



## The First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework:

A Coordinated, Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health and Addictions Programs and Services



Health  
Canada

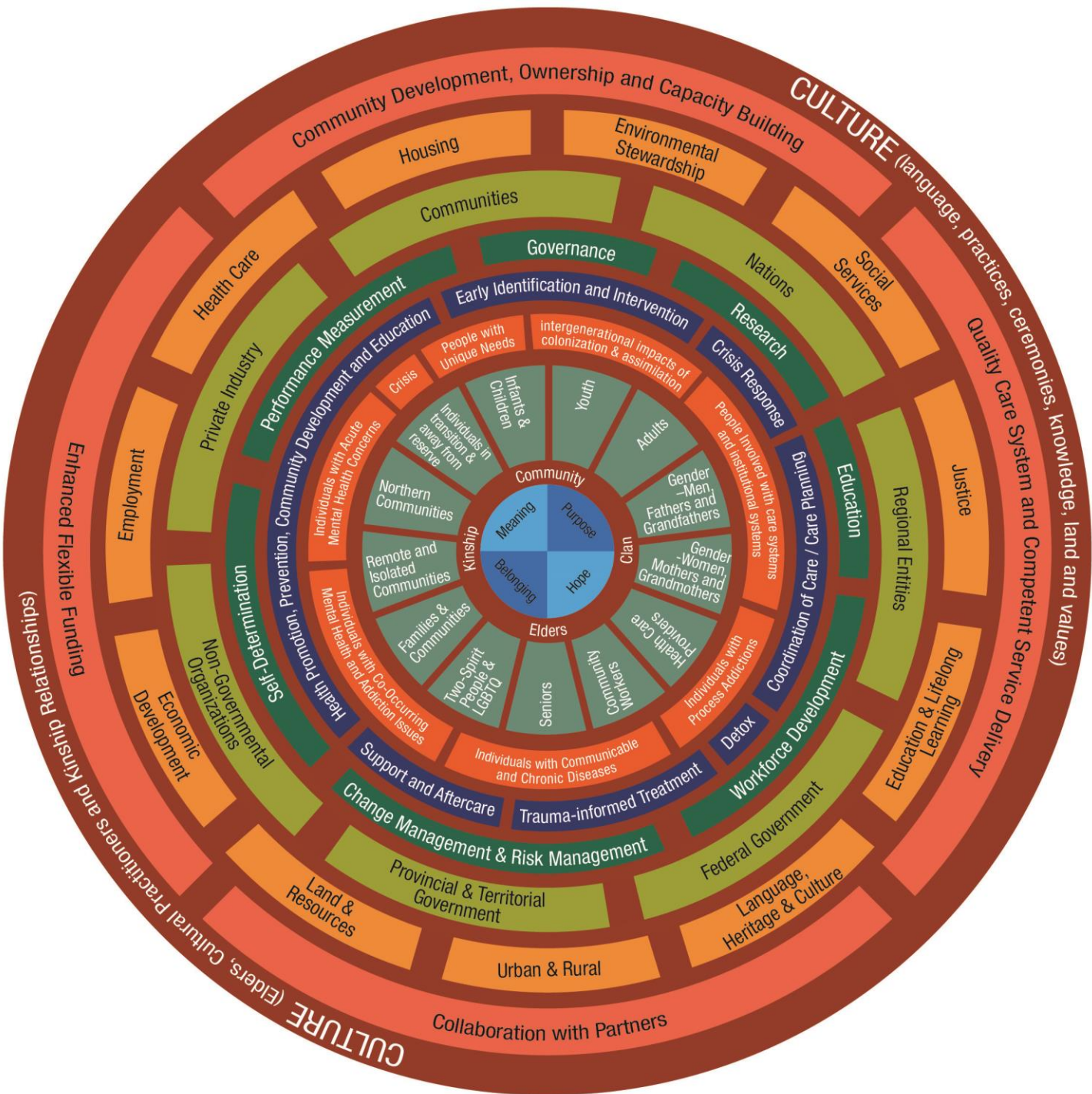
Santé  
Canada



## Overview

- Developed by the AFN, FNIHB, TPF (NNAPF) & FPWC, the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework is a shared vision for First Nations Mental Wellness
- Outlines a coordinated, holistic approach to MW programming that takes into account the important role of FN culture, traditions, and language:
  - Links mental and physical health and wellness
  - Is a component of the broader continuum of health programs and services, and social determinants of health
  - Represents a new way of doing business
  - Builds on innovation in communities
  - Outlines continuum of programs and services aligned with the population health model, linking with public health and primary care
- As such, achieving vision will involve action by First Nations but also FNIHB, AANDC, Provinces/RHAs









