

Understanding, Promoting and Supporting Indigenous Learners

FINAL REPORT

Executive Summary



In November of 2016 The Ontario Ministry of Education launched a province wide engagement process to develop a shared vision on how they can best support the well-being of all students in publicly funded schools. As a stakeholder the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) committed to ensuring Indigenous perspectives were represented and included in the discussions and Indigenous voices were included in Ontario's vision.

On October 23 to 24, 2017, ONECA gathered a diverse group of Indigenous counsellors, teachers, student support workers, directors of education from First Nations and FNMI schoolboard leads from across Ontario to have a focused discussion on Indigenous well-being in schools. We wanted to gain insight into the following areas – Understanding, Promoting, Supporting, and Measuring from an Indigenous perspective.

The main focus of the discussions were on K-12 however we knew at the beginning of the session that we would need to move the discussion to life long learning and take a holistic approach to truly engage and gather information. In order to engage participants and to create a safe and culturally responsive environment, we chose to use the medicine wheel and its four quadrants: spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental, as the foundation for the discussion. The participants were divided into smaller groups and assigned a facilitator who was responsible for facilitating and recording the discussions.

This report describes what we learned from the 99 participants in attendance and from those who completed the online survey.

Foremost, we heard that people appreciated our use of the medicine wheel as it was important to develop the whole person. Balance and well-being means that you need to take care of the spiritual, physical, emotional and mental elements and that this will provide for a healthy mind, body, and spirit. We heard that it was very important to respect individuality and diversity amongst learners and the stages of understanding and knowledge about Indigenous and non-Indigenous (Christian or other) practices, customs, and beliefs and further, to remove assumptions about spirituality, education, relationships and choices. Collective well-being was important and participants expressed that schools have a role in supporting the well-being of communities and families, as well as the individual.



Well-being is nurturing the mind, body, spirit and emotions equally so that students can live a healthy, balanced life.

Outreach and Engagement

A two-day conference was held in Sault Ste. Marie on October 23 and 24, 2017 with ten members invited from each of ONECA's 11 districts and 15 participants from the FNMI leads. To engage and capture as many voices as possible, the option of completing an online survey for those who were unable to attend the conference was also provided.

The groups were assigned facilitators and using the medicine wheel as a guide and a foundation for a discussion, participants were assigned the task of providing feedback on the following series of questions:

Understanding Well-being

What does well-being look like?

What are the factors that contribute to well-being?

What are factors that influence well-being both positive and negative?

Promoting and Supporting Well-being

What are the factors, people or supports that contribute to well-being?

How can we better support & promote well-being?

What resources do we already have? What resources do we need or could better utilize?

Who needs to be involved in supporting and promoting well-being?

The Medicine Wheel was used to guide the discussions and examine the four elements that need to be equally nurtured to attain Well-being.

How will we know if we are successful?

What might be some of the indicators that we are doing a good job?

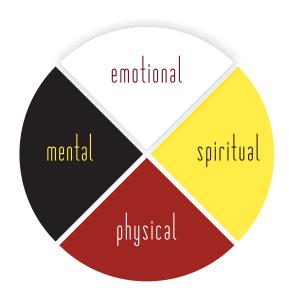
How might we measure that we are doing a good job?

Creating an Indigenous Well-being Toolkit

What needs to go in to the tool kit?

