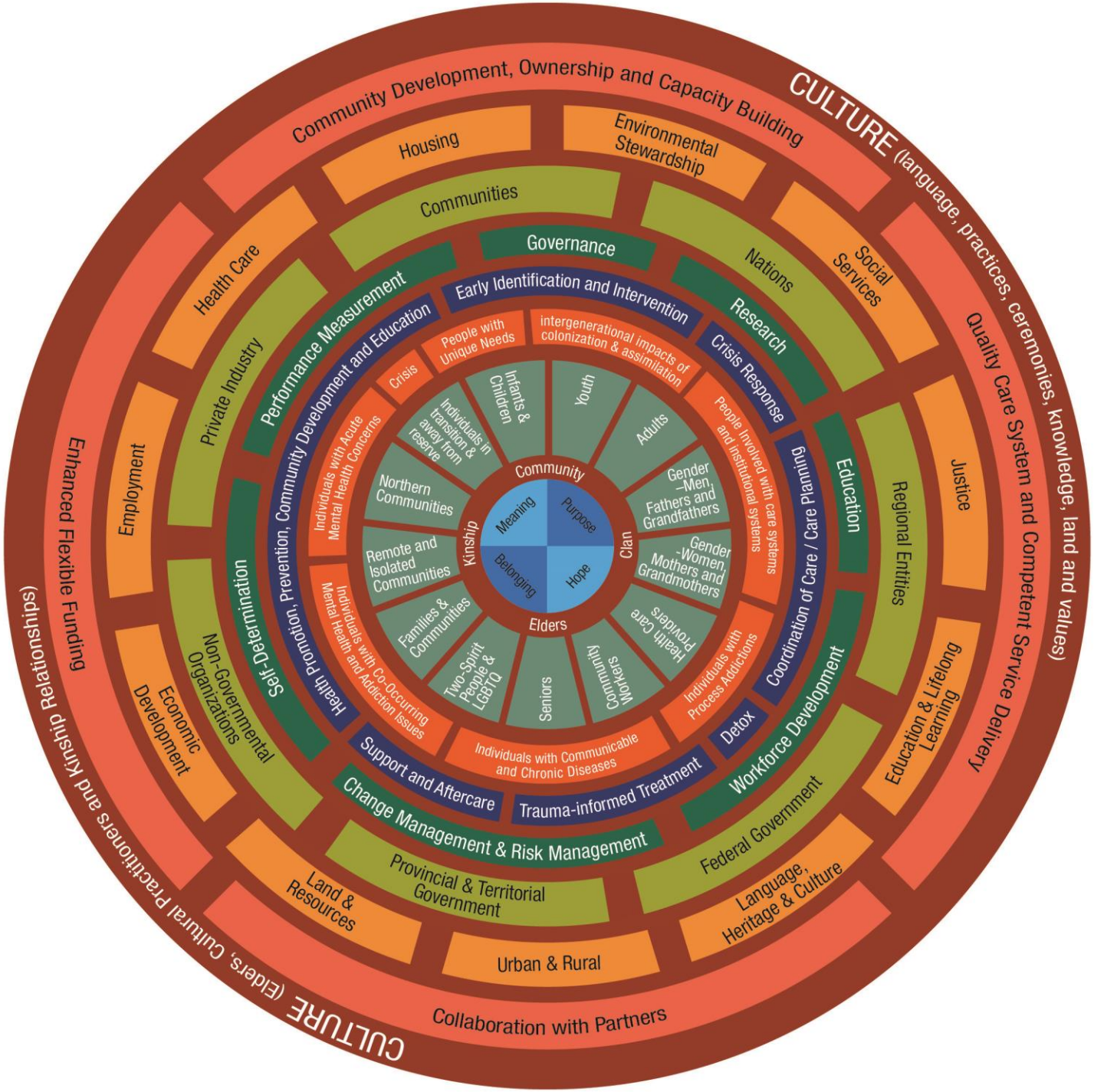
The First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework:

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

THUNDERBIRD PARTNERSHIP FOUNDATION
ASSEMBLY of FIRST NATIONS • ASSEMBLÉE des PREMIÈRES NATIONS
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


CULTURE (language, practices, ceremonies, knowledge, land and values)
Quality Care System and Competent Service Delivery
CULTURE (Elders, Cultural Practitioners and Kinship Relationships)
Enhanced Flexible Funding
Collaboration with Partners
Community Development, Ownership and Capacity Building
Housing
Environmental Stewardship
Communities
Nations
Social Services
Health Care
Private Industry
Employment
Non-Governmental Organizations
Economic Development
Land & Resources
Provincial & Territorial Government
Federal Government
Urban & Rural
Language, Heritage & Culture
Education & Lifelong Learning
Regional Entities
Justice
Governance
Performance Measurement
Early Identification and Intervention
Research
Crisis Response
Education
Coordination of Care / Care Planning
Workforce Development
Detox
Trauma-informed Treatment
Support and Aftercare
Change Management & Risk Management
Self-Determination
Health Promotion, Prevention, Community Development and Education
People with Unique Needs
intergenerational impacts of colonization & assimilation
People Involved with care systems and institutional systems
Individuals with Process Addictions
Individuals with Communicable and Chronic Diseases
Individuals with Co-Occurring Mental Health and Addiction Issues
Individuals with Acute Mental Health Concerns
Crisis
Infants & Children
Youth
Adults
Gender –Men, Fathers and Grandfathers
Gender –Women, Mothers and Grandmothers
Health Care Providers
Community Workers
Seniors
Two-Spirit People & LGBTQ
Families & Communities
Remote and Isolated Communities
Northern Communities
Individuals in transition & away from reserve
Community
Clan
Elders
Kinship
Meaning
Purpose
Belonging
Hope

First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum

What?

Access to the full basket of mental wellness services:

- Health Promotion, Prevention, Community Development, and Education
- Early Identification and Intervention
- Crisis Response
- Coordination of Care and Care Planning
- Detox
- Trauma-informed Treatment
- Support and Aftercare

How?

- Partnerships, collaboration, aggregation, alternative service delivery models, flexible funding, elimination of program silos, quality improvement
- Team-based approaches, link with primary care and public health approaches, including with communicable and chronic disease
- Focus on individuals, families, and communities, across the lifespan

Applying the Framework: Conceptual Shifts

Program focus on deficits	Discovery of strengths
Evidence that excludes Indigenous worldview, values, culture	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 inputs for individuals	Focus on outcomes for individuals, families and communities; holistic collaborative approaches
Uncoordinated, fragmented programs and services	Comprehensive planning and integrated federal/provincial/territorial/ sub-regional/First Nations models for funding and service delivery
Communities working within program silo restrictions	Communities adapt, optimize and realign their mental wellness programs and services based on their priorities
Program focus on health and illness	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

Key Theme:
Enhanced Flexible Funding Investments

The impacts of not addressing mental wellness issues are significant at the community level. Unaddressed mental wellness issues are also costly to the justice, child welfare, social assistance, education, and health systems. Mental health and addictions issues are linked to high rates of incarceration, child apprehensions, poverty, unemployment, preventable injury, disease burden, and lower levels of educational attainment.

Priorities for Action:

Providing Additional Funding

Moving Away from Time-Limited and Siloed Funding

Increasing Flexibility of Funding

Questions?

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