



# CULTURE IN ADDICTIONS SERVICES

National NNADAP Renewal Forum: Carol Hopkins, Executive Director, National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation





**“The eye sees only  
what the mind  
is prepared  
to comprehend.”  
- Henri Bergson**

# Indigenous Knowledge / Cultural Evidence Base... What does this mean

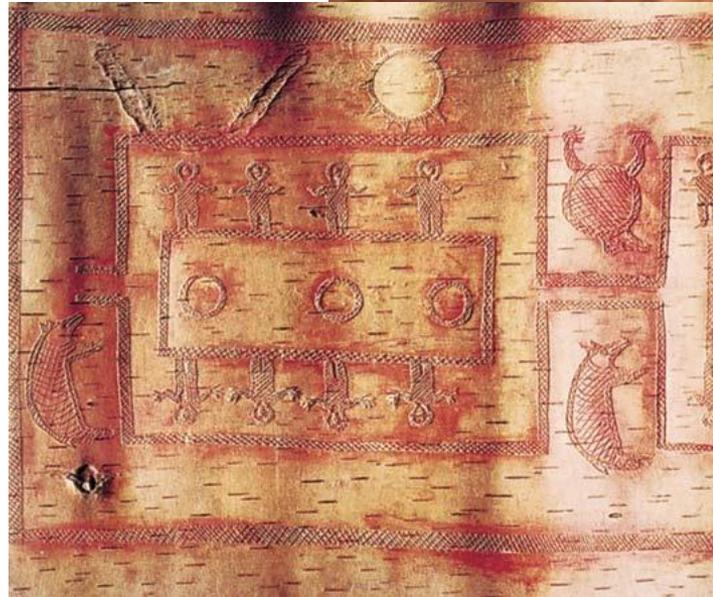
- One day somebody is going to call us on it – statements like, “our way is the way of the circle; our way is the way of the four directions; our way is a holistic way of life; we are environmentally conscious,” and so on. Somebody one day is going to ask us *what that means*.
- ***We are in that time now***
- ***Its also time for us to discuss how to balance the Indigenous Knowledge / Cultural Base with the empirical / scientific evidence base specific to addictions***

# Cultural Evidence Base... Two dimensions

- An approach to healing and wellness that emphasizes the integration of spirit and physical realities
  - ▣ which encourages the pursuit of understanding spiritual influence in physical reality, and;
  - ▣ it is the acceptance of cultural beliefs that spirit influences physical reality such that the manifestation of spirit in physical reality is accepted as proof when the understanding of such manifestation can be tied to cultural teachings.

# Cultural Evidence base continued...

- Indigenous Intelligence is the vehicle by which the evidence of spirit influence in the physical reality is understood and made meaningful in all aspects of life.



# Example



A youth going home from treatment is met with consistent pressure from her brothers and friends to use again. When she feels the pressure is getting to be too much for her to manage she takes her tobacco to the water to pray and has decided to spend her free time singing gospel songs on the community radio. Out of curiosity her mother asks what she does when she goes to the water, and after explaining the mother asks if she can join her... Later her aunts join as well.

# Evidence of spiritual influence in physical reality

- Creation Teachings talk about the relationship between woman and water, the healing power of water, tobacco as a sacred medicine and the love and care of the spirit – the example illustrates calling upon spiritual help for coping and family healing
- Singing on the radio is a good Cognitive Behavioural strategy... Learning to manage boredom, self awareness of pressure and buffering impact of negative thinking through positive activity
- Neuroscience perspective... Music / Singing stimulates all regions of the brain... This stimulation strengthens balance between cortex and limbic brain functioning ... Important for shifting chemical pathways (dopamine – memory, emotion, motivation) associated with addictions



Client Characteristics	#	%
Family Violence	14	52
Not Attending School at Intake	21	78
Family Addictions	19	73
History of Suicide Ideation	19	73
Justice System Involvement	7	26
History of Sexual Victimization	9	33
Attended Previous Treatment	8	30
Average Age	15.5	
Client Completion of Program	27	100%

# Treatment Approach

- Culture Program: cultural assessment, identity development, various ceremonies, community inclusion for modeling healthy relationships/family, cultural use of medicines, use of sacred foods, social activities, land base activities
- Emotional Intelligence: develop emotional literacy, recognize patterns, navigate emotions, intrinsic motivation, optimism, empathy, Nobel goal
- Resiliency Theory: assess strengths through resiliency traits, build awareness of shield and risk situations, link family & community resources
- Individual Therapy: trauma focused using existential therapy, NLP, existential theories
- Family Counselling: brief therapy, building connections within the family based on family strengths
- Recreational / Social Program
- Work Experience Program
- Academic education program – client specific

