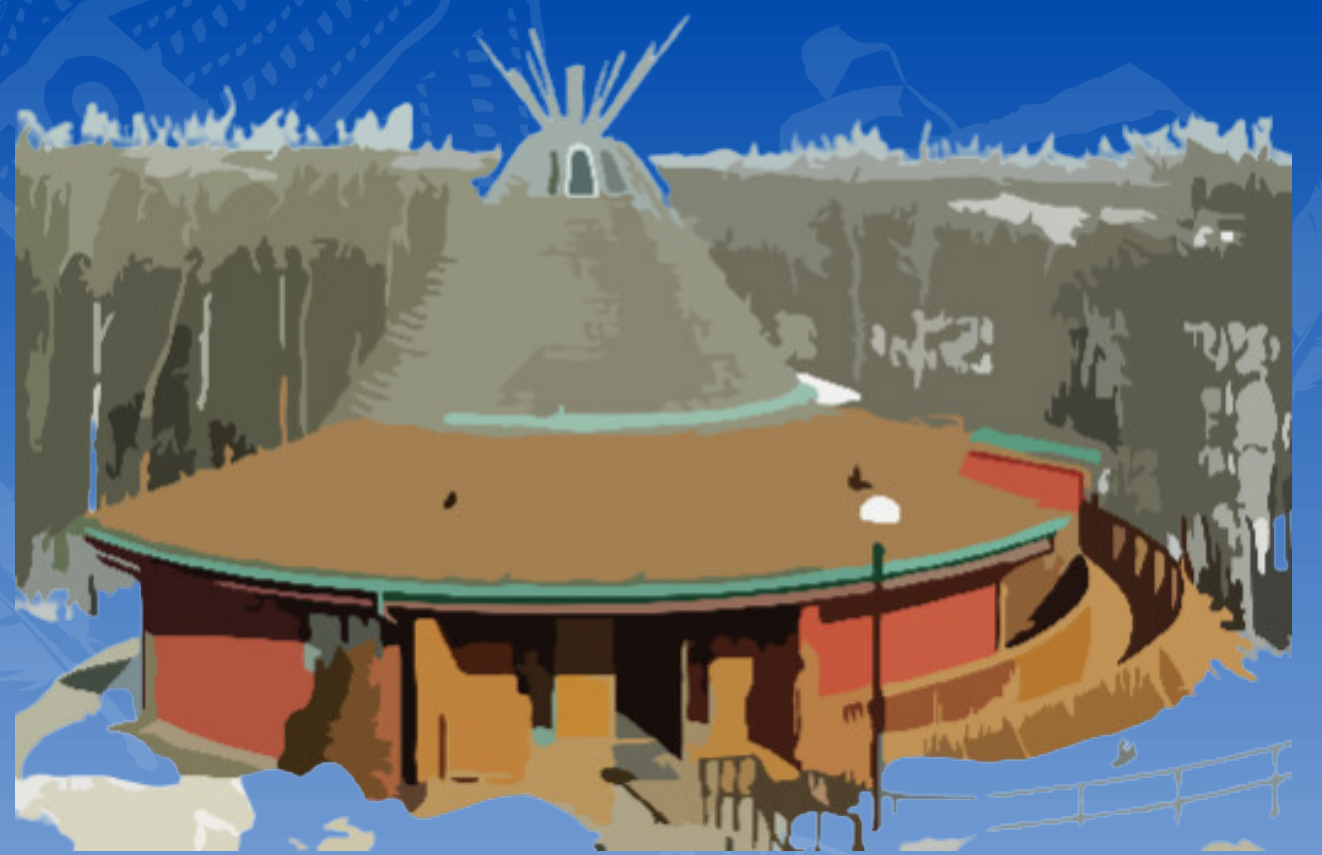


INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES INTO HEALTH SERVICES DELIVERY



Overview of Program

This culturally-based health program was integrated into the health service delivery model at OOHL, and is intended to advance the healing of federally incarcerated Indigenous women by promoting physical, mental, and spiritual wellness and enhancing connection to culture.

Methods

Two data collection phases were employed to gather quantitative and qualitative information from program participants ($n = 21$) and collaborators ($n = 17$) with respect to their perceptions surrounding the implementation, delivery, and outcomes of the program.

Results

Residents' Perspectives

Strengths - The program includes traditional medicine, ceremonies and cultural teachings, mental and spiritual guidance and tools that helped improve residents' overall well-being. Residents enjoyed learning about traditional medicine and the integration of both Western and traditional medicine led to openness of seeking both types of support.

Challenges - The Traditional Healing Team was not on-site as much as needed.

Wellness and Correctional Outcomes:

- The Healers provided support and guidance that led to a better outlook on life with healthier relationships with oneself and others.
- The program guided residents on a path toward better living in the community, reconnection with culture and family members, and encouragement to seek out traditional healing supports in the community.

Impacts on Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Health:

- Residents rated their physical, mental, and spiritual health as slightly above average and important to their overall quality of life.
- Energy work, mental and spiritual support and guidance, traditional medicines and cultural teachings made residents feel comfortable and supported while ultimately improving physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Program Collaborators' Perspectives

Strengths - The program serves as a unique resource bridging the gap between Western and traditional medicine that provides residents with opportunities for healing as well as cultural and social supports.

Challenges - A smaller than expected Traditional Healing Team led to increased tasks for each member that distracted them from their primary responsibilities as Healers.

Conclusions

Impact:

- Cultural activities and healing practices offered through the program were beneficial to the residents' physical, mental, and spiritual health.
- Traditional medicine helped the residents manage physical illness and led to improved energy levels, healthier thoughts and peace, and better control of emotions and situation management.
- The program helped residents reconnect to cultural traditions and spirituality and gain a stronger connection to oneself, culture and the Creator.

Recommendations - Expand the program to establish it as a long-term traditional medicine health services option at other facilities.



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