



First Nations Health and Wellness
Summit

FNHA-Vancouver-2023

Land Based Healing-Youth, Family,
Communities

Presenter: Dr Rod McCormick
(Kahnienkehaka)

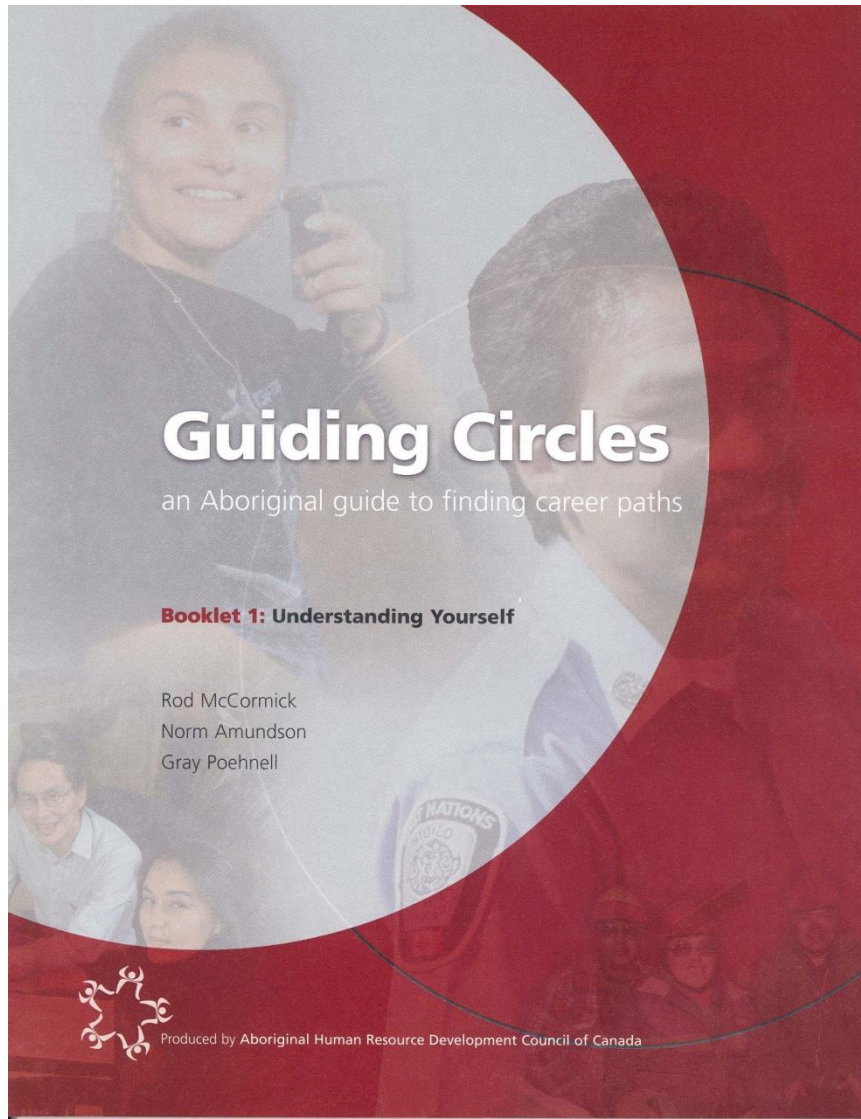
I would like to acknowledge that I am a guest on the unceded traditional territories of the **x^wməθk^wəy'əm** (Musqueam), **S_kwx_wú7mesh** (Squamish), and **səlilwətał** (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

All My Relations centre- Xwexweyten Kweltken

- ▶ The mission of the All My Relations Research Centre is to advance Indigenous community wellness by bringing together regional, national and international Indigenous researchers to work in partnership with Indigenous communities to identify, research, advance and build capacity and capability in Indigenous community wellness.