# Monitoring & Measurement

## Pre Post

- Identity through a self esteem self perception of identity scale
- Resiliency scale – 32 point resiliency traits
- Emotional intelligence competency assessment
- Valpar – hand, eye, foot coordination
- Academic – language arts (reading, comprehension, writing), math

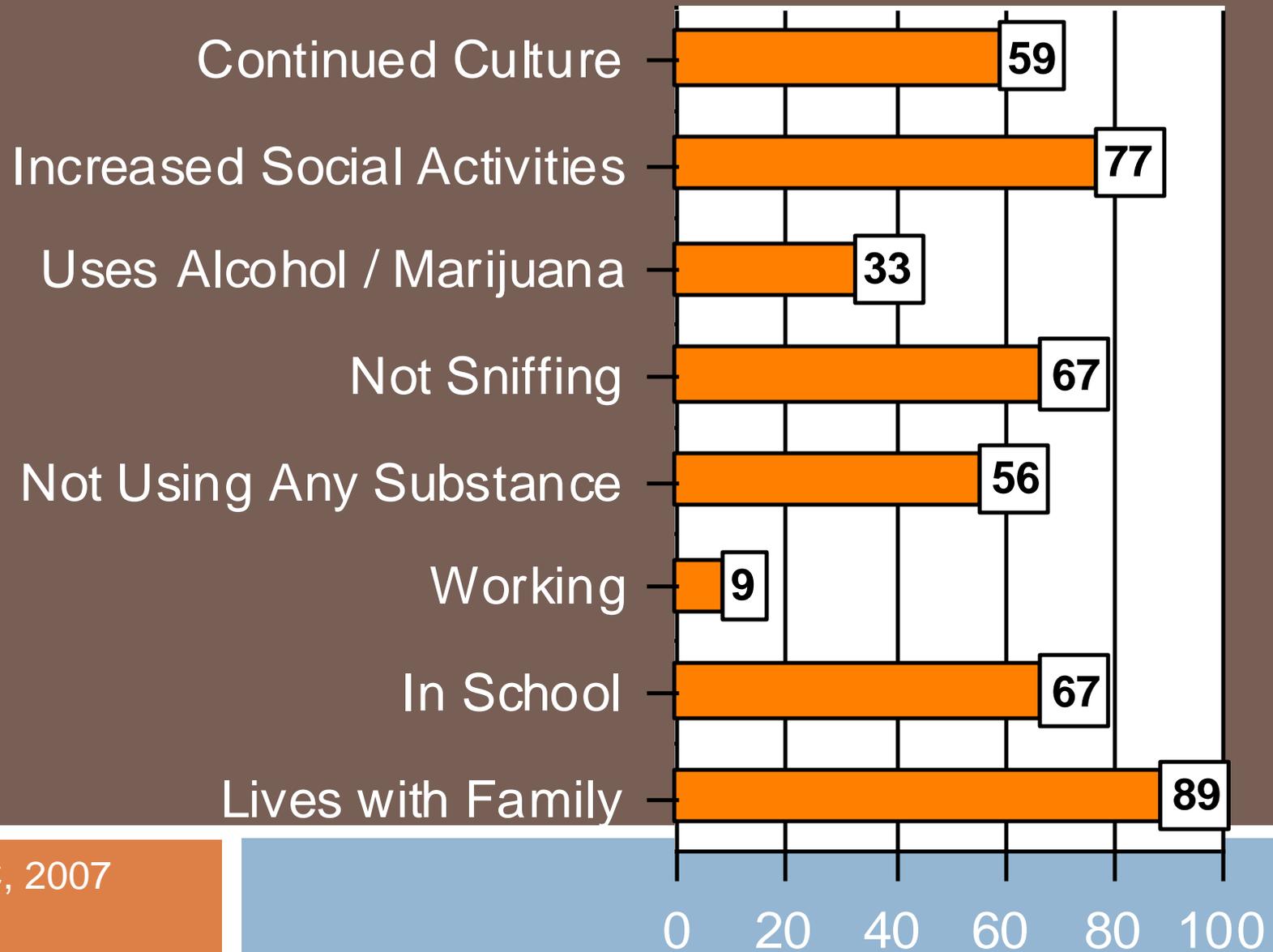
## Other

Youth, Parent, Referral source satisfaction: staff helping skills, treatment activities, help for treatment issues

