

Community Love Part Two: a Pacheedaht Youth Wellness Framework

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Abstract

Self-determination and cultural continuity are key determinants of Indigenous health. This two year university-First Nation partnership examined the revitalization of ceremonial teachings and cultural practices as an effort to minimize hardships for the young men in the community and to provide a means for them to regain confidence, transferable skills, and a deepened understanding of their roles and responsibilities as Nuu-chah-nulth men. We take the position that youth are healing from colonial disruptions to Indigenous identities that have presented in the form of intergenerational trauma and, therefore, that their healing is a matter of the whole community healing together. Reclaiming the art and ancestral teachings of carving a cedar dug-out canoe and revitalizing cultural practices with the support of relative Nations and matriarchal wisdom, enlivened the village during the global pandemic. In this two-part article we will describe a ceremonial, land-based, education and wellness project; the ceremonial and arts-based approach; the stories of cultural resurgence in part one; and, in part two, the youth wellness framework that emerged, along with insights on self-determination and community wellness. This expression of community love is represented in a youth wellness framework that encourages wholistic perspectives on Indigenous mental health and informs mental health educators, practitioners, and policymakers working with Indigenous communities.

Indigenization Statement

Dr. Sarah Wright Cardinal is Bush Cree and resides on her ancestral Treaty 8 homeland. She is an invited guest to Pacheedaht First Nation and has been co-leading community wellness projects with the Nation since 2019. Tracy Charlie is a member of Pacheedaht First Nation, a community leader and co-lead of our partnership. Trena Black is a member of T'Sou-ke Nation

with ancestral ties to Pacheedaht and an invited PhD student on this project. Micah McCarty is a member of the Makah Tribe and a master carver invited to mentor his Pacheedaht relatives.

Introduction

In *Community Love Part One: Bringing the Čapac to Life* (Wright Cardinal et al., 2026) we described a ceremonial, land-based, education and wellness First Nation-university partnership; the ceremonial and arts-based approach; and the stories of cultural resurgence to better understand land-based activities as a conduit to healthy youth identity formation and community wellness. In part two, we discuss the youth wellness framework that emerged and insights on self-determination and community wellness. This two-part article contributes to Indigenous articulations and practices of community love.

Over the two years of the project, the partnership examined the revitalization of cultural teachings and ceremonial practices as an effort to minimize hardships for the young men in the community and to provide a means for them to regain confidence, transferable skills, and a deepened understanding of their roles and responsibilities as Nuu-chah-nulth men. These revitalization efforts centred on learning about commitment, carving and art, from a Master Carver with relational ties to Pacheedaht. The university students assisted with the project coordination, documentation of participant learning, and the development of a dug-out canoe curriculum (English-Ditidaht) and a short documentary alongside community youth and under the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The partnership provided the opportunity for Indigenous university students with the opportunity to gain practicum and research experience in their home community or a community through which they have relational ties.

Each Indigenous Nation has its own ways of knowing, doing, and being that are held within the language. Language and cultural revitalization strengthen an Indigenous Nation's

connections to the knowledge systems that sustained, protected, and upheld their Ancestors and that have persisted despite the violence and domination of colonization (McAdam, 2015; Simpson, 2013). These knowledge systems include governance, law, education, health, and community wellness. Our languages, and therefore our identities, suffer from the harms of colonial legislation and policy such as the Indian Residential School and child welfare systems and the Potlatch Ban (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996). Collectively, in this project, we have been relearning the value of language learning and the knowledge systems that our languages hold. Ongoing engagement in community learning activities that nurture healthy Nuuchahnulth identity development can help unburden the next generation from the history of colonization.

