

# Linking Health, Equity and Sustainability in Schools

A New and Traditional Way of Thinking and  
Acting

International Symposium  
July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010  
Keynote Presentation I



# Indigenous School Health Framework

- Sponsoring Organizations

- National Collaborating Centre on Aboriginal Health

Report on the framework development process to date.

Available at- <http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/>

- Canadian Council on Learning Knowledge Centre on Aboriginal Learning
- On-line space for discussion of the framework is available at: [www.aboriginalschoolhealth.wetpaint.com](http://www.aboriginalschoolhealth.wetpaint.com)

# Background to the project:

## Goal-

- Co-construct a framework that would be broadly representative of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous definitions and perspective on health and wellness
- To design a framework that would ground a school health approach in the strengths, knowledge and practices of Indigenous communities

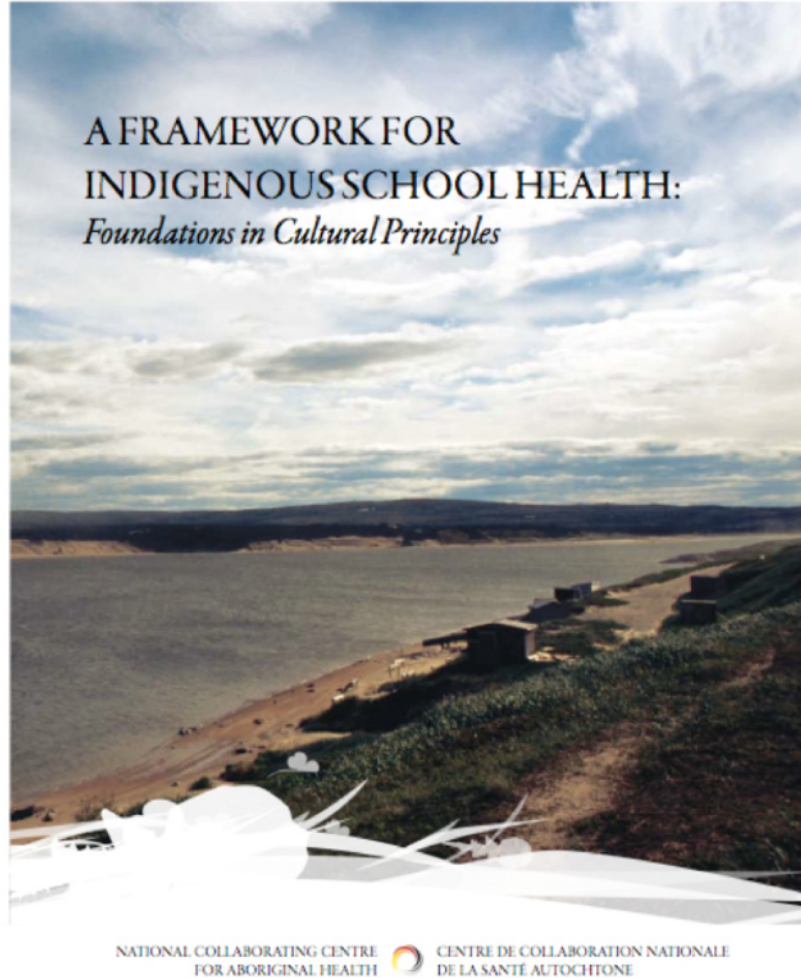
# Approach:

- Provide a working space on-line for Indigenous educators and health practitioners to engage in discussion around issues specific to Indigenous communities and collaborate on building the framework:

[www.aboriginalschoolhealth.wetpaint.com](http://www.aboriginalschoolhealth.wetpaint.com)

- Host dialogue circles in face-to-face forums where existing approaches can be shared and further discussions about Indigenous school health can be promoted