## Applying the Framework: Conceptual Shifts

### Program focus on deficits

**Evidence that excludes Indigenous worldview, values, culture**

**Focus on inputs for individuals**

**Uncoordinated, fragmented programs and services**

**Communities working within program silo restrictions**

**Program focus on health and illness**

### Discovery of strengths

Indigenous worldview, values, and culture that are the foundation to determine the relevance and acceptability of various sources of evidence in a community context

Focus on outcomes for individuals, families and communities; holistic collaborative approaches

Comprehensive planning and integrated federal/provincial/territorial/sub-regional/First Nations models for funding and service delivery

Communities adapt, optimize and realign their mental wellness programs and services based on their priorities

Approaches that strengthen multi-sectoral links, connecting health programs and social services, across provincial/territorial and federal systems to support integrated case management taking into account the First Nations social determinants of health



# Outcomes

Mental wellness is a balance of the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical. This balance is enriched as individuals have:

- **HOPE** for their future and those of their families that is grounded in a sense of identity, unique Indigenous values, and having a belief in spirit
- a sense of **BELONGING** and connectedness within their families, to community, and to culture
- a sense of **MEANING** and an understanding of how their lives and those of their families and communities are part of creation and a rich history
- **PURPOSE** in their daily lives whether it is through education, employment, care-giving activities, or cultural ways of being and doing



# Key Theme: Culture as Foundation

When culture is considered the foundation, all First Nations health services can be delivered in a culturally relevant and safe way. The result of this conceptual shift will be policies, strategies, and frameworks that: are relevant to local community contexts; recognize the importance of identity and community ownership; and promote community development.

## Priorities for Action:

- Responding to the Diversity of First Nations Communities
- Defining Culture
- Valuing Cultural Competency, Cultural Safety, and Indigenous Knowledge
- Understanding the Role of Language in Mental Wellness



# Key Theme: Community Development & Ownership

This Framework aims to support communities in shaping their own programs and services, ensuring that they own and develop the programs and services they provide. Community ownership ensures that the continuum of mental wellness programs and services for First Nations are relevant, effective, flexible, and based on community needs and priorities.

## Priorities for Action:

- First Nations Control of Services
- Building on Community Priorities
- Developing Community Wellness Plans
- Working Together in Partnership
- Investing in Community Development and Capacity Building



## Key Theme:

### Quality Health System & Competent Service Delivery

The Framework outlines an ideal continuum of essential mental wellness services to which all First Nations communities should have access. It is essential that this continuum of services be located within a quality care system and that the services and supports be of high quality and culturally competent.

#### Priorities for Action:

- Delivering Accessible Services
- Providing Quality Mental Wellness Programs and Services
- Responsiveness, Flexibility, and Reliability
- Proactive Planning and Crisis Supports and Services
- Delivering Trauma-Informed Care
- Promoting and Recognizing a Culturally Competent Workforce
- Providing Education, Training, and Professional Development
- Supporting Worker Wellness



# Key Theme: Collaboration with Partners

Enhancing First Nations mental wellness requires strategic action that goes beyond FNIHB's mandate. It involves federal government departments, provincial and territorial governments, and First Nations communities and organizations. Currently, partner organizations do not share information regarding funding, policy, and decision-making in relation to First Nations communities. Although it is recognized that there are shared roles and responsibilities, these roles and responsibilities are unclear

## Priorities for Action:

- Defining Clear Roles and Responsibilities
- Establishing Leadership
- Creating Partnerships and Networking
- Developing System Navigators and Case Managers
- Providing Advocacy
- Raising Awareness – Reduction of Stigma and Protection of Privacy





