



Feast Centre for
Indigenous STBBI Research

Transcript of Episode 2 - "Sexual Health is Part of My Medicine Bundle"

*In [Episode Two](#), Doris speaks with Martin Morberg and Lane Bonertz, two phenomenal leaders who work with the Two-Spirit Program at the Community Based Research Centre (CBRC). They share the creation and developmental story of the **Medicine Bundle**, an innovative, culturally informed and culturally grounded HIV prevention tool geared towards Two-Spirit, Queer, and Trans Indigenous community members. When the HIV self-testing kit became widely available in Canada, the Two-Spirit leadership at the CBRC saw an opportunity to harness culture and tradition for HIV self-testing for the two-spirit community in BC. Martin and Lane also acknowledged the commitment of the CBRC who worked with local Two-Spirit leaders to establish the Two-Spirit Program within their organization. The CBRC recognized that "true reconciliation requires more than an endorsement and have made a series of commitments" to community, utilizing the Calls to Action from the TRC (<https://www.cbrc.net/2spirit-program>).*

(00:00 - 00:28) Doris Peltier:

Indigenous Sexual Futures is produced by The Feast Center for Indigenous STBBI Research on the Ancestral Lands of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee Nations within the lands protected by the Dish With One Spoon wampum. We acknowledge the ancestors of this territory, and we also acknowledge the lands and territories of all our guests.

[MUSIC]

(00:54 - 04:01) Doris Peltier:

You are listening to Indigenous Sexual Futures, a Podcast storytelling series that is produced by the Feast Centre for Indigenous STBBI Research. And yes, you heard the word 'sexual', 'STBBIs', and 'research' in my first sentence, hope that caught your attention. But you also heard the word 'feast', which is what we hope to do with all of you through this podcast storytelling series. You should also know that we are aligning this podcast series with a growing body of work by scholars, artists, writers, and community in Indigenous Futurisms. You will have to listen to our series to learn more about what Indigenous Futurisms is, and why we dropped the word 'sexual' into the middle of 'Indigenous Futurisms'. Stay with us. Now, let's get started.

Adiniwemaaganidook. E-amakawaataagoowazid dizhnigaas, waawaashkesh nidodem. Anishinaabe n'dow. Hello and welcome to Episode 2 of Indigenous Sexual Futures. My name is Doris Peltier, I am Anishinaabe and your host for this podcast storytelling series. Are you tired by acronyms? Because I

know in this area of work, we quite often throw around acronyms thinking that everyone knows what we are talking about. STBBIs, which stands for 'sexually transmitted bloodborne infections', is a prime example of one of those acronyms. Also, in this podcast, you will hear a multitude of stories, and always, at the centre of these stories are the people. Accessible sexual healthcare, specifically HIV testing, is the focus for today's episode. Two very special guests have been invited to tell us about the development of an innovative, culturally grounded approach to HIV testing titled 'The Medicine Bundle'. But before we go to my guests, I asked one of our Elders at the Feast Centre if I could share a drum song that came out of her early days of HIV activism in community as part of the HIV response in Manitoba back in the earlier days of our Indigenous response. Let us listen to this song that Elder Marjorie Beaucage wrote and sings that honored family members living with HIV. Notably, this song was part of another Medicine Bundle initiative called Me Mengwa Maa Sinatae: Butterfly Patterns of Light. Let's listen.

(04:01 - 08:03) Marjorie Beaucage [Drum Song]:

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Oh sisters and brothers, we have much to say

We have a story to share from this day

Some teachings to bring from those far away

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Oh spirits above, look down on them here

Give them the strength to fight all the way

Stay strong to their spirits, stay strong all the way

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Grandmothers, grandfathers, oh help them we pray

For they are the people we care for them all

We sing of healing, HIV and AIDS

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Oh moon oh sun, oh stars from above

Look down on that people and give them your love

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

Weya weya weya hey hey

(08:04 - 09:35) Doris Peltier:

Miigwech Marjorie for such a beautiful song, and *miigwech* for your continued contributions to your work in community spaces. There is a beautiful poignancy to this sacred song which touches heart and spirit, and it reminds us why we need to continue doing the work we do in community. Now, what does HIV testing look like if one were to look at it through an indigenous sexual futures lens? That is the question! My two beautiful guests that I will now introduce are here to tell us how they have taken the HIV self-test kit, and wrapped it into beautiful medicine bundles geared towards two-spirit, queer, and trans-Indigenous community members. Martin Morberg and Lane Bonertz both work at the Community Based Research Canada, otherwise known as the CBRC. Martin Morberg is the Two-Spirit Program Coordinator at the CBRC, and Lane Bonertz is the Two-Spirit Program Lead at CBRC. Finally, let's welcome our two guests to the Indigenous sexual futures table. To set the table, I asked them both to tell us something about themselves for when we begin the storytelling portion on this podcast. Let's listen.

(09:36 - 13:12) Martin Morberg:

So, I was having this conversation the other day of, you know, how do I identify. And when I think about that, I perceive myself to be a multidimensional person. But I think if somebody were to ask me, you know, "Martin, who are you?", I think for me what I have been taught in my own culture is that I am my blood lineage and the people that I belong to. And so the people that I belong to are through my grandmothers. So my one grandmother, my paternal grandmother, is Northern Tutchone and my maternal grandmother is Tlingit. So I am a Northern Tutchone and Tlingit person, I believe first and foremost. And in the Tlingit culture there is a term that we use, and the term is Dakeen kow, and what that translates to is 'creation.' And so the idea of it is that we are part of the land and that we are part of the water and that we are in relation to the land that we're from. So when I think about myself, I think I am a Northern Tutchone and Tlingit man, and I am from, and I belong to, the land of the Yukon territory. And I am a relative of that land, my ancestors are relatives to that land, and that is a part of my creation story of where I come from and where my people come from. I also identify as a two-spirit person and I think my two-spirit identity was gifted to me from the community. So I also have a home in the community. And, I will disclose my status today – I am an also an Indigenous person living with HIV and my HIV diagnosis has been one of my greatest teachers. And it has pushed me into the arms of an Indigenous HIV activism family and also into a national two-spirit family and so they're a big part of my identity too. And they have, through their stories, nurtured me and loved me and supported me and encouraged me into the activist that I am today. And so, the two-spirit part is the role that I play in community. It is a part of those in-between people that we hear of when we speak of two-spirit people. And it's kind of a liaison between the western world and between those, kind of, colonial structures, and then the Indigenous community. And so really, kind of weaving through those different worldviews and structures to really promote health and wellness and increase the visibility of two-spirit and Indigenous people living with HIV. So, who am I? I am a Northern Tutchone Tlingit man and I am from the Yukon territory. My home is within the two-spirit and Indigenous HIV world here on Turtle Island.

(13:13 - 13:26) Doris Peltier:

Wow that's really beautiful, thank you for sharing that Martin. Let's go to Lane now. Lane, tell us a little about yourself, who you are.

(13:27 - 16:14) Lane Bonertz:

Sure, my name is Lane Bonertz. I am Blackfoot, German, and British. My family comes from Pikani nation in southern Alberta. This conversation is really beautiful timing because I'm actually back home right now for the first time in a couple years, being able to see my family and be back with the land in a way I haven't in quite a while. Actually right after we're done talking I'm going to be going over to my grandma's and my uncles at the timbers for a nice prime rib dinner, so I have something to look forward to there. I currently live in Montreal or Tiohtake but I grew up in ranching and agriculture and really depending on the land for nourishment that way. And growing up in such a small town and community where everyone does knows everyone that's always informed a lot of my work, my relationships with people and who I meet and that coming together and recognizing that it takes strength from many people to make something come to be, to succeed. And, growing up kind of dependent on the harvest and on calving cycles, and that kind of thing, seeing the seasons as influencing what you're able to do at any given moment, at any given time and seeing that within people as well. What are they capable of and what are they able to offer and be a part of