# Outcomes

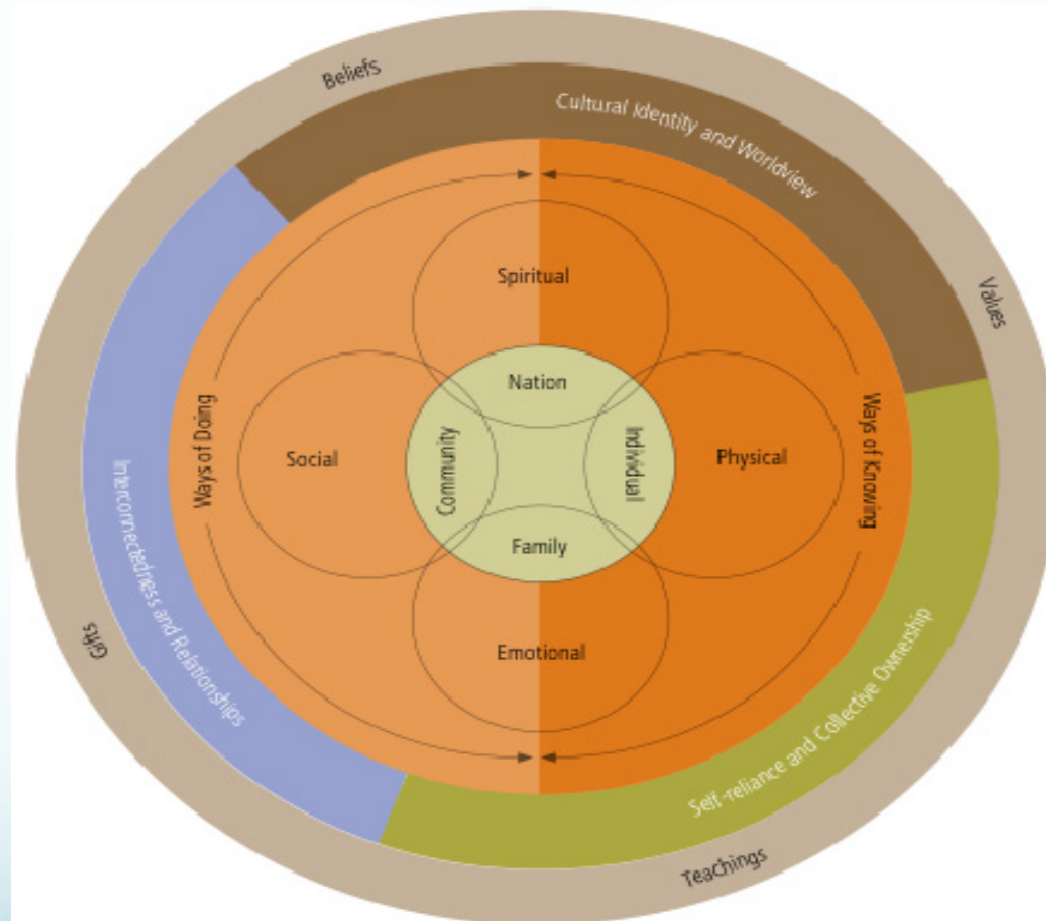


Digital copy of  
the report is  
available at:

<http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/>

# The Indigenous School Health Framework

Indigenous School Health: Framework



## Why is this framework important for Indigenous school health?

*Most, if not all of the public health challenges that we are facing... are directly related to how we organize our societies and live our lives, with inequities among and within the populations again standing out. Inequities both fuel the emergence of new public health challenges and result from them. (WHO, 2010:4)*

*Aboriginal children suffer a greater burden of these inequities than all other children across the country [Canada]... The holistic nature of children's health and well-being demands multi-level approaches designed to address individual and collective inequalities. A social determinants approach provides a way to understand and address the interrelated context of environmental, social and historical factors underlying health disparities. (UNICEF, 2009:2)*

# Contexts for Equity

## WHO Principles

- Health is a function of political-social & economic power & resources
- Health equity provides overall progress in health improvements with no sections of the population being left behind
- Health equity requires that the social determinants of health are addressed



## Addressing SDOHs in the Indigenous context:

*Differences in values should be given full attention in the process of scaling up any policy programme that attempts to redress inequities within populations.*  
(WHO, 2010:272)

- Critical mass buy-in at policy levels
- Inter-sectoral approach
- Institutionalization of approaches
- Recognition of self-governance issues, shared roles & responsibilities & co-management approaches
- Sustained impact through vertical short term and horizontal long term strategies



# Closing the gap in a generation:

1. Recognize the unique contexts of Indigenous populations.
2. Understand the components of holistic, strength-based health promoting processes integral to the culture.
3. Focus on rebuilding personal and cultural continuity, grounded in values and belief systems.
4. Transfer the ownership of programs to the community.



