Cape Breton District Health Authority
- Ethics Discussion Group – Mental Health Services
- Workshop: “Ethics, Cultural Competence and Collaboration: moving forward”
- Cape Breton Regional Hospital, Sydney, NS; 29 October 2009

Integrative Science & Two-Eyed Seeing
- “ethics” … in the spirit of cultural humility

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KECCCA
Knowledge: Education and Cultural Consultant Associates

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www.integrativescience.ca
Outline of Presentation and Materials

1) Acknowledgements and Key Concepts
   • cultural humility
   • Integrative Science
   • Two-Eyed Seeing

2) Elders: conduits for wisdom of Ancestors
   • example model: Cindy Blackstock’s
   • example understandings
     … within Integrative Science / Two-Eyed Seeing context
   • example story: Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters

3) Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about mental health
   • various topics

4) Ethical space (*sensu* Willie Ermine)
   • towards reconciling different worldviews

5) Entering ethical space
   • FOUR BIG PICTURE philosophical understandings
Cultural Humility

being able, through a process that requires humility, to engage in self-reflection and self-critique within the journey of being a lifelong learner and reflective practitioner …

… seeking to understand and bring into check the power imbalances that exist in all dynamics of communication and relationship …

… this must include learning to: acknowledge gaps in one’s own knowledge, remain open to ideas and contradictory information, and see with the strengths in different cultures’ “ways of knowing, doing, and being” …

… all towards developing and maintaining quality care for the patient as the individual person she or he is (while also realizing that the concept of “individual” may differ among cultures)

i.e., akin to learning and doing Integrative Science & Two-Eyed Seeing
Cultural Humility (from: http://www.uniteforsight.org/cultural-competency/module12)

Merely acknowledging the differences between cultures is in itself an important first step toward cultural humility, but it is certainly not sufficient. It is possible to know everything that one could possibly know about a culture without demonstrating true cultural humility. The California Health Advocates* aptly point out that cultural humility is a kind of “reflexive attentiveness” that requires a great deal of “self-awareness” and goes far beyond “knowledge of the details of any given cultural orientation.” Care providers must always be aware of the differences that will exist between their own perspective and the perspective of the members of another culture.

Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnnn
Integrative Science

15+ years ago we started a Co-Learning Journey ...
(we have been our own experimental rats)
our THANKS to many Elders & many others
our THANKS to CBU’s Mi’kmaq Science Students
our THANKS to CBU’s Integrative Science Team
The support of various partners and funding agencies is gratefully acknowledged.
Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnn
Integrative Science

“bringing our stories together”
Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnnn
Integrative Science

Indigenous

“bringing our ethics together”

Western

ARTIST: Basma Kavanagh
Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnnn
Integrative Science

“bringing our worldviews together”

ARTIST: Basma Kavanagh
Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnn
Integrative Science

Indigenous

Western

“bringing our knowledges together”
Toqwa’tu’kl Kjijitaqnn
Integrative Science

Indigenous
Western

“bringing our sciences together”

ARTIST: Basma Kavanagh
Kneeling is a position of vulnerability and depicts the mutual respect necessary for deep learning.

ARTIST: Basma Kavanagh
Co-Learning Journey

A shared understanding of how to talk together

This visual is based on the Medicine Wheel (or Circle of Learning), which is a commonly used Aboriginal teaching tool. The visual shows that within the discussion, all have a role to play. Each person has an opportunity to speak, to share, to teach, and to learn.

Each participant gains new understandings of Mother Earth and her lessons for humans about health, healing, and wholeness based on sharing, listening, and discussing.

Co-Learners

University Researchers & Students
University researchers from Eastern Canada and senior Mi’kmaq Integrative Science students share their perspectives based on Western, Aboriginal or Integrative perspectives.

Elders & Special Guests
Elders and special guests share their perspectives based on traditional Aboriginal Knowledge, the Mi’kmaq worldview, and Western Science.

Community Representatives
Individuals from Mi’kmaq communities in Cape Breton share their understanding of the concepts introduced by students.

First Understandings
Key concepts are introduced with visual icons and verbal explanations by first-year Mi’kmaq students from the Integrative Science program, a CBU science degree that brings together Aboriginal and Western scientific understandings.

Co-Learning Journey

praxis-based RESEARCH

- integrative
- community-based
- participatory
- action

methodologies
Two-Eyed Seeing • a Guiding Principle •

“LEARN ... to see from one eye with the best in our Indigenous ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the best in the Western (or mainstream) ways of knowing ...