in any given space and time and what can you give to them in return to make sure that they're supported and cared for? And that's a huge motive in my work and what guides me is growing up that way. Even though I'm very very far from home right now, I kind of carry home with me in my work everywhere I go and really that intention is to always see ways of even when I'm working from away or meeting people from away or learning from other people from away, that there's going to be a time and place where I'll be able to return to my own community and hopefully be a part of it in a meaningful way. I actually don't go about calling myself two-spirit day to day, I feel that in me, but for myself and my own personal understanding, I really see it in the roles, the responsibilities, and the relationships that I have with other people and I think it's more for other people to recognize that in my self than for it to be something that I assign or identity with and I hope that that's seen through how I take care of people, how I contribute to my community, and learn and listen from everyone I get to meet.

(16:15 - 16:52) Doris Peltier:

Wow the two of you are just amazing. And I find it interesting that as Indigenous people we always make that connection to the land, I just love that. So, I just wanted to ask each of you to tell me a bit about the story of the medicine bundle, the vision of the medicine bundle and harnessing our cultural knowledge in preparing that. There is a story there, I'm sure. So let me call on Martin.

(16:54 - 19:59) Martin Morberg:

Yeah there is a bit of history that I think needs to be acknowledged in regards to the medicine bundle and the space that was actually created in order for these initiatives to come forward. So there was some groundwork being done by the Community Based Research Centre in partnership with two-spirit people. There was some Coast Salish two-spirit folks that were working in partnership with the leadership at CBRC to actually create the two-spirit program. CBRC then made a commitment to the TRC and with the collaboration of these two-spirit elders and community members they were able to create the two-spirit program where we started creating these initiatives. I would really like to recognize Glen Tozaze as he was instrumental in the development of the program. And I think one of the intentions that was put forward was consulting two-spirit community members in the development of these kind of initiatives. And so, with the help of Jesse Dame and Harlen Pruden, they were starting to do consultations around the province of BC. At the same time, what was happening is the HIV self-test became available in Canada and with the accessibility of this HIV self-test kit there was limited focus put on promoting the self-test kit to Indigenous people in culturally relevant and culturally safe ways. And so because of this limit, or this lack of focus put on Indigenous populations, we really wanted to do the consultations to see the feasibility of at home self-testing in communities, in rural and remote communities, throughout the province of BC. And so, keeping those two things in mind a lot of the conversations that were had were just conversations and story sharing with two-spirit people or Indigenous people throughout the province of BC to ask them what an at home self test kit would look like in the community and how could we promote something like this and what do you think would work best for the community. And so, a lot of those conversations happened, and those consultations then landed on my desk and it was my job to pull out a lot of the needs and barriers that were being experienced in these communities. And some of those stories that came with the lack of cultural safety, the lack of Indigenous visibility in the western health care system.

(20:00 - 20:02) Doris Peltier:

So people weren't going for testing?

(20:02 - 22:43) Martin Morberg:

So people were experiencing barriers in regards to accessing adequate testing. And some of those barriers were financial in regards to having to travel outside the community. There was the fear of stigma and discrimination. There was fear of transphobia, homophobia, systemic racism. And then, because these rural and remote communities are so small in population, there was a deep need for confidentiality and for anonymity in regards to, you know, accessing something like this. And so, all of those were made really apparent, they really came to the surface and became visible to us at the two-spirit program. And so we started to discuss, how do we respond to the needs and the barriers that have been presented directly from community through their own stories. And so, to ensure community engagement throughout the development of this response, a two-spirit guidance committee was established where there was about 10-12 two-spirit and Indigenous people that came together on a committee that I was working closely with and taking direction from where the actual concept of the medicine bundle was born. And so, we wanted to think about how can we collaborate western sexual health resources that are effective, but how do we present it to people in a way that is Indigenous, that is encompassing spiritual health, our own cultural health and safety and teachings, and how do we make it culturally relevant. And so, the idea for the medicine bundle was born in those conversations of here we have a medicine bundle that we carry this pan-Indigenous concept of how we carry our spiritual items and our spiritual tools that help nurture us. And, can we take western sexual health resources and put it in a bundle and also lay it with Indigenous medicines, understanding the need for our own cultural needs, our own spiritual needs. And so, that's really where it started, was in those conversations and stories that were being told.