Guiding Circles:

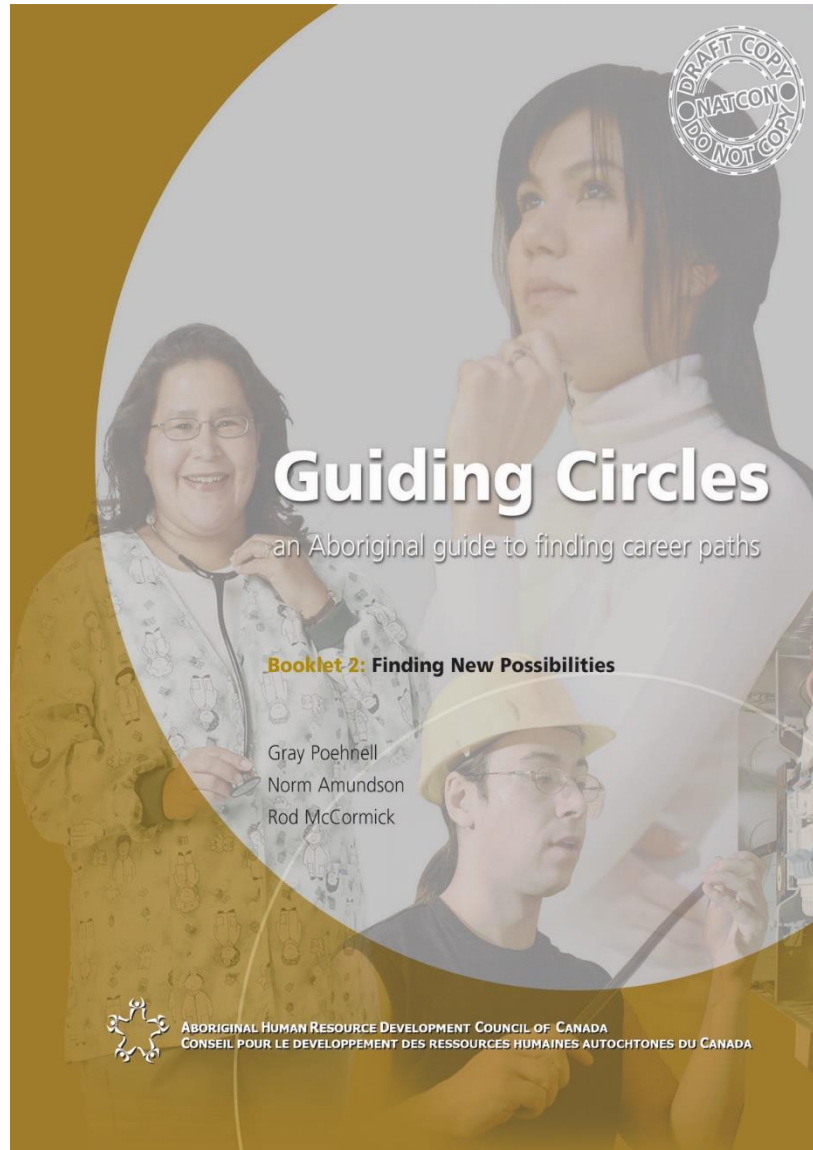


an Aboriginal guide to finding
career paths

Booklet 1:
understanding yourself

Rod McCormick
Norm Amundson
Gray Poehnell

In partnership with the
Aboriginal Human Resource
Development Council of
Canada

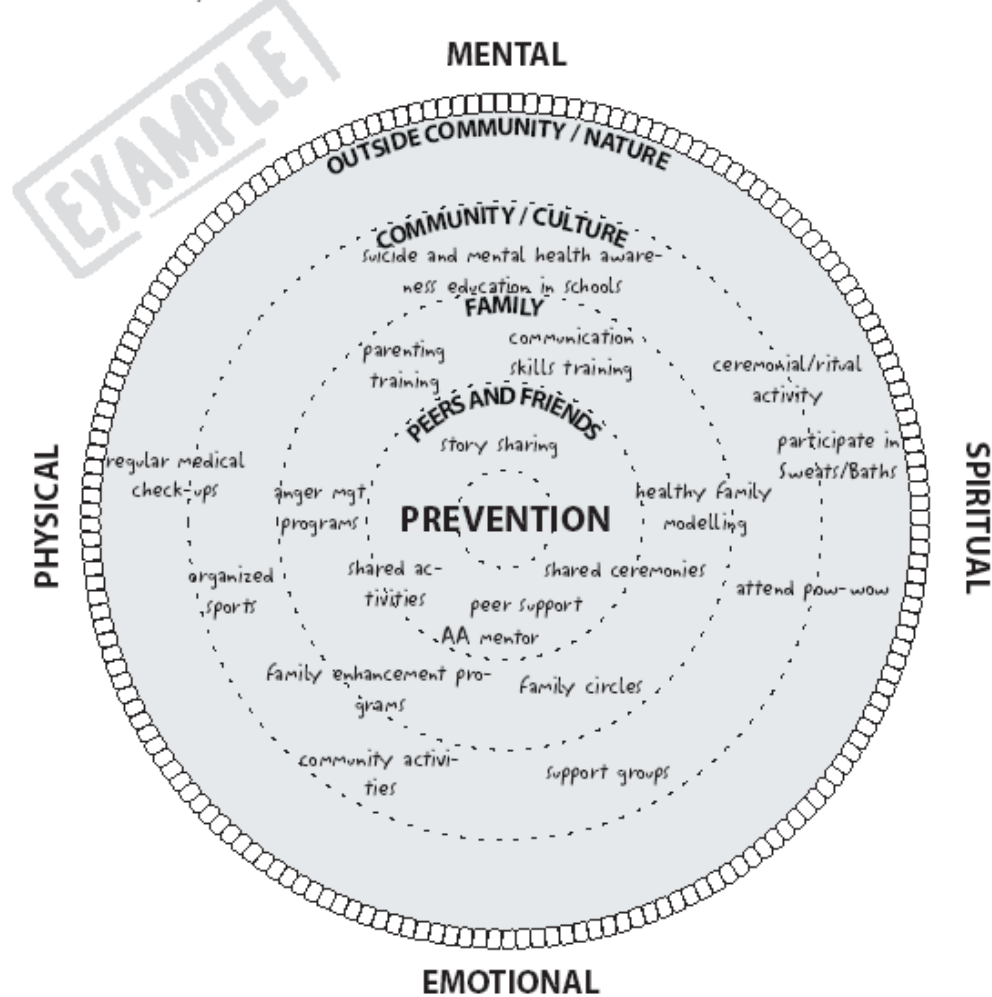


Booklet 2: Finding New Possibilities

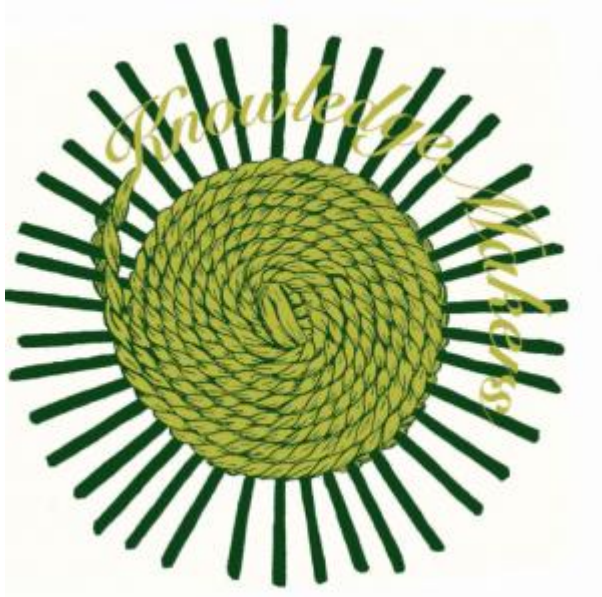
The journey continues by conducting in-depth career exploration and decision making. Career directions are established which address the challenges on possible paths.

STEP**1****PAST AND PRESENT
PREVENTION RESOURCES***Youth Suicide*

Examples of past and present prevention healing resources in a hypothetical community that might address the problem of youth suicide. Most communities do not have this many resources. Even if you can only think of a few resources, write them down.

