

Researcher Journeys: Water Connects Us All.

Using Water Teachings to Enrich the Work and Practice of Indigenous and Allied HIV Researchers.

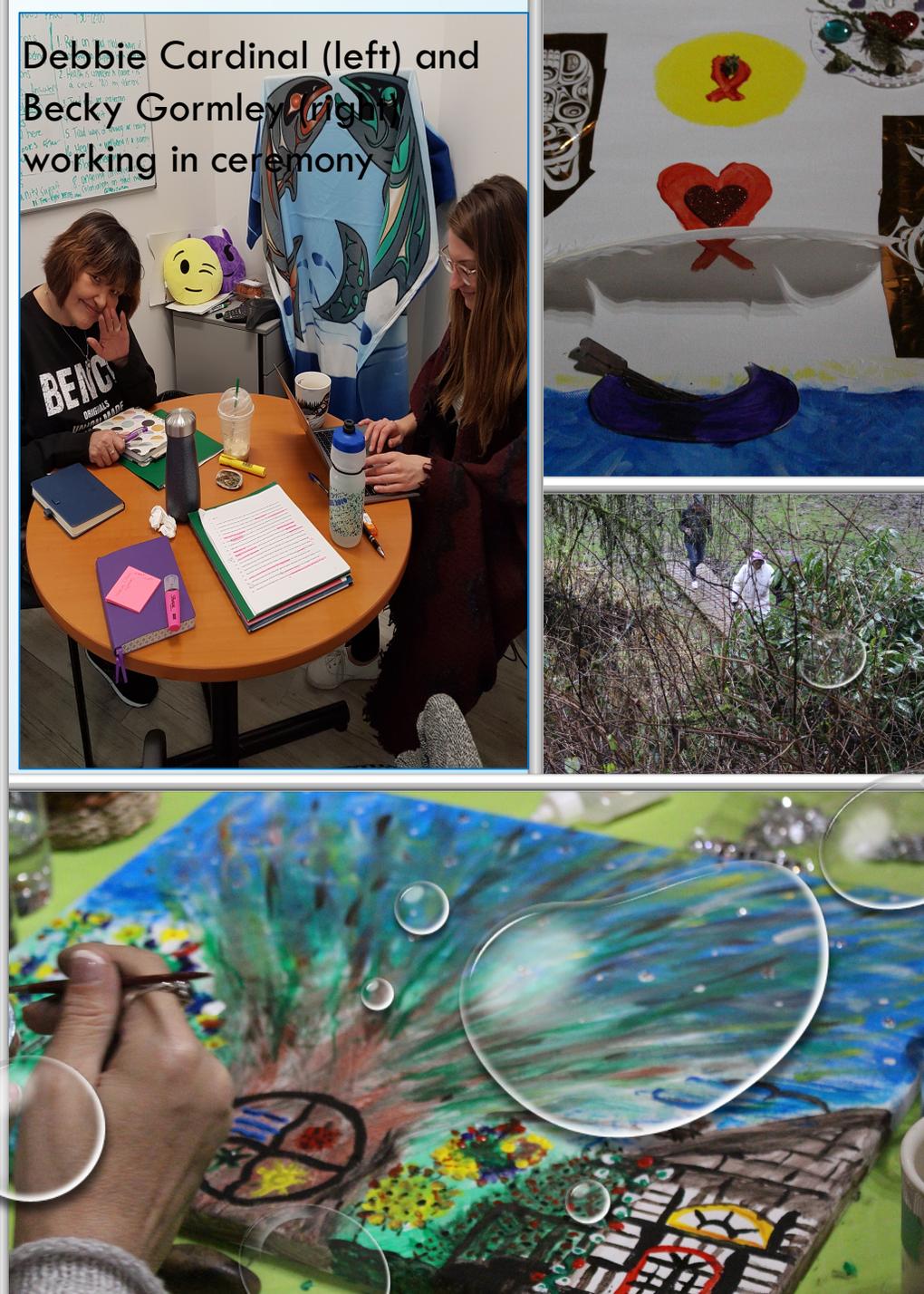
We honour and respect the Kwantlen Ancestral Traditional lands and waters, where we connected our bodies, minds, spirits, and hearts to do our work.

