North Carolina Health Association Annual Conference

Indigegogy: Making Room for Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Healthcare

Transforming medical practice through Indigenous philosophy, relational pedagogy, and holistic health

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(Welcome to all of you!)





Land *Acknowledgement*

The Cabarrus region is located on the traditional territory of the Catawba/Iswa, the Saponi, and the Waxhaw peoples.

“I also invite you to take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that have brought us together here today.”





Indigenous people will continue to be here...

We are contemporary people.
We are educators, physicians, nurses, counselors, scientists, patients, grandparents, children, scholars, artists, leaders, and members of communities across this country.

In healthcare, we must first recognize Indigenous presence...



But from an Indigenous lens, I want to invite you to consider another way of understanding what is actually occurring...

Let's call it RECOLONIZATION



*If **colonization** changed narratives and political boundaries…*



RE-COLONIZATION
continues to change

- *Bodies*
- *Families*
- *Diets*
- *Relationships with the land*

Colonization is a Health Story









“The consequences of these experiences did not remain within one generation, but continue intergenerationally.”

So, *for those of you who work in healthcare...*

The person sitting before you does not arrive without history.

None of us do.



When History Walked Into the Counseling Room With Me



Taking Action

Be curious enough to ask.
Be humble enough to listen.
And be courageous enough to make room for an understanding of healing.

What might **CHANGE** if we also asked:

- *"What has happened?"*
- *"What matters to you?"*
- *"Who and what sustains you?"*
- *"What does healing mean in your family or community?"*
- ***"What has kept you strong?"***



If we want to truly—and intentionally—transform healthcare, we must embrace decolonizing practices such as *Indigegogy*

That is the story I especially want health professionals to hear.

Health disparities are real.
Historical trauma is real.
Colonization is real.

But deficit is not our identity.

What happens when we reclaim health and wellness by honoring the pathways our ancestors taught us?





“We are; therefore, I am.”

What happens when health is understood not simply as the condition of an individual body, but as something connected to family, community, culture, land, spirit, and generations?

Indigegogy: Storytelling & Making Room

It embraces ceremony.
Storytelling.
The importance of the circle.
Medicines.
Experience.
Reflection.
Relationships.



The Tale of Mrs. Fobes





Taking Action

Our responsibility is not always to correct the purple leaf.
Sometimes, our responsibility is to become curious.
To pause. To listen. To ask ourselves:
What does this person see that I do not?

Decolonization *and* ***Healing*** *Go Hand in Hand*

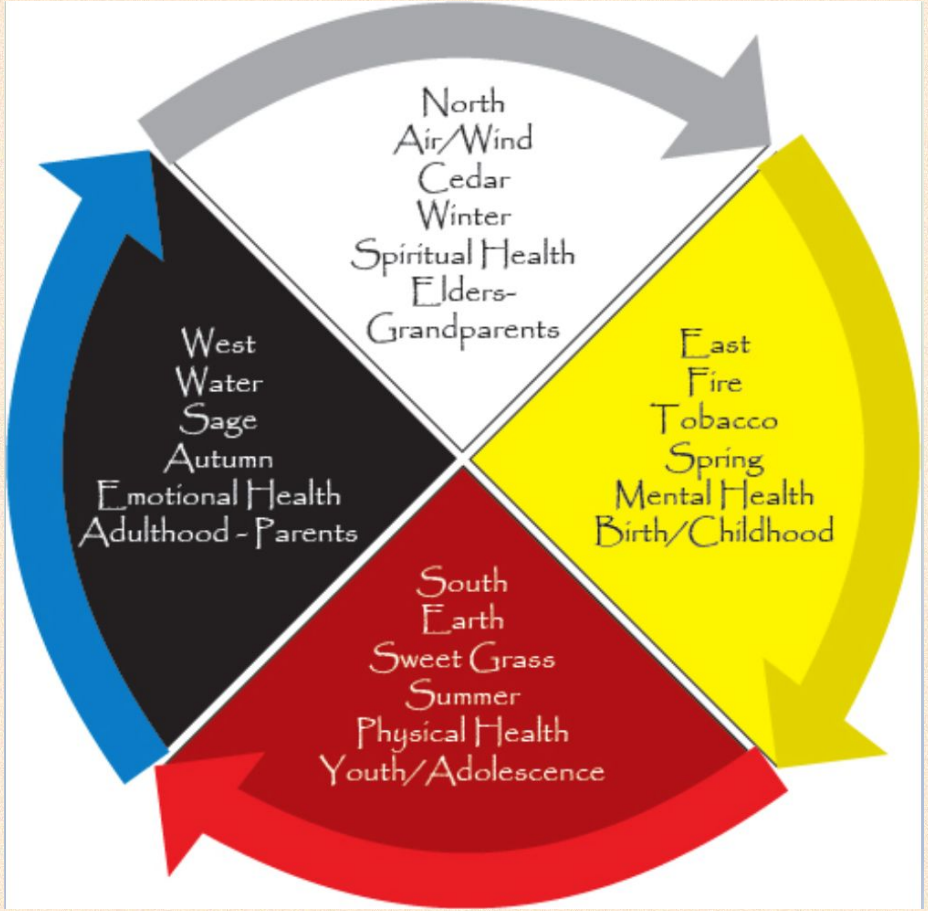
Two-Eyed Seeing

Learning to draw upon the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and Western ways of knowing without requiring one to erase the other.

What might happen if appropriate care could make thoughtful room for both?



Holistic Wellness and *the Medicine Wheel*



What a Basket Can Teach a Health Professional



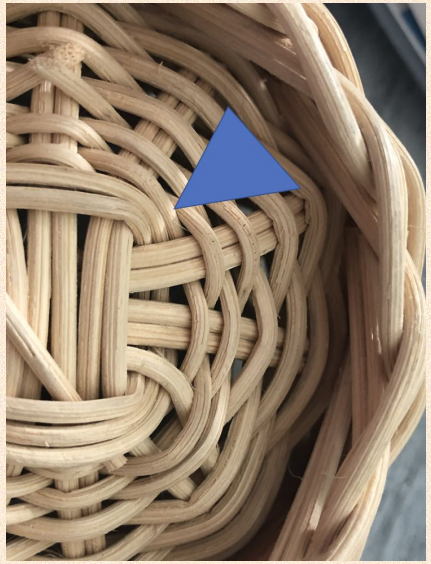
Building the Sparrow Basket



1.
Begin with the inner square



2.
The dyes to color the reeds



3.
Interlocking triangles

Building the Sparrow Basket



4.
Add the extra reed



5.
The outer wall



6.
Inner and outer walls

Think about us as human beings...

We spend enormous amounts of time working on the outside:

Credentials.
Professional identities.
Clinical expertise.
Roles.
Titles.
Appearances.

But what about the inner wall?

Culture.
Identity.
Spirit.
Relationships.
Belonging.
Meaning.
Grief.
Purpose.

Taking Action

The science was always there…

It is not rejecting
Western knowledge.
It is expanding what we are
willing to recognize as knowledge.

Considerations Moving Forward

How can I create enough space to ***understand the whole person*** *who has entrusted me with their care?*

&

How might ***each of us*** *help make that possible?*



Wado.
Osda.
Thank You.

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