

## **Reflection: Healing Through Indigenous Sit Spots**

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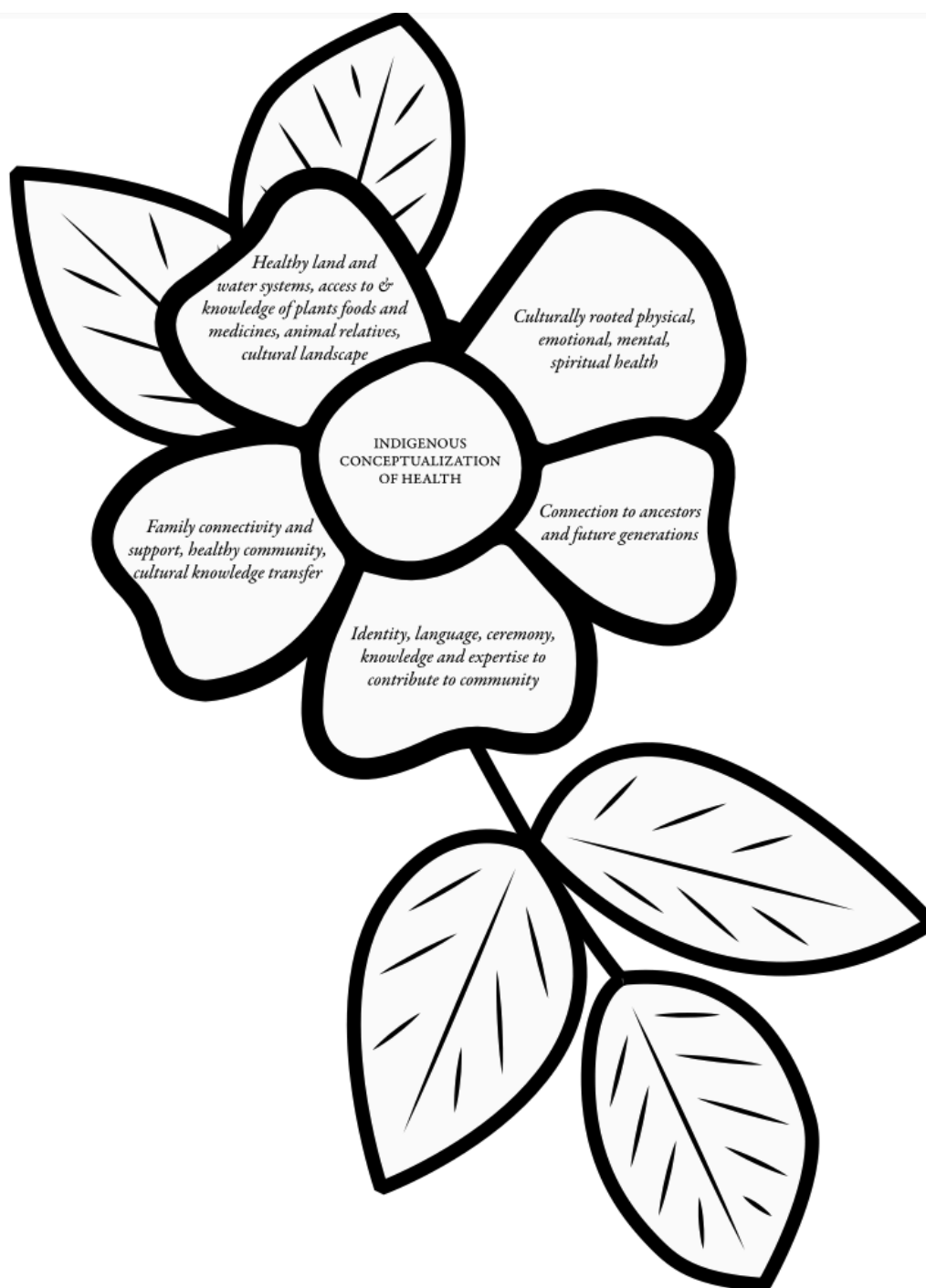
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*The kalkáy (Wild Rose): An Indigenous Conceptualization of the Social and Cultural Determinants of Health, Emphasizing the Layered and Interconnected Nature of the Parts That Make the Whole*



(Joseph, 2021, p. 172)