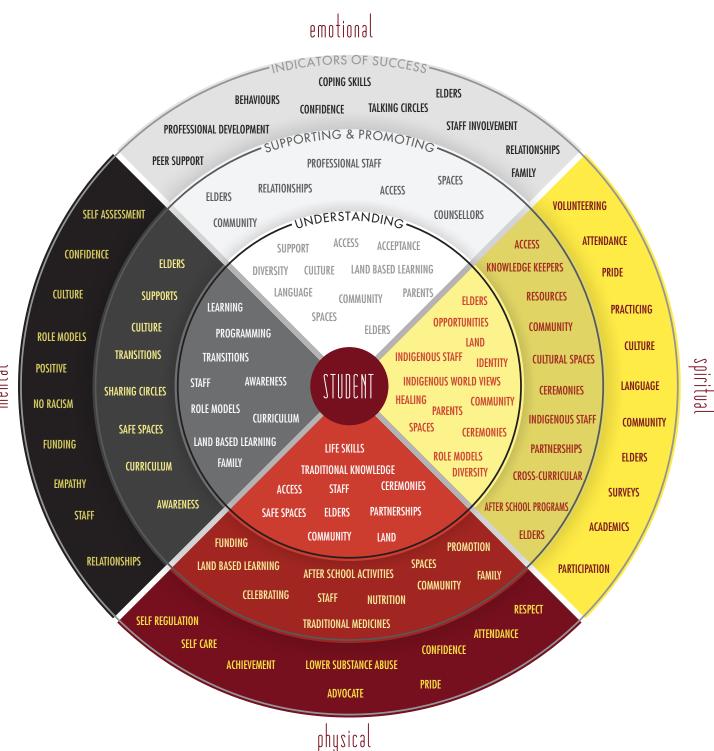
What do you want every school to know?

What would be helpful to you in your work? Best practices.



Engagement Session at a Glance

The diagram provides a summary of the key words and recurring themes & phrases given by participants in the two day engagement session.



Summative

Understanding well-being

Participants told us that students need to have a positive sense of identity and that it was especially important that there was collective well-being of community. Indigenous well-being has and continues to be impacted by colonialism, therefore it is important to understand the lived experience of Indigenous students. It is deeply rooted in the connection to land, language, culture, and places that connect families and communities.

Indigenous students must feel safe spiritually, physically, emotionally and mentally. They have to have a sense of belonging and know that Indigenous voices are valued and respected. Students need to see their culture reflected in the school, in curriculum, and visible throughout the school. The school environment needs to be inclusive and allow students and staff to learn, practice, and share Indigenous knowledge. Well-being is dependent on having healthy relationships and the involvement of family and community including Elders and knowledge keepers. There is a need to include ceremony, traditional food and opportunities for students to learn on the land. Students must be confident, have pride in their identity as Indigenous students and feel safe expressing their opinions and sharing their values and beliefs. It is important to recognize the diversity among the Indigenous population. They must be equipped with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices and to actively participate within their schools and communities.

Promoting and supporting well-being

Participants told us that we need to recognize the diversity amongst Indigenous people and that well-being can be different for each individual and unique to specific communities. There is a shared responsibility to support and promote the well-being of students. We can attain well-being by increasing the self-esteem of students and by offering students opportunities to explore, practice and reflect on their own culture and identity in a safe celebratory manner. Participants identified the following areas that need to be promoted and supported to increase the well-being of Indigenous learners.

Relationships

- With parents, First Nation communities
- Build partnerships with agencies
- Between First Nation leadership & schools
- With the land and the environment

People

- Culturally competent teachers and school staff
- Family, includes parents, grandparents, extended family
- Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Faith Keepers
- Counsellors, Mental Health Workers
- Role Models and Mentors

Culturally Safe Spaces

- To hold ceremony, smudge or receive support from counsellors and Elders
- Access to medicines and Elders
- Hold talking circles and sharing
- Traditional grounds and land based learning

Assessments

- Assessment tools need to consider the whole child
- Tools that reflect Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing
- Qualitative and quantitative data important

Programming

- Self Esteem and confidence building
- Culture and language programs
- Life skills
- Healthy living
- Indigenous curriculum and resources
- Opportunities to build skills and participate in ceremonies
- Land based learning experiential learning

Policy

- School boards need to include Indigenous contributions and lived experience
- Indigenous Education Councils need to have a mandate and be supported

The key elements

There was consensus amongst participants that in order to have a positive impact on well-being the following key elements need to be present:

- A system that encourages and supports all learners to experience Indigenous culture, language, and way of life
- A system that understands, respects, and values Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing
- A wholistic approach to teaching and learning that includes lifelong learning
- Assessments and practices that consider the whole child



Group discussion during concurrent workshop. Elder and keynote speaker Leona Nahwegahbow joined the engagement sessions.

