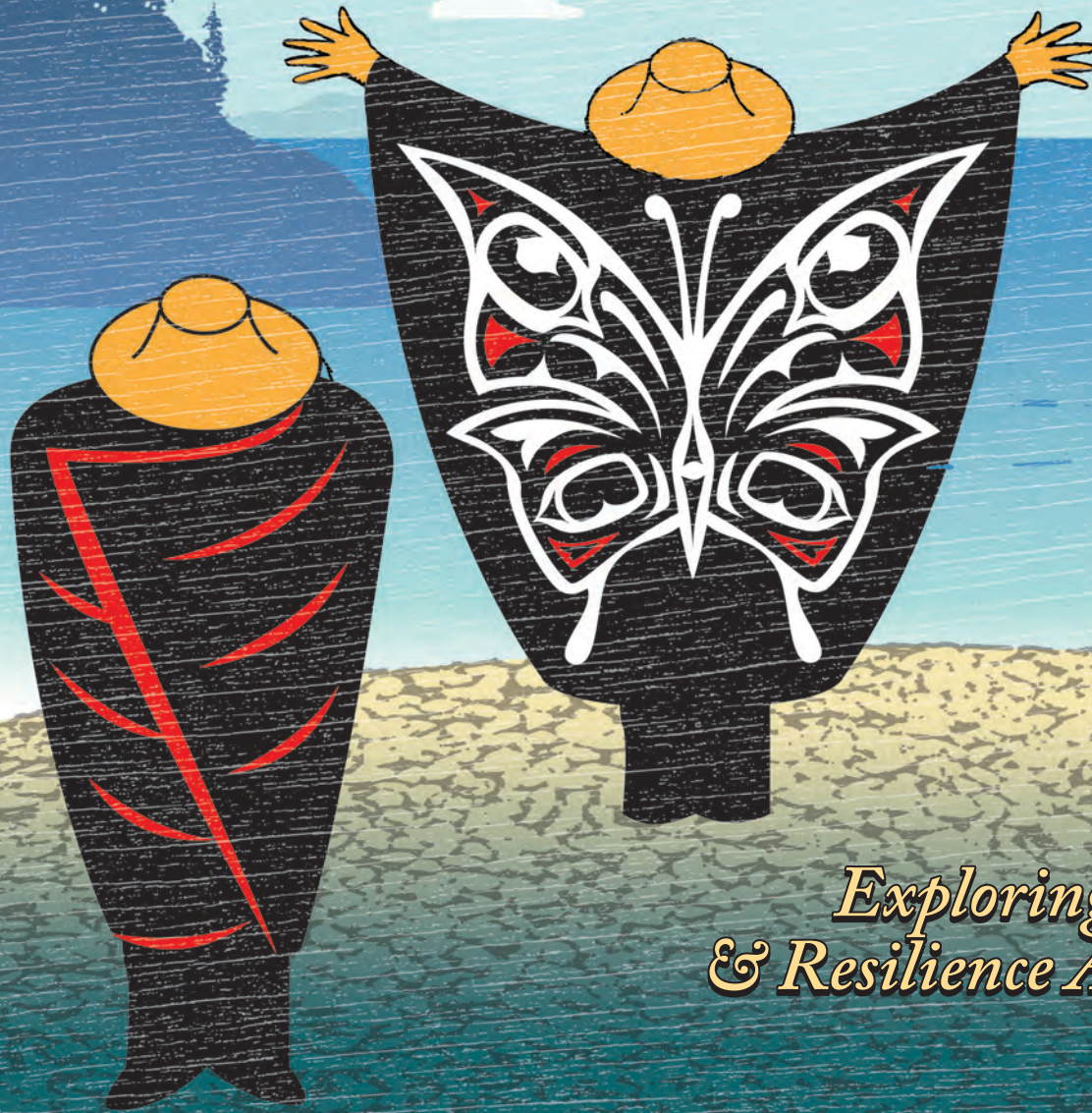


NATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS in the Pacific Northwest



*Exploring Coast Salish Strengths
& Resilience Against Substance Abuse*

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APPENDICES

[Included in Reports to Tribal Council]

1. Project Time Line
2. Tribal Data Sharing and Ownership Agreements
3. Interview Consent Form
4. Life History Interview Guide
5. Methods and Results

— QUOTES —

The quotes in this report are the words of the people interviewed for the project.

All quotes are included with the permission of the participant.

The quotes come from participants in the project representing all three Tribes.



Artwork and Illustration Acknowledgments

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The findings in this report are the findings of the Native Transformations Project Team, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or endorsement of our partners, including any participating Tribe.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“What generation of our people is going to not have alcohol or alcoholism in their family or home? I want it to be in mine.”



The Native Transformations Project (NTP) explores strengths, protections and resilience against substance abuse in three Coast Salish communities in the Pacific Northwest: Lummi, Upper Skagit and Swinomish.

This study responds to Tribal community requests to understand more about how Coast Salish people are working towards wellness and the factors that build strength in recovery and protect against the development of substance use disorders.

To accomplish the project goals we gathered 62 life histories from adults who:

- ☉ Had never had a problem with drugs and/or alcohol; or
- ☉ Had at one time had a problem with drugs and/or alcohol but had sustained their recovery for three or more years.

Results from the study revealed sets of key protective factors within families, communities, individuals and spiritualities that participants identified as important to their wellness and recovery. Protective factors have the potential to act like floats on the lead line of a fishing net by opening a person, family or community up to transformational change.

Findings from this study were used to develop a Reef Net Wellness Model that represents a Coast Salish specific process of change and transformation that protects against substance abuse and leads to wellbeing. The Reef Net Wellness Model represents an initial step in the development of community-based and culturally-grounded interventions to reduce substance abuse disparities. Using this model, Tribal communities can identify strong spots in the net along with gaps in the line in need of mending.

Tribes can use findings from this study to develop, support and evaluate community prevention and recovery services that build Coast Salish strengths and protections against substance abuse.

TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND TRIBAL APPROACH



“The culture I see for today is trying to keep the history of our culture for our young people. That’s the hardest thing now is trying to preserve it because the world’s too fast. Nobody’s got time to sit down and talk to our young ones about the values of our culture that we had before. That’s one thing I taught my kids is take time to visit grandma and grandpa, take time to talk to the elders. Learn what your culture is and save it. Talk to them, pick up just a little bit at a time and it will stay with you. That’s what I’d like to see with what culture we have left and bring back what we can as we can do it. And we were able to bring back the canoe journey. That’s one big thing that we take time to reiterate.”

The Native Transformations Project (NTP) brings together representatives from three Tribal communities in the Pacific Northwest with university researchers from the Northwest Indian College (NWIC) and the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) in an alliance to end the devastation brought by alcohol and drugs upon the Coast Salish people residing on their traditional lands.

Native Transformations is a community-based participatory research (CBPR) project that is Tribally initiated and directed. In doing CBPR, researchers join with Tribal community members who take the role of local experts in a collaborative process that builds local capacity and support for research. In CBPR, community members are involved in all stages of the research from the design, including development of the research questions and methods, to data collection, analysis and sharing of results.

The idea came from the Tribal communities, to conduct a research project to understand more about Coast Salish strengths and protective factors as they build resilience against substance abuse. Tribal college and university researchers were engaged by the Tribal communities to help develop the project into a grant proposal. The project was included as part of a Native American Research Centers for Health (NARCH) grant awarded to Northwest Indian College in 2009. The Native Transformations project received funding and support from the Indian Health Service and National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA).

The NTP CBPR process lifts the people up by recognizing the good in Tribal people and communities. CBPR is a shared practice of learning, building back from prior experience and teachings while moving forward into new places of knowing and understanding.













Tribal Participatory Approach

Three Tribes participated in the Native Transformations Project, and each Tribal community was engaged separately, through a local process, and together through the development of the Native Transformations Community Action Board (CAB).









Local Tribal Community Engagement in Research — Each Tribe engaged in its own local process to approve and oversee the research. Each Tribal community has its system of governance, and a local oversight group was established at each site to guide the project through the appropriate local channels. The research was approved and implemented at each site according to the Tribal-specific decision-making process.