(22:43 - 22:58) Doris Peltier:

Wow that is tremendous. Lane, your role, were you on this journey with Martin? Did both of you start at the same time in terms of working together and if not, when did you come in to this, to support this work?

(22:59 - 23:51) Lane Bonertz:

I wasn't there in the beginning. I had been working with CBRC in a different program, and my previous experience I have worked and lived in Indigenous spaces, and I have worked and lived in gay or queer spaces, but I have never been in an environment where those two parts of who I was came together until I started working at CBRC. I was actually brought into the guidance committee towards the end of the planning of the medicine bundle. And being invited to work with it in a more hands-on way after the fact, which I think really shows how community has their part and their continued engagement in it from beginning to end. But no, I wasn't there in the very beginning but hey, they can't get rid of me now.

(23:54 - 24:10) Martin Morberg:

We were really excited to have Lane join us, knowing that he is Blackfoot Indigenous person working in sexual health working for the same organization. So when he came to join the two-spirit program we were really excited to have, to have him join us.

(24:11 - 24:54) Doris Peltier:

Wow it seems to me like, I always like to say that there are no coincidences in life, you know.

Creator puts us in places for reasons sometimes that we don't know. This seems like one of those kind of stories. Lane you're kind of there already in another department and, only to meet Martin and the crew that was conceptualizing this and visioning the medicine bundle. I think that's tremendous. You've got a background in sexual health, Lane? Did you go to school for that or...?

(24:54 - 25:42) Lane Bonertz:

Yeah, I did. I went to York University in Toronto in sexuality studies and I did a program there, and then it was actually a lot of community-based work more so than my degree that had me working in this environment and getting to be with community in a deeper way. I started doing work around HPV and then I kind of stepped away from sexual health for a while. I was volunteering as well with an AIDS services organization in Toronto and then it was that covid, that huge shift that happened there that pulled me out of the work that I was doing outside of sexual health and kind of brought me back into this space where I got to do this work again and really connect with Martin and Jesse and the rest of the team here.

(25:42 - 26:24) Doris Peltier:

Wow so that's part of the creation story. Like I'm also wondering about, you mentioned something Martin about pan-Canadian. Do you feel that the medicine bundle is pan-Canadian or can people receive it in their own way from their nation from their ways of being and knowing as an Indigenous person. Because quite often we use that word pan-Canadian, and I picked up on it when you said this pan-Canadian tool, is there anything more you'd like to add to that in terms of calling it that?

(26:25 - 28:21) Martin Morberg:

I think my intention was that, in saying that, was that it's adaptable, it's universal and I think there's something in it for every Indigenous person that wants to engage with it. One of my all-time favorite things to do, the work that really feeds my spirit, is to be in a circle with other Indigenous people, other two-spirit people and envision projects together. It's like going to a drawing board. It serves as these brainstorming sessions. And so this is what was happening with the guidance committee. People were making suggestions of different medicines that they wanted in there. There was also mention that we are distinct groups of Indigenous people, First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people and the many distinct groups that fall kind of under those Indigenous identities. So it was important that part of the planning was that people could pack their own bundles, and so it was optional of what they wanted in their bundles and so when they ordered them they had an opportunity to engage with the bundle the way that they wanted to. So any sexual health supplies whether it was the HIV self test kit or the dry blood spot self-test kit or whichever medicines that were available to them, that they got to select them. They got to select which medicines were best fitting for their needs and then that's how their bundles were packed specifically for them. So, there was a bit self-determination there on how they wanted to engage with the bundle.