Knowing and measuring success

Participants expressed that it was important to consider both qualitative and quantitative data when considering whether progress was being made.

Participants identified the following key areas that could be monitored to examine and measure progress:

- Access to and participation in cultural activities, Elders and ceremonies by both students and staff
- Availability and access to cultural supports, resources, activities, curriculum
- Greater presence of Elders and Indigenous staff in schools
- Increase in student supports, counsellors, mental health counsellors, advisors
- Increase in self-esteem, pride, confidence, self-regulation, volunteerism
- Improvement in relationships between school staff, students, parents, community
- Academic achievement levels
- Decrease in racism and bullying
- Mental health and physical health improvements less referrals, coping skills improved
- Use of Indigenous resources and application
- Improvement of peer relationships
- Reports from parents and families on their child's experience
- Reports from educators on class participation and attendance
- Student self-assessments

Requested Resources & Areas of Need

Community —	Texts and Written Materials
Templates of community resources	Indigenous Bibliography
Letters and forms	Children's books
	TRC – Calls to Action
Culture and Language —	Histories
Ceremonies and traditions specific to regions	Curriculum
List of Elders, bibliography – knowledge	Stories
Indigenous phrases that can be used in the classroom	Residential School
Medicine wheel teachings	Transitions
Seven grandfather teachings Land based learning - environment	Grade 8 to secondary, secondary to post secondary
Healing activities	On reserve to publicly funded schools
Elder protocols	· ·
Flags	Life Skills
Ceremonial objects and clothing	Self esteem building
Treaties	Parenting
	Cooking
Food and Nutrition —	Counselling
Harvesting	Trauma based counselling
Traditional medicines	Sharing circles
Cookbook of traditional foods	
Nutrition resources	Training
	How to implement the TRC
Online Resources —	Mental Health First Aid
List of websites and web based resources	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
Links to the Ontario Ministry of Education policies	
Links to Boards of Education	Grants and Funding
Links to Indigenous education resources	Links to grants and funding

Inderstanding Well-being Factors, Contributors & Influences

Spiritual

It is very important to respect the individuality and diversity among learners and the stages of understanding knowledge about Indigenous or non-Indigenous (Christian or other) practices, customs, beliefs and to remove assumptions about spirituality, education, relationship, and choices. The key is valuing different world views across cultures, backgrounds, nations, languages, and respecting each person's belief systems and their spirituality.

- Having access to Elders, knowledge keepers, medicines, ceremony, language, teachings
- Opportunities to learn about Indigenous world views, ceremonies, teachings
- Connection to land through ceremony and land based learning, medicines, teachings, harvesting
- Identity allowing students to have a voice
- Cross cultural training and awareness
- Teacher training; awareness of traditions and cultures practiced as well as having traditions and cultures imbedded across the curriculum, as needed.
- Establishing and supporting an Indigenous Education Advisory Committee and integrating an accessible approach to student success.
- Indigenous staff who are grounded in language and culture
- Healing and reconciliation; respect for each other. Students can share their voices without judgement
- Parental involvement needs to be present within the schools to support and participate in cultural activities
- Community schools need to be connecting with community to participate in gatherings, cultural days, field trips, significant spiritual places
- Positive role models need to be involved to support spiritual well-being including parents, family and community at school and at home
- Creation of safe cultural spaces for students to participate in talking circles, smudging, ceremony and to receive teachings
- Talking about the history of colonialism and how it impacts students will create understanding

Physical

- Traditional knowledge, ceremonies, medicines, land based learning, fishing, seasonal harvesting, foods
- Leadership land based survival programs
- Access to knowledge keepers, Elders, traditional Indigenous activities such as games and teachings
- Initiatives that develop life skills and that support students with building self-confidence, self-care, healthy living, and cultural identity
- Partnerships building strong healthy relationships that connect community to school and home increased parental involvement will increase access to knowledge
- Safe spaces facilities that support physical activities
- Staff counsellors, mental health workers and teachers who have cross-cultural training and are able to support students in a culturally responsive way