Local Tribal community engagement in the research included:

-  Development of Tribal Resolutions to approve and participate in the Native Transformations Project.
-  Development of Tribal Data Sharing and Ownership Agreements.
-  Development of local community action boards.
-  Selection of representatives for the cross-site Community Action Board.
-  Customization of local recruitment strategies to select Tribal members to be interviewed.
-  Local community navigation for the Tribal college and university researchers conducting the interviews.
-  Tribal specific updates to Council or the Council appointed Board or Committee.
-  Tribal review and approval of results, findings in the form of reports or publications from the research.

Native Transformations Community Action Board (CAB) — As part of the local Tribal process, representatives from each community were nominated to be on a cross-site Community Action Board that met monthly for the duration of the project. The NTP CAB consists of 11 active community members representing the three communities along with NWIC and UAF project staff.

The CAB has met over 28 times since the project began and has contributed to all stages of the research including:

-  Identifying and defining the research questions guiding the overall study.
-  Development of the tools to protect Tribal participants in the study.
-  Designing the research approach and developing the methods that would be implemented locally at each Tribal site to gather the stories of strength.
-  Development of the life history interview guide.
-  Review and interpretation of the stories.
-  Development of the tool used to identify patterns and key concepts in the stories.
-  Interpretation of results and findings from a Tribal perspective.
-  Development and review of the Tribal reports and publications.

COAST SALISH SOURCES OF STRENGTH



We interviewed 62 adults from the three participating Tribal communities for the NTP project. The NTP Community Action Board (CAB) suggested that we seek to understand the development of wellness as a more holistic outcome than sobriety. To this end, the CAB suggested we interview individuals who would fit into the following two groups:

Lifetime Wellness

Defined as those individuals in the communities who may have experienced other hardships and challenges in their lives but had not had a problem with drugs and/or alcohol and were considered good role models of resilience.

Secure Wellness

Defined as those individuals in the communities who did at one time in their lives have a problem with drugs and/or alcohol but had changed their lives and had not had a problem with drugs and/or alcohol for three or more years and are considered good role models of recovery.

Individuals from both wellness groups, Lifetime and Secure, identified sources of strength that contributed to their resilience and recovery from substance abuse and achievement of overall wellness. In the life histories, family, local community, individual and spiritual sources of strength were identified at a higher rate in reference to wellness outcomes than were formal services and programs. Family sources of strength were identified at the highest rate as contributing to longterm wellness among both groups.



In each of the stories we identified factors contributing to strength and protection against substance abuse that were found within families, communities and individuals and also within the spiritual life and beliefs.

Family Sources of Strength



Factors within Coast Salish lineage and family systems contributing to resilience and recovery include: extended family, role and place in family, and family traditions as a key part of wellness and/or recovery.

Community Sources of Strength

Factors within Coast Salish Tribal communities contributing to resilience and recovery include: community traditions and resources, opportunities to learn and participate in wellness activities, and environmental factors such as having access to tidelands, hunting grounds and sacred places.

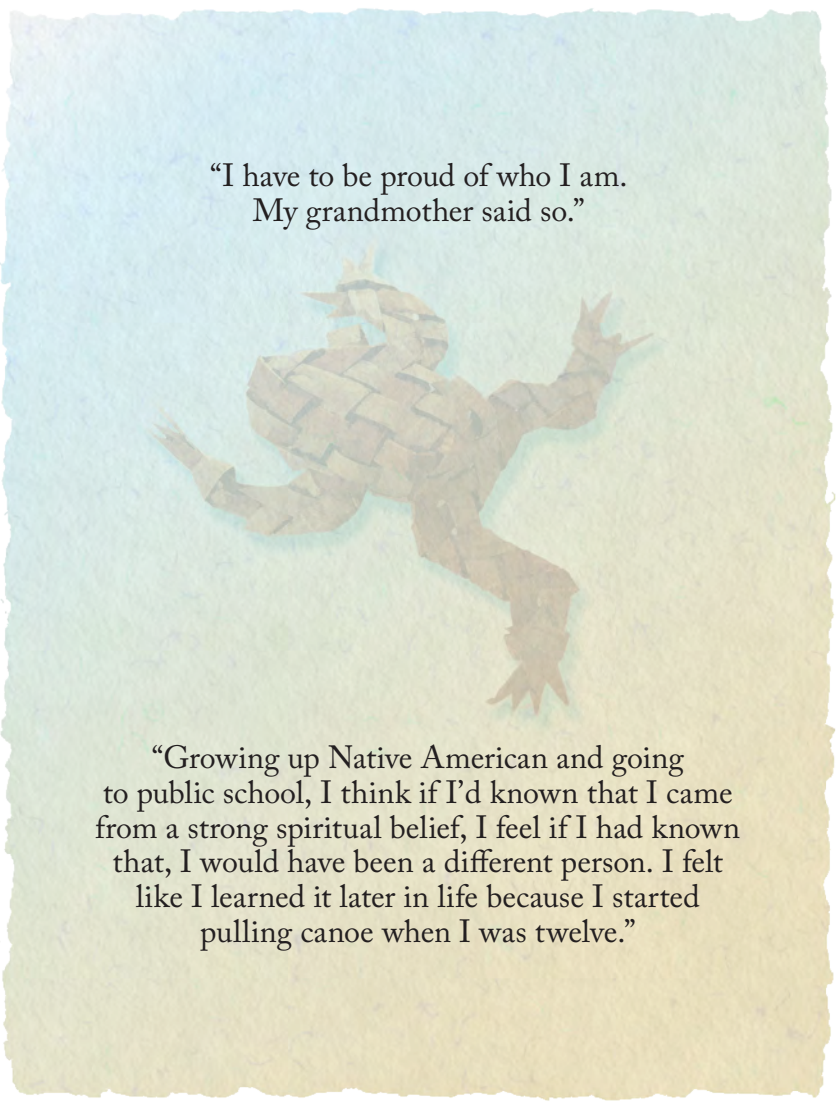
Individual Sources of Strength

Factors within Coast Salish people contributing to resilience and recovery include: personal strengths and strategies for being well, strength of mind, being a namesake, belief in one's self and individual roles and achievements as part of a family and community.

Spiritual Sources of Strength



Factors within Coast Salish spiritual life contributing to resilience and recovery include: engagement in spiritual gatherings and activities in the community, personal spiritual engagement and belief in prayer.



COAST SALISH PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Factors that Contribute to Wellness

The stories revealed much strength in Coast Salish people, communities, families and spirituality. More importantly even, we found how it required the interaction of strengths within each area to create protective environments from substance abuse. We discovered protective family, community, individual and spiritual characteristics that contribute to lifetime and secure wellness outcomes for Coast Salish adults. Protective factors help build strengths and contribute to resilience and recovery. The protective factors we identify here were those mentioned most often in the life stories.

FAMILY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Teachings
Family Roles, Rules and Rituals
Protective Parenting
Ancestors
“Uncles”
Powerful Women
Grandparents

INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Awareness
Working on Living
Helping Others
Honoring your Gift/Speaking from the Heart
Power of Mind
Indian Names/Being a Namesake

COMMUNITY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Opportunities for Learning and Healing
Social Connections
Strong Elders
Traditional Laws
Harvesting and Sharing Resources
Healthy Connections to the Past

SPIRITUAL SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Welcoming the Spirit
Belief in Prayer
Gatherings
Warnings
Rites of Passage
Being on the Land/Water



FAMILY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Teachings

Protective families pass on teachings. Teachings provide moral guidance and instruction on how to live. Teachings can shoot like arrows into a person, setting or righting a person on a path towards wellness.

