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As a Lead Educational Developer at the University of Alberta's Centre for Teaching and Learning and Office of the Vice Provost, she is entrusted with the critical task of transforming and Indigenizing academic spaces by applying Indigenous ethics, teachings, practises and laws. Drawing from over 25 years of experience working with Indigenous Nations across Treaties 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10, the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Settlements, the T'exelc Nation, and the Northern Secwēpemc te Qelmūcw on unceded lands in British Columbia, as well as her own lived experiences as a Métis person living between two worlds, she guides other professionals towards how to build relationships with local Indigenous communities and how to Indigenize and decolonize structures that currently hold systems that are not equitable.

As a professor at the University of Calgary's Faculty of Law, she designed the groundbreaking course, "Reconciliation and Lawyers" which became an Indigenous model on how to apply Indigenous laws ethically into legal practise and how to represent Indigenous clients effectively with respect. Additionally, she is a professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, where she co-leads and co-designed a new Indigenous dispute resolution course entitled, "In Search of Reconciliation Through Dispute Resolution" where students explore how Indigenous legal traditions and values can be incorporated into dispute resolution practises and how to respect the importance of Indigenous worldviews.

Andrea's expertise extends beyond post-secondary academic spheres, as she also designed "The Path (Alberta)- Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada" with NVision Insight Group Inc. which is a mandatory online Indigenous cultural competency course for all lawyers across Alberta through the Law Society of Alberta; as well as co-created another education module called, "Indigenous Peoples and the Criminal Legal System" that is an online course for lawyers to take across the nation through the Canadian Bar Association.

Andrea was named the Top 25 Most Influential Lawyer for Canadian Lawyer Magazine, 2022 and Best in Law across Canada, New Zealand and Australia, 2022.



# Canada is a multi-juridical country

We have:

Common Law

Civil Law

Indigenous Law

This guidebook is founded on the understanding that Indigenous Peoples possess unique and profound perspectives on various facets of life, deeply rooted in their culture, laws, values, beliefs, teachings, traditions, and medicines. It acknowledges the inextricable and reciprocal relationship that Indigenous Peoples share with the land, which transcends linguistic description.

The guidebook highlights the significance of recognizing and honoring Indigenous inherent rights, as well as safeguarding their rich heritage, which holds equal or, in some cases, greater authority than common and civil law in Canada. It is essential to appreciate that Indigenous knowledge systems should never be considered inferior or subordinate.

# Exercise: Embracing and Honouring Indigenous Perspectives and Knowledge Systems

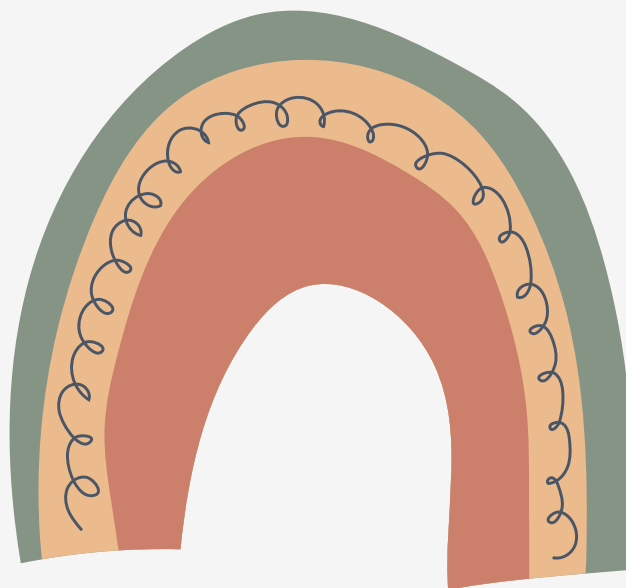
1. Begin by researching Indigenous perspectives, cultures, laws, values, beliefs, teachings, traditions, and medicines. Familiarize yourself with the unique aspects of Indigenous knowledge systems and their importance in various facets of life. Take notes on the key aspects and the significance of acknowledging and honoring Indigenous inherent rights.
2. Reflect on your own beliefs, assumptions, and biases about Indigenous knowledge systems. Are there any misconceptions or misunderstandings you need to address? Make a list of these misconceptions and actively seek information to correct them.
3. Identify areas in your professional or personal life where you can incorporate Indigenous perspectives, values, and knowledge systems. Consider how this can lead to a more inclusive, holistic, and respectful approach to your work and relationships.
4. Create a personal action plan to deepen your understanding and appreciation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Include specific steps, such as attending workshops, courses, or events, engaging with Indigenous community members, or reading books and articles written by Indigenous authors.
5. Develop a list of resources that can help you and others learn more about Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems. Share these resources with your friends, family, or colleagues to promote collective understanding and appreciation.
6. Actively work to challenge any notions that Indigenous knowledge systems are inferior or subordinate to other knowledge systems. Engage in conversations and advocate for the recognition of Indigenous perspectives as equal or, in some cases, holding greater authority than common and civil law in Canada.
7. Regularly revisit your reflections, action plan, and progress, assessing your efforts and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that embracing and honoring Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems is an ongoing process, and consistently integrating these principles into your life is essential for fostering greater understanding and respect.



# Embracing Indigenization to Transform Systems & Heal

Indigenization is a necessary approach due to the existing gaps of knowledge in the current colonial system Canadians currently operate in.

Utilizing Indigenization methodologies transforms harmful systems into systems that heal.



# Exercise: Embracing Indigenization to Transform Systems and Heal

1. Begin by researching the principles and practices of Indigenization. Explore how this approach differs from the colonial systems in which Canadians currently operate. Take notes on the key aspects of Indigenization and how it can contribute to healing and transforming systems.
2. Reflect on your current professional environment and identify areas where Indigenization could be applied. Consider aspects such as communication, collaboration, and decision-making processes, as well as the integration of Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices.
3. Identify potential barriers to implementing Indigenization within your professional environment. Brainstorm strategies to overcome these barriers and engage in meaningful conversations with colleagues and leaders about the importance of Indigenization.
4. Develop a personal action plan for integrating Indigenization methodologies into your professional practice. Include specific steps, such as attending workshops or courses, engaging with Indigenous community members, and advocating for policy changes that support Indigenization.
5. Create a list of resources that can help you and your colleagues learn more about Indigenization and its transformative potential. Share these resources with your team to foster collective understanding and commitment to the process.
6. Regularly revisit your reflections, action plan, and progress, assessing your efforts and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that embracing Indigenization is an ongoing process, and its implementation is essential for transforming harmful systems into systems that heal.

# Becoming the Translator

While it may be impossible to fully grasp every aspect of Indigenous cultural knowledge, laws, and languages in one's lifetime, it is vital to acknowledge this fact and strive to become a bridge between two worlds or "the translator".

Both decolonization and Indigenization aim to promote fundamental shifts in the way rehab med incorporates Indigenous perspectives, values, laws, and cultural understandings into practices, pedagogies, decision-making, reporting, assessments, communication, and data collection.

At the same time, it is crucial for rehab med to dismantle the Eurocentric biases that pervade current standards, whether visibly or invisibly.

This approach should be applied consistently, broadly and never stop.



# Exercise: Becoming the "Translator" for Decolonization and Indigenization in Rehab Medicine

1. Begin by researching the concepts of decolonization and Indigenization. Understand the differences and similarities between these approaches and their importance in rehab medicine. Take notes on the key aspects of both decolonization and Indigenization and how they can contribute to transforming rehab medicine.
2. Reflect on your current professional environment and identify areas where decolonization and Indigenization could be applied. Consider aspects such as communication, collaboration, decision-making processes, reporting, assessments, data collection, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge, laws, codes and cultural practices.
3. Develop a personal action plan for integrating decolonization and Indigenization methodologies into your professional practice. Include specific steps, such as attending workshops or courses, engaging with Indigenous community members, and advocating for policy changes that support these approaches.
4. Create a list of resources that can help you and your colleagues learn more about decolonization and Indigenization and their transformative potential in rehab medicine. Share these resources with your team to foster collective understanding and commitment to the process.
5. Identify potential challenges or barriers to implementing decolonization and Indigenization within your professional environment. Brainstorm strategies to overcome these barriers and engage in meaningful conversations with colleagues and leaders about the importance of these approaches.
6. Actively work on becoming a bridge and translator between the two worlds by deepening your understanding of Indigenous perspectives, values, laws, and cultural understandings. Engage with Indigenous communities, attend events, and learn from their experiences and wisdom.
7. Regularly revisit your reflections, action plan, and progress, assessing your efforts and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that becoming a bridge and translator is an ongoing process, and consistently applying decolonization and Indigenization approaches is essential for transforming rehab medicine.



# Exercise: Embracing Indigenous Wisdom in Rehabilitation Medicine: A Reflective Journey

**Objective:** To gain a deeper understanding of Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness and to develop an appreciation for the importance of Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine.

**Materials needed:** Pen and paper, a quiet space for reflection

**Instructions:**

Begin by finding a quiet space where you can focus on this reflective exercise without distractions.

Take a few moments to clear your mind and focus on the topic at hand.

Read the above passage about Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine carefully and reflect on the points made.

On your paper, make two columns. On the left side, write down your current understanding and assumptions about rehabilitation medicine. On the right side, write down new insights and perspectives you gained from the passage on Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine.

As you compare the two columns, consider the following questions:

- a. In what ways do Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness differ from my current understanding of rehabilitation medicine?
- b. What are some ways I can show respect for and embrace Indigenous sovereignty in my practice?
- c. How can I integrate the knowledge of Indigenous healing methods and the connection to the land in my practice?

Reflect on your answers to these questions and write down concrete steps you can take to Indigenize your practice and incorporate Indigenous wisdom into your rehabilitation medicine approach

Commit to implementing these steps in your practice and continually reflecting on your progress, making adjustments as needed to ensure you are honouring and respecting Indigenous perspectives on health and wellness.

# Understanding the history and ongoing impacts of colonization and how to approach next steps through Indigenizing

The history of colonization and residential schools in Canada has left a profound mark on the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and communities. For over a century, Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities to attend residential schools, where they were systematically stripped of their language, culture, and identity. These institutions aimed to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture, but the resulting devastation was immense. Children endured physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, malnutrition, disease, and neglect. The trauma inflicted by residential schools has had a lasting impact, leading to intergenerational trauma, mental health challenges, and loss of cultural identity among Indigenous Peoples and communities.

The enduring legacy of colonization and residential schools continues to affect the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and communities today. They face higher rates of chronic diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, along with increased mental health challenges and substance use. These health disparities are connected to various social determinants of health, including poverty, racism, and discrimination, which persistently impact Indigenous Peoples and communities.

To forge authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities, it is essential to comprehend the history and ongoing ramifications of colonization and residential schools. This involves acknowledging the harm inflicted and committing to Truth and Reconciliation efforts that promote healing and well-being for Indigenous Peoples and communities.

