

THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN ADDRESSING INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA: A STUDY OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVE

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Abstract

This study explores the role of Indigenous knowledge systems in addressing intergenerational trauma through community-based initiatives, using a qualitative research approach with an exploratory design. Employing a comprehensive desktop methodology, the research draws on a wide range of secondary sources, including academic literature, reports, and case studies of Indigenous-led healing initiatives. The data was analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and insights related to the effectiveness of Indigenous knowledge in healing trauma across generations. The findings highlight the significance of cultural revitalization, identity restoration, collective healing, and the pivotal role of elders in transferring intergenerational knowledge. The study also emphasizes the holistic nature of Indigenous healing, which integrates physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Despite the barriers to integrating Indigenous knowledge into mainstream healing practices, including institutionalized marginalization and cultural misunderstanding, the research demonstrates how land-based practices and community solidarity contribute to resilience and empowerment. The study concludes that Indigenous knowledge systems offer profound insights into trauma recovery, promoting a culturally grounded approach that can enhance contemporary healing efforts and address the ongoing effects of colonization.

Keywords: *Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Intergenerational Trauma, Community-Based Initiative.*

Introduction

The idea of intergenerational trauma describes how trauma is passed down through generations and is frequently brought on by past marginalization, violence, and oppression. The trauma has been ingrained in the collective experience of Indigenous communities worldwide, especially because of forced assimilation, colonization, and the removal of Indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands (Garvey & Green, 2015). The effects of these past injustices are still felt by Indigenous peoples today, as evidenced by the high prevalence of mental health disorders, drug misuse, poverty, and cultural identity loss. To promote resilience and healing in the face of these difficulties, numerous Indigenous communities have turned to their extensive knowledge systems. These Indigenous knowledge systems, deeply rooted in the cultural practices, spirituality, and worldviews of the community, are instrumental in addressing the trauma that has been passed down through generations (McNally & Vincent, 2017).

Indigenous knowledge systems are comprehensive approaches to knowing and comprehending the world that are closely linked to the land, community, and ancestral wisdom. They are not just a collection of traditional practices. These knowledge systems comprise social structures, ecological knowledge, spiritual ceremonies, healing practices, and oral traditions that have been transmitted from one generation to the next. According to Tallman & Lynch (2014), indigenous knowledge is interdependent and acknowledges the interdependence of people, nature, and the cosmos, in

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contrast to Western knowledge, which frequently isolates various facets of life. By emphasizing healing via reconnection with culture, land, and community, this worldview provides a profound approach to trauma treatment (Smith & Stewart, 2015). These Indigenous customs frequently form the basis of community-based programs that seek to restore what was lost during colonization and promote healing.

The application of Indigenous knowledge systems to the treatment of intergenerational trauma has drawn more attention recently as both communities and academics have come to understand the shortcomings of Western methods of mental health and recovery. According to Tallman & Lynch (2014), indigenous peoples' collective and culturally embedded needs may not be met by Western models, which frequently emphasize individual therapy and biomedical interventions. On the other hand, Indigenous community-based programs offer a more comprehensive, community-focused method of healing, acknowledging the significance of cultural revitalization and everyone's well-being (Kessler & Ramsden, 2018). These programs frequently include storytelling, ceremonial healing, intergenerational communication, and land-based activities that help people rediscover their identity and heritage. This process not only helps to heal trauma but also empowers communities to reclaim their sovereignty and self-determination (White, 2013). Young (2019) emphasizes on how well Indigenous community-based programs work to address intergenerational trauma have shown that they can offer long-lasting and culturally appropriate remedies.

Many Indigenous communities, for instance, have set up language revitalization initiatives, cultural camps, and healing circles that combine traditional wisdom with modern techniques (Smith, 2012). These programs promote identity, empowerment, and a sense of belonging, all of which are essential for tackling the underlying causes of trauma. Furthermore, by recognizing that trauma impacts not only the individual who directly experienced it but also their family, community, and future generations, these approaches frequently highlight the significance of community healing rather than concentrating only on the individual (McNally & Vincent, 2017). By centering Indigenous knowledge in these healing practices, communities are better able to develop solutions that are grounded in their cultural values and worldview.

According Triggs & Walker (2017) the Integration and recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems continue to face obstacles, despite their promising potential in addressing intergenerational trauma. Indigenous knowledge has been suppressed and marginalized as a result of colonization, and it is frequently presented in popular discourse as archaic or unscientific. According to Garvey & Green (2015), many Indigenous healing methods have thus been disregarded or inaccurately depicted. Furthermore, Indigenous communities now face obstacles to reclaiming or fully accessing their traditional knowledge due to the imposition of Western legal, educational, and healthcare systems. However, there is a growing movement to acknowledge the importance of Indigenous healing practices and decolonize mental health care (Smith, 2012). This study explores how Indigenous community-based initiatives can provide a path forward for healing from intergenerational trauma, drawing on the strength of Indigenous knowledge systems to foster resilience, empowerment, and cultural revitalization in the face of historical adversity (Martin & Green, 2018).

