

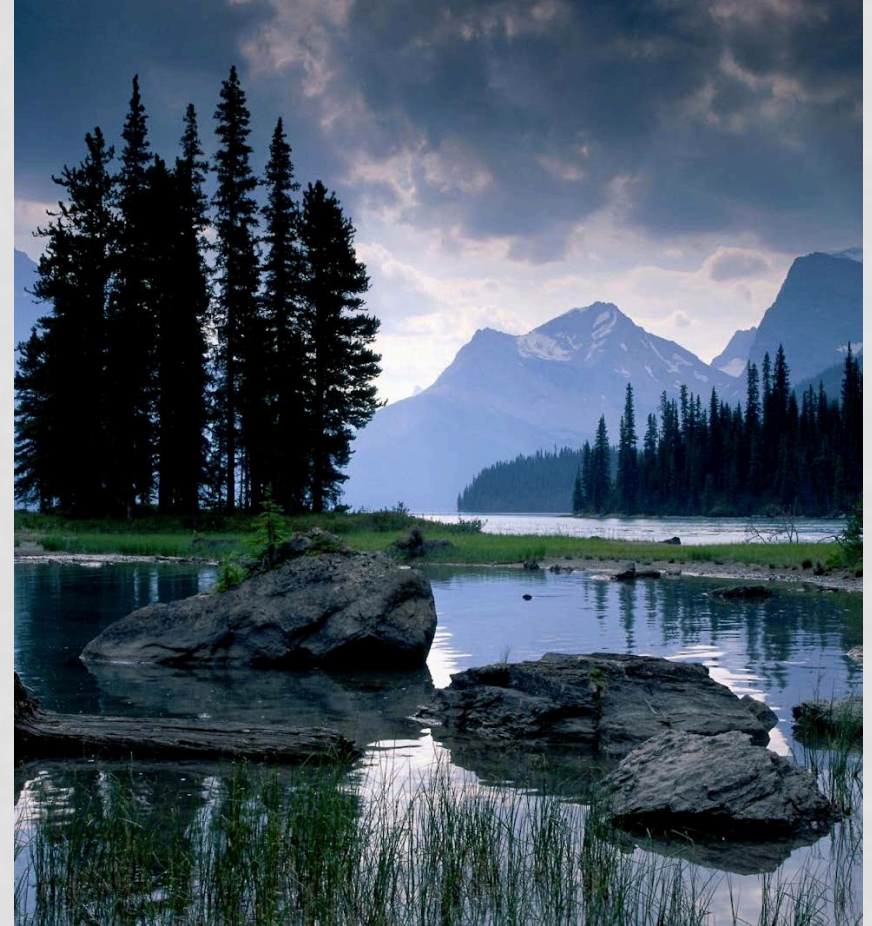
FIRST NATIONS LAND BASED HEALING

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WEATHERDON



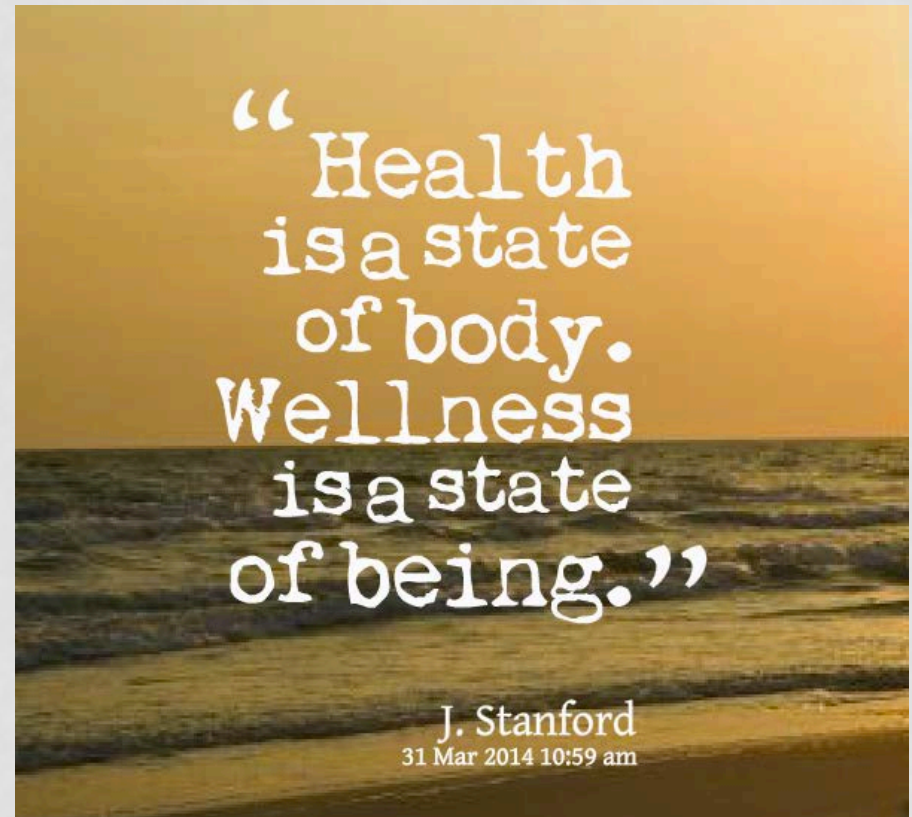
OUTLINE

- 1) Introductions
- 2) First Nations Health and Wellness Challenges
- 3) Social Determinants of Health
- 4) Holistic Health and Wellness
- 5) Activity #1
- 6) Evidence Base
- 7) Case Studies: Exemplary Programs and Best Practices
- 8) Assessing Land Based Programs
- 9) Activity #2
- 10) Future Directions



