

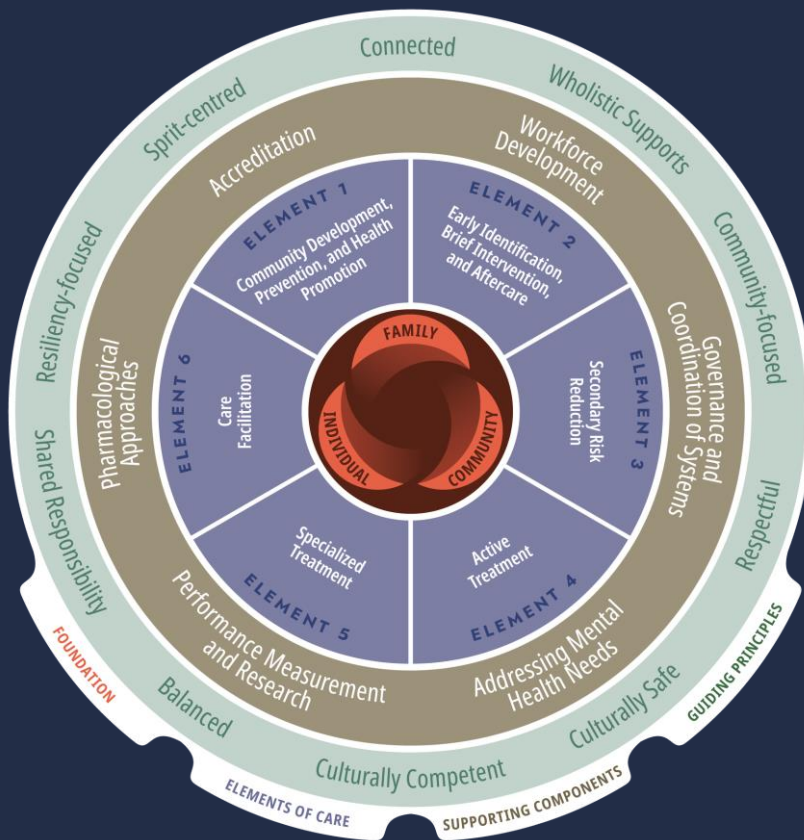
# Honouring Our Lost Loved Ones through Ceremony and Culture

First Nations Health Authority: Wellness Summit  
April 4, 2023

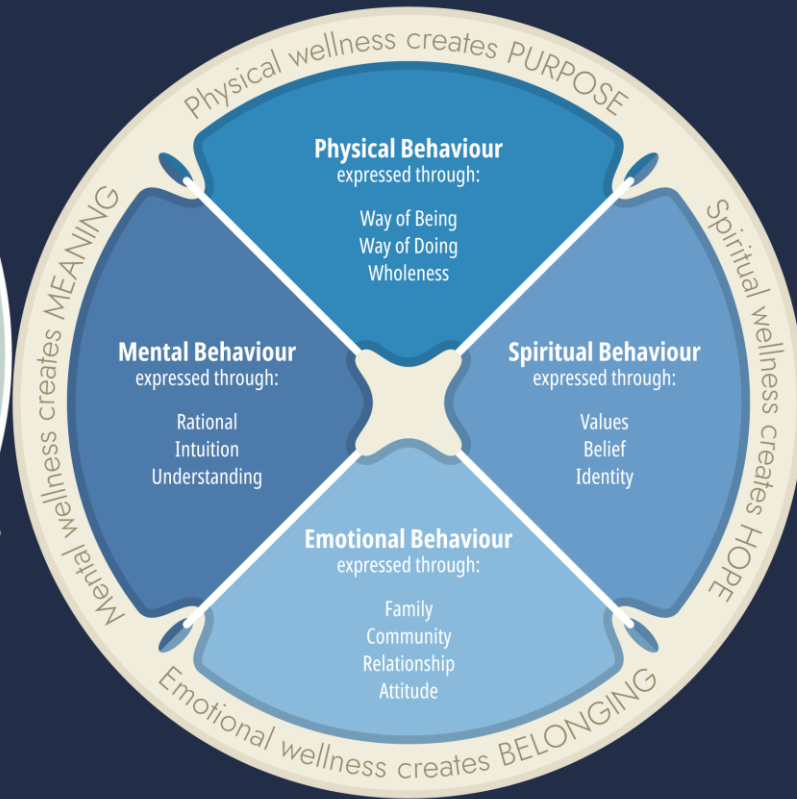
Carol Hopkins, O.C., MSW, LL.D. (hons)