... and learn to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”
... two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle
As Elders in Our Time

We seek to be a conduit for wisdom of our Ancestors. We seek to see with “Two-Eyes” ... to take the accomplishments of Western Science further by enriching it with the wisdom of our Ancestors.
The breath of life versus the embodiment of life: Indigenous knowledge and western research


CINDY BLACKSTOCK
Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

Despite the diversity of Aboriginal cultures, there are several common fundamental differences between Aboriginal and western epistemologies: 1) Aboriginal peoples believe their ancestors were right on most things and western peoples believe their ancestors were either mostly wrong or their ideas could be improved upon (Assembly of First Nations, 1993; Auger, 2001), 2) Aboriginal peoples believe they hold the land and life knowledge in a sacred trust for the generations to follow whereas many western peoples believe they can own land and knowledge and use it for individual benefit with little concern for future generations (RCAP, 1996; Pinto, in press), and 3) Aboriginal knowledge is situated within more expansive concepts of space and time (Auger, 2001). From these differences, flow very different concepts.
The breath of life versus the embodiment of life: Indigenous knowledge and western research

CINDY BLACKSTOCK
Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada

ecological models for child care

[Diagram showing ecological models for child care, comparing Indigenous and Western approaches to child care, emphasizing the passing on of Ancestral Knowledge.]
The breath of life versus the embodiment of life: Indigenous knowledge and western research
CINDY BLACKSTOCK
Executive Director, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada
what we “see” as: HUMAN

Indigenous
Ancestral Knowledge
Passing on Ancestral Knowledge

WHOLENESS of FOUR:
Aspects of Being Human
Sacred Colours
Directions

cognitional
physical
spiritual
emotional
what we “see” as: HUMAN

Indigenous

wholistic, interconnective body-mind-ecosystem being

cognitional

physical

emotional

spiritual

Western

organism with a brain-based mind (also embodied mind & phenomenology)

heart-brain

neocortex

limbic

cerebellum

brain stem
what we “see” as: **HUMAN HEALTH**

**Indigenous**
interconnective: inner and outer
self – community – cosmos

**Western**
physio-chemical-biological
in a social environment

**Artist:** Rod Restoule  
*From book:* Into the Daylight  
*By:* C. Morrisseau, 1998
Our Mi’kmaq language takes us into a Life Long Journey.

Artwork by Eskasoni Elementary School Children

Artist
Basma Kavanagh
Journey of Interconnectiveness:
Life, Land, Language, Love

Artist
Basma Kavanagh
Mi’kmaq Seven Sacred Gifts

Teachings of Elder Murdena Marshall

WHOLENESS of SEVEN

HUMILITY
Two-Eyed Seeing teaches you awaken the spirit within you. You become a student of life … and you become observant of the natural world … and realize we humans are part and parcel of the whole.
Two-Eyed Seeing teaches that everything is physical and spiritual ...

... and about interconnectiveness among all humans and with the natural world

... and about our responsibilities for the next Seven Generations.
Our seasons follow the cycles of Mother Earth ...

... so that our children will always be reminded of the beauty of creation, and of our dependence on her.

artist Basma Kavanagh
RESPECT

WHOLENESS of SEVEN

Mi’kmaq Seven Sacred Gifts

Teachings of Elder Murdena Marshall
Circle Teachings

LAYERS
Physical
Personal
Respect
Sacred

visual model from:
Murdena Marshall, 2008
Traditional Health and Healing;
Health Workshop Module
First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model

from: Canadian Council on Learning: Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre
(http://www.ccl-cca/CCL)
Everything that we do to our natural world ... 

... we also do to ourselves
Knowledge is spirit.

It is a gift, passed on through many people.

As Elders, we must pass it on.
Pemi Pungek Mi'kma'ki

The poster is dedicated to all Mi'kmaq Elders.

This poster was created with support from the Nova Scotia Natural and Rural Community Public Awareness Program, the University of Buenos Aires, and the Canadian government.

The map illustrates the seasonal cycle and traditional activities of the Mi'kmaq, including hunting, fishing, and planting. It also highlights the importance of the environment and the cultural heritage of the Mi'kmaq people.

The map is divided into four seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter, each representing different activities and environmental changes.

The poster is a celebration of the Mi'kmaq culture and the importance of preserving the natural environment for future generations.