“The teachings that my dad and my grandmother and my mom shared were a big part of making me who I am. Mom and dad taught me was when you talk or when you speak, speak from your heart and my dad always said use as little words as possible. So those were good teachings and even from childhood he always said use your ears first, you’ve got two ears, one mouth, listen and think before you speak. At funerals, me and my brother and younger brother when things were done and chairs needed to be put away, we were expected to do that. My aunt and her husband eventually, we call it stood me up, as a young man, and said, well they didn’t say it but I knew that’s what it was, you’re going to be a cultural speaker. You’re going to stand up and speak for people at our ceremonies, particularly at funerals. So they didn’t ask me, they stood me up and it’s just the way it happens and so those teachings about thinking before you talk were putting me on this path. I don’t see those teachings anymore. I think all that leads into how you treat other people, how you treat yourself.”

Family Roles, Rules, and Rituals

Families with clear roles for each member and rules to follow are protective. Family rituals are activities that families do together on a regular basis, such as eating together; going to powwows, going out fishing/crabbing/gathering, helping at ceremonies and funerals, etc. Family rituals provide stability and build cohesion.

“My aunt had a huge part in my life. She was strict on rules, making sure of where I was at, what I was doing, when I was going to come back with limitations on when I could go places or who I can hang out with. A few times she did kind of loosen up, that’s when I slipped a few times. It started in middle school thinking I was part of the cool group of kids and whatnot, claiming the one color and thinking I was a gang banger and smoked weed. Me and one of my friends got caught smoking weed on school campus and we got emergency expulsion for a week, and my aunt, she didn’t like it at all. That’s when everything got tightened back down and I just kind of became a homebody, cleaned up the house, chores, helped her. As I was growing up with her, she was one of the cooks for all the funerals and ceremonies, different types of ceremonies, whether it be funerals, pow wows, marriages, namings, gatherings. I helped her out in the kitchen and out on the floor, setting up tables, placing things. I’m pretty sure that was a huge part too by keeping busy and helping out with the community.”

Protective Parenting

Having strong parental role models is a critically important source of strength and protection within families.

“In retrospect though, looking back at the situation, I think the experience with my grandmother especially after everything I’d been through in my childhood just really finally clicked me into a mindset that really prepared me for today. It was a real melding of both worlds-kind of thinking. I grew up in the inner city and had parents that although they weren’t together, and although they had their shortcomings, really instilled a lot in me as a young man. Then on top of that, being able to live with my grandmother, and just kind of learn from an elder who grew up in that old-school time when elders lived within the old teachings. It just really helped my way of thinking of things traditionally speaking.”



Ancestors

Kinship knowledge, knowing who your relatives are, and being an active part of your lineage, is protective.

“When you talk about the Indian culture, there’s one thing that is predominant in all of it, is family is central. Family is central to everything. It begins and ends with your family. We’re taught that our families go beyond first cousins and that we can claim a relationship in a lot of different ways and can go seven or eight or nine generations back. And you want to be related to families that have a lot of respect because you know if you claimed as a relationship, certain families, you get inherent respect that is shared by everyone because they do things in certain ways or they’re very dedicated to the traditions and teachings. And when you’re dedicated to teachings, you’re doing things in a proper way and good things happen to you.”





“Uncles”

Protective families have strong male role models who, like the Watchmen on a reef net canoe, look after the younger members of their families. “Uncles,” an English term closest to the Coast Salish meaning, play a key role in Coast Salish communities, providing guidance and discipline when needed. The role of “Uncle” can be assumed by any of the older male relatives in an extended family system.

“In our community a long time ago, the teachings to the kids came through stories, and the uncles. You see that a lot still. Boys who are misbehaving, their dads send them off to live with an uncle. And what I’ve observed from that is the uncle can be a little bit more strict and harder on a young man than a dad can be in teaching them how to follow the rules.”

Powerful Women

Protective families have central female figures who provide the glue and the teachings that hold a family together and keeps a family strong.

“I think what brought me through all this was my grandfather’s culture. He was raised by his mom, single parent, very strong, hard working woman. Our belief in our culture is something that’s been handed down to my grandfather comes from the mother, his mother. It was always handed down to the female of the family because it’s the female that’s supposed to be the glue of the family. And that was drummed into my head, that if I get a family to be the glue.”

Grandparents

Grandparents, like uncles, can be any elder member in an extended family system and play a critical role in the development of wellness. Protective families have at least one strong grandparent figure who takes an active role in the upbringing of the grandchildren.

“My son, he’s in sixth grade and he already says he’s going to college and knows what he wants to do with his life. It was pretty comical because his soccer coach was talking about college and he popped up and he said yes, I’m going to college or my grandma will kill me if I don’t go. And I looked at him because I was standing there and I said to him, and what will Mommy do? And he’s like, I don’t know. And he said I’m not worried about that, I’m worried what Grandma will do. It was like oh wow. It was pretty funny. He said Grandma’s going to make sure I make myself a good life. So I mean we talk about college and stuff, but he’s inseparable from Grandma and it doesn’t matter what we talk about, but with Grandma it’s like the law. If Grandma says something, that’s what it is. Sometimes I’ll ask him why do you feel that way and he said because Grandma’s your mom too and she’s the boss. So can’t argue with that I guess. She taught me well so I don’t mind.”



COMMUNITY SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Opportunities for Learning and Healing

Protective communities include opportunities for learning new skills, gaining new knowledge and for healing. Opportunities include access to both western-based and culturally-based learning and healing.

“Probably one of the best things that happened here on the reservation is when they provided on the job training and we got some real special instructors that really supported us. Some of us were encouraged to go to college. That was a big change finding out I really could learn and finding out a direction to go in, finding out something I loved to do. I was nineteen and was already married and flunked out of college and then went to the aqua-culture training program and found out I really could learn and then tried college again and ended up graduating.”



Social Connections

Protective communities build interdependence and provide emotional support. Social networks describe social connections in a community. Strong social networks create intergenerational interconnections. Social networks with strong love relationships and those that include elders build resilience.

“There was a sense of community then and there was a woman’s circle that my mother had in that period of time, and the women were quite strong. They had something meaningful. The relationships were built. So those same aunties are my aunties today and those women are still important to me. I saw a woman the other day in the casino of all places and she looked at me like, ‘I should know you but who are you.’ She didn’t say anything, it was on her face. I told her my name and then my parent’s names and she goes, ‘Oh I should love you.’ Now for me I thought it’s not me she’s talking to about that love; it was the love of everything. I can see her going back in time and connecting because there were all those kinds of pieces. I think for most of the people that I grew up with at that time will tell you some of the same things, that there was some structure, there was some community, there was these aunties and uncles that were watching and looking, and as we’ve grown, I’ve noticed that my children don’t have that sense of community. They don’t have that sense of the strengths of aunts and uncles in the same way.”

Strong Elders

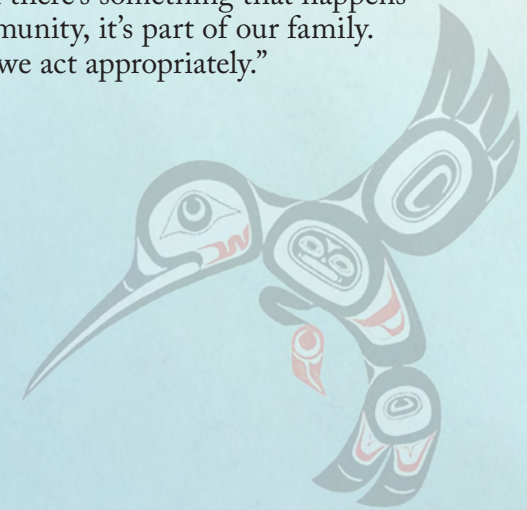
Strong Elders direct a path for learning and wellness for the people, family and community. Strong Elders have the respect of the community and recognize their role and power to help the community heal.

“Okay so sometimes on Facebook it can get kind of dramatic. One time when I actually put my feelings out, and I didn’t even make it really strong out there, I just made like a small comment and an Elder responded to my post. She said let’s have lunch and lets talk about this, and she had no idea what it was and I couldn’t say no because she’s an Elder, and so I went and had lunch with her and I think that is huge. I felt really, really supported because a lot of times... I actually worked for the elders and a lot of them are going through their own struggles and don’t know how to interact with the younger generation. I mean I loved them and I cared for them, but it was so hard sometimes to always respect them just because of how they treated you as a young person. But then when that Elder reached out to me, it put a huge different twist on it. I’m like okay there are Elders out there that care and I feel like that’s really important in Native communities across the board is that they have that support from the Elders.”