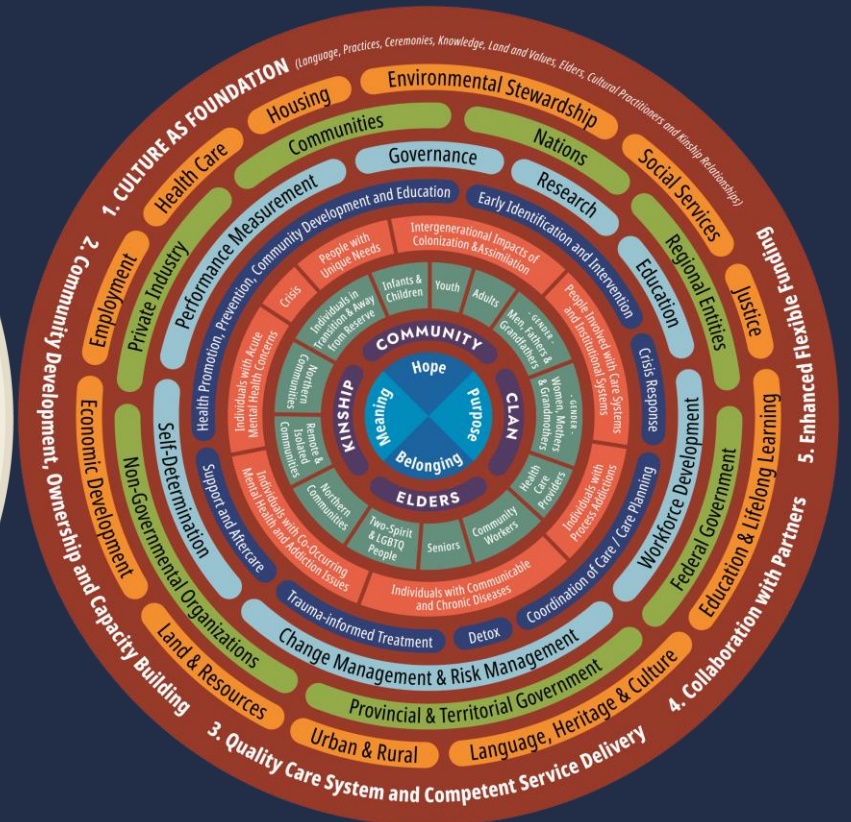
**THUNDERBIRD**  
PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION



Honouring Our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Among First Nations