Moreover, it requires recognizing the unique health challenges and needs of Indigenous Peoples and communities, and collaboratively addressing them in a respectful, culturally appropriate, and responsive manner, customized to their needs and experiences. However, this approach still operates within the constraints of existing colonial structures.

What we must do is break free from the mindset of merely applying Indigenous methodologies like an overlay. Instead, we need to dismantle everything, tear it all apart, and then rebuild it through Indigenization, with equity and respect at its core. This is the true essence of truth and reconciliation.

# Treaty 6: Upholding Indigenous Rights to Healthcare

Treaty 6, signed in 1876, is an agreement between the Canadian government and the Indigenous Peoples of the central region of Alberta and Saskatchewan. This treaty has implications for the provision of healthcare services, including rehabilitation medicine, to Indigenous communities within its territory where the University of Alberta's North Campus is located.

Treaty 6 includes a "medicine chest" clause, which implies the government's responsibility to provide healthcare services to Indigenous Peoples within Treaty 6 territory.

Rehabilitation medicine professionals in this region should be aware of this obligation and work towards ensuring equitable access to healthcare services for Indigenous communities.

# Truth and Reconciliation

Recognizing the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action is essential for building authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. Truth and Reconciliation is a process that seeks to address the legacy of colonization and residential schools in Canada, and to promote healing and well-being for Indigenous Peoples and communities.

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action encompass a broad range of topics, several of them are particularly relevant to rehabilitative medicine. Here are some key Calls to Action and their significance for the field:

- **Call to Action #18:** Acknowledging and addressing the health disparities faced by Indigenous Peoples. This call highlights the need to recognize and address the distinct health challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples, including those that directly relate to rehabilitative medicine, such as chronic diseases, disabilities, and the impact of intergenerational trauma.
- **Call to Action #22:** Providing culturally appropriate health care services. Rehabilitative medicine professionals must ensure that the care they provide is respectful of Indigenous culture, history, and values. This involves integrating traditional healing practices and working closely with Indigenous communities to develop tailored care plans.
- **Call to Action #23:** Increasing the number of Indigenous health care professionals. This call emphasizes the importance of recruiting, retaining, and supporting Indigenous professionals in the field of rehabilitative medicine, fostering a more diverse and inclusive workforce that can better address the unique needs of Indigenous patients.
- **Call to Action #24:** Providing cultural competency training for health care professionals. Rehabilitative medicine practitioners should undergo cultural competency training to better understand and address the health challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples. This training should include education on the history of colonization, residential schools, and Indigenous healing practices.
- **Call to Action #57:** Providing education to public servants on the history of Indigenous Peoples. While not specific to rehabilitative medicine, this call underscores the importance of educating all public servants, including health care professionals, on the history and experiences of Indigenous Peoples. This knowledge can foster a deeper understanding and empathy, improving the quality of care provided to Indigenous patients.

By addressing these Calls to Action, rehabilitative medicine practitioners can work towards building authentic, meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities, promoting healing and well-being that respects their unique cultural identities and experiences.



# UNDRIP

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) contains several articles that can be linked to rehabilitation medicine in Canada. Here are some key articles and their relevance to the field:

**Article 3: Right to self-determination** Indigenous Peoples have the right to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. In the context of rehabilitation medicine, this means that Indigenous Peoples should have the autonomy to design, develop, and implement health care policies and programs that suit their specific needs and contexts.

**Article 21: Right to health and social services** This article emphasizes the right of Indigenous Peoples to access health care and social services without discrimination. Rehabilitation medicine practitioners should ensure that they provide equitable and culturally appropriate care to Indigenous patients.

**Article 24: Right to traditional medicine and health practices** Indigenous Peoples have the right to their traditional medicine and health practices, which should be respected and protected. Rehabilitation medicine practitioners should work to integrate traditional healing practices and knowledge into their care plans, in collaboration with Indigenous communities and healers.

**Article 31: Right to cultural heritage and traditional knowledge** This article highlights the right of Indigenous Peoples to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. Rehabilitation medicine practitioners should respect and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous healing practices and knowledge and seek to incorporate them into their work.

**Article 43: Right to the minimum standards for survival, dignity, and well-being** Indigenous Peoples have the right to the minimum standards necessary for their survival, dignity, and well-being. Rehabilitation medicine professionals should strive to provide high-quality, culturally responsive care that promotes the overall well-being of Indigenous patients.

By adhering to these UNDRIP articles, rehabilitation medicine practitioners in Canada can help ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected and upheld, promoting equitable and culturally appropriate care within the field.

# University of Alberta's Indigenous Strategic Plan's application to Rehab Med

To align with the Indigenous Strategic Plan in 2023, the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine must take several actions to ensure that its goals are achieved. Here is a list of key steps that the faculty should undertake:

1. Develop a detailed action plan: Create a comprehensive plan outlining the specific actions, timelines, and resources required to implement the Indigenous Strategic Plan within the faculty. Engage Indigenous stakeholders, including community members, Elders, and students, in the development of this plan.
2. Establish partnerships and collaborations: Actively seek and establish partnerships with Indigenous communities, organizations, and Elders to ensure that their perspectives and knowledge are integrated into the faculty's education, research, and practice.
3. Enhance recruitment and retention efforts: Implement targeted recruitment and retention strategies to attract and support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. This may include offering scholarships, mentorship programs, and support services tailored to the unique needs of Indigenous learners.
4. Review and revise the curriculum: Conduct a thorough review of the existing rehabilitation medicine curriculum and incorporate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and healing practices. This process should involve collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders to ensure cultural relevance and appropriateness.
5. Implement cultural competency training: Develop and implement mandatory cultural competency training for all faculty, staff, and students within the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine. This training should cover the history and experiences of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the unique health challenges they face.
6. Foster Indigenous research and scholarship: Encourage and support Indigenous-led research initiatives and promote collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. Allocate resources, such as funding and research spaces, specifically for Indigenous research projects.
7. Monitor progress and evaluate outcomes: Establish a system for monitoring progress and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken in implementing the Indigenous Strategic Plan. This may include developing performance indicators, setting targets, and regularly reporting on progress.
8. Create inclusive and welcoming spaces: Design and develop spaces within the faculty that celebrate and honor Indigenous culture, art, and history. These spaces should be accessible to all members of the university community and promote inclusivity, learning, and cultural exchange.

By taking these actions in 2023, the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine can make significant progress towards achieving the goals outlined in the Indigenous Strategic Plan and fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive environment for Indigenous Peoples.

# Beyond Barriers: Transforming Rehabilitation Medicine through Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives

It is crucial to comprehend and respect the health challenges that Indigenous Peoples face to provide appropriate and effective rehabilitative care. However, the approach of "Indigenizing" takes a distinct path. To Indigenize rehab med, one must begin by adopting an objective approach and creating a different lens through which to work, acquire knowledge, and study.

Indigenous Peoples have distinct ways of understanding health and wellness that are rooted in their cultural traditions and experiences. These beliefs and practices differ significantly from Western colonial approaches to health and illness.

Indigenous Peoples face elevated rates of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, along with increased prevalence of mental health issues and substance use. These health disparities are associated with various social determinants of health, such as poverty, racism, and discrimination, which persist due to the colonial structure of society. Make no mistake, such structures have been designed to undermine Indigenous Peoples and their way of life.

It is not unexpected that Indigenous Peoples confront obstacles when attempting to access healthcare. Such challenges include geographical barriers, language barriers, cultural barriers, and a lack of trust in the present colonial healthcare system.

The impact of historical and inter-generational trauma, combined with a lack of Indigenizing in healthcare and academia, can intensify feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. When Indigenous individuals are unable to see themselves or their culture represented within healthcare and academic environments, it can exacerbate possible fears and mistrust, making Indigenous Peoples feel unsafe.

The absence of Indigenous leaders and academics within the healthcare field raises concerns that the institution is still rooted in colonialism and that teachings will perpetuate the pattern of oppression that Indigenous peoples have experienced for generations.

The lack of Indigenous representation and Indigenization suggests a toxic epistemology that endangers the well-being of Indigenous individuals. We are the "canaries in the mine," and the absence of our presence within healthcare sends an alarming signal.

# Exercise:

Research the concept of representation and Indigenization in healthcare and academia along with the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, UNDRIP, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit Calls for Justice, and the "medicine chest clause" of Treaty 6. Take note of the key tenets and approaches involved that call upon the healthcare system to do better.

Reflect on your own experiences with representation and diversity in your academic or professional field. Have you encountered situations where you felt underrepresented or marginalized? How did this impact your well-being or ability to succeed?

Research Indigenous Peoples' experiences with colonization and oppression within healthcare and/or educational structures (depending what position you hold). Consider the ways in which these experiences have contributed to the current lack of representation of and Indigenization in the field.

Choose a specific aspect of healthcare or academia, such as research, teaching, or policy-making, and research ways in which Indigenous perspectives and leadership could benefit this aspect. For example, you could consider the benefits of incorporating traditional healing practices into healthcare or including Indigenous perspectives in public health policy-making.

Brainstorm strategies for increasing Indigenous representation and Indigenization in your academic or professional field. This could include advocating for diversity initiatives, creating mentorship or leadership programs for Indigenous individuals by Indigenous individuals, or seeking out opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration.

Write a reflection paper on your findings and insights. Consider how you can contribute to creating a more inclusive and respectful environment for Indigenous Peoples. What steps can you take to support Indigenous leadership and promote the principles of representation and Indigenization in your specific area?

