Wellness Measures for Indigenous Children and Families
A Scoping Review of Best Practices and Contextual Considerations
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Introduction
• Wellness measurement among Indigenous Peoples is crucial to understanding health-related needs of communities
• Examination of existing international best-practices
• A measure aligned with Indigenous cultural context is important
• Indigenous health and wellness assessments that were not co-developed by Indigenous partners perpetuate systemic harms (Indigenous Corporate Training Inc, 2019)

Methods
• A scoping review of existing measures across Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand was completed with the PRISMA method across 5 databases (Tricco et al., 2018)
• Search terms: “child-welfare”, “Indigenous” or “Aboriginal”, “wellness”, “children”, “families” and “framework” or “measure”
• All work led by Indigenous students in keeping with Traditional Ways of Being and Knowing and self-determination practices

Guiding Principles
• Importance of adherence to cultural protocol and asserting sovereignty/self-governance
• Elders and Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Keepers consulted throughout process

Conclusions
• Emerging assessment base for measuring wellness
• Minimal work to date relevant for Indigenous children in MB
• Significant gap because it limits the ability of agencies to support Indigenous families
• Will fill this gap by supporting the development of a wellness measure with potential to multi-contextual relevance
• Potential to contribute to meaningful advancements in Indigenous child wellness through a culturally safe assessment of wellbeing
• Promoting the adequate and equitable dispersion of supports and resources to families and communities

References

World Views
Values and Teachings
Culture and Language
Residential Schools
Colonization
Relationship to land
Holistic

Openness
Reciprocity
Mutual Respect
Cultural Protocols
Communication
Trust
Relationship-Building

Theory
Methodology
Scientific Inquiry
Research Ethics
Bias
Fidelity

Results
• 896 titles, keywords, and/or abstracts were screened
• 88 full articles were reviewed
• 43 were identified as relevant
• Importance of incorporating elements of self-determination by ensuring the assessment derives from Indigenous developers and focuses on restoring empowerment among sovereign Nations
• Themes of family, community, and wholism repeatedly emphasized

Measure
Name
Absence Children, Health and Wellness Measures Canada (ACHWM) - Aaniish Naa Gigaan questionnaire
Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society: Aaniish Naa Gigaan questionnaire
Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness Manual - Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
Vicente et al., McGill University
Children’s Worlds International Survey of Well-Being (CWSIB)
Hua Oranga Outcome Assessment (ACHWM) - Aaniish Naa Gigaan questionnaire

Institution
Laurentian University and Wilfrid Laurier University
Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society
Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (funded by Alberta Children’s Services)
Vicente et al., McGill University
Children’s Worlds research team

Context
Indigenous Youth
Indigenous women and families
Healing from trauma Wholistic approach Ensuring all parts of the self are in balance
American adults
Children of diverse cultures

Strengths
• Assesses spiritual, mental, emotional and physical wellness
• For young people in communities
• Developed by community, for community
• Positive and negative emotion assessment
• Used in Australian Aboriginal communities
• Only 10 Items
• Simple and concise
• Based on self-determination theory
• Measures autonomy
• At home, school, and with peers
• Positively worded questionnaire
• Strengths-based

• International assessment of child wellness
• At home, school and other social contexts
• Different versions for different age groups

• Work-life preparation
• Social and emotional adjustment Youth programs and schools
• Strengths-based
• Includes items to measure quality of service for children in programs, school, etc.

• Wholistic wellness
• Used with clinical assessments
• Addition of family to wholistic wellness
• Use of multiple reporters

• Culture as intervention in addictions treatment
• Culturally grounded
• Focused on spirituality of First Nations

• Promoting the adequate and equitable dispersion of supports and resources to families and communities

Notes:
1. Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society: Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society (funded by Alberta Children’s Services)
2. Community based, research informed approach: Ensuring self-determination and ownership of Indigenous researchers
3. Children’s Worlds International Survey of Well-Being (CWSIB)

Acknowledgments:
• The research team would like to thank the Indigenous Leads in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and British Columbia, as well as the research team leaders from the Children’s Worlds team, for their valuable input.

* Project funding provided by the University of Manitoba
* Academic resources and support provided by the Hearts and Minds Lab

First Nations
Focuses on spirituality of First Nations
Use of multiple reporters
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