

WELLNESS ON THE LAND

Land-Based Service Delivery Models

Land is and always has been fundamental for the health and cultural identity of Indigenous peoples, playing an essential role in wholistic healing and wellness.

Culturally-safe land-based programs provide an opportunity for people to connect or re-connect with who they are, through living off the land, speaking the language and learning ways to live with and practice culture in the every day, through the sharing of traditional skills and stories by Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

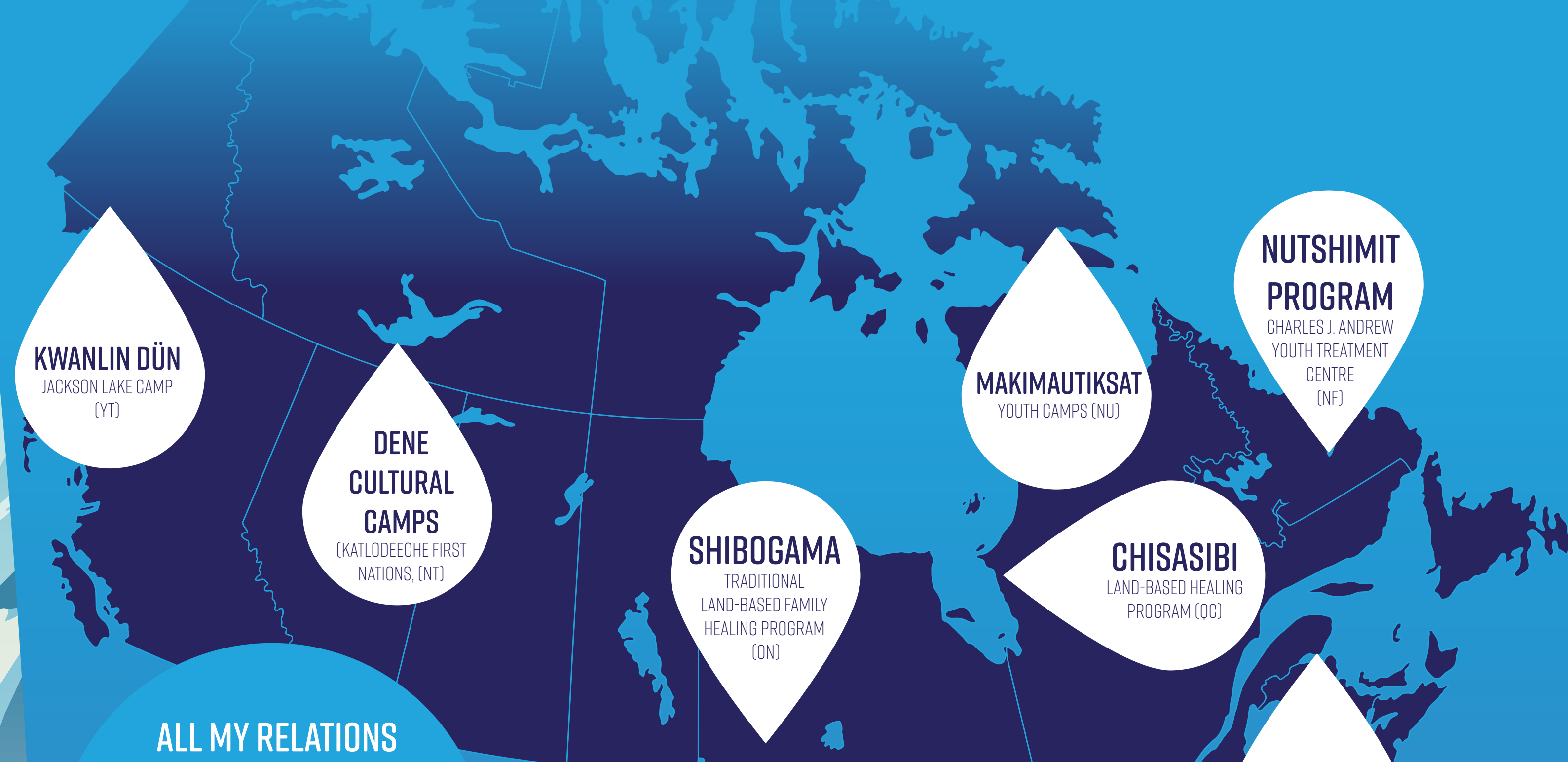
Land-based programs re-establish a spiritual connection with the land, through recognition that Creation – the animals, plants, rocks, visible and unseen forces of nature, the universe – is a healer and a teacher.