(28:21 - 29:22) Doris Peltier:

Wow. I think it's a wave of the future actually when we think about our own selves as medicine bundles. I think it moves it into that really strengths-based place of the future and of our past as well, you know, because it's holistic, it's a holistic approach. Western approaches and western medicine I've heard you say before and I've heard an Elder also tell me that western medicine and treatments are only treating the physical. And what about yourself Lane, when you came into this how did you adapt into receiving all this new knowledge about medicine bundles and creating this,

being part of that vision for the two-spirit community to harness the knowledge through this medicine bundle?

(29:23 - 30:45) Lane Bonertz:

I mean I'd say I'm definitely at a different place now than I was at the beginning. And I mean our entire team, we were very clear from the get go, we don't want to be perceived we don't want to be seen as experts leading this work. We only know as much as what the community is willing to share with us. Our experiences make up a part of that but it's not all and entirely the work we do. And just reflecting on what a bundle means to an individual right those are objects that are chosen, they're objects that are given, and they're things that guide us that remind us and give us strength on our own journeys. And we really wanted to carry that meaning into the medicine bundle, recognizing that sexuality and sexual health is another one of those journeys that we need to make sure that we're strong in and that we can heal from if we need to. And by allowing that opportunity for people to select the medicines that speak to their own traditions to their own teachings and to have those sexual health resources as well like condoms, lubes, and different ways of testing for different STBBIs – we're giving them those tools to have more awareness and certainty in how they continue to move forward.

(30:46 - 31:57) Doris Peltier:

Wow, it kind of sounds like a harm reduction journey as well like harnessing harm reduction is part of it right in terms of providing these tools. Because I've heard before, an Elder once asked me, "what is harm reduction?" and I explained what harm reduction is to this Elder in one sentence. I said "harm reduction is when you walk alongside an individual without judgement and give them tools," and he said "I get it." It's kind of like our Indigenous values I said and he got it you know and off we went to do a ceremony with a bunch of our peers, you know, other Indigenous people living with HIV. So that was on the journey to go do that ceremony. So in terms of that harm reduction piece Martin, was it your intention to weave some of that in there or is it something that I am kind of putting on the table from my own perspective of the medicine bundle.

(31:57 - 36:40) Martin Morberg:

I really appreciate the conversation and some of the questions that are being brought to the table, but I'm feeling inspired to speak a little bit about, kind of the structure of the medicine bundle and the intentions we had. And I think one of the biggest intentions we had is to resist colonial structures in the sense of hierarchies and the way that we serve communities. And I think we have all seen in our work experience and probably a lot of people that are tuning in and listening, how often a community is left out of a conversation on services and resources that are being created for them. And so really, tried to set an intention of working from the ground up and working from the community voice and moving up to where it's our job to support them, so what Lane was speaking to earlier about, we are not experts in this initiative in this movement. It's really about how do we respond to what the community is telling us. The challenge is, is that when you're moving through this work, and you're kind of weaving between, you know, funding bodies and academics and these western researchers and ethics boards and committees, and having to appease their requirements of what they're seeking and then when we weave back into the community side of it, how do we respond and resist these hierarchies and these outcomes and deliverables and everything that they're looking for. And having to liaise between those two can be really challenging and I think when moving through it, sometimes I can catch myself conforming to the colonial perspective or the

colonial outcome and there was an instance in there where I was really grateful for Lane. He had a real gift of refocusing or realigning back to the grassroots vibe and the grassroots of our community. And this was happening in our trusted messenger program. So the trusted messengers were Indigenous and two-spirit people that really helped with the dissemination of the medicine bundle into communities throughout BC. And so we were having these weekly gatherings of how are you doing how can we support you and what started to happen was, I'll let Lane articulate this but I just want to say this is that, this really beautiful organic storytelling, relationship-building, and sharing of experiences started to happen in these weekly meetings that we were having. And it was really, that's when the work becomes spiritual. That's when it becomes: "Ok we're not just focusing on the physicality of things here, this is becoming bigger than an HIV self-test kit. This is about how indigenous people are moving through their communities and supporting their communities and really sharing the strengths and the challenges." And there was so much rich knowledge being shared that would never be captured in quantitative data or deliverables quote unquote outcomes and things. So when Lane started to become inspired by that, it was easy for me to recognize it. And so, really, it shifted because I felt myself conforming to colonial structure. And sometimes we really do need that nudge from an Indigenous friend, an Indigenous colleague, to say "Hey- listen to these stories that are being told." And it completely redirected my focus back onto the stories that were being told. So I'd really like to give Lane an opportunity to share about this.

