



# COMING TO KNOW *SIHTOSKÂTOWIN*

An Indigenous Methodology with Indigenous Peoples Who Use Illicit Drugs  
in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood

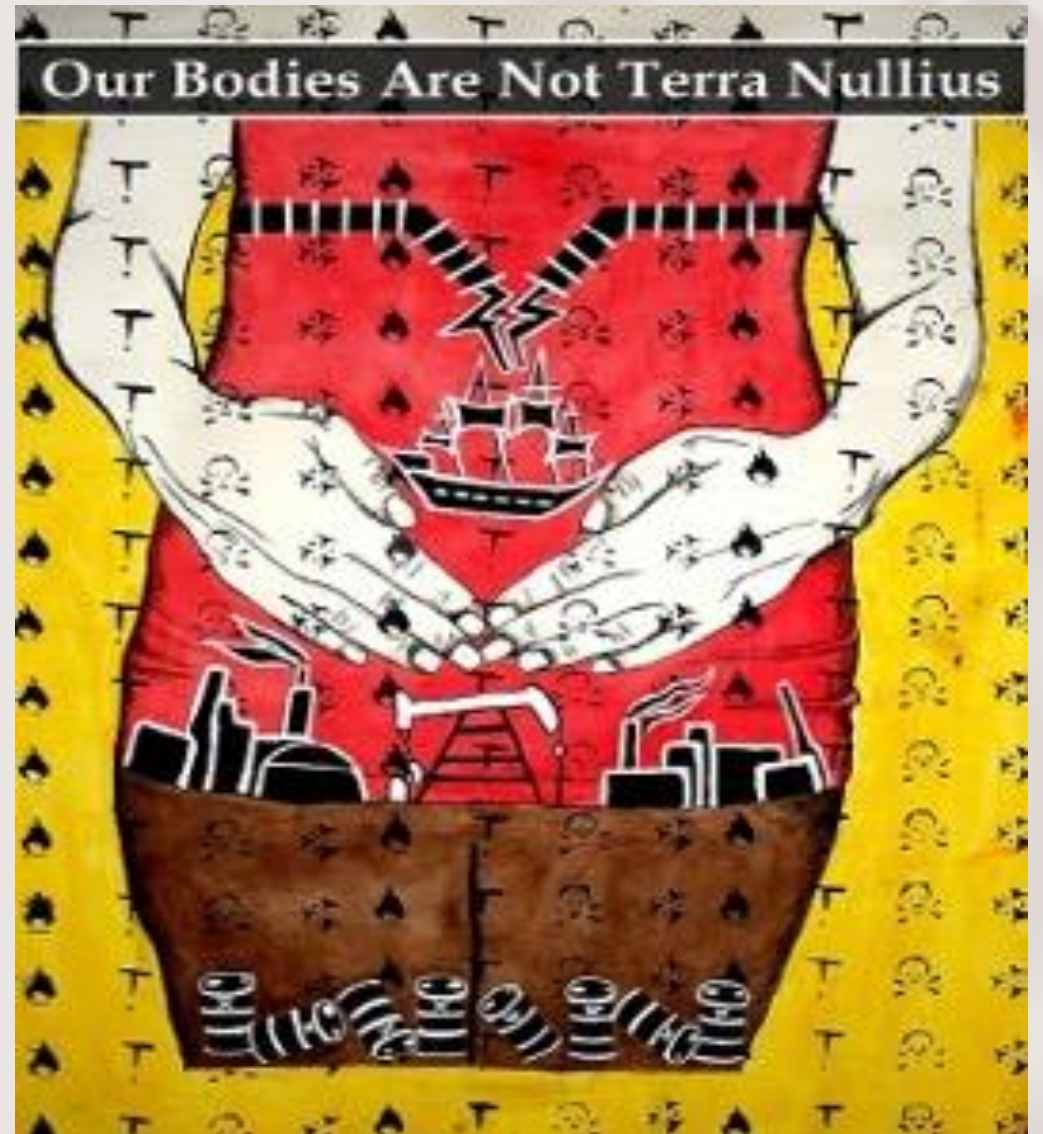
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I am a guest on the  
traditional lands of  
the Muisca People