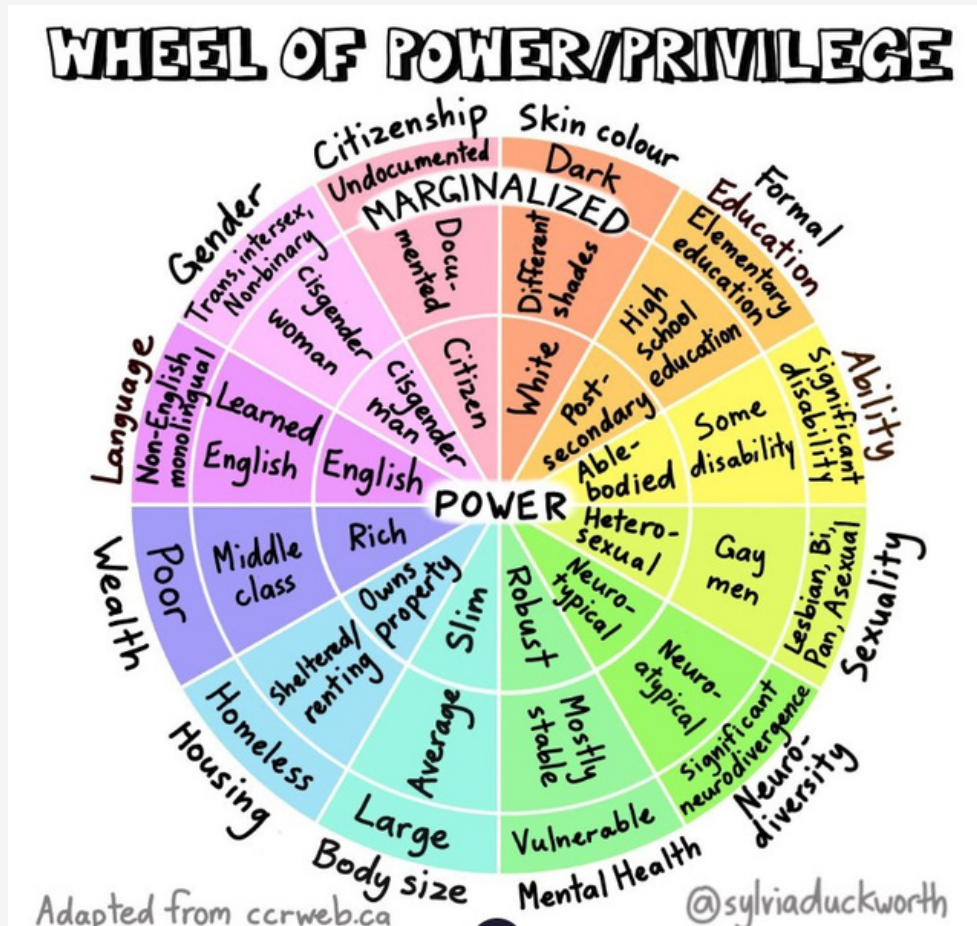
# The Wheel of Power/Privilege: A Visual Tool

Sylvia Duckworth's "wheel of power/privilege" provides a visual representation of how power, privilege, and social identities intersect. The graphic utilizes the imagery of a wheel divided into sections, each representing a social identity and its respective categories: gender, wealth, language, religion, ability, sexuality, mental health, age, education, language, education, ability, housing, neurodiversity, skin color, citizenship, and body size.

## Exploring Social Identities, Privilege, and Oppression

Critical social psychology views identity as a social construct learned through interactions with others and the world, which profoundly impacts personal development (Allen & Rosatto, as cited in Shah, 2018). Social privilege is based on complex and intersecting social identities, such as race, gender, ability, class, faith/religion, age, and sexuality, and their proximity to dominant identities and power (Black & Stone, as cited in Shah, 2018).

# WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



## Defining Yourself: A Solo Exercise Using the Wheel of Power/Privilege (Social Location Wheel)

Take a moment to consider how you define yourself and where your most significant social identities are positioned on the Wheel of Power/Privilege. Reflect on the following questions:

1. Proximity to the Center: How close or far away from the center are you in terms of your social identities?
2. Shifting Power Dynamics: How does your level of power change as you examine yourself within different identity categories?
3. Workplace Hierarchy: In your workplace, where do Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Clinical Partners, Professors, and Ph.D. students fall on the wheel?
4. Support Staff: Where do the assistants and helpers reside within the wheel? Where do the janitors reside? Where does the Food Court servers reside?

Feel free to record your reflections in a way that suits you best, whether it's through writing, drawing, or any other form of expression. Remember that this exercise is confidential, and it is essential to respect your privacy by not sharing your experience with others at work.



# Understanding Positionality and Intersectionality: A Guide to Social Identities, Power, and Privilege

## Location Wheel

### Positionality: The Influence of Personal Values and Social Identities

Positionality refers to the personal values, views, and one's location in time and space that shape how they engage with and understand the world. Intrinsically connected to dynamics of power and privilege, factors such as gender, race, class, and other aspects of social identities inform how individuals navigate the world, produce and value knowledge, and perceive everything through their unique biases, either consciously or unconsciously. Positionality varies across different contexts, often determining the access individuals have to resources and support in society. As such, the inherent power in social positions cannot be ignored (Misawa, 2010, p. 26).

### Intersectionality: A Framework for Analyzing Interconnected Oppression

Created by Black lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality acknowledges the complex relationship between social identities and systems of power and oppression. Recognizing the fluid, relational, and socially constructed nature of identities, intersectionality considers how multiple and diverse identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, dis/ability, beliefs, and worldview) combine in unique ways to shape individuals' perspectives and experiences with oppression and privilege (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2001). In this context, intersectionality emphasizes that oppression does not exist in isolation; instead, intersecting oppressions work together to produce injustice (Collins, 2001).

# Bridging the Gap: Embracing Indigenization in Rehabilitation Medicine for a More Inclusive and Equitable Future

Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine is not simply about adopting culturally appropriate techniques and superimposing them onto existing methodologies, nor is it a carnival show of cultural appropriation, purportedly motivated by "good intentions", nor is it a neocolonial attempt of haphazardly applying culture to everything in order to look good for Orange Shirt Day.

Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine entails deconstructing systems and structures that have failed Indigenous Peoples, who possess a fundamental right to health, law, education, and land. This process should be viewed as an honor and a privilege, not just for the sake of truth and reconciliation, but for the betterment of society as a whole.

Indigenization is crucial because deep divisions within society are growing more profound by the day, as Canadians remain hesitant to take action for fear of causing offense or further harm to Indigenous Peoples. This lack of action only serves to widen existing chasms, making it all the more important to embrace the process of Indigenization in a thoughtful and proactive manner.

The greatest harm to Indigenous Peoples arises not from taking action, but from inaction and a failure to address pressing issues. Canadians often feel trapped in a state of paralysis, unable to move forward for fear of causing offense or making mistakes. This guidebook aims to help professionals, students, leaders, and practitioners in rehab medicine break free from this frozen state by adopting the principles of Indigenization.

It is imperative to transform the field of rehab medicine because Indigenous healing practices have the potential to enhance the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of all Canadians. Moreover, colonialism has failed to address the healing and rehabilitation needs of anyone effectively.

**'We owe it to each other to build Canada based  
on our shared future, a future of healing and  
trust.'**

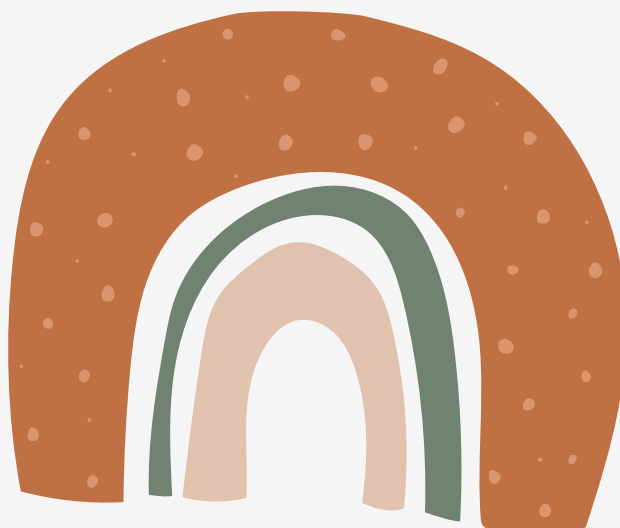
-Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of TRC

# Indigenizing Communication in Rehabilitation Medicine: Embracing Deeper Understanding and Dismantling Colonial Barriers

Indigenizing communication involves more than just establishing genuine relationships with Indigenous Peoples. While active listening, empathy, respect, and a willingness to learn and understand Indigenous culture are integral components of effective communication, Indigenizing communication encompasses a broader range of principles, including:

- The Duty to Learn
- The Privilege and Honor of Practicing on Indigenous Land
- Acknowledging Indigenous Sovereignty
- Equal Power and Knowledge
- Recognizing the Indigenous Languages of the Land
- Acknowledging the Land as Medicine

Moving beyond "White Innocence," "Nice Racism," and "White Fragility" and learning to communicate through this framework, rather than positioning oneself as a "White Saviour," is the first step. The next step involves embracing the privilege and honor of learning how to Indigenize rehabilitation medicine and becoming an effective communicator. The ultimate goal is to serve as a translator between two worlds and dismantle colonial structures that continue to cause harm to Indigenous Peoples.



# The Seven Grandfather Teachings and Their Application to Rehabilitation Medicine

The Seven Grandfather Teachings are traditional Anishinaabe teachings that encompass core values and principles for living a balanced and harmonious life. By incorporating these teachings into rehabilitation medicine, practitioners can provide care that is culturally sensitive and holistic. Here are the Seven Grandfather Teachings and their applications to rehabilitation medicine:

1. **Wisdom (Nbwaa'kaawin):** Practitioners should seek knowledge from various sources, including traditional Indigenous healing methods, to provide comprehensive care. Listening to patients' stories and understanding their cultural backgrounds can contribute to a deeper understanding of their unique needs.
2. **Love (Zaagidiwin):** Practitioners should approach their work with genuine compassion, empathy, and kindness. Building trusting relationships with patients and their families can foster a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes healing.
3. **Respect (Mnaadendmowin):** Practitioners should respect patients' autonomy, cultural beliefs, and values. This includes acknowledging and honoring traditional healing practices and working collaboratively with patients to develop tailored treatment plans.
4. **Bravery (Aakode'ewin):** Practitioners should have the courage to address systemic barriers and advocate for policies that improve healthcare access and outcomes for Indigenous communities. Additionally, they should be willing to challenge their own biases and assumptions to provide culturally responsive care.
5. **Honesty (Gwekwaadziwin):** Practitioners should maintain open and transparent communication with patients, their families, and colleagues. This includes providing accurate and honest information about diagnoses, treatment options, and progress throughout the rehabilitation process.
6. **Humility (Dbaadendiziwin):** Practitioners should recognize their own limitations and seek guidance from Indigenous Elders, healthcare providers, and community members. Acknowledging the value of diverse perspectives and traditional knowledge can enhance the effectiveness of rehabilitation services.
7. **Truth (Debwewin):** Practitioners should strive to understand the historical, social, and cultural context of Indigenous Peoples' health and well-being. By acknowledging the impact of colonization, residential schools, and ongoing systemic discrimination, they can better address the unique health challenges faced by Indigenous patients.

By integrating the Seven Grandfather Teachings into rehabilitation medicine, practitioners can create a more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and holistic approach to care that promotes healing and well-being for Indigenous patients and their communities.

Love + Respect + Bravery + Truth + Honesty + Humility+ Wisdom

# Beyond Cultural Safety: Embracing Indigenization and wahkohtowin in Rehabilitation Medicine

Colonial society has inflicted great harm on Indigenous Peoples.

"Cultural safety" has the propensity to blur the line and may only serve as another protective barrier designed to shield White people from taking accountability, perpetuating further harm to Indigenous Peoples.