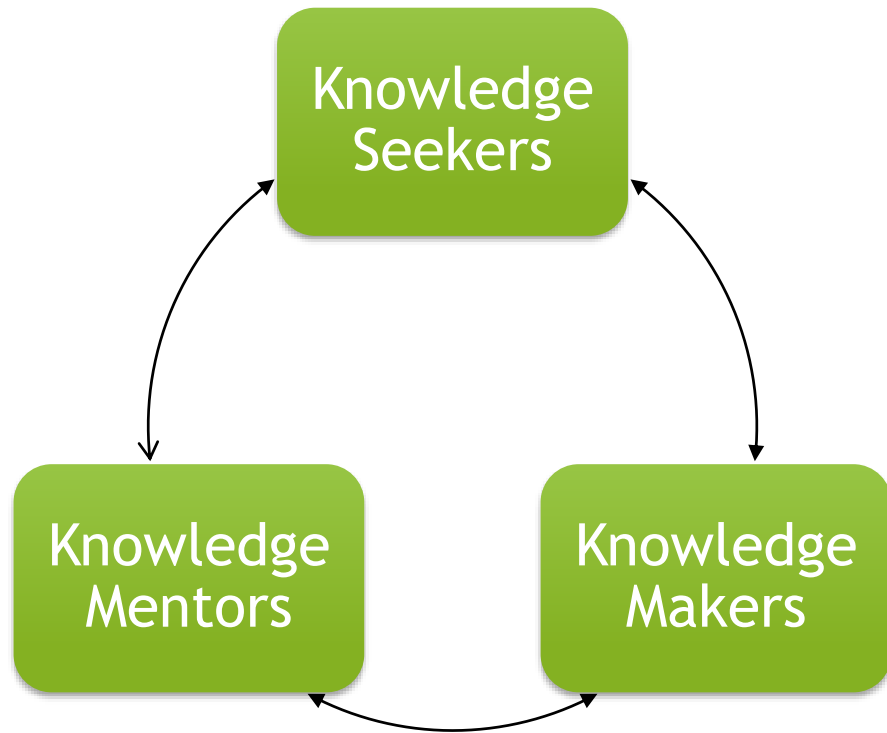


KNOWLEDGE MAKERS



- ▶ Knowledge Makers is an Indigenous student research network. The aim of Knowledge Makers is to bring Indigenous students together to learn how to do Indigenous research that is of service to our communities. We have a [journal](#), monthly [Circles](#), and [scholarships](#). It has expanded from TRU to include Indigenous students from the US, NZ and Australia. Recently we launched a knowledge Makers program with the United Nations (FAO) and are training young Indigenous women from 19 countries.

Knowledge Makers-Knowledge circle



- ▶ Proposed model for an Indigenous Knowledge Circle for the All My Relations Research Centre- TRU
- ▶ The Knowledge Circle facilitates knowledge transfer back and forth between all 3 generations
- ▶ The current Knowledge makers model will be expanded to involve research training programs for graduate students as well as K-12 and elders.

Point 1 **Knowledge Seekers** (children and youth-K-12)

- Obtain knowledge and mentorship from adults and elders
- Because of their natural instinct for learning they provide inspiration and meaning to adults and elders

Point 2 **Knowledge Makers** (adults) Expand current undergrad KM to include Masters and Doctorate

- Obtains knowledge and mentorship from elders and inspiration from youth
- Provides knowledge for all

Point 3- **Knowledge Mentors** (elders)

- Help us to appreciate and acknowledge what we once knew (re-search) as well as remind us that we must also look to the natural and spiritual world for guidance
- Obtain meaning and inspiration from youth and adults

What is Land-Based Treatment and Healing?

First Nations Health Authority

Land-based treatment and healing can take place when we return or reconnect to the land while utilizing supports to relearn, revitalize, and reclaim our traditional wellness practices.

This is because the land is foundational to our Indigenous identity, but over generations of colonization, we have been disconnected and dispossessed from our traditional territories

