

Developing a Culturally Restorative Approach to
Aboriginal Child and Youth Development –
Transitions to Adulthood

Thematics of Aboriginal Development

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Overview



- **Sitting Eagle – Teaching**
- **Defining Culturally Restorative Practice**
- **Building cultural concepts into service practice**

Context



- **Historical Context**
- **Historical Trauma**
- **The Soul Wound**
- **Current Issues**

Leadership



- Successful engagement with Aboriginal people
- Cultural safety
- Leadership
 - Transformational
 - Visionary
 - Moral
 - Social Responsibility

Thematic of Aboriginal Development



- Development is the changes in human behavior that occur throughout the lifespan where all parts of self are evaluated through a worldview that is different from Aboriginal context.
- Developmental theories are typically stage theories involving task completion or milestones. These are also evaluated in light of emotion, intellect, physical and social domains.
- All of these theories are missing one key domain – the spirit.

Thematic of Aboriginal Development



- Applying these theories to Aboriginal youth will not provide an accurate description because it is quantified against mainstream norms, exclusive of the socio-economic or contextual factors.
- Aboriginal development must be viewed in the context of historical factors and consequences on present day issues. The present day issues must be reconciled with cultural safety efforts.

Thematic of Aboriginal Development



- Aboriginal Context
- Thematic begins with:
 - Aboriginal worldview,
 - Cultural structure,
 - Cultural attachment,
 - Cultural Identity development,
 - Relational development and
 - Task achievement.



Aboriginal worldview – Aki naanaagadawaabiwi



**Ways of Knowing –
Anishinaabe
Naanaagadawedamowinan**

**Anishinaabe
Gikendaasowin**



Cultural Structure
Anishinaabe
Zaagaswe'idiwin

Cultural Structure – Day's Definition of Culture



Cultural structure is made up of cultural variables such as:

- values (ishpendaagokin);
- language and communication patterns(azhawinamaadiwin);
- family orientation (izhiningodogamig);
- healing beliefs and practices (noojimotwaawin gaye izhichegewin);
- religion (izhitwaawin);
- art/dance/music (ozhichiganan, miimi'idiwin nagamo(an));

Cultural Structure



Cultural structure is made up of cultural variables such as:

- diet and food(inanjigewin);
- recreation(izhimamaajiiwin);
- clothing(gigishkigan(an));
- history(mewinzha);
- social status(eshpendaagozid);
- social group interaction (oko'idiwin)

Cultural Structure

Clan - Doodem



- Crane – chieftainship and leadership for external negotiations
- Loon – chieftainship and leadership for internal responsibility and effective community management
- Fish (turtle) – philosophers, mediators and visionary for program planning, design and leadership.
- Bear – guardians, healers, historians, protectors of justice and legal issues
- Martin (lynx) – hunters, providers, and warriors for environmental protection and economic development
- Deer (hoof clan) – reconcilers and pursuers of well-being for the purpose of effective communication/social development.
- Bird Clan – spiritualists, teachers, pursuers of knowledge; facilitators of ongoing education and survival of the people.

Cultural Structure Language - Inwewin



- Aboriginal values are within the language, it is a teaching language. (80% verbs, no differentiation between male and female).
- Anishinaabe language is based on relationships and people who speak the language view the world on a much deeper level.
- Example: grief and ninondemowin

Cultural Structure

Value Development - Ishpendaagokin

- 9 values consistent across Aboriginal cultures: vision/wholeness, spirit-centered, respect/harmony, kindness, honesty/integrity, sharing, strength, bravery/courage, wisdom, respect/humility (Hart, 2002).
- Seven Grandfather teachings: love, wisdom, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth.
- Mino-bimaadiziwin: sharing, respect and spirituality. Sharing facilitates equality within a system (knowledge, food, life experiences are shared, sharing eliminates individualism and greed. Respect is to treat others with honor, non-interference and non-judgement. Spirituality comes with understanding that all things have a spirit and are viewed within a spiritual context.