The reluctance for White people take "risks" and recognize the damage inflicted on Indigenous Peoples can stem from a fear of losing the privileged lifestyles many currently enjoy (hence why they call it "risks").

A mere display of a dream catcher in a clinic cannot signify that genuine work has been done to ensure Indigenous clients' safety.

Instead of adding superficial solutions, Indigenization requires a deep and thorough examination of existing structures. It involves stripping away everything in its current form and getting to the essence of it. To it's heart and yours.



# Transforming Rehabilitation Medicine: Learning, Unlearning, and Relearning through the Lens of wahkohtowin

Achieving genuine Indigenization in rehabilitation medicine involves a continuous process of learning, unlearning, and relearning. This transformative journey requires a deep understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and a commitment to questioning and dismantling the colonial frameworks that have shaped our current perspectives.

The Cree concept of wahkohtowin, which translates to "everything is related," provides an invaluable lens for guiding this work. wahkohtowin emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of life, including our relationships with each other, the land, and the broader environment. It encourages us to recognize the inherent value and wisdom of Indigenous knowledge systems and to incorporate them into our practices, policies, and decision-making processes.

To embrace wahkohtowin in rehabilitation medicine, we must:

1. Engage in active listening and learning from Indigenous Peoples, acknowledging their expertise in traditional healing practices and respecting their autonomy in determining their healthcare needs.
2. Critically examine our own biases, assumptions, and privileges, recognizing the ways in which our social and professional positions influence our understanding of health and healing.
3. Challenge the Eurocentric and colonial frameworks that have shaped our current practices, seeking to dismantle and replace them with Indigenous-centered approaches.
4. Foster genuine partnerships with Indigenous communities, grounded in trust, respect, and a shared commitment to upholding their rights and well-being.
5. Promote Indigenous leadership and representation within the rehabilitation medicine field, recognizing the importance of diverse voices in driving meaningful change.

By adopting the lens of wahkohtowin, we can begin to reorient rehabilitation medicine towards a more inclusive, equitable, and transformative future—one that acknowledges and values the unique knowledge, perspectives, and experiences of Indigenous Peoples.



# The Power of Storytelling: Embracing Indirect Communication in Indigenous Rehabilitation Medicine

Storytelling takes on many forms and serves various purposes in Indigenous ways of life. In the context of practising client care in rehabilitation medicine, storytelling offers a unique learning opportunity for practitioners to hone their skills as indirect communicators with Indigenous patients. Rather than issuing orders or directives, storytelling offers a respectful and autonomous approach that avoids humiliation. I refer to this approach as "indirect communication."

## Reflective Exercise:

### Embracing Indirect Communication through Storytelling in Indigenizing Rehabilitation Medicine

1. Begin by considering your current communication style with patients and colleagues. Do you rely on direct orders and directives? How might this communication style impact Indigenous patients and colleagues?
2. Reflect on any experiences you've had with storytelling in a professional context. How did it feel to share or listen to a story? Did you notice any differences in how people responded to the story compared to more direct communication?
3. Think about a recent interaction you had with a patient or colleague. Can you reimagine that conversation using storytelling as a form of indirect communication? Write a short narrative that captures the main points of the conversation in a more respectful and autonomous manner.
4. Consider any potential barriers to implementing storytelling and indirect communication in your practice. What resources or support might you need to effectively incorporate this approach into your interactions with Indigenous patients and colleagues?
5. Set a goal for yourself to incorporate storytelling and indirect communication into your practice. How will you know when you've successfully integrated this approach into your interactions? Reflect on your progress regularly and adjust your strategies as needed.

Remember that this reflective exercise is meant to help you grow and learn as a professional. Be honest with yourself and use your reflections to guide your ongoing journey towards Indigenizing your communication practices in rehabilitation medicine.

# Vulnerability

Recognizing personal vulnerabilities and knowledge limitations is crucial in cultivating authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. By understanding one's own biases, assumptions, and weaknesses, individuals can learn from their experiences, fostering personal and professional growth that leads to a deeper sense of purpose and more significant societal impact.

This heightened understanding encourages genuine connections and promotes a more inclusive environment, enriching collaborations and relationships with Indigenous individuals and communities. This paves the way for the positive transformations we all aspire to see in our society.

Cultivating awareness and acceptance of one's knowledge limitations, including an incomplete understanding of Indigenous Peoples' unique experiences and perspectives, is a vital starting point for introspective work. Developing a habit of self-examination allows for more meaningful connections and deeper understanding across diverse communities.

Engaging in self-reflection is essential for overcoming these challenges. By examining one's personal experiences and perspectives, individuals can identify how they might negatively influence interactions with Indigenous Peoples. This approach goes beyond intellectualization, shedding colonial paradigms and practices that have traditionally protected non-Indigenous individuals.

Indigenization's ultimate goal surpasses cultural competence or tokenistic incorporation of culture into practices and communications. It aims to serve as a translator between two worlds while actively dismantling the colonial legacy that no longer benefits anyone in the long run. This approach fosters genuine understanding and connection, creating a more equitable and inclusive future.

Furthermore, demonstrating a willingness to seek help and support when necessary is a critical aspect of acknowledging one's vulnerabilities and knowledge limitations. This may involve turning to Indigenous organizations for guidance, or collaborating with experts on Indigenizing and decolonizing structures and processes.

By actively collaborating with, or alternatively, stepping aside to allow Indigenous Peoples to take the lead, we can foster a more inclusive and empathetic environment. This approach ultimately strengthens our relationships and collaborations with these communities, promoting greater understanding and unity.

# Exercise: Embracing Vulnerability and Acknowledging Knowledge Limitations in Indigenous Rehabilitation Medicine

1. Begin by reflecting on your current understanding of Indigenous cultures, experiences, and perspectives. Identify any knowledge gaps or misconceptions that may influence your interactions with Indigenous patients and colleagues.
2. Think about a time when your lack of knowledge or understanding impacted a professional interaction with an Indigenous individual. Write a brief summary of the situation and consider how you might have approached it differently, given your current understanding.
3. Set a goal to deepen your understanding of Indigenous Peoples' unique experiences and perspectives. Identify specific areas where you would like to grow and develop a plan to seek out resources, support, or guidance.
4. Identify potential allies or experts within your professional community who can support your journey towards Indigenization. Consider ways you might collaborate with them or seek their guidance when confronted with challenges or knowledge gaps.
5. Reflect on your willingness to be vulnerable and acknowledge your limitations in your professional interactions. How can you demonstrate this openness to Indigenous patients? Develop a strategy for integrating vulnerability and humility into your practice.
6. Consider any structural changes or collaborations that might be necessary to support a more inclusive and Indigenized environment. Identify potential opportunities to engage with Indigenous organizations or Indigenous professionals.
7. Regularly revisit your reflections and goals, assessing your progress and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that this exercise is meant to foster personal and professional growth, and that embracing vulnerability and acknowledging knowledge limitations are essential steps towards a more equitable and inclusive practice in Indigenous rehabilitation medicine.

# Power Imbalances

Understanding the impact of power imbalances on the profession with Indigenous Peoples is essential for building authentic and meaningful connections grounded in the seven Grandfather teachings: Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility and Wisdom.

Power imbalances in this regard stem from historical and ongoing colonial practices, resulting in systemic inequalities and injustices towards Indigenous Peoples.

Acknowledging the harm colonialism has inflicted on Indigenous Peoples and recognizing that rehabilitation medicine currently operates within Canada's colonial structures are crucial steps.

Addressing these power imbalances requires a focus on recognizing and addressing systemic inequalities and injustices while advocating for policy changes that support Indigenous Peoples.

Another strategy involves being aware of one's own privilege and biases, working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples to address power imbalances and promote equity and social justice. This includes respecting and valuing the cultures, traditions, laws, beliefs, medicines, and histories of Indigenous Peoples and checking in either through self-reflection, dialogue or further learning to see if you are an effective ally or just reinventing a new colonialism.

Recognizing and respecting the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples is also vital in understanding the impact of power imbalances. This entails acknowledging their right to make decisions, while cooperating with them to support their self-determination and sovereignty. In doing so, we can create more inclusive and understanding environments that enrich our relationships and collaborations with one another.

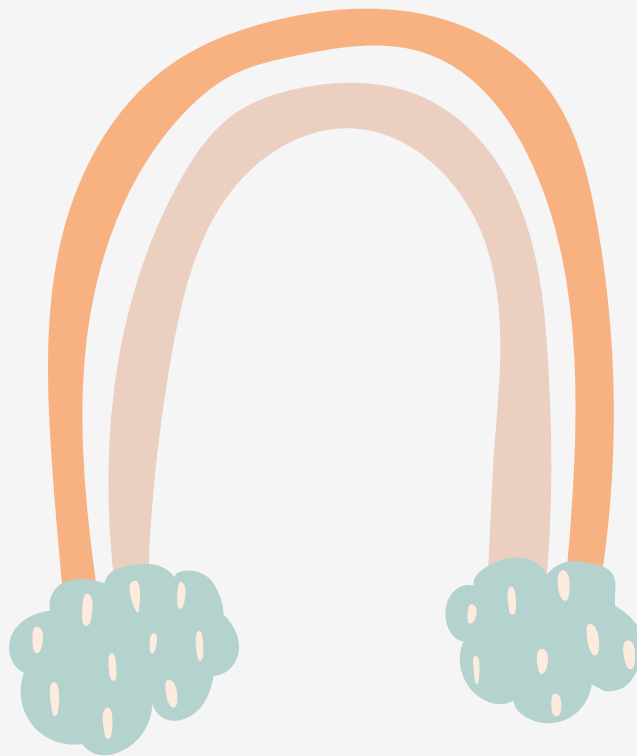
# Exercise: Addressing Power Imbalances in Indigenizing Rehabilitation Medicine

1. Begin by reflecting on your understanding of the historical and ongoing colonial practices that have resulted in systemic inequalities and injustices towards Indigenous Peoples. Identify areas where you may need to deepen your knowledge.
2. Consider the power imbalances present in your professional environment. Make a list of specific instances where you have witnessed or experienced these imbalances, particularly in relation to Indigenous patients and colleagues.
3. Reflect on your own privilege and biases, and how they might contribute to power imbalances within your professional environment. Write down specific examples and consider how you might work to address these biases and leverage your privilege to support Indigenous Peoples.
4. Develop a personal action plan for addressing power imbalances and promoting equity and social justice. Include specific strategies related to respecting and valuing Indigenous cultures, traditions, laws, beliefs, medicines, and histories.
5. Identify opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous Peoples to address power imbalances and promote equity within your professional environment. Consider ways to support Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty while fostering meaningful relationships and partnerships.
6. Regularly revisit your reflections, action plan, and progress, assessing your efforts and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that addressing power imbalances is an ongoing process, and that working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples is essential for promoting equity and social justice in Indigenous rehabilitation medicine.