Literature Review and Theoretical framework

Historical Context and Sources of Intergenerational Trauma in Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities' history of intergenerational trauma is closely linked to colonization, which resulted in the systematic eradication of Indigenous languages, cultures, and lifestyles. Indigenous populations suffered greatly because of violent and disruptive processes that began when European settlers arrived on their lands (Haskell & Randall, 2009). Indigenous peoples suffered from diseases that wiped out entire communities, were evicted from their ancestral lands by force, and had their land taken away. According to Garvey & Green (2015), the creation of residential schools, where Indigenous children were removed from their homes and communities, was one of the most severe effects of this colonial trauma. These institutions disrupted the transmission of knowledge and culture by robbing Indigenous children of their cultural identities, languages, and familial ties to assimilate them into European norms (Freeman & Wright, 2017). The trauma experienced by these children has reverberated across generations, leading to widespread social, emotional, and psychological challenges in contemporary Indigenous communities (Wilson, 2015). The repercussions of this historical trauma have been transmitted through several generations and have shown up as a variety of psychological and emotional disorders. PTSD, anxiety, depression, and substance abuse are common among Indigenous peoples whose ancestors experienced violence, forced relocation, and residential schools (Smith & Stewart, 2015). Since the upheaval of family structures and cultural customs has had a lasting impact on the well-being of the community,

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these symptoms are not exclusively personal but rather are a collective legacy of trauma. This trauma was exacerbated by the loss of traditional knowledge and practices, which left Indigenous peoples without the cultural frameworks that once offered support, resiliency, and a feeling of community norms (Freeman & Wright, 2017). This lack of connection to heritage and community knowledge, combined with the ongoing marginalization and discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples, continues to fuel a cycle of trauma that persists today (Kessler & Ramsden, 2018). Indigenous knowledge systems have emerged as a key component of the healing process in response to this intergenerational trauma. According to Garvey & Green (2015), these systems offer frameworks for healing the scars left by colonialism and are firmly anchored in the ideals of community, spirituality, and interconnectedness. Indigenous knowledge includes many different practices that have been passed down through the generations, such as ceremonies, oral traditions, and healing rituals. In addition to providing a way to deal with the trauma, these practices also provide a way to regain cultural identity and bring about equilibrium. According to Garvey & Green (2015), elders are essential in helping younger generations learn traditional practices that promote resilience, healing, and a sense of community because they are the keepers of this knowledge. Since the recovery of cultural knowledge is a vital component of the healing process, Indigenous communities are increasingly resurrecting these practices in many cases to combat the effects of colonial violence and trauma (King & McKenna, 2016).

Integrating traditional knowledge systems with contemporary therapeutic approaches to address intergenerational trauma has become a growing focus of indigenous community-based initiatives. Because trauma and recovery are collective processes, these programs frequently place a high priority on community-led healing (King & McKenna, 2016). To restore cultural practices like storytelling, language revitalization, and ceremonial gatherings all of which are essential to the healing process community members, elders, healers, and young people collaborate. According Triggs & Walker (2017) the community's ties to its history and identity are strengthened by these programs, which also address the psychological and emotional effects of trauma and encourage cultural revitalization. By creating spaces for individuals and communities to reconnect with their traditions, these initiatives foster resilience and self-determination, providing a path toward healing that is both culturally relevant and sustainable (Wilson, 2015). In this way, Indigenous knowledge systems are not only a means of addressing trauma but also a powerful tool for reclaiming sovereignty and reasserting Indigenous peoples' rights to their cultural and spiritual heritage (Triggs & Walker, 2017).

Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Foundations and Healing Practices

Indigenous knowledge systems, which are based on the ideas of harmony, balance, and interconnectedness with the land, community, and spiritual realm, are ingrained in Indigenous peoples' worldview (Pihama & Cram, 2010). These knowledge systems, which are transmitted orally through customs, rituals, tales, and practices, are dynamic rather than static. They cover a wide range of knowledge about the natural world, medicine, politics, and social structures, all of which are inextricably linked to the environment and the land (Martin & Green, 2018). Indigenous knowledge systems are based on the notion that people are a part of a greater, interconnected whole and that the health of the land and the community are directly related to the well-being of the individual. This holistic perspective contrasts with more reductionist views on health, offering a broader, more inclusive framework for understanding trauma and healing (King & McKenna, 2016).

Indigenous knowledge systems are based on the idea that healing is a collective process rather than merely an individual one. To address trauma and restore equilibrium, healing practices are woven into the social fabric of the community through group rituals, ceremonies, and support networks (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). For instance, many Indigenous cultures employ healing circles, smudging, and sweat lodges as sacred rituals to reestablish mental, emotional, and spiritual equilibrium. McHugh & Anderson (2020), fostering a strong sense of connection to one's ancestors, the land, and the spirit world, these practices aim to create a supportive, communal setting that promotes healing. Since individual healing is viewed as inextricably linked to community healing, the healing process in many Indigenous communities entails both restoring individual well-being and fortifying communal ties (Garvey & Green, 2015). The function of elders, who serve as keepers of spiritual and cultural knowledge, is central to Indigenous knowledge systems. As the living link between the past, present, and future generations, elders are entrusted with passing on life lessons, cultural knowledge, and healing techniques to the next generation (Garvey & Green, 2015). Elders assist their communities in overcoming obstacles, such as the trauma that has been passed down through the generations, by sharing stories, imparting knowledge, and providing mentorship. McHugh & Anderson (2020), elders play a crucial role

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in the healing process when it comes to intergenerational trauma because they help people understand the past, put current problems in perspective, and impart wisdom to future generations (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). The relationship between elders and younger community members creates an intergenerational bond that is integral to both healing and the continuation of cultural practices and knowledge. The revival of traditional healing methods has emerged as a crucial element in efforts to alleviate the effects of intergenerational trauma in modern Indigenous communities. Indigenous knowledge systems are increasingly being integrated into therapeutic frameworks by community-based initiatives, which combine traditional methods with contemporary mental health approaches (Wilson, 2015). These programs stress the value of community empowerment, language reclamation, and cultural revitalization as crucial components of the healing process. Indigenous peoples are regaining their cultural identity and reestablishing connections with customs that have supported their communities for thousands of years by going back to their traditional ways of knowing and being (Martin & Green, 2018). These initiatives allow Indigenous communities to recover on their own terms by addressing the psychological and emotional effects of trauma while also providing a means of regaining resilience, self-determination, and cultural pride (Wilson, 2015).