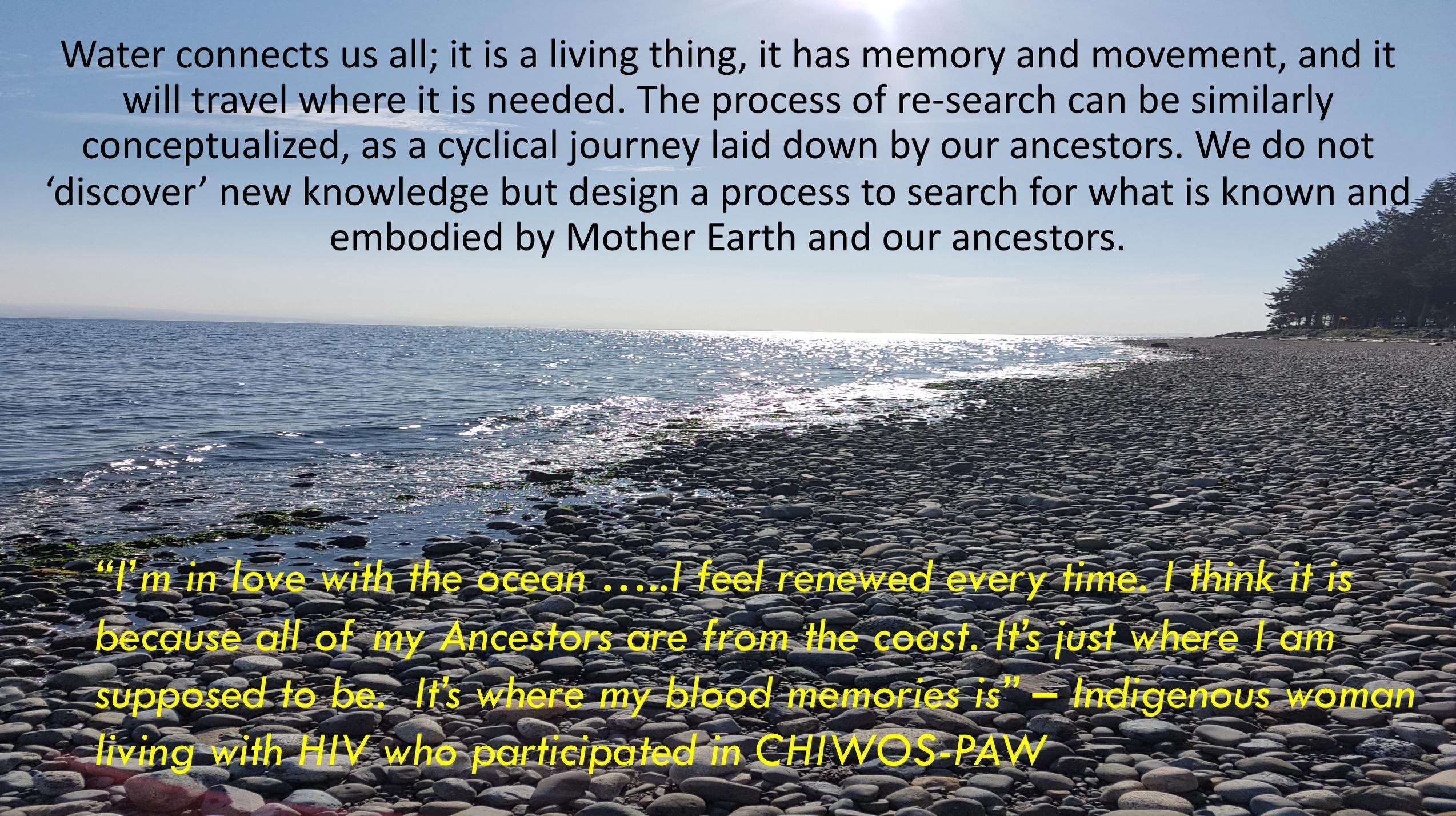
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CHIWOS-PAW BC OVERVIEW

- Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study – Positive Aboriginal Women (CHIWOS-PAW) Indigenizes re-search by, with, and for Indigenous communities using Water Teachings.
- Our re-search question: ***How do Indigenous women living with HIV in the Coast Salish territories understand their health and well-being through traditional ways of knowing?***
- Held three gatherings with six Indigenous women living with HIV in the Coast Salish Territories [more information: <https://bit.ly/3f847lu>]
- **We were in ceremony. Each day opened with a smudge, and connected with the lands, waters, and Earth Medicines.**
- Women felt protected by the lands and waters, drawing on their blood memories. Healing for the women was prioritized in this new way of doing re-search.

Debbie Cardinal (left) and Becky Gormley (right) working in ceremony



A scenic view of a rocky beach with waves crashing against the shore under a bright sky. The sun is high in the sky, creating a shimmering reflection on the water. The beach is covered in smooth, dark grey rocks. In the distance, a line of trees is visible on the right side.

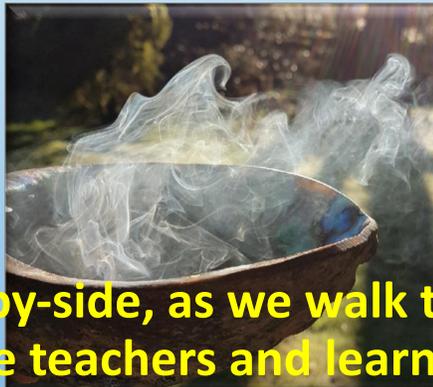
Water connects us all; it is a living thing, it has memory and movement, and it will travel where it is needed. The process of re-search can be similarly conceptualized, as a cyclical journey laid down by our ancestors. We do not ‘discover’ new knowledge but design a process to search for what is known and embodied by Mother Earth and our ancestors.

“I’m in love with the oceanI feel renewed every time. I think it is because all of my Ancestors are from the coast. It’s just where I am supposed to be. It’s where my blood memories is” – Indigenous woman living with HIV who participated in CHIWOS-PAW

Indigenous Re-searchers

Indigenous re-searchers challenged traditional methodologies to prioritize connection with the lands and waters and created space for the women participating to guide the questions. This felt natural to the Indigenous re-searchers; they also felt apprehensive of the response within institutional systems and guidelines. As water teaches us to be fluid and ever-changing, so must re-search shift to highlight the strength of Indigenous communities.

Water Women Rising



We present our journeys side-by-side, as we walk together through the re-search world.
We are teachers and learners together.

Re-searchers practicing Allyship

Re-searchers trained in traditional academic settings had new learnings of how things are to be done, that often went against traditionally taught 'objective' research. Under the mentorship and guidance of the Indigenous leads, we began a journey to reconceptualizing re-search in a Good Way. This included centering Indigenous ways of knowing, ceremony, and cultural practices; changing re-search jargon to more inclusive and honouring language (for example, data analysis become *honouring voices*); and reaffirming commitment to Indigenous communities.

THE STREAMS HAVE COME TO OUR SEA OF KNOWLEDGE AND TEACHINGS

Need to take the time to privilege and unpack the what we have learned and taken as an assumption of 'truth' in Western academic settings.

Centering Indigenous worldviews is an ongoing practice, and requires active engagement in ceremony, and time connecting with and being on the land and waters. It is important not to rush this process; and to build time within your re-search agenda for these connections.

Indigenous re-search should be led by Indigenous communities.

As community re-searchers, it is our responsibility to ask:
Is your community re-searcher *from* the community?

Thank you for viewing our presentation.

Hear the voices of the women who participated on May 5th 11:30am-1:00pm

PST / 2:30-4:00pm EST (#86)

Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3d6xZCy>

