

# Using Photovoice to Understand Intergenerational Influences on Health and Well-Being in a Southern Labrador Inuit Community

---

## Abstract

This research sought to explore one southern Labrador Inuit community's intergenerational relationships, with a focus on seniors' perspectives and understandings of health and well-being. This knowledge is important for accessing and responding to social and demographic change to ensure a continued ability to provide for future generations. Our research employed a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach and a qualitative, arts-based methodology, including photovoice. Participants in this study included six seniors and six youth from St. Lewis, Labrador, Canada, who were provided with cameras and were asked to take photographs that represent how their lived experience related to the research questions. Our findings demonstrated that strong relationships between older and younger generations, particularly within families, exist in St. Lewis. We argue that these relationships contribute positively to the overall health and well-being of the community. Little is known about how youth and seniors in Indigenous communities perceive one another and their respective roles in a contemporary context. Our research suggests that learning more about the factors that shape senior–youth interaction and communication in St. Lewis may lead to interventions that will support intergenerational contact and, hence, promote cultural continuity and increase overall well-being. The promotion of cultural continuity and well-being is of particular importance in Indigenous communities, given the disruption of culture due to colonialism and given that Indigenous communities with high levels of cultural continuity are healthier.

## Keywords

Intergenerational communication, Inuit health and well-being, Labrador, seniors, elders, community-based participatory research, photovoice, traditional learning, resilience

## Authors

Chelsea Gabel (Métis from Rivers, Manitoba), PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Health, Aging and Society and the Indigenous Studies Program, McMaster University; 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4L8, Canada, (905) 870-9487; gabelc@mcmaster.ca.

Jessica Pace, PhD, is a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Health, Aging, and Society at McMaster University.

Chaneesa Ryan, BA, is one of the research assistants hired to work on this project. She is pursuing her MA in the Department of Health, Aging, and Society at McMaster University.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) funded this research. We would also like to acknowledge the NunatuKavut Community Council for their support throughout the research process and St. Lewis for welcoming us into their community. Furthermore, we would like to thank the seniors and youth from St. Lewis for their enthusiastic participation in the research, particularly our community research assistant, Danielle, for all of her hard work and our gracious hosts Geraldine and Harold, for welcoming us into their home and sharing their precious bakeapples with us!

### **Introduction**

Indigenous elders traditionally passed on to youth the norms, knowledge, and moral values of the whole society. Traditional learning processes included ceremonies, rituals, demonstration, storytelling, and songs (Ulluwishewa, Kaloko, & Morican, 1997). However, colonialism significantly impacted Indigenous family and community structures in Canada, including the transmission of traditional knowledge (Czyzewski, 2011). Factors such as dispossession from the land, disruption of traditional life-ways, intergenerational trauma, and the long-term effects of the residential school system (Martin-Hill, 2009) have resulted in the erosion of intergenerational closeness, particularly between the oldest and youngest members of these communities (Wexler, 2011). These factors have also contributed to community-level issues such as isolation, substance abuse, and violence (Brave Heart 2003; Kirmayer, Brass, & Tait, 2000; Strickland, Welsh, & Cooper, 2006).

The political and historical experience of Indigenous Peoples in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) is distinct from that of other places in Canada because there was no legal recognition of Indigeneity for its residents upon Confederation with Canada in 1949 (Grammond, 2014). A “designated communities” system was established after Confederation, which acknowledged northern Labrador communities. However, Inuit living in southern Labrador were not recognized despite similarities in cultural background and life-ways shared with their northern counterparts (Grammond, 2014). Grammond (2014) suggests that as a result, southern Labrador Inuit “were subjected to greater assimilative pressures and their identity was often hidden from outsiders” (p. 495). In 1985, persons of mixed ancestry who chose to reaffirm their Indigenous identity formed the Labrador Métis Nation<sup>1</sup>, now the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC). Martin et al. (2012) note that, “NunatuKavut’s most recent efforts to have their Inuit identity formally recognized by the federal government include a land-claim submission to the federal government” (p. 23). Despite a renewed sense of “pride and interest in their roots” (Kennedy, 2014, pp. 11–12), for many southern Labrador Inuit, social needs and challenges continue to reflect a loss of community connectivity and a growing gap between generations (MacCallum et al., 2010).