When aligned with the outcomes of the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum (FNMWC) and Indigenous Wellness Frameworks (IWF), land-based programs facilitate hope, nurture belonging and give meaning and purpose in life – creating conditions to live life as a whole and healthy person.

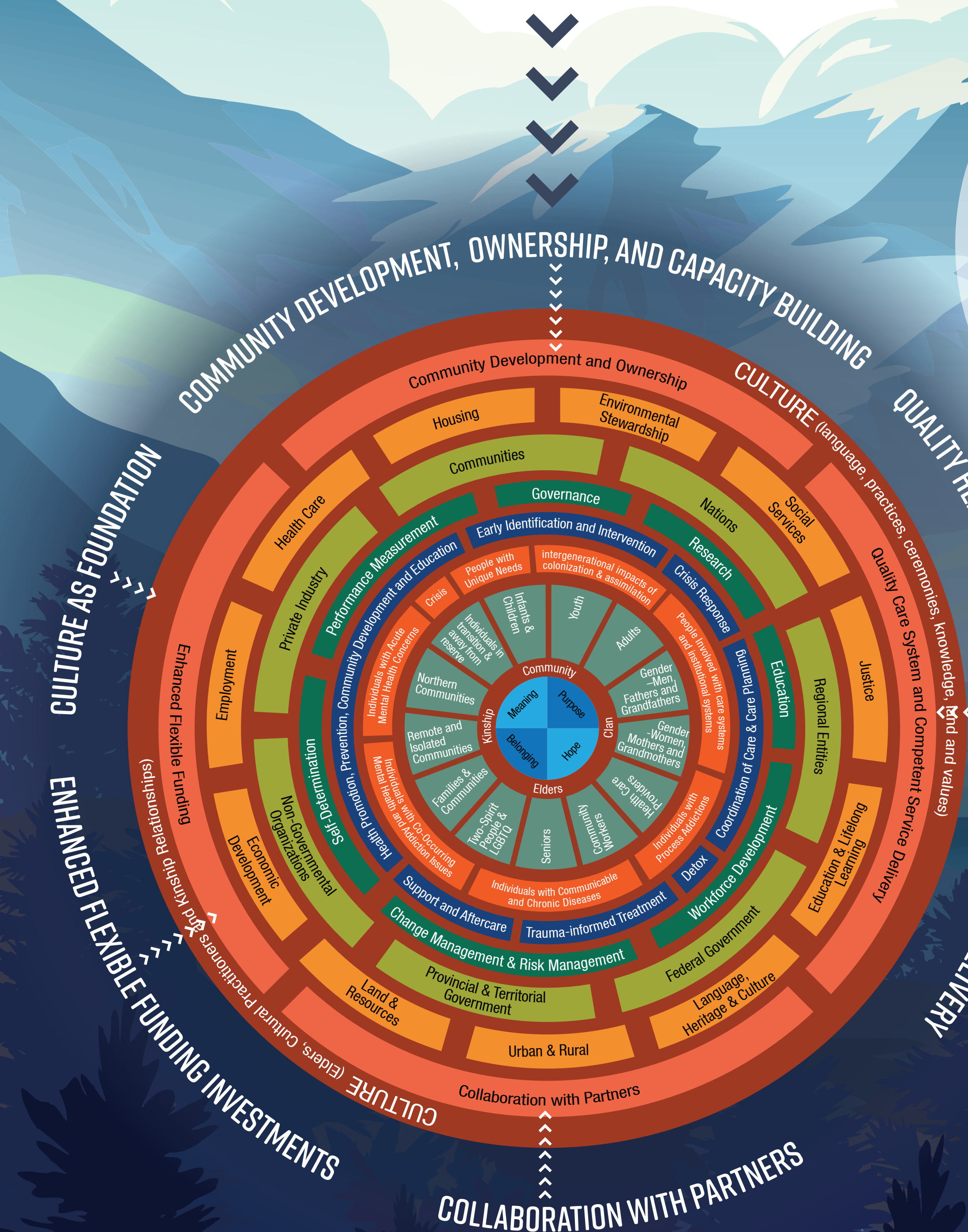
CREATE YOUR OWN LAND BASED PROGRAM

The First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework Implementation Team studied land-based programs across Canada and developed this Service Delivery Model. It's meant to support Nations and communities interested in creating their own land-based initiatives.