Each Indigenous Nation has its own natural laws and spiritual practices that cannot be understood without being lived. Ermine (1998) explains: “learning and spirit are foundational to the ethos of Aboriginal culture and pedagogy” (p. 26). Indigenous knowledge systems include the notion of being in relationship with all living beings and honouring the spirit of each being (Atleo, 2011). Tagalik (2015) explains that, from an *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* (Inuit worldview), “there is no value to know something if the knowledge is not used to improve the common good, the knowledge without application has no purpose” (p. 27). To understand Pacheedaht ways of wellness, the core team gathered regularly to plan each step of the project, the core team includes the community partner, the university partner, the Master carver, the project Elder, the apprentices, community carvers, student team members, and Pacheedaht staff. We took notes at each team meeting and recorded each milestone sharing circle, to reflect on what was learned during each step of the process. All ceremonial and cultural work was guided by Pacheedaht, Ditidaht, and Makah Elders and knowledge keepers who shared their insights in conversational

interviews. The youth wellness framework emerged from these reflections and the guidance received on the four interconnected parts of the project. 28 members of the community were interviewed on “what the čapac means to me” and these insights informed how to strengthen core protective factors for youth mental health. The approaches used in this project to restore the roles and responsibilities of youth resulted in the articulation of a wellness framework rooted in this Nation’s ceremonial teachings and land and water-based practices.

Intergenerational Engagement Enlivens Kinship Family Systems

In this project we have taken the position that youth are healing from colonial disruptions to Indigenous identities that have presented in the form of intergenerational trauma and, therefore, that their healing is a matter of the whole community healing together. For this reason, we took a multi-pronged approach to our partnership. The youth dug-out canoe was central to the project and at the same time, a role model program, craft drop-in, youth camp, and community Culture Nights were important wrap-around activities through which relatives from neighbouring Nations and healthy Pacheedaht role models provided cultural and ceremonial mentorship to Pacheedaht youth and helpers. Culturally rich, self-determined Pacheedaht people generate wellness through knowing who we are and where we come from. Remembering and reconnecting to our teachings by bringing a čapac to life creates healing, deeply enriching our wellness: “knowing who we are is connected to our healing” (Absolon & Willett, 2004, p.102).

Generational teaching and learning from each other involve nurturing relationships based on mutual love and respect. Healthy relationships sustain the wellbeing of self, family, and community. We observed positivity and pride growing in the community as people prepared for and participated in *bringing the čapac to life*. We observed and heard the importance of land-based connections for community healing and wellness, particularly in re-establishing healthy

roles for youth in the community (Gaudet, 2016; Redvers, 2020). In this multi-pronged approach, youth gained a deepened understanding of their roles and responsibilities within a Nuu-chah-nulth worldview while carving a canoe for their family.

Mentorship

The Master Carver reflects on his approach:

As an active creator of cultural arts, I based much of my approach to mentorship in ways that I learned and/or was taught by my own mentors, many times by direct demonstration with the teaching to put action into progressive context, for instance, drawing out the stages of canoe carving to visualize the process, and after various milestones, we would reflect on such achievements, while also discussing in circle time ancillary teachings that could be gleaned from problem-solving complications to the process, with a focus on the vision.

This mentorship encouraged dedication and commitment to the art of carving among the apprentices. They worked long hours and navigated unexpected situations while learning new skills such as working with chainsaws, power tools and hand tools. They were also navigating life events and during the pandemic. Together, they worked through challenges with guidance and inspiration while expressing gratitude for living ancestral teachings in the moment; the rebirthing of the cedar manifested with matriarchal wisdom.

Reciprocity

Connection to land and water in Pacheedaht territory is an ancient reciprocal relationship and an immense source of wellbeing. Rather than owners, we are the land and the water. Much like trees, we are living extensions of the land itself. Through this way of knowing and being, we belong to the land rather than the land belonging to us. This perspective has allowed us to live within the land's capacity for thousands of years without harm (Davis & Twidale, 2011). One participant was inspired to pass on the teachings to the next generation and plans to carve a

sealing canoe, while another expressed pride in being able to share some of what he was learning with his son. The opportunity to work with cedar as a collective created a loving brotherhood. They reminisced about being young children when the last čapac was carved in the community. Without ego and with good feelings, they humbly apprenticed with helpers until completion. In moments of achievement and while sharing perspectives with visiting dignitaries and other friends and relatives, the apprentices showed a strong degree of pride in and respect for passing forward the teachings and insights from their experiences. Particularly important were the times when the apprentices guided their own younger relatives in helping to do our work together. Seeing the apprentices pass forward lessons learned along the canoe carving journey was extremely impactful and reflected the sacred nature of community love in action. We observed young men thriving when invited to contribute to the community collective with a clear and meaningful purpose: to carve, with good feelings, a seaworthy čapac that will carry relatives.