Intergenerational programming has been identified as a potential means of addressing

---

<sup>1</sup> We use the term *southern Inuit* throughout the paper to represent the people living within the NunatuKavut territory. However, the participants in our sample self-identified as Métis.

community problems, including poverty, violence, and isolation (Newman, 2003; VanderVen, 1999). Intergenerational programs bring together different generations within or outside of the family context to participate in planned activities designed to benefit all participants (Larkin, 2004). These activities facilitate interaction, cooperation, and exchange between generations by encouraging the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences (Abrams & Giles, 1999; Greengross, 2003; Vernon, 1999). Benefits are far-reaching and include a reduction in negative stereotypes and attitudes, increased knowledge and skills, personal and social development, increased self-esteem, and decreased social isolation (Abrams & Giles, 1999; Kuehne, 1999; Stanton & Tench, 2003). Intergenerational involvement can also improve health and confidence, break down social barriers between generations, foster shared experiences, and build community capacity (Ayala, Hewson, Bray, Jones, & Hartley, 2007; MacCallum et al., 2010). Such effects are particularly important in an Indigenous context because senior-youth relationships support cultural continuity, the social and cultural cohesion within a community (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Indigenous communities with high levels of cultural continuity and self-determination have been shown to be healthier (i.e., lower youth suicide rates) (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998).

Our research considered the nature of interaction and communication between Inuit seniors and youth living in St. Lewis, NL. Indigenous communities contain a wealth of traditional knowledge that can inform us about how to access, adapt to, and respond to social and demographic change to ensure a continued ability to provide for future generations. Our research took a broad and creative approach, drawing on social, historical, and cultural understandings of relationships between seniors and youth. The purpose of this research was to explore how intergenerational relationships impact health and well-being in St. Lewis. This paper specifically reports on seniors' perspectives of the nature of intergenerational relationships in their community and utilizes these data to evaluate how such relationships might impact health across generations in St. Lewis. Little is known about how seniors and youth in Indigenous communities perceive one another and their respective roles in a contemporary context. This research addressed a gap in knowledge by focusing on seniors' understandings of intergenerational relationships and the barriers and enablers that influence their ability to communicate and engage with youth.

### **Southern Labrador Inuit Understandings of Health and Wellness**

From an Indigenous perspective, health and well-being are often understood holistically (Adelson, 2005; Bartlett, 2003). Good health is viewed as a state of balance and harmony involving body, mind, emotions, and spirit, and links each person to family, community, and the land (Lavoie, O'Neil, Reading, & Allard, 2008). For southern Labrador Inuit, an intimate connection to the land and environment is imperative in the maintenance of good health (Hanrahan, 2000). Resources from the land and sea provide food, clothing, shelter, and medicine (Hanrahan, 2000). As a result, traditional diets based on hunting, fishing, and berry picking are integral to the idea of health (Martin et al., 2012). Labrador Inuit identify a direct link between processed foods and poor health, whereas food from the land is associated with a healthy community (Hanrahan, 2000). In addition to the well-balanced diet traditional foods can provide,

traditional subsistence activities such as berry picking, fishing, cutting wood, and hunting provide alternatives to more common modern forms of exercise such as jogging or aerobics (Martin et al., 2012).

Good practices related to maintaining personal safety in the geophysical environment also contribute to southern Inuit understandings of health; they see themselves as having the ability to influence their own health and well-being by taking care of themselves in this way (Hanrahan, 2000). Thus, personal responsibility for individual and family well-being is at the forefront of Inuit understandings of health (Hanrahan, 2000). In her research on food and global change in St. Lewis, Martin (2009) found that “food not only protected against nutritional deficiencies, but also reinforced a collective solidarity, fostering emotional and mental health and well-being” (p. 48). Hanrahan (2000) draws on the example of a tradition that the first salmon caught is shared amongst community members. This practice stems from a history of caring and respect for the community and assures that even those who may be too young or too frail to catch fish will be guaranteed a meal. This ongoing tradition also cultivates good relationships among community members (Martin, 2009).

### **A Community Profile of St. Lewis**

St. Lewis, NL, is situated in southeastern Labrador, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. The community is within NunatuKavut territory, an Inuit-settled area, currently home to Inuit, mixed-Inuit, and European descendants (Martin, 2011). The 2011 census states that St. Lewis had a population of 210 people. Of those, 145 identified as Métis and 15 identified as Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2013), including 85 individuals aged 0–24, 55 individuals aged 25–49, 80 individuals aged 50–84, and no one over age 85 (Statistics Canada, 2013). St. Lewis has an all-grade school (kindergarten to Grade 12) with 33 students. The school has a gymnasium and library where community meetings, after-school activities, social gatherings, as well as senior and youth events are held (Martin, 2009). Additionally, there is a church, health centre, airstrip, and three small stores. Many people in town have an Internet connection; however, there is no cellular phone service. St. Lewis was first connected by road to the Trans-Labrador Highway in 2002, which provided residents with increased access to goods and allowed easier entry into and exit from the community (Martin, 2009).

