

Breakout Session Day 1: 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Embracing Life: *Northern Saskatchewan Working Together*



Background Information

Identifying Innovative Practices & Gaps

Social Determinants of Health and Well-Being

We can address health issues such as suicide by broadening our approach to health interventions. We've learned a lot in the past several decades about what determines health and where we should be concentrating our efforts. Much of the research is telling us that we need to look at the big picture of health to examine factors both inside and outside the health care system that affect our health. At every stage of life, health is determined by complex interactions between social and economic factors, people's everyday lives, where they learn, work and play as well as personal health practices, coping skills, language, culture, history and self-determination. These factors are referred to as 'determinants of health'. They do not exist separately from each other. It is the combined influence of the determinants of health that determines our health.

A summary of the Social Determinants of Health

- Income and Social Status
- Social Support Networks
- Education and Literacy
- Employment/Working Conditions
- Social Environments
- Geography/Physical Environments
- Self Determination
- Colonial Interfaces
- Healthy Child Development
- Biology and Genetic Endowment
- Health Services
- Gender
- Culture, Language & Heritage
- Justice
- Residential Schools
- Food Security

*Public Health Agency of Canada (2011),
Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Agency of Canada (2003)
Aboriginal Children's Health: Leaving No Child Behind. Canadian UNICEF Committee (2009)*

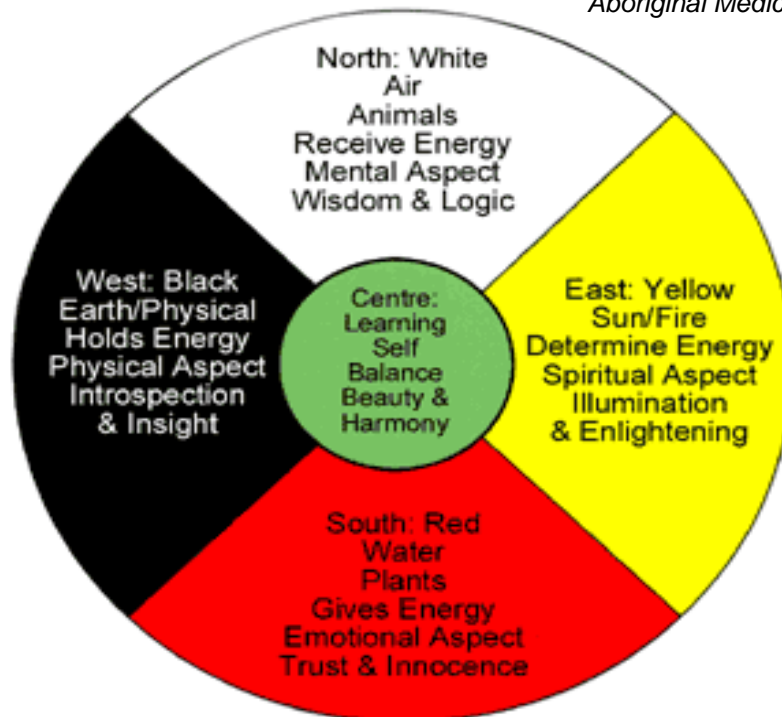
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Identifying Innovative Practices & Gaps

In Aboriginal culture, the Medicine Wheel represents balance and connections and symbolizes the interaction between all living beings on Earth. It also symbolizes the cycles of nature, and the journey of life as a continuous circle. The number four is a sacred number and may represent many different things: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and well-being; winter, spring, summer and fall seasons; or even the four sacred medicines (sweet grass, tobacco, cedar and sage). Medicine Wheels vary according to the diverse cultures of Aboriginal people. The Medicine Wheel presented in this document is one example of many.

