Indigenous Women from the Sixties Scoop Healing Through the Full Moon Ceremony and Storytelling at Winona's Place

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Abstract

The Sixties Scoop refers to the policies and practices in Canada from the 1950s to 1980s of forcibly removing Indigenous children from their birth families and communities. Cultural disconnection, loss of identity, and lower social connectedness were outcomes for Sixties Scoop survivors. My project focused on establishing a healing environment at the YWCA Toronto Winona's Place for Indigenous women who were Sixties Scoop survivors and interested in learning more about the Sixties Scoop. Community-Based Research principles were followed and included working with Indigenous community members. Our project consisted of 8 weekly two-hour healing circles culminating in a Full Moon Ceremony. Through feedback forms and two-hour focus groups, data was collected on the project's strengths, areas for improvement, and information on resources needed by the women to create a healing environment. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The healing circles and Full Moon Ceremony allowed the women to engage with a Knowledge Carrier and Winona community members, learn about Indigenous teachings and cultures, and work through painful experiences with community members. Although many of the women experienced hardships and trauma, they remained interested in healing and reconnecting to Indigenous cultures. The women shared what they had learned through teachings, how the sessions positively impacted their well-being, how they would apply cultural knowledge into their healing journeys, and offered recommendations on how Winona's Place could better support them. We demonstrated the significance of Indigenous healing approaches for improving health and well-being among our participants, who have experienced trauma. Cultural connection to Indigeneity is rarely considered, or offered, in mainstream health services. Indigenous healing models and perspectives are important in creating and implementing Indigenous-specific health services and promotion programs. My project hopes to emphasize the importance of decolonizing public health systems and addressing the Calls to Action related to health.