Historically, St. Lewis relied heavily on the seasonal employment of local cod fisheries; however, with the recent decline of this industry, residents of St. Lewis have been forced to search elsewhere for stable employment (Hanrahan, 2008; Martin, 2011). That search often leads to employment through offshore fishing, which, although more stable, requires workers to leave their homes for weeks or months at a time. There is a direct correlation between the decline in the cod fishery and the decline in the population of St. Lewis, which dropped 28% between 1986 and 2006 because many families could not secure local employment. The population declined by an additional 18% between 2006 and 2011 (Graham, Hussey, Small & Hollett, 2014). The outmigration of younger people in search of employment has led to a demographic shift in the community. While St. Lewis remains a vibrant community today, where cultural traditions have

been maintained, the colonial legacy has impacted community well-being, including senior–youth relationships.

### Methods

Canadian Indigenous people integrate knowledge and practices of Western and traditional worldviews as they negotiate their health and well-being (Graham & Stamler, 2010). Conducting research in Indigenous communities thus requires the use of a research approach that can accommodate both. Our research was grounded in a *community-based participatory research (CBPR)* approach in which we attempted to blend Labrador Inuit knowledge with academic theory and expertise. CBPR creates bridges between communities and researchers through the use of shared knowledge and experiences, and it facilitates the establishment of mutual trust that enhances the quantity and quality of data collected. The key benefit of these collaborations is deeper understanding of a community's unique circumstances, and a more accurate framework for adapting best practices to suit the community's needs. In our research, particular attention was paid to supporting an ongoing effort to integrate both community and researcher perspectives in all stages of the research process. This process included developing relationships with community members and disseminating findings back to the community. In particular, we consulted regularly with our community research assistant about the content of our interview guide, the sharing circle format, and our analytic process. Methodologically and analytically, we followed knowledge pathways articulated and experienced by seniors and youth through visual and oral storytelling and a sharing circle. Western methods included semi-structured interviews.

We utilized photovoice, a qualitative, arts-based methodology in which participants are provided with cameras and asked to take photographs to represent how their lived experience relates to the research questions (Poudrier & Thomas-MacLean, 2009; Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchison, Bell, & Pestronk, 2004). The goals of photovoice are to (a) enable participants to record strengths and concerns in their community, (b) facilitate dialogue about community issues, and (c) make research visible to policymakers (Wang & Burris, 1994). Photovoice is ideal for research with Indigenous communities because it fosters trust, gives community members ownership over research data, and shifts the balance of power to community members; it is consistent with a CBPR approach (Castleden, Garvin, & Huu-ay-aht First Nation, 2008; Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991; Minkler, 2004; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Photovoice also builds capacity among research participants relating to photography skills and the research process (Castleden et al., 2008; Corbie-Smith, Moody-Ayers, & Thrasher, 2004) and creates a natural opportunity for knowledge mobilization.

Our sample consisted of 10 individuals from St. Lewis, NL. Five participants were seniors<sup>2</sup> aged 50-75, and five were youth aged 8-24. Because this paper focuses on identifying and addressing seniors' understandings of intergenerational relationships, only senior

---

<sup>2</sup> Age 50 and up is often used to define seniors in Indigenous contexts; the impacts of poor health in this population contribute to functional decline at a younger age than in the mainstream population (Reading, 1999).

perspectives will be discussed.<sup>3</sup>

Our research was carried out in four stages:

1. An information and training session for prospective participants
2. A participant photography assignment
3. Individual interviews with senior and youth participants
4. A sharing circle

Participants were recruited by a local research assistant and invited to participate in the information and training session. At this session, we introduced the project to participants and discussed ethical considerations related to photography and photovoice. Participants were given one week to consider the research questions and take 5 to 10 photographs that represented their understanding of how these questions impacted their community.

Once individuals completed the photography assignment, a follow-up interview was scheduled. Interviews were semi-structured conversations about the content and meaning of participants' photographs. Interviews were loosely structured around the SHOWED approach developed by Wang et al. (2004). Our slightly modified version asked participants to think about each photograph in terms of five structured questions: What do you **See** here? What is really **H**appening here? How does this relate to **O**ur life? **W**hy does this situation, concern, or strength exist in your community? Who could the image **E**ducate? What can we **D**o about it?

Once all individual interviews were completed, we held a potluck supper as a way for participants to gather and tell their stories. Coming together around a meal to share stories was an approach encouraged by our participants and helped to facilitate discussions and ensure equitable opportunities for individual participation (Baskin, 2010). During this event, seniors and youth viewed one another's photographs, discussed the similarities and differences in their photographs, reflected on shared experiences, and thought about future opportunities for meaningful interaction between the two groups. This format was chosen as an opportunity to gather more data as well as an intervention that brought seniors and youth together in a shared, meaningful, and positive setting designed to strengthen their relationships.