# Historical Trauma

Understanding historical trauma and acknowledging the ongoing impacts of colonization is essential for building authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

Historical trauma refers to the intergenerational trauma that Indigenous Peoples have experienced as a result of colonization, residential schools, and other forms of systemic oppression that was enacted against them and that are still Canada's structures today. For example the *Indian Act* that was enacted in 1876 is still alive and well and it is 2023.





# Exercise: Exploring Historical Trauma and the Ongoing Impacts of Colonization

1. Begin by researching the history of colonization and its impact on Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Focus on key historical events and policies, such as the Indian Act, residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop. Take notes on the significant consequences of these events and policies on Indigenous communities.
2. Reflect on your understanding of historical trauma and its intergenerational effects on Indigenous Peoples. Consider how this trauma might manifest in the lives of Indigenous individuals today, including the barriers they may face when accessing healthcare and rehabilitation services.
3. Examine your own professional environment and identify any areas where historical trauma and the ongoing impacts of colonization may be affecting the experiences of Indigenous patients and colleagues. Consider potential changes that could be made to create a more inclusive and culturally safe environment.
4. Develop a personal action plan for deepening your understanding of historical trauma and its ongoing impacts. Include strategies for continued learning, such as attending workshops, reading books, or engaging in conversations with Indigenous community members or colleagues.
5. Create a list of resources that can help you and your colleagues learn more about historical trauma and the ongoing impacts of colonization. Share these resources with your team to facilitate a collective understanding and commitment to addressing the effects of historical trauma in your professional environment.
6. Regularly revisit your reflections, action plan, and progress, assessing your efforts and adjusting your approach as necessary. Remember that understanding historical trauma and the ongoing impacts of colonization is an ongoing process and a crucial aspect of building authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

# Trauma-informed approaches

Trauma-informed approaches require an acknowledgement of the systemic injustices and historical trauma that Indigenous Peoples have experienced, and continue to experience, under colonialism. This includes recognizing that colonialism has created and perpetuated a system that benefits White people and harms Indigenous Peoples.

Trauma-informed approaches requires getting out of denial, "White Innocence", "White Fragility" and "Nice Racism" and moving towards being effective and taking good action-oriented steps that does not re-colonize. It requires hard-core honesty with oneself and a lot of self reflection and journaling. It requires courage and being the only one doing it against all odds to the benefit of many. It requires humility and respect that you do not know it all. It is love: love of life, love of others, love of a future together that is rehabilitative and lessens the pain that one side has and the other side has not. This is wisdom and it is the Seven Grandfather Teachings you can incorporate into your everyday life.



# Case Study: Incorporating Trauma-Informed Approaches in Rehab Medicine

Anna is a rehabilitation medicine professional with several years of experience working with Indigenous Peoples. Recently, she attended a training on trauma-informed approaches in healthcare, which highlighted the need to acknowledge the systemic injustices and historical trauma that Indigenous Peoples have experienced and still experience under colonialism. This realization has led Anna to recognize her own cultural background and privilege, which may have contributed to her lack of understanding and recognition of these issues in the past.

Anna has taken proactive steps to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into her work with Indigenous Peoples. She understands that this process requires getting out of denial, "White Innocence," "White Fragility," and "Nice Racism" and moving towards taking effective action-oriented steps that do not re-colonize. This has led Anna to engage in a process of self-reflection and journaling, where she identifies and addresses her own biases and assumptions that may impact her interactions with Indigenous patients.

To further her understanding of Indigenous perspectives and experiences, Anna has also sought out opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and education. This includes attending Indigenous-led trainings and working with Indigenous leaders in her community. By doing so, Anna acknowledges the need for humility, courage, and respect in trauma-informed approaches.

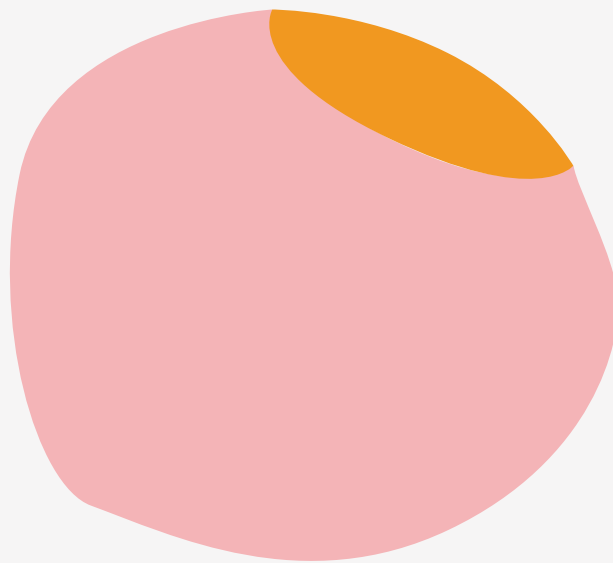
Anna recognizes that trauma-informed approaches are about love, wisdom, and respect. She incorporates the Seven Grandfather Teachings into her everyday life, recognizing the importance of humility, honesty, and courage in her work with Indigenous Peoples. Overall, Anna's journey towards incorporating trauma-informed approaches in rehab medicine for Indigenous Peoples is an ongoing process. It requires ongoing self-reflection, learning, and collaboration. However, by taking these steps, Anna is working towards a future together that is rehabilitative and lessens the pain that one side has and the other side has not.

## Questions:

1. What inspired Anna to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into her work with Indigenous Peoples?
2. How did Anna's understanding of her own cultural background and privilege impact her work with Indigenous patients?
3. What steps did Anna take to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into her work?
4. Why is self-reflection and journaling important in trauma-informed approaches?
5. What are some examples of cross-cultural collaboration and education that Anna pursued to further her understanding of Indigenous perspectives?
6. Why is humility important in trauma-informed approaches?
7. How did Anna incorporate the Seven Grandfather Teachings into her everyday life and work with Indigenous Peoples?
8. What are some ongoing challenges that Anna may face as she continues to incorporate trauma-informed approaches in rehab medicine for Indigenous Peoples?
9. How can other healthcare professionals follow in Anna's footsteps to incorporate trauma-informed approaches into their work with Indigenous Peoples?
10. Why is it important to recognize the systemic injustices and historical trauma that Indigenous Peoples have experienced under colonialism in healthcare?

# The Seven Grandfather Teachings

By integrating the 7 Grandfather Teachings into rehab med, practitioners can provide care that is respectful of Indigenous culture, laws, and values and sovereignty, and promote healing and wellness for Indigenous patients



The 7 Grandfather Teachings are a set of guiding principles that are central to many Indigenous cultures. These teachings include love, respect, honesty, courage, wisdom, humility, and truth. Integrating these teachings into rehabilitative medicine can help to promote cultural sensitivity and provide care that is respectful of the unique experiences and needs of Indigenous Peoples. Here are some ways to integrate the 7 Grandfather Teachings into rehab med:

1. Love: Rehab med practitioners can demonstrate love by showing empathy, compassion, and kindness towards their patients. They can also encourage patients to practice self-love and self-care as part of their recovery.
2. Respect: Respect for patients' culture, beliefs, and values is crucial to providing effective care. Practitioners should demonstrate respect by listening actively to patients and incorporating their cultural practices and beliefs into their care plan.
3. Honesty: Practitioners should be honest and transparent in their communication with patients, and provide accurate and timely information about their condition and treatment options.
4. Courage: Patients who have experienced trauma may face significant challenges in their recovery. Practitioners should demonstrate courage by supporting patients in facing these challenges and providing them with the tools and resources they need to overcome them.
5. Wisdom: Wisdom involves recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Practitioners should approach care with a holistic understanding of health and work to address all aspects of their patients' wellbeing.
6. Humility: Humility involves recognizing that there is always more to learn and being willing to learn from patients and their experiences. Practitioners should approach care with humility and a willingness to learn and grow.
7. Truth: Truth involves being honest and truthful in all interactions with patients. Practitioners should provide patients with accurate information about their condition and treatment options, and be truthful about the potential risks and benefits of different treatment approaches.

# Building the 5R's

Building relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect is essential for promoting health and well-being and building authentic and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Building trust involves being transparent and honest in your interactions with Indigenous Peoples and communities, and demonstrating a commitment to their well-being.

One strategy for building relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect is to listen actively and empathetically. This involves taking the time to listen to Indigenous Peoples and communities, and to respond in a way that demonstrates understanding and empathy for their experiences and perspectives. It also involves recognizing and respecting their unique cultural practices, laws, values, and beliefs, and sovereignty, and being open to learning and growth.

Another strategy is to communicate effectively and clearly. This involves using clear and plain language. It can also involve adapting communication styles to meet the unique needs and experiences of Indigenous Peoples, such as providing language interpreters or using visual aids.

Building relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect also involves recognizing and addressing power imbalances and promoting equity and social justice. This includes recognizing and addressing the ongoing impacts of colonization and systemic oppression, and working collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples to address these issues as a practitioner who is on their truth and reconciliation journey.

In summary, building relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect involves listening actively and empathetically, communicating effectively and clearly, recognizing and addressing power imbalances, and promoting equity and social justice. By building relationships based on trust, honesty, and respect, rehab med practitioners can promote health and well-being for Indigenous Peoples based on Treaty 6, the TRC, UNDRIP and the Indigenous Strategic Plan and build authentic and meaningful relationships based on the 5R's: Relationship, Respect, Relevance, Responsibility, and Reciprocity



# The Land is Medicine Exercise



# Exercise: The Land is Medicine - An Outdoor Experience for University Rehab Med Students with An Indigenous Knowledge Holder

**Objective:** To provide students with an experiential understanding of the concept that "the land is medicine" through a series of outdoor activities that promote reflection, connection, and healing, and to engage in a Sharing Circle with an invited Indigenous Knowledge Holder. Additionally, students will participate in a sweetgrass teaching and learn how to smudge.

