



THE INVINCIBLE METHODOLOGY: OUR RESEARCH JOURNEY

The INVINCIBLE Research Team

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Indigenous Youth in Care

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THE INVINCIBLE METHODOLOGY: OUR RESEARCH JOURNEY

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Keywords: Indigenous arts-based methods, Indigenous methodologies, Indigenous youth-led research, Indigenous action research, Indigenous knowledge dissemination

Acknowledgement: We raise our hands in deepest respect and gratitude to the ancestors and families of the ʔəkwəŋən and WSÁNEĆ nations and to our own ancestors and nations. We raise our hands to all Indigenous children and youth who have grown up in colonial systems, to those we have lost, and to those who survive, resist, and imagine justice and resurgence. INVINCIBLE is grateful for funding provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Insight grant 435-2020-1191) and the Canet Foundation.

The INVINCIBLE Research Team consists of Indigenous youth researchers, assisted by a team of adult facilitators and mentors. The INVINCIBLE project is part of Kinship Rising, an Indigenous arts-based, community-led research project headquartered at the University of Victoria. Please direct correspondence to Dr. Sandrina Carere, School of Child & Youth Care, University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700, STN CSC, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2.
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Figure 1. *The INVINCIBLES at the 2024 Gathering Our Voices (GOV) Provincial Indigenous Youth Conference*



We, the INVINCIBLE youth research team (assisted by a team of adult facilitators), created our own methodology for this project: the INVINCIBLE methodology. Our INVINCIBLE methodology blends Indigenous ways and teachings, our own skills and ideas that we brought to the table, and new research and storytelling skills we learned from working with the Kinship Rising Indigenous community-based research project. Our goal for our storytelling research project was to design and share stories and artwork by Indigenous youth in care. We named our project INVINCIBLE¹; this name reflects the fact that we have survived the child welfare system and have many gifts and strengths to share.

Conducting our own hands-on, arts-based research took a lot of time and energy, and we learned many new research methods and ways of expressing ourselves. In total, we created 17 illustrated storybooks that are featured on the INVINCIBLE website². We are very proud to be Indigenous youth creating our own way of doing Indigenous, youth-led research that is fun, creative, and respectful.

¹ Rayne Kakewash came up with the name INVINCIBLE.

² <https://invincible.uvic.ca>

Figure 2. *Youth Council Gathering: Taco Night*



Throughout the project, we worked with a skilled support team, including the Kinship Rising research facilitators, a counselor, a cultural mentor, a graphic and website designer, and a graphic recorder. Each of us attended many group workshops, zoom sessions, and one-on-one meetings. We worked in circle a lot so that we could all share and bond. We met outside, in various locations like cafes, restaurants, beaches and parks, and at Surrounded by Cedar, an Indigenous child and family serving agency in Victoria, and at the First Peoples House at the University of Victoria.

Figure 3. *Land-Based Workshops*



We also had a very grounding, creative three-day research retreat in the forest by the ocean in Gabriola Island. We gathered for storytelling around the fire, and we shared food, laughs, tears, hikes, and many creative moments. We also practiced cultural protocols, facilitation, and presentation skills.

Healing was a central part of our journey. We did land-based healing activities and ceremonies such as drumming, songs, fires, smudging, giving thanks for the local Nations and our own Nations, working in circle, and following good protocols with the land and the ancestors.

Throughout the project, we received UVic certificates and references, which are much appreciated as they can help us access opportunities such as scholarships and employment. We also received cash honoraria and gifts. These were all important, because life is expensive for youth in care on a very low budget.

Figure 4. *The INVINCIBLES Preparing Their Presentations*



To illustrate our stories and books, we used diverse art materials including paint, canvases, markers, collage, land-based materials, hide, beads, and fabric. We learned how to develop and share stories and create storyboards, poetry, art, and digital design. We received training in website design and digital media software such as Canva and Procreate. We created all our own words, artwork, formats, and designs. We designed research surveys that we all filled out to select website names and colours and to assess our project as we went along. We also fully designed our logo and the logo font. Everyone on the team reviewed all pictures and creations to make sure everyone approved of everything we did and shared. This all took many meetings, with each of us spending hours working on our own time as well as with the team.

Figure 5. *Land-Based Workshops*



Food definitely played a central role in our INVINCIBLE project. Delicious foods such as pizza, snacks, crackers, seaweed, cookies, and chips fuelled our research, and there were always lots of leftovers to take home.

