

# Indigenous women living with HIV are leading the change they need to see. Indigenizing research through ceremony, art, and Sharing Circles can provide a healing space for Indigenous women living with HIV.

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## “My Heart’s Full. My Spirit’s Flying”: Creating a CHIWOS PAW Gathering with Indigenous Women living with HIV on the Coast Salish Territories

### INTRO

- Indigenous women living with HIV are overrepresented in the Canadian HIV Epidemic
- CHIWOS PAW is a substudy of CHIWOS, focused on Indigenous women living with HIV
- We developed a strengths-based sub-study of CHIWOS, focused on the health priorities of Positive based approach to explore how women support their health through Indigenous teachings and healing

### METHODS

Indigenous women living with HIV and allied researchers developed hosted two Gatherings;

1. Virtual Gathering (introduce team and study objectives), November 2019
2. **4-Day Sharing Circle Gathering, December 2019**



### KNOWLEDGE GATHERING

Six Indigenous women living on the Coast Salish Territories were led through a series of art-based and land-connecting activities and Sharing Circles. Each day was opened and closed in a good way and supported with ceremony with an Elder. Women weaved together their wisdoms to conceptualize and support their health through art on collective canvases, centered on water teachings. For example, in **canvas 1 (Earth Medicines)**, women represented how they rely on traditional medicines and ceremony to support their health. The canvases are numbered to illustrate the order of the questions that women reflected on.



#### 1. Earth Medicines

Women rely on traditional medicines and ceremony to support their health



#### 3. Waterfall

Bumps & Falls in Healthcare



#### 5. Bear Paw

Courage to make a change – inner strength



#### 6. Rivers of Change

Messages to health and care providers



#### 2. Water Wheel

Visions for health is fluid, healing.



#### 4. Reflection Pool

Supports

### NEXT STEPS

Two more Gatherings are underway:

- Closing Gathering with participants to share results
- Community Gathering with women and stakeholders to share their messages

*“For me [participating in CHIWOS PAW] gave me a new direction to work towards. The answers I was seeking were revealed to me while I went through the process. I am empowered and ready to teach and communicate within my community. It also is important as leaders to gather.”*

### EMERGING THEMES

Traditional medicines & ceremony are vital to supporting women’s wholistic health



Medicines and ceremony are protection for women and their families



### CULTURE DENIED

Vulnerability accessing Western healthcare services

Health is a journey; it is not a ‘state’ that you achieve



*“This weekend, these four days taught me that there are leaning opportunities, doors opening to newer, more traditional medicines. Which is basically what I was aiming for.”*



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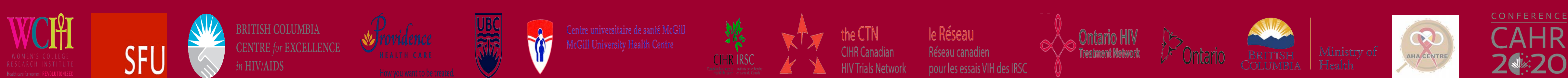


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Conflict of Interest Disclosure: presenters have no conflict of interest.  
Consent was received for all photos appearing in this poster.



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