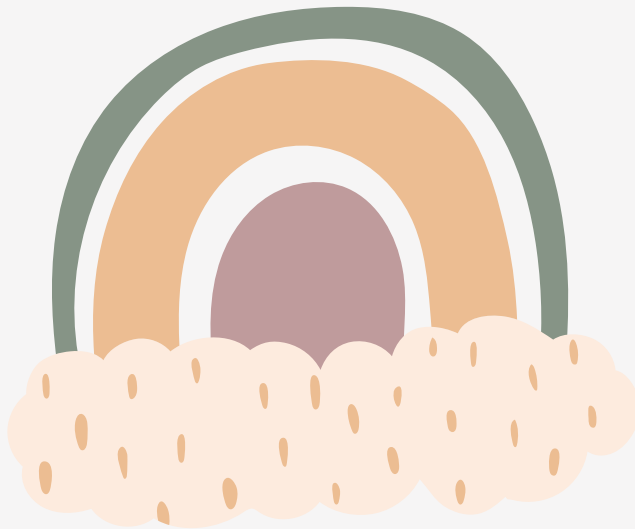
## Materials needed:

1. Journal or notebook for each participant
2. Writing utensils
3. Comfortable outdoor clothing and footwear
4. Blankets or mats for sitting on the ground
5. Access to a natural outdoor space (e.g., park, forest, riverside)
6. An Indigenous community member to join the Sharing Circle and lead the sweetgrass teaching (arrange proper protocol and offer an honorarium)
7. Sweetgrass and smudging materials for Indigenous Knowledge Holder

## Instructions:

1. **Preparation:** Find a suitable natural outdoor space for the exercise, ensuring it is safe and accessible for all participants. Ensure students wear comfortable clothing and footwear appropriate for the outdoor setting. Invite an Indigenous Knowledge Holder to facilitate the Sharing Circle and lead the sweetgrass teaching, following proper protocol and offering an honorarium.
2. **Opening circle:** Begin the exercise by gathering students in a circle. Introduce the concept of the "land is medicine" and its significance in Indigenous ways of life. Explain the importance of connecting with the land for healing and well-being.
3. **Sweetgrass teaching and smudging:** The Indigenous Knowledge Holder introduces the sweetgrass teaching and demonstrate how to smudge. They explain the significance of smudging in Indigenous culture and the cleansing properties it offers. Allow students to participate in the smudging ceremony.
4. **Sensory awareness walk:** Lead the students on a slow, mindful walk through the natural setting. Encourage them to engage all their senses, observing the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the land. Ask students to consider how the land can provide healing and nourishment.
5. **Reflection:** Invite students to find a comfortable spot to sit on the ground or on a blanket/mat. Allow them to spend 10-15 minutes in quiet reflection, connecting with the land and contemplating the concept of the "land is medicine."
6. **Journaling/Drawing:** Encourage students to write in their journals, expressing their thoughts and feelings about the exercise and the healing properties of the land. They can write/draw about their sensory experiences, insights, or personal connections with the land.
7. **Sharing Circle with Indigenous Knowledge Holder:** Reconvene the group in a circle and have the Indigenous Knowledge Holder facilitate. Encourage students to share their reflections and journal entries (if they feel comfortable doing so), and ask the Indigenous Knowledge Holder to share their perspective on the concept of "the land is medicine." Facilitate a discussion about the healing aspects of the land and how they might integrate this understanding into their rehab medicine practice.
8. **Closing circle:** Close the exercise by expressing gratitude to the land, the Indigenous Knowledge Holder, and acknowledging the land in its role in healing and well-being. Encourage students to continue reflecting on the concept of "the land is medicine" and consider ways they can incorporate this understanding into their professional and personal lives.
9. **Optional follow-up:** As a follow-up to this exercise, students could be asked to develop a plan to integrate "the land is medicine" concepts into their rehabilitation medicine practice. This could include incorporating outdoor therapy sessions, utilizing traditional Indigenous healing practices with permission, or collaborating with Indigenous communities, elders, knowledge holders, or local Indigenous organizations.

# A Call to Action for Rehab Med



# A Call to Action for Rehab Med:

## Cultivating Safe Spaces and Empowerment for Indigenous Students in Rehabilitation Medicine

**Objective:** To create a separate and safe space for Indigenous students in rehabilitation medicine, fostering empowerment, self-care, and connection with one another. This Call to Action aims to reduce harm by acknowledging and addressing the unique experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous students in a supportive and culturally sensitive environment.

### Materials needed:

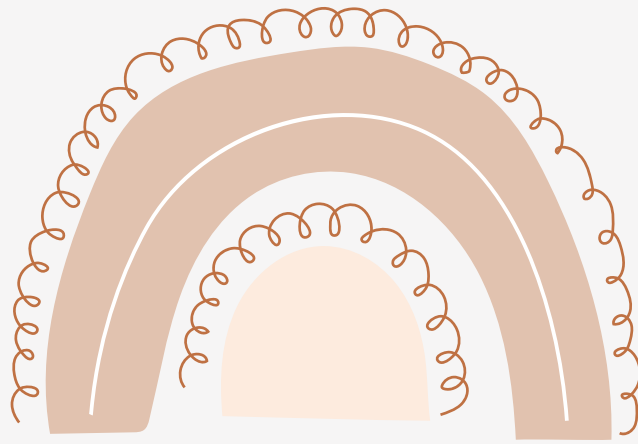
1. A comfortable and culturally appropriate space for gathering at or near the faculty
2. Tea, Bannock, Stew or any other food they would prefer
3. Art supplies or other creative materials (optional)

### Instructions:

1. **Introduction:** Invite Indigenous students to participate in a gathering specifically designed to create a safe space for them to connect, share experiences, and discuss the unique challenges they face in rehabilitation medicine. Ensure that the gathering is facilitated by an Indigenous peer, staff member, or community member who knows Indigenous culture and protocols to maintain cultural safety and understanding.
2. **Opening:** Begin the gathering with a traditional opening or prayer (if appropriate) to create a sense of connection and grounding. This could be led by a participating Indigenous student, an Indigenous facilitator, or a respected Elder.
3. **Sharing Circle:** Initiate a sharing circle, allowing each participant to speak about their experiences, challenges, and successes as an Indigenous student in rehabilitation medicine. Encourage participants to listen respectfully and attentively to one another, offering support and understanding.
4. **Discussion:** Facilitate a group discussion on strategies for self-care, empowerment, and overcoming challenges faced by Indigenous students in the field. This may include sharing coping mechanisms, accessing available resources, and establishing support networks both on and off-campus.
5. **Creative Expression:** Provide participants with art supplies or other creative materials and encourage them to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through art, writing, or other forms of creative expression.
6. **Closing:** Conclude the gathering with a traditional closing or prayer (if appropriate) to maintain cultural continuity and provide a sense of closure.
7. **Follow-up:** Schedule regular gatherings for Indigenous students to continue fostering a sense of community, support, and cultural safety. Encourage participants to stay connected with one another and create a budget to have them meet regularly and to have them be able to invite Indigenous guest speakers and elders in. Encourage Indigenous students to create a national Indigenous student group of rehab med professionals in order to connect, support and network.

By creating a separate and safe and separate space for Indigenous students in rehabilitation medicine, this exercise aims to reduce harm, promote self-care and empowerment, and strengthen connections among Indigenous students. This supportive environment can help Indigenous students navigate the unique challenges they face in their academic and professional journeys.

# Sample Case Studies



# Physiotherapy

## Case Study: Tyler's Recovery from a Work-Related Injury

Tyler is a 40-year-old Indigenous man who works as a construction worker. He sustained a back injury on the job and was referred to a physiotherapy clinic for rehabilitation.

### Initial Assessment:

During the initial assessment, Tyler's physiotherapist notes that he has limited mobility and significant pain in his back. Tyler also shares that he is struggling with the emotional toll of his injury and is feeling disconnected from his cultural background and community.

### Treatment Plan:

The physiotherapist develops a comprehensive treatment plan that incorporates both traditional physiotherapy approaches and Indigenous perspectives, values, and traditions. The plan includes the following components:

- 1. Exercise Therapy:** The physiotherapist develops a customized exercise therapy plan for Tyler to help him regain mobility and strength in his back. The plan includes a combination of strengthening exercises, range of motion exercises, and balance exercises.
- 2. Traditional Healing Practices:** The physiotherapist consults with an Elder from Tyler's community to integrate traditional healing practices into his rehabilitation plan. This includes smudging ceremonies, land-based healing, and talking circles.
- 3. Cultural Support:** The physiotherapist recognizes the importance of cultural support in Tyler's recovery and includes cultural support in his treatment plan. This includes referral to an Indigenous health worker who is trained in traditional healing practices and can provide culturally sensitive support during his rehabilitation journey.
- 4. Mental Health Support:** The physiotherapist recognizes the emotional toll that Tyler's injury has taken and includes mental health support in his treatment plan. This includes referral to a counselor or therapist who is knowledgeable about Indigenous perspectives on health and healing.

### Outcome:

After several months of physiotherapy and support, Tyler makes significant progress in his recovery. He regains mobility and strength in his back and is able to return to work. He also gains a sense of connection to his cultural background and community through the integration of traditional healing practices and cultural support. Tyler becomes more knowledgeable and empowered to take care of his physical and emotional health, and ultimately reaches his goal of returning to his active lifestyle with a renewed sense of strength, purpose, and cultural identity.



# Speech And Language Pathology

## Case Study: Emily's Speech and Language Rehabilitation

Emily is a 5-year-old Indigenous girl who has been diagnosed with a speech and language disorder. She was referred to a speech and language pathology clinic for rehabilitation.

### Initial Assessment:

During the initial assessment, Emily's speech and language pathologist notes that she has difficulty with articulation and language comprehension. Emily's parents also share that they have noticed that she is struggling with social interactions and making friends.

### Treatment Plan:

The speech and language pathologist develops a comprehensive treatment plan that incorporates both traditional speech and language pathology approaches and Indigenous perspectives, values, and traditions. The plan includes the following components:

- 1. Speech and Language Therapy:** The speech and language pathologist develops a customized therapy plan for Emily to help her improve her articulation and language comprehension. The plan includes a combination of exercises and activities that are tailored to Emily's specific needs and preferences.
- 2. Cultural Assessment:** The speech and language pathologist conducts a cultural assessment to identify Emily's needs and preferences related to her cultural background. This assessment helps to inform the development of a culturally sensitive treatment plan.
- 3. Traditional Healing Practices:** The speech and language pathologist consults with an Elder from Emily's community to integrate traditional healing practices into her rehabilitation plan. This includes storytelling, language immersion, and other cultural activities that promote language development.
- 4. Social Support:** The speech and language pathologist recognizes the importance of social support in Emily's rehabilitation and includes social support in her treatment plan. This includes referral to community resources and support groups that promote social interactions and friendships.

### Outcome:

After several months of speech and language therapy and support, Emily makes significant progress in her speech and language development. She improves her articulation and language comprehension, and her social interactions and friendships also improve. Emily gains a sense of connection to her cultural background and community through the integration of traditional healing practices and cultural support. Emily becomes more confident and empowered, and ultimately reaches her goal of improving her speech and language skills with a renewed sense of cultural identity and pride.

# Occupational Therapy

## Case Study: Michael's Occupational Rehabilitation

Michael is a 55-year-old Indigenous man who has been diagnosed with a chronic medical condition that affects his ability to perform his daily activities. He was referred to an occupational therapy clinic for rehabilitation.

### Initial Assessment:

During the initial assessment, Michael's occupational therapist notes that he has difficulty with basic activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, and preparing meals. He is also struggling with depression and isolation related to his medical condition. Michael shares that he has lost touch with his cultural background and community and is feeling disconnected from his sense of identity.