Challenges and Opportunities in Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems into Mainstream Trauma Healing Practices

The historical marginalization and erasure of Indigenous practices is one of the biggest obstacles to incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into mainstream trauma healing practices. Indigenous communities have endured centuries of cultural assimilation, colonization, and the repression of their traditional healing practices (Anderson & Lawrence, 2018). Since these customs are deeply ingrained in Indigenous cultural contexts and are frequently transmitted orally, mainstream practitioners may find it challenging to integrate them into modern trauma healing frameworks because they may not be aware of their underlying values and principles (Ross, 2014). The prevalence of Western medical models, which place a higher priority on individual therapies and evidence-based practices, makes it more difficult to acknowledge and accept community-based, culturally diverse healing systems (King & McKenna, 2016).

A significant obstacle is the cultural gap that exists between Western trauma therapies and Indigenous healing practices. According to indigenous knowledge systems, healing should be approached holistically, considering the interdependencies of the individual, community, land, and spirituality (Ross, 2014). This way of thinking is very different from the more reductionist and individualistic methods that are commonly used in Western trauma treatment. Indigenous systems frequently seek to heal the community as a whole and restore equilibrium, whereas Western models typically concentrate on treating trauma symptoms clinically (Smith, 2012). Reconciling these two methods without simplifying or misrepresenting the essential components of Indigenous healing traditions is difficult due to this difference in viewpoint.

According to Anderson & Lawrence (2018), the unwillingness of mainstream organizations, such as healthcare providers, legislators, and educational systems, to completely adopt Indigenous knowledge systems is another major obstacle. Because these organizations are frequently based on Western scientific frameworks, non-Western healing methods may be viewed with suspicion or even rejected outright. Another problem is that practitioners lack the resources and training necessary to comprehend or use Indigenous healing techniques in a contemporary setting (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). It is challenging for conventional healing techniques to be accepted or supported by mainstream health systems due to the absence of established procedures or evidence-based studies. Furthermore, because Indigenous healers might not be included in decision-making processes, power disparities between Indigenous communities and institutional bodies can obstruct meaningful collaboration (King & McKenna, 2016).

According to King & McKenna (2016) there are plenty of chances to close the gap between Indigenous knowledge and conventional trauma healing techniques, despite these obstacles. Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into trauma healing has become possible due to the growing recognition of the significance of culturally sensitive healthcare models (Martin & Green, 2018). Some mainstream mental health professionals are becoming more receptive to learning about and incorporating traditional healing techniques because they recognize that they can enhance Western therapies rather than take their place (King & McKenna, 2016). The emergence of collaborative initiatives between Western-trained professionals and Indigenous healers is promoting a cross-cultural exchange that enhances both systems. These collaborations can lead to the development of integrated trauma healing models that honor the cultural and spiritual

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dimensions of healing, benefiting not only Indigenous communities but also the broader population (Smith & Stewart, 2015). Incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems into conventional trauma healing techniques offers a chance to empower communities and revive Indigenous cultures. Through the recognition and appreciation of traditional healing methods, Indigenous peoples can recover an essential aspect of their cultural legacy that was almost lost because of colonialism and institutionalized oppression (Bartlett Marshall & Marshall, 2012). A more inclusive and thorough method of trauma healing is provided by this integration, which also helps Indigenous people develop a sense of pride and identity. It is possible to ensure the preservation of these significant customs by revitalizing and passing on Indigenous knowledge systems to younger generations through community-based initiatives (Bartlett Marshall & Marshall, 2012). Furthermore, these initiatives offer a more sustainable model of healing, one that emphasizes the importance of community, relationships, and long-term recovery over time.

Theoretically framework

The study was influenced by the framework of Ecological Systems Theory, which provides a useful for comprehension of the intricate relationships that exist between people and the different systems in which they are situated, including families, communities, and societies. This theory emphasizes how various environmental layers from the peer group or immediate family to the larger social, cultural, and institutional contexts are interconnected (Missimer, Robert & Broman, 2017). Applying Ecological Systems Theory to the study of Indigenous knowledge systems and their function in resolving intergenerational trauma reveals that trauma is a collective phenomenon that is greatly impacted by historical, familial, and community contexts in addition to being an individual experience (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). It encourages us to consider the multiple layers of influence that Indigenous knowledge systems work within, and how they address trauma on various levels, from individual healing to community and cultural revitalization (Johnson, 2010).