Mental

- Learning styles teachers need to be able to recognize and teach to the learning style of the student and allow for opportunities to reflect
- Community based programs that connect and include the whole family, at all stages of life and recognize that
 these learning experiences need to be acknowledged and valued
- Programming needs to reflect the needs of the student and provide training that supports their mental well-being such as coping skills, resiliency training, confidence building, identity, and life skills
- Transition programs that support students who are moving from on-reserve to off-reserve
- Indigenous support staff, mental health workers, and counsellors who can assist students by building capacity, promoting values and supporting education attainment
- Increased awareness and respect for Indigenous world view, belief systems, protocols, and ceremony
- Role models play an important role in mentoring and supporting students
- Land based teachings create a sense of belonging, identity and allow for increasing knowledge of local history (both family and community)
- Curriculum Mental health and well-being should be offered as curriculum and needs to include parenting classes, safeTALK, and activities that support mental health

Emotional

- Access to social, emotional and mental health supports, counselling, peer supports, mentoring and programs such as safeTALK, ASIST and Mental Health First Aid
- Access to knowledge keepers, teachers, ceremonies and health care services such as dental, eye testing, and sexual health
- Diversity, accepting and promoting belonging and involvement
- Culture, language, traditional teachings
- Spaces having a safe space with access to nutrition, sacred medicines, elders and visuals
- Acceptance of the diversity of the students and understanding of local and regional histories
- Parental involvement, building relationships between schools, families and communities
- Land based learning and acknowledging First Nation territories
- Community supportive networks at home and in the community

Promoting and Supporting Well-being



Spiritual

- Students, staff, trustees, having access to Knowledge Keepers and Elders
- Resources Indigenous resources available to staff and students and includes academic resources, partnerships with agencies, programs, languages, books, videos and materials
- Connection to community integration of spiritual practices from the wider community (Chief and Council, education departments and school boards)
- Dedicated cultural spaces
- Includes Indigenous support staff, counsellors, mental health workers, faith keepers, elders, and community members. Schools need to acknowledge and respect the importance of lived experience and access local resource people.
- Cross-curricular approach to integrating knowledge and awareness about Indigenous peoples, histories and colonialism
- After school programs beading, singing, regalia making, storytelling, etc.
- Opportunities to participate in cultural activities and ceremony

Physical

- After school activities student run and led groups, music, art, dance, outdoor activities, health challenges and financial support to sustain programs
- Promotion and integration of cross-curricular Indigenous knowledge
- Sustainable funding for mental health workers, professional development for staff, cultural spaces, family wellness programs, cultural teachers, Elders, knowledge keepers, land based learning activities
- Land based learning traditional medicines, harvesting, ecosystems, sacred places
- Celebrating having the presence of the eagle staff or other sacred items at student celebrations such as graduation
- Community partners field trips to First Nations
- Nutritional lunch programs and healthy cooking. Access to traditional harvesting activities, fishing, trapping, hide tanning, gathering foods and medicines
- Spaces architectural spaces designed for outdoor learning, such as tipis, lodges

Mental

- Elders, knowledge keepers, and faith keepers are accessible to students and are present in the schools
- Student supports school boards investing in more frontline workers to support students, such as counsellors, mental workers, and Indigenous staff
- Training for parents, students, school staff in Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention (ASIST) and life skills
- Transitions preparing youth to leave home or pursue higher learning and equipping them with the skills and tools necessary to make the transition
- Sharing circles held in a safe environment
- Safe cultural spaces are available where students can meet with Elders, counsellors, or use traditional medicines
- Curriculum wholistic approach to curriculum development and assessment, which reinforces cultural identity
- Land based activities are being utilized to promote cultural sensitivity, ceremony, and help connect with identity
- Opportunities to discuss Indigenous history and traditions local, regional and national

Emotional

- Trained professionals and staff are important to supporting students to make healthy choices and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Building relationships and accessing support from outside agencies and communities, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities
- Accessing support knowing where to go for help is key
- Spaces students have access to safe, private cultural spaces with Indigenous medicines, Elders, knowledge keepers
- Counsellors, Elders, and support workers are available for students to access
- Community bridging between family, community and schools to celebrate milestones