Traditional Arts as Medicine

One participant shared how this project saved their life. In fact, they received a prescription from their doctor to take time off work and help carve the canoe. This participant, an advocate for suicide awareness, said to us: “be sure to share that.” Carving the čapac brought the village of Pacheedaht together to empower and strengthen Pacheedaht young men and restore cultural continuity through intergenerational connectedness creating a “protective factor” against Indigenous youth suicide (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008). Rooted in traditional knowledge sharing, this resurgence project rejuvenated Pacheedaht cultural continuity within community wellness. We established site protocols for ceremony, physical safety, and COVID-19 safety. We entered the site with good feelings, grounded in ceremony and a daily check-in, and paused the work when support was needed for emotions and situations as they arose. It was understood that this

was a collective and that each person was to take care of self and one another. When one person had a hard time, we gathered around them to hold them up. The Elders taught, and the core crew modelled, working together with unconditional love and a vision of project completion. As the Institute of Medicine (2013) shares, “Cultural continuity also involves traditional intergenerational connectedness, which is maintained through intact families and the engagement of Elders, who pass traditions to subsequent generations” (p. 70). The absence of these opportunities interrupts self-determination and intergenerational knowledge sharing, profoundly increasing suicide rates of BC Indigenous youth (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008). Opportunities to practice the teachings held in our natural laws, family systems, and ceremonies are critical to reclaiming our Indigenous identities (Corntassel, 2012; Stelkia et al, 2021; Weber-Pillwax, 2021).

Our findings indicate the importance of intergenerational knowledge transmission and the participation of the whole community so that youth and young men have authentic experiences of meaningful contribution while engaging the natural laws of their Nation.

Makah has a very beautiful love song, we use it sometimes for circle dance with all invited, and we also use the song in potlatch as an invite to all who wish to gift to a special potlatch purpose, the song is used to invite all to a circle dance that ends in gifting money to a person being honored in the potlatch ceremony. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

Like the potlatch ceremony, youth and Knowledge Keepers giving back to their relatives were acts of community love, as was the act of the community wrapping its arms around the youth and carvers. Every meal dropped off, every word of encouragement, and each honk and wave were acts of community love. Memories of past canoes carved, of winter potlatch ceremonies, and of summer canoe journeys, recalled and regenerated ancestral community love, helping to carry forward and power an approach to youth wellbeing that uplifts an entire whole kinship system, from babies to Elders to non-human relatives.

Matriarchal Wisdom

We upheld matriarchal teachings on service and care for community. We needed to be healthy, with clear minds and hearts, and present each day to support, problem-solve, and complete the tasks with positivity. Circle meetings included the community partner who provided cultural guidance in consultation with Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Both the researcher and community partner viewed themselves as playing a small role in the cultural revitalization because it was a collective effort involving the whole community. Our practicum student, whom we called Eagle Woman because of her matriarchal wisdom and strength, organized logistics, communicated with families, emceed events, and developed the role model program. The role model program was based on a paper she wrote for a fourth-year course in her bachelor's degree program. The program was a weekly event at the Health Centre where children and younger youth listened to Nuu-chah-nulth guest speakers share their pathways to wellness. Children and younger youth visited the site weekly to help carve the čupuc. The youth apprentices guided their younger relatives using the knowledge and skills they were learning from the Master Carver. The role models included two university Elders-in-residence, a Pacheedaht member and her husband, a Coast Salish Master Carver. Their loving guidance modelled the wellness we sought to uphold.

