

Context:

Indigenous Peoples are overrepresented among Canada's HIV population, partially attributed to complex trauma (severe repetitive or prolonged stressors involving harm or abandonment by ostensibly responsible actors [including government officials and policies] and spanning generations [e.g., intergenerational trauma]). Indigenous beliefs and cultural practices, such as resilience promotion strategies, offer hope for effective interventions. There is limited knowledge about the role of land based healing in this context.

Research Objectives:

This research's objective is to provide an overview of the academic and grey literature examining how land based healing can help address complex trauma among Indigenous Peoples, in particular those with HIV. The research findings will support a broader empirical study on how land based healing can be used to prevent HIV and manage complex trauma. This study uses a two-eyed seeing approach that integrates the strengths of both Indigenous and western ways of knowing (see Figure 1). Land based healing is the use of traditional culture and the natural environment to heal or maintain wellbeing (Dobson & Brazzoni, 2016). Complex trauma "is the exposure to severe repetitive, cumulative and prolonged stressors often occurring at developmentally vulnerable times" (Choi, 2016: 11).

Methodology:

- Conduct a knowledge synthesis of published and grey literature.
- Examined documents describing land based healing and similar Indigenous resilience strategies that incorporate cultural beliefs and practices to address complex trauma, including HIV and substance abuse.

Results:

Table 1: Summary findings from literature review

Authors (year)	Article type	Interventions	Comments
Gone et al. (2011)	Participatory research	Structured indigenous cultural immersion program	Creating a seasonal cultural immersion camp to assist in recovery from substance abuse
Morgan et al. (2009)	Commentary	Model of diagnosis and treatment that combines cultural strengths and conventional medicine	Partnership in the treatment process has increased cultural pride
Marsh et al. (2016)	Primary research	Sharing circles and structured interviews	Indigenous traditional healing practices should be included in the Western treatment model Seeking Safety
Nebelkopf et al. (2005)	Preliminary data analysis	Holistic Native network (HNN)	The HNN is beneficial for Natives living with HIV/AIDS
Robbins et al. (2011)	Review	Critical reflection and case study	Policies must be developed to support indigenous systems of knowledge
Walters et al. (2002)	Review	Stress coping model examining how American Indians cope with traumatic life stressors	Framework used was effective in providing culturally valid information

Discussion:

- The literature reviewed suggests that culturally appropriate health care with a blend of traditional and western care are optimal to address the health needs of Indigenous Peoples living with complex trauma.
- Land based healing interventions are rooted in the cultural traditions and value the interconnectedness of humans and their environment and include ceremonies (sweat lodge, sun dance), rituals, and sharing circles that appear to be beneficial in reducing substance misuse and help to heal complex trauma.
- In the context of HIV, land based healing can be used as both a preventative and healing approach with Indigenous Peoples.

Conclusion:

- The literature review suggests that land base healing can play an important role to address complex trauma among Indigenous Peoples.
- However, this relationship has not been fully studied and further research is needed to better assess its effectiveness, long term impact and conditions most favorable to its implementation.
- In particular, there is a critical need to further explore how land base healing influences prevention and healing among Indigenous persons living with HIV.
- Overall, the studies examined illustrate the importance of adopting a two-eyed seeing approach to capture the complexity of the relationship between land based healing and complex trauma.
- An upcoming visioning ceremony will allow the research team to experience firsthand some components of traditional rituals and practices and will guide the team's future research efforts.

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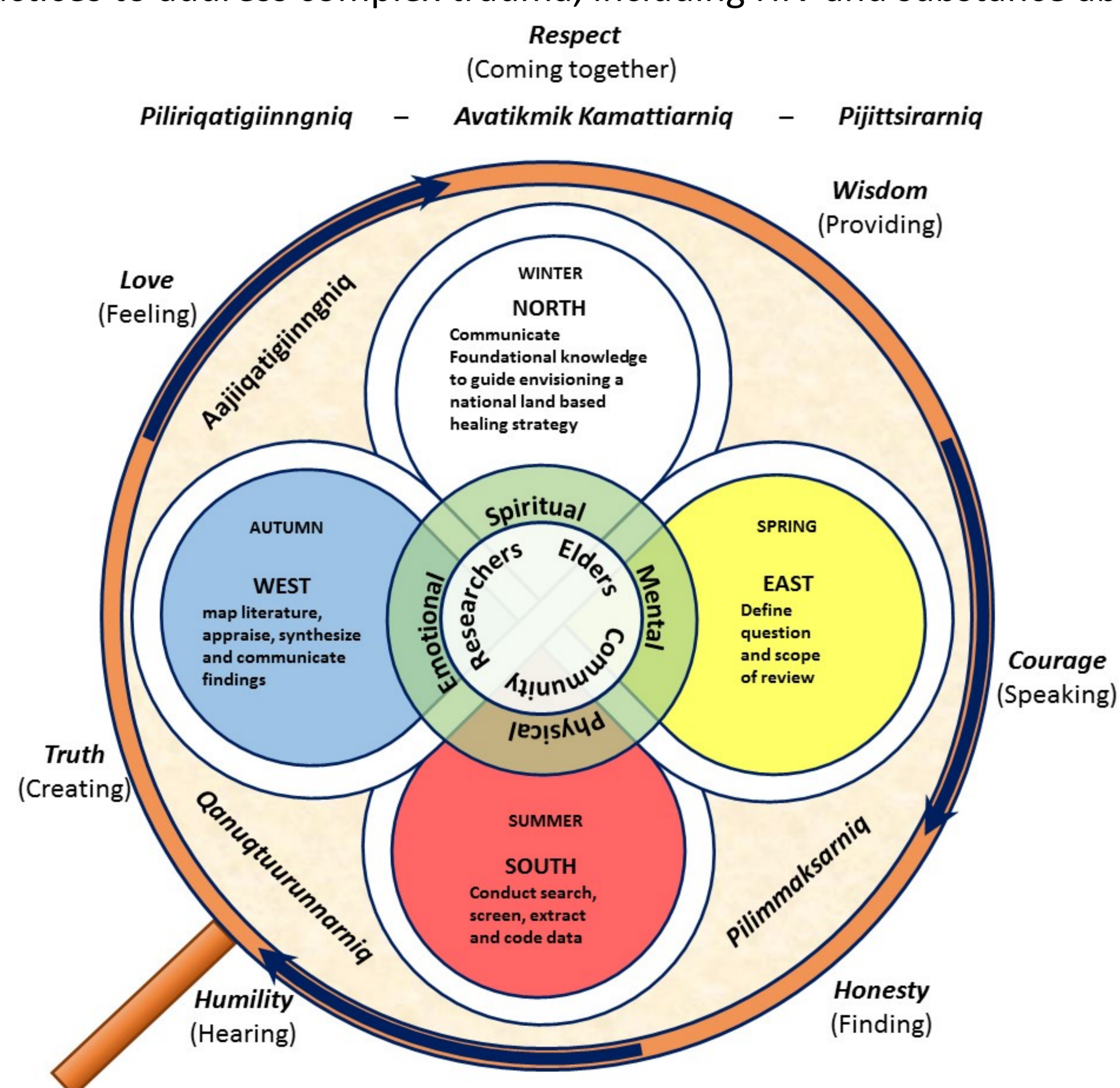


Figure 1: Anishnaabe symbol-based framework for land based healing and complex trauma knowledge synthesis (Morrisseau-Beck & Phillips, 2016: 6).

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