



THE AHA CENTRE

NEWSLETTER • OCTOBER 2019

Fall arrived in the blink of an eye, leaving the events of the summer in a warm haze behind us. Our bi-annual event, Wise Practices, took place in partnership with CAAN's Skills Building at the end of August, making way for a fall that has been charged with travel and grant deadlines. There are times when it feels as though there is more on the "to-do" list than our small but mighty team can tackle. In spite of our coast-to-coast separation, but somehow, we're seeing progress!

In light of recent losses, we would like to remind everyone on our team (and our friends and colleagues beyond) to take a moment to appreciate all the "smiling voices" that help, guide and support us in our work.

Wise Practices VII

Our event took place in August in downtown Montreal. We are so grateful to all of the presenters and participants who made it a great success.

We are pleased to report that Dr. Anita Benoit was our LaVerne Monette Lecturer this year. Her presentation titled: *Building collaborative research spaces in epidemiology* challenged us to imagine all of the ways that we can incorporate community-based research principles into even basic science projects and offered several success stories from her own project designs.

We were also fortunate this year to be able to offer our delegates a total of nine, twenty-minute oral presentations and seven workshops that ranged from 60 – 90 minutes each. All presentations covered a wide array of topics

including two-eyed seeing, stigma, HIV Criminalization, stress management and HIV and infant feeding for example. We were struck by all of the incredible Indigenous and peer-led research happening across Canada.



Wise Practices 2019 welcome kit

The AHA Centre strives to offer a program where all delegates leave having learned something new and feeling inspired on personal and/or professional levels.

For a full presentation list, please visit: [Abstracts: Oral Presentations and Workshops](http://www.ahacentre.ca/wise-practices-resources.html) (www.ahacentre.ca/wise-practices-resources.html)

WoW Study Research Retreat

On Monday September 30, 2019, the Weaving our Wisdoms (WoW) team grew from 12 people to nearly 30 when we gathered in Saskatoon for the first WoW land-based research retreat. For those of you who have been following the WoW study, you may know that the flicker that is the flame of WoW was lit several years ago when a group of WoW team members began

talking about exploring land-based methodologies in HIV research. This was followed by a research retreat on the beautiful shores of the Northwest Pacific Coast, near Bella Bella, BC, summer of 2018. It was here the WoW Gathering began to take shape.

Fast forward to 2019 and the wee hours of a Tuesday morning at the end of September in Saskatoon when we loaded our bus to Moosomin Reserve where the Gathering began. Some participated in a pipe ceremony and sweat while others took time to wander the hills, receive some horse and dog therapy or help in the kitchen. Whatever activity we participated in, being on the Moosomin Reserve gave us an opportunity to reflect on how connecting to the land could influence personal and community HIV wellness and leadership in the IPHA community. We were gifted with a traditional feast, and much like the way the project began in ceremony, we worked to do the same for the Gathering to ensure its success.



Tipis at Wanuskewin

Wednesday, we traveled to Wanuskewin Heritage Centre. With the smell of sage and damp grass in our noses, we started by looking over across the river valley to get our bearings, before descending into the coulee at the bottom of the bluff. Here our tour guide, who is

also a gifted jingle dress dancer, helped us to (re)live the stories of the people who have been visiting this place for eight thousand years. We filled ourselves with local foods and after gathering around the fire for teachings, we separated to tipis for sharing circles. We further indulged our conversational research methods with one-on-one interviews the following day, talking about such things as: how is land meaningful to you in terms of your health? How can an HIV Older support this? How about support between nations? Where does sex and gender fit in?

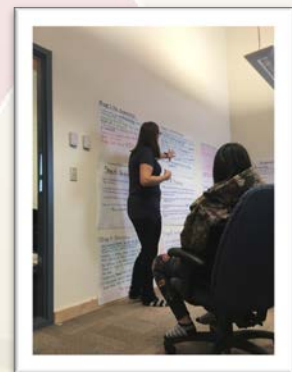
The WoW journey has only begun. After having some time for reflection and respite, we are now bringing together the words, stories, and images that were shared at the Gathering to weave a collective voice that continues to advocate for IPHA wellness and honor and carry forward the seven sacred teachings of respect, wisdom, courage, honesty, truth, humility, and love.