Traditional Laws

Protective communities guide themselves, enacting local rules and standards from within and teaching their inherent rights.

“It’s important that we continue to carry out these traditional laws. And they said if we talk long enough we can find out how we’re all related and we may have to go back to seven, eight, nine generations but we can all tie ourselves together. So we try to work that way. We try to think that way that when there’s something that happens in this community, it’s part of our family. So we act appropriately.”



Harvesting and Sharing of Resources

Community engages in traditional subsistence practices, including fishing, hunting, gathering and shares resources among its members.

“In a bigger sense, there’s work that keeps us together as a community and a meal is always there. Resources are always to share, there’s always food at the table spread, people are giving a meal and sometimes other resources are shared and traded and it’s all driven by resources. It’s all driven by what you’re harvesting. I call it the harvesting and gathering. You harvest the resources and you gather as a people. So during the time of harvesting, there’s the values and respect that’s shared between the family and then there’s bigger sets of traditions that are shared during the larger gatherings and I really believe it all resolves around resources, fish and animals and everything that kept our culture alive since we can remember.”



Healthy Connections to the Past

Being part of a community’s success story is protective. Recognizing your community’s historical strengths and the strengths of your ancestry builds resilience.

“In growing up with my grandparents, we always had to be proud of our coat as Native people. Don’t ever, ever take your coat off. The coat meaning our Indian heritage, our pride in our being a Native. Don’t ever take your coat off. You take your coat off and you’re open for everybody to hurt you. I kept my coat on though. I had to protect myself. Again protecting myself because nobody else will. My grandchildren, my granddaughters don’t believe that there was a time when people treated Indians so badly. I told them don’t ever, ever let anybody call you a dirty little Indian. You stand up, you show them your coat. You show them your knowledge of being who you are because I’ve already put names on my children, their cultural names. And mine was put on me when I was younger. You’re then taught to learn where that comes from, who had that name before you, how were they. And I say to my children that’s part of that coat. With that coat you’re carrying with you all that past.”

INDIVIDUAL SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Awareness

Opening-up to learning and healing builds resilience. Process of awakening and transformation.

“I realized that I had this whole pathway to follow. There was a great deal of reflection on what my mother did for our Nation, what my father did and what my grandparents did and my great parents did for us as a people and it was kind of like this spiritual thing. It was so strong in me that I was coming home from the smokehouse and I came to a stop light there outside the reservation and I started crying uncontrollably. It was like one in the morning, just all by myself and it was just so overwhelming and it was about my failures, it was about what was right, it was about my kids and like I was just blowing it. So I had to figure out what I am going to do then.”



Working on Living

Individual contributions to family survival and success are protective.

“We had our duties to do, chores to do and it was nothing for me to get up at 6:30 in the morning and do something. Like I said my mom and dad taught us how to do that kind of stuff, I mean get up and go to work, get up and go to work whether it’s picking berries or whatever. And the hours of work at home was nothing compared to the ten hour days we spent in the berry patches and cucumbers and stuff. So it was easy duty for me and we just enjoyed it. It was really a rewarding thing. I still thank my dad and my mom for doing that survival mode with me.”



Helping Others

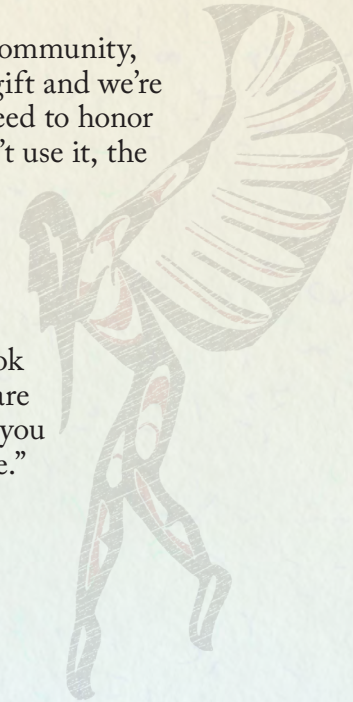
Doing and caring for others, especially elders, helps build resilience.

“When I was really young my mom would take me to Grandma’s quite a bit. So my Grandma was another support for me, but she died when I was ten or eleven. I can remember cooking and cleaning a lot. She showed me how to crochet, how to manually do quite a bit with the home. Then when I got older into my teenage years, she had me babysit for some of my aunts and uncles and she’d also send me to the elders houses’ that lived by us and she’d have me go sit and talk to them or help clean their houses. So if their dishes needed to be done, I’d go and do their dishes. If their bathroom needed to be cleaned, things like that. So I learned how to cook and clean at a young age but then when she’d send me to go help cook and clean for the elders I never looked at it like a chore, it was just something that we did because it was something that they needed help with. But I remember just being so interested because they always had cool stories to tell, funny stories and tribal stories and I really took a big interest in learning about my family tree.”

Honoring your Gift/Speaking from the Heart

Gaining knowledge of your own personal strengths and special abilities. Honoring yourself, as you are, and learning to speak from the heart builds resilience.

“So within the community, everybody’s got a gift and we’re taught that you need to honor that gift. If you don’t use it, the Creator’s going to take that gift away. Whether it’s your voice, or speaking from the heart, or whether you’re a cook or a hunter, those are gifts that God gave you to help your people.”



Power of Mind

Individual spirit power protects bodies and minds. Individuals with power of mind can buck the tide and go against negative social norms and stand up to hard times without use of drugs or alcohol.

“Even at childhood I said when I have my kids, my kids will never, ever go through this. So I remember very, very young saying never again. When I’m old enough and on my own and I’m able to change my life, none of that will be in my life. So it’s kind of weird and you know I never really talked about that but I mean, that was some pretty big feelings to have as a child. Most kids are worried about watching TV and running to get their bike or whatever, but I was thinking about... I was always thinking about even as young as elementary school, I was always thinking about my life as an adult and how different it would be then when I was a child and how those bad things scared me.”

Indian Name/Being a Namesake

Having an Indian name and knowing and being a namesake for a strong relative builds strengths.

“Native pride isn’t a tattoo, it’s how you live. It’s the humbleness you have about where you come from, the family that you come from, the Elders that came before and that’s my grandmas, my grandpas, my uncles. It’s that pride that you have and where you come from. That was one of the things that dad said is to be proud to have your family name. Be proud of the people that you come from. You come from strong people. Strong beliefs. Don’t do things to drag that name through the mud.”



SPIRITUAL SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Welcoming the Spirit

Acknowledging the spirit that lives within us. Guided learning in how to be in a healthy spiritual relationship. Providing a safe and loving home where our spiritual self can live.

“As an alcoholic I think we’ve lost our spirituality.

We lost our spiritual connection through our alcoholism and our drug addiction. I don’t think our spirit wants to be in our body as long as it’s being abused by alcohol and drugs, so it leaves. So when

I sobered up, it was like the spirit came back in and it wants to live in this house again, but I don’t know who he is. So through this, I’m learning my spirituality, my culture. I have a higher power. I

have God. And it feels so good to have that feeling of wholeness. It’s comfortable. It’s a warm feeling. I don’t know how to explain it, but it was somebody that wasn’t there while I was using. It takes a while to understand it. It takes a while to understand the spirituality. That’s what’s really lonely I think when

we’re using, is there’s not a spirit living inside of you and we’re more spirit driven people than we are human driven people. This human life is just what we have. The spiritual is going to live forever. So it feels good to welcome that spirit back in.”

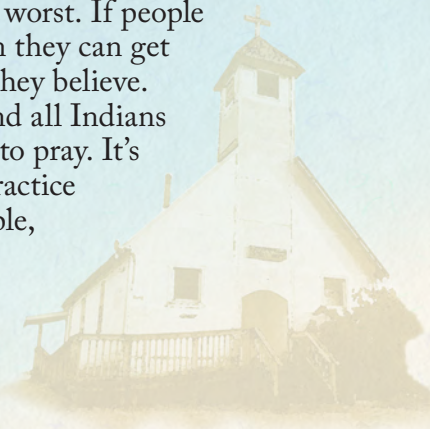
Belief in Prayer

Believing and accepting the power of prayer and knowing how to pray is protective and strengthening.