***Have you succeeded or are you succeeding? Why or why not?***

To answer the question “was I successful?” requires careful deliberation. Defining success adds nuance to my reflection when explored through the lens of Indigenous practices. Unlike the often rapid and upward trajectory associated with conventional notions of success, Indigenous approaches unfold with patience and follow a linear, interconnected path. Rooted in Indigenous wisdom and values, success is not just an individual ascent but a collective and intrinsic journey. This journey for me is marked through my connection to land and self. The intriguing aspect lies in the nuanced understanding of achievement, encompassing harmony with nature, well-being, and the preservation of culture. In embracing these practices, success becomes a tapestry woven over time. I do believe that my commitment to weekly sit spots has been thoroughly demonstrated and carried out; in that sense of the word, I have been successful. The level of success permeates much deeper however, and is expressed in what I took away holistically from this experience and practice.

***What would you change or are you changing?***

After careful consideration, I made the decision to forego the video log aspect of my sit spot and rather chose to complete my reflections through journaling and art. I felt the experience would be better rooted in both the sentiments of my resources and personal cultural alignment, in the absence of technology. Throughout the sit spots, I was flexible in terms of adapting my approach based on my evolving understanding and needs; this meant that I often completed the sit spots alone as my mom was unable to accompany me, as well as bringing tools to be more comfortable in nature, and coming in proper clothing for the weather. I found a beautiful routine in my weekly sit spots on Sundays, and that is something that remained consistent, and which will continue to be consistent; such insights are also iterated in my journal entries themselves.

***What did you learn?***

Through my practice, I have gained insights into the significance of place, nature, and personal reflection. I feel this experience has deepened my intrinsic connection to heart and healing, as well as offered me great learning from my original goal of bettering myself through mindfulness. In taking the time to slow down and contemplate my space in time and nature, I have come to realize a deep sense of wellbeing and connection. Going forward, this is a practice I intend to continue doing and intensifying; I have come to exist in a space where I cannot imagine going a week without the reprieve of my sit spot. The immense sense of peacefulness, learning, and bonding that I have taken away from this has benefited, and will continue to benefit me forevermore.

In consideration of how I may take these learnings and translate them into my classroom, the possibilities are bountiful. Not only have I deepened my understanding of land based learning—which in and of itself can be implemented in a classroom setting—I have also learned mindfulness and self-regulation practices which I can demonstrate as a teacher, but also impart upon my students. The insights gained through Indigenous sit spots and reflective practices can be integrated into my teaching approach, reflected through my own wellness and the consequential wellness of my students. This may involve incorporating nature-based activities, mindfulness exercises, or Indigenous perspectives into my curriculum. The experiential knowledge can also work to make my teaching more holistic, engaging, and culturally sensitive. This becomes even more rich when I consider my positionality as an Indigenous educator. I ask myself, how and what am I doing to become more culturally grounded and literate so that I might embed this in my teaching? I envision a classroom wherein I can be peaceful, mindful, and patient but also where my students feel and mirror those same attributes.

As I reflect on the impact of these practices on my relationships, the resonance extends beyond the classroom. In respect to this, I turn to ideas presented in the *The kalkáy (Wild Rose) image of Indigenous conceptions of health* as presented to begin my paper. Altogether, my whole community—colleagues, family, parents—will benefit from a more present and balanced version of myself, making our relationships more meaningful and intentional. Specifically with parents, the ability to share my experiences in cultivating mindfulness and connection to the land, and how I aim to transfer this knowledge to my students, can create a bridge, fostering understanding and collaboration. Colleagues may find inspiration in the incorporation of these practices into our shared teaching environment, creating a more supportive and culturally rich community. Furthermore, these experiences deepen my cultural understanding and strengthen the bonds of community and family, creating a reciprocal exchange of wisdom and knowledge that enhances the authenticity of my teaching and personal growth. These connections, woven through the fabric of shared values and experiences, contribute to a broader sense of community, wellness, and interconnectedness which will no doubt be beneficial to my teaching practice going forward.

## References

- Joseph, L. (2021). Walking on Our Lands Again: Turning to Culturally Important Plants and Indigenous Conceptualizations of Health in a Time of Cultural and Political Resurgence. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 16(1), 165–179.  
<https://doi.org/10.32799/ijih.v16i1.33205>