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Summary Report for National Gathering of Graduate Students 2022  
June 14-16, 2022; Dakota Dunes Resort, SK

*“Exploring the physical realm of the Medicine Wheel and its relationship to the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in Canadian prisons”*

<https://research-groups.usask.ca/neihrcoordcentre/events/indigenous-health-gathering.php>

**Description of the conference event:**

The National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS) was an Indigenous health research conference coordinated by the Network Environments for Indigenous Health (NEIHR) Coordinating Centre and with support from the Saskatchewan NEIHR and the Indigenous Mentorship Network Programs (IMNPs). Local and International Indigenous students who are enrolled in an Honours Undergraduate, Masters, PhD or Postdoctoral Fellowship programs, and who reside in Canada, were invited to apply to present their health research. This year the conference took place on the traditional lands of Whitecap Dakota First Nation at Dakota Dunes Resort on June 14 to 16, 2022. There were approximately 60 presenters who shared their health research specific to First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples. Each student provided a 15-minute panel presentation.

**Relevance of the conference/training to the research area:**

To combat the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian prison system, my research aims to identify meaningful programs for First Nations adults who are reintegrating back into community after incarceration in a federal prison. While working on my research ethics proposal, I noticed that existing reintegration efforts tend to follow the *status quo* - where offender success is measured by becoming a law-abiding citizen. This line of thinking is consistent with colonial practices such as Residential Schools, which aimed to assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Institutions have been set up to distinguish between sectors such as Justice, and Health; however, since time immemorial, traditional healing through the eyes of Indigenous Peoples has included natural laws within its practice. Because of this, it is fallible to separate justice from health when attempting to define success and meaningful programs for First Nations Peoples.

**Realized/expected outcomes of attending the conference/training event:**

From attending this conference, I learned there are a variety of health research topics specific to First Nations, Inuit and Metis Peoples. I was grouped with panelists who shared a similar interest in justice and health, which provided me with an opportunity to reflect on our different approaches. The questions raised to our panel regarding our use of the words **Etuaptmumk** and **Indigenous** were helpful for me. It supported me to articulate my own positioning with these words. I found it especially helpful to see how other researchers approached the inclusion of traditional knowledge into their academic work. All this combined was an inspiration for me to

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continue doing this work, despite challenges that arise with graduate studies. Finally, it was a joy to have an opportunity to experience local artists and to get a glimpse of local culture.

**Next steps:**

1. Learn how to control the slideshow timer on PowerPoint by December 2022.
2. Submit my Masters research ethics proposal for review by December 2022.
3. Begin interviews by Spring 2022.