Indigenous Wellness Framework

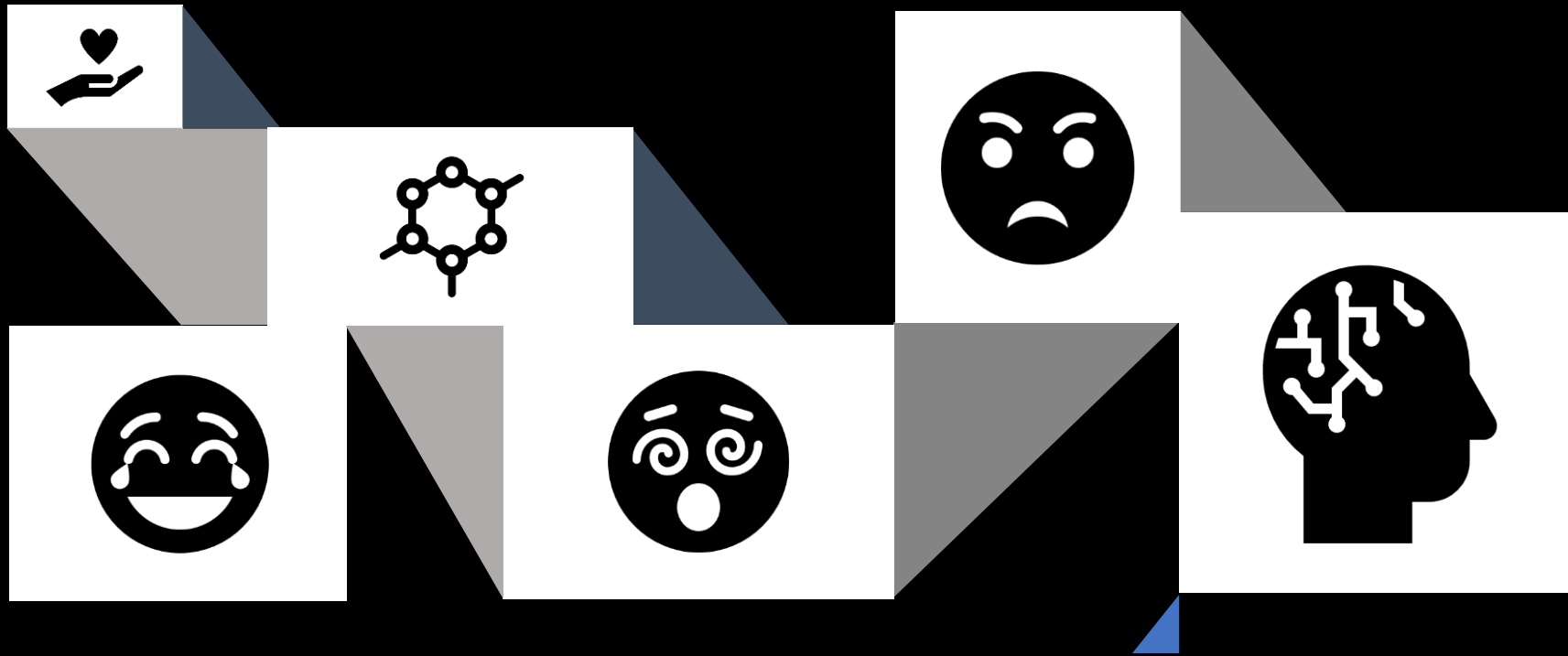


First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework

Culture and Indigenous Knowledge is the foundation

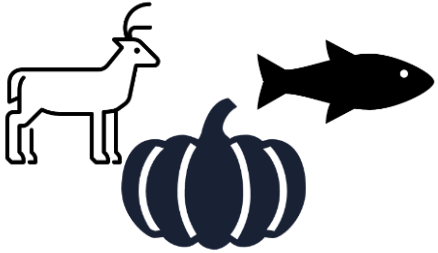


**THUNDERBIRD**  
PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION



Where do we focus our attention to address these impacts

## Risk Factors: Determinants of Health



### ***Food security:***

People who reported that they are “fairly often” unable to buy food for their household are **3 times more likely** to use methamphetamine compared to those who never have had issues accessing food.

*( $p=0.001$ , 95%CI 2.56-6.54).*

43% never or almost never have enough money to buy food. 48% said that they lose their appetite with methamphetamine use



### ***Housing:***

People who have been experiencing homelessness during COVID-19 are **2 times more likely to use** methamphetamine ( *$p=0.001$ , 95%CI 1.69- 3.28*).

# Risk & Protective Factors

The odds of using opioids in a harmful way is:

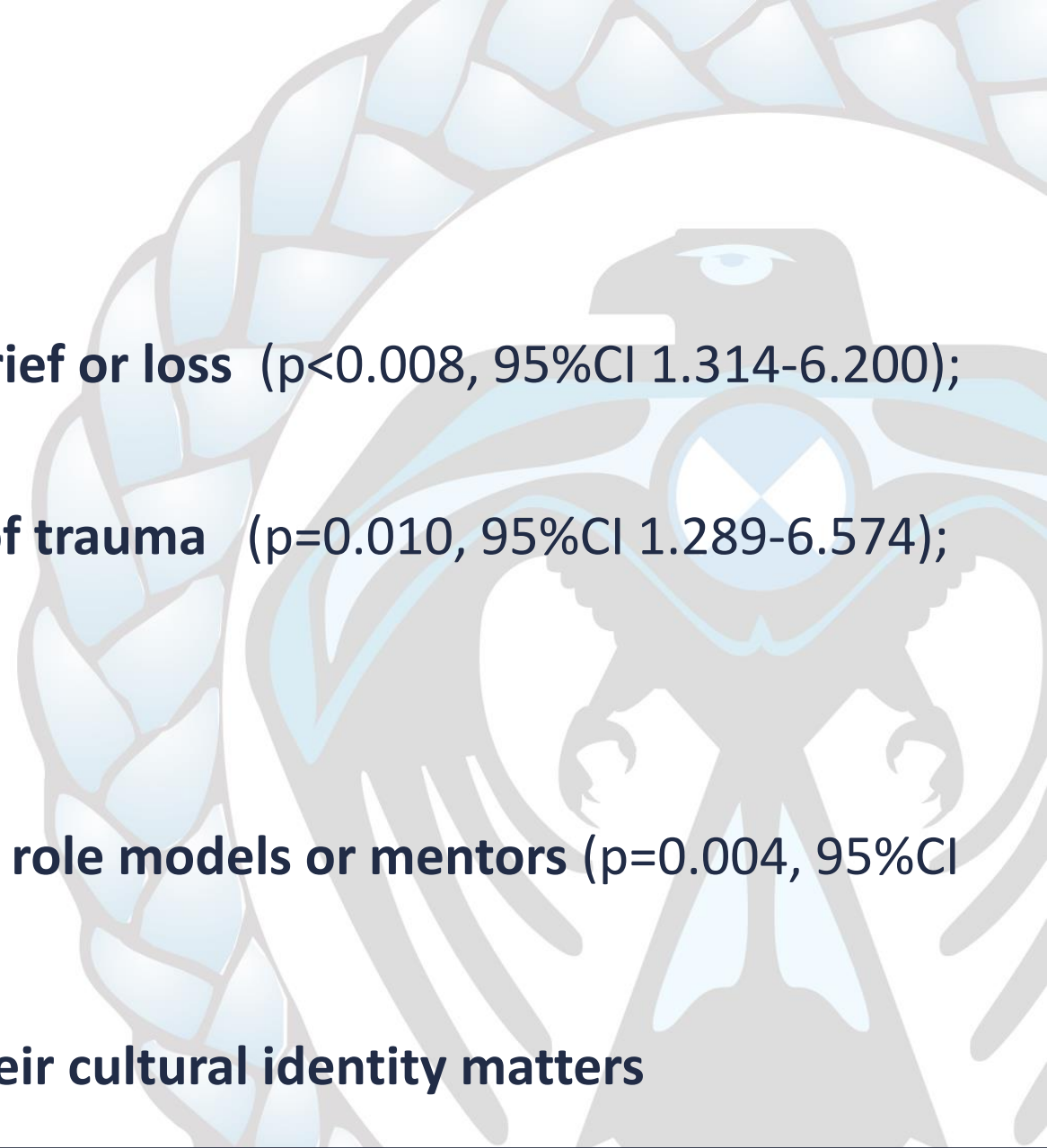
**2.8 times greater for those who experienced grief or loss** ( $p < 0.008$ , 95%CI 1.314-6.200);

**2.9 times greater risk for those with a history of trauma** ( $p = 0.010$ , 95%CI 1.289-6.574);

The odds of not using opioids in a harmful way is:

**2.9 times greater for those who have positive role models or mentors** ( $p = 0.004$ , 95%CI 1.407-5.869);

**2.3 times greater for those who believe that their cultural identity matters**



# TRAUMA CHANGES

## 1. Neurological changes

- Increased autonomic responses- **shaky, sweaty, heart palpitations, trouble breathing**
- Compromised immune system
- Affect dysregulation- over, under
- Emotional instability

## 2. Physiological changes

- Increased body responses to fear triggers, hypervigilance, anxiety, depression
- Sleep abnormalities and eating patterns
- Reduced immunity, physical illness, body aches, headaches, tiredness

## 3. Cognitive /Emotional changes

- Memory impairments- difficulty making decisions, poor concentration
- Chronically activated stress hormones- impairs ability to learn new things and remember
- anxiety, depression, Addictive behaviors
- Emotional distress, shame, guilt, anger, sadness, grief & loss, numbing.

## 4. Spiritual

- Disconnection from spirit/culture/traditions, Dissociation
- Belief & Value conflict



# Grief and Loss

## SURVEY

### Grief & Loss During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has cut off access to cultural practices and has exacerbated grief and loss within First Nations communities. Indigenous Knowledge and culture-based practices will support communities and families in addressing unresolved grief.

We invite you to share your thoughts in a survey to help identify guidance needed from Elders, Cultural Practitioners, and Youth. Results from this survey will guide the content for brief stories and teachings, presented in print, pdf, and video.



**THUNDERBIRD**  
PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION

**You are encouraged to share the survey within your network.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kate Turner at [kturner@thunderbirdpf.org](mailto:kturner@thunderbirdpf.org).