(36:40 - 37:01) Doris Peltier:

Yes. Lane. I'm really interested to hear because you've already experienced academia when you were a scholar going into university and studying sexual health. We'll come back to Martin after because I know Martin is in school now too. So spill the beans Lane!

(37:02 - 39:39) Lane Bonertz:

The trusted messengers, that was really the most powerful part for me especially working from home and not always being able to see how things are happening on the ground. The trusted messengers really deserve endless recognition for what they accomplished in those three months because they are the ones that already knew their communities. And I think that's the important thing to recognize when it comes to community based work that is led and focused by community. We're not removed from it, so sometimes there are those emotional connections, there's past experience. Things that inform us but things that also challenge us and make this work a lot more deeper or spiritual as Martin was saying. And that was how those check-ins started. It was very much a report back "ok guys what'd you do this week, what's going on" and then things started to change. It was less regimented. We were less focused on hearing how many emails someone sent out or where they went or who they talked to. And we just started talking. And using that space to connect and even though we all came from different places, different health regions different experiences and nations, there were things that were tying us together and similar experiences that we were able to connect over. And, one big moment for me, we're all sitting over zoom but you can imagine it in a different way and we were talking about the medicines and sexual health and sexuality and the impact that colonialism and Christianity has had on so many of our teachings and our beliefs and the way that people have come to treat each other in a lot of ways. And recognizing that a lot of those ideas, they didn't come from us. So through something like the medicine bundle there is this piece of healing our relationship with our sexuality and our sexual health. I think Martin can speak about it a lot better but one of our big messages with the medicine bundle was to bring

the sacredness back into sex. So in bringing the sacredness back into sex with this other component of allowing people to connect with medicines, some people might not even have been able to access medicines in the same way knowing where they are and who they know, until a resource like this came to be. There was also this piece of kind of healing our relationships with our medicines and giving space to that in a different way.

(39:39 - 40:09) Doris Peltier:

Wow. Making space for the medicines to interact, because the medicines do interact as some elders talk about when there are medicines in the room. I heard an elder once say “go introduce yourself to those medicines. Go meet them. Touch them and interact with them.” Martin, you’re in school now. How does that feel?

(40:09 - 40:35) Martin Morberg:

It’s exciting. It’s challenging. In some ways, very disheartening to see how rampant colonialism is just imbedded and entrenched in the curriculum, in the way that people are educated and the views that are kind of perpetuated through the education system, the Canadian education system.

(40:35 - 41:56) Doris Peltier:

That speaks to what both of you have spoken about earlier about the wisdom is in our communities. That knowledge is there, and that beautiful work happens in our communities because it’s the ways of our people. Some could say our school is very different in our communities. It doesn’t feel like school. I’m sorry to hear that you’re feeling those effects of the institute that you’re going to school at right now, but keep hanging onto that medicine and keep smelling that medicine, that medicine that you carry in that little red bag that you showed me earlier. Just keep doing that and that medicine will carry you and you know that. Yeah. We’re going to start wrapping this up but I’ve really enjoyed talking to the two of you but in terms of the future, as two of the people of the community of people that conceptualized harnessing medicines as part of sexual health tool kit in the medicine bundle, you must have had a vision for the future when you were putting this together and working so hard to put this together.

(41:58 - 43:17) Martin Morberg:

Yeah I really believe that, you know as I was talking a bit earlier, sometimes when you’re, you know, neck deep in the work it can be easy to slip into the tendencies of conforming. I think the power of community is they remind you of why you’re doing the work. And so we are exploring partnership that will be taking place to expand the bundle nationally. So there was a research aspect to the medicine bundle pilot, and we’ve now received some of the data from that which is, it is useful information it is valuable information that can help us set intention, help us identify what areas need focus and more, kind of, tender love and care. We’re also looking at establishing a national guidance committee of a diverse group of people from all corners of our Turtle Island here to help us conceptualize...