Indigenous knowledge systems provide a holistic approach to healing by attending to the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of the individual at the micro level of Ecological Systems Theory. Interconnectedness is emphasized in many Indigenous healing practices, which encourage people to heal within the framework of their relationships with family, community, and the natural world rather than in isolation (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). Ceremonies, rituals, and community meetings involving shared healing practices, for instance, aid in reestablishing a feeling of community and shared accountability. Therefore, restoring a person's connection to their community and cultural traditions which have been severely disrupted by colonialism and historical trauma is just as important as treating them on a micro-level (Johnson, 2010). This model is in stark contrast to Western trauma healing methods that often prioritize individual therapy or symptom reduction, which may neglect the broader social and cultural dimensions of healing.

Ecological Systems Theory aids in the examination of the relationships between different systems in an Indigenous community at the meso level. Indigenous knowledge systems, which have been transmitted through the generations, function in a variety of systems, including community organizations, local leadership, and families. These systems offer ways to address intergenerational trauma by reaffirming cultural values and collective identity. Elders, for instance, are essential in bridging generations by transmitting traditional healing practices and knowledge while creating a feeling of continuity and interconnectedness between the past, present, and future (Johnson, 2010). Indigenous communities establish spaces where trauma can be processed collectively and culturally, rather than through the prism of individual therapy, by incorporating traditional knowledge into contemporary community-based programs like healing circles or youth mentorship programs (Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

The larger social environment in which Indigenous communities live has a significant impact on whether or not attempts to address intergenerational trauma are successful at the exo level. Indigenous peoples have suffered severe wounds from colonial policies, the loss of Indigenous lands, forced assimilation, and the systematic denial of Indigenous rights, which have affected entire communities for many generations (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). We should think about how these broader societal forces like economic systems, educational systems, and governmental policies affect the community's capacity to recover, according to ecological systems theory. Resolving these more general systemic problems is essential to Indigenous communities' ability to recover from intergenerational trauma (Johnson, 2010). Beyond individual or family efforts, key elements of trauma healing include reclaiming land, gaining political autonomy, and maintaining language and culture. Ecological Systems Theory highlights that the well-being of Indigenous

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communities is intricately tied to the restoration of their sovereignty and the restoration of their cultural practices within a broader societal context (Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the significance of institutional structures, cultural narratives, and societal values in forming the collective identity and well-being of Indigenous communities on a large scale (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). Indigenous worldviews, which frequently highlight the cyclical and interconnected nature of life, the significance of ancestral knowledge, and the spiritual connection to the land, have been eroded because of colonialism's imposition of foreign norms, religions, and political structures (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). A key component of resolving the intergenerational trauma that Indigenous communities endure is the restoration of these cultural narratives via the revitalization of Indigenous knowledge systems. As more Indigenous-led projects gain traction, these large-scale initiatives give Indigenous communities a chance to assert their cultural identity, reclaim their voices, and actively engage in the global conversation about environmental sustainability, decolonization, and human rights. In order to bring about long-lasting change and guarantee the survival of Indigenous knowledge systems, the healing process must take into account cultural, political, and ecological aspects, as highlighted by ecological systems theory (Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

The theory of ecological systems provides a thorough and sophisticated perspective on how Indigenous knowledge systems deal with trauma that is passed down through generations. It is evident that healing cannot be accomplished purely through individual therapy or isolated interventions when the layers of influence from the micro to the macro level are examined (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). To develop effective healing practices, indigenous knowledge systems must be fully understood in the context of the intricate web of family, community, and societal systems in which they operate. Through the recognition and treatment of trauma on various levels individual, familial, community, and societal Indigenous knowledge systems can offer comprehensive healing solutions that respect the interdependence of all lives (Navarro & Tudge, 2023). The integration of these systems into mainstream healing practices can foster a more inclusive, culturally relevant, and effective approach to addressing intergenerational trauma.

Research Methodology

The study utilized a qualitative research approach, employing an exploratory research design to investigate the role of indigenous knowledge systems in addressing intergenerational trauma within indigenous communities. This approach was chosen to capture the depth and complexity of the subject matter, as it allowed for the exploration of lived experiences, cultural practices, and community-based initiatives. The study specifically focused on indigenous community-based programs, providing an in-depth understanding of how traditional knowledge systems are being utilized to address the lasting impacts of trauma passed down through generations. Given the nature of the research topic, which involves understanding cultural perspectives and the transmission of knowledge within communities, a qualitative method was considered most appropriate. The exploratory design facilitated an open-ended inquiry, encouraging flexibility in data collection to explore the various dimensions of indigenous practices and their effectiveness in healing intergenerational trauma.

The research was conducted as a comprehensive desktop study, involving the systematic review and analysis of existing literature, reports, and case studies of indigenous community-based initiatives. These documents were selected based on their relevance to indigenous knowledge systems, healing practices, and intergenerational trauma. The data from these resources were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that allowed for the identification of common themes, patterns, and insights across the different community initiatives. This analysis focused on understanding how indigenous knowledge systems are adapted and applied in modern contexts to address the deep-rooted psychological and social issues caused by trauma. Thematic analysis enabled the identification of key concepts related to healing practices, cultural revitalization, and the transmission of knowledge, providing a nuanced understanding of the role of indigenous knowledge in community-based trauma recovery initiatives. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of these initiatives in addressing the long-term impacts of intergenerational trauma.