The youngest attendee at the Engagement Session reminded participants to think of future students

Spiritual

- Volunteering students volunteer for roles in ceremony or in services
- Participation increase in cultural ceremonies, use of medicines, and in all school activities both academic and cultural
- Pride comfortable and proud of who they are as Indigenous students and proud to wear their traditional clothes, medallions, dress
- Practising language and culture and requesting ceremonial activities and traditional teachings
- Meeting with Elders and increased awareness about their roles and responsibilities as caretakers of the land
- Attendance has improved and participation in extra-curricular activities has also improved
- Community connections students & staff will seek out Elders, natural helpers, healers, traditional knowledge keepers
- Student satisfaction surveys that are Indigenous led; survey all levels of administration, teachers, & support staff
- Academic achievement test results, graduation rates, EQAO results, less suspensions

Physical

- Self-regulation students are exercising more self-regulation and self-control
- Students are demonstrating respect for self and others
- Pride in self, personal space, showing affection
- Confident and able to act with confidence, balanced and motivated
- Advocate able to advocate for one's need and feel safe enough to take smart risks
- Lower substance abuse less smoking and substance abuse
- Self-care students are smiling, less obesity, have access to good nutrition, good hygiene
- Engaged in learning and involved in school, have good social lives and display leadership
- Increased participation in sports and extra-curricular activities
- Achievement improved grades and graduation rates
- Attendance improved and increased participation; active peer support networks
- Increased visibility of Indigenous peoples, culture, and art within schools
- School staff have built relationships with First Nation communities and are collaborating on activities

Mental

- Students are taking on leadership roles in and outside the class
- Increased student engagement and positive behaviour, self-discipline, self-confidence
- Teachers are knowledgeable about colonialism and intergenerational trauma
- Racism is not being experienced by students and they are happier
- Culture of support is present, student and staff relations are improved, decreased depression, anxiety, suicidal behaviours, lack of bullying and decrease in suspensions
- Self-assessment tools are being used such as the Aboriginal Children's Healing and Wellness Measurement
- Equitable funding would be an indicator of success
- Empathy is being displayed rather than racism and bullying

Emotional

- Improved behaviour, more empathetic and less bullying
- Students have a sense of belonging, are engaged, and have healthy relationships with their peers and teachers
- Coping skills reduced anxiety and able to resolve conflict
- Confidence levels are higher students are able to seek support for academic and personal support; students
 are able to challenge teachers and the curriculum.
- Student involvement higher rates of participation in class and completing surveys
- Talking circles students and staff are comfortable and are utilizing talking circles, Elders & traditional medicines
- Positive role models, family support, mentors and recognition from staff and teachers
- Relationships between schools, families, communities and external agencies are being built
- Professional development opportunities that increase knowledge about Indigenous peoples are being made available to staff

Evaluation

We asked: Was this session successful in capturing what Well-being looks like from an Indigenous perspective? Describe.

- Evaluations received indicated that the session was successful by ensuring the mental, spiritual, emotional and physical elements were central to all discussions. This facilitated diverse conversations across a number of topics that connected well-being. Examining the issues showed that there are local, varied responses and needs; a number of which are based on geography and other factors, including but not limited to funding.
- The engagement session was successful in capturing what well-being looks like from many different perspectives, across human and natural geographies.
- Many shared the value of the diversity of attendees that came from different communities sharing their knowledge, experience and perspectives.
- Participants stated that they were inspired by the knowledge shared and in knowing that the work undertaken at home in their schools is on the right track or journey.
- Participants also appreciated and enjoyed the creative exercises undertaken to capture what well-being looks like, using a variety of mediums. The exercises allowed for open dialogue and a sensitive and non-judgmental method of expression that enabled the sharing of thoughts of wellness by creating a symbol/story.

...wonderfully diverse conversations about the broad spectrum of things that connect well-being.

We asked: What did you find most useful about the session? How will you apply it in your school or community?