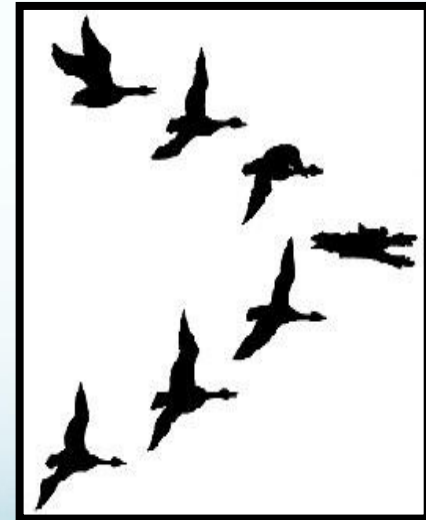
# Cultural Identity & Worldview

## ***Working for the common good:***

Inuit worldview is strongly grounded in social accountability and unity. All individuals have a responsibility to those around them. Working for the common good is an expectation for all ages and is central to why Inuit were such a successful society.



*Aulajaaqtut*- a school health curriculum that focuses on rebuilding cultural continuity and collective identity as a wellness improving strategy.



# Interconnectedness & Relations



## **5 Ulu & 5 Sakkus on a Drum**

- Bringing together the activity (*ulu*) with innovative thinking (*sakku*) into a circle on the drum head.
- The drum head, a circular construct has no beginning and no end. There is no one part that is more important than the other. All are part of the whole.

By revisiting, reflecting on one's actions, thoughts and beliefs one is able to refine and extend learning to a new level. Including reflection as part of the learning cycle one becomes more innovative, building on strengths and skills with a new and fuller understanding.

# Connectedness to Place & Belonging

Curriculum competences:

- Respectful stewardship
- Observation & awareness
- Nature as provider, healer, sustainer—roles & responsibility of the individual
- Spiritual connections & cultural laws
- Personal health & wellbeing associated with the health of the environment



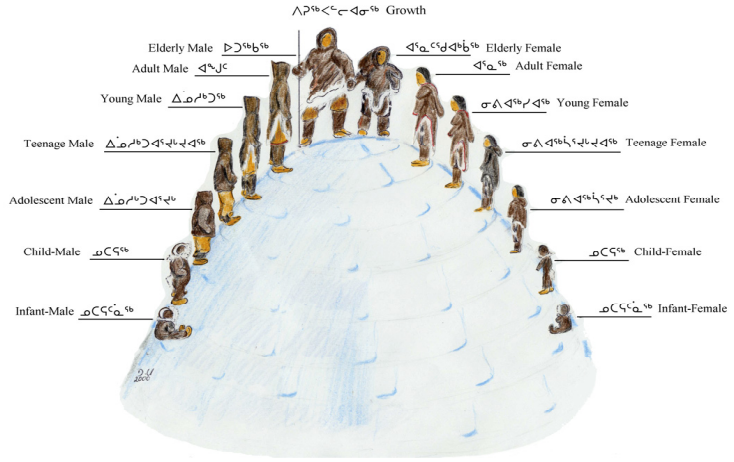
# Self-reliance & Collective Ownership



## Curriculum foundations:

- *Pilimmaksarniq*-Skilled independence & practice
- Continuous improvement
- Self-reliance—mastery

***Inunnguiniq*-- making a human being**  
 Fully developing the person in all areas to create a level of strength that results in success and survival for both the individual and the group.



# Implications for School Health

*Inuit know a lot more about Inuit and it would be better if the Inuit help their own people. Because the mental health worker comes from the south...all they see is what is written down on paper, they don't see our lives, they don't see the person.*

(Defining and Servicing Mental Health in a Remote Northern Community, Harckham, 2003)



# Contact



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