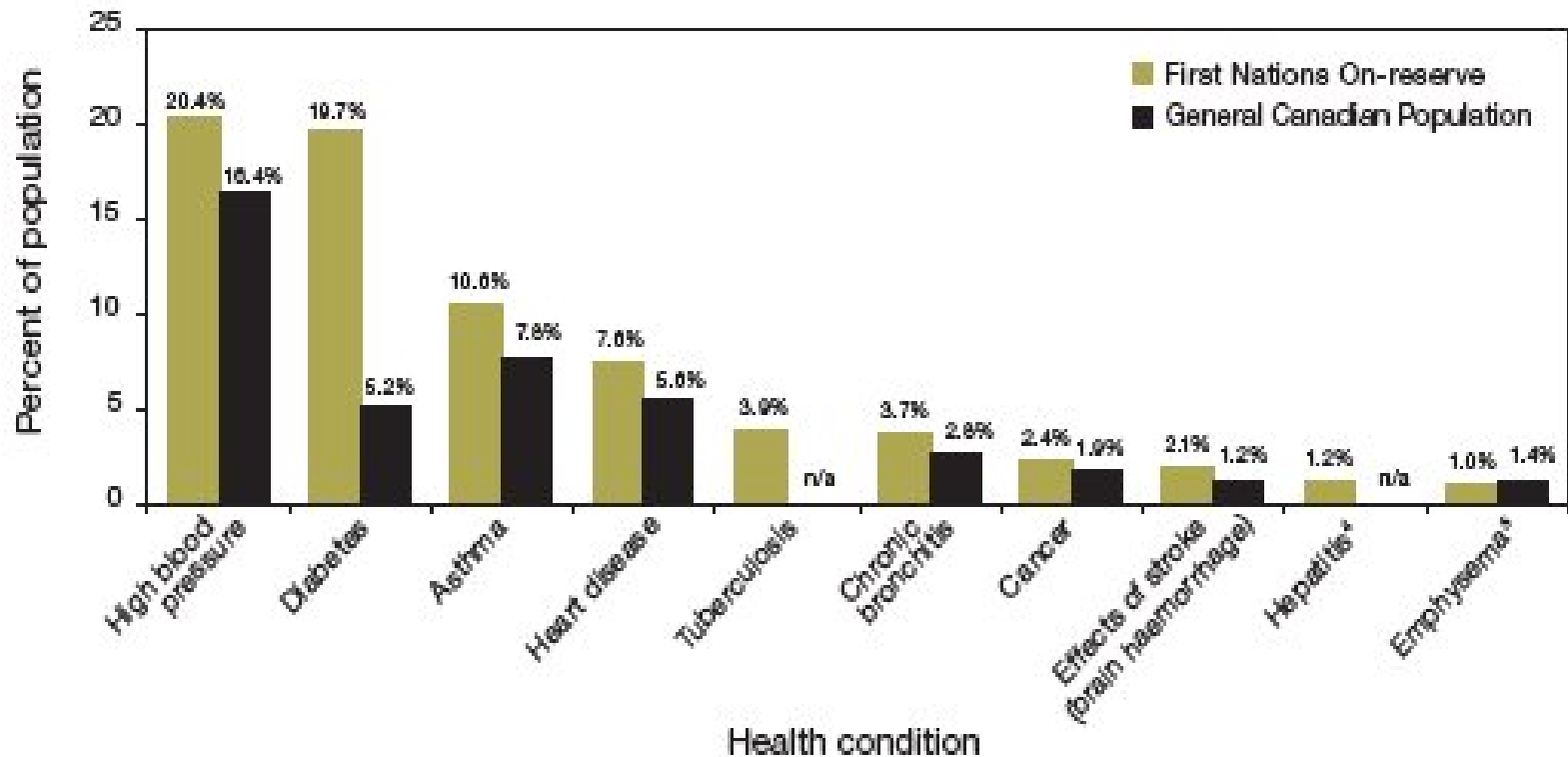
HEALTH AND WELLNESS CHALLENGES

- First Nations communities in Canada are dealing with:
- lifestyle diseases
- infectious disease
- environmentally caused illness
- mental health issues



Picture taken from: [Quotesgram.com](https://www.quotesgram.com)

Figure 5. Age-standardized Prevalence of Selected Health Conditions¹, First Nations On-reserve² (2002-03) and General Canadian Population³ (2003), Adults