- Participants reported that the engagement session provided a good venue to make connections and contacts. The group work in the breakout sessions had very rich conversations on the multi-faceted aspects of well-being and captured what well-being looks like from a collective perspective with a wide variety of ideas & opinions provided.
- The session provided information that can be readily used and taken back to participants' own work. Participants appreciated the dialogue on issues regarding Indigenous education and recognized that well-being cannot be measured the same way for everyone. Discussions identified how important culture is for Indigenous people's well-being.
- Ideas presented in written format gave a clearer picture and allowed for all voices to be heard. Participants were eager to share. It was noted that each community has unique needs and school boards and education systems need to work closely with communities.
- Participants appreciated an opportunity to share their perspectives and having input on such an important topic.

We asked: What do you want every school to know?

- Important for teachers and staff to have knowledge on the history of colonialism
- Staff need to have knowledge about and be able to connect students to local resources
- Schools need to acknowledge, respect and recognize community based learning opportunities & give value to them
- School boards need to ensure that there is a sustainable financial commitment to supporting the well-being of Indigenous learners
- All staff members should receive training in cultural competency
- Teachers need to understand the diversity of Indigenous students and communities
- School policies need to include Indigenous community members, Elders and places of learning
- Schools, teachers and staff should know the local histories, treaty areas, protocols and First Nation leaders

We asked: What would be helpful to you in your workplace?

- Collaborative service meetings and service agreements for sharing of knowledge
- A youth panel or youth council to guide and direct activities
- Access to geo-political information and resources to ensure cultural competency
- More qualified Indigenous workers in the board and schools
- A list of local resource people
- Indigenous focused mandatory training for all the teachers
- Information on how to partner with communities that have teacher shortages
- Access to baseline information and the ability to monitor progress through surveys or questionnaires
- List of relevant grants, collaboration opportunities, and ways to share resources within the community
- A curriculum clearing house or a collective with resources such as documents and worksheets created to support Indigenous learning

Recommendations

- Cost factor of creating and implementing an Indigenous Well-Being Strategy was not discussed; but participants
 indicated that voices of students and Elders need to be included.
- That the engagement session results be brought back to the teachers, principals and administrators. It was also shared that the Ontario Ministry of Education implements the feedback from the engagement session into their strategic planning.
- That a tool kit be created that includes relevant content across urban, rural, provincial, federal, and on-reserve schools, with the understanding that well-being is different everywhere.
- Tool kits received by a school or a board include a signed agreement or indicate a commitment to learning the tool kit, and implementing and utilizing it.

Best Practice

Participants expressed that there is a need to ensure that the information gathered from the engagement session is acted on and that it is important to have ongoing gatherings to continue dialogue, development and report progress on Indigenous well-being.

- Addressing compassion burnout, self-care, and links to other initiatives including mental health days and team work, to create awareness
- Supportive administration and staff support was identified as a best practice. Information that explained how to present and implement a program such as orange shirt day is an example
- Schools acknowledging and honouring lived experiences of individuals by accessing knowledgeable resource people from the community
- Reference to existing resources such as 211 Directory and 211 Community database that provides ongoing services that contribute to Indigenous well-being
- A number of online resources and web sites exist to support Indigenous language, culture, education, and access to Elders and traditional knowledge keepers through external community, regional and provincial organizations
- An annotated bibliography that lists web site addresses and explains with a few short sentences or keywords the site content that would be beneficial



Elder Peter Beacage and wife Debbie

- Equitably funded Indigenous education programs
- Recognizing role models and Indigenous achievements and highlighting organizations that have programs to support well-being through various means such as the arts and land-based activities
- Developing partnerships with local social service agencies, mentorship programs, & inviting guest speakers to visit.
- Access to resource and wellness rooms and inviting and allowing parents/guardians/families into the classroom
- Feast days that feature harvested food such as moose meat and goose, that has been gathered by students to allow them to learn about the harvesting process and feast bags