[https://thunderbirdpf.research.net/r/grief\\_loss\\_pandemic](https://thunderbirdpf.research.net/r/grief_loss_pandemic)

## SONDAGE

### Deuil et perte pendant la pandémie

La pandémie de COVID-19 a limité l'accès aux pratiques culturelles et exacerbé le deuil et la perte au sein des communautés des Premières Nations. Le savoir autochtone et les pratiques fondées sur la culture aideront les communautés et les familles à surmonter les deuils non résolus.

Nous vous invitons à partager votre opinion dans le cadre d'un sondage visant à définir les conseils nécessaires de la part des Aînés, des praticiens culturels et des jeunes. Les résultats de ce sondage orienteront le contenu des brèves histoires et des enseignements, lesquels seront présentés en format papier et numérique ainsi que sous forme de vidéos.



**THUNDERBIRD**  
PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION

**Nous vous encourageons à partager le sondage avec votre réseau.**

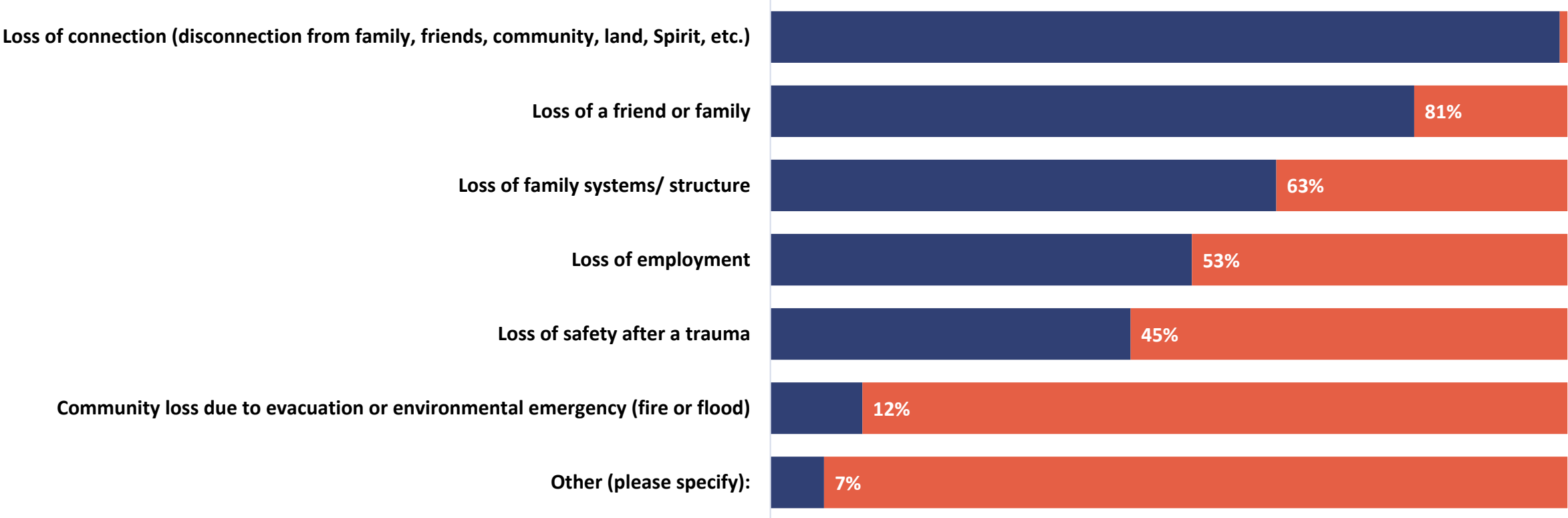
Pour toute question, communiquez avec Kate Turner à l'adresse Kate Turner - [kturner@thunderbirdpf.org](mailto:kturner@thunderbirdpf.org).