1. The 2001 population for Canada was used as the standard population in the calculation of age-standardized rates.

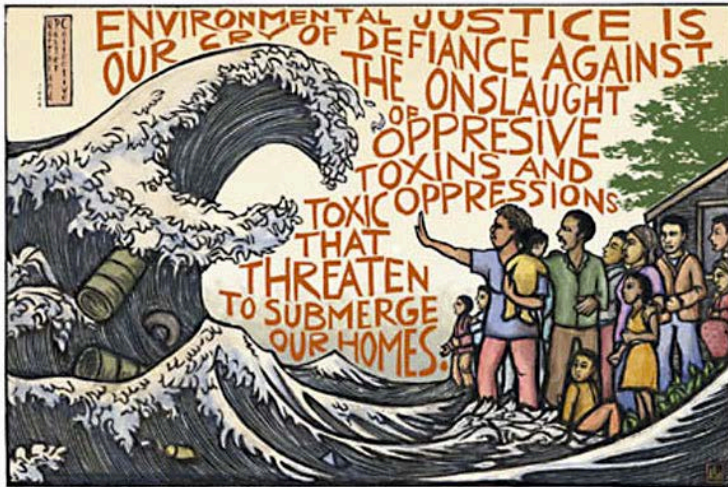
2. Includes respondents 18 years of age and older.

3. The sampling frame of the Canadian Community Health Survey excludes individuals living on Indian Reserves and on Crown Lands, institutional residents, full-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces, and residents of certain remote regions.⁵ (see [References](#)) Includes respondents 20 years of age and older.

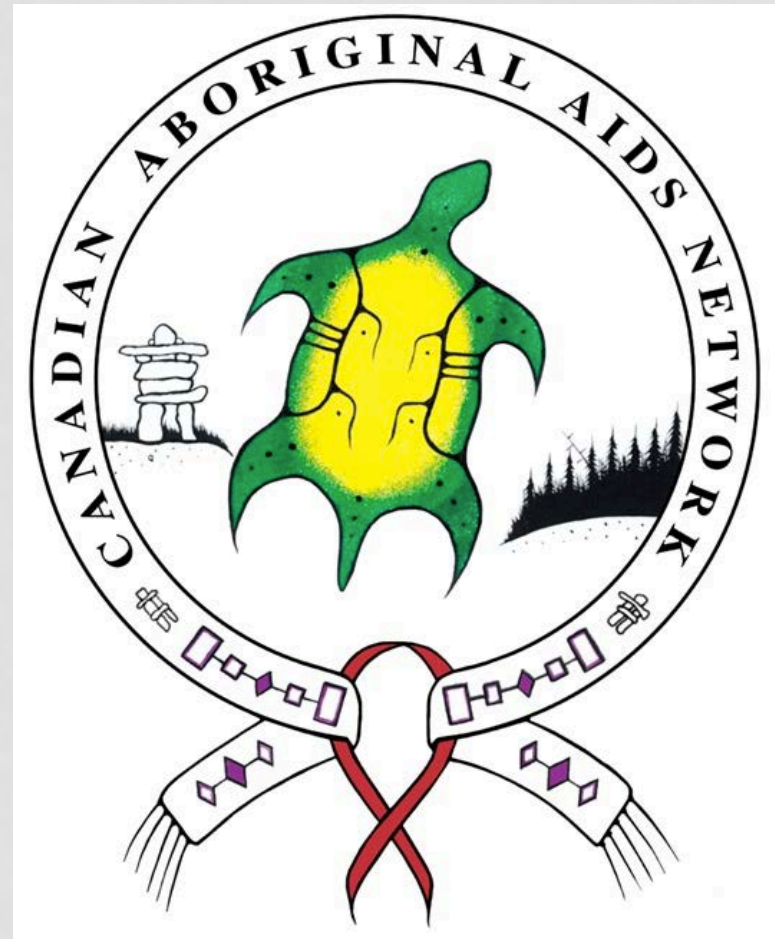
4. Includes hepatitis types A, B, and C.

5. For the general Canadian population in the Canadian Community Health Survey, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease were asked in the same question. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