During a sharing circle (Figure 1), we used a reflexive process that enabled the group to contemplate the meaning of their photographs. We asked them to identify positive traits of seniors/youth as well as things they would like to learn from or know about the other age group in their community. These discussions were facilitated by the use of cue cards and flip charts to help participants share and record their ideas. Cue cards were used for participants to write down their answers to targeted questions about their interactions with seniors/youth in their community.

As the sharing circle progressed, relationships between the content categories were identified and combined to form themes. Throughout this analytic process, group members identified photographs they believed best represented their community's intergenerational

---

<sup>3</sup> We chose to focus solely on seniors' perspectives in this article because Canadian researchers and policymakers have paid limited attention to the healthcare needs of Indigenous seniors. However, we believe youth and senior perspectives are significant and will highlight and discuss both in targeted publications.

relationships. Additionally, interview transcripts were analyzed and coded by the research team. Thematic analysis was used to identify themes specific to particular generations as well as overarching themes that cut across all age groups.



*Figure 1.* Seniors and youth engage in the analytic process at the sharing circle.

### **Relationships**

At the outset of the research, the NCC was consulted regarding the appropriateness of this research topic for communities in their jurisdiction. The NCC acts as a gatekeeper to southern Labrador research, and advised the researchers that St. Lewis would be a suitable community in which to conduct the research. We sought support from the NCC for the proposed research and underwent their research review process. Ethical approval was also secured from McMaster University Research Ethics Board. We are currently working with research participants and our local research assistant to design a photo exhibit in spring 2016, which will mobilize knowledge back to the entire community. Written reports for the NCC and St. Lewis have also been prepared.

### **Results**

Three major interrelated categories emerged from our analysis: Connections to Family; Teaching and Storytelling; and Traditional Lifestyles, Heritage, and Values. These categories are described below.

### **Connections to Family**

Senior participants spoke warmly of their relationships with youth in the community, particularly their grandchildren. The importance of family was a key theme that emerged in seniors' photographs and interviews. Grandparent–grandchild relationships appear to be very strong in this community, based on participants' stories. All senior participants told stories about their grandchildren or their relationships with their own grandparents.

In St. Lewis, youth often start families in their early twenties, with the result that as many as five generations may be alive at the same time. Two participants in our sample discussed having the opportunity to take a “five generations” photograph. As a result, it is common for cross-generational relationships to extend beyond grandparents and grandchildren to great-great-grandparent and great-great-grandchild.

*So we got fifth-generation picture ... I said okay, before you leave, I want the picture of my grandfather, my mother, me, my son, and my granddaughters. And all of us were the oldest in the family. (Senior01)*

Describing her photo, another participant spoke with great emotion about how meaningful it was to her that her granddaughter brought her great-grandson over to her house to visit and described the special bond they had developed as she taught him to make pancakes.

*This is the story right here in that picture. This is my little great-grandson, and he and I got a thing. When he first started coming here, like after he got old enough, he was here one day and I said, “What are we going to feed you? Why don't we try and make some pancakes?” “Ok, Nan,” he said, “me help.” I said, “Yes, you help.” And when he come now, he always first thing says, “Cakes, Nan?” And that's OUR thing [said with pride]. That's our thing, and this is what you want to show your children, little things like this. (Senior02)*

The pride expressed among seniors about their relationships with their children and grandchildren indicated that these relationships contribute positively to seniors' mental and emotional well-being. Visits with the young people reduce social isolation, provide opportunities for seniors to pass on their knowledge and skills, and allow seniors to learn about younger generations' perspectives of the world.

Although seniors lamented that changes in technology and ways of life were potentially negatively impacting intergenerational relationships, some seniors described positive changes to grandparent – grandchild relationships that had occurred in their lifetime.

*I think seniors and youth seem to be closer than when we were [young]—I remember when we were growing up my grandmother didn't participate in our lives like they do now. Grandmothers babysit their grandchildren and when we were younger, you'd go visit grandmother at Christmas, we'd visit her probably a few times a year ... and when she spoke, you listened.*

*And now I think they are closer now to their grandchildren. And I think youth and seniors interact better now than they did back then. (Senior03)*

This participant described that in her youth, meetings with her grandmother were reserved for formal occasions, and she was not close with her grandparents. By contrast, she described her relationships with her grandchildren as close and centered on shared experiences, day-to-day interaction, and fun. Another participant spoke similarly of the changes to grandparent and grandchild roles. She described being sent to take full-time care of her ailing grandmother at age eight and emphatically expressed that she would never ask a child that young to take on such a role today.

