

Definition of Wellness

Wellness from an Indigenous perspective is a whole and healthy person expressed through a sense of balance of spirit, emotion, mind and body. Central to wellness is belief in one's connection to language, land, beings of creation, and ancestry, supported by a caring family and environment. The spirit causes us to live, gives us vitality, mobility, purpose and the desire to achieve the highest quality of living in the world. **Spiritual** wellbeing is the quality of being alive in a qualitative way. Spirit is central to the primary vision of life and worldview and thereby facilitates hope. Within an Indigenous worldview, being rooted in family, community and within creation as extended family is the foundation of belonging and relationships. At this heart level of one's being, **emotional** and relational wellbeing is nurtured by one's belonging within interdependent relationships with others and living in relation to creation, including beings in creation. The mind operates in both a rational and intuitive capacity. **Mental** wellbeing is the conscious and intelligent drive to know and activate one's being and becoming. Having a reason for being gives meaning to life. The body is the most outer part of our being and is comprised of the most immediate behavioral aspects of our being. **Physical** wellbeing is that way of behaving and doing that actualizes the intention and desire of the spirit in the world. This and the knowledge that the spirit has something to do in the world generates a sense of purpose, conscious of being part of something that is much greater than they are as an individual.



Elder Jim Dumont, National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, Honouring Our Strengths: Indigenous Culture as Intervention in Addictions Treatment Project - University of Saskatchewan. (2014). *Definition of Wellness* ©. Muskoday, Saskatchewan; Author. Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Funding Reference Number AHI-120535.