Figure 6. *Multimedia, Logo, and Website Design and Art-Making Workshops*



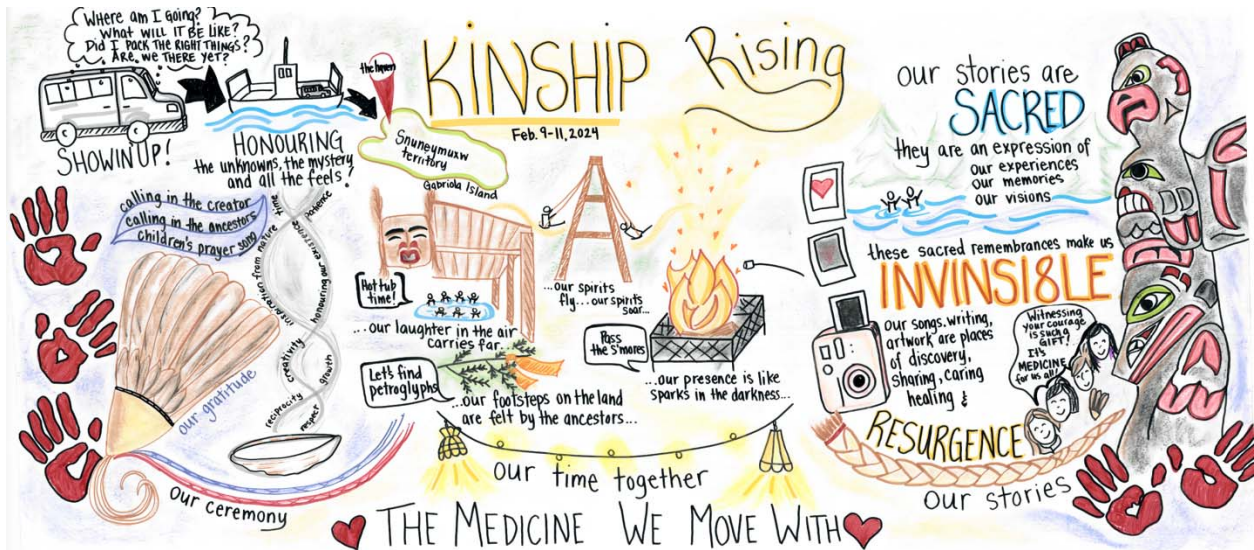
Note. Left to right: Creating the INVINCIBLE website; working on the logo; making art.

Figure 7. *INVINCIBLE Workshops and Drumming*



We want to make our work as accessible as possible. Our stories are printed in a book format that can be shared widely with others, especially with other children and youth in care. We are adding audio to stories to make them more accessible. We also used graphic recording (see Figures 8 & 9) to keep visual track of our research process. These inspiring works of art share the story of our journey together.

Figure 8. *Kinship Rising: Our Sacred Time Together*

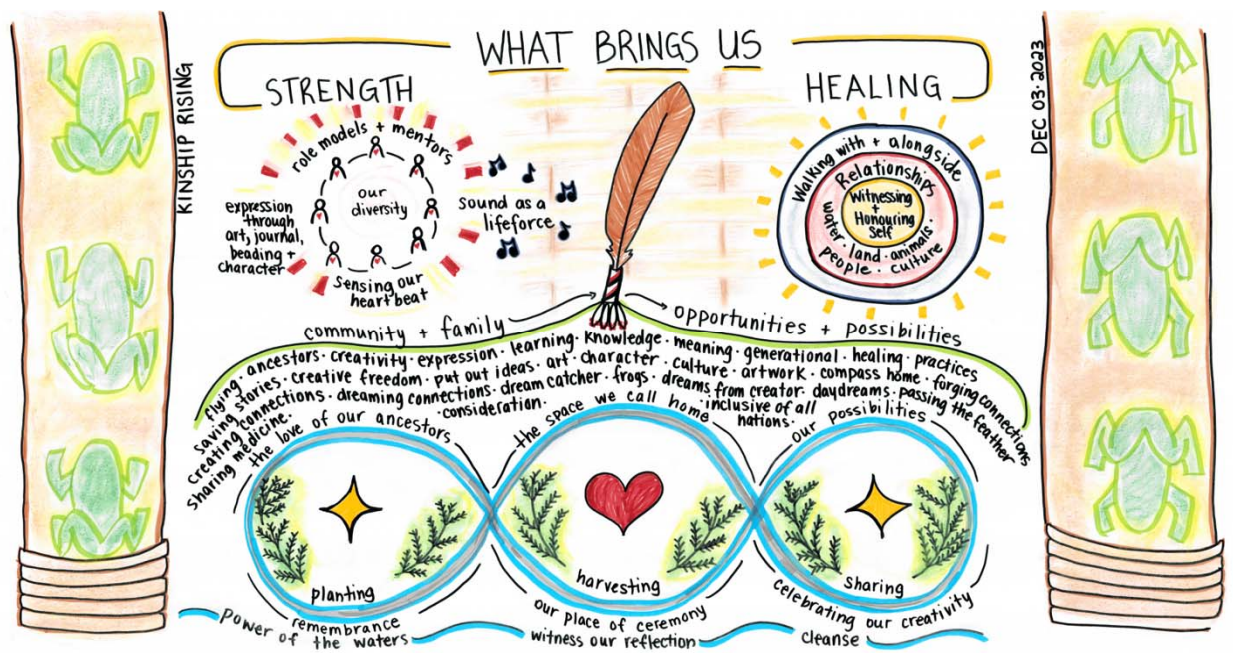


Note. Graphic recording by Jaime Fafard, The Collective Consciousness.

Widely sharing our research outcomes is important to us. We want children, youth, and families in the child welfare system, as well as staff and researchers, to learn about the realities facing Indigenous youth in care. We want to create safe and respectful practices. We are presenting our work at conferences and workshops and will host hands-on, in-person workshops and presentations for youth and others. To prepare for our presentations, we create speaking lists and scripts, meet to practice, and do trial runs to get fully prepared.

We worked very hard to develop our stories, create our artwork, and put our website together. We hope you enjoy!

Figure 9. *What Brings Us Strength and Healing*



Note. Graphic recording by Jaime Fafard, The Collective Consciousness.