Cultural Structure

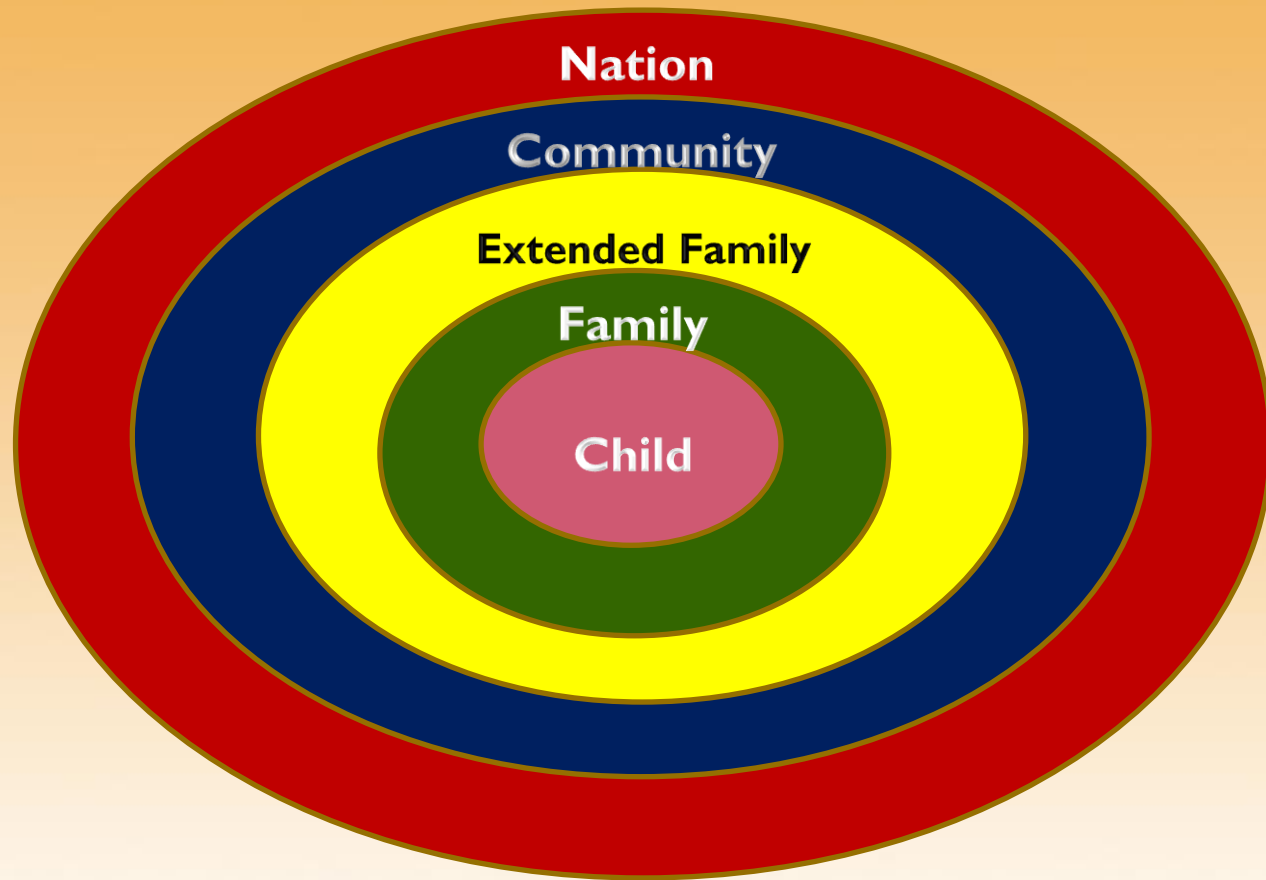


- Cultural Structure is held together through customs, traditions, rituals, ceremonies.
 - Customs are universal ideas congruent among many Nations.
 - Traditions are the handing down of knowledge/practice through generations
 - Rituals are rites or procedures for religious practice
 - Ceremonies are formal or public spiritual activities.
 - Traditions, rituals and ceremonies will vary within families, communities, and Nations.

Cultural Structure

Natural Protective Network -

Inaadiziwin





Cultural Attachment Wiidamaagowiziwinan



Cultural Identity Formation Ino'idiziwin

Aboriginal Identity



- Minority youth are challenged from school age to incorporate various cultural perspectives.
- The developmental tasks of minority youth are far more challenging as these youth must adapt to at least two cultures.
- Identity for Aboriginal children must be considered with the understanding of adaptation of worldviews; however, the core of Aboriginal identity must continue to be developed.



Cultural Identity Development

- Begins with understanding who you are and what your sacred purpose is- while being grounded in cultural structures.
- Can be restored at any age
- There is always an opportunity for growth and development through cultural structures
- Development requires an understanding of the colonial process and subsequent impacts on a Nation.