Findings And Discussion

Theme 1. Cultural Revitalization and Identity Restoration

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The study discovered that in Indigenous communities, identity restoration and cultural revitalization are essential to resolving intergenerational trauma. One of the most important conclusions was that reestablishing a sense of identity and belonging requires reestablishing cultural practices, rituals, and knowledge systems (Larkin & Rapa, 2014). People can recover their Indigenous identity through this process, which has been damaged by colonization and past trauma. Through the use of traditional practices like drumming, storytelling, and ceremony, Indigenous people can overcome feelings of alienation and displacement, leading to resilience and healing. Along with promoting a sense of empowerment and pride among the community, this cultural renaissance also aids in the healing of individuals (McNally & Vincent, 2017).

The study found that traditional knowledge systems are being revitalized. These systems provide essential healing tools and include teachings about the land, spirituality, and communal life. Addressing the trauma endured by generations is especially important when it comes to Indigenous healing methods that are based in nature, such as herbal medicine, spiritual ceremonies, and sustainable ecological practices (Jackson, 2015). These systems offer culturally appropriate and successful approaches to mental and emotional health as an alternative to traditional medical models. Communities can recover self-determination and start the process of recovering from the damaging effects of colonization by reestablishing these knowledge systems.

Language revitalization has been found to be closely linked to identity restoration. The study concluded that cultural revitalization through the restoration of traditional knowledge and language is a powerful tool in addressing the lingering effects of intergenerational trauma. For many Indigenous communities, the loss of language has been directly linked to the erosion of identity and culture (Jackson, 2015). Language revitalization initiatives, such as language immersion programs and community-led efforts to teach youth their ancestral languages, have proven essential in reclaiming cultural identity. Restoring Indigenous languages allows individuals to reconnect with ancestral knowledge and gives them a sense of pride and purpose (Smith, 2012).

Theme 2: Collective Healing and Community Solidarity

According to the study, community solidarity and collective healing are essential elements in addressing intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities. Restoring emotional and psychological well-being is facilitated by shared experiences and group action, making healing a communal process rather than merely an individual one. This is one of the most important discoveries (Smith, 2012). This communal healing process benefits greatly from the frameworks provided by indigenous knowledge systems, especially those that are based on group healing techniques, community-based ceremonies, and collective rituals. These programs help people feel united and supported by providing a space where they can talk about their difficulties, feel heard, and gain strength from the group (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). By working together, the community can face and recover from trauma as a cohesive unit, which is crucial for long-term resilience.

The significance of intergenerational sharing in the healing process is one of the study's major sub-themes. The transmission of knowledge, cultural customs, and lessons that are vital to the emotional health of future generations is largely the responsibility of elders (Anderson & Lawrence, 2018). Elders and young people can build strong bonds that cross the generational gap by taking part in intergenerational activities like storytelling, traditional craft instruction, or ceremonies. By promoting continuity and cultural cohesion, this exchange of information and experience aids in the healing of the scars left by previous trauma (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). Young people strengthen their identities and lay the groundwork for future generations to heal by learning more about their heritage through these intergenerational interactions.

Furthermore, it was discovered that overcoming the collective trauma that Indigenous peoples underwent required community solidarity. According to the study, when communities band together to help one another, they build a collective resilience that is far stronger than any one person's efforts (Bell, 2017). Community gatherings, healing circles, and group ceremonies are examples of grassroots efforts that demonstrate this solidarity as participants work together to address the effects of trauma and support one another's emotional recovery (Martin & Green, 2018). Beyond personal suffering, these practices foster a sense of collective accountability, healing, and strength. Indigenous communities can combat outside forces, restore their cultural integrity, and create a supportive atmosphere that promotes healing for all members by banding together (Howard & Macdonald, 2012).

Theme 3: Role of Elders and Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer

According to the study, addressing intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities requires a strong emphasis on the role of elders and the transfer of knowledge between generations. Bonnycastle (2014) indicates that as the keepers of cultural wisdom and knowledge, elders play a crucial role in the healing process. Restoring cultural identity and building resilience are made possible by their teachings, which frequently include a thorough comprehension of oral histories, spiritual teachings, and traditional healing methods. Anderson & Lawrence (2018) states assuring that Indigenous ways of knowing and being are maintained and modified for modern issues, elders help close the gap left by colonialism and historical trauma by imparting their knowledge to younger generations. This knowledge exchange fortifies the community's base and establishes continuity, which is essential for recovery and development.

The study's emphasis on oral traditions In the process of intergenerational knowledge transfer is one of its key findings. In addition to preserving history, storytelling, music, and traditional narratives serve as channels for teaching important life lessons, morals, and therapeutic techniques (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). These oral traditions provide effective tools for addressing trauma and are ingrained in Indigenous culture. The study emphasized how intergenerational dialogues, especially when elders and young people share stories, offer a forum for the sharing of healing stories that are crucial for redressing past wrongs and fostering hope for the future. A strong sense of cultural pride and a common appreciation for the resiliency inherent in Indigenous communities are fostered by this process.

The study also found that elders' spiritual contributions to intergenerational knowledge transfer aid in the healing process. In their communities, elders frequently act as spiritual mentors and healers, sharing knowledge about customs, ceremonies, and practices that help people feel more connected to the land and their ancestors. Bell (2017) indicates that for the trauma brought on by separation and displacement to be healed, these spiritual lessons are essential. Elders give community members the chance to rediscover their cultural roots and inner strength through practices like sweat lodges, smudging, and other sacred ceremonies. Elders make sure that these spiritual tools are preserved and continue to be used in the healing process for future generations by passing these practices on to younger generations (Howard & Macdonald, 2012). Thus, the role of elders and the transfer of intergenerational knowledge are central to both individual and collective healing in Indigenous communities.