LAND-BASED HEALING: COMMON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

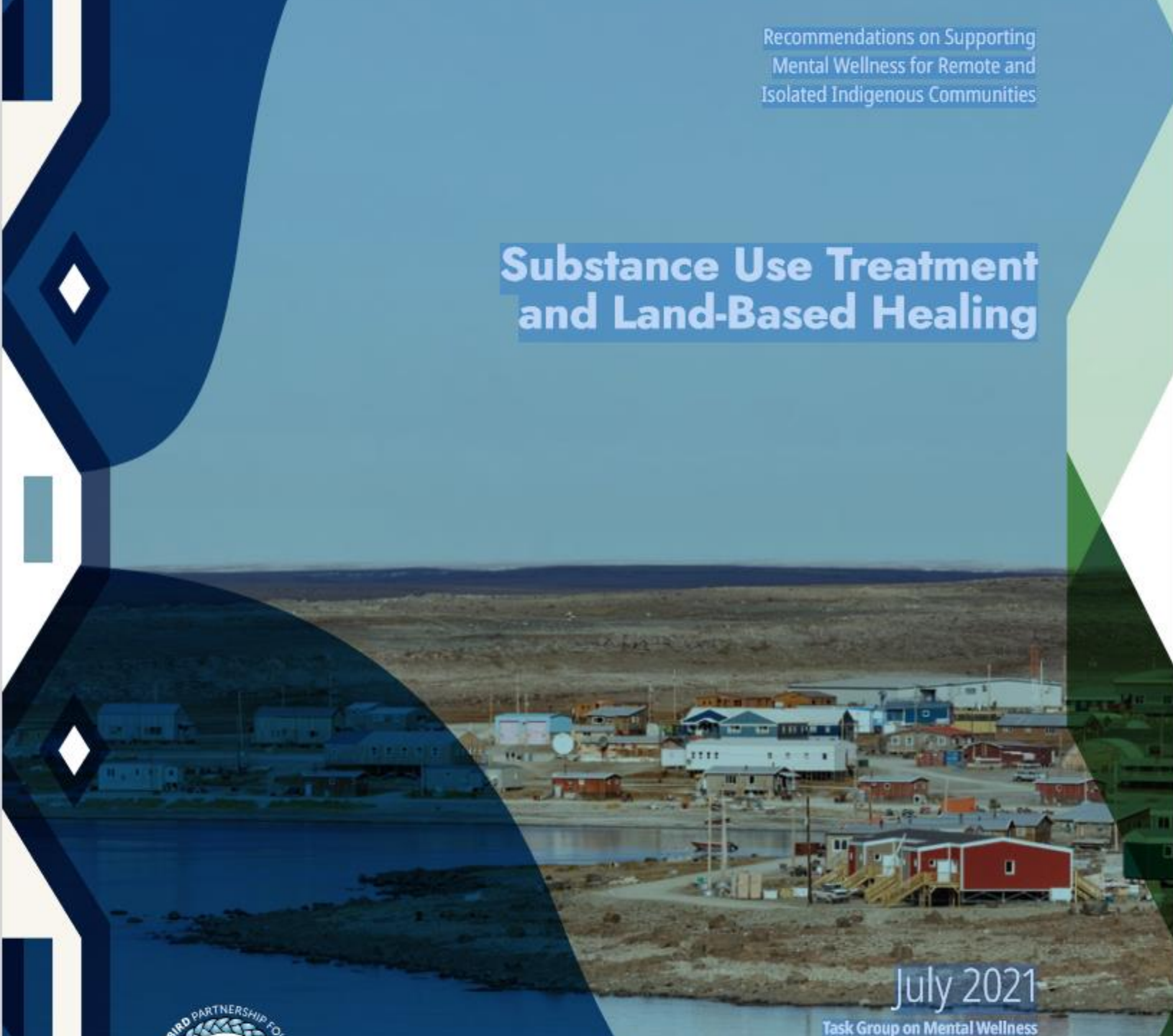
- Focuses on culturally safe models of care
- Views Indigenous languages as foundational
- Is controlled locally, fosters collaborations**
- Improves the quality of life of individuals, families, and communities
- Honours local strengths and resources, building the expertise at home**
- Targets multiple determinants of health, e.g., self-determination, language acquisition, cultural values, life skills, human-nature relations, ethics, and social cohesion**
- Is viewed as an essential element of a quality health system
- Fosters connection to our traditional territories and land-based values
- Integrates the First Nations Wellness Mode

EXAMPLES OF LAND-BASED HEALING INITIATIVES

- ▶ Culture and language camps
- ▶ Traditional food harvesting projects with education around nutrition and wellness while supporting community berry picking, fishing, hunting, trapping, etc.
- ▶ Cultural activities for people struggling with addiction, helping them to spend time on the land doing these
- ▶ Programs for Elder and youth knowledge transfer of traditional land uses such as the revitalization of ceremonial practices, rites-of-passage activities, reconnection to land/history/teachings, traditional medicine gathering, etc.
- ▶ Programs for teaching traditional birthing and parenting practices
- ▶ Programs for integrating local Indigenous healers into existing land-based activities

Recommendations on Supporting
Mental Wellness for Remote and
Isolated Indigenous Communities

Substance Use Treatment and Land-Based Healing



July 2021

Task Group on Mental Wellness

Trauma-Informed Care and Land-Based Programming

1. Ensure community capacity to address substance use issues and related harms through access and availability to land-based programming
 - Access and availability to counselling, through culture and/or clinical, to address unresolved trauma as people are ready
 - Access and availability of services to stabilize someone in their substance use/recovery journey
 - Ensuring clear benefits for family and community are captured and publicly shared
2. Support the availability of Rapid Access to Addiction Medicine (RAAM) at the community level, through RAAM Clinics, mobile clinical teams, and community outreach workforce to ensure support for virtual/text/chat access alongside culturally relevant land-based programming. (see appendix C for more on RAAM Clinics and virtual delivery)
3. Ensure Métis communities have access to these same structural resources and funding for land-based programming, to address substance use issues and related harms at the Métis community level.

