Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Social Work

of

SHAWNA BOWLER

BSW (University of Manitoba, 2009)
BA (University of Manitoba, 2005)


School of Social Work

Friday, October 9, 2020
10:00am (PDT)
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Jeannine Carriere, School of Social Work, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Billie Allan, School of Social Work, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Sherry Farrell-Racette, Department of Visual Arts, University of Regina

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Renée Monchalin, School of Public Health and Social Policy, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

This thesis explores how urban Indigenous women experience reconnections to cultural identity when they take up the practice of traditional beadwork. A beading methodology was used to explore the experiences and beadwork stories of five urban Indigenous women in Winnipeg. Within this methodology, beadwork and stories about beadwork are understood as a way to gather and share knowledge in research. This methodology is articulated through the story of the beaded medicine bags I created for this research. My beaded medicine bag is also used as a framework for a thematic analysis of the research findings. The themes identified through this analysis suggest beading as a multi-faceted and action-oriented approach that facilitates processes of journeying, remembering, relationships, asserting the self and healing that Indigenous women experience through their engagement with this practice. This thesis concludes by highlighting some of the important implications of beading as an Indigenous way of knowing, being and doing in social work practice and research to promote decolonization, resurgence, wellness and healing in our work with Indigenous communities.