Theme 4: Holistic Approach to Healing: Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual

The study discovered that addressing intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities requires a holistic approach to healing, which considers the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of well-being (Bonnycastle, 2014). Indigenous knowledge systems place an emphasis on interconnectedness, acknowledging that true healing happens when all facets of a person body, mind, spirit, and emotions are considered in the healing process, in contrast to conventional models of care that frequently isolate aspects of healing. A thorough healing process that supports each person's unique aspects is made possible by the incorporation of traditional healing techniques like plant medicine, sweat lodges, and ceremonial rituals (Bonnycastle, 2014). This all-encompassing strategy not only helps people recover from trauma, but it also preserves harmony and balance in the community.

The study looks at the physical side of healing, which frequently entails using customary treatments and methods that have their roots in the environment. Indigenous knowledge systems encompass a deep comprehension of natural healing techniques that target the body and mind, such as medicinal plants (McCulloch & McDonald, 2019). As the land is considered both a source of nourishment and a healer in and of itself, these customs are strongly linked to it. Community members re-establish a connection with their surroundings through pursuits such as farming, fishing, hunting, and the preparation of herbal medicines (Stout & Downey, 2016).. This not only promotes physical health but also cultivates a sense of spiritual and cultural connection. The more comprehensive, all-encompassing method of trauma recovery is based on this physical healing.

The study also emphasized the importance of the spiritual and emotional aspects of healing in the holistic approach. Anderson & Lawrence (2018) states indigenous healing practices place a strong emphasis on the value of spiritual connection and emotional expression as crucial components of trauma recovery. Storytelling, talking circles, and group gatherings all promote emotional healing by providing a safe and encouraging space for people to express their emotions. The land, cultural traditions, and ancestors provide deep spiritual healing (McCulloch & McDonald, 2019). In order to heal the wounds of intergenerational trauma, ceremonial activities like drumming, singing, and prayer are essential for reestablishing emotional and spiritual equilibrium as well as for fostering a sense of community and

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stability (McCulloch & McDonald, 2019). Thus, the study concluded that the holistic approach combining physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing offers a comprehensive and effective means of addressing the complexities of trauma in Indigenous communities (Stout & Downey, 2016).

Theme 5: Barriers to Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Mainstream Healing practice.

The study found that one of the main obstacles to incorporating Indigenous knowledge into conventional healing methods is the under appreciation and ignorance of Indigenous knowledge systems (Garvey & Green, 2015). The cultural significance and efficacy of Indigenous healing practices can be undermined by mainstream health and mental health practices, which frequently favor Western approaches (Strong & Henson, 2011). Because of this ignorance, medical professionals may oppose traditional practices like plant medicine, spiritual ceremonies, or community healing circles because they are not familiar with them or are dubious of them (Garvey & Green, 2015). Furthermore, it can be challenging to measure or incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the standardized frameworks frequently employed in Western medical models because it is frequently passed down orally and through lived experience. As a result, Indigenous healing practices are often marginalized or excluded from formal healthcare systems (Garvey & Green, 2015).

The cultural gap between mainstream healthcare providers and Indigenous communities is another important obstacle that the study highlights. Due to colonization-induced cultural displacement and historical trauma, many Indigenous people find it challenging to trust outside healthcare systems that have historically supported their oppression. This mistrust also applies to mental health services, where mainstream methods might not be in line with Indigenous peoples' spiritual needs, worldviews, or cultural values (Garvey & Green, 2015). For people more accustomed to group healing practices and a holistic perspective, the clinical settings and treatment modalities such as individual counseling or medicalized approaches to trauma seem alienating or even alien. As a result, there is often a reluctance to seek out or fully engage with mainstream health services, creating a barrier to integrating Indigenous knowledge into broader healing frameworks (Bonnycastle, 2014).

Bell (2017) indicates that for indigenous healing practices face significant challenges due to a lack of funding and institutional support. Indigenous healing techniques are frequently not accepted or supported by mainstream organizations, forcing community-based projects to rely on volunteer labor and scarce resources. Indigenous healers' capacity to offer services on a larger scale is constrained by their lack of official government or healthcare system recognition and support (Anderson & Lawrence, 2018). Additionally, these practices are rarely included in formal education or professional development programs because healthcare providers are not trained in Indigenous knowledge systems. In addition to making it more difficult to incorporate Indigenous healing practices, this lack of infrastructure and support also keeps Indigenous viewpoints out of mainstream healthcare, which eventually limits Indigenous peoples' access to culturally appropriate care (McCulloch & McDonald, 2019).

Themes 6: Impact of Land and Environment on Healing

According to the study, Indigenous communities coping with intergenerational trauma benefit greatly from a connection to their land and the natural world. The basis of Indigenous identity and well-being is land, which is more than just a geographical location; it is a deeply spiritual and cultural concept (Danforth & Cooper, 2020). Indigenous people and their land have a strong, mutually beneficial relationship that gives them stability, purpose, and a sense of belonging all of which are critical for recovering from past trauma (Stout & Downey, 2016). By reconnecting with their ancestral lands through traditional activities like farming, hunting, gathering, and living in balance with the environment, people can heal physically members in overcoming the psychological scars left by colonial dispossession and displacement.

