

# Editorial

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I have cried and know it is time to let the bitterness and resentment go. I have survived and will continue to grow from here. I sent the hurt away with the smoke of sweetgrass. It is dismissed to go where it will. It will no longer stay inside me to grow and fester. Now I can go to a brighter tomorrow. (Rosa Bell, cited in Jaine, 1993, p. 15)

I have had many experiences and I guess I carry my own burden of pain. But I have to give thanks to the Elders who spent the time, who gave me the love and support I needed to heal, and who taught me that patience was the first thing I needed to overcome the suffering that I was going through.

Our Elders have deep wells of patience and it is this patience that can help take you through the excruciatingly slow steps towards recovery. There are no shortcuts to healing. There are no easy answers. We have to do the best that one can, either in the Indian tradition or in the Christian tradition. (Harold Cardinal, cited in Jaine, 1993, pp. 23-24).

This edition of the *Canadian Journal of Native Education (CJNE)* is dedicated to the theme of education and healing. The quotes above show the differing ways that Aboriginal people feel about and approach healing. The need for healing and healing approaches are often mentioned in many Aboriginal gatherings and meetings. Generations of Aboriginal people have suffered the harsh effects of colonization. I have heard the late Chief Dan George refer to this darkness as the "Winter of our lives." Many Aboriginal people and Nations are now finding their "Spring," their own ways of cultural renewal, their own ways of becoming well. Harold Cardinal's words need repeating: "There are no shortcuts to healing. There are no easy answers." However, there are answers and those answers lie within the individual, the family, the community, and the land. A tradition common to many First Nations is to share what we have learned with others. This *CJNE* edition does that.

Rod McCormick, of the Mohawk Nation, completed his doctorate in counseling psychology at the University of British Columbia in 1995. His dissertation *The Facilitation of Healing for the First Nations People of British Columbia* was selected as the best biannual dissertation by the Canadian Guidance Counseling Association in 1995. Rod McCormick revised sections of his dissertation to address the interconnectedness between healing and education, drawing from his experiences and interests in First Nations mental health, teacher education, and counseling psychology. Rod is currently the Director of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program

(NITEP) at the University of British Columbia and a faculty member of the Department of Counseling Psychology, Education Faculty.

Fifty First Nations people shared stories of their experiences, in particular methods that helped them in their healing process. The Critical Incident Technique of Flanagan (1954) was used to map 14 categories of facilitation methods. Four complete narratives were then analyzed to identify phases in the individuals' healing processes. The map created through this collective sharing shows many pathways that educators and health professionals may want to follow. Some of these pathways are found in nature, in cultural tradition, and with support from others.

Some of the healing strategies shared by the 50 research participants remind me of the Sto:lo Elders' teachings related to healing and education. Their words end this editorial note. But their thoughts bring us back to a starting place for healing and learning.

The Elders teach that when you are in a bad situation, talk to the trees in the bush. You have to go off on your own there and talk to them. You could talk to the river. You wait and you talk to them, to the trees or to the river. You'll get your answer. You don't get a specific answer but you feel good inside.

When I was confused about what direction to go one time, I did that. I went out into the bush. I didn't know what I was looking for. I must have been out there three hours. But I knew when I had my answer. I felt like everything was lifted off me. I felt pure and good. I got happy. (Frank Malloway, cited in Sto:lo Sitel Curriculum, 1983, p. 20).

I've always had a great respect for the mighty Fraser River. Whenever I am in great sorrow, I walk to the river and ask the river to help me bear my great sorrow. And then I go to the edge of the bank and wash my tears away. (Evangeline Pete, cited in Sto:lo Sitel Curriculum, 1983, p. 19)

#### References

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- Sto:lo Sitel Curriculum. (1983). *Upper Sto:lo interaction: Teachings from our Elders*. Sardis, BC: Coqualeetza Education Training Centre.