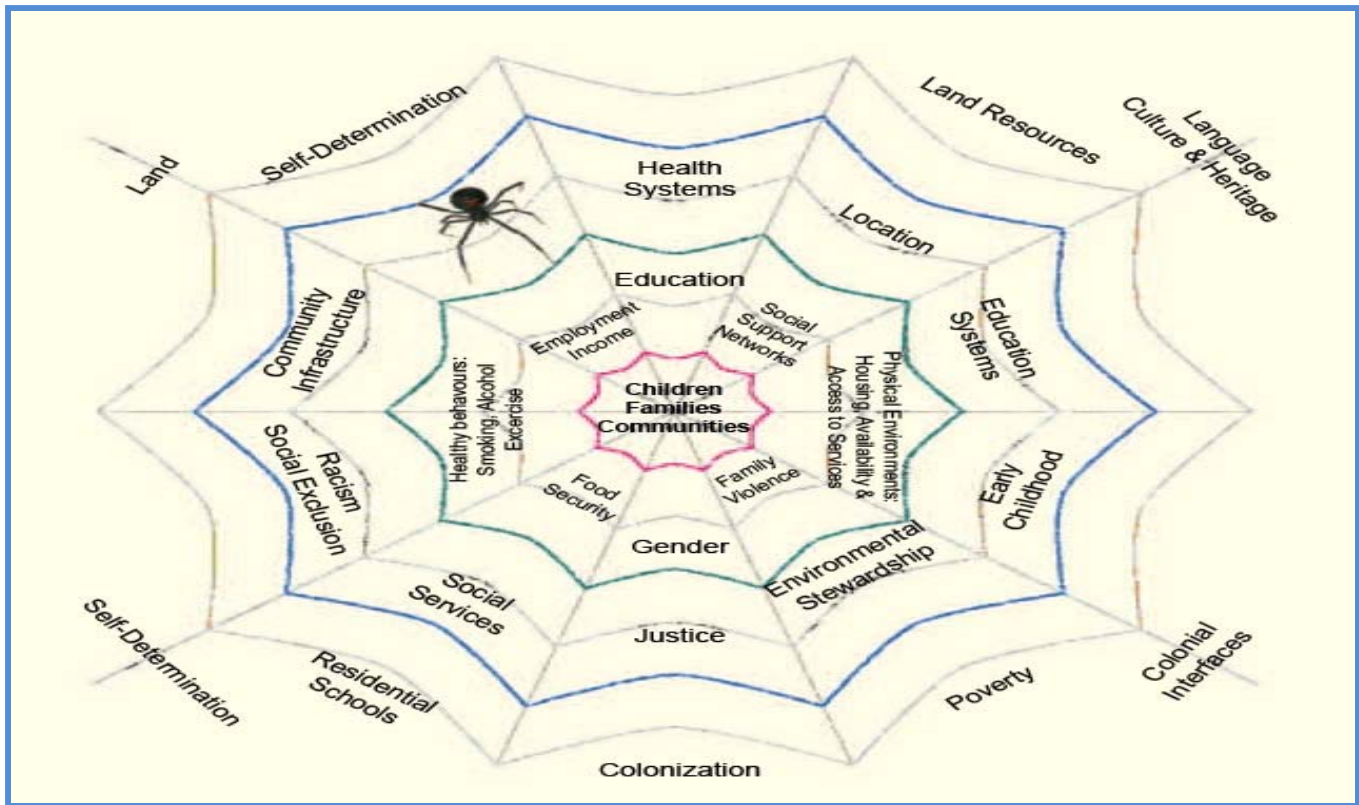
1. The four points of the compass, each with a guiding spirit, symbolize stages in the life journey. The East, direction of the daily birth of the sun, represents a person's birth and early years. The South relates to childhood and intellectual growth. The West symbolizes adulthood and introspection, while the North represents the old age, wisdom and the spiritual aspects of life. The centre of the wheel is symbolic of Mother Earth and the Creator, and their role in the beginning and continuation of life.
2. The four points can also represent the balance between spiritual (East), mental (North), physical (West) and emotional (South) aspects of health.
3. The wheel can also represent values and decisions. Here, values (drawn in the East, where the sun rises) influence decisions taken in the mental realm (drawn in the North, at the top). Then, decisions are implemented in the physical realm (West), and actions produce reactions in the emotional realm (South).

*University of Ottawa. Society, the Individual, and Medicine.
Aboriginal Medicine and Healing Practices. 2009.*



http://www.webpanda.com/There/uot_directions-colors.htm

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<http://www.healthnexus.ca/projects/primer.pdf>

Guiding Questions

1. Which of the Social Determinants of Health has the **most significant impact** on suicide in the North (please describe)?

2. Many people, First Nations, Métis and others, respond in **holistic, integrated and balanced ways**, taking into account the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual aspects of the whole person. Will you incorporate the medicine wheel/a balanced approach into your response, and if so, how?

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3. What innovative practices are you aware of that help reduce or prevent suicide?
Please note appropriate age group for each innovative practice noted.

4. What gaps exist in what is being done to prevent or reduce suicide?
What additional actions are needed to prevent and reduce suicide?

5. What can be done to **reduce suicide** within your pillar (Health Promotion, Prevention, Intervention, or Post-vention) for the **short term and for the long term**?

6. What other partners in the community might you consider working with to address suicide?
