PERSPECTIVES ON INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH:
Cultural Teachings and Implications for Care

The Dr. Robert M. Martin Memorial Lecture
Department of Clinical Health Psychology

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OVERVIEW

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There are more differences within groups than between groups.
Foundations

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5"
The problem with simple linear relationships.
FOUNDATIONS
There are 3 possible outcomes to every intervention, no matter how well-intentioned.
1. Improvement
1. Improvement
2. No change
1. Improvement
2. No change
3. Make things worse
FOUNDATIONS OF WELLNESS

• Ability to self-regulate
• Ability to tolerate distress
• Ability to meet the demands of daily life
• Ability to be in meaningful relationship(s)
• Ability to take responsibility for oneself and/or others
• Ability to use adaptive coping behaviours
• Ability to manage physical needs, etc.
FOUNDATIONS OF WELLNESS
FOUNDATIONS OF WELLNESS

FIGURE 1: CULTURE AS INTERVENTION MODEL

Indigenous Wellness Framework

- PURPOSE
  - PHYSICAL BEHAVIOUR: Expressed through Wholeness Way of Being
  - SPIRITUAL BEHAVIOUR: Expressed through Belief Identity

- HOPE
  - MENTAL BEHAVIOUR: Expressed through Intuition Understanding Rationale
  - EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOUR: Expressed through Attitude Relationship

MEANING

BELONGING

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FOUNDATIONS OF WELLNESS

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INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect
- Mental illness
- Domestic violence
- Problem drug and alcohol use
- Parental incarceration
- Parental separation
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Major Findings

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common. Almost two-thirds of study participants reported at least one ACE, and more than one in five reported three or more ACEs.

The ACE score, a total sum of the different categories of ACEs reported by participants, is used to assess cumulative childhood stress. Study findings repeatedly reveal a graded dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes across the life course.

As the number of ACEs increases so does the risk for the following*:

- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Illicit drug use
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Poor work performance
- Financial stress
- Risk for intimate partner violence

*This list is not exhaustive. For more outcomes see selected journal publications.

Dose-response describes the change in an outcome (e.g., alcoholism) associated with differing levels of exposure (or doses) to a stressor (e.g., ACEs). A graded dose-response means that as the dose of the stressor increases the intensity of the outcome also increases.
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

ACE Score vs. Smoking

Felitti, 2004
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

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ACE Score vs. Adult Alcoholism

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ACE Score vs. Adult Alcoholism

Felitti, 2004
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

ACE Score vs. Injected Drug Use

Felitti, 2004
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Felitti, 2004

ACE Score vs. Injected Drug Use

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Male with ACE score of 6 compared to male with ACE score of 0 has 46-times greater risk

Felitti, 2004
The ACE Study and the considerable body of research on early trauma send the same message for suicide [for more information about the ACE Study, go to our first posting]. Early adverse childhood experiences dramatically increase the risk of suicidal behaviors. ACEs have a strong, graded relationship to suicide attempts during childhood/adolescent and adulthood. An ACE score of 7 or more increased the risk of suicide attempts 51-fold among children/adolescents and 30-fold among adults (Dube et al, 2001). In fact, Dube and colleagues commented that their estimates of population attributable fractions for ACEs and suicide are “of an order of magnitude that is rarely observed in epidemiology and public health data.” Nearly two-thirds (64%) of suicide attempts among adults were attributable to ACEs and 80% of suicide attempts during childhood/adolescence were attributed to ACEs. Further, while system responses to family violence continue to place greater emphasis on physical forms of abuse, the strongest predictor of future suicide attempts in ACE research was emotional abuse.
EXECUTIVE FUNCTION
Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan
SELF-EFFICACY  BANDURA, 1982

- Individual's belief in her or his ability to achieve goals
  - Choices regarding behavior
  - Motivation
  - Work performance
  - Thought patterns and responses
  - Health behaviors
  - Relationship to loss of control
  - Factors affecting self-efficacy
SELF-EFFICACY  
BANDURA, 1982

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https://www.cbc.ca/kidscbc2/the-feed/do-you-know-what-a-powwow-is
DEVELOPMENT

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FOUNDATIONS OF WELLNESS

Predictability
Consistency
Warmth
Validation
Expectations
Consequences
Self-Efficacy

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CORRECTIVE EXPERIENCES

- Events that challenge one's fear or expectations and lead to new outcomes
- Often facilitated by a skilled clinician
  - Engage in new behaviors
  - Adopt more healthy ways of relating to others
  - Develop a more positive view of self
  - Feel previously unacceptable feelings

CULTURE-BASED APPROACHES

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