Land-Based Service Delivery Model

In the model offered by Thunderbird, land for healing has six dimensions.

Land is:

1. An aspect of self governance
2. A determinant of health
3. A core element of culture
4. A teacher and healer
5. A teacher of relationality
6. A teacher of culture specific life-skills



Recommendations for Land-Based Healing

- ▶ **Support Elders and Knowledge Keepers** by understanding there is a sense of urgency to connect to Elders. Thus, Elders in each community must be included in the development and implementation of the program to provide the linkage to traditional culture based on the season.
- ▶ **Ensure they are funded for their role.**
- ▶ **Provide programs that are not just centred around hunting and fishing,** but accessing medicine from the land and the knowledge behind medicine preparation and use. Ensure Knowledge Keepers are funded to assist in identifying medicines and the protocols behind harvesting.

2. Support knowledge transfer to youth with proper training to develop community-based capacity to deliver programs and retain traditional culture-based knowledge.
3. Ensure living off-the-land programming has traditional cultural components (i.e., sewing, country food, toolmaking, etc.), teaches life-skills for living off the land, supports life promotion, mental wellness, and a sense of pride in identity.
4. Land facilitates revitalization of First Nations, Inuit, Métis use and meaning.
5. Ensure the lead guide is well trained in risk management, or ensure an Elder who has grownup on the land leads land-based activities to teach how to be in relation to the land to ensure safety

Programming- All land-based healing programs should:

- ▶ Be considerate of family needs and children
- ▶ Include trauma-informed healing
- ▶ Be highly flexible regarding eligibility and establish parameters around how the program is developed to tailor what works best in the community.
- ▶ Consider working with the health unit/department in the area to allow non-Indigenous people to participate in the programming.
- ▶ Include preventative programming for youth, and if possible, include them in the development process.

- Collaboration is required with local organizations and/or local community members (i.e., schools, youth support workers, family houses, municipalities, etc.) and may assist with costing if resources are shared.
- Form an operational group that can connect with other land-based programs to share best practices and lessons learned (Thunderbird Foundation report).
- Create ways to build the credibility of land-based programming by establishing standards, regulations and licensing based on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis knowledge systems. This may also include developing a comprehensive system of core competencies for the workforce, capacity for application of accreditation and licensing standards, capacity for structural requirements, administrative sustainability, quality control, local autonomy, and professionalism. Risk Management processes might also apply for sustainability of land-based capital/minor capital resources and reducing liability risks

Resource Investments- At a minimum this should include:

1. Operational Costs

2. Capital Costs

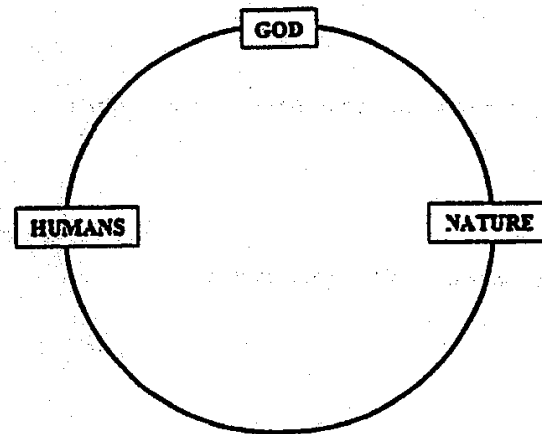
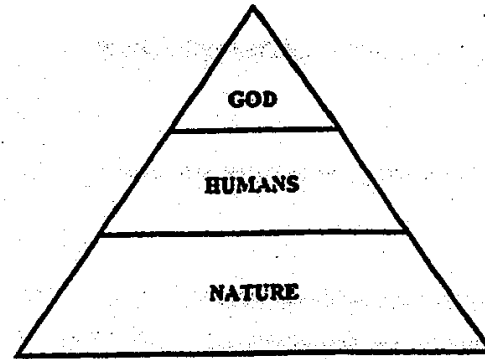
- ▶ Sustainable Resources and Year-Round Access is required to ensure continuity of way of life and provide the opportunity to plan for programming for all seasons since different seasons offer different knowledge and purpose. This will ensure continuous access to mental wellness through land and learning traditional knowledge of culture-based skill sets.
- ▶ Measuring Outcomes of Land-Based Programming to demonstrate the difference land makes in mental wellness, and support the overall wholistic approach to healing and wellness by increasing capacity and improving data collection, management, and access