Eagle Woman was raised in Pacheedaht and left after high school to go to Malaspina College (now VIU). She stayed in Nanaimo for 27 years until she moved to Victoria with her mother to attend UVic. "Self-care," she says, "is vital. I think part of my role here this summer, was just to show that you can go to school, you can complete grade 12, you can go to college, you can go to university, you can leave the community, and come back and help your community." It is difficult, she explains, for young men to know how to be a son, a brother a

father—one of the impacts of residential schools and missing role models. “When I was young,” she said,

I saw a lot of suffering. I saw a lot of suicides.... Things are changing but it’s still very isolated here. It’s important to raise up [the young men] and teach them and give them tools. It lights a little flame.

At the end of the summer, she was honoured at the back-to-school pit cook with an eagle woman drum. The drum represents her anciently rooted vision and care for everyone involved in the project and her home village.

University Partner as Helper

When invited, the university partner can play a role in supporting community wellness projects through which we unlearn colonial framings of Indigenous identities and contribute to community wellbeing. The researcher’s lived experience and respect for the healing power of reclaiming identity and connection to ancestral place with the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, in ceremony and community, drive her research contributions. She tries to walk with the strength of her ancestors and to be flexible, humble, and gentle in co-leading, recognizing that each Nation holds the vision, knowledge, and desired outcomes for a project. A key role of the researcher was to ensure alignment between university requirements and community priorities. Nurturing spirit-based understandings of identity and the inherent value of ceremonies and protocol was also important. To uphold the teachings and protocols of Pacheedaht Nation, project governance involved leadership, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and youth. An Indigenous research wise practice in this project was to ensure that all materials, supplies, and resources created remain in the community and are the intellectual property of the Nation.

It’s an honour for me to be able to reconnect with family and a community I am profoundly proud to have ancestry to. As a helper on this beautiful creation, I hope I reciprocated the love and inclusion I was given there every day. The way we valued and upheld one another

as people always came first. This energy flowed into the work, allowing for some joyful moments of togetherness I will always remember. (TALIAIS, PhD student)

Our Coast Salish doctoral student has matrilineal ties to Pacheedaht, and her traditional name, TALIAIS, comes from Pacheedaht. She has taught Indigenous education in the school district for over 20 years and holds a leadership role in the district's Indigenous education department. TALIAIS is a curriculum expert who teaches educators how to include Indigenous content in their classrooms and has served on the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC, 2026) curriculum working group for several years, reviewing and recommending Indigenous children's books for schools within British Columbia and co-writing Indigenous curriculum content. She had both the skills and the passion to co-lead the development of our curriculum. She camped on the beach for two months, assisting with project start-up, daily ceremony, and support for the core crew, and documenting the work in photos and notes in preparation for the curriculum work. She returned to the community for milestone documentation and the ceremonial events. All of this informed the curriculum that TALIAIS helped steward for her relatives. Our Métis undergraduate research assistant, who lives in the village and is married into the community, is a photographer and videographer with relational connections to the children, youth, and families. Her photography fills the pages of the community resources created. With consent, she was able to record the authentic feelings of what the čapac means to the community. Together, the University of Victoria (UVic) helpers and the community partner, nurtured an environment of trust.

Next, we share the youth wellness framework that emerged in this project. There are four elements: čapac (canoe) carving; Culture Nights; a cultural curriculum and video; and the diłk^waŋqł (warrior) youth camp. Together, these elements create a wholistic wellness framework for Pacheedaht youth.

Pacheedaht Youth Wellness Framework: Wrapped in Community Love

Figure 1

Four Elements: Čapac (Canoe) Carving; Culture Nights; Cultural Curriculum and Video; and DiłkʷaƷqł (Warrior) Youth Camp



Note. Each of these drums are the intellectual property of Pacheedaht Nation, gifted in ceremony at the culmination of the project, and are not to be reproduced nor used for commercial purposes.