“Creator first. If you don’t do that then you won’t have a fighting chance. That’s the way I look at it because you ain’t got nothing to believe in at the start and then it’s going to be a tough battle because you’re going to get knocked down and the Creator’s going to be the one picking you back up. It’s why the beliefs. Like I said I got my Native culture and my powwow culture and Shaker, everything that I’ve learned tells me it wasn’t that bottle that made me feel better. It wasn’t the counselor that made me feel better. It was the prayer that

I had when I was at my worst. If people can remember that then they can get through it as long as they believe.

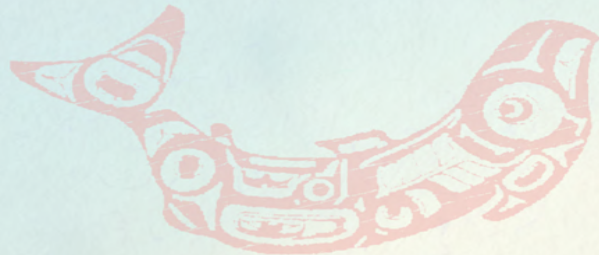
You’re always Indian and all Indians have always known how to pray. It’s just that they need to practice it more to be better people, be stronger people, to be proud.”



Gatherings

Engaging in ceremonial and spiritual activities, for example; going to church, First Salmon Ceremony; canoe journey, stick-games, namings and powwows, together with other members of your family and community is protective.

“So a lot of the Tribes have ceremonies. We’ve been taught that if you thank salmon for giving up its life to you, you thank the deer, the elk, for giving its life so you could survive you’ll always be successful because that resource it allows itself to be caught so that we can be successful but only when we pay our respect. So a lot of us when we go fishing, we thank salmon, we thank the water, we thank the resource itself for being good to us.”



Warnings

Verbal and non-verbal signs of acknowledgment and respect for the spiritual.

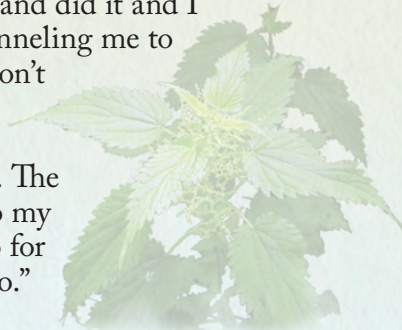
“Well she taught me respect yourself, of course. You’re Native. You walk tall. You’re the first people that ever walked in this country and don’t let anybody put you down because of that. And so I always remember that. And then she would teach me things like - well first of all always respect your Elders no matter who it is. Always respect your elders and I’ve always done that. I could just see my mom turning in her grave if I ever didn’t do that and things like; you don’t eat food in a cemetery, you don’t drink in a cemetery, you don’t step on graves, things like that. You don’t whistle after dark. I remember all the little things. You don’t cry outside after dark. You don’t hoot and holler after dark unless it’s in a ceremony and you don’t sleep with your curtains open or your blinds open.”

Rites of Passage

Events marking an important stage in a person's life are protective and build a sense of purpose and place as part of a community. Events can include; receiving an Indian name, receiving your song, walking through sticker-bushes, first communion, first animal hunted, etc.

“He'd walk me through sticker bushes. He says those are people's words. If they sting, it just goes away. That's another thing. The stinging nettles, they sting just for a little while and they'll go away. Those are people's words. Don't let them hurt you. I think we as grandparents need to be teachers again and not be so darned busy. I hear people talk about their culture but they don't live it. Words are cheap. You got to feel it. You got to walk it and I do now. Like even helping somebody with their funeral, there's a protocol. Like I just came from one yesterday. I had my granddaughter walking with me, I'm teaching her. I told her you're going to be my legs. I just told her what she had to do and she did it.

You're grandma's legs. She went and did it and I feel my grandfather, like he's channeling me to teach her now using his tools. I don't see very much of that. I don't. I don't see that in our community very much at all. You got to do it. The way they did me, I'm doing it to my granddaughter. She's going to go for the walk in the sticker bushes too.”



Being on the Land / Water

Being out on the land, in the forest and mountains, and out on the water, on the rivers and Salish Sea, is protective and strengthens the spirit.

“My papa was a fisherman, he was a commercial fisherman. There would be a lot of times where he'd just take mamma and I out in the boat with him, out in the open ocean and I was a little kid, okay. You're wondering, how the heck did she stay on the boat? Because those are high waves half the time. Well, they tied me to the boat. So if I fell over and they don't see me on the boat, they just pull me back in. Now papa, when I was a teenager, he says there's a reason I did that to you if you really think about it. The waves are the things in life. I've tied you to my boat. You fall off, I'm always going to be there. That's family. So I told my kids I don't have a boat but I'll share my story. I got a Suzuki... But I've never, ever forgotten it. I'm still tied to the boat. I'll always be tied to the boat. But being tied to that boat is I'm tied to my culture. I'm tied to my heritage. That's where our strengths have to come from. That's where our teachings and everything comes from, from our family boats.”