HUMILITY



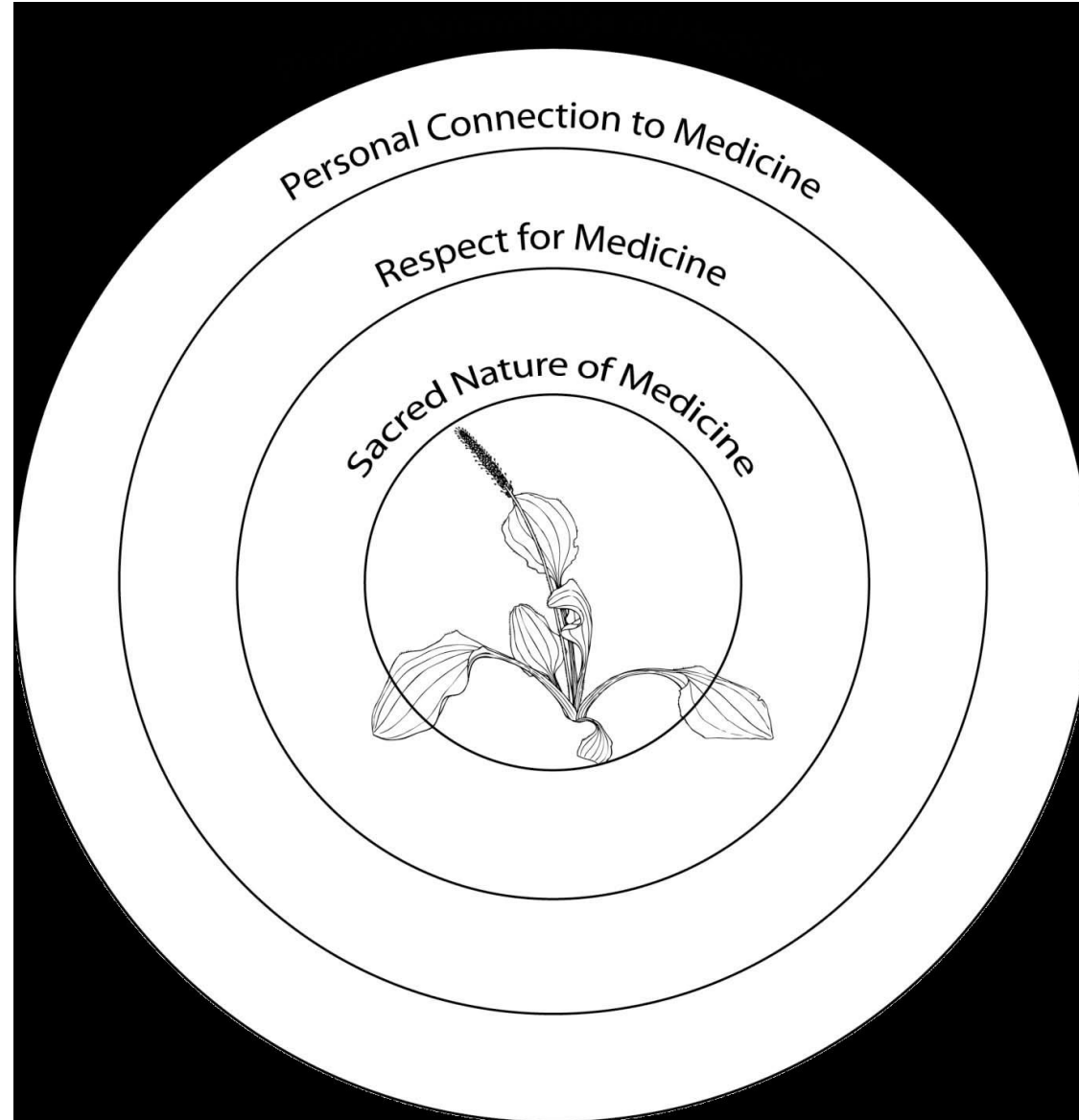
First Nations Counselling

COSMOLOGY



Relationship with
Medicine/Healing
Elder Murdena
Marshall






OMBAASHI

HEALING

— from the —

LAND

Summer School



"In examining over 100 stories on how Indigenous peoples obtain healing from nature, participants found that nature can be grounding, calming, cleansing, and that it provides guidance, perspective and empowerment."

Dr. Rod McCormick
BC Regional Innovation Chair in
Aboriginal Health, Faculty of Education
and Social Work



Healing from the Land

Each summer Ombaashi provides access to an Indigenous Healing Summer School. The Summer School is focused on providing experiential learning opportunities for Indigenous students. We work with the community and explore the land around us while we connect with the land and learn about its ability to heal us.