My Name is Hawtwilthiyatook, it is a hereditary name tied to direct descendants of the Legend of the Three Sisters; an important aspect of community history, the Name has been carried by the Waatch Village of the Makah Nation, one of the three sister nations. My father's father was born from a matriarch of Ditidaht, the north sister of the three sisters, my father's mother was born from a matriarch of Pacheedaht, so as a living manifestation of the three sisters, these drums were inspired. Nu-uh-nulth identity, young men's wellness, and the importance of cedar arts, have been enshrined in an inherently respectful pedagogy unique to Indigenous led research, while nurturing continuity of a living culture. The descriptions for each drum resonates with this vision and in deep respect for the culmination of achievements. We carried unconditional love during some heavily lifting times both in community and canoe birthing journey. The vision of such a brilliant song, a calling to purpose and cultural survival, we know who we are and where we come from, we are literate of our territories, and we know what we can do, moving forward are we, among the three sisters. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

It is vital that the community identify its own values of wellness as research topics so that action and knowledge combine in ways that most meaningfully benefit community health (Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). *Bringing a čapac to life* was what Pacheedaht wanted. It is where we see our wellness. Envisioned and led by the community, the project generated protective factors for

youth mental health through practicing Nuu-chah-nulth teachings. Pacheedaht members enhanced self-determination and confidence by contributing to the community with the guidance of Knowledge Keepers throughout the carving process and wrap-around activities. Our approach was to center young men while involving the whole community to nurture intergenerational sharing and respect for the various roles within a kinship community system. These drums represent protective factors for mental health among Pacheedaht children and youth. The four elements of this project and wellness framework are described below.

Figure 2

First Element: Čapac Carving



Matriarchal wisdom blowing blessing of vision for cultural experiential healing and teaching. The Master Carver and two apprentices on a journey together with Matriarchs blessings and support. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

For four months, a Nuu-chah-nulth Master Carver guided two apprentices in carving a 33-foot cedar dug-out čapac, the first seaworthy čapac created in many years. University helpers took turns staying in the community to provide daily support. The core crew met regularly in circle to start each day in a good way, complete a daily COVID-19 health check, plan, and gather milestone interview stories. The carving site became the hub of the community. Our undergraduate practicum student organized a weekly summer role model program with activities

for children and younger youth so they could help carve the čapac. The čapac took on a feminine spirit and the children of the community named her diłk^waƝqł xaadaʔk (warrior woman).

Leadership, visitors, and community members came frequently to watch the progress, visit, and lend a hand. The carving site was a safe outdoor space that enlivened the community during the pandemic while the youth apprentices learned to be helpers of their Nation and to bring their ancestor to life.

Figure 3

Second Element: Culture Nights



Wolves value unity and protect their territory. The wolf dancer on this drum represents Pacheedaht's winter dance gatherings. Canoes carry dancers to potlaches. Wolf society teachings are tied to way of the canoe, a tribute to wholistic cultural revitalization with demonstrated intentions for community love, as wolves share strong love for the pack and an inherent fidelity for place. Wolf dancer on the drum reflects the harmony of the dancers' feet with the beat of the drum, while Matriarchal dancers shield wolf dancers and are observers from the power of ancient medicine that lives in song and dance. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

Our partnership has been funding Culture Nights since 2019 to awaken the songs and dances that have been sleeping because of the intergenerational impacts of colonial policy. Ditidaht relatives, from a neighbouring Nation, have retained language fluency and with funding from our project, Knowledge Keepers travel to Pacheedaht bi-monthly to guide the singers and dancers who are relearning and reawakening their families' ceremonial dances. In our previous project, shawls

and vests were made. In this project, dance paddles were made. Now everyone who wants to participate, from babies to Elders, have regalia. There are now Pacheedaht members who lead the dances, and we are working towards Pacheedaht lead singers. Ditidaht supports and encourages this resurgence and cultural continuity goal.