Grandchildren are a constant presence in many seniors' lives in St. Lewis today. Although many families are separated by large geographical distances, photographs of grandchildren were featured prominently in all of the seniors' homes and were a recurring theme in their photovoice assignments.

### **Teaching and Storytelling**

All participants mentioned teaching, knowledge sharing, and storytelling either directly or indirectly. Seniors expressed their desire for youth to have a better understanding of the value of work and what it was like for them growing up. One of the key ways in which senior–youth relationships contribute to community well-being is through the transmission of knowledge about the land and traditional food procurement activities. Teaching was important to these seniors. They recognized that they have knowledge that will potentially be lost if they do not pass it on to younger generations. Rapid changes in the last several decades—an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, increased community accessibility with the building of a road, increased access to non-wild food, and changing technology—have decreased the necessity of traditional knowledge and skills for survival. Yet, for these senior participants, passing on this knowledge and ensuring the continuation of certain skills was a matter of pride. Seniors said they wanted youth to understand where they came from and to maintain the skills that allow them to sustain themselves. Seniors repeatedly expressed the importance of youth having knowledge of basic skills such as cooking, sewing, and fishing.

Seniors expressed a great deal of pride in traditional activities. In the spring, they look forward to ice fishing and seal harvesting. Summer and fall bring duck hunting and berry picking, and with winter comes wood-cutting and hunting. Seniors also described knowledge and skills necessary for carrying out these activities, such as boat building, snowshoe making, winter survival, and setting fishing nets. Although many of these skills remain in the community, knowledge of some techniques is held by fewer people than in the past.

From our participants' descriptions and observations in the community, it is clear that traditional skills are in many cases passed on to youth by their grandparents and great-grandparents rather than their parents. These skills were less necessary for survival among younger people than for older generations. As a result, some people in this middle generation are not as skilled in these activities or as able to pass them on. Regardless, older people in the community have a strong desire to see these traditions and knowledge continue.

*It means a whole lot to me to be able to carry on with tradition 'cause I knows my grandchildren is never going to learn how to set a cod trap, they're never going to learn how to set a gill net, and that was a way of life for us. (Senior02)*



*Figure 2.* Grandchildren helping grandfather to pull a boat out of the shed.

Teaching and storytelling were seen as important, and the particular knowledge and skills that were taught emerged as their own theme as many of these were closely tied to traditional lifestyles and skills (sewing, crafts, cooking). Knowledge transmission through teaching and storytelling was common within families but also occurred in the broader community. For instance, seniors gave presentations in school classes about heritage and traditional skills such as snowshoe and slipper making.

Teaching and learning were understood to be reciprocal. Many senior participants expressed an interest in learning from youth in the community, and youth were perceived to play a valuable role in teaching seniors about technology and the “new way of life.”

*I see the roles of elders and youth in our communities as interconnected and also individualized, which helps to balance out our community. Elders give us wisdom and stories, a past that we are trying to hold on to, traditions and culture. Our youth are the energy of the community, they are the ones that we are passing our wisdom, cultures, stories, traditions*

*on to. In turn they are adding their own style of life and intertwining it with the old style. (Senior04)*

Additionally, many seniors we spoke with were relatively young (age 50), and they expressed their continued enjoyment of learning from *their* elders.

### **Traditional Lifestyles, Heritage, and Values**

Sharing knowledge about traditional ways of life, heritage, and values was important to senior participants. Engaging in traditional activities that reflect subsistence practices and crafting emerged as an important example of situations where seniors and youth came together, with positive potential benefits for health.

*I tell you about my father helping with the snowshoes. When [my son] was probably 10 or 12, I think, they had Dad do a class with his age group to show them how to do snowshoes. Dad is 75 now, so that was a few years back, but like every year there is somebody trying to keep that up. 'Cause like they had slipper [making], they showed them how to do slippers this spring. Those techniques and everything that we learned as youngsters, they are being passed on to younger generations to keep. (Senior01)*

*I'd like the kids to remember their heritage, the way we grew up. I don't want them to lose that. (Senior03)*



Figure 3. St. Lewis Heritage Society Museum.