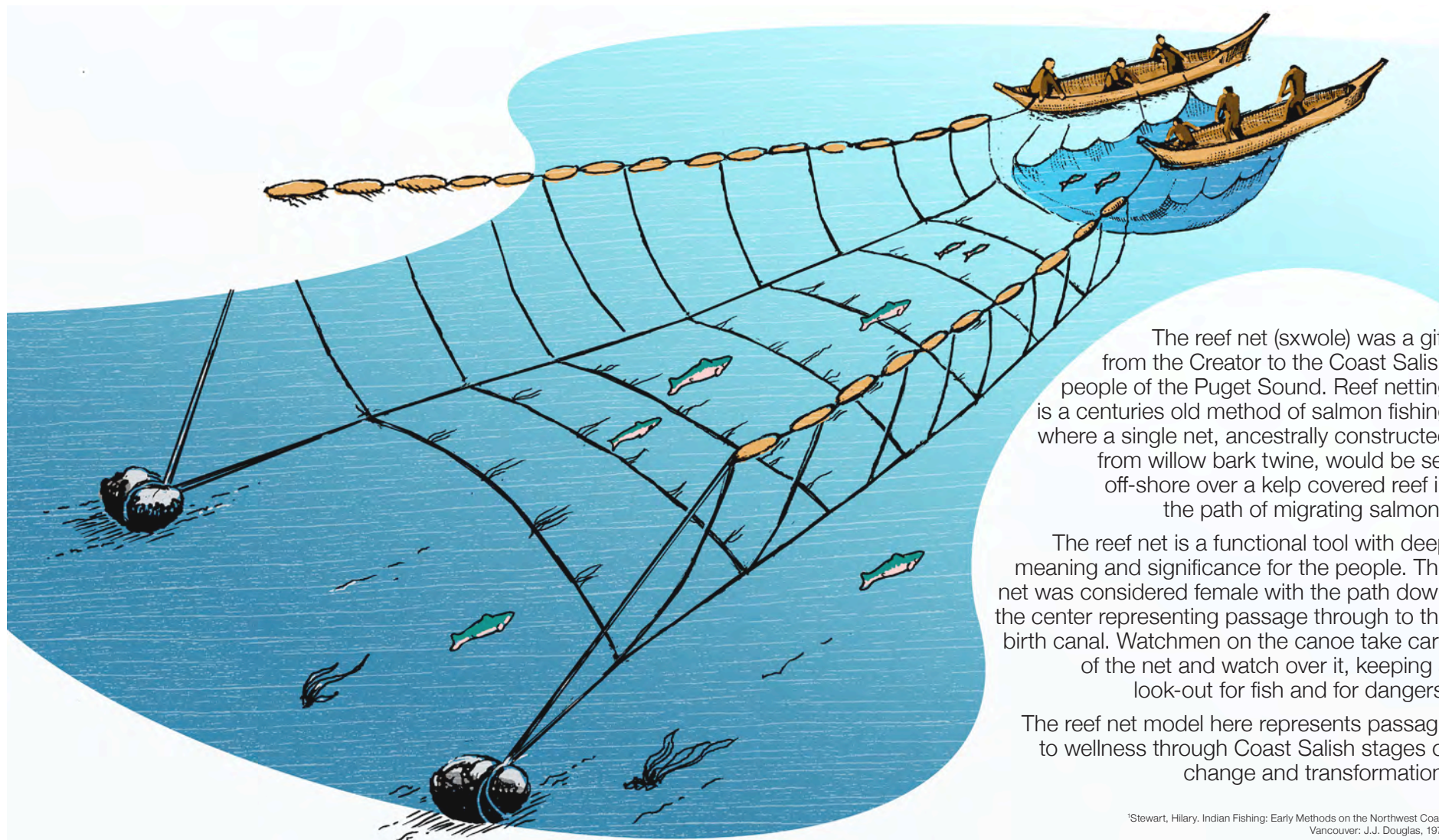




“Fishing and hunting was always important to the family, my dad’s family in particular. Fishing was important to my mom’s family too. It is important to my wife’s family. I don’t ever remember being on the boat and thinking and hearing and saying you know we’re Lummi or Swinomish or Upper Skagit, but at some point in time collecting all of those experiences and bringing them together you realize that it’s a part of who you are, not only just from one Tribe but just as a Native from this area. I remember my dad saying, ‘Just look at all the boats, look at everyone that’s out here right now.’ And I tried to kind of convey that to my younger brother during these last two summers when he helped us fishing. I’m basically trying to get him to think about who do you see in the water? Who is out there? Who else is participating? What type of people are there? Who are they? Trying to kind of instill

what we have is special. The opportunities that we have are almost just for us and it’s ours to take care of. It’s ours to appreciate. But even one step further, it’s ours to take care of because those are the things that stick out to me, those are the things that made me who I am. Those are the things I want to share with my kids. I want them to be able to share it with theirs as well. But in order to do that, the resources need to be there. Without those resources and without those people to facilitate the transferring of values — I haven’t even thought about how it would be done. I thought about what would happen. I think we would diminish as a people. The values would be lost. Culture would be lost. We wouldn’t be gone. The culture would be gone. So it’s either fight for the resources or keep them alive or in a sense change culture and find a different way to transfer the values and beliefs.”

REEF NET WELLNESS MODEL



The reef net (sxwole) was a gift from the Creator to the Coast Salish people of the Puget Sound. Reef netting is a centuries old method of salmon fishing where a single net, ancestrally constructed from willow bark twine, would be set off-shore over a kelp covered reef in the path of migrating salmon.¹

The reef net is a functional tool with deep meaning and significance for the people. The net was considered female with the path down the center representing passage through to the birth canal. Watchmen on the canoe take care of the net and watch over it, keeping a look-out for fish and for dangers.

The reef net model here represents passage to wellness through Coast Salish stages of change and transformation.

¹Stewart, Hilary, Indian Fishing: Early Methods on the Northwest Coast. Vancouver: J.J. Douglas, 1977.



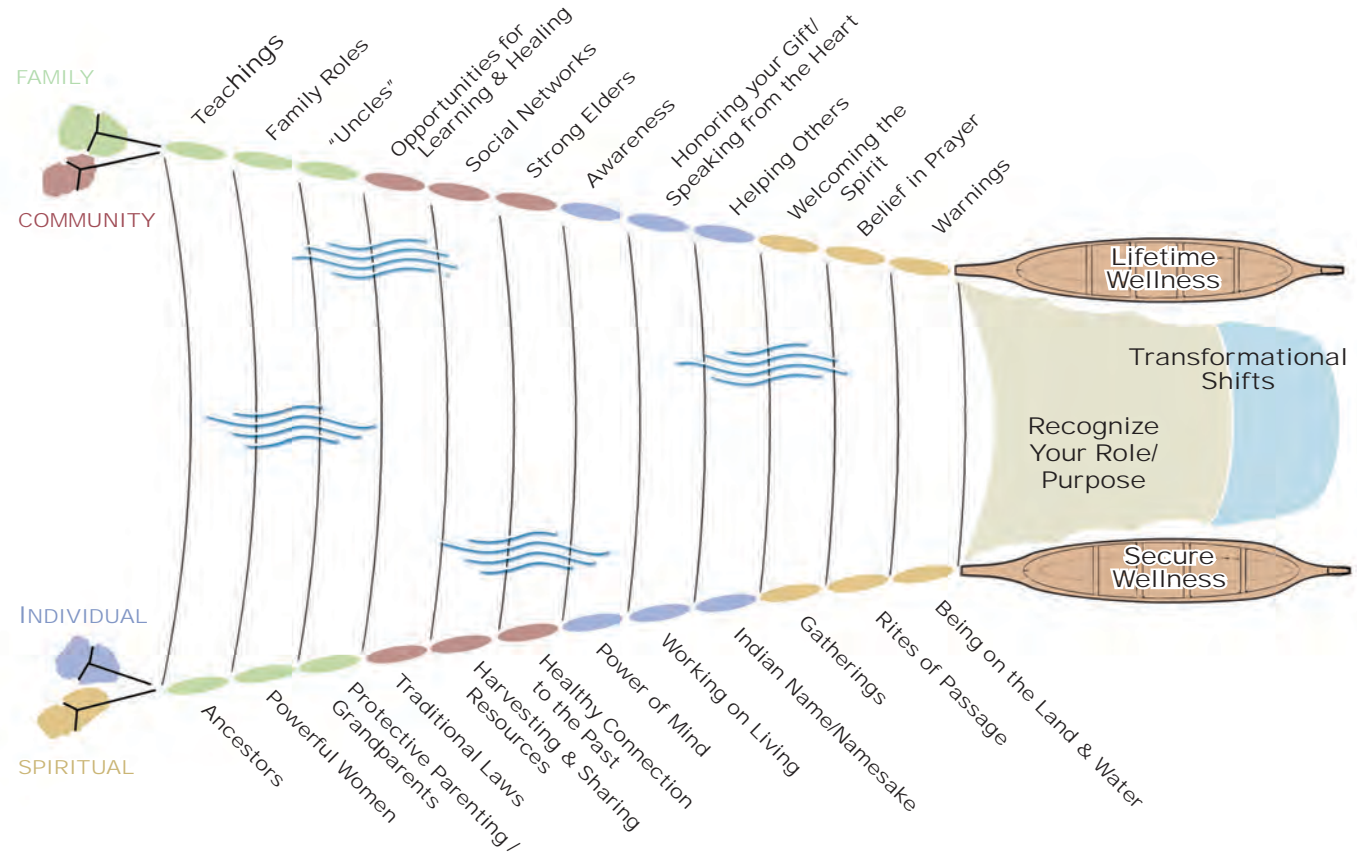
In Coast Salish oral traditions, salmon were once people, and people just like the salmon today, are most drawn to swim with the currents. The forces in people's lives; their families and communities can be like currents pulling and carrying them in different directions. Properly set reef nets can guide the salmon on either ebb or flow of the tide.

The anchors of the net are like the individual and spiritual characteristics of a person. Some anchors do not carry enough weight to keep the net strong, but with time the right amount of weight can be added to hold the line and shore up the passage.

Protective factors, like floats on a net, help keep a person, family and community open to wellness, and provide for safe passage through life's ebbs and flows.

The net, like a mother's womb, represents life and transformation, outcomes of a safe passage.

Watchmen in the cedar canoes keep lookout for salmon entering the net. At the right moment the net is pulled into the inshore canoe and fish are deposited in the shore canoe. The people on the canoes each know their place and purpose as part of the crew. And working together, they support the net from both sides.