*Art by: Erin Konsmo (Métis)*

# Who Am I & What Do I Carry Into This Work?

## *Relational Accountabilities and Responsibilities*

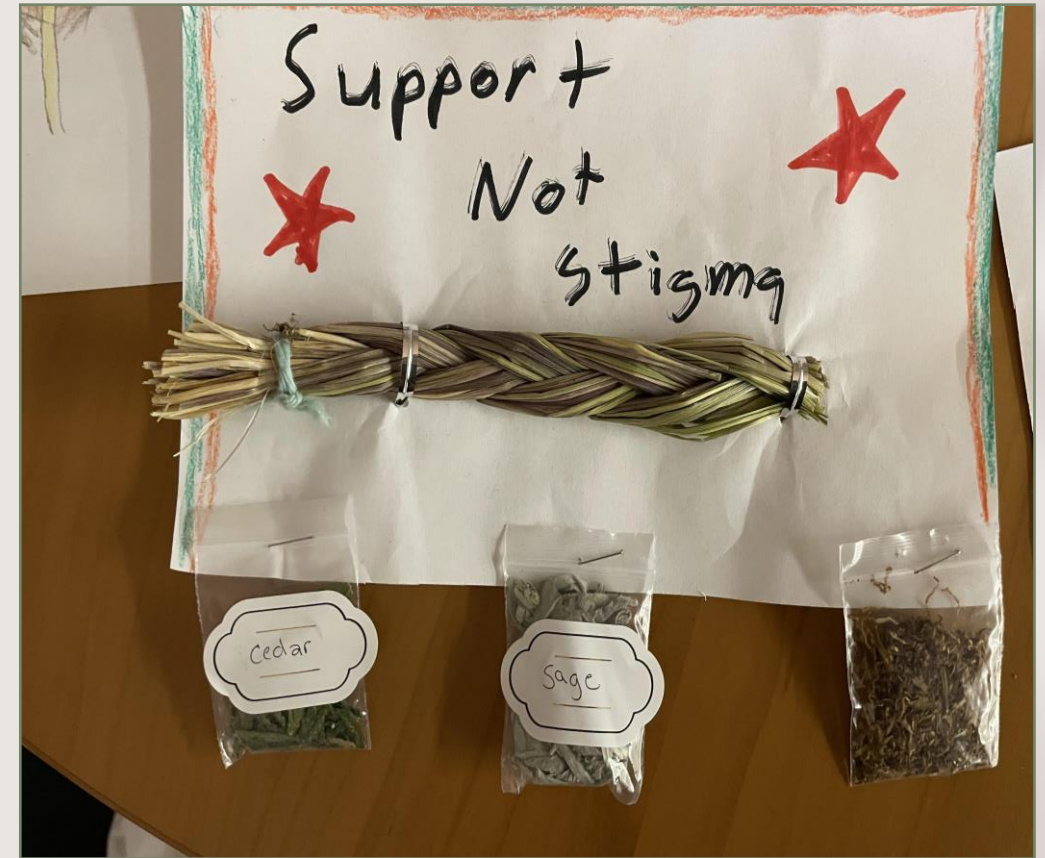


*Treaty 4 territory - Saskatchewan*

- **Cree, Saulteaux & Métis** from Piapot First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory, in so-called Canada.
- **Over 15 years of experience** in harm reduction and community work, grounded in lived experience
- Research bridges **Indigenous studies, public health, and community-based research** to **revitalize Indigenous care ethics** in relation to **Indigenous sovereignty, resistance, and resurgence**
- Personal experiences of **grief and loss**

# Resurgence for Whom?

- ❖ **Indigenous Peoples Who Use Illicit Drugs (IPWUID)** continue to be **disproportionately affected** by toxic drug crisis
  - In BC, **17.7%** of drug poisoning deaths, only **3.4%** of the population
- ❖ **Harm reduction/substance use stigma & the exclusion** of IPWUID from community, cultural **resurgence spaces** persists.
- ❖ Our resurgence framing **challenge assumptions** that contribute to the **exclusion** of IPWUID from community and culture
  - Centres IPWUID as **full human beings** with the right to cultural connection and community
  - Recognizes IPWUID practices as **acts of resurgence & pathways toward collective hope**






# The Downtown Eastside and Land Back

- Located on the unceded and occupied territories of the **xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam)**, **Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish)**, and **sel̓ilwítulh (Tsleil-waututh) Nations**.
- **Land Back means** reclaiming relationships beyond colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal structures.
- The DTES is not just a site of research—it is **Indigenous land** and a place of **active resurgence**.







# Towards an Indigenous Methodology with IPWUID....

- Methodology as Reclamation
- Witnessing as a Sacred Responsibility
- From Damage to Desire
- Intentional Vulnerability

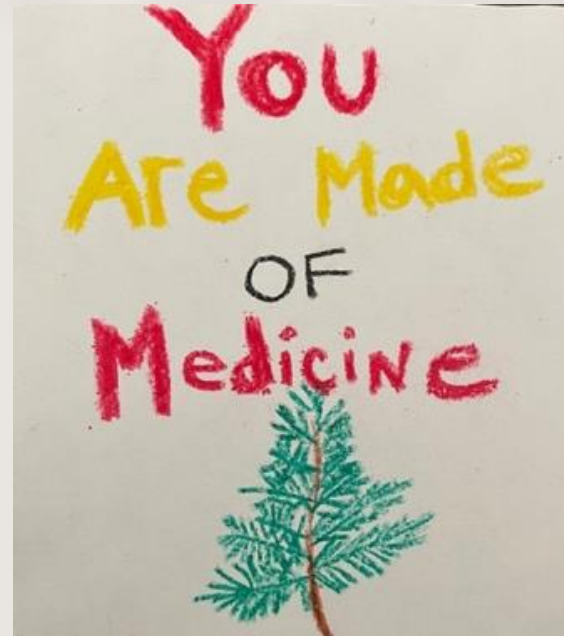


# Core Foundations:

## *A Sihtoskâtowin* Methodology for Research with IPWUID

***Sihtoskâtowin***—a principle centred on supporting one another and coming together in mutual care and solidarity. It implies an understanding that we cannot “do it alone.”

- ❖ **Decolonial Love**
- ❖ **Land as relation**
- ❖ **Re-imagining kinship where *all* our kin are valued**
- ❖ **Cultural resurgence through research**



**"Come as you are.** You are all welcome in my lodge, no matter where you are at. We are taught that we are not pure enough to go into ceremony when we are using [substances] and I work to counter that narrative. My lodge is how I push back that we aren't pure enough"

-Elder Sandy



Miigwetch!  
Thank you!