

**Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.**  
**A Comprehensive Approach to Good health and Wellness in Indian Country**  
**Internal Framework and Approach**

**Approach:** The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.(ITCA) approaches the Comprehensive Approach to Good health and Wellness in Indian Country project (GHWIC) through an emphasis on culturally adapted and community chosen Policy, Systems, and Environmental interventions to chronic disease. ITCA encourages tribal partners to utilize tribal specific concepts of “good health” and “wellness” to measure the health status of their community and develop and implement PSE interventions to chronic disease. What follows is a list of examples of Indigenous frameworks of “health” and “wellness,” suggested language, and concepts that frame the ITCA approach to GHWIC.

**Examples of Indigenous frameworks of “good health” and “wellness:”**

- Hozho
- Te Pae Mahutinga (Maori)
- Gohzho (Apache)

**Language** and terms that highlight the connections between chronic disease prevention, policy systems and environmental change, and Indigenous centered approaches to addressing the seven prevention areas:

- Healing Wellness
- Balance
- Holistic
- Healthy Living/Life
- Healthier Way of Being
- Culturally Relevant
- Indigenous
- Reconnecting
- Recovery
- Resilience
- Land
- Language
- Oral History
- Ceremony
- Kinship

**Examples of culturally adapted and Indigenous approaches to addressing the seven prevention areas:**

- Indigenous Gardening
  - Prevention areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 7
  - Reconnections to land
  - Learning traditional foods
  - Promote physical activities
  - Learning stories
- Traditional/ceremonial activities
  - Prevention areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
  - Learning traditional practices
- Promote healthier traditional foods
- Promotion of physical activities
- Traditional Food Gathering
  - Prevention areas 2, 3, 5, 7
  - Reconnections to land
  - Promotes physical activities
  - Learning traditional place names

**Key Concepts** that inform the ITCA approach to GHWIC:

- Historical Trauma
- Colonization
- Decolonization
- Cultural Resilience
- Survivance
- Holistic Healing
- Indigenous Centered Framework

## **Cultural Resilience – Key Terms**

**Peoplehood:** consists of four components (language, sacred history, territory, and ceremonial cycle) that are interwoven and dependent of each other making up the foundation of how indigenous peoples defined themselves. Each component is dynamic and interlocking but no single element is more or less important than the other (Holm 2003).

**Colonization:** is both the formal and informal methods (behaviors, ideologies, institutions, policies, and economies) that maintain the subjugation or exploitation of Indigenous Peoples. (Waziyatwin & Yellowbird 2005) It is a process that creates a relationship between the colonizer and colonized which maintains and/or expands the colonizer's social, political, and economic power. (Memmi 1965; Waziyatwin & Yellowbird 2005).

**Decolonization:** is the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of Indigenous minds, bodies, and lands, and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation (Waziyatwin & Yellowbird 2005).

**Trauma:** an acute event or insult against a person's body or psyche includes emotional insult or shock to the mind resulting in physical and/or emotional injury. Highlights adverse impacts on the individual level (Duran & Duran 1995; Brave Heart 1998 2003; Whitbeck 2004).

**Trauma response:** the response attributed to or meaning derived from the trauma experience, most commonly known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Highlights adverse impacts on the

individual level (Duran & Duran 1995; Brave Heart 1998 2003; Whitbeck 2004).

**Historical trauma:** the cumulative emotion and psychological wounding, over the lifespan or across generation emanating from massive group trauma experience (Brave Heart & DeBruyn 1998; Brave Heart 2003). Examples include: loss of culture, forced removal from homelands, genocide, and boarding schools (Whitbeck 2004).

**Historical trauma response:** a constellation of feature perceived as related, or as a reaction, to historical trauma. It also highlights the past and current adverse impacts on the community level (Brave Heart 2003). Examples include higher levels of depression on the community level, various forms of anxiety within the community, and hopelessness in the community.

**Resilience:** the ability to overcome stress and regaining health and well-being after experience adversity. It is also the outcome of coping skills and social support that promotes positive adaptations to extreme circumstance of adversity. (Denham 2008; Goodkind 2012).

**Survivance:** Native People's individual and collective abilities to persist despite the enormous adversity imposed by colonialism (Vizenor 2008).

**Community resilience:** how a community overcomes adversity by drawing from the social and culture networks and practices of the community. (Goodkind, 2012) (Denham, 2008) Highlights the system and structural issues that may be causes of or solutions to personal and community suffering (Denham, 2008).

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# American Indian Studies Paradigm

The American Indian Studies Paradigm is grounded in the experiences of American Indian nations, peoples, communities, and organizations from American Indian perspectives. Its principles are rooted in the concepts of sovereignty and indigenusness. It recognizes that disparate worldviews, literatures, knowledge systems, political structures, and languages characterize Indian societies within the United States but that they share commonalities that link them with other indigenous peoples of the world. It acknowledges that colonialism has impacted sovereignty, human rights, landholdings, religious freedom, health, welfare, and cultural integrity of Indian nations.

AIS focuses on the protection and strengthening of Indian sovereignty, self-determination, self-sufficiency, and human rights. AIS faculty must view their teaching, research, and service as a "sacred" responsibility to Indian nations undertaken for the sake of cultural survival. AIS provides a curriculum for the intellectual, ethical, and social development of students so they will acquire a comprehensive and practical understanding of U.S. Indian law and policy, colonization/decolonization, and nation building.

AIS privileges oral history and traditional knowledge while promoting collaborative community-based research methods that transcend disciplinary boundaries. It calls for partnerships with Indian nations, communities, and organizations that seek tangible and sensible solutions rooted in indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge to address problems facing American Indian nations. It acknowledges that Indian concepts of living in a balanced, harmonious, and reciprocal relationship with our Earth Mother have a place in dialogues concerning sustainable communities, climate change, environmental degradation, and justice. It trains future leaders and intellectuals to meet challenges of an ever-changing world<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Riding In, James. "Editor's Commentary." *Wicazo Sa Review* (26) 2, 2011: 5-12.