## She Walks With Me: The Indigenous Doula Project

Presented by

**Ashley Hayward** 

BabySteps Research February 2024

## Disclosures

Presenter

Ashley Hayward

**Funding Sources** 

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
Health Canada
The University of Winnipeg

Conflict of Interest

None

Acknowledgements

Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC)

Mount Carmel Clinic (MCC)

Women's Health Clinic (WHC)

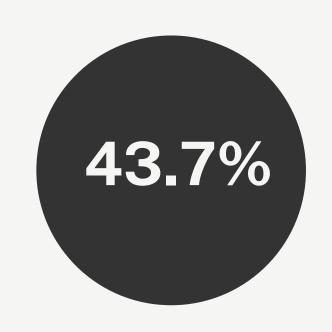


## My Philosophy on Birthing Experiences:

Valuing the importance of choice, I hope for my daughters to have empowering and safe birthing experiences aligned with their values

# What is the percentage of Indigenous children in foster care in Canada?







An ongoing journey of heartache towards culturally appropriate care for Indigenous communities

2005
Phoenix Sinclair

Brian Sinclair

2014
Tina Fontaine
Attack on
Rinelle Harper

Winnipeg:
'Canada's Most
Racist City

2016

National Inquiry into MMIWG

2020

Joyce Echaquan

2021-

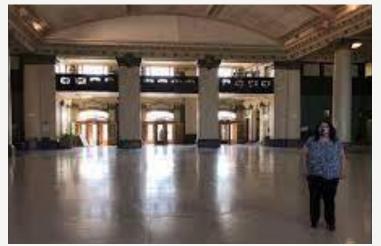
Discovery of unmarked graves at residential school sites across Canada

2022

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Rebecca Contois Morgan Harris Marcedes Myran Mashkkode Bizhiki'ikiwe BabySteps Research 2024

## Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre's COVID-19 Response in Winnipeg









**Culturally-Driven Operations** 

**Transportation & Family Accommodations** 

Food Support

**Community Safety** 

## Healthcare Delivery for Urban Indigenous Communities









## Improving Support for Indigenous Birthing Individuals

4-Month Training Program

For AHWC community support workers to deepen knowledge and extend care scope.

Critical Topics Covered ... Gender diversity; Cultural safety and anti-racism; Body literacy; Traditional medicines and healing practices; Prenatal care; Nutrition and exercise; Navigating resources for housing needs; Supporting survivors of sexual violence; Substance use harm reduction strategies; Labour and delivery; Newborn care and infant feeding, and postpartum care; Navigating CFS involvement; Grief and loss; Intimate partner violence ...

Essential Certifications

Motivational interviewing; Perinatal mental health; Infant CPR; First Aid; Naloxone Administration

Well-Being of Support Workers

Integration of self-care and self-reflection practices.

## Project Roadmap

#### **Expert Panel Review**

Indigenous panel comprising a social worker, 2S Knowledge Keeper, midwife, and nurse

### Research & Development

Collaboration with field experts for curriculum development

### **Engagement with Lived Experience**

Curriculum presentation to individuals with firsthand experience

Feedback collection and integration to ensure real-world applicability

#### Success Measures

Goals &

Improving perinatal care and continuity of care throughout pregnancy

Adapting the curriculum for implementation in partner organizations

### Integration of Feedback

Incorporation of panel recommendations for curriculum refinement

#### **Pilot**

Real-world testing of the training program with partner organizations:
Mount Carmel Clinic,
Women's Health Clinic, and AHWC.

Gathering feedback for curriculum evaluation and improvement

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#### Comprehensive Approach

The curriculum is designed as a holistic journey that aims to empower, educate, and drive excellence in supporting Indigenous birthing individuals.

#### Addressing Systemic Issues

It highlights the systemic racism, cultural insensitivity, and negligence within health and social services as broader challenges that the program seeks to address within the Manitoba context, reflecting national concerns.

#### **Urban Indigenous Doulas**

They combine traditional birthing support with advocacy for body sovereignty and addressing the significant impacts of lost cultural traditions.



#### Collaborative Effort

This project is a partnership with local Indigenous health and social service agencies in Winnipeg, acknowledging the complex challenges in providing equitable and culturally appropriate care.

#### Challenges Ahead

Indigenous doulas are seen as a beacon of hope in advocating for Indigenous rights and improving care, yet face challenges in mainstream healthcare integration and systemic reform needs.

#### Not a Cure-all Solution

A promising step towards addressing systemic issues and supporting Indigenous birthing individuals but is not positioned as a singular solution to all challenges.

# What would you identify as the most critical area to emphasize or ensure inclusion in the curriculum?

CURRENT TOPICS COVERED

- Gender diversity
- Cultural safety and anti-racism
- Body literacy
- Traditional medicines and healing practices
- Prenatal care
- Nutrition and exercise
- Navigating resources for housing needs
- Supporting survivors of sexual violence
- Substance use harm reduction strategies
- Labour and delivery
- Newborn care and infant feeding, and postpartum care
- Navigating CFS involvement
- Grief and loss
- Intimate partner violence

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## Thank you

We extend our deepest gratitude to all our community partners who had a role in bringing this project to fruition!

If you'd like to keep the conversation going, please do not hesitate to contact me at a.hayward@uwinnipeg.ca