### Treatment Plan:

The occupational therapist develops a comprehensive treatment plan that incorporates both traditional occupational therapy approaches and Indigenous perspectives, values, and traditions. The plan includes the following components:

- 1. Occupational Therapy:** The occupational therapist develops a customized therapy plan for Michael to help him improve his ability to perform his daily activities. The plan includes a combination of exercises, adaptive equipment, and environmental modifications that are tailored to Michael's specific needs and preferences.
- 2. Cultural Assessment:** The occupational therapist conducts a cultural assessment to identify Michael's needs and preferences related to his cultural background. This assessment helps to inform the development of a culturally sensitive treatment plan.
- 3. Traditional Healing Practices:** The occupational therapist consults with an Elder from Michael's community to integrate traditional healing practices into his rehabilitation plan. This includes land-based healing, talking circles, and other cultural activities that promote healing and connection to his cultural background.
- 4. Mental Health Support:** The occupational therapist recognizes the emotional toll that Michael's medical condition has taken and includes mental health support in his treatment plan. This includes referral to a counselor or therapist who is knowledgeable about Indigenous perspectives on health and healing.

### Outcome:

After several months of occupational therapy and support, Michael makes significant progress in his ability to perform his daily activities. He gains more independence and confidence in his daily routines, and his depression and isolation improve as well. Michael also gains a sense of connection to his cultural background and community through the integration of traditional healing practices and cultural support. He becomes more knowledgeable and empowered to take care of his physical and emotional health, and ultimately reaches his goal of living a fulfilling life with a renewed sense of cultural identity and pride.

## Case Study: Rachel's Rehab Medicine Science Journey

Rachel is a 30-year-old Indigenous woman who has been diagnosed with a chronic medical condition that affects her ability to walk and perform her daily activities. She was referred to a rehabilitation medicine science clinic for rehabilitation.

### Initial Assessment:

During the initial assessment, Rachel's rehabilitation medicine scientist notes that she has difficulty with mobility and experiences significant pain in her lower body. Rachel shares that she has lost touch with her cultural background and community and is feeling disconnected from her sense of identity.

### Treatment Plan:

The rehabilitation medicine scientist develops a comprehensive treatment plan that incorporates both traditional rehabilitation medicine science approaches and Indigenous perspectives, values, and traditions. The plan includes the following components:

1. **Medical Assessment:** The rehabilitation medicine scientist conducts a medical assessment to identify the underlying cause of Rachel's mobility issues and pain. The assessment helps to inform the development of a medically sound treatment plan.
2. **Cultural Assessment:** The rehabilitation medicine scientist conducts a cultural assessment to identify Rachel's needs and preferences related to her cultural background. This assessment helps to inform the development of a culturally sensitive treatment plan.
3. **Traditional Healing Practices:** The rehabilitation medicine scientist consults with an Elder from Rachel's community to integrate traditional healing practices into her rehabilitation plan. This includes land-based healing, smudging ceremonies, and other cultural activities that promote healing and connection to her cultural background.
4. **Medication Management:** The rehabilitation medicine scientist develops a medication management plan to help Rachel manage her pain during her rehabilitation process. This includes the use of pain medication when necessary.
5. **Exercise Therapy:** The rehabilitation medicine scientist develops a customized exercise therapy plan for Rachel to help her improve her mobility and strength. The plan includes a combination of exercises and activities that are tailored to Rachel's specific needs and preferences.

### Outcome:

After several months of rehabilitation medicine science and support, Rachel makes significant progress in her mobility and strength. She gains more independence and confidence in her daily routines, and her pain improves as well. Rachel also gains a sense of connection to her cultural background and community through the integration of traditional healing practices and cultural support. She becomes more knowledgeable and empowered to take care of her physical and emotional health, and ultimately reaches her goal of living a fulfilling life with a renewed sense of cultural identity and pride.

# Example: Indigenizing Professional Programs and Strategic Initiatives for the Faculty of Rehab Medicine

## I. Introduction

The Faculty of Rehab Medicine is committed to advancing the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples through education, research, and community engagement. This case study examines the process of Indigenizing the faculty's professional programs and strategic initiatives, highlighting key successes and challenges, and offering insights and recommendations for further improvement.

## II. Background and Context

The faculty recognized the need to better address the unique health and wellness needs of Indigenous peoples, who often experience significant disparities in access to and outcomes from rehabilitation services. The faculty acknowledged the importance of Indigenizing its programs and initiatives to enhance cultural competency, promote the integration of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, and foster more equitable and inclusive learning environments.

## III. Indigenizing Professional Programs

### A. Curriculum Development and Revision

1. Engaging Indigenous community members, scholars, and practitioners in the review and development of curricula for the faculty's professional programs, ensuring that content is culturally relevant, respectful, and reflective of Indigenous experiences and perspectives.
2. Integrating Indigenous healing practices, traditional knowledge, and holistic approaches to health and wellness within the curriculum, offering students a more comprehensive understanding of diverse rehabilitation practices.
3. Providing opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning, such as placements within Indigenous communities, to foster deeper connections and understanding of Indigenous cultures and health needs.

## **B. Faculty and Staff Development**

1. Offering regular cultural competency and anti-racism training for faculty and staff to enhance understanding and respect for Indigenous cultures, traditions, and values.
2. Encouraging and supporting the recruitment and retention of Indigenous faculty members and staff, recognizing the value of their knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences in enriching the learning environment.
3. Providing mentorship and professional development opportunities for Indigenous faculty members and staff, to help build capacity and leadership within the faculty.

## **IV. Strategic Initiatives for Indigenizing the Faculty**

### **A. Building Relationships and Partnerships**

1. Developing and maintaining strong relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations, and leaders, to ensure that the faculty's programs and initiatives are responsive to community needs and priorities.
2. Collaborating with Indigenous partners on research projects, community-based initiatives, and joint educational programs, to advance shared goals of improving health outcomes and advancing reconciliation.
3. Supporting the development of Indigenous-led rehabilitation services and programs, recognizing the importance of self-determination and community-driven solutions to addressing health disparities.

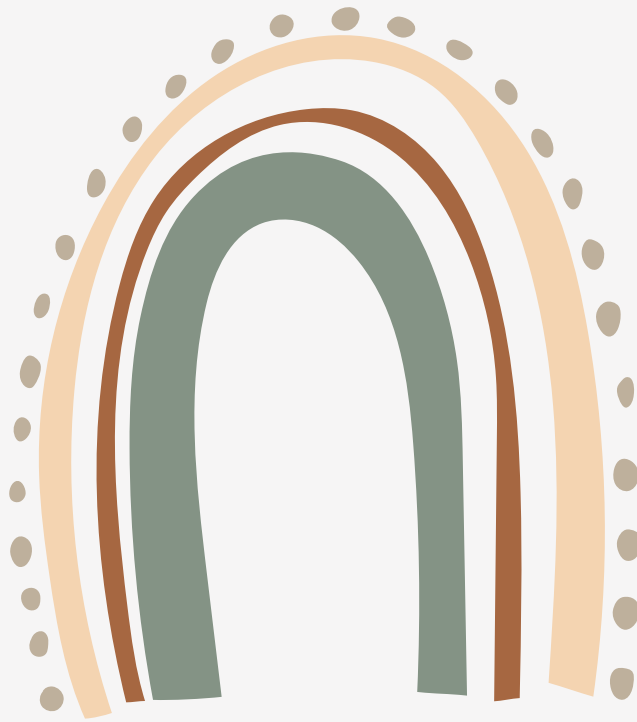
### **B. Enhancing Student Support and Success**

1. Implementing targeted recruitment and outreach strategies to attract and retain Indigenous students, including financial aid, scholarships, and mentorship programs.
2. Providing culturally safe and supportive learning environments, including dedicated spaces for Indigenous students to gather, study, and access resources and support services.
3. Offering specialized academic and personal support services for Indigenous students, recognizing the unique challenges they may face and the importance of holistic support for their success and well-being.

## **V. Reflection and Future Directions**

The Faculty of Rehab Medicine has made significant progress in Indigenizing its professional programs and strategic initiatives, but there is still much work to be done. Ongoing reflection, evaluation, and adaptation are crucial to ensure that these efforts remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples and contribute to the broader goals of decolonization, reconciliation, and social justice.

# Top 10 Things to Act On:





## Top 10 Things to Act On When Indigenizing Rehab Med:

Indigenizing rehabilitation medicine involves incorporating Indigenous knowledge, practices, and perspectives into healthcare services to create more culturally responsive, inclusive, and effective rehabilitation programs. This process is particularly important for providing holistic care to Indigenous patients and communities. Here are some steps to indigenize rehab medicine:

1. **Understand Indigenous perspectives:** Educate yourself on the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the Indigenous communities you serve. Gain an understanding of their health beliefs, traditional healing practices, and the impact of colonization on their well-being.
2. **Collaborate with Indigenous communities:** Engage with Indigenous leaders, elders, healers, and community members to develop rehabilitation programs that are culturally appropriate and respectful of Indigenous values and practices. This collaboration ensures that services are responsive to the unique needs of these communities.
3. **Integrate traditional healing practices:** Recognize the value and effectiveness of Indigenous healing methods, such as herbal medicine, ceremonies, and spiritual practices. Encourage and facilitate the integration of these practices into rehabilitation services when appropriate.
4. **Implement cultural safety training:** Provide cultural safety training for rehab professionals to enhance their understanding of Indigenous cultures, foster respect for cultural differences, and develop culturally sensitive communication skills.
5. **Support Indigenous-led initiatives:** Encourage and support the development of Indigenous-led rehabilitation programs and services. This can include providing resources, sharing expertise, or creating partnerships with Indigenous organizations.
6. **Foster a diverse workforce:** Strive for diversity and inclusivity within rehab medicine by hiring and promoting professionals from Indigenous backgrounds. This helps create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive healthcare environment.
7. **Address language barriers:** Provide translation services and use culturally appropriate language to ensure clear communication with Indigenous patients and their families.
8. **Adapt assessment and intervention tools:** Modify or develop new assessment tools and intervention strategies that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs and preferences of Indigenous patients.
9. **Advocate for systemic change:** Work towards dismantling systemic barriers that contribute to health disparities among Indigenous populations. Advocate for policies and initiatives that support equitable access to healthcare services for all.
10. **Evaluate progress:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of indigenization efforts and make necessary adjustments to ensure that rehabilitation services are increasingly inclusive and culturally responsive to Indigenous patients and communities.

