen is an alumni of Dechinta, the Aurora College Social Work Program and the Jane Glassco Northern fellowship. Kristen currently works in Health & Wellness for her regional Indigenous Government Organization, Dehcho First Nations. Kristen is passionate about the North's well-being and people in her community and region.

Doug Williams is Anishnaabe and former Chief of Mississauga's Curve Lake First Nation. He is now currently Co-Director and Graduate Faculty for the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. Program and oversees the cultural and spiritual component of the program. He is a member of the Pike Clan, and was one of the first graduates of what is now called Indigenous Studies at Trent University in 1972. He is a Pipe Carrier, Sweat Lodge Keeper, and ceremony leader. He is a language speaker and considers himself a trapper, a hunter and a fisher. Beyond his work in the academy, he is active at the community level and works to ensure that Indigenous Knowledge is maintained within the community. He is the author of *Michi Saagiig Nishnaabe: This is Our Territory*, from ARP Books.

Madeline Whetung is an Assistant Professor in Geography at Ryerson University. She is currently completing a PhD at UBC in Geography under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Hunt. Maddy is of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg and Scottish descent and a member of Curve Lake First Nation. Whetung's interdisciplinary research emerges out of her background as a frontline anti-violence educator and advocate as well as land-based practice and revolves around questions of decolonization, gender, race, law, and violence. Her SSHRC-funded dissertation work is focussed on drawing together grounded knowledge and practice surrounding accountability for violence and harm across multi-scalar, intercultural, and interethnic queer relationships within the contemporary layered geography of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg territory.

Alex Wilson is Neyonawak Inniniwak from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. She is a professor with the Department of Educational Foundations and the Academic Director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. She completed her BA (Psychology) from California State University, Sacramento in 1994; her EdM (Human Development and Psychology: Psycho-social and Cultural Development) from Harvard University in 1995; and an EdD (Human Development and Psychology) from Harvard University in 2007. Dr. Wilson's scholarship has greatly contributed to building and sharing knowledge about two spirit identity, history and teachings, Indigenous research methodologies, and the prevention of violence in the lives of Indigenous peoples. Her current projects include two spirit and Indigenous Feminisms research: Two-Spirit identity development and "Coming In" theory that impact pedagogy and educational policy; studies on two spirit people and homelessness; and an International study on Indigenous land-based education.