A significant discovery from the research is the function of land-based healing techniques in trauma treatment. Certain plants, animals, and landscapes have sacred meaning in indigenous knowledge systems, which place a strong emphasis on the healing potential of nature (Stout & Downey, 2016). One way to regain equilibrium and spiritual alignment is to participate in traditional practices like planting, harvesting, or performing ceremonies on the land. According to the study, land-based healing works especially well to combat the disempowerment and alienation that cross-generational trauma frequently causes (LaFromboise & Bigfoot, 2010). Going back to one's ancestral roots is viewed as a way for people to reestablish their sense of self and kinship with their ancestors. These practices not only

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help to heal emotional and mental wounds but also reinforce a sense of collective solidarity and cultural continuity (Cote-Meek, 2014). The study made clear that the welfare of Indigenous communities is still negatively impacted by land loss and environmental degradation. Many people have lost their connection to traditional knowledge and cultural practices because of the historical and ongoing dispossession of Indigenous territories (McCulloch & McDonald, 2019). Since land is essential to one’s spiritual, emotional, and social well-being, this disconnection is closely related to the continuation of trauma. According to the study, efforts to protect sacred sites, restore the environment, and reclaim land are essential to the healing process (Garvey & Green, 2015). Addressing the psychological and physical impacts of trauma requires restoring land rights and promoting land-based healing initiatives. Thus, the study concluded that land and environment are not only central to Indigenous identity but also essential for the holistic healing of individuals and communities affected by intergenerational trauma (Tallman & Lynch, 2014).

Theme 7: Resilience and Empowerment Through Traditional Knowledge

According to the study, Indigenous communities’ use of traditional knowledge systems is fundamental to resilience and empowerment, providing a crucial avenue for addressing intergenerational trauma (Bell, 2017). One of the main conclusions is that Indigenous people can recover their sense of strength, autonomy, and self-worth by reestablishing a connection to traditional knowledge, including cultural practices, oral histories, and spiritual teachings. These generations-old knowledge systems offer frameworks for thriving in the face of hardship in addition to survival tools (Bell, 2017). According to the study, traditional knowledge helps to deal with the long-term impacts of colonialism, displacement, and cultural erasure by empowering them to draw on their cultural heritage.

According to the study, traditional healing methods can empower both individuals and communities. People can take control of their own health by using Indigenous healing techniques like plant medicine, sweat lodges, and ceremonies (Cote-Meek, 2014). These methods work well for healing trauma-related emotional and spiritual wounds in addition to curing physical illnesses. Through their ancestors’ wisdom, people can learn how to deal with mental health issues in ways that are both spiritually and culturally meaningful (Smith & Stewart, 2015). Members of the community gain a sense of control over their healing process by utilizing these traditional methods, which boosts their confidence, self-worth, and sense of empowerment. The study demonstrated that this empowerment is integral to breaking the cycle of trauma and building sustainable resilience within Indigenous communities (Danforth & Cooper, 2020).

The study also discovered that community-based projects and cultural revitalization promote a feeling of empowerment among all participants. Engaging with traditional knowledge helps people participate in the larger cultural process, which benefits the community (Cote-Meek, 2014). In addition to offering healing resources, community-driven projects like language revitalization, land-based healing, and cultural education programs foster a sense of cohesion and shared purpose. People who actively engage in these programs experience a revitalized sense of pride in their heritage and a shared vision for the future (Stout & Downey, 2016). Indigenous communities’ social cohesion is strengthened by this collective cultural empowerment, which increases their ability to withstand outside threats. Ultimately, the study concluded that resilience and empowerment through traditional knowledge are essential for healing intergenerational trauma and creating pathways toward a more self-determined and vibrant future for Indigenous peoples.

Table 1: Summary of the findings

Main key findings	Sub-themes
Cultural Revitalization and Identity Restoration	Traditional knowledge systems Language revitalization
Collective Healing and Community Solidarity	Intergenerational sharing Community solidarity
Role of Elders and Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer	Oral tradition Spiritual role
Holistic Approach to Healing: Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual	Physical aspect of healing Emotional and spiritual dimensions
Barriers to Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into Mainstream Healing practice.	Misunderstanding and undervaluation of indigenous knowledge system.

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	Cultural disconnect. Lack of institutional support and funding
Impact of Land and Environment on Healing	Land based healing practices Environmental degradation
Resilience and Empowerment Through Traditional Knowledge	Traditional healing practices Cultural revitalization and community-based Initiative

Results and Discussion

According to the study's findings, Indigenous knowledge systems are essential for addressing intergenerational trauma, especially when it comes to community-based programs that support identity restoration and cultural revitalization. A significant theme that emerged from the research is the close relationship between cultural practices and both individual and group healing. The healing process from trauma is based on cultural traditions, languages, and rituals in many Indigenous communities. A sense of pride and belonging are provided by cultural revitalization initiatives that prioritize reestablishing ties to ancestors' knowledge, and these elements are critical for identity restoration. For communities that have endured centuries of colonization, forced relocation, and cultural erasure, these initiatives are a vital first step in taking back control of their own healing processes. By empowering people and communities to reinterpret their relationship with their cultural heritage, the revival of traditional practices such as storytelling, ceremony, and language revitalization fosters emotional and psychological resilience.