# Top 10 Things to Act On When Decolonizing Rehab Med:

Decolonizing rehabilitation medicine involves recognizing and addressing the historical and ongoing effects of colonization on healthcare systems, practices, and beliefs. This process seeks to create more equitable, culturally sensitive, and inclusive rehabilitation services for diverse populations, especially those from marginalized or Indigenous communities. Here are some ways to decolonize rehab medicine:

1. **Acknowledge the historical context:** Understand the history and ongoing impact of colonization on the health and well-being of Indigenous and marginalized populations. Recognize that historical trauma and systemic oppression can contribute to disparities in health outcomes.
2. **Embrace cultural humility:** Adopt a respectful, self-reflective approach to understanding the diverse cultural backgrounds and beliefs of patients. Be open to learning and unlearning, and always be willing to adapt your practice.
3. **Prioritize cultural competency:** Educate yourself and your colleagues on the cultural practices and beliefs of the communities you serve. Develop culturally appropriate interventions and ensure that rehab professionals are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.
4. **Engage community members:** Involve Indigenous and marginalized community members in the planning, development, and evaluation of rehabilitation programs and services. This collaboration ensures that services are responsive to the unique needs of these communities.
5. **Support traditional healing practices:** Recognize and respect the value of traditional healing methods alongside Western medicine. Encourage and facilitate the integration of traditional practices into rehabilitation services when appropriate.
6. **Advocate for systemic change:** Work towards dismantling systemic barriers that contribute to health disparities. Advocate for policies and initiatives that support equitable access to healthcare services for all.
7. **Address language barriers:** Provide translation services and use culturally appropriate language to ensure clear communication with patients and their families.
8. **Foster a diverse workforce:** Strive for diversity and inclusivity within rehab medicine by hiring and promoting professionals from diverse backgrounds, including Indigenous and marginalized communities.
9. **Collaborate with other disciplines:** Work with experts from other fields, such as social work, psychology, and public health, to develop comprehensive, culturally sensitive rehabilitation programs.
10. **Evaluate progress:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of decolonization efforts and make necessary adjustments to ensure that rehabilitation services are increasingly inclusive and equitable.

# Effective Communication Strategies with Indigenous Peoples in Alberta for Rehab Med:

Effective communication with Indigenous Peoples requires cultural sensitivity, respect, and an understanding of the specific Indigenous communities you are interacting with. Here are some tips for communicating effectively:

- **Learn about the Indigenous communities:** Alberta is home to diverse Indigenous peoples, including the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations. Familiarize yourself with the history, culture, languages, and traditions of these communities to develop a better understanding of their perspectives.
- **Use appropriate terminology:** Be mindful of the language you use when addressing Indigenous individuals or communities. Some preferred terms include First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or the specific names of individual nations or communities (e.g., Cree, Blackfoot, Dene). Avoid outdated or offensive terms.
- **Practice active listening:** Listen attentively and respectfully to Indigenous people when they speak. Acknowledge their feelings and experiences and show empathy. Avoid interrupting or imposing your own opinions or solutions.
- **Be respectful of cultural protocols:** Understand and adhere to the cultural protocols and customs of the Indigenous communities you engage with. This may include seeking permission from community leaders or elders before entering their territories or participating in their ceremonies.
- **Use plain language:** Speak clearly and avoid using jargon or technical terms that may be unfamiliar or confusing to the listener. Offer explanations when necessary and ensure that your message is understood in a gentle way.
- **Be patient and flexible:** Allow for more time in conversations, as Indigenous communication styles may be different from your own. Be open to different ways of sharing information and adapting your communication style as needed.
- **Address language barriers:** Some Indigenous individuals may not be fluent in English or may prefer to communicate in their own language. Arrange for translation services if necessary and use simple, clear language to ensure that your message is understood.
- **Acknowledge historical context:** Be aware of the impact of colonization, residential schools, and other historical traumas on Indigenous communities. Recognize that these experiences may influence communication and trust-building.
- **Build trust and relationships:** Establishing trust and rapport with Indigenous individuals and communities is essential for effective communication. This may involve participating in community events, showing genuine interest in their well-being, and demonstrating a long-term commitment to working together.
- **Seek feedback and learn from mistakes:** Be open to feedback from Indigenous individuals and communities about your communication style and approach. Learn from any mistakes and adapt your methods as needed to ensure more effective communication in the future.
- **Remember, communication is a two-way process that requires mutual respect, understanding, and patience.** By adopting these strategies, you can foster better communication and build strong relationships with Indigenous peoples across Alberta.

# Acceptance of Vulnerability and Knowledge Limits for Rehab Med Practitioners Who Are Non-Indigenous

Being vulnerable in the process of Indigenizing rehab medicine means opening oneself to new perspectives, acknowledging one's limitations, and embracing the learning journey. Vulnerability can lead to deeper understanding, empathy, and meaningful change. Here are some ways to be vulnerable in Indigenizing rehab medicine:

1. Acknowledge your biases and limitations: Recognize that everyone has biases and blind spots, and be willing to confront and address them. Be open to learning and growth, even when it challenges your existing beliefs or understanding.
2. Listen actively and empathetically: Engage in active listening when learning from Indigenous colleagues, patients, or community members. Listen with empathy and humility, and be open to understanding their experiences, perspectives, and emotions.
3. Share your personal experiences: Be open about your own experiences, struggles, and learning journey related to indigenization and cultural competency. Sharing personal stories can foster a supportive and inclusive environment and encourage others to be vulnerable as well.
4. Seek feedback and engage in self-reflection: Regularly seek feedback from Indigenous colleagues, patients, or community members, and engage in self-reflection to identify areas for improvement. Be open to constructive criticism and use it as an opportunity to grow and enhance your cultural competency.
5. Embrace uncertainty and discomfort: Accept that the process of indigenizing rehab medicine can be challenging and uncomfortable. Be willing to embrace uncertainty, adapt to new information, and learn from mistakes.
6. Be open to new perspectives and approaches: Recognize that Indigenous knowledge and healing practices can offer valuable insights and approaches to rehab medicine. Approach these perspectives with curiosity and a willingness to integrate them into your practice.
7. Develop meaningful relationships: Cultivate genuine relationships with Indigenous colleagues, patients, and community members. Be open to sharing your vulnerabilities and learning from each other, fostering trust and understanding.
8. Practice humility and gratitude: Be humble in recognizing that there is always more to learn, and express gratitude for the opportunities to learn from and work with Indigenous peoples.
9. Advocate for change and support others: Use your vulnerability as a catalyst for change by advocating for policies and practices that support the Indigenization of rehab medicine. Support others in their learning journey and create a culture of vulnerability and growth within your workplace or educational setting.

By embracing vulnerability in the process of Indigenizing rehab medicine, you create opportunities for personal and professional growth, foster deeper connections with Indigenous peoples, and contribute to a more culturally sensitive and inclusive

## Examples of Performative Actions in Rehab Med:

Examples of Performative Actions in Rehab Med when Indigenizing refer to superficial or symbolic gestures that may give the appearance of progress without leading to meaningful change or addressing the root causes of systemic issues affecting Indigenous peoples. Some examples of performative actions in rehab med when Indigenizing include:

1. Tokenism: Appointing a few Indigenous individuals to committees or advisory groups without addressing the broader issues of representation, power dynamics, or systemic barriers that may be preventing more widespread Indigenous involvement in decision-making processes.
2. Symbolic gestures: Adding Indigenous artwork or cultural symbols to physical spaces or promotional materials without engaging in substantive efforts to integrate Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, or healing practices into the rehab medicine curriculum or practice.
3. Superficial cultural training: Offering brief, one-time cultural sensitivity or awareness training sessions without providing ongoing support, resources, or opportunities for deeper learning and engagement with Indigenous cultures and histories.
4. Overemphasis on individual actions: Focusing on individual behaviors or attitudes while neglecting to address the broader systemic issues, policies, and practices that contribute to disparities in access to and outcomes from rehabilitation services for Indigenous peoples.
5. Limited community engagement: Engaging with Indigenous communities or organizations in a superficial or one-time manner, rather than establishing ongoing, reciprocal, and respectful partnerships that prioritize the needs, voices, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples.
6. Inadequate funding and resources: Announcing new initiatives or programs aimed at Indigenizing rehab medicine without providing sufficient funding, resources, or support to ensure their long-term success and sustainability.
7. Noncommittal language: Using vague or noncommittal language in policy documents, strategic plans, or mission statements, without outlining clear, measurable goals, timelines, or accountability mechanisms for Indigenizing rehab medicine.

To move beyond performative actions and achieve meaningful progress in Indigenizing rehab medicine, it is essential to prioritize substantive, long-term efforts that address systemic barriers, foster genuine relationships with Indigenous communities, and integrate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and healing practices into all aspects of rehab medicine education and practice.



# “Unfreezing” yourself in rehab med when Indigenizing

“Unfreezing” yourself in rehab med when Indigenizing refers to overcoming resistance to change, embracing new perspectives, and becoming more open to the process of Indigenization. This involves recognizing the need for change, taking steps to educate oneself, and actively engaging in the process of integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into rehab medicine. Here are some strategies to help “unfreeze” yourself in rehab med when Indigenizing:

1. Acknowledge the need for change: Recognize the historical and ongoing disparities faced by Indigenous peoples in accessing healthcare, including rehab medicine, and understand the importance of Indigenization in addressing these disparities.
2. Educate yourself: Seek out resources and learning opportunities to deepen your understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and perspectives. This may involve attending workshops, conferences, or webinars, engaging with Indigenous-led organizations, or reading books and articles on Indigenous issues.
3. Reflect on your biases and assumptions: Engage in self-reflection to identify your own biases, assumptions, and areas of growth related to Indigenous issues. Be open to questioning and challenging your own beliefs and practices.
4. Develop a growth mindset: Embrace a growth mindset, recognizing that you will not have all the answers and that the process of Indigenizing rehab medicine will involve ongoing learning and adaptation. Be open to new ideas, experiences, and ways of thinking.
5. Foster relationships with Indigenous communities: Actively engage with Indigenous communities, organizations, and individuals to build relationships, seek guidance, and learn from their experiences and knowledge.
6. Involve Indigenous voices in decision-making: Ensure that Indigenous perspectives and voices are included in decision-making processes related to rehab medicine, such as curriculum development, policy changes, and program planning.
7. Implement culturally-responsive practices: Integrate Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and healing practices into your rehab medicine practice, while respecting the cultural diversity and individual needs of Indigenous patients.
8. Advocate for systemic change: Use your influence within your professional network and organization to advocate for systemic changes that support the Indigenization of rehab medicine, such as increased funding, representation, and support for Indigenous-led initiatives.
9. Share your learning journey: Share your experiences, insights, and learning related to Indigenization with your colleagues, peers, and professional networks to foster a broader culture of openness, curiosity, and growth.

By taking these steps to “unfreeze” yourself in rehab med when Indigenizing, you can actively contribute to the process of Indigenization, fostering a more inclusive, culturally-responsive, and equitable rehab medicine practice.

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