



# Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' Practice Framework

A PATHWAY TOWARDS LOVING JUSTICE THAT SUPPORTS AND  
HONOURS TR'ONDËK HWËCH'IN CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES





# Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì'

OUR FAMILIES, OUR FUTURE





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**Łihè tr'ädäl. Łëk'ănăcha. Tr'inkè-in hōzō huk'ănăhcha. Tr'ëhuhch'in Năwtr'udăh'a. We walk together. Take care of each other. Take good care of the children. Finding our way home. Family, Community, Healing, Connection, Ceremony, Celebration, All Our Relations.**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' Department and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation would like to recognize and thank all the Citizens that took the time to provide their feedback on this framework at community engagements and one-on-one sessions over the course of the past years leading up to its development.

Thanks to the youth, Elders, families, citizens, TH departments and numerous working groups over the past years, we have a practice framework that is representative of the community and nation that will guide the work in supporting our families by Dënezhu values.

This Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' Practice Framework is a culmination of community feedback, lived experience, survivor empowerment, traditional knowledge, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in worldviews.

We would like to acknowledge all the collaborative efforts of those who provided their expertise in support of the development of this framework.

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# Ni'ehłtyat Nidähji'

OUR FAMILIES, OUR FUTURE  
PRACTICE FRAMEWORK FOUNDATION



Łihè tr'ädäl. Łëk'änàcha. Tr'inkè-in  
hözö huk'änähcha. Tr'ëhuhch'in  
Näwtr'udäh'a.

We walk together. Take care of each other.  
Take good care of the children. Finding our  
way home.

Family, Community, Healing, Connection,  
Ceremony, Celebration, All Our Relations.

## Guiding Principles

### TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

A focus on healing and caring without  
judgement.

### CULTURAL CONTINUITY

Teaching through modelling, storytelling,  
and observation.

### HOLISTIC APPROACH

Focus on intergenerational and  
interconnected community and holistic  
healing.

### FAMILY-CENTERED/INDIVIDUALISTIC

A focus on healing and caring for all  
members of the family with plans  
specific to each members' needs.

### TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The land, animals, and our ancestors teach  
us, and we have a responsibility to apply  
and pass on what we learn for future  
generations.



## Our Families, Our Future

Dënezhu dät'r'inch'e.

We are Dënezhu. The people of this land.

We are Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. The people of this river.





This Practice Framework is intended to improve outcomes for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in children, youth, families, and nation through restorative and holistic practices. We want to practice in a way that is supportive of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in ways of knowing, being, and doing to reclaim our inherent rights, empower individuals to connect with their culture and identity, embrace their unique strengths and support one another as a community and nation.

This framework is rooted in the groundwork of the UNDRIP, TRC, CHRT, MMIWG Final Report and Child Welfare Jurisdiction. It is grounded in storytelling, survivor empowerment, community engagement, lived experience, traditional knowledge, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in law and worldviews.

Continuing the work of our grandparents, Elders, ancestors and all who walked before us to keep our families strong and connected to self, to each other, to our land, our food and animals.

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# WE ARE DĚNEZHU. WE LIVE TR'ĚHUDÈY.



We are Děnezhu, the people of this land. We are Tr'ondĕk Hwĕch'in, the people of this river following the ways Tsà' Wĕzhè traveled and remembering his journey and the living inheritance he left us – Tr'ĕhudè, our way of life and our law.

We are Děnezhu, the people of this land, salmon people and caribou people, weather-watchers and story people. Ours is a constitution of stories and promises – a promise to listen to the land, a promise to act humbly and show gratitude for the gifts that sustain us, a promise to take care of each other.

The promises Tsà' Wĕzhè made in the long-ago times are the core of our identity as Děnezhu, the source of our wealth, the reason we endure and the root of our kinship with the land and our animal relatives—those with fur or fins or feathers leaves or needles or berries or flowers, two legs or four legs, more legs or none, who taught us how to survive, but also how to live. These promises are happy obligations because when we look after our relatives, they look after us.

Tsà' Wĕzhè used his wits to make the world safe for us, so we live Tr'ĕhudè to protect the balance he made, still telling the stories that bind us to this land and keeping our promises so the animals keep theirs for all the generations yet to be born.

That is what we mean when we say we are Děnezhu, the people of this land. That is what it means to be Tr'ondĕk Hwĕch'in, the people of this river.

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# TR'ĒHUDÈY AND DÄ'OLÈ

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Our culture is governed by the laws of Tr'ēhudèy and Dä'olè. These laws work together to form a land-based culture that sustains both human and non-human life. Non-human life includes the land, the spirits, our ancestors.

Tr'ēhudèy is our way of life, it is a life that seeks to live in balance. We understand that all beings are interconnected, and all are worthy of care and respect.

Dä'olè reminds us that our actions have consequences that ripple throughout all of creation. If we cause harm, that harm is felt throughout our communities and is felt on the land: we must seek to restore balance through Tr'ēhudèy. From these laws, which are rooted in the spirit of the land, our culture has developed five guiding values: integrity, justice, balance, interconnection, and respect.

As with all creation, these values are not distinct, but are woven together to create a tapestry of Tr'ēhudèy. The land thrives through interconnectivity and cooperation, just as we do.

The land is honest, it prospers with integrity, and pays attention. The land provides, but it can also take away; it is neither good nor bad, it is a delicate balance of complex forces. Balance is the essence of the land's justice. The land teaches us, and we have a responsibility to apply those teachings and to pass them on.

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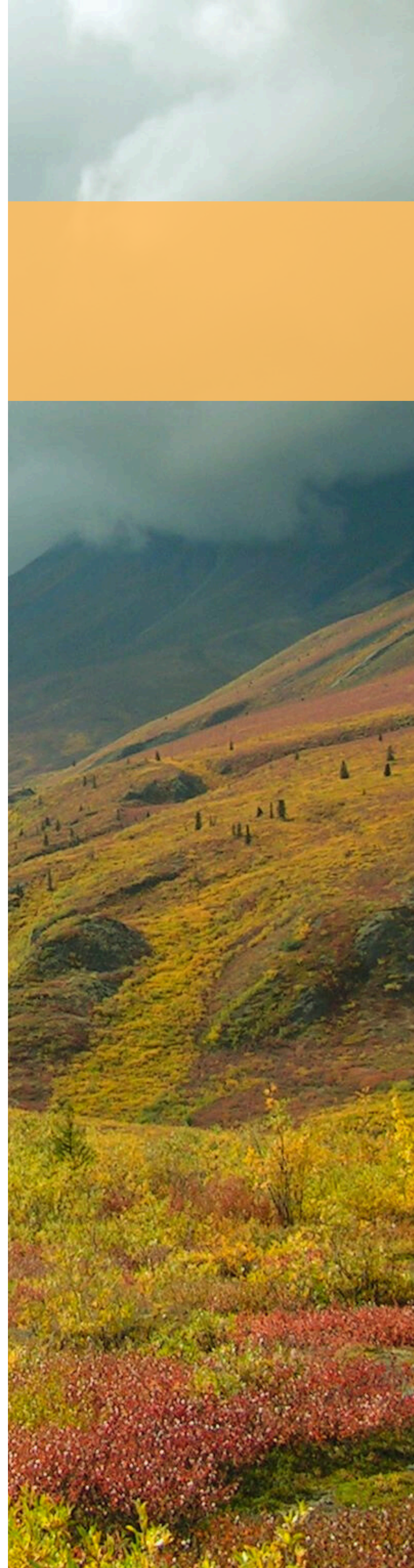


# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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