Youth participation in program: group and individual counselling

Serious Occurrences & Incident rates

# Post Treatment Results



# Current Cultural Practices in NNADAP / YSAP

- Prayer
- Indigenous Teachings
- Sharing / Healing Circles
- Sweat lodge
- Memorial Feast / Ghost Feast / Feast for the Dead / Honouring Feast for Ancestors
- Use of indigenous medicines for cleansing, healing
- Use of food as medicine for intervention and healing. Consistency in using berries
- Facilitating connection to spirit name and clan family
- Full Moon Ceremonies
- Use of water and fire for healing
- Potlatch / Giveaway
- Social Activities – singing and dancing, crafts, drumming, visiting Elders
- Formalized Protocols that guide culture within Addictions and mental health programs at the residential treatment and community level



# Cultural Practices are intrinsically tied to community

- Take place within treatment program as scheduled & routine, incorporated into treatment manuals
- Inclusion of community within treatment programs and/or taking treatment centre clients to community
- Land base, cultural camps (maybe closed or open to community)
- Community based programs as prevention, intervention, ongoing health maintenance
- Facilitated by addictions staff with cultural competency / specialized cultural education, cultural practitioners, community volunteers

# Health and Wellness... How is it defined

- Many definitions so depends on how you look at health
- If addictions services are designed to improve health and wellness then what does this mean to families and communities
- Again many things, but common expectations indicate that health is strongly related to ones ability to fulfill roles and responsibilities within family and community
- So function, but function based on purpose & identity
- Essential factor is “making connections”

# Western Theoretical Approaches

- Do not generally consider cultural identity as a prerequisite or determinant of health
- Does not generally interpret identity or health beyond the individual to be inclusive of family, community, Creation
- Cultural Conflicts – the inappropriate application of dominant cultural values to programs & services & is used to account for high incidence of socio-economic problems amongst Native people

# Example of Balancing Western Theory & Culture

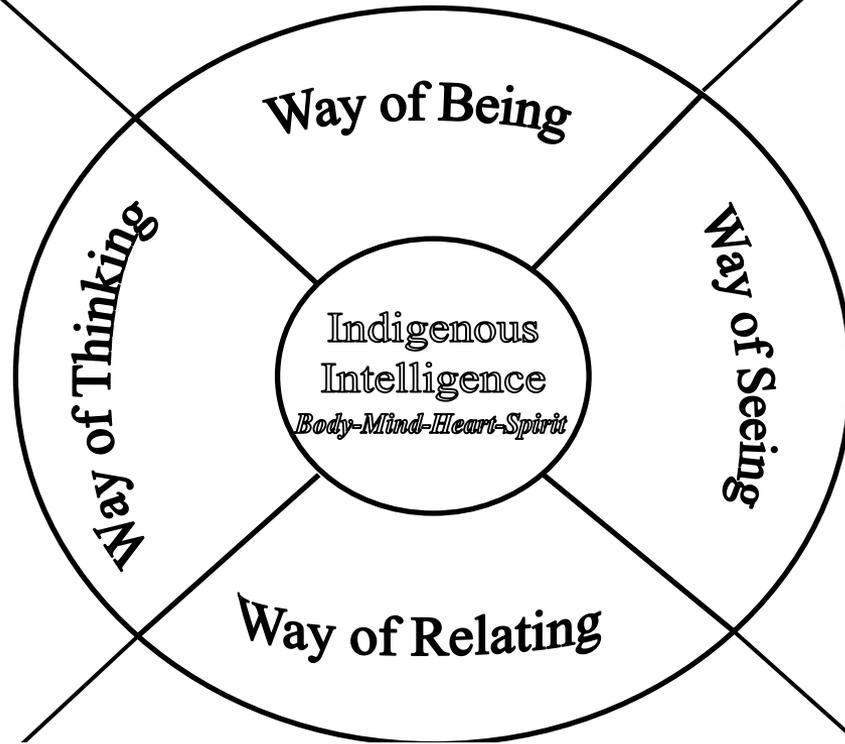
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - based on the idea that our *thoughts* cause our feelings and behaviours, not external things, like people, situations, and events. The benefit of this fact is that we can change the way we think to feel / act better even if the situation does not change.
- From a cultural perspective changing the way we think is equal to changing our beliefs about self and our place within Creation... The process of “decolonization” and rebuilding identity through cultural teachings is a powerful tool for changing one’s path in life.
- Motivational Counselling – difficult to begin with when historical oppression is ignored. Powerful tool when motivation is tied to identity, family, community and resiliency characteristics
- Existential Therapy – inclusion of and recognition of spirituality as a source of developing meaning and purpose to one’s life... Interpretation of spirituality from cultural perspective is important