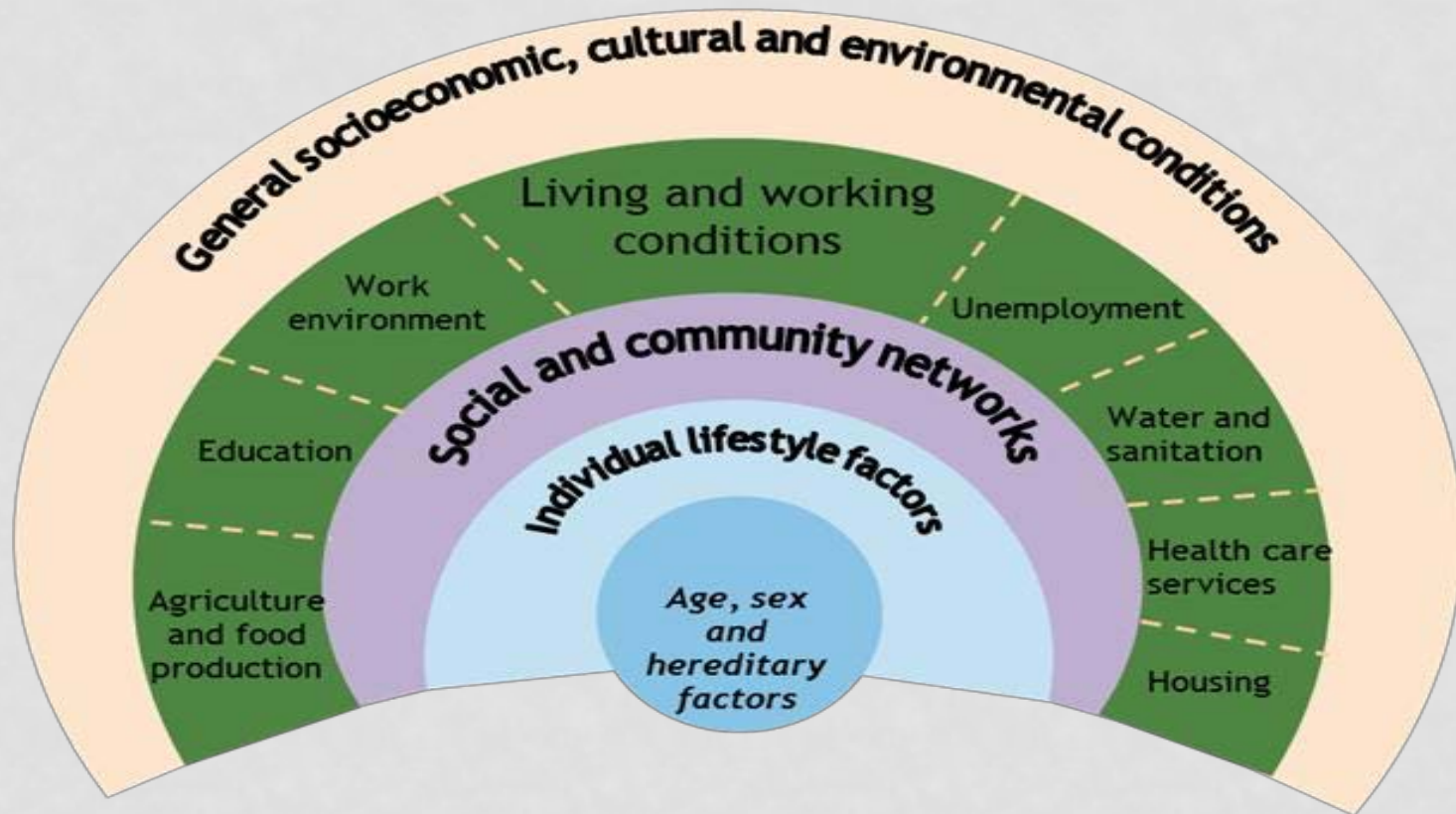
Infectious Disease, Environmentally caused illness, mental health issues



