Reframing Workplace Wellness as a Sacred Rite

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Growing the Ability to Deliver Quality Healthcare to American Indian and Alaska Native People.

Objectives

I.   Identify some of the professional ethics related to self-care

II. Explain linear and relational worldviews to identify ways to assess for balance

III. Formulate ideas to include in workplace wellness policies, supervision, and clinician's career development

IV. Describe ways to operationalize workplace wellness as if it were a sacred rite

Considerations

- Clinically trained to keep our personal self separate from clients and work
- Lack of choices often force us to adapt so we can survive – including as professionals
- Spend most of our time as adults working

Ethics to Prevent Impairment

- Licensing bodies and professional organizations have ethics and standards which govern our professional behaviors.

- **NASW Code of Ethics 2021 Amendment** "*Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers' self-care.*"

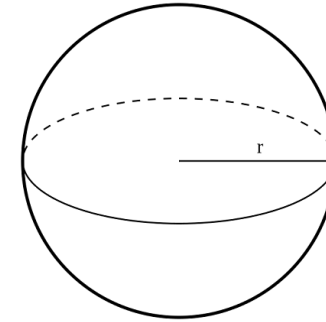- What do your professional ethics include for self-care?

Primary Worldviews

Linear
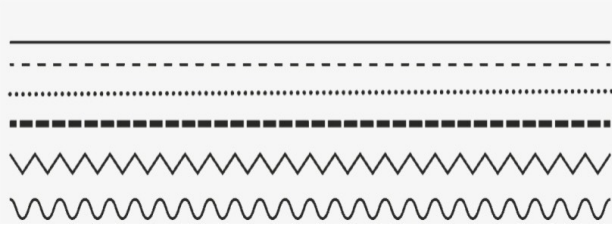
- Asks Why
- Cause and Effect
- Time/clock oriented
- Medical Model
- Values individual achievements
- Accumulation of wealth
- Mastery over nature, youthfulness
- Separation of church & state/religion
- Nuclear/biological family

Relational

- Asks How/What
- Focus on group
- Interconnected
- Sharing, generosity
- Children are protected and precious
- 7 Generations
- Elders are respected/esteemed
- Spirituality
- Extended Family

Medicine Wheel Relational World View

- Balance

- Interconnectedness

- Transcendence

- Provides a model for who we are as individuals: we have an intellectual self, spiritual self, emotional self, and a physical self.

- Balance can produce a strong, positive sense of well-being.

- Imbalance can cause symptoms of illness, addictions, difficulty maintaining relationships, a sense of disconnection.