(43:17 - 43:21) Doris Peltier:

I hope there’s some aunties that are going to be invited to be part of that!

(43:21 - 46:16) Martin Morberg:

We’ll be speaking about it at the gathering that you’re invited to... With that being said, it’s exciting

because we have a better idea and a better, some groundwork that has been done and kind of direction that has been given to us from the community through this data that we're going to be able to focus on certain areas. So I feel like the pilot has prepared us for this larger scale, kind of, evolution of the medicine bundle. And I'll tell you from personal experience it can be sometimes difficult to evolve as an Indigenous person, as a two-spirit person, in the sense of we want to respect tradition we want to respect culture and at the same time we want to evolve in our sexuality. The medicine wheel says physical, emotional, spiritual and mental. We're sexual beings, you know, being indoctrinated by these Christians and Catholics through colonization has taken that from us and so I believe part of the conversation is a reclamation of our sexuality as Indigenous people and that I truly believe that there's room for medicines in those conversations in those resources of collaborating our own culture with our sexuality in a way that could be celebrated and spoken about and have that shame removed from our sexuality. So I'm really excited about the possibility of this national expansion and going to the drawing board with a diverse group of Indigenous people throughout Turtle Island, understanding that a lot of the spirit of a project comes in those very organic conversations and it grows into something bigger. So, this started out as an HIV self-test kit and now we're talking about our sex as sacred and shame and self-determination and relationship building and navigating our indigenous communities and supporting our indigenous communities. So, this has become a lot more than a single western tool, it's become the way we relate and work together as Indigenous people. And so that grassroots, I am really hoping to see that grassroots spirit light the way.

(46:17 - 49:28) Doris Peltier:

Chi-miigwech to our two amazing leaders, Martin Morberg and Lane Bonertz. As a wrap up, I would like to share some of my big takeaways from our two guests. The biggest one for me, and notably so, is the connection to the land that each of our guests highlighted. It shows what is important in terms of how that connection to homeland is a key component to identity for most Indigenous people. It is beautiful when we can make that connection. My second takeaway is, the beauty of the two-spirit community and their leadership which has organized themselves into this powerful and strong community of activists that I so admire. As part of historical record, we know the Two-Spirit community had to respond in the early days of HIV and have led the way since that time. Today, the harnessing of a culturally grounded tool and the placement of a western HIV self-test kit in a Medicine Bundle is progress, is progressive. Canada only approved the use of the HIV self-test kit in November 2020 and the two-spirit community of activists took it and are running with it. Is this a wave of the future? I say an emphatic yes! I lift my hands up to these leaders. In closing, the Medicine Bundle is a physical culturally grounded tool that places our ancestral knowledges into the future with the inclusion of this HIV self-test kit in the bundle. It is also driven by the grassroots, through the Trusted Messengers who are part of this initiative. I would love to feature them in a complimentary podcast in the future with this one. Community voice is key! I also highlight the title of this podcast – **“my healthy sexuality is my medicine bundle”**. This title embodies the spirit of the work being done by the Two-Spirit Program team at the CBRC, the title for this episode comes from one of the social marketing messages of this initiative. In my view, it also suggests that we are the medicine bundles. I hope that you enjoyed our podcast. We just have to keep reminding ourselves that we are all storytellers. Research too is storytelling. In closing, we would like to acknowledge our funders, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, for making yet another aspect of the Feast Centre possible. Thank you for tuning in, this is Doris Peltier your host, signing

off. *Baamaa-pii miniwas kakinoodidme. Miigwech.*

(49:33 - 49:51) [Outro]:

It's all the healing that's taking place and we as Anishinaabe People have these sacred items that Creator left us that we can share with the world in our healing journey for ourselves and everybody else that walks with us equally.