All participants expressed a great deal of pride in their community and the natural environment in which they live. A majority of their photographs depicted favourite places on the landscape such as family fishing spots and cabins. Community pride was strong among the seniors, and it was clear that they valued the maintenance of this pride and wanted to ensure that youth felt the same way about their history and community. Seniors benefited by sharing their pride with the youth and by being engaged in the community. For example, one senior spoke about senior–youth outings involving boating, hunting, fishing, and berry picking:

*Like last fall they took them out in the boat and showed them how to duck hunt, and cod fishing and berry picking ... in the fall they go berry picking for the day, they'll come back, they'll make those berries into jam and they bring it to the seniors' home in Mary's Harbour. (Senior04)*

This example illustrates the potential benefits of interaction across several generations. Seniors had the opportunity to transmit knowledge and skills to younger generations and youth had the opportunity to be able to engage with an older generation of seniors and provide them with the fish and berries that they harvested. As one participant expressed, this type of activity is “great, 'cause everybody benefits” (Senior04). Similarly, participants shared the value of an event held at the school for Grandparents' Day where grandparents have the opportunity to go into the school and share stories and skills (e.g., making snowshoes, rug hooking) with youth. During the sharing circle, one senior expressed her belief that there “should be more opportunities for that because both parties [seniors and youth] can get a lot out of it” (Senior05).

One participant who took a photo of blackberries explained that growing up she “practically lived off the land” and her mom taught her how to make blackberry pudding, which they made every Sunday for dinner (Senior05). Serving this pudding to her family and friends is a continuing tradition in her family. While picking blackberries is a form of cultural continuity that allows this participant to feed her family and remain active, she said youth today do not like picking berries, which she said “breaks me heart” (Senior05).

### **Limitations**

The findings of this research are limited by data that comes from a single, small community of Inuit and Métis people in NL. A further limitation is that our sample of seniors was relatively young, the majority between age 50 and 60. Thus our results may not be generalizable to a population of older seniors from other communities and do not fully represent the heterogeneity of experience. Additionally, all senior participants were women. We recognize that our research and analysis would have been more balanced if we had included senior men's perspectives; however, given the constraints mentioned above and our reliance on others to facilitate the recruitment process, this was not feasible.

## Discussion

Our findings relating to senior–youth relationships in St. Lewis, NL, reveal that older generations feel they have strong relationships with youth, particularly within their families. We posit that these relationships contribute positively to the overall health and well-being of the St. Lewis community in several ways. Here, we focus on the benefits to seniors' well-being.

Themes emerging from this research are closely interrelated and include: the importance of family, pride in their community, connection to the natural environment, teaching, storytelling, and traditional knowledge and ways of life. Although seniors spoke only peripherally about the health benefits of their interactions with youth, it is clear that there are many positive outcomes resulting from intergenerational relationships. For example, connecting with youth through arts, crafts, music, and community contributes to social participation and engagement among St. Lewis seniors. This type of social engagement has been demonstrated to have positive health outcomes for older adults including: reduced disability, mortality, and depression, and increased cognitive functioning and self-rated health (Richard, Gauvin, Gosselin, & Laforest, 2009). Additionally, community involvement contributes to empowerment, which is closely connected to health (Richard et al., 2009). Involvement with the community provides an opportunity for seniors to pass on cultural knowledge and traditions to youth, which is an important component of cultural continuity. Furthermore, when seniors share teachings and stories with youth, opportunities for engagement are enhanced (Lewis, 2011). It was clear that senior participants were enjoying the benefits of this type of interaction.

Participants described how living in Labrador, specifically St. Lewis, is connected to a sense of identity and belonging, and that this place possesses nurturing qualities. They described how traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, wood-cutting, boating, and berry picking build group cohesiveness and a sense of empowerment, particularly among seniors and youth. These observations are consistent with other literature, which suggests that participation in cultural activities leads to better health and wellness in Indigenous communities (Dockery, 2010). Although this literature often focuses on the benefits for youth, it is clear from our findings that there are comparable benefits for older people.

Participation in sports and physical activity, as well as healthy eating through traditional food procurement, are important and much desirable in St. Lewis. In fact, seniors emphasized their responsibility to show young people how to live off the land, preparing food, eating healthy foods, and being physically active. Engagement in these activities also provides additional opportunities for older people to share stories and experiences with youth. Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) suggest story is essential in the transmission of knowledge, and that “this can be learned from the land and from the connections with the land, and from the stories that elders tell us about the land and our relationship to it” (p. 53). Our research supports the idea that time spent engaging with youth in these activities is beneficial to health and well-being.

Our results also demonstrate that seniors desire to be role models and mentors for youth, teaching traditional cultural values and practices that support resilience, health, and well-being. Our research acknowledges that determinants such as culture and social support can lead to

greater resilience and positive development in youth, but that it is similarly important to consider how such determinants can benefit older people.