# Examples of International Initiatives

- Sámi ... Indigenous peoples of Nordic countries, incorporate land base programs facilitated by Sami Elders and inclusive of Psychologists
- Australia... Community based mental health and addictions program inclusive of Aboriginal Elders & traditional practitioners
- New Zealand... Community based mental health and addictions is inclusive of the use of traditional / cultural medicines and all constructs of services are based on Moari language
- United States... Community based programs inclusive of culturally respectful evidence base, identifying various indicators for measuring impact of services



**Recognition that resilience is Spirit sourced means services inclusive of land and community connection. Foundation of service is strengths based & are synonymous with Identity.**



**Assessments are strength based and focused on decolonization through establishing cultural identity. Program & services focused on strengthening resiliency traits. Treatment protocols are standardized on principles and practice that are community specific & supports individual autonomy in choice for healing path**

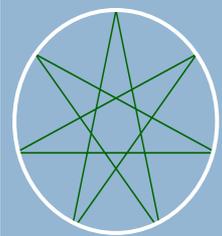
**Family and Community is the nucleus, interdependent with Creation, Inclusive of the Universal Family. All of which is founded on a spiritual connection. Programs & services include cultural practices of medicine, foods, ceremonies, teachings, land, connecting to universal family. May include pharmacotherapy. Community Development.**

**Policies and protocols based on /informed by Indigenous Intelligence, inclusive of culturally relevant mainstream addiction strategies**

**Human Resources inclusive of cultural practitioners & compensated at par with western based practitioners (addictions counsellor, social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist)**

Interconnectedness:  
Ecological Systems  
Determinants of Health  
Population Health

# Stages of Creation as Framework For NNADAP services...



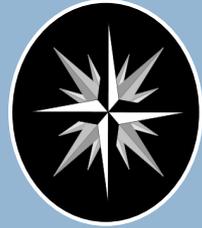
Community Based: outreach, prevention, peer support, natural support, identity & community development, Indigenous Healing Practices / Ceremonies, resiliency focused



Brief support & Referral: by professionals, community based workers, Indigenous healing practitioner to Indigenous Healing Practices, withdrawal management, literature, internet, text messaging



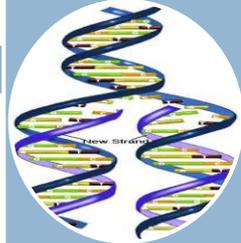
Outreach & Harm Reduction: specific and focused attention to high risk populations / groups – including the use of medication, spiritual healing, support while respect for personal choice – upholding ethic of non-interference



Community Based Intervention: inclusive of land base & cultural interventions, focused on connection to family and community system, uses case management strategies, indigenous healing practices



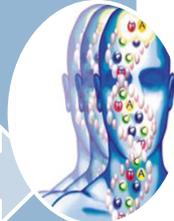
Community Development: focus is on strengthening linkages of individuals and families with community with more of a focus on community response to individuals and family through community values, system design, policy, practice & service, cultural evidence



Residential Treatment: individual focus but inclusive of family and community is critically important – gender, mental health, youth