Examples of Indigenous innovation in mental health and wellness:



LAND-BASED PROGRAMS SUPPORTS THEMES OF THE FNMWC



INDIGENOUS WELLNESS FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES ON THE LAND

The Shibogama Traditional Land Based Family Healing Program invites people to **develop their 'inner-knowing'** by consciously reflecting on their five senses as they go about their day, physically connected to the land.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers at Dene Cultural Camps **promote purpose** through ways of doing and being through physical presence on the land.

The Makimautiksat Youth Camps reinforce a **sense of belonging** for people by emphasizing the key relationship between people and the natural world, including showing respect and care for the land, animals, and environment.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers at the Chisasibi Land-Based Healing Program **activate a sense of hope** in people when they reinforce positive cultural identity through a spiritual connection with the land and responsibility towards Creation.



ALL MY RELATIONS is often heard when Indigenous people give thanks. It is recognition of their interconnectedness to all life, all beings of Creation.

In the country, it was better. They showed us how to be spiritual. Sometimes we went fishing. At night, we played games. We talked, bonded, laughed. Everyone really connected. The staff would take us for really good long walks, one-on-one. There's always friendliness in the country.
Participant testimony: Charles J Andrew Youth Treatment Centre, NF

"A person's inner spirit is intertwined with their family, community, **AND THE LAND** and cannot be understood apart from them"

Land-based programs "re-establish a spiritual connection with the land"



With the strong prayers and smudging, **I FELT LIFTED** – left the bad stuff in there and got a better feeling for self and family.
-Male participant: Kwanlin Dün Jackson Lake Camp, YT



DENE LAND CONNECTION
De means flow, ne means land; flowing from the land. The Dene have a relationship with the land, their very being flows from the land, and the land from its people.

* youth photos from My Life/My Culture National Campaign, cultureforlife.ca

COMMON GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR LAND-BASED PROGRAMS

- Focused on culturally-safe models of care
- Language is foundational
- Controlled locally
- Improves the quality of life of individuals, families and communities
- Honours local strengths/resources, building the expertise at home
- Targets multiple determinants of health i.e. self-determination, language acquisition, cultural values, life-skills, human-nature relations, ethics, and social cohesion
- Is viewed as an essential element of a quality health system
- Often require innovative funding strategies, if not included in core funding
- Fosters collaborations with local and regional partners

LAND-BASED PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Costs vary from \$400 to \$9,000+ per client
\$500K start-up minor capital (average)

First Nations communities are using existing funding from the following First Nations and Inuit Health Branch programs to support land-based programs:

Community Health Promotion Program (CHPP), National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP), Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI), Building Healthy Communities (BHC), Tobacco Control Strategy (TCS), Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative (ADI), Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP), Nutrition North Canada (NNC), National Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy (NAYSPS), Healthy Child Development (HCD), Prescription Drug Abuse (PDA) Program, Ring of Fire, and Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF).

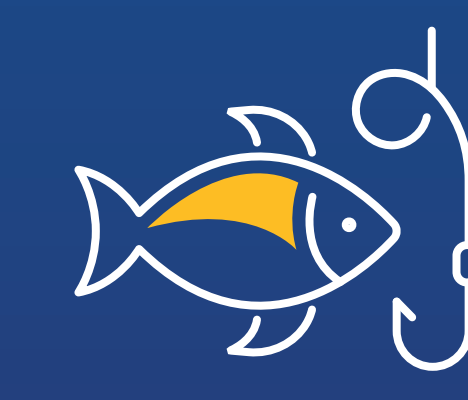
LAND-BASED PROGRAM FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

- 1) Principles and Cultural Protocols
- 2) Governance
- 3) Operational Structure
- 4) Capital
- 5) Referral and Assessments
- 6) Aftercare Plans
- 7) Specific Cultural Components
- 8) Outcome Measures

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

- 1) Indigenous values and worldview
- 2) Personal and cultural safety
- 3) Healers and healing teams

EXAMPLES OF LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES



trapping, fishing and hunting



camp maintenance



medicine walks



ceremonial activities such as sweats, blanket ceremony, pipe ceremony, or smudging



a blend of Indigenous and Western methods, i.e. visualization, yoga and meditation, with talking circles, rites of passage, or singing



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR VISIT THUNDERBIRDPF.ORG

for more on the Land-Based Service Delivery Model and other land-based program resources.

Wellness On the Land was created by the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, for the Issues of Substance Conference 2017. It is based on the Land Based Service Delivery Model created by the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework Implementation Team.