Learning Opportunities

- DAY 1** TREES & FORESTS
- DAY 2** RIVERS
- DAY 3** LAKES & WATER
- DAY 4** PLANTS & EARTH
- DAY 5** HILLS & MOUNTAINS

Students will learn...



- ▶ How nature can be grounding and connecting
- ▶ How nature can be calming and cleansing.
- ▶ How nature can provide perspective and guidance.
- ▶ How nature can be empowering.

Healing from the Land Summer course



Day 1: Trees and Forests

Day 2: Rivers

Day 3: Lakes and Water

Day 4: Earth and Sky

Day 5: Hills and Mountains

Nature is right now

I go to nature when I need help. I'm not saying that going to see a talk therapist, not going to see a psychologist, psychiatrist, a drug and alcohol counselor, a Reiki person, a massage person is bad, all of those things are good, they are good things, they are good methods to heal. But nature is right now, and all we have really is right now. I believe all of those other ways, allow you, or help you at some level I guess to heal over time, but when you take a look at nature, nature is right here and it is right now".

Nature doesn't judge

“In nature it doesn't matter what you do or what you say because no one will judge you. I could holler, cry or whatever I wanted. This was really good because it helped me to get my emotions out and that relieved stress.”

“Nature won't judge you. I mean us as humans we are very, very judgmental. Nature is not so judgmental. It's just there. You can sit there and talk to nature without hesitation. It helps me to talk because it is not judgmental”.

With nature you can
also just be yourself.

“In nature you don’t have to worry about talking all the time to try to keep the conversation going. You can just be by yourself, and talk with yourself or talk to nature. Talk with the flowers. Instead of having to keep a conversation going, you can just talk you know. You can just talk and you don’t have to worry like”.

“In nature I don’t have to follow the rules. The unspoken rules of the city which is like keep to yourself, don’t talk to nobody, watch for cars and everything. In nature you don’t have to listen to the cars. You don’t have to exactly watch where you were going or you don’t have to worry about talking to somebody and them being insulted.”

General benefits

“Being in nature is getting back to the basics because you do not have to prove anything to anyone when you are out there. Being in nature is a chance just to be on your own for a little while. You don’t have to prove yourself to anyone or anything. I gain a sense of self worth. “

“What is healing is to go and just sit and listen to nature and what the earth has to say. In a natural environment, instead of a concrete place earth tells me to enjoy life and to not be so uptight about everything. To enjoy life instead of having to work all the time. Working a lot will like kind of drive you insane if you don’t get the chance to go out and enjoy nature and all its beauty.”



I used to take a walk in the bush where it was isolated. During the time that I was depressed I would walk along the power lines behind my village. One day I was sitting in a favourite spot there thinking about what I should do about pain that I am carrying around when just then a bear came crashing out of the bush, crossed the clearing in front of me, and went crashing back into the bush on the other side. When I walk through the bush it is really tangled and tough to walk through. Watching the bear encouraged me to go straight forward and not be afraid of sobriety. At that time everybody else was poking fun at me and saying that I must have thought I was better than them because I stopped drinking. Thinking and acting like that bear taught me that it was ok to take big steps. This helped me to feel a lot better about not using alcohol but in finding straighter paths to deal with my problem. My grandfathers guardian spirits were the wolf and the bear and I think that they are for me now too.

Wolf Wisdom



- ▶ When I first moved to Vancouver and was attending the Native Education Centre I lived down in the skids in a Hotel room in the East side. One night before Christmas the loneliness really hit. I had been in my room and it was around 11 o'clock and I had been crying. I remembered the wolf and how it goes out and howls until its mate answers or its family group answers. I went down to the waterfront late at night and I did exactly that - I screamed and hollered and cried my eyeballs out until I let people know back home that I really missed them . This felt good to do this. The next day I got a letter from back home and I thought that the Creator is right. I just have to go out and express myself like the wolf. It may have been a coincidence but I saw it as a sign. Going out and screaming was good. If I did it in public it would have created tension for people. Wolves howl when they are lonely so it's alright to be sad and lonely and let people know so the wolf really helped me.

Water

I sit by the water when I'm really upset. The river behind our house was really rough. I imagined the troubled water just taking all of my problems away. The rougher the water the calmer I felt because it pulls the problems away faster.