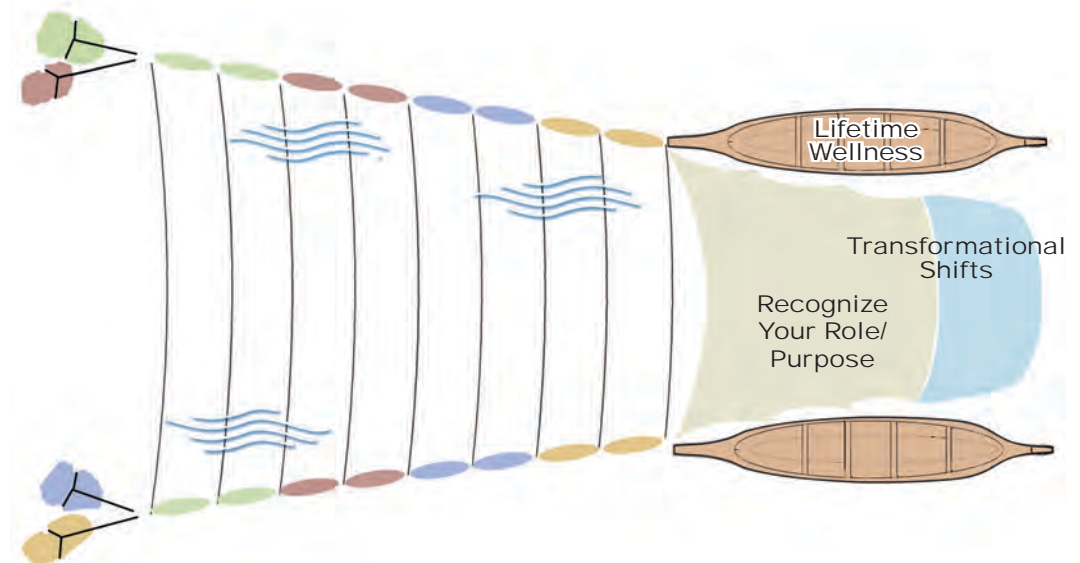
RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY IN WELLNESS

“I’m the oldest in a big family. I grew up having to be responsible. My mom and dad... I don’t remember them ever saying you have to go to college. There was just an expectation that you would do well and that education was important and really it wasn’t even just my parents, it was really a community thing at the time. My dad worked hard too. I saw it. And that’s why I think that my life story, and the success I’ve had from it, is really not that significant because I had everything that mattered. I had a mom and a dad who believed in me consistently without waiver and said you can do it. We know you can do it. So having someone believe in you like that your whole life from the time you’re little, that’s pretty empowering. That is the best empowering thing you can get I think. It’s like they are saying, because we know we can do it, we’re going to make sure you do it. You’re not going to be allowed to quit. You’re not going to be allowed to fail and so you got to just keep at it until you get it done.”

An important finding in the NTP study was the fact that individuals on both canoes, Lifetime Wellness and Secure Wellness, experienced, at a similar rate, adversity and trauma in childhood, or factors contributing to risk. A key difference between the Wellness Groups was that those on the Lifetime Wellness Canoe had stronger anchors and a much higher exposure to protective factors in childhood, than those individuals on the Secure Wellness Canoe.

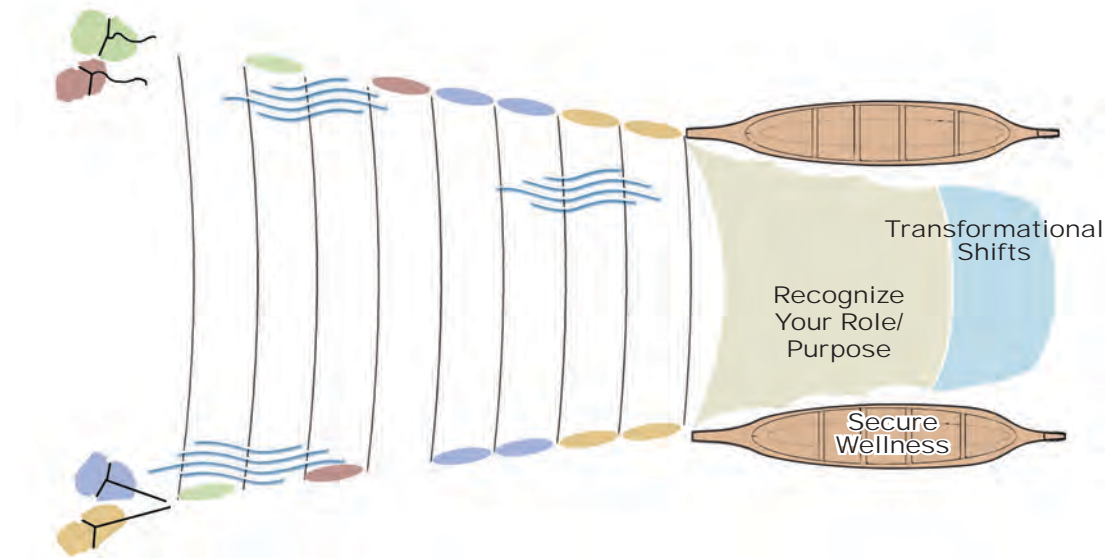
Lifetime Wellness Outcome Model

Strong anchors and consistent exposure to protections among individuals on the Lifetime Wellness canoe led to an earlier recognition of one’s role and purpose in life and stronger and more lasting transformational shifts towards wellness.



Secure Wellness Outcome Model

For individuals on the Secure Wellness Canoe, strengths and protections were developed, awakened, or re-awakened later in life as part of their recovery and transformation from having a substance use disorder to maintaining and strengthening their wellness.



“I think if I look back, and look at who am I as an individual – where did I come from and can I make a difference, can I provide something that will make things better for someone else? I think it just comes from a long line of tribal leaders. All of the people on my dad’s side, going back generations, were medicine people. And on my mother’s side, they were tribal chiefs, tribal leaders. And so I guess it’s an amalgamation coming through. And those things are always there just waiting to be coaxed out.”



NATIVE TRANSFORMATIONS

The Reef Net Wellness Model describes how wellness is the result of the interaction of strengths and protective factors that develop resilience and lead to outputs in a process of change that includes; recognizing your role and purpose and transformational shifts. These stages are critical to the achievement of ultimate outcomes in the development of Lifetime and Secure Wellness.

Recognizing Your Role/Purpose

This is a critical stage in a Coast Salish theory of change model connected to the presence of protective factors and strengths built early on in childhood or in recovery from substance abuse. This stage is characterized by an active taking on of responsibility for the protection of oneself and others along with the realization of one's purpose and place in the culture and social environment.

Overall, individuals in the Lifetime Wellness group entered this stage earlier in their lives, during late adolescence and young adulthood, compared to individuals in the Secure Wellness group.

For many in the Lifetime Wellness group, their recognition and transformation occurred as an integral part of the strengths and protective factors with which they already had been surrounded.

Many in the Secure Wellness group navigated toward wellness by realizing that their use of drugs and alcohol was harmful to themselves, to their loved ones, and to their newly recognized purpose in life, and thus enabled them to recover their strengths, protections, and purpose and to rebuild their resilience.

“So when I had finally for the first time experienced, and felt love for my people it was like wow! It was pretty amazing to be able to see and recognize what it's like to be part of a larger something that I'd been missing out all along and to have that help me understand it as part of my identity and who I am. I am not just here by myself, but I'm here as part of a bigger something. And that felt really great to finally be able to experience that and to know that I have a place amongst my people and this is where I want to be. And Northwest Indian College helped me understand that and get that better understanding of a larger something. They in turn became the teachers that maybe some families are blessed with to have as their uncle or their parents or their grandmother or their grandfathers, to sit there and tell them that this is who we are as a people, this is how we are as a family, this is your place. But I didn't have that and Northwest Indian College was able to give me that and help me with that. So that was just amazing to finally feel connected to something larger in life in general, knowing more about that purpose and part of the destiny that people strive for and look for.”



“It’s the best life I’ve ever had.