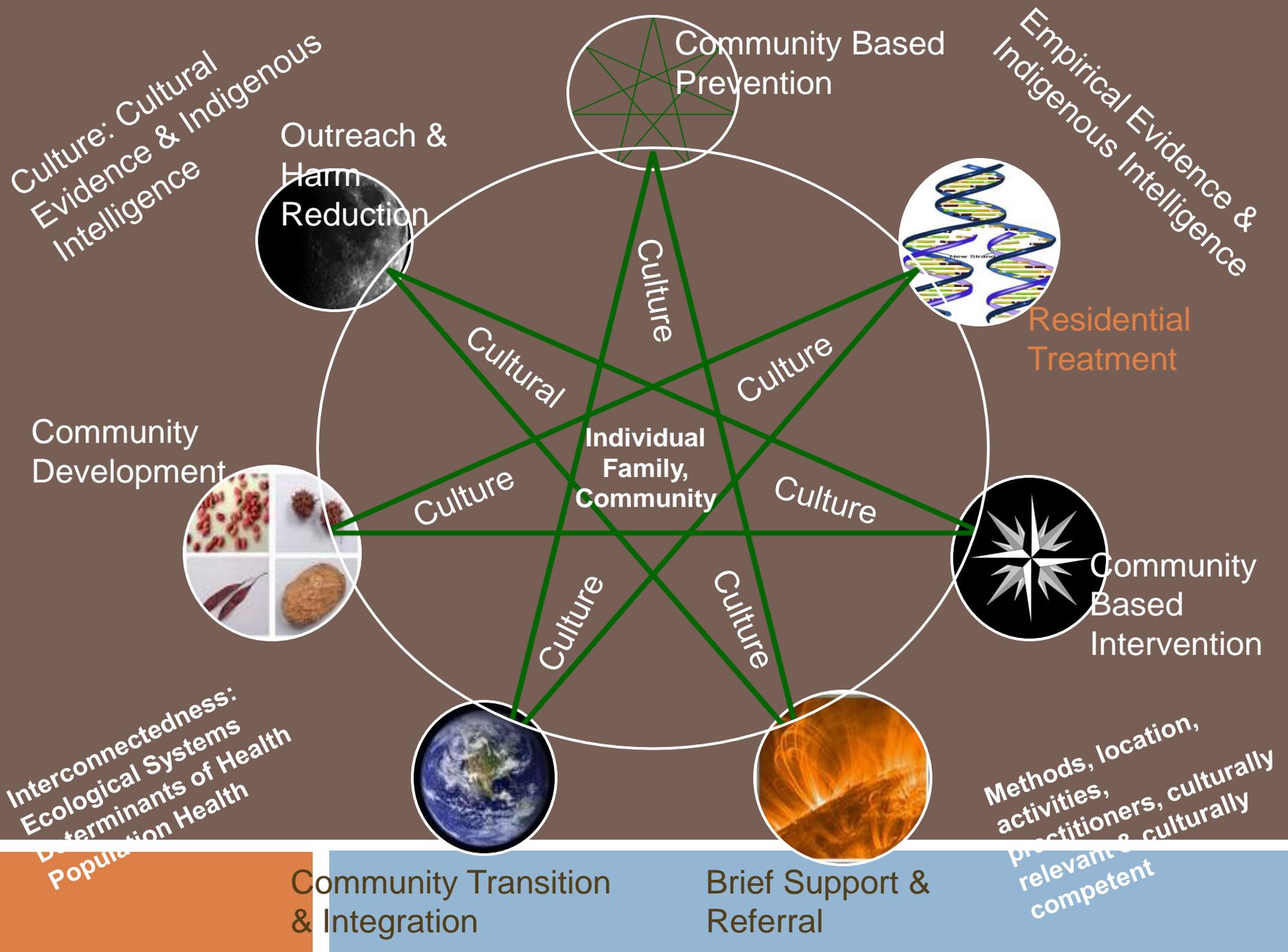


Community Integration: facilitates practice of cultural identity and fulfilling purpose through family & community roles & responsibilities , community supports for healthy living