### Conclusion

Through this research, we gained insight into the interactions between Indigenous seniors and youth, and determined how senior–youth relationships contribute to the health and well-being of St. Lewis community members. Seniors in St. Lewis have vastly different life experiences than youth due to significant changes in the economy and accessibility of the community in recent decades. However, their eagerness for interaction with youth was evident. From the perspective of seniors, benefits of this interaction included the reinforcement of their meaningful, traditional roles as teachers, mentors, storytellers, and knowledge keepers. Furthermore, our research suggests that learning more about the factors shaping senior–youth interaction can lead to interventions that support intergenerational contact and, hence, promote cultural continuity and increase overall well-being. These findings also have the potential to lead to future initiatives that support senior–youth interactions in St. Lewis. Programming that engages seniors and youth could contribute to community resilience in creative, innovative, culturally specific, and historically sensitive ways. Addressing these issues has the potential to improve quality of life in St. Lewis across many generations. Photovoice contributed additional richness to the data and also led to a tangible outcome (photos) that can be a valuable part of the knowledge mobilization process. The photovoice process acted as an intervention bringing seniors and youth together in a productive, shared endeavour that can help bridge the gap between these groups and may lead to future interventions or collaborations.

### References

- Abrams, J., & Giles, H. (1999). Intergenerational contact as intergroup communication. *Child & Youth Services, 20*(1–2), 203–217. doi:10.1300/j024v20n01\_15
- Adelson, N. (2005). The embodiment of inequity. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 96*(1), 45–61.
- Ayala, J. S., Hewson, J. A., Bray, D., Jones, G., & Hartley, D. (2007). Intergenerational programs: Perspectives of service providers in one Canadian city. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 5*(2), 45–60.
- Bartlett, J. (2003). Involuntary cultural change, stress phenomenon and Aboriginal health status. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 94*(3), 165–166.
- Baskin, C. (2010). *Strong helpers' teachings: The value of Indigenous knowledges in the helping professions*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Brave Heart, M.Y. (2003) The Historical Trauma Response Among Natives and its Relationship with Substance Abuse: A Lakota Illustration. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs 35*(1), 7-13. doi:10.1080/02791072.2003.10399988

- Castleden, H., Garvin, T., & Huu-ay-aht First Nation. (2008). Modifying Photovoice for community-based participatory Indigenous research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 66(6), 1393–1405. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.11.030
- Chandler, M. J., & Lalonde, C. (1998). Cultural continuity as a hedge against suicide in Canada's First Nations. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 35(2), 191–219. doi:10.1177/136346159803500202
- Corbie-Smith, G., Moody-Ayers, S., & Thrasher, A. (2004). Closing the circle between minority inclusion in research and health disparities. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 164, 1362–1364. doi:10.1001/archinte.164.13.1362
- Czyzewski, K. (2011). Colonialism as a broader social determinant of health. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 2(1). doi:10.18584/iipj.2011.2.1.5
- Dockery, A. M. (2010). Culture and wellbeing: The case of Indigenous Australians. *Social Indicators Research*, 99(2), 315–332. doi:10.1007/s11205-010-9582-y
- Fals-Borda, O., & Rahman, M. A. (1991). *Action and knowledge: Breaking the monopoly with participatory action-research*. New York, NY: Apex Press. doi:10.3362/9781780444239
- Graham, H., & Stamler, L. L. (2010). Contemporary perceptions of health from an Indigenous (Plains Cree) perspective. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 6(1), 6–17.
- Grammond, S. (2014). Equally recognized? The Indigenous Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 51(2), 469–499.
- Greengross, S. (2003). Intergenerational programmes as a global approach to social issues. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 1(1), 11–13. doi:10.1300/j194v01n01\_03
- Greenwood, M., & de Leeuw, S. (2007). Teachings from the land: Indigenous people, our health, our land, and our children. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 48–53.
- Hanrahan, M. (2000). Industrialization and the politicization of health in Labrador Métis society. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 2, 231–250.
- Hanrahan, M. (2008). Tracing social change among the Labrador Inuit and Inuit-Métis: What does the nutrition literature tell us? *Food, Culture & Society*, 11(3), 315–333. doi:10.2752/175174408x347883
- Kennedy, J. C. (Ed.). (2014). *History and renewal of Labrador's Inuit-Métis*. St. John's, NL: ISER Books.
- Kirmayer, L., Brass, G.M., and Tait, C. (2000). The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples: Transformations of Identity and Community. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 45(7),607-616.
- Kuehne, V. (1999). Introduction. *Child & Youth Services*, 20(1–2), 1–3. doi:10.1300/j024v20n01\_01
- Larkin, E. (2004). Introduction. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 2(3–4), 1–3. doi:10.1300/j194v02n03\_01
- Lavoie, J., O'Neil, J., Reading, J., & Allard, Y. (2008). Community healing and Aboriginal self-government. In Y. D. Belanger (Ed.), *Aboriginal self-government in Canada: Current trends and issues* (3rd ed., pp. 175 - 205). Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing.

