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Indigenous Mental Health Wellness Program Feasibility Study:

Introduction

*First Nations, Inuit & Metis
Catch the Wave*

TeKnoWave Inc. Light the Fire Project has been made possible through the generosity of Indigenous Services Canada.





Light the Fire Project

Introduction:

Indigenous peoples in Canada face barriers to healthcare, mental health services and urban outreach programs. Disparities in mental health between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada stem from systemic colonial practices.

Funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), this project supports the outcomes of creating economic growth and capacity and promoting greater access to wellness and mental health services for Indigenous rural and urban populations.

Light the Fire Project is about:

- building relationships with communities
- understanding the need for more front-line mental health workers
- working together to build capacity and co-develop a curriculum informed by experts including Indigenous Elders and Healers in mental wellness and substance use treatment services for Indigenous communities.

From January to August, we will facilitate roundtables and focus groups, and generate a feasibility study in which verbal and written results measurement indicators will be used to assess the viability of creating a mental wellness program combining Indigenous traditional knowledge, and cultural practices with western perspectives.

Questions to Ponder...

- What definition(s) of mental health and wellness do you align with?
- What do you think are the key factors that influence mental health and addictions?
- Should workplaces require any training or certification in mental health and/or addictions? (For example: Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Care, Crisis Intervention). Does yours?

- What existing mental health and addictions training do you know of to support Indigenous front-line workers in your community or in Ottawa?
 - Can you describe the training program? Do they include traditional, non-Western healing methods?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, how well are available mental health and addictions services fulfilling the needs of your home community and the Ottawa community?
- Have you attended any online or in person training in mental health and addictions?
 - If so, do you know which organization / institution offered the training?
 - What was the length of the training?
 - What were the key takeaways? Did you receive a certificate?
- What do you think are the key components of a mental health and addictions training program for Indigenous frontline workers?
 - Which topics do you think are critical for frontline workers to learn?
 - Professional Documentation & Case Management
 - Holistic Wellness & Mino-Bimaadiziwin
 - Finding Strength in Trauma and Risk, Trauma-informed care
 - Supporting Indigenous Families and Communities
 - Navigating Legal Systems as an Indigenous Person
 - Conflict, individual and collective: Anger as a Tool of Resistance
 - Counseling across the medicine wheel: Providing Holistic Support
 - Solution-Focused intervention - Strength-based/Islands of Safety Model
 - Psychology: Reading and living the Mental and Spiritual
 - Indigenous Wellness Framework - Life Promotion
 - Indigenous Harm Reduction
 - Medicinal Plants for Wellness
 - Ceremony and the Red Road
 - Mental Health Across the Lifespan
 - Interviewing and Helping Skills
 - Land-based learning/healing approaches
 - Prevention, Harm Reduction, Relapse and Recovery Management
 - Pharmacology for Mental Health and Addictions
 - Ethics, Legislation and Social Policy in Mental Health and Addictions
 - Workplace Communications and Accountability
 - Other? _____

What are some other questions to ponder?

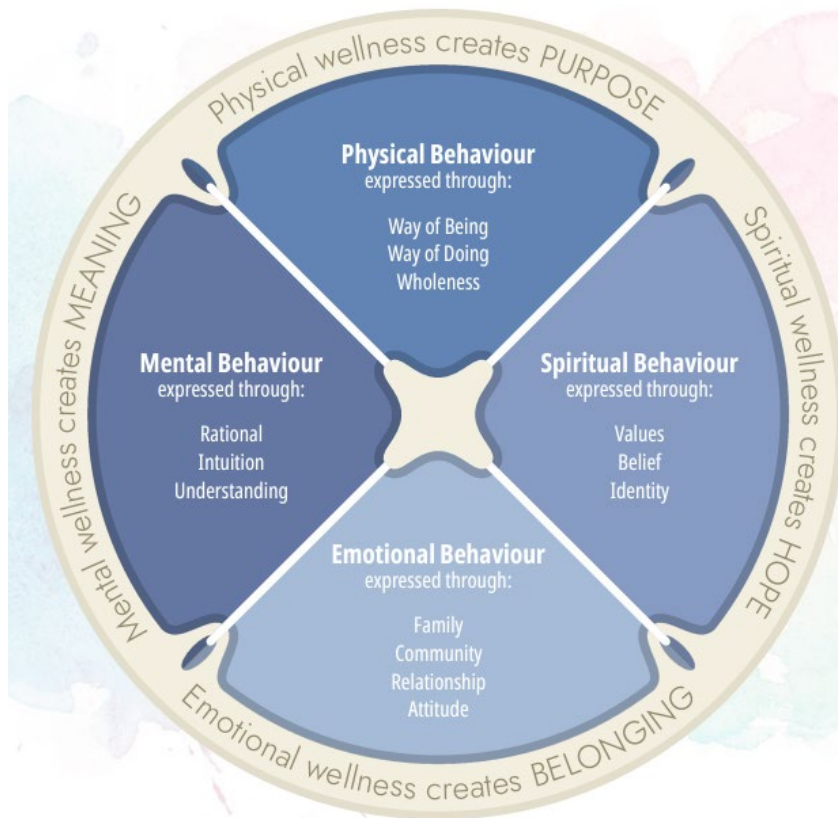
According to Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Mental health and wellness include both the mental and emotional aspects of being, such as how you think and feel. Some signs of good mental health include:

- knowing and taking pride in who you are
- enjoying life
- being able to form and maintain satisfying relationships
- coping with stress in a positive way
- striving to realize your potential
- having a sense of personal control

[Reference: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576089278958/1576089333975#chp01>]

According to the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, Wellness from an Indigenous perspective is a whole and healthy person expressed through a sense of balance of spirit, emotion, mind and body. Central to wellness is belief in one's connection to language, land, beings of Creation, and ancestry, supported by a caring family and environment.

[Reference: https://thunderbirdpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/indigenous_wellness_framework_reference_guide.pdf]



Indigenous Wellness Framework-Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. (2015). Indigenous Wellness Framework.

Thunderbird Partnership Foundation (NNAPF Inc.). Retrieved from: <https://www.thunderbirdpf.org/IWF>

Federal, provincial, and territorial mental wellness programs and services seek to address the indicators that challenge wellness in many First Nations communities; however, there are gaps in services. Further, programs and services are not always delivered in a culturally safe manner. As a result, First Nations communities and leadership have been calling for the development of a coordinated, comprehensive approach to mental health and addictions programming. In response, the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), and Indigenous mental health leaders from various First Nations non-government organizations* jointly developed the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework (the Framework).



TeKnoWave Inc., was incorporated in 2004 as a non-profit organization serving the Indigenous population of Canada. For over 25 years, TeKnoWave has delivered quality projects to enhance prospects for employment, bridge the existing skills gap, and to provide innovative, permanent solutions to Indigenous community needs.

TeKnoWave has built and delivered programs in Essential Skills and preparation for post-secondary education, healthcare diploma career programs such as Indigenous Community Service Worker and Indigenous Personal Support Worker programs. Also in IT, Clean Energy, Business Career Development, Employment Awareness and Skills Training

programs (i.e., ESPORT), including industry certifications and certificates. TeKnoWave has also offered seminars, workshops and developed Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity Handbooks in collaboration with community partners.

Innovative Partnerships Building Canada's Indigenous Capacity

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