Visioning Health: An Indigenous, Participatory, Culturally Grounded and Arts-Informed Intervention for HIV-Positive Aboriginal Women

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**WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW**

✧ Disproportionate burden of HIV on Indigenous women

✧ Predominance of research that highlights needs, risks, vulnerabilities and deficits

✧ Research and interventions that maximize strengths can counter negative social and economic determinants of health

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**The Birth of Vision Health**

✧ Emerged from a pilot (doctoral) study undertaken by Tracey Prentice and Doris Peltier.

✧ Findings indicated that research can be healing* for participants, when done with attention to:
  – Indigenous knowledges
  – cultural traditions
  – ceremony
  – strengths

✧ Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) Voices of Women Standing Committee invited me to partner on a full study of Visioning Health

* Enhanced resilience, self-determination and social support
Visioning Health Goals

1. To gather knowledge about the meaning of health and how it intersects with gender and culture for ~40 HIV + Indigenous women (PIW) from across Canada.

2. Develop and test the Visioning Health model as an intervention, and assess the effectiveness and process with PIW.
   - Integrate:
     - arts-informed methods, including contemporary and traditional arts (e.g. digital photography, hand drum making, ceremonial skirt making, cedar hat making)
     - qualitative interviews
     - observations
     - sharing circles
     - quantitative and qualitative survey questionnaires.
   - Ground process in culture and ceremonial practices appropriate to each region, including but not limited to women's teachings, drumming/singing, sweat lodge, and pipe ceremonies.

Visioning Health governance

- PIW from VHI form a Women’s Council that actively participates in:
  - the governance of the project
  - ensuring cultural protocols are followed
  - Sub-committees (e.g. instrument development, Website, Community Research Coordinator (CRC) training, KTE)
- PIW Mentors act as peer role models and create safety for PIW new to the VH process
**Anticipated Outcomes of VH**

1. Participants report **improvement in self-defined health**, including a stronger sense of connectedness, self-determination (self-mastery), and social support.

2. New Indigenous HIV-relevant, strengths-based **knowledge** regarding conceptions of health

3. **Region- and nation-specific** understandings of the intersections between health, culture and gender for PAW

4. **Indigenous artworks** from each group that may be used in culturally relevant health promotion and KTE

5. **A strong network** of PIW across the country

6. **A manual** outlining the essential elements of VH as a health promotion intervention.

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**Many Thanks**