Additional information is available on the website www.mikmaq.ca.
Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters: a Mi’kmaq Night Sky Story
... interconnectiveness of space-time-life-knowledge-spirit
“Reflections”
artist Gerald Gloade
Millbrook First Nation
Patterns on Earth

Patterns in Stars

“Reflections”
artist Gerald Gloade
Millbrook First Nation

THE UNIVERSE
YOURS TO DISCOVER

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
ASTRONOMY
2009

GERALD GLOADE
The Story of Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters resonates with patterns in the ecosystems of Mi’kma’ki.
The Story of Muin and the Seven Bird Hunters does not resonate with patterns in the ecosystems of Blackfoot Territory.
stories of our interactions with and within nature

Science ... dynamic, pattern-based knowledge

PATTERNS ...

- spirits within ecosystem-wide minds
- ideas in brain-based minds

cognitive neuroscience

sense of place, emergence, and participation: “know, do, value”

Elder Murdena Marshall, Mi’kmaq Nation

... interconnectiveness of space-time-life-knowledge-spirit
... interconnectiveness of space-time-life-knowledge-spirit
Mi’kmaq Elders* knowledge about “mental health” … various topics

* based in conversations with Mi’kmaq Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall, Eskasoni First Nation (October 2009)
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health”
the person within community

- The relationship is always with the person as a person.
- No intellectual distinction is made.
- Person’s presence in community is accepted … no better, no less.
- Community has an open door policy.
- It is understood: the person needs attention and recognition.
- It is understood: the person can motivate the whole community.
- If the person’s behaviour is too violent, then he/she may be institutionalized … but even then, the person’s passions (child-like) should be indulged.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health”
the Gift of Foresight

- The person may have the Gift of Foresight: ability to see the future.
- In some Native communities, this is considered a Sacred Gift.
- Mainstream society ignores such messages.

artist Basma Kavanagh
Important to love, care for, and nurture the person, and to take him/her at face value … and enable the person to maintain some sense of function and obtain proper guidance in this.

If given the chance to function in a family or community, the person can stabilize.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” institutionalization

- If institutionalized, the person may feel like he/she has been excluded, segregated, or ostracized … the worst forms of punishment in Native communities. The person may feel like they have been put in jail.

- Extreme cases may require institutionalization … but the question is: at what level (for the person) is this judgment made?
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” institutionalization

- Agencies can plant fear in communities … if they encourage only institutionalization.
- Institutionalization can result in the person’s illness simply becoming worse … such that they become totally incapacitated as a person.
- Institutionalization may need to be considered … but also that such may trigger worsening of condition.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health”
talking with trees

➢ It is quite OK to talk with the trees, at any age.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” dreaming

- It is normal for young people to have powerful dreams. For example, dreams may include people who have passed away.
- We must respond in some way to young peoples’ dreams ... even if just to give recognition to the dream.
- It is important to share dreams, because in doing such you give it to someone else ... so that your brain does not become overloaded.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health”
love and growth

- Mental illness will progress if love is not present.
- The person needs love ... and also patience and understanding. If these are not nurtured in the person, the abilities will, like any organ, degenerate.
- Must always provide time and space for the person to feel like he/she is part of the family and community.
- Within the family, the person simply has different Gifts. This understanding needs to be looked at again today.
- The person is likely less able to articulate their thoughts and may need specialized people to work with them.
If the person is constantly referred to by a label, then eventually the person’s mind will work to ensure that is exactly what she or he is … no more, no less.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” taboo and limits

- Mental illness is such a taboo topic.
- All spiritual / intellectual beings have their limits.
- If a person’s sense of self is not supported by external sources, one can only endure so much pain ... then become comatose and no longer feel things ... breakdown overrides everything ... one is no longer in control.
- One objective: end it.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” more than biomedical paradigm

- State of one’s mind has to be better understood than just “physio-chemical-biological”.
- We are too quick to rely on:
  - medications, and
  - judgment of experts.
- Medications can be dependency creating.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” when with nature and when with humans

- When with nature, one may feel and be very OK.
- When with humans, one may feel very judged and not OK.
Mi’kmaq Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” participation in ceremony

- Ceremonies require collective effort.
- A person may come forward and offer to help with respect to certain tasks, but otherwise would not be assigned such.
- The person must be given the chance to be part and parcel of the whole.
Mi’kmaw Elders’ knowledge about “mental health” different Gifts

- Never remind one of their “condition”
  … she or he is a true and integral member of the community, with different Gifts.
Love is the main ingredient of wellness.