I’ll put it that way. I mean I should have been dead eight and a half years ago. There’s no reason other than God, that I believe I’m alive and it’s an amazing ride. I definitely try to live my life within the principles of Alcoholic Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous. Just having the constant thought of others and their well-being. I think

I finally got to the point that they talk about where we reach the point in our lives where we want to cease fighting anyone or anything and you just want to be a part of your surroundings. You’re done fighting everything. My whole

life that’s what I do is fight. I went against the system, I went against authority as much as I possibly could and now

I just want to enjoy life. I think that’s one of the bottoms that you hit in drug addiction and what I think I hit was the bottom of an emotional and spiritual nature where you’re not connected to any other human in your life. You’re running around bouncing off everything in your life, but you’re not really connected to one thing. I think as humans we have to have that. We have to be connected to something or there’s just no reason for us, there’s no purpose for us and I think

that’s why God kept me here, I believe, was to have this purpose giving back and providing a means of recovery for other people.

It’s an amazing gift
that’s for sure.”

Transformational Shifts

This is a culminating stage characterized by a realization or an awakening to wellness, after which an individual is changed fundamentally and alcohol and/or drugs will lose power and will never or no longer be a part of their lives. For individuals in the Lifetime Wellness group, this change happens early on and is sustained. For those in the Secure Wellness group, this change occurs later and sometimes multiple times before sustained recovery from substance abuse is achieved.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing the role and purpose of research is also an important step in a process of community and systems transformation. The purpose of the Native Transformations Project was to understand more about the development of wellness for Coast Salish people so that we may then use this knowledge to inform and improve the community and the services within the community. The study was exploratory and takes an initial step towards developing effective and culturally-grounded prevention and interventions to reduce disparities in alcohol and drug abuse within Coast Salish American Indian communities.

Research to Practice Recommendations

- The Reef Net Wellness Model is the knowledge of the three Tribes expressed in a traditional Coast Salish image. This model may assist the Tribes in explaining their indigenous knowledge, help chemical dependency and behavioral health programs provide services to these Tribes, and aid other Tribes in developing their own model.
- Findings can be used to identify Tribal community sources of strength and areas where strengths can be supported and grown.
- The protective factors can be used to create a clinical tool to assess Coast Salish strengths and identify protective areas “waiting to be coaxed out” in a treatment or recovery setting.
- The protective factors can be used to develop evaluation tools that measure growth in strengths and protections.
- Findings can be used as evidence in support of the need for cultural, community-based prevention services.
- Findings can be used to develop or adapt a cultural, community-based preventive intervention for Coast Salish youth to build strengths and protections against substance abuse.

“Our job is to put our family on the healing path. We do not expect them to find healing immediately, but we hope to put them on the path towards healing. So once they get started then it’s up to them to finish up the process. So many people when they’re hurt, they resist putting themselves on the healing path. So it’s our job to speak that we love and care for them, to say these things that help them understand.”



NEXT STEPS ON A HEALING PATH

The NTP is the first step down a healing path towards community well-being.

Future steps might include:

- Development of a Coast Salish Strengths Inventory: a tool to identify sources of strength and protections against substance abuse.
- Re-submission of the Native Transformations Opiate Project: an application to the NIH (National Institutes of Health) to explore healing paths out of opioid dependence.
- Development of a proposal to NIH to develop a preventive intervention to build Coast Salish strengths and resilience against substance abuse based on findings from the Native Transformations Project.
- Publication of findings in peer-reviewed journals to establish an evidence-base for Coast Salish best practices.
- Presentation of findings at the local, regional and national levels.
- Development of a book of life stories based on the Native Transformations Project interviews.

This report is meant to start conversations and initiate or reignite community action. Each person will take something different from the results of this study. Each person and each community may have their own ideas about the ways that wellness happens.



IN CLOSING, WE HOPE...

“You take something from each person’s ideas. And you’re not looking at these ideas to say do I agree with that or do I disagree with that? Rather you’re saying, okay, everyone has a version of the truth. Take what you can use and leave the rest. So ask, what I can use from each person? So instead of looking for faults, you’re looking for positive things that you can gather and incorporate into your way of life.”



We wish to thank the communities and individuals who participated in the Native Transformations Project. We are appreciative and humbled by your generosity and your courage, in sharing your stories and knowledge for the benefit of others. We also thank all who contributed, including our Tribal partners, who approved the research, the Northwest Washington Indian Health Board, and our Community Action Board (CAB), who guided the research at all stages. The National Institute of Drug Abuse provided funding for this project as part of a Native American Research Centers for Health grant to the NWIC Center for Health (5R01DA029002).

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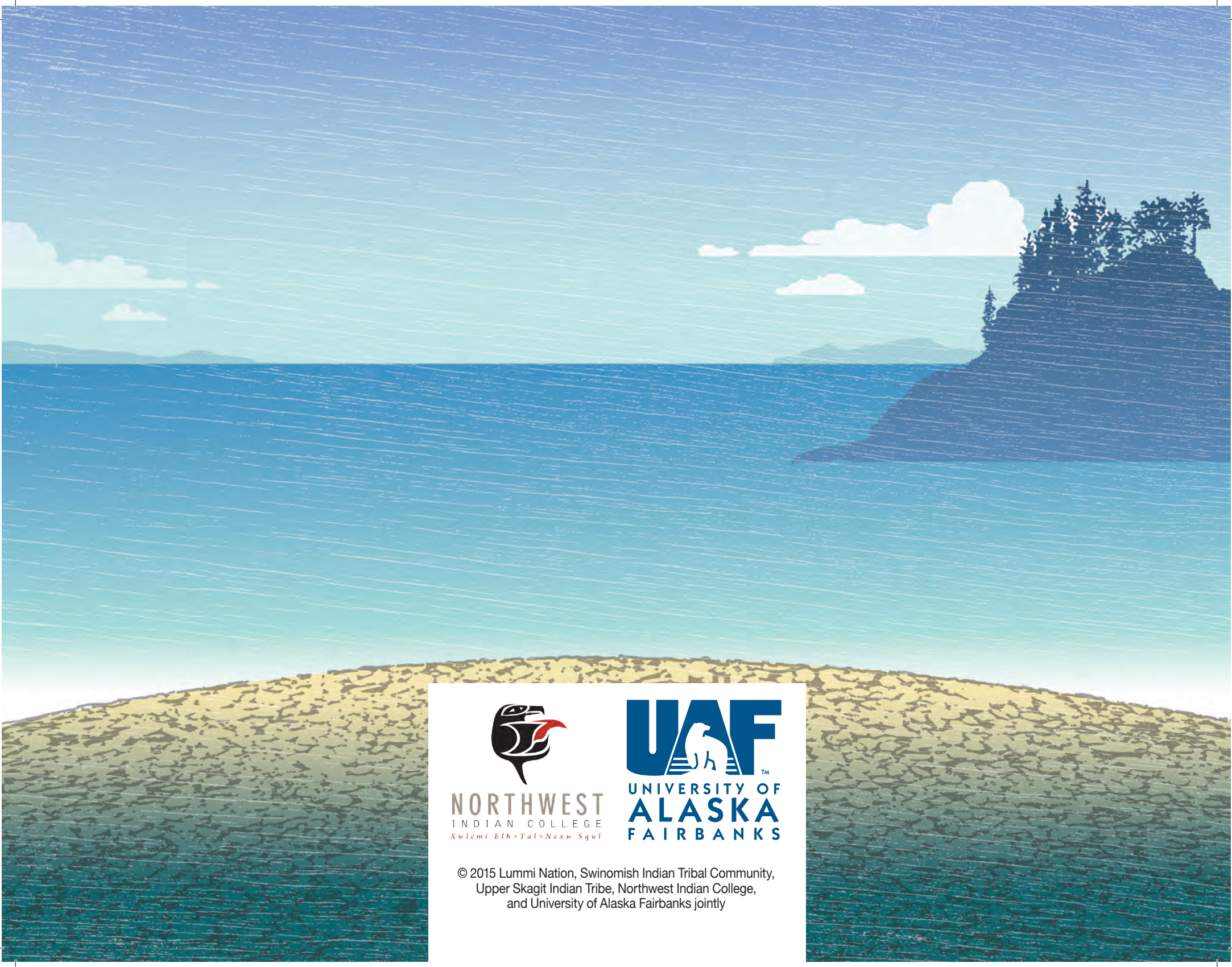
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