- childhood

- adolescence

Emotional

Physical

Spiritual

Social/Mental

- elder

- adult
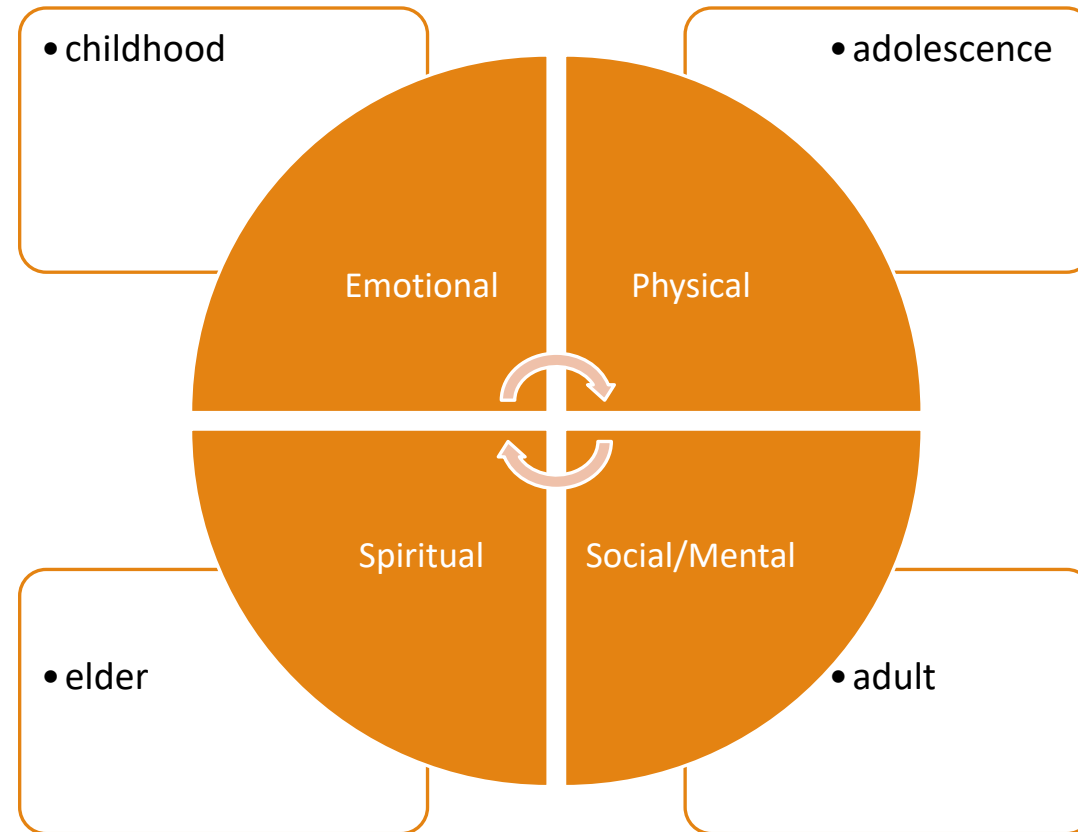
Wheel Assessment

- Individual or organization is the hub

- Spokes can be missing, bent, loose or strong and secure . Spokes are the connections.

- Tire can have a slow leak, worn tread when experiencing brown out, stress, loss, etc.

- Have employee consider their own wheel. How the integrity of all the parts impact the direction they would go if riding a bike.
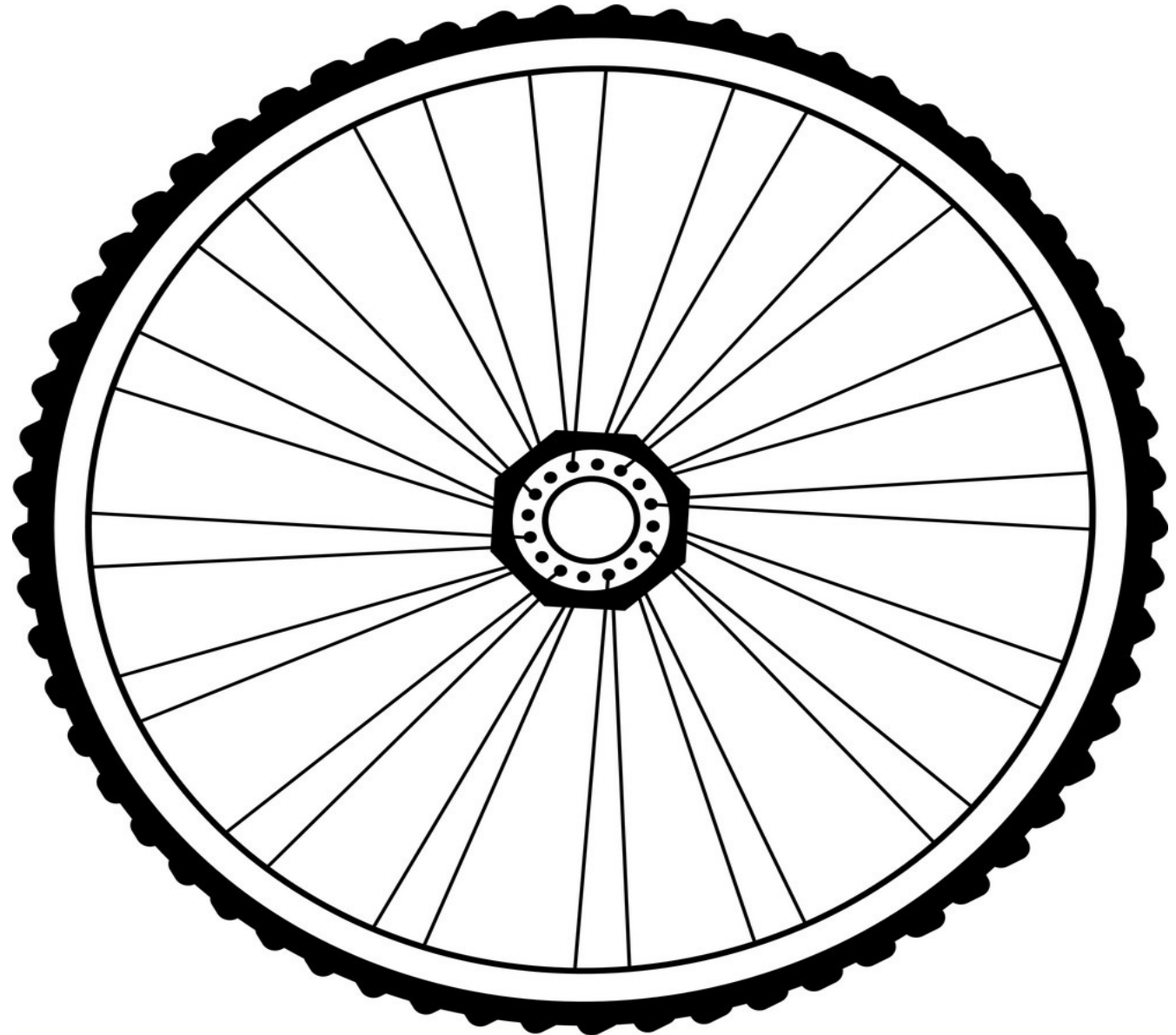
Wellness

- What do we mean by wellness?

