



CIEDAR and UBC Health present



# Hearing Indigenous Voices During the COVID-19 Pandemic

University of British Columbia  
June 8, 2023



## Summary

## About the Event

In June 2023, CIEDAR hosted a dialogue session, *Hearing Indigenous Voices During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, highlighting the experiences and triumphs of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island and around the world. The session included presentations and discussions about lessons learned on conducting research and Indigenous resilience during the pandemic with researchers based in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand.

The event was presented in partnership with UBC Health, UBC Sociology, UBC Indigenous Land-Based Health, Wellness, and Education Research Cluster, and CoVaRR-Net EDI&I.

## Presentations and Speakers

### Indigenous Vaccine Motivations & Hesitancy in Canada & the United States

#### Kimberly R. Huyser

Dr. Kimberly R. Huyser is an enrolled Tribal member of the Navajo Nation and was raised on the Navajo reservation in Arizona, USA. As a sociologist and Dine woman, her work and research are focused on the lives and opportunities of Indigenous population. She perceives CIEDAR as a chance to amplify the voices of Indigenous people and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences throughout the pandemic.

### Perspectives and Experiences from the Research Field with Southwest Tribal Communities

#### Lorenda Belone

Dr. Belone, a Diné from Naakaii Bito' on the Navajo reservation, was recently promoted to full time professor at the University of New Mexico's College of Population Health. With 23 years of experience, Dr. Belone specializes in community-based participatory health research, where she addresses health disparities among southwestern tribal nations using an Indigenous paradigm.

#### Jordan Derkson

Jordan Derkson is of white settler ancestry. Residing in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Jordan has been actively engaged as a research assistant with CIEDAR for the past year. Jordan perceives his role within CIEDAR as a valuable opportunity to not only gain insights into Indigenous perspectives, voices, and experiences but also to contribute towards amplifying those voices through research. Jordan is committed to learning and utilizing his position to uplift Indigenous voices and foster greater understanding through his work with CIEDAR.

#### Mary Jessome

Mary Jessome grew up in South Western Ontario by the Six Nations of Grand River. They view CIEDAR as a distinctive opportunity to collaborate with individuals who believe in research's potential to amplify Indigenous voices. As the research manager for CIEDAR, Mary eagerly anticipates utilizing research as a means to share the stories and experiences of the various communities partnered with by the organization.

## Wide Engagement for Assessing COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

### Shannon Sanchez-Youngman

Dr. Sanchez-Youngman, a community-based participatory researcher, specializes in addressing Latino mental health disparities and health equity policy. With 20+ years of experience, she develops interventions to reduce social and health disparities among marginalized and racial/ethnic groups in the US. Her goal is to connect social science theories and methods with multi-level health intervention research.

## Rising Before Dawn: Indigenous Learnings from the Pandemic

### Cherryl Smith

Cherryl Smith is a Kaupapa Māori researcher researching the health needs and wellbeing of Māori. She completed a Post Doc on Māori grandparents raising mokopuna. She has completed more than 25 years in Kaupapa Māori research on Māori health and wellbeing and helped to establish one of the first independent Kaupapa Māori research institutes within Aotearoa.

### Jasmine Sampson

Jasmine Sampson (Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngāti Kuri) holds a PhD and a Master's in Māori and Pacific Development, and a Bachelors (Double Major) in Māori and Pacific Development and Psychology. She currently works as a researcher for Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, focusing on the Tangata Whenua, Tangata Ora project. This initiative prioritizes Māori health and well-being by emphasizing the connection between people, the environment, and ancestral lands. Additionally, Jasmine actively contributes to marae, whānau, hapū, and iwi communities.

### Helena Rattray

Helena Rattray, a Kaipūtaiao Social Scientist at the Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited, is dedicated to promoting Māori health and wellbeing in Aotearoa, New Zealand. With expertise in kaupapa Māori research, Helena focuses on reviving and preserving Iwi and hapū knowledge, working closely with Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa to address crucial Iwi goals. Helena is also pursuing a PhD, exploring Māori responses to colonial incarceration, aiming to contribute to Māori decarceration. Through her work, Helena aims to foster connections and empower communities with sustainable solutions for positive change.

### Visual Storytelling of Māori Land-Based Healing During COVID-19

Māori partners Cherryl Smith, Jasmine Sampson (Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangī, Te Whānau-a-Apanui, Ngāti Kuri), and Helena Rattray shared a video project during the dialogue session.

The video project launched on February 14, 2023 at the *Rising Before Dawn – Indigenous Learnings Through the Pandemic* workshop, which saw Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa descendants speak about maintaining wellbeing during COVID-19. The project was funded through [Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga](#) COVID-19 response funding and managed by [Te Atawhai o Te Ao](#) in conjunction with the Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa research team.

Hoki atu ki tōu maunga kia purea ai e koe ki ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea – Return to your mountain to be cleansed by the winds of Tāwhirimātea.

An important traditional way of healing and grounding ourselves in times of crisis is to return to our mountains, our rivers, our land to replenish ourselves as Māori. During COVID-19, we were cut off from

accessing this particular healing/grounding practice. However, out of that struggle emerged creative and innovative ways of thinking about and reconnecting to our land, to our marae, to our mountains whilst maintaining our physical distance. The goal of this research is to explore the question: In what new and creative ways did descendants of Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa return to their mountains? How did they retain their sense of mana whenua and connectedness to the healing aspects of te taiao (the environment) through a global pandemic?

#### Videos

- [Pauline's Story](#)
- [Justin's Story](#)
- [Andre's Story](#)
- [Jazz's Story](#)
- [Kiri's Story](#)

## Welcome to the (Re)Story Podcast

### Felipe Contreras

Felipe Contreras, a multifaceted multimedia producer, filmmaker, photographer, and podcaster, is dedicated to amplifying diverse voices and exploring the intricate connection between environmental and social justice. Equipped with a sociocultural anthropology degree from the University of Washington, Felipe's work is enriched by his profound comprehension of the cultural, historical, and social dynamics of the communities he collaborates with, as well as their ecological context.

### Danielle Wray

Danielle Wray was born and raised as an uninvited and grateful guest on the unceded, ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil Waututh First Nations on the Pacific Northwest of Turtle Island. Her ancestors are Scottish and Norwegian. Danielle is a student and creative that is captivated by the power of stories to disrupt, uproot, nourish, and heal. Her love for story has led her over the past decade as an actor, theatre director, playwright, artistic director, spoken word poet, and now, as a co-host and producer of the ReStory podcast.

### (Re)Story Podcast

[restorypodcast.podbean.com](http://restorypodcast.podbean.com)

[\(Re\)story Podcast](#) is the storytelling of resilience and thriving by Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand. The podcast series is a unique opportunity that shares the experiences and stories of Indigenous Peoples in their own words in (re)storying the pandemic. In a time marked by isolation, we witnessed so many Indigenous communities who have been (re)storying their connection to land, to community, and to self. We're taking time to elevate stories of Indigenous thriving, resistance, and love that happened over the past three years.

The (Re)Story Podcast is a CIEDAR project. Hosts: Carly Morrisseau and Danielle Wray. Executive Producers: Katie Collins, Tamara Chavez, Kimberly Huyser, Michelle Johnson-Jennings. Supported by the Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network (CoVaRR-Net), funded by Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) (FRN# 175622).