**Transcript of Thrivival: The Fire Within  
11. Indigenous Neurodivergent Trauma-Informed Lens  
Project Lead and Speaker: Heather Simpson**

HEATHER SIMPSON:

Indigenous Neurodivergent Trauma-Informed Lens.

Before we explore these themes in relationship to research questions, it is important to emphasize that across these themes is a deeply rooted entanglement of complex trauma and stress that operates at micro meso and macro levels. It is the findings of this study and in my previous literature review that chronic ongoing exposure to oppressive, discriminatory, racist, ableist, hetero-cisgender normative sociological conditions, and the phenomena experienced by Indigenous Autistic People in systems and society in general, seriously impact health. Thrivival is heavily reliant upon a trauma-informed approach through an Indigenous Neurodivergent lens.

Within each emergent theme is expressed certainty that ideologies and practices within the post-secondary system and public at large create and exacerbate traumatic experiences daily. Failing to realize this and respond accordingly in a proactive way to build the conditions needed for Thrivival, traumatization of Indigenous Autistic learners is perpetuated. In postsecondary, this means by expecting conformity to the status quo, we expose Indigenous Autistic learners to profound isolation and neglect as students while upholding institutional structures, policy, spaces, and socialization that diminishes realization of full potential and respect for the variant human expression. While in a day and age of equity, diversity and inclusion and Indigenization movements, the needle has not moved far enough on systemic policy and social changes that mitigate the severity and complexity of traumas experienced within Western education systems for Indigenous Autistic learners.

Supporting all neurodivergent Indigenous learners to succeed in post-secondary life requires education, policy, and experiences that account for variation in neurology and in personal nervous system responses as well intergenerational trauma, in addition to systemic traumas. This is trauma-informed care from a neurodivergent Indigenous lens. As we explore themes of this project, examples will be shared by participants as to how they are experiencing an ongoing sense of fear, helplessness and powerlessness in their educational experience and shed light on the ways that they care for their fire within and seek solidarity and change in this pursuit.