Figure 4

Third Element: Cultural Curriculum and Video



This drum honors raising succession, raising the next generation with teachings, and reflects the community love for bringing the čapac to life, as young parents brought their newborns to sit in the canoe when she was awakening. Transmitting language and culture involves generational roles and responsibilities. Restorative cultural projects are based in transmitting traditional knowledge from older generations to younger, through positive experiences captured in photos and community resources, ensures cultural continuity and wellness in self and community. The older humpback relatives are holding up the younger generation. Reminding us to look to those who nurture your learning and growth. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

Working in circle with our PhD student lead, Elders, youth participants, and the Pacheedaht Education team developed a bilingual (English-Ditidaht) curriculum unit on the cedar dug-out canoe. Of particular importance are Pacheedaht's efforts to offer strength-based schooling in the community as an alternative to bussing two hours each way to a neighbouring town. UVic helpers guided the creation of an authentic learning resource and demonstrated how land-based learning materials can be developed. This curriculum unit was developed to give back to the

cedar tree by honouring its lessons. It is also intended to support the journey of finding our unique gifts, walking lightly on the earth, and nurturing reciprocal relationships in school, family, and community. The short documentary was also created in circle, guided by Elders' wisdom and our community partner, with interviews conducted by our Métis student and one of the carving apprentices. The video accompanies the curriculum and is a reminder that the cedar gives to us in many ways, supporting our lives and personal growth as Pacheedaht people. These resources also give learners the opportunity to see themselves in the curriculum, instilling pride in their Pacheedaht identity at a young age. The video was launched at a community lunch and is available on YouTube, a decision made to provide an accessible public resource for the community as well as for other communities, educators, and policymakers interested in Indigenous youth wellness.

Figure 5

Fourth Element: DiłkʷaƷqł (Warrior) Youth Camp



The three sisters, Matriarchal wisdom guiding cultural resurgence with ancestral wisdom shining a path forward, living teachings of our recent ancestors in part manifested by bloodlines that embody lineage of the three sister nations. Eagle feathers over Matriarchal thunderbird headdresses illustrate the illumination of ancient wisdom for highlighting good ways forward. Three sister tribes; Pacheedaht, Makah and Ditidaht, once lived in one village. Bringing the canoe to life brought people together and rekindled the sisters' kinship. This drum embodies the three sisters' wisdom and their thunderbird dance. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

We held a three day, on-the-land camp at Pacheedaht campground for Pacheedaht youth and youth of neighbouring Nations to engage in land-based wellness activities such as a guided hike with Elders to a sacred site, beading feathers, and canoe paddling. On beach day, we hosted canoe races and a barbecue. One of the youth leaders, a national soccer coach inducted into the North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame, reminded us of the importance of sports as a conduit to youth wellbeing. Physical movement, connection to water, and laughter were experienced by all. Youth also prepared the back-to-school community pit cook hosted by the Education Department with Knowledge Keepers and UVic helpers. This included plant gathering, rock hauling, and digging out the pit. After the meats, vegetables, and fruits were roasted in the ground all day, the youth opened the pit with their uncle, unwrapped the foods, and passed the trays of food from the pit to the serving tables. The meal was opened with a dinner song and sideline dancers, then the youth served their Elders. At Culture Night, to wrap up our project, these four drums were gifted to the Education Department to care for. The Master Carver made these drums to provide Nuuchahnulth family designs and story work for the children and youth. These drums embody the youth wellness framework that emerged through intentional, ceremonial, visiting, planning, and sharing: calling on the ancestors, our blood memories, and the community as a whole. Healthy relationships are based on reciprocity, giving and giving back, helping and receiving help. (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) The youth of the community have a sense of belonging and purpose. Reciprocal relationships ultimately support the wellbeing of self, family, community, land, water, and ancestors.

Self Determination and Cultural Continuity

Canoes are a form of living in continuity in cultural values of self determination as canoes are both providers and transporters of wealth. In ways that cultural arts can be

afforded, ways beyond survival mode, literacy of the territory comes with living the culture, as both youth and elders came to canoe carving sessions to both witness milestones of progress and to help. (Hawtwilthiyatook, Master Carver)

In this era of reconciliation, it is important for Canadian society to understand both the intergenerational impacts of colonization and ways to remediate these impacts, such as restoring cultural teachings and practices in the community to improve the social, economic, and intellectual wellbeing of Indigenous youth. Bodor et al. (2022) highlighted the powerful connection between healing and ceremony within Indigenous communities. They explain that a nêhiyaw worldview recognizes ceremony as central to Indigenous communities and vital to all forms of healing. We observed the healing that occurred in this Nuuchahnulth community.

