



Integrating Indigenous Approaches to Using Body Mapping as a Form of Arts-Based Research

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On Behalf of the Women, ART, and The Criminalization of HIV

WATCH Research Team

Society for Applied Anthropology
March 29, 2017

Acknowledgments



- All women who have participated in the WATCH Study
- Our Elders: Nancy Rowe, Sheila Nyman, Mary Rose Naytowhow, MaNee Chacaby
- WATCH Research Team Members and Body Mapping Facilitators: Saara Greene, Angela Kaida, Marvelous Muchenje, Alison Symington, Valerie Nicholson, Peggy Frank, Kristin Dunn, Jasmine Cotnam, Judith Odhiambo, Lydia Birungi, Krista Shore, Becky Gormley, Allyson Ion



The Criminalization of HIV Non-Disclosure in Canada



- People living with HIV in Canada have been prosecuted in cases of perceived HIV exposure and/or transmission since the 1990s.
- People living with HIV are legally obligated to disclose their HIV status before having any sex that poses a “realistic possibility” of HIV transmission.
- Sexual assault law used in cases of alleged non-disclosure, which is traditionally used to protect women from gender-based violence.
- Canada has one of the more aggressive approaches to criminalizing perceived HIV exposure in the world and is one of the only jurisdictions that classifies HIV non-disclosure as aggravated sexual assault.
- Combination of formal criminal law with increasing sense of surveillance and social control: women living with HIV feel “under the gaze” of service providers, family, friends, and society in general.

What is WATCH?



- Community-based research project
 - National collaborative team comprised of women living with HIV, academic researchers, and members of community health and social service organizations.
- Recognition by numerous stakeholders regarding the problematic nature of criminalization of HIV non-disclosure in Canada.
- Goal of study: to examine criminalization of HIV non-disclosure including:
 - How women understand and experience the criminal law
 - Impact on women's social and sexual relationships
 - Impact on women's interactions with legal, health, and social service providers

What is Body Mapping?





Body Mapping: History

- Developed by South African artist and psychologist during roll-out of antiretroviral therapy in 2001 as a form of art and narrative therapy.
- Body Mapping is a way for people living with HIV to sketch, paint and put their journeys into colours, symbols, and words.
- Through a series of creative exercises, people can use art to tell life stories and engage in a process of self-healing.
- Opportunity to adapt art therapy into a research and advocacy tool for the **WATCH** Study.



Why Body Mapping?

- Opportunity for self-discovery, healing, and personal reflection.
- **WATCH** Study is not just about collecting data:
 - Supporting women living with HIV around the issue of criminalization of HIV non-disclosure.
 - Creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive space to discuss challenging issues and personal experiences.



Planning the Research

- Strengthening ties and developing relationships with community leaders and advocates from across Canada.
 - Collaborative discussions about the research focus and methodologies.
 - Recognition that numerous participants would identify as Indigenous, which would influence how the research would be conducted.
- Indigenous community leadership and consultation to develop the study proposal to ensure it reflected the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous women living with HIV in Canada.
- Decision to utilize Body Mapping to explore issue of criminalization with a diverse group of women living with HIV across Canada.



Team Development & Training: The Importance of Indigenous Ceremony & Teaching



- Through established relationships, we identified an Indigenous Elder from New Credit First Nation.
- Recognition by Elders involved in previous research that Nancy (Giidaakunadaad) Rowe would be appropriate because:
 - Much of her work has been with women, e.g. Full Moon ceremonies, 13 Moon Model Journey program on New Credit First Nation.
 - She is very welcoming and open-minded – invites all backgrounds to her roundhouse, and encourages Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to learn about and participate in ceremonies.
- Integration of Anishinaabe ceremony and teachings in the experiential training for Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members – integral part of our team building.

Krista's Experience

- How important and valuable was it to have an Elder present (what did it mean for Krista)?
- Importance of having an Indigenous Elder present for team building given the diversity of our group (Indigenous and non-Indigenous, women with and without HIV).
- Importance of having an Elder present while Krista was creating her own Body map.



Team Members Experiences of Experiential Training & Indigenous Ceremonies



- Opening and closing ceremonies enhanced the feeling of unity, comfort, and cohesion among team members.
 - Grounding, opening up dialogue.
- Ceremonies were an opportunity to process thoughts, self-reflect, cleanse, and prepare for the work ahead.
 - Feeling safe, at home; “greater forces looking down on me and the work that I do”
- Way to honour the land on which the workshop was taking place.
- Although ceremonies were based on specific cultural knowledge, they were offered in ways that all team members could relate to and embrace.
 - E.g. similarities with some African traditions.