Relationships – Gidinawemaaganinanig



Task Completion Gashkitwaasin or gashkichigewin



Models founded on Indigenous Knowledge



Western Models

Recognizing Differences



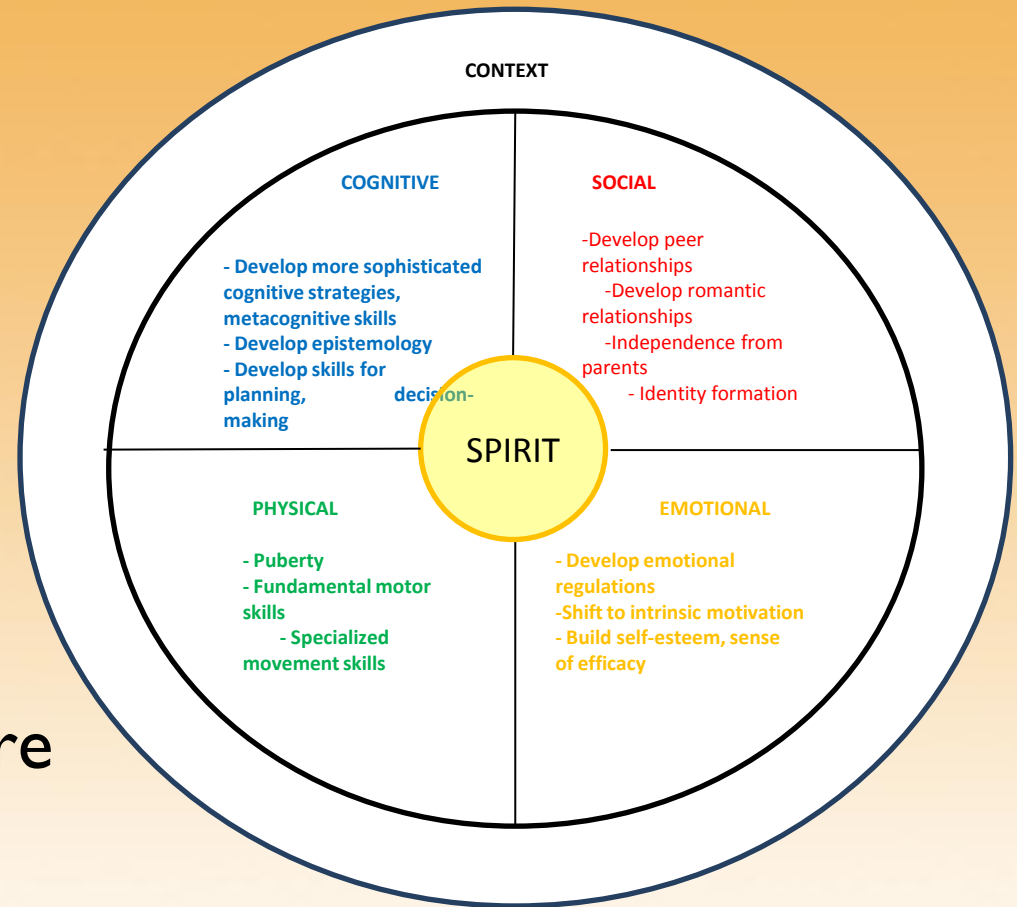
- Trajectories for Aboriginal child and youth development must recognize variables such as:
 - Historical context
 - Contemporary issues
 - Access to culturally safe and supportive services
 - Socio-economic context.

These variables alone with the Thematic of Aboriginal development must be included into the developmental framework as a best practice for Aboriginal people.

This will allow for Aboriginal children to succeed with confidence.

Aboriginal Worldview on Development

- All parts of self are included within this model.
- Aboriginal core is the spirit
- Other domains are captured: social, emotional, cognitive, physical.
- Contextual variables are included.



Implications for Child and Youth Services



- Deep seated effects of colonization
 - Medical wave
 - Addressing societal oppression
- Aboriginal knowledge systems are alive and well
 - Shifts in policy warrant consideration
 - Interventions designed by Aboriginal people
- This project promotes a better understanding of Aboriginal youth in child welfare, mental health and youth justice systems.
 - The trajectories form a framework for ensuring healthy development

Implications for Child and Youth Services



- There is a need for policy makers to support the development of cultural interventions and culturally safe research
- Culturally restorative practices within agencies will facilitate human development and decrease barriers in the current system.
- A shift in operational paradigms through development of professional learning communities to discuss cross-cultural work.

Miigwech!

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