The benefits of this project include developing a First Nation-university partnership that explores self-determination and cultural continuity, two key determinants of Indigenous health, to better understand the relationships among youth wellness, language learning – primarily through song and protocol, cultural engagement, and the role of mentorship for young men. For society, this can inform our understandings of post-colonial Indigenous masculinities and community-based actions to address social determinants of Indigenous health. In this project, the young men and carvers relied on and welcomed matriarchal wisdom and care. They held reverence and respect for the work they were entrusted to do, and their humility and kindness were felt in the village. Four primary impacts and outputs of our project include:

- The short documentary *Bringing the Čapac to Life* demonstrates how the project has enlivened the Nuuchahnulth natural laws of Pacheedaht Nation by centering both the cedar as a relative and canoe family teachings and has created a meaningful role for young men within this kinship family system. The Nation now has an ocean-going dug-out warrior canoe to travel the waterways and participate in sovereign gatherings such as Tribal Journeys, as well as paddles and safety gear from the previous project.

- Culture Nights have grown such that Pacheedaht lead dancers have emerged alongside more than two dozen dancers in the community. The drum circle also includes more than a dozen men and non-binary people, from young children to older adults, who are relearning the songs. Babies to Elders participate in Culture Nights, a bi-weekly community feast and dance practice to maintain the ancestral songs and dances for community gatherings and potlatch. Regalia is available for everyone who participates.
- A curriculum unit, *Bringing the Čapac to Life*, has been developed for the community school. It includes lessons for K-12 and Ditidaht language outputs. The short documentary accompanies the curriculum and serves as a real-life resource through which students see themselves and their kin uplifting Pacheedaht lifeways.
- We co-organized and co-facilitated the inaugural diłk^waŋqλ (warrior) youth camp in 2022. The camp honours the naming of the čapac and upholds youth wellness through cedar arts and canoe family teachings. Three Nations participated, enlivening the Three Sisters teachings.

By publishing this project, we are also contributing to the conversation on responsive community-engaged research amid the global pandemic and its aftermath, specifically by sharing a story of community love that enlivened a kinship family system through reclaiming Nuuchahnulth teachings and witnessing the ceremonial transformations in the village. We are also contributing to the conversation on Indigenous approaches to community-based research, including the role of the university partner as a helper where invited, research as the intellectual property of the Nation, engagement with matriarchal wisdoms, and wholistic views of youth mental health.

Conclusion

There were three objectives in our partnership: (1) reclaim the art and ancestral teachings of carving a cedar dug-out canoe led by a Nuuchah-nulth Master Carver; (2) revitalize the language by creating bilingual Nuuchah-nulth community curriculum resources; and (3) revitalize the culture by having Ditidaht Knowledge Keepers mentor Pacheedaht's Culture Nights. This project sought to strengthen mental health protective factors for youth by encouraging participation in cultural and ceremonial activities that promote positive self-esteem, Nuuchah-nulth identity, meaningful roles in the community, and Indigenous health and community wellness promotion. We created a wholistic youth wellness framework that includes specific reciprocal cultural learning activities for youth, hands-on cultural learning opportunities for children and youth in community, community ceremonial and cultural gatherings, authentic learning resources for the school and families, and a land-based summer camp for younger youth. This wholistic approach enlivened the village during the pandemic and these wellness elements continue four years later. As our community partner explained, "this is just the beginning." The fire has been relit, ancestral strength is embodied in these young people and their older relatives who have shared what they know and who encourage youth to keep moving forward with Pacheedaht pride.

ḷekoo ḷekoo (Thank You), All our relations!

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