Dadirri: Using a Philosophical Approach to Research to Build Trust between a Non-Indigenous Researcher and Indigenous Participants

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ABSTRACT:
This article focuses on a philosophical approach employed in a PhD research project that set out to investigate sport career transition (SCT) experiences of elite Indigenous Australian sportsmen. The research was necessary as little is known about the transition of this cohort to a life after sport, or their experiences of retirement. A key problem within the SCT paradigm is a presumption that an end to elite sport requires a process of adjustment that is common to all sportspeople—a rather narrow perspective that fails to acknowledge the situational complexity and socio-cultural diversity of elite athletes. With such a range of personal circumstances, it is reasonable to suppose that athletes from different cultural groups will have different individual SCT needs. The researcher is non-Indigenous and mature aged: she encountered a number of challenges in her efforts to understand Indigenous culture and its important sensitivities, and to build trust with the Indigenous male participants she interviewed. An Indigenous philosophy known as Dadirri, which emphasises deep and respectful listening, guided the development of the research design and methodology. Consistent with previous studies conducted by non-Indigenous researchers, an open-ended and conversational approach to interviewing Indigenous respondents was developed. The objective was for the voices of the athletes to be heard, allowing the collection of rich data based on the participants’ perspectives about SCT. An overview of the findings is presented, illustrating that Indigenous athletes experience SCT in complex and distinctive ways. The article provides a model for non-Indigenous researchers to conduct qualitative research with Indigenous people.
Researchers have consistently pointed to positive links between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing amongst marginalized population groups. This paper concentrates on a group about which little is presently known in terms of these links – Indigenous women in Australia. The catalyst for this focus is twofold: demographic data that, while sparse, suggests that this group has very low levels of participation in sport and associated physical activity; and second, a recent parliamentary inquiry into Indigenous sport in which the participation of women featured in several submissions. Dadirri: Using a Philosophical Approach to Research to Build Trust between a Non-Indigenous Researcher and Indigenous Participants. Article. Full-text available. "Dadirri is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. The importance of a practice like dadirri is that it is completely based on non-judgment. Over time, the story is shared on multiple occasions, and by doing so the telling begins to change. The emotional charge is released a little at a time as the circle around them offers an unwavering reflection of loving acceptance. I feel we’re fortunate to be living in a time where, whether we’re indigenous or non-indigenous, we’re waking up. We’re recognising the common threads between ancient and modern ways of healing ourselves, and by doing so discovering the techniques that actually work."