*Murdena Marshall*

The voice of wellness is in the land.

*Albert Marshall*
Humility is a Sacred Gift.
Willie Ermine ( ethicist and Professor at First Nations University in Saskatchewan) believes the fundamental question of cultural encounters is: “How can we reconcile worldviews?”

He advocates implementation of the concept of “ethical space” … a venue to step out of our allegiances, to detach from the cages of our mental worlds and assume a position where human-to-human dialogue can occur.

Ermine believes that ethical space can open channels for new ways of thinking and understanding. He suggests that “recognizing that the Indigenous-West encounter is about thought worlds may also remind us that frameworks or paradigms are required to reconcile these solitudes”.

Towards first steps within **ethical space** …

Integrative Science recognizes **FOUR BIG PICTURE philosophical questions** and has created **simple responses** (as **TWO-EYED SEEING text and visuals**).

We have adopted and adapted Elder Murdena Marshall’s insight* that **healing requires putting one’s deeds out in front of one’s self like an object** … to take ownership over them … to say “that’s me” within a consciousness of transformation.

(* I Got It From An Elder, Iwama et al. 2007)

We realize that as participants in a Co-Learning Journey, we need to be able to place the actions, values, and knowledges of our own culture out in front of us like an object, to take ownership over them and to be able to say: “**That’s me**”. And, similarly: “**That’s you**”. 
put our values + actions + knowledges in front of us ... like an object
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR WORLDS

#1

BIG QUESTION

What do we believe the world or cosmos to be? (ontology)
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR WORLDS

#1

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN WORDS

interconnective

beings ...
interconnective

and animate:

spirit +

energy + matter

with

CONSTANT CHANGE

within balance and wholeness

parts & wholes

objects ...

comprised of parts and wholes characterized by systems and emergences:

energy + matter

with

EVOLUTION
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR WORLDS

#1
BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN VISUALS

interconnective

parts & wholes

CONSTANT CHANGE within balance and wholeness

EVOLUTION
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR KEY CONCEPTS and ACTIONS

#2

BIG QUESTION

What do we value as “ways of coming to know” the cosmos? (epistemology)
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR KEY CONCEPTS and ACTIONS

- respect
- relationship
- reverence
- reciprocity
- ritual (ceremony)
- repetition
- responsibility

- hypothesis
  (making & testing)
- data collection
- data analysis
- model & theory construction

Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR KEY CONCEPTS and ACTIONS

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN VISUALS

photo credit: NRC
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR LANGUAGES and METHODOLOGIES

#3

BIG QUESTION

What can remind us of the complexity within our ways of knowing?
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR LANGUAGES and METHODOLOGIES

#3

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN WORDS

weaving of patterns within nature’s patterns via creative relationships and reciprocities among love, land, and life (vigour) that are constantly reinforced and nourished by Aboriginal languages

un-weaving of nature’s patterns (especially via analytic logic and the use of instruments) to cognitively reconstruct them, especially using mathematical language (rigour) and computer models
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR LANGUAGES and METHODOLOGIES

#3

BIG UNDERSTANDING … IN WORDS

Life
Love
Land

vigour

WEAVING

Math
& Instruments

rigour

UN-WEAVING
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the **strengths** of each & together

OUR LANGUAGES and METHODOLOGIES

#3

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN VISUALS

Life
Love
Land

vigour

WEAVING

Math & Instruments

rigour

UN-WEAVING
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

#4

BIG QUESTION

What overall goals do we have for our ways of knowing?
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN WORDS

collective, living knowledge to enable nourishment of one’s journey within expanding sense of “place, emergence and participation” for collective consciousness and interconnectiveness
dynamic, testable, published knowledge independent of personal experience that can enable prediction and control (and “progress”)
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

#4

BIG UNDERSTANDING … IN WORDS

collective, living
knowledge to enable
nourishment of one’s journey
within expanding sense of
“place, emergence and
participation” for collective
consciousness and
interconnectiveness
dynamic, testable,
published knowledge
independent of
personal experience
that can enable
prediction and control
(and “progress”)

towards resonance of
understanding within environment
towards construction of
understanding of environment
Two-Eyed Seeing
learning to see with the strengths of each & together

OUR OVERALL KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

#4

BIG UNDERSTANDING ... IN VISUALS

towards resonance of understanding within environment
towards construction of understanding of environment

from: www.leads.ac.uk
Thank you / Wela’lioq

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