Picture taken from: www.columbia.edu

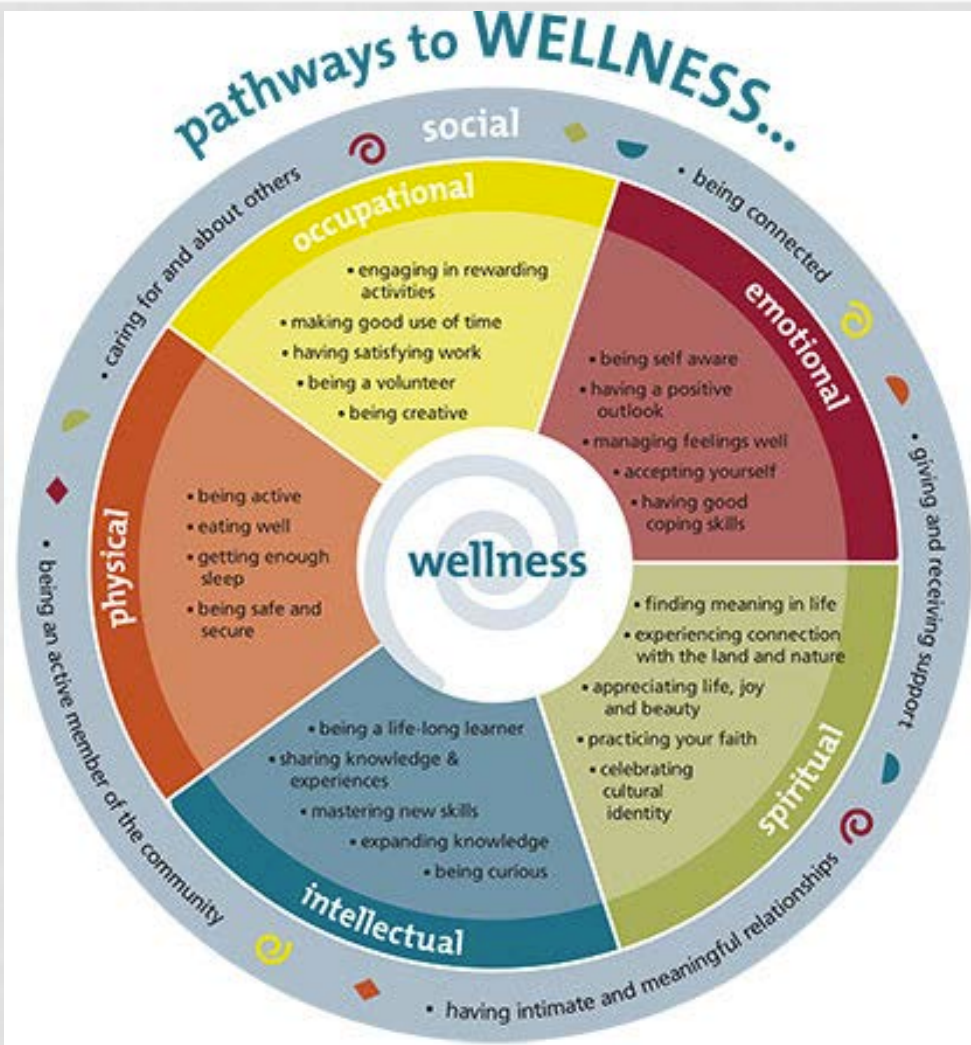


SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



taken from: Land Based Healing Program Draft Curriculum Cree Nation of Chisasibi.

PURSuing HEALTH AND WELLNESS FROM A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE



Relying solely on bio-medical concepts of disease and of health — as is often the case in western health — is not necessarily an effective system for disease prevention and public health in Aboriginal populations

- NAHO, 2008

LAND BASED HEALING

Indigenous health systems view the earth as a source of life rather than resource.

- Looking Horse

With respect to the land, knowledge flows from the land and this is expressed in differences and diversity throughout Aboriginal groups. In contemporary society, this break with the land is the single most important factor in health problems among Aboriginal People. Language is how the knowledge is encoded. The belief among Elders is that Aboriginal languages developed organically from the land. Relationships need to be strengthened (whether it is relationships between people and the land or people and institutions).

- James Lamouch, Research Officer National Aboriginal Health Organization

LAND BASED HEALING

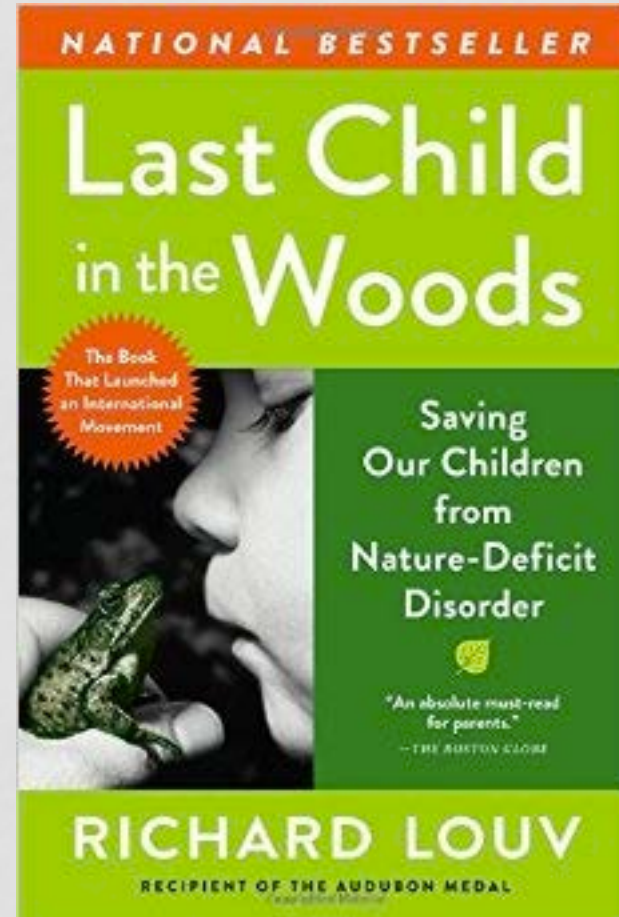
- WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health has recently affirmed, the settings approach within health promotion that connects healthy people to healthy places is an essential ingredient for reducing health inequities (WHO, 2008)
- The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) defined a socio-ecological approach as the basis for an approach to health promotion that is committed to 'the inextricable links between people and their environment' (p. 2) with the primary purpose of achieving equity in health.



EVIDENCE BASE

Eco-Psychology

- Traditional psychology treats patients in the context of their immediate social context and tends to focus solely on human relationships.
- As eco-psychologist, Larry Robinson explains:
“Ecopsychology places the psyche in the context of the more than human world meaning the complex, interconnected web of humans, animals, plants, microbes, rocks, oceans and stars” (26).



EVIDENCE BASE



Image taken from: populationeducation.org

Health Geography and Therapeutic landscapes

- Field of health geography increasingly studying the relationship between health and environment of individuals and communities through the lens of wellbeing.
- Therapeutic Landscapes is an expanding body of research within health geography that focuses on the role of therapeutic landscapes in shaping health (Wilson 2003, 83). Views places as symbolic systems of healing.

