



INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH



All stakeholders create a culture of learning so that students come first.

Hello, Bonjour, Boozhoo!

Co-created by the Seven Generations Mental Health Coordinator and Keewatin Patricia District School Board Mental Health Leader, the intent of this newsletter is to highlight resources specific to Indigenous Mental Health. These resources are provided as additional supports to add to your toolkit for supporting the mental health and well-being of all students. We encourage you to discuss best practice for implementation of these resources during staff meetings, with your school administrators and, if possible, with an Elder from your community. An important reminder is to ensure consultation with an Elder from your community before implementing certain activities such as the medicine pouch, blanket exercise, etc. As a first step, staff are encouraged to speak with their administrators and/or Michelle Parrish for more information on Indigenous Protocols as they relate to the Treaty area where they work. Use the link below to access the new KPDSB Intranet. This link will allow you access to curriculum, protocols, treaty recognition, and resources/literature approved by our KPDSB team:



[KPDSB INTRANET Indigenous Education](#)

Written by the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, [Considerations for Indigenous child and youth population mental health promotion in Canada](#), addresses some of the determinants of mental well-being for all children and youth in Canada. The document highlights Canadian statistics related to the mental health status of Indigenous children and youth, as well as suicide rates specific to this population. The document also has a strong focus on protective factors, examples of intervention and life promotion practices. Use the link above to access the document online or ask your Mental Health Champion or Principal for your school copy.



WRITTEN BY THE NATIONAL COLLABORATING CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH



Considerations for Indigenous child and youth population mental health promotion in Canada



Population mental health promotion for children and youth - a collection for public health in Canada

We Matter
TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORT WORKERS
For Youth, Teachers and Support Workers

The We Matter Toolkit is a resource created to help Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth workers, counsellors/social workers and teachers in supporting Indigenous youth. The toolkit supports conversations related to **HARDSHIP, HOPE and HEALING**.

Information related to colonization, expressing emotions, land as strength, two-spirit identity, how to ask for help, self-care, youth engagement, engaging the community and positive affirmation can be found in the toolkits. Online videos will help you navigate the material and engage students. Click on the images below to access these resources:

WE MATTER
TOOLKIT FOR TEACHERS,
EDUCATORS AND FACILITATORS

WE MATTER
TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORT WORKERS
(YOUTH WORKERS, COUNSELLORS, SOCIAL WORKERS)

Mental Health Champions check the Google Drive for resources referred to in this newsletter and more.



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The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) has created a package of resources related to the Well-Being Engagement session held in October of 2017. The package can be ordered for a small fee and contains a number of resources, some of which are available online. A few of these resources are listed below:

[INDIGENOUS WELL-BEING IN SCHOOLS WEB-BASED RESOURCE GUIDE](#)

This document highlights where to find information related to topics such as identity, culture, health, healing, wellness and help lines.

[INDIGENOUS WELL-BEING IN SCHOOL FINAL REPORT](#)

This document provides key components to understanding, promoting, and supporting well-being, along with indicators of success related to the 4 main sections of the medicine wheel spiritual, physical, mental and emotional.

[MAINTAINING BALANCE STAYING CONNECTED TO LAND, CULTURE & LANGUAGE](#)

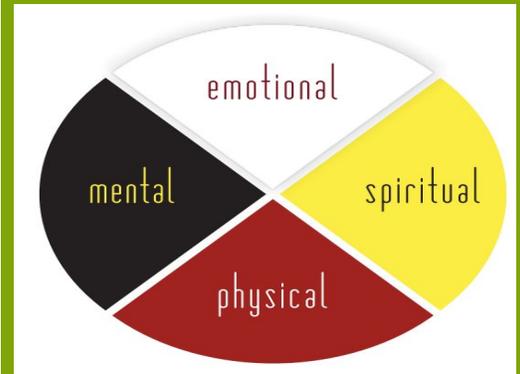
Highlights Indigenous activities and learning connected to the land and culture.



[SUPPORTING FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS & INUIT STUDENTS TRANSITIONING FROM FIRST NATIONS SCHOOLS TO PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS, A RESOURCE GUIDE](#)

Also created by ONECA, this document highlights a number of website links to various resources related to education and policy, fostering success, learning about culture, and supporting healthy lifestyles for FNMI students. Within the document you will find links to Truth and Reconciliation; [GoodMinds](#) (an Indigenous book company with over 3,000 titles from preschool to adult); trauma informed schools; toolkits; blanket exercise; resource for Speech and Language Pathologists; Orange Shirt Day lesson plans; and residential schools; as well as many others.

MEDICINE WHEEL



[Indigenous Ally Toolkit](#)

TO BE AN ALLY IS TO:

Actively support the struggle.

Speak up, even when you feel scared.

Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who have less.

Acknowledge that the conversation is not about you.⁴



Miigwech, Thank-you



Medicine Bag



SGEI is the leader in providing sustainable, high quality education and training programs, which respect our Anishinaabe Language and Culture, support present needs, and embrace our future of life-long learning.