[https://thunderbirdpf.research.net/r/grief\\_loss\\_FR](https://thunderbirdpf.research.net/r/grief_loss_FR)

# Type of Loss

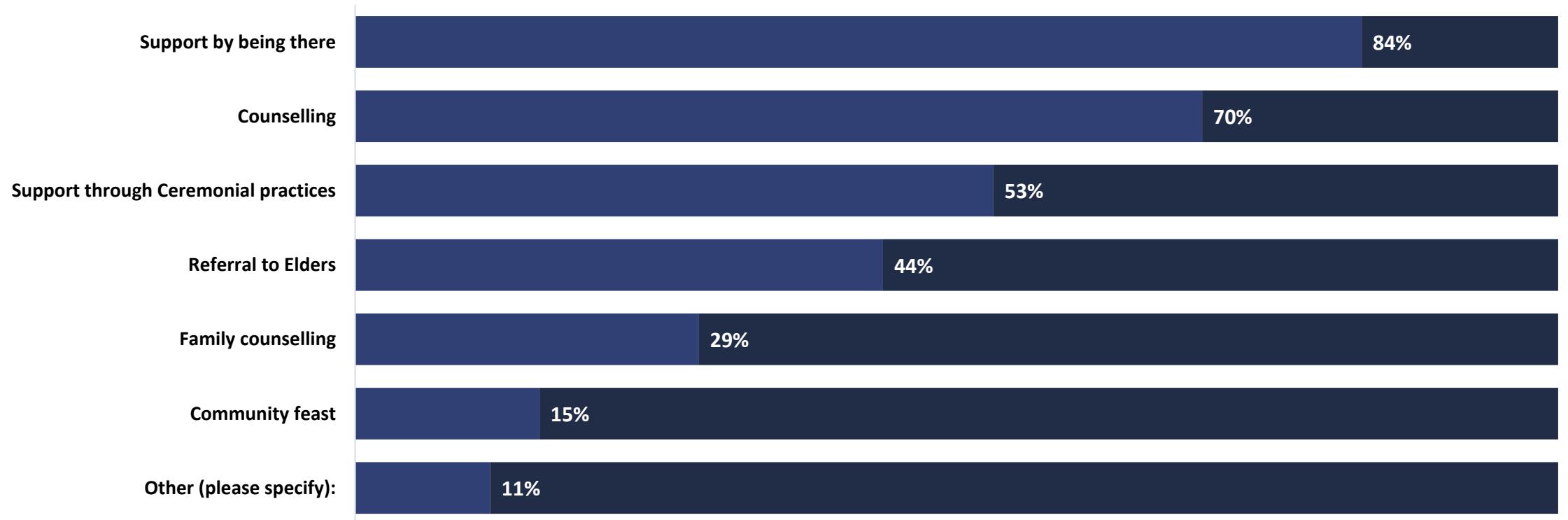
Types of Loss During the Pandemic





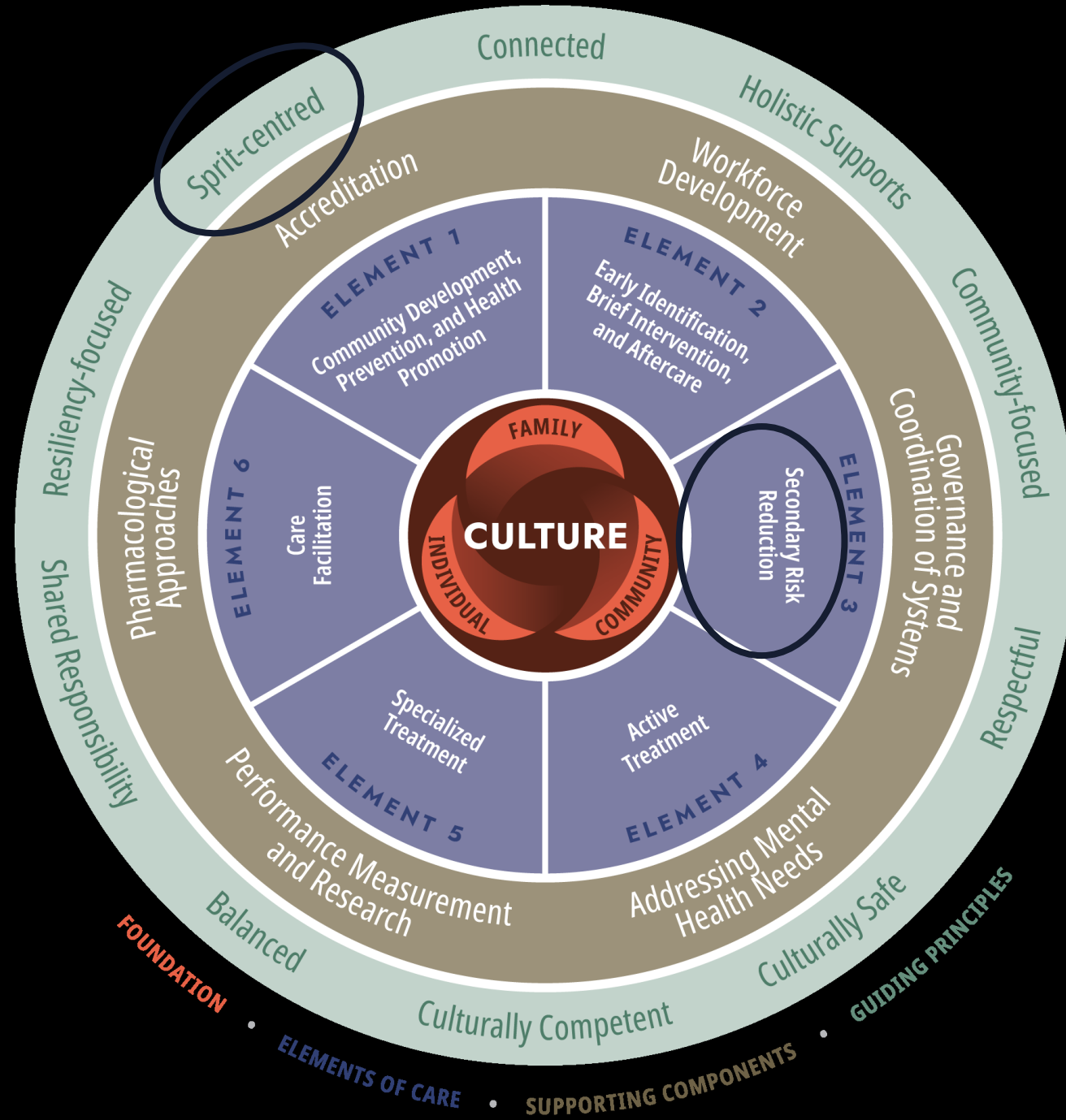
# Mental Wellness Workforce

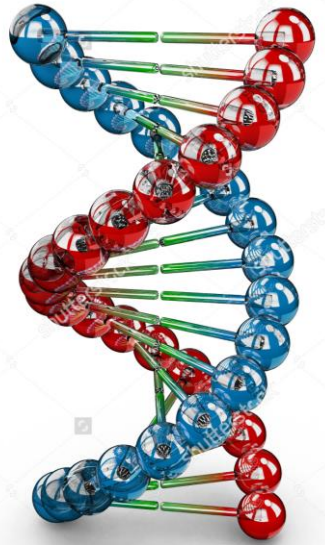
Mental Wellness Workforce: Support provided to clients with grief





Honouring Our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Among First Nations in Canada (2011)