Update provided by Andrea Mellor

Pauktuutit Meeting

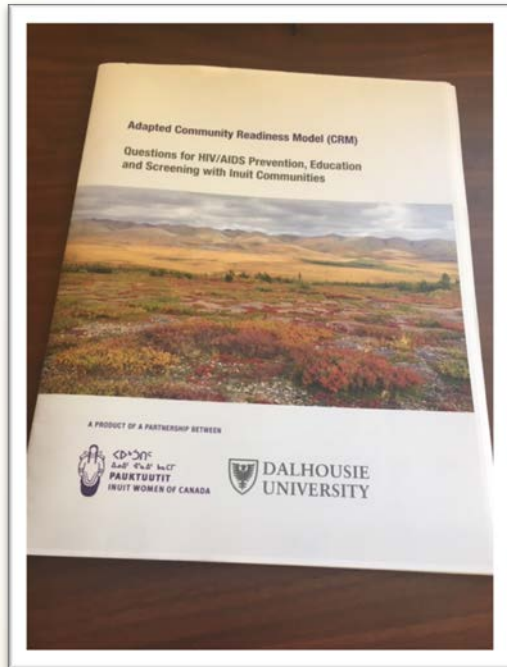
This October, the AHA Centre joined our colleagues from Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, Dalhousie University and members of the Canadian Inuit HIV/AIDS Network (CIHAN) and the Colorado State University in Ottawa to celebrate the launch of the newly developed Inuit-adapted Community-Readiness Model. We have been working in partnership since 2007, when the first seed grant was funded by CIHR. That was when the first consultation with Inuit communities occurred and we began to learn what kinds of support and research was needed when it came to HIV prevention in Inuit communities.

The AHA Centre supported the grant submissions that were made to CIHR. We were an active member of the research team, participating many aspects of the project,



PHD candidate and AHA Centre team member Jenny Rand delivering a community feedback session in Kugluktuk, Nunavut, October 2017

including Data Collection in Kugluktuk and Arviat, Nunavut. The AHA Centre continues to support and mentor PhD Candidate Jenny Rand, whose dissertation examines how principles of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) informed the research.



Contact [Pauktuutit](#) for a copy of the CRM booklet

For more information about the project and partnership, please go to: www.dal.ca/research/ResearchInTheNews/mediareleases.html

Please note: a link to the newly adapted Community Readiness Model is forthcoming. We will be sure to share this important resource once it becomes available.

Bringing together The AHA Centre's Governing Council and our National Aboriginal Advisory Committee

We are beginning to plan bringing together The Governing Council (GC) and our National Aboriginal Advisory Committee (NARAC) for the first time ever in the new year! This meeting is supported through a CIHR Catalyst Grant that will allow us to create space to explore Indigenous ways of knowing and doing (IWKD) within the context of HIV, Community-based research. We anticipate that this meeting will help us to further AHA Centre Objective 1 that has been developed around IWKD to

'Continue to entrench, model, and implement Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing within the AHA Centre's governance and activities'. We will be super excited to report back on this initiative when the time comes!

AAAW 2019

Events will be held across the country from December 1st – 7th for Aboriginal AIDS Awareness Week. Details will be posted on our website and social media. The AHA Centre's contribution to AAW 2019 will be the launch of Volume 10 of the Indigenous Journal of HIV Research (JIHR). We have five new articles and a commentary on offer this year. All contributions share research results and perspectives on just a few of the amazing projects that have happened or are happening across the country, so stay tuned!



Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut, Canada (2017)

Suggested Reading

A Thunder's Wisdom
By Randy Jackson

"*A Thunder's Wisdom*" draws on the craft of Indigenous storytelling to create, what is hoped, a compelling Indigenous knowledge translation product (Jackson & Masching, 2017). It is meant to re-story experiences of sadness and HIV as acts of survivance (Vizenor,

1994)—that is, it is a story that is focused on the idea of survival grounded within Indigenous identity. Drawing on earlier research findings that explored experiences of depression for Indigenous peoples living with HIV (Cain, et al., 2011; Cain, et al., 2013; Jackson, et al., 2008), this re-story is also best when considered as one researcher's literary interpretation of these interviews using a composite narrative approach (Jackson, Debassige, Masching, & Whitebird, 2015). It braids seventy-two individual stories into a single story and was meant to work as if stories are medicine, that teach, and that inspire new possibilities through Indigenous world views (Peacock, 2013). To accomplish this, principles of creative non-fiction were used and involved several steps: (1) Repeating readings of each of the seventy-two interviews; (2) using life-course theory grounded by these 'real' experiences, the story was organized by compiling key substantive issues (i.e., finding out of HIV status; sadness and living with HIV, and moving forward, etc) from across these interviews; and (3) worked to embed these substantive issues within a well-known traditional story (i.e., thunderers and serpents). Although similar stories exist in most Indigenous cultures, these mythological creatures—who many continue to believe actually exist—were characters in a story I first heard as a child growing up. It was shared with me as a way of teaching about how best to understand one's personal struggles. This personal experience was bolstered, further developed, and adapted to this context by drawing on the anthropological and humanities literature (Anderson, 2011; Johnston, 1995; McKegney, 2007; Smith, 1995). Before reading, it is important to note that the names of characters appearing in the story, the residential HIV-positive Indigenous treatment lodge, and the advice offered and roles played by Elders are largely fictitious. The study received approval from the McMaster University Research Ethics Board.

The article can be found on our site:
www.ahacentre.ca/volume-9.html

Contact Us

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments:

<http://www.ahacentre.ca/contact-us.html>