Allan: "It doesn't matter where you go. If I have problems I take a walk in the bush. I talk to the trees and they listen. They take my problems away" (Wilson 2003, 90).

Patrick: "I came up with a phrase the other day that describes how I feel, 'Harvesting medicine is medicine'. I really think about the therapeutic aspect involved in knowing that you are out there being spiritually connected with Mother Earth and what she provides for you. You are picking plants and putting down tobacco, thanking her for what she has given but at the same time you are rejuvenating yourself. You are healing yourself within. You are making yourself feel good" (Wilson 2003, 83).



CASE STUDY



Pathways to Wellness approach which has identified six dimensions of individual well-being – social, physical, occupational, intellectual, spiritual and emotional. These dimensions are interconnected and interdependent.

Yukon Health and Social Services – mandate is to support Yukon People, families and communities to be as healthy as possible.



The Government of Yukon is providing \$1 million in funding over three years to the Kwanlin Dün First Nation to support land-based healing programs at the Jackson Lake Healing Centre."

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/14-070.html#.Vg2ZoiBViko>

Jackson Lake Healing Program Mission Statement:

To provide a supportive,
land-based, holistic, and
compassionate
environment based on the
integration of traditional
and modern knowledge in
order to create balance
and self empowerment.



Image taken from: "Caring for the Circle Within: Jackson Lake
Land-Based Healing Program: program Overview & Evaluation
Report" (Oct 2010)

“In spite of a positive intent, current mainstream programming has not always effectively met the unique psychosocial and spiritual needs of the First Nation community. Consequently, it was felt by many that a land-based healing program, rooted in the land, traditional knowledge, spiritual values and ceremonial practice, would represent a relevant alternative for those whose needs are not being adequately served by mainstream services” (Plaskett and Stewart, 2010, i).



Photos taken from: kwalindun.com

CARING FOR THE CIRCLE WITHIN



Image taken from: kwalindun.com

Healing from the Circle Within Program Components:

- Traditional Teachings (e.g. Visioning, Dreams, Spiritual practices and ceremonies; teachings about traditional values, beliefs and skills; Yukon First Nation history; Storytelling, etc.)
- Modern Teachings (e.g., Goal setting, Coping skills, Emotional Regulation Skills, Relaxation, Yoga, Trauma Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Exposure therapy, etc.)
- Cultural Activities (e.g., drumming, singing, sewing, making medicines, drum- making, rattle-making, traditional crafts, etc.) and
- Land-based Activities (e.g. Fishing, netting fish, preparing fish,

Evaluation Results

- 80% of women completed program
- Reduced mental health/trauma/anxiety symptoms
- Improved self care (nutrition, exercise, avoidance of high risk violent relationships, etc.)
- Physical health improvements such as: weight loss, reduced blood pressure, increased activity
- Improved coping skills in place of substance abuse, decisions to address co-addictions
- Improved ability to access SAFE support
- Increased skills in self-reliance
- Improved family and community functioning (eg. caring for children, attending school/work)
- Decrease destructive acts ex: cutting, suicide, unsafe sex
- Increased knowledge/skill in cultural/traditional activities
- Increased pride & identification with cultural heritage
- Increased knowledge of First Nation history

More Specific Results:

- Two participants report quitting smoking in addition to alcohol/drugs
- Two participants report that they have ended violent relationships
- Two participants report active initiatives in relation to renegotiating the safe return of children in the care of YTG or other family
- Two participants report finding employment
- Of the eight participants interviewed during a one month follow- up evaluation, six reported abstinence from alcohol and drugs. All of those who attended the 1 month evaluation who did report relapses, also reported evidence of reduced harm around their patterns of use.

CASE STUDY



“People made it clear they want on-the-land programming, and lots of it. Reconnecting with their spiritual and cultural identities - so closely tied to nature - was for many communities a necessary component to all six pillars of healing: Prevention, Intervention, Treatment, Outreach, Aftercare and Enforcement” (Healing Voices: The Ministers Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness 2013, 2).

Other Findings from: Healing Voices: The Ministers Forum on Addictions and Community Wellness, NWT:

- “What the Forum heard more than anything else during its travels is the land heals” (2013, 5).
- On the land programming became the forums # 1 recommendation.
- “Many addictions and primary issues such as residential school trauma and child sexual abuse trace to a time when ties to the land were severed” (2013, 5).
- “In its purest form, an on the land experience should help a person to understand they need water, air, fire and earth—not alcohol or drugs -- in order to survive” (2013, 5).



Image taken from: www.tripadvisor.com

TAKE A KID TRAPPING & HARVESTING

Purpose: This program is designed to introduce Northwest Territories (NWT) youth to the traditional life-skills practices of hunting, trapping, fishing and outdoor survival. It is designed for youth of all ages as a method to build on the traditional practice of passing on skills and knowledge to the next generation.



Photo taken from: norj.ca

"By taking students trapping they not only practiced the skills and applied the knowledge they learnt in class about wildlife and conservation, but also had the chance to build their awareness of traditional cultural practices on the land" (Take a Kid Trapping Program – Final Report 2009, 3).