- Lewis, J. P. (2011). Successful aging through the eyes of Alaska Native Elders. What it means to be an Elder in Bristol Bay, AK. *The Gerontologist*, 51(4), 540–549. doi:10.1093/geront/gnr006
- MacCallum, J., Palmer, P., Wright, W., Cumming-Potvin, M., Brooker, C., & Tero, C. (2010). Australian perspectives: Community building through intergenerational exchange programs. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 8(2), 113–127. doi:10.1080/15350771003741899
- Martin, D. H. (2009). *Food stories: A Labrador Inuit-Métis community speaks about global change* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS.
- Martin, D. H. (2011). “Now we got lots to eat and they’re telling us not to eat it”: Understanding changes to south-east Labrador Inuit relationships to food. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 70(4). doi:10.3402/ijch.v70i4.17842
- Martin, D. H., Valcour, J. E., Bull, J. R., Graham, J. R., Paul, M., & Wall, D. (2012). *NunatuKavut community health needs assessment: A community-based research project* (Final Report). Retrieved from NunatuKavut website: [http://www.nunatukavut.ca/home/files/pg/ncha\\_web.pdf](http://www.nunatukavut.ca/home/files/pg/ncha_web.pdf)
- Martin-Hill, D. (2009). Traditional medicine and restoration of wellness strategies. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 5(1), 26–42.
- Minkler, M. (2004). Ethical challenges for the “outside” researcher in community-based participatory research. *Health Education & Behavior*, 31(6), 684–697. doi:10.1177/1090198104269566
- Minkler, M., & Wallerstein, N. (2003). *Community-based participatory research for health*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley.
- Newman, S. (2003). An introductory message from the Editor. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 1(1), 1-4. doi:10.1300/j194v01n01\_01\_
- Poudrier, J., & Thomas-MacLean, R. (2009). “We’ve fallen into the cracks”: Aboriginal women’s experiences with breast cancer through photovoice. *Nursing Inquiry*, 16(4), 306–317. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1800.2009.00435.x
- Reading, J. (1999). *An examination of residential schools and elder health*. Ottawa, ON: First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey Steering Committee.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.) (2001). *Handbook of action research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Richard, L., Gauvin, L., Gosselin, C., & Laforest, S. (2009). Staying connected: Neighbourhood correlates of social participation among older adults living in an urban environment in Montreal, Quebec. *Health Promotion International*, 24(1), 46–57. doi:10.1093/heapro/dan039
- Stanton, G., & Tench, P. (2003). Intergenerational storyline bringing the generations together in North Tyneside. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 1(1), 71–80. doi:10.1300/j194v01n01\_07

- Statistics Canada. (2013). *St. Lewis, Newfoundland and Labrador (Code 1010010) (table). National Household Survey (NHS) Profile, 2011* (Catalogue number 99-004-XWE). Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Strickland, C.J., Walsh, E., & Cooper, M. (2006). Healing Fractured Families: Parents' and Elders' Perspectives of the Impact of Colonization and Youth Suicide Prevention in a Pacific Northwest American Indian Tribe. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 17(1), 5-12. doi:10.1177/1043659605281982
- Ulluwishewa, R., Kaloko, A., & Morican, D. H. M. (1997, June). *Indigenous knowledge and environmental education*. Paper presented at Environmental Education Workshop, University of Brunei, Darussalam.
- VanderVen, K. (1999). Intergenerational theory: The missing element in today's intergenerational programs. *Child & Youth Services*, 20(1-2), 33-47. doi:10.1300/j024v20n01\_04
- Vernon, A. (1999). Designing for change: Attitudes toward the elderly and intergenerational programming. *Child & Youth Services*, 20(1-2), 161-173. doi:10.1300/j024v20n01\_12
- Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1994). Empowerment through photo novella: Portraits of participation. *Health Education & Behavior*, 21(2), 171-186. doi:10.1177/109019819402100204
- Wang, C. C., Morrel-Samuels, S., Hutchison, P. M., Bell, L., & Pestronk, R. M. (2004). Flint photovoice: Community building among youths, adults, and policymakers. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(6), 911-913. doi:10.2105/ajph.94.6.911
- Wexler, L. (2011). Intergenerational dialogue exchange and action: Introducing a community-based participatory approach to connect youth, adults, and elders in an Alaskan Native community. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(3), 248-264.