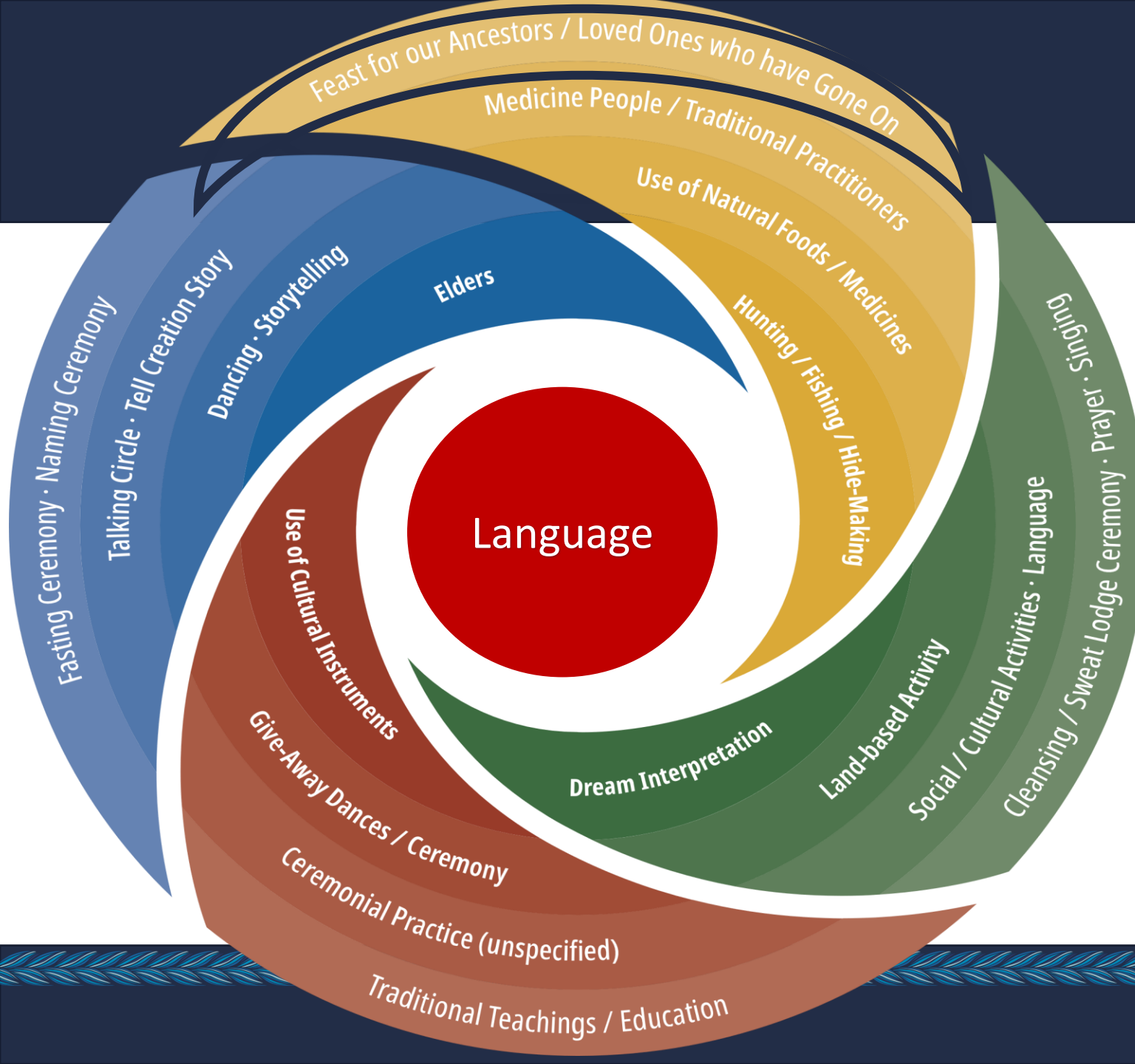


- What identifies us individually ... is spiritual DNA. Our name, our language, our nationhood
- The clan is in the DNA as a potential at the beginning of Creation. The genes that would be awakened later
- The structure of gene type can be mapped on the layers of our being
- Gene is from the interior
- Epigenetic is from the outside
- Therefore, genetic behavior changes from outside source, i.e., environmental / experience with life, and ancestry
- need to get spirit back into the picture

**Connect, support, and meet people who use drugs where they are**

The creator imaged the most beautiful and perfect place... Where life would grow... a place full of hope, belonging, meaning and purpose

# Culture



- Support education from a cultural perspective – e.g., link knowledge about how drugs effect people (pharmacology) with elders who have knowledge of medicines, or healers who understand & work with neuropathways
- Language – basis for values and worldview, and key concepts for healing and connection
- Land – foundation for relationships and critical for facilitating belonging
- Medicines – unconditional gift from our mother the earth, powerful cognitive behavioral tool
- Ceremony – access to spiritual help. Cannot promote healing by physical world alone
- Elders, Culture – Based Practitioners, Healers, Teachers – are critical to the workforce

<b>Youth Presenting Characteristics</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Family Violence	14	52
Not Attending School at Intake	21	78
Family Addictions	19	73
History of Suicide Ideation	19	73
Justice System Involvement	7	26
History of Sexual Victimization	9	33
Attended Previous Treatment	8	30
Average Age	15.5	
Client Completion of Program	27	100%

NNHC, 2007. Note the national average for client completion of treatment for youth is 50% for both mainstream and First Nations residential treatment for substance abuse.

# Thunderbird Wellness

APP

Download on the  
App Store

GET IT ON  
Google Play



# Mino Bimaadiziwin

PODCAST





PHONE  
(519) 692-9922

TOLL-FREE  
1-866-763-4714



FAX  
(519) 692-9977



E-MAIL  
[info@thunderbirdpf.org](mailto:info@thunderbirdpf.org)

[thunderbirdpf.org](http://thunderbirdpf.org)



VISIT OUR LIFE PROMOTION WEBSITES

[cultureforlife.ca](http://cultureforlife.ca) for Youth

[wisepractices.ca](http://wisepractices.ca) for Communities