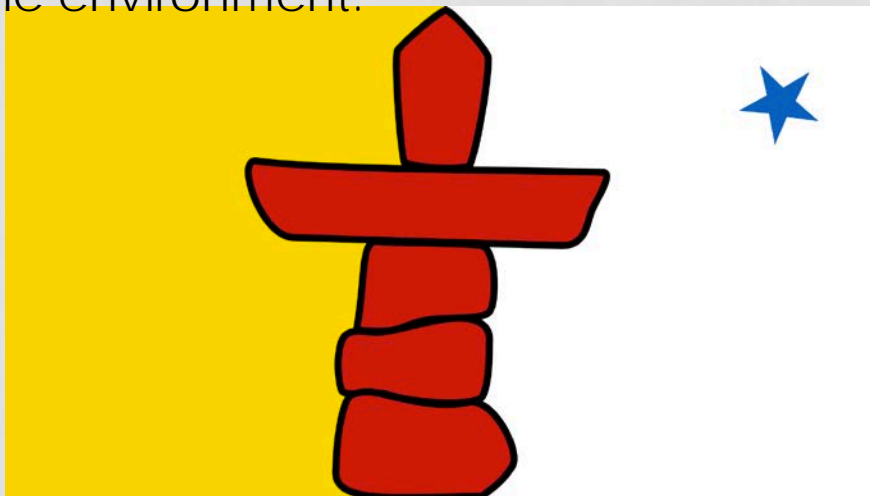
"Culture-based education enhances a sense of belonging and pride in culture by providing meaningful learning experiences that connects our learners to the community, the past, and the present" (ibid).



"The excursion strengthened their self-esteem, enhanced learning, and will definitely provide for greater success in life" (ibid).

CASE STUDY

Government of Nunavut has partnered with the Department of Education and a number of local and regionally-based Inuit organizations to develop and update land-based camp curriculum. Camps have focused on fostering "Two-Eyed Seeing", whereby science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit are brought together through hands-on learning in the environment.



There are also a variety of community based and initiated organizations in Nunavut offering land based healing programs.

ILISAQSIK SOCIETY

Ilisaqsivik is a community initiated and community based organization and charity located in Clyde River Nunavut. The organization is "dedicated to promoting community wellness by providing space, resources, and programming that help families and individuals find healing and develop their strengths.

<http://ilisaqsivik.ca/programs-and-services/land-based-programming> .



Programs Offered Include:

- Summer Healing and Cultural Retreats
- Qimmivut (Our Dogs) Program
- Country foods program
- Men's Group Father and Son Program
- Arnait (Women's) Retreat



MAKIMAUTIKSAT YOUTH CAMP

Makimautiksatsat and the Eight *Ujarait*/ Rocks Model were developed by Qaujigiartiit Health Research Centre and piloted in six Nunavut communities between 2011 – 2013.

The Eight *Ujarait*/ Rocks Model includes the following modules

1. Strengthening Coping Skills
2. *Inuuqatigiitiarniq* (being respectful of others): Building Healthy & Harmonious Relationships
3. *Timiga* (my body): Nurturing Awareness of the Body, Movement & Nutrition
4. *Sananiq*: Crafting and Exploring Creativity.
5. *Nunalivut* (our community): Fostering Personal & Community Wellness
6. Encouraging Self Discovery & Future Planning
7. Understanding Informed Choices and Peer Pressure
8. *Avatittinik Kamatsiarniq* Celebrating the Land: Connecting Knowledge and Skills on the land



Top image: Elder and Grandmother of a participant teaching the youth how to dry fish in Pangnirtung Bottom image: Campers in Coral Harbour build a *saputit* for catching Arctic Char



Evaluation Results:

- The data collected from parents, campers and facilitators indicate that the activities in the program fostered physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness and supported a holistic perspective of wellness.
- The camp promoted knowledge sharing with community members and role models, thereby strengthening relationships between youth and members of the community.
- The camp promoted team-building with peers, a sense of unity among the group, and connection to the community at large.
- Campers reported feeling more happy, cheerful, and energetic, and a decrease in feeling sad and feeling miserable after participation in the camp.
- Campers indicated they felt better prepared to plan for their future, set goals for themselves, and understood their personal strengths
- 6-months after camp, campers indicated they still felt capable and interested in preparing for their future, goal-setting, and understanding their personal strengths.
- Increase interest in participating in land based programs