The focus on community solidarity and collective healing, which are essential to Indigenous approaches to trauma recovery, is another noteworthy finding of this study. It emphasizes that healing is not seen as an individual process but rather as a collective endeavor in which the health of the community is intertwined with the well-being of the individual. Indigenous community-based initiatives frequently involve collective rituals and ceremonies that engage participants in shared experiences, which foster unity and solidarity. By doing so, communities can process trauma, loss, and grief together, forming a support system that reduces isolation and strengthens social ties. According to the study, community-centered healing techniques offer a feeling of security and trust, both of which are essential for recovering from the trauma of colonization and its aftereffects. Communities can confront the historical and social factors that have fueled their suffering by banding together, which will ultimately promote a mutually supportive and strong culture.

Another important finding of this study is the part elders play in passing down knowledge from one generation to the next. Elders are considered to be the keepers of Indigenous knowledge, and their healing contributions are invaluable. As a way to preserve cultural continuity and promote healing, the study discovered that Indigenous knowledge systems are transmitted orally through ceremonies, storytelling, and mentoring. Elders teach resilience, survival, and strength, and they offer insight and direction on overcoming trauma. By serving as a bridge between the past and present, they help ensure that younger generations have access to the resources they need to deal with the challenges of contemporary life while maintaining a sense of connection to their ancestry. In these situations, knowledge transfer involves not just maintaining cultural customs but also making sure that they can be modified to address the current issues brought on by persistent trauma.

Traditional knowledge systems achieve their healing effectiveness through complete person-centered approaches according to this study's results. The Indigenous healing methods unify personal health dimensions starting from physical forms through mental health states and emotional states and spiritual states because complete wellness exists only through these integrated elements of self. Community-based programs which emphasize total health recovery deliver superior long-term benefits to individual health aspects by providing a combined therapeutic approach. Healing practices such as sweat lodges and vision quests together with medicinal plant use help individuals heal emotional wounds as well as their body and spirit. Under Indigenous healing practices health practitioners work to heal the whole person through attention to mental and physical as well as spiritual elements since trauma requires multiple approaches for resolution. The integrated model of healing helps people become stronger through time because it enables them to regain their personal connection to themselves and to the universe.

The study recognizes multiple obstacles that hinder the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into traditional healing methods during its analysis of Indigenous knowledge strengths. Indigenous knowledge faces continuous discrimination in the Western medical and psychological systems which represent the most important challenge. Some research participants complained about their anger toward non-Indigenous medical practitioners

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because they ignore or misinterpret Indigenous therapeutic methods that display effectiveness. Several institutional constraints together with legal boundaries prevent people from obtaining access to vital natural health resources which are fundamental to healing. Western biomedical systems that focus on individual treatments with symptom management stand in the way of harmoniously uniting Indigenous knowledge with conventional healthcare. Medicine's acceptance by health services depends on both systemic health care decolonization and health practitioner cultural competency development as per the research findings. The study demonstrates the central role that land together with its environment plays in Indigenous community healing processes. Native peoples view their lands as living beings because these spaces intersect with their cultural identity and spiritual practices as well as their health. Research findings demonstrate that Indigenous peoples require unrestricted access to their lands together with traditional healing practices that include hunting activities and gathering rituals and ceremonies for successfully healing trauma. Native communities experience increased psychological damage and degrade their cultural traditions because of disrupted traditional practices due to forced relocation and environmental harm. The restoration of land-based healing practices through projects like community gardening activities and land ownership restoration work as highly effective healing approaches. These initiatives let people restore their bond with their ancestors while finding power from the natural world through their connections with land. The land-based practices produce resilience and empowerment as foundations to achieve both the resolution of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous communities and the establishment of a sustainable wellbeing future.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates how Indigenous knowledge systems that promote the advancement of cultural heritage and the rehabilitation of cultural identities can result in significant change in how intergenerational trauma is handled. Languages, customs, and cultural practices are all necessary for the healing process in order to reestablish identity, wellness, and cultural ties to oneself and the community. Cultural revitalization gives Indigenous peoples the ability to overcome historical trauma from colonization which results in an identity empowerment that counteracts previous damage. People who participate in heritage-based celebrations simultaneously restore shared memories which build their collective strength. Such restoration initiatives prove the strong bond between cultural traditions and spiritual wellness because they show how trauma healing must revolve around preserving native practices which colonial authorities have targeted for many generations.

The research establishes the major role that tribal unity and shared survival play in Native trauma therapy. The healing process in Indigenous communities operates through communal efforts since members consider personal wellness tightly linked to collective health. The combination of communal support with ceremonial together with shared rituals develops trust and solidarity in Indigenous knowledge frameworks so people can overcome the isolation which trauma brings. The guidance provided by elders remains essential to this process since they possess cultural knowledge from multiple generations which they pass to younger people systematically. Through their work elders both protect cultural traditions and maintain an open knowledge channel for healing trauma methods which extends healing insights across time for the younger population thus enhancing community bonding.

Indigenous healing practices encounter major difficulties when integrating into Western medical systems because mainstream healthcare and psychology have marginalized these traditional practices. The study delivers information about major obstacles especially institutional mental ignorance along with legal boundaries and healthcare worker shortcomings in cultural understanding that restrict traditional Indigenous healing practices from being accepted by widespread use. Although serious barriers exist traditional knowledge systems continue to be practiced because they foster profound empowerment and resilience in communities. Empowerment results primarily from land-based healing practices because these practices establish a holistic spiritual bond between Indigenous people and their natural environment. Native peoples obtain their healing through access to land because it develops their bond with nature and their ancestors. Traditional knowledge systems unlock resilient empowerment for healing through their continued use even though obstacles persist in the healing process.

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