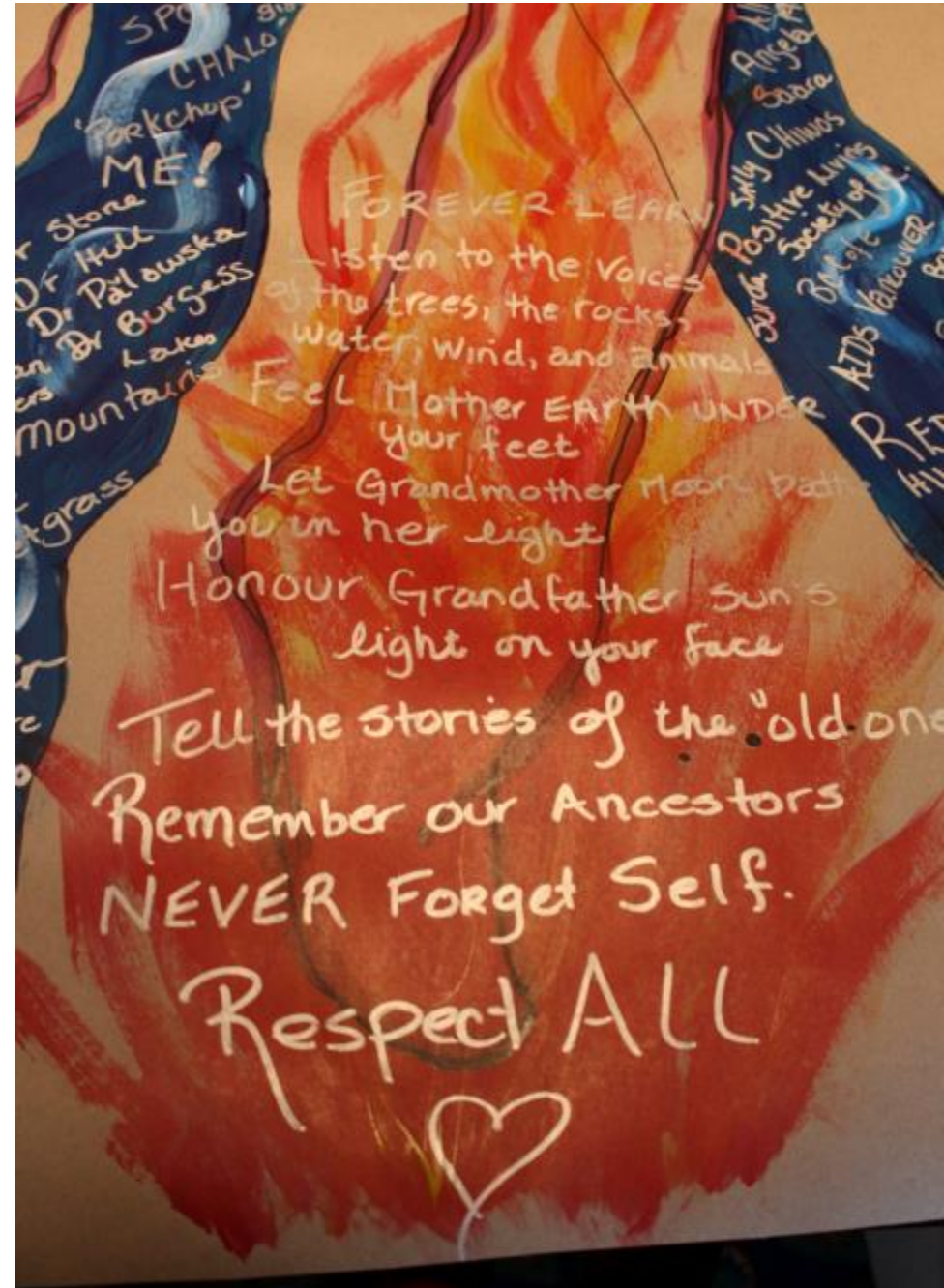
The Road Ahead: Planning Future Workshops



- What steps have been taken to organize future Body Mapping workshops with women living with HIV across Canada?
- What factors are considered when inviting an Elder to be a part of the Body Mapping process?

Implications

- Value of Indigenous teachings and ceremonies for all women – Indigenous & non-Indigenous, researchers and participants.
- For women: to enhance knowledge of the law, and available supports across Canada.
- For organizations: to make program, policy and law reform recommendations.
- For research: to understand how Body Mapping can be used as a research tool while creating an opportunity for self-discovery, healing, and connection among women.



Thank you!