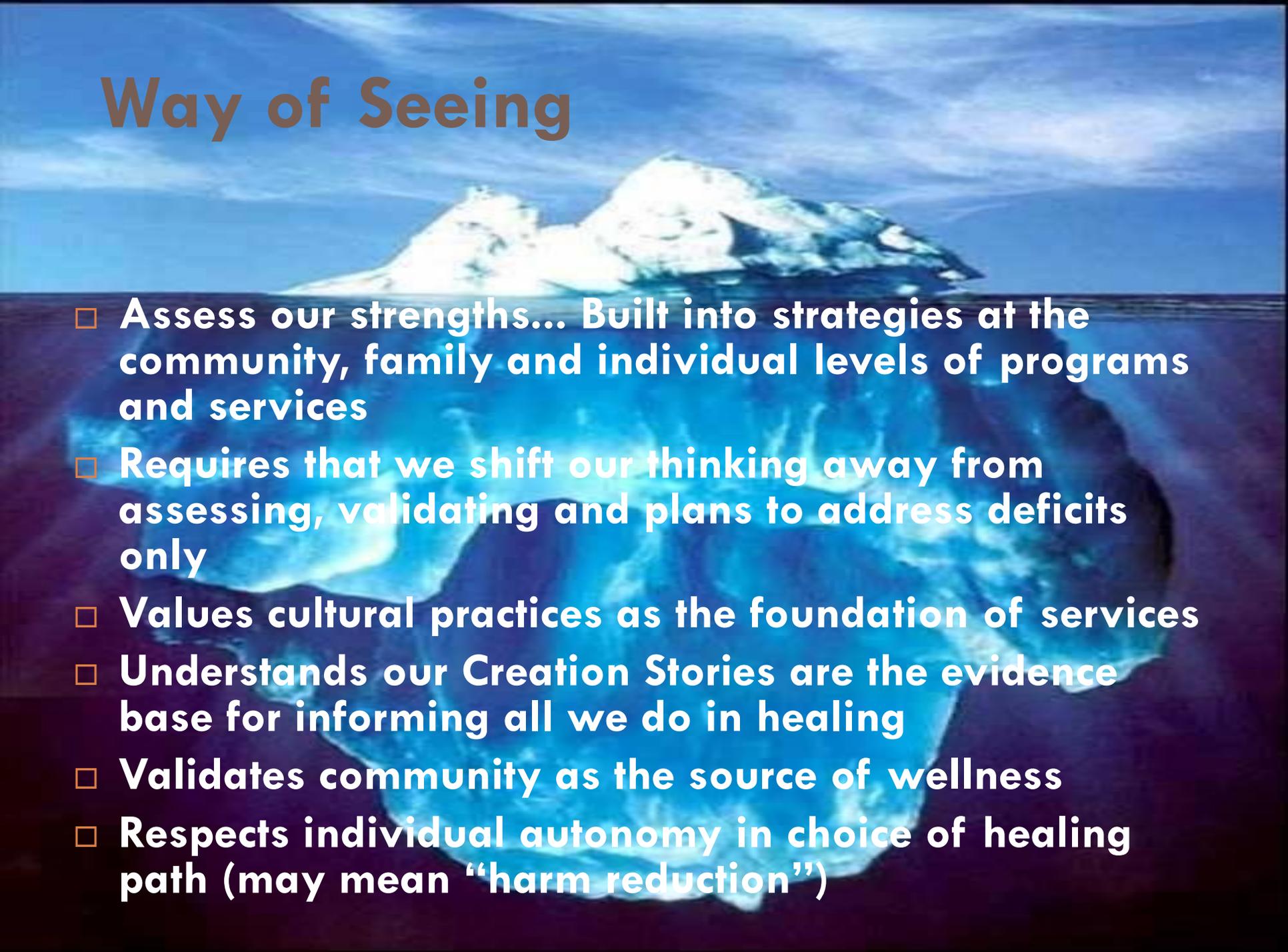


## Family & Community Inclusive





# Way of Seeing



- ❑ Assess our strengths... Built into strategies at the community, family and individual levels of programs and services
- ❑ Requires that we shift our thinking away from assessing, validating and plans to address deficits only
- ❑ Values cultural practices as the foundation of services
- ❑ Understands our Creation Stories are the evidence base for informing all we do in healing
- ❑ Validates community as the source of wellness
- ❑ Respects individual autonomy in choice of healing path (may mean “harm reduction”)

# Way of Relating... *All about connections*

- **Activities that facilitate relationship with land... Hunting, trapping, canoeing, fasting, tanning hides, medicine gathering, gardening, feasts, ceremonies, etc.**
- **Activities that facilitate relationships with community... teaching mutual support programs, talking / healing circles, drum and/or dance groups, Indigenous language acquisition activities, craft activities, any strategy that supports/develops volunteerism, community gardening – including traditional medicines.**
- **Identity shaping / building activities... Such as “spirit name”, clan family, nationhood. Focused on teaching vision, planning and future oriented thinking. Prayer is a critically important cultural practice in facilitating hope, future orientation and for supporting vision.**





# Way of thinking

- Policy which clearly speaks to the inclusion of culture across the continuum of programs and services: validates cultural practices as foundational across the continuum of services.
- Recognition of cultural knowledge and skills in workforce / human resource management strategies
- Requirement for Cultural competency / dual competency across the system
- Cultural protocols / guidelines that facilitate understanding of relationship between cultural practitioners and programs/services
- Best practice and research that focuses on the success and relevancy of both a cultural evidence base and a scientific evidence base as applied within NNADAP
- Commitment to understanding what theoretical models work well with Native people because they are respectful of Indigenous world view and values



# Way of Being

- Inclusion of family and community across the continuum... As a standard of practice
- Community development approach to enhancing programs and services
- Embraces determinants of health through well coordinated and collaborative community services
- Using Ecogological Systems Theory with the Inclusion of cultural practitioners & cultural practices
- Physical aspects of addictions services, including withdrawal management are inclusive of spiritual healing.



## Components of Renewal