- Taking students out on the land with more opportunities to learn Indigenous teachings and cultural programming
- Creating opportunities to increase knowledge about students and families inside and outside of school and initiatives that include Elders and traditional knowledge keepers.
- Sharing of programs implemented in schools that worked and if they did not work, working to understand why
- Access to educational research that is relevant to Indigenous well-being and training for all teachers, both in schools and at teacher's college, including mandatory Indigenous courses
- A request for teachers to have training in brain based knowledge and to be trauma informed
- Mindfulness programs such as yoga
- Mentorship programs and initiatives such as the First Nation, Metis and Inuit 'School Within a College' (SWAC)
 Program through Thames Valley District School Board that enables students to achieve their secondary school diploma while also preparing them for college
- A central access point for all resource sites (kidshelpline, LGBTQ2 help line, Teen help line) is also recommended and should be created in an easy to use and easy to reference format such as the annotated bibliography that lists web site addresses and explains the content with a few short sentences or keywords

Conclusion

We have a collective responsibility to ensure that the well-being of Indigenous students are being met in our publically funded schools. This will require a genuine commitment from all parties to collaborate to ensure that there is Indigenous pedagogies relating to teaching and learning in all schools. Students need to have access and opportunities to learn and practice their language and culture. There needs to be an understanding that a one size fits all approach does not work.

Creating and supporting localized and regional programs and services are essential. Culture, language and traditional activities have been identified as key factors that play an important role in supporting students' well-being, identity, and self-esteem. Schools need to respond by building relationships with First Nations, families and agencies. Providing equitable and sustainable funds to implement and embed activities and opportunities where all students can participate and learn about Indigenous people, will help foster reconciliation.

Students need to be engaged in their education and have cultural spaces where they feel safe and secure enough to be able to express their ideas and advocate for themselves and others. They need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices.



All students have an opportunity to benefit from the rich culture that Indigenous people have to share and it gets us one step closer to reconciliation.

Visual Representation of What Well-being Looks Like Through an Indigenous Lens

To encourage participants to describe their understanding of well-being, the factors that contribute to well-being and what influences well-being, the small groups were asked to create a visual representation of what well-being looks like through an Indigenous lens. They were asked to imagine that they were entering a school that was meeting all Well-being needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners; what does it look like? feel like? sound like? and smell like?

Common themes across the various models created was the connection to land, Elders, traditional knowledge keepers, Indigenous teachings, sacred medicines and the links from school to family, community and external organizations or entities. This indicates that not one person or group is responsible for Indigenous well-being. Partnering with community agencies for grief, addictions and self-esteem programs was identified. Honouring diversity, inclusivity and the cultural differences among Indigenous peoples was seen as very important, as was recognizing specific initiatives for urban, rural and remote locales.

The following were created as part of the visioning exercise Models of Well-being.



Yellow drawing is Elders & their important role in working with youth and children. Sweetgrass braid: mind, body, spirit. Tipi: knowing history and where we come from, traditional ways of living, medicine at bottom, bear protector in corner. Colours of four directions in corners: sense of self, living in good way, feel valued and worthy. Birch bark canoe – represent our history and constant journey. Famous set of eyes with Indigenous roots in middle - demonstrate the need to observe, look out and really see.

Communication and self-advocacy. Cedar (medicine) represents cleansing and protection. Teach with land and culture. Orange for residential schools.





Mother earth, father sky, sun and medicines. All those things that connect the world around us; included the cross to represent diversity in belief systems.

Seven grandfather teachings in each of the directions, many hands needed to work toward wellness. Fishing net shows importance of traditional food and harvesting practices. Cross recognizes respect needed for different belief systems and spiritual diversity.





Many hands needed to work toward wellness; culture, medicines and natural elements that are central to each of the four quadrants.

Four quadrants with sweetgrass in each to show medicines, culture and tradition in each. Replica of Two Row Wampum Treaty at top (peaceful coexistence), shows knowing more about history and treaties is needed.





Sweatlodge, community, school and ONECA to represent medicine wheel teachings. Eagle staff, seven grandfathers teachings, fire - burning passion to work with our young people. Thunder and rain for water and reflection, sacred medicines to bring balance.



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