The instructions below on how to make a Medicine Bag are reflective of my own experience making a medicine bag and *not* meant to represent the only way. Styles, ingredients and ceremonies are very diverse depending on the area in which the teachings come from, the elder providing the teaching and the intentions of the medicine.

The Medicine bags, sometimes referred to as Offering Bags, are sacred items. The pouch can be of various sizes, color and design. It can be worn around the neck, waist or carried in the pocket. The items in the pouch are deemed as being good medicines and can vary depending upon personal preference. Some may choose to carry sacred herbs, stones or other significant items that are important to the individual. Medicines can change depending on the circumstances for which it is being used. It is very disrespectful to touch or open someone's pouch without their permission.

When creating a Medicine Bag, you should try to do so in a positive and open spiritual state to allow positive energy into the creation of the Medicine Bag. Through every step you should be thinking about the intention of your bag and feeling grateful to the materials and medicines being used to help. You can choose to beautify it with beads, feathers, shells or your personal artwork; whatever you feel is reflective of you.

Sacred Medicines

There are many teachings on the following medicines, here are some that I learned while making my medicine bag;

Tobacco is considered to be one of the main medicines one needs to carry at all times. Tobacco should always be offered to an Elder when seeking guidance and teachings. It is used to give thanks in ceremony, when

picking medicines or offering food to the spirits and to the water for the life it provides.

It's important to remember that teachings can vary from Elder to Elder and to keep an open mind to new teachings and ways of knowing. (First Nations Voice, 2009)

Sage has strong medicinal properties that cleanses and purifies us and the space we are in. Sage has the ability to sooth, relax and heal the mind, body and spirit. Sage can also be used as part of the smudging ceremony in combination with the other sacred medicines. Some Pipe Carriers use it to light their pipes as it is quicker and easier and has many other uses. (First Nations Voice, 2009)

Cedar is a medicinal plant that has many healing properties often used for protection. When cedar is lit in a smudge, it emits a sweet smell that is calming. It is used in ceremonial structures, such as the sweatlodge for the purpose of providing protection and welcoming the spirits that come and help us in our healing. Some people use cedar as a medicine. They may boil it as a tea and drink it, or bathe in the cedar water, warding off sickness or negative energy. Pregnant women must be mindful not to drink cedar tea during their pregnancy as it may create some complications for the mother to be. (First Nations Voice, 2009)

Sweetgrass grows at the outer edge of marshy areas on dry land, (Cultural Awareness Through Outdoor Education, 2004, p. 19). Sweetgrass is used in smudging ceremonies and gives off a sweet smell, welcoming good energy. Braids of sweetgrass are also used as teaching tools. (First Nations Voice, 2009)



Medicine Bag



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Materials you will need:

- Piece of tanned leather, buckskin, deerskin, rabbit, etc.
- Medicine bag template
- Leather lace 2'
- Leather hole punch
- Small amounts of; sweetgrass, cedar, tobacco and sage
- Any other small item you may want to include (i.e. a friend has a wolf tooth in his)

Step One

Take the Medicine bag template and trace on your piece of leather and cut it out.

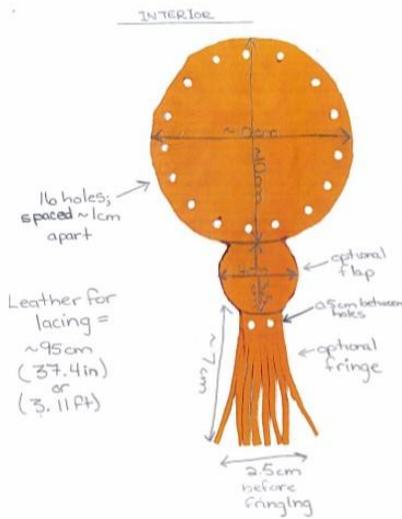


Figure 1 Medicine Bag Template interior



Figure 2 Medicine Bag exterior

Step Two

Use the leather hole punch and punch holes (approximately 16) along the outside of the large circle of the medicine bag trying to make the distance between holes equal.



Figure 3 Medicine Bag exterior tanned side



Figure 4 Medicine Bag interior



Medicine Bag



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Step Three

Take the leather lace and starting from the smooth side (tanned side) begin weaving the lace through the holes until weaved through each hole, leaving equal length of leather lace on either side of pouch



Figure 5 Medicine Bag interior laced



Figure 6 Medicine Bag exterior laced

Step Four

Pull laces until a small pouch forms. Place small amounts of chosen medicines inside along with any other objects that hold spiritual importance to you.



Figure 7 Medicine Bag complete containing medicine



Figure 8 Closed Medicine Bag with flap down

Step Five

Place or store the medicine bag where you feel it is most needed. Some place the bag in their vehicles for safe travels; in their locker; under their pillow or in a safe location at home or in the office; others carry the medicine bag with them for protection and healing. Speak to an elder in your community to see if it is culturally appropriate to smudge your medicine bag from time to time.