CASE STUDY



Conseil Cré de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James

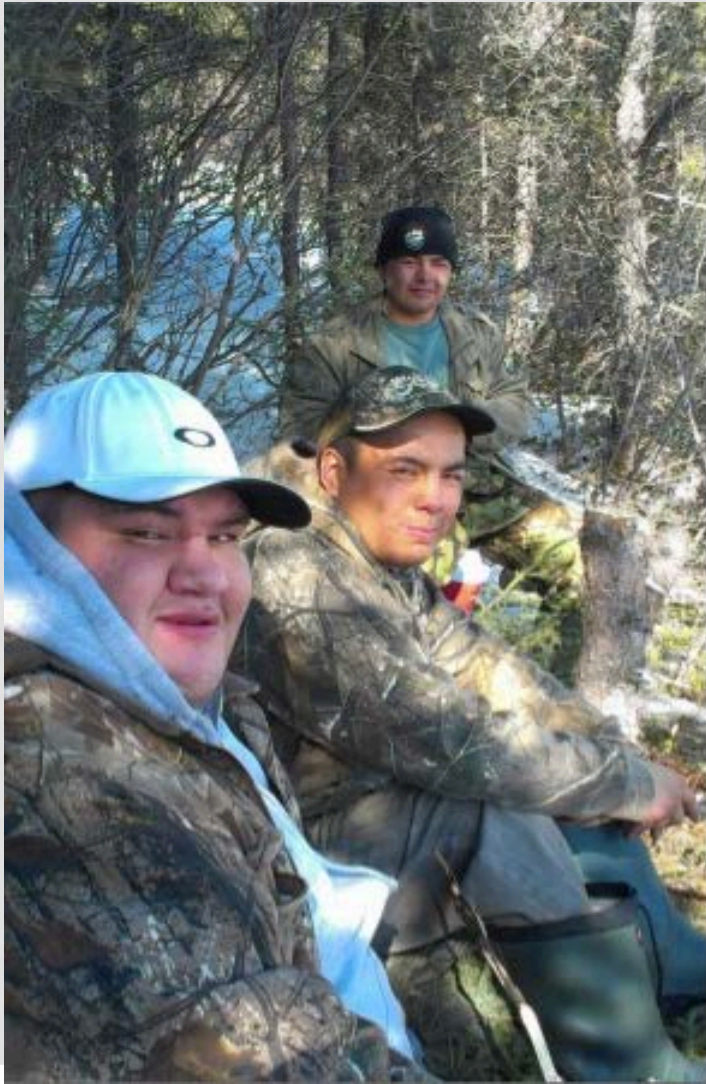
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

The Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiun division of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services has developed a holistic model of healthcare which incorporates a variety of culturally significant practices and land based activities in health care and promotion.



CHISASIBI MIYUPIMAATISIUN



LAND-BASED PROGRAM

- It aims to improve the mental health of individuals so that they can effectively participate in the life of their family and community and make positive contributions to the collective development of their Nation.
- Programming addresses issues related to substance abuse, trauma (physical and sexual abuse, unresolved grief), and the many intergenerational social suffering symptoms associated with residential school.



TEAM COMPOSITION

- **Elder** - Design treatment plan/individual wellness plan in collaboration with healer; holistic counselling and express their traditional knowledge; teach the spiritual and the sacred aspect of hunting fishing, trapping and gathering;
- **Program coordinator** - Oversees the organization of the program in consultation with elder/healer; identify & retain employees;
- **Office manager** - Data entry and processing program registrations; orientation support
- **Healer / Counselor** – Conduct individual entry interviews; help the participant's personal growth; do the intervention; engage, encourage and support the participants in the healing process.
- **Camp helpers** – provide daily camp services such as cooking, cleaning, provision and other assistance as requested by the team

Time	Activity	Content
Morning (8AM - 12PM)	Opening Prayer Forgiveness Impacts of Hydro Development	Story about victim's father forgiving person responsible Social: loss and grief Environment: loss of Eeyou Istchee Ongoing Impacts
Afternoon (1PM- 5PM)	Hunting Teachings What has hunting got to do with abuse? Bush Activity: Ice Fishing (net lines, nets)	Survival Health Killing animals for nothing Killing for more than you need Bragging
Evening (7-9PM)	Jealousy (within you and towards others)	Laughing at people, not asking advice from peers, etc.

Reproduced from: Radu, Iona, Larry House and Eddie Pashagumskum, 2014. "Land, Life, and Knowledge in Chisasibi: Intergenerational Healing in the Bush," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3:3, pp. 86 -105).

If I am stressed or worried or sad, for me nature and what we have gone through [surviving on the land prior to settlement] helps me. If I sit down in the middle of the woods with all this pain, what am I going to do? If I look up I see all the trees. If I look at the tree that is alive and well, beautiful...how did he become like that? He didn't get mad at anybody to be like this. Ask nature to take care of you. Don't be afraid to talk to the nature.

– Eddie Pashagumskum (2014, 93 -94)



Image taken from: www.psxetreme.com

BEST PRACTICES IN LAND BASED PROGRAMMING

- Community strength – based approach
- Bridging mainstream and traditional approaches while privileging a holistic model of health that is rooted in Indigenous worldviews and ways of doing.
- Creating safe and welcoming environments
- Developing a vision of health with participants
- Understanding healing as a journey
- Continuum of Care
- Skilled, supportive, and motivated staff
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Developing partnerships across various service sectors
- Evaluations

ASSESSING LAND BASED HEALTH PROGRAMS



Whys is it important to assess programs?

What assessments tools/strategies work best?

ACTIVITY

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- Linking health and safe and clean environments in policy
- More public awareness campaigns
- Increased research and assessment reporting
- Increased research on gendered aspects of land based programs
- Funding land based programs

MIIGWETCH!

THANK YOU! MERCI!