The Medicine Wheel:

Health Teachings

and

Health Research

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What is Integrative Science?

Traditional Knowledge

Common Ground

Western Science
CIHR - IAPH
Community Based Participatory Action Research

Integrative Health & Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land

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What is Health?

According to Webster’s New Dictionary College Edition:

1. Physical and Mental well-being; soundness; freedom from defect or pain or disease; normality of Mental and Physical function.

2. Condition of body or mind as good or bad health.

WHERE’S EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUALITY?

an Aboriginal definition:
the overall well-being of an animate object that includes not only the Physical and Mental aspects but also the Spiritual and Emotional
Derivation of the word Health

Health
Heal
Healing
Whole
Holy

All these words derive from the Old Saxon Root *hal* (or *haelen*), meaning whole (or to become whole). These words also relate to the German word *heilen* and it relates to the Greek word *holos*, meaning whole or entire.
Introduction to Medicine Wheel

Many Representations

Healing tool

Teaching Tool

all have a cyclic pattern

sacred

symbol

flexible and limitless
What does the Medicine Wheel / Mpisun represent?

- Wholeness/Mese’k
- Change/Sa’se’wika’sik
- Balance/Tetpaqjoqtesk
The Medicine Wheel has many different representations of the natural world which surrounds us.
The Medicine Wheel

It is a way of organizing thoughts to convey knowledge gained through experience.
“Teachings and colors may vary, but the basic truths contained within are universal.” – Mary Toulouse
One representation is the concept of the Four Directions. The wheel is divided into 4 parts. We are taught that there are Four Directions, also referred to as the Four Winds:
- Direction of when a new day comes into the world
  - Rising sun
  - Direction of birth & rebirth
  - Many new journeys begin here because at any time there are new paths in life
• Direction of the sun at its highest point
• The place of summer, fullness, youth, physical strength
• A time that people work to prepare for the fall & winter months

Symbolically, it is a time for preparing for the future.
Thunder & lightning often come from the West. Symbolically it is the direction of power.

- Direction from which darkness comes
- The unknown, going within, dreams, prayer and meditation
- Important in the development of our self will
- Clear self knowledge
• Place of winter snow that reminds us of the hair of our Elders
• Dawning place of true wisdom
• Completion
• Organizing
The Path to Healing

Self

Your family

Community

Nation
The Path to Healing: Self

Another representation is the concept of the four aspects of human nature.

The Wheel is divided into 4 parts with **You** in the center of the wheel.

The Medicine Wheel teaches that you are in the center. In your individual wheel, there are four parts that represent you.

As a healing tool the Wheel teaches us to recognize and work with these aspects to bring Wholeness into our lives.

- in the East there is Spiritual
- in the South, Emotional
- in the West, Physical
- in the North, Cognitive or Mental
The East : Spirituality

- Spiritual practices
- Relating to nature
- A belief in higher power, God, Niskam, Creator
- Smudging, singing, dancing

The Medicine Wheel: A Healing Tool
The South: Emotional

- Positive Self Image
- Positive Self Esteem
- Self Love
- Positive Environment

The Medicine Wheel: A Healing Tool
The Medicine Wheel: A Healing Tool

The West: Physical

- physical activity
- a BALANCED daily diet
- getting enough sleep.
The Medicine Wheel: A Healing Tool

The North: Cognitive/Mental

- Quality time with family
- Learning from Elders / Teachers
- Listening to oral stories / history
Medicine Wheel ~ Balanced

- Mental
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Emotional
Medicine Wheel ~ Not Balanced

- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Spiritual

North (N)

South (S)

East (E)
Path to Healing: Family

a healthy family requires
time, individual attention, support and effort
Example of how a Medicine Wheel can be used as a Healing Tool

The process of Apiksiktuauq includes 4 parts:

- Recognition
- Restitution
- Reconciliation
- Recovery

- used if there was a problem between 2 community members
- both the accused and victim, along with their family members and all community members, join together in a circle
Path to Healing: Community

A community is considered healthy when all of the 4 aspects are in balance (ie people/ health, culture, economics and politics).
Research Tool, Teaching Tool, Learning Tool

1st understandings

New co-understandings

Elders & Special Guests

Researchers

Community Representatives

LEARNER

Research Tool, Teaching Tool, Learning Tool
Path to Healing: Nation

In order to heal a nation, you need time.

For Example: Residential Schools
HEALTHY COMMUNITY & NATION

Politics
Gift: Honesty
Mind

Body
Gift: Sharing Economics

Heart
Gift: Caring Community Health

Spirit
Gift: Respect Culture
HEALTHY COMMUNITY & NATION

Politics
Gift: Honesty

Mind

Body
Gift: Sharing Economics

Spirit
Gift: Respect Culture

Heart
Gift: Caring Community Health

LOVE
Example of an imbalanced “Medicine Wheel”

DOMINATE

Politics

Economics

FEAR

Little or no practice of Spirituality or culture

Community’s health is ignored

ROAR!!
HEALTHY COMMUNITY & NATION

Politics
Gift: Honesty
Mind

Body
Gift: Sharing Economics

Heart
Gift: Caring Community Health

Spirit
Gift: Respect Culture
Barriers to Healing

FEAR

POWER
The Medicine Wheel is used for many purposes. It can be seen as a holistic model. It is flexible and limitless: many different drawings and symbols to represent your understanding. It can be used as a research tool. Important model for healing Self, Family, Community, and Nation.

In Conclusion
Acknowledgements

- The Sacred Tree
- Spirituality: Living Our Connectedness
- The Way of the Pipe
- Unfinished Dreams
- UCCB Mi’kmaq Resource Center
CIHR-IAPH research award to CRC Cheryl Bartlett for project entitled “Integrative Health and Healing: co-learning our way to expanding wholeness through restoration of relationships with the land”

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Thank you Wela’liek