- What does this look like in your environment (work, home, etc.)?
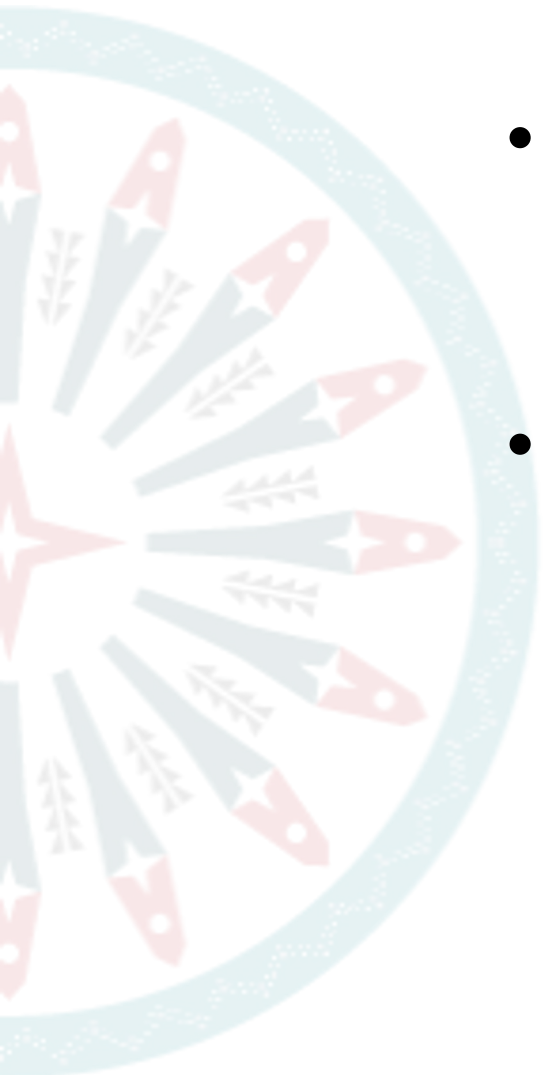
Sacred

- What do we mean when we say something is sacred?
- How do we behave when something is sacred?
- Sacredness means it is respected, revered, culturally essential.
- Workplace wellness becomes sacred when we make is essential, respect it, honor staff's time to practice something that helps them to maintain balance.

Promoting Wellness

- Trauma informed human resources/clinical supervision
- Flexibility
- Hybrid work settings
- Connection built in to work
- Making relatives with each other
- Weekly talking circles w/ co-workers
- "Taking care of those, who take care of co-workers."

Workplace Wellness Considerations

- Does your place of employment have a health/wellness policy in place?

- NPAIHB Mental Health & Wellness Policy:
- As a Native organization, NPAIHB values the interconnectedness of all aspects of one's life and everything in our world. We understand that to live in harmony requires the balance of one's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being with the environment. The failure of any or all of these parts to wellness can lead to poor outcomes in other aspects of life, including work. Mental, emotional and spiritual health is just as important as physical health. Mental illness may be detrimental to a person, as it impacts happiness, productivity and collaboration.

Employer Wellness Benefits

- Education leave
  - 3hrs per week
- Cultural leave
  - 24hr per calendar year
- Parental leave
  - Up to age 6 months
- Wellness time
  - 30 mins of paid wellness each day

Taking Care of Yourself

- Focus on managing time efficiently (including play & rest)
- Work/life balance is a process, not an end goal
- Identify and protect your personal/home priorities (especially your food, sleep, and exercise habits)
- Cultivate email routines that protect your productivity
- Take short breaks throughout the day, and don't skip or work through your meal break!
- Turn your work devices off when you're off the clock
- Bring workplace issues to your supervisor, a trusted friend/mentor/elder, or HR (if applicable)
- Progress, not perfection

Questions & Discussion

- What does your employer do that helps promote/prioritize wellness in the workplace that you appreciate?

- What aspect of personal wellness do you find the most challenging about your job?

- What can Tribal communities & providers to do integrate cultural practices and values into the workplace?

Resources

Dr. Sidney Stone Brown – Transformation Beyond Greed (she developed the tribal clinical assessment model; she also revisited Maslow's notes from when he lived with the Blackfeet) https://youtu.be/1PTAEP5m4q4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gC5qoWFA-Iw
Accompanying workbook -
https://www.nasmhpd.org/sites/default/files/2022_NASMHPD_Making_Relatives.pdf

2021 Amendments to the NASW Code of Ethics: Self-Care and Cultural Competence (socialworkers.org)

Trainee Perspectives on the Importance of Self-Care and Research in Clinical Supervision | Society for the Advancement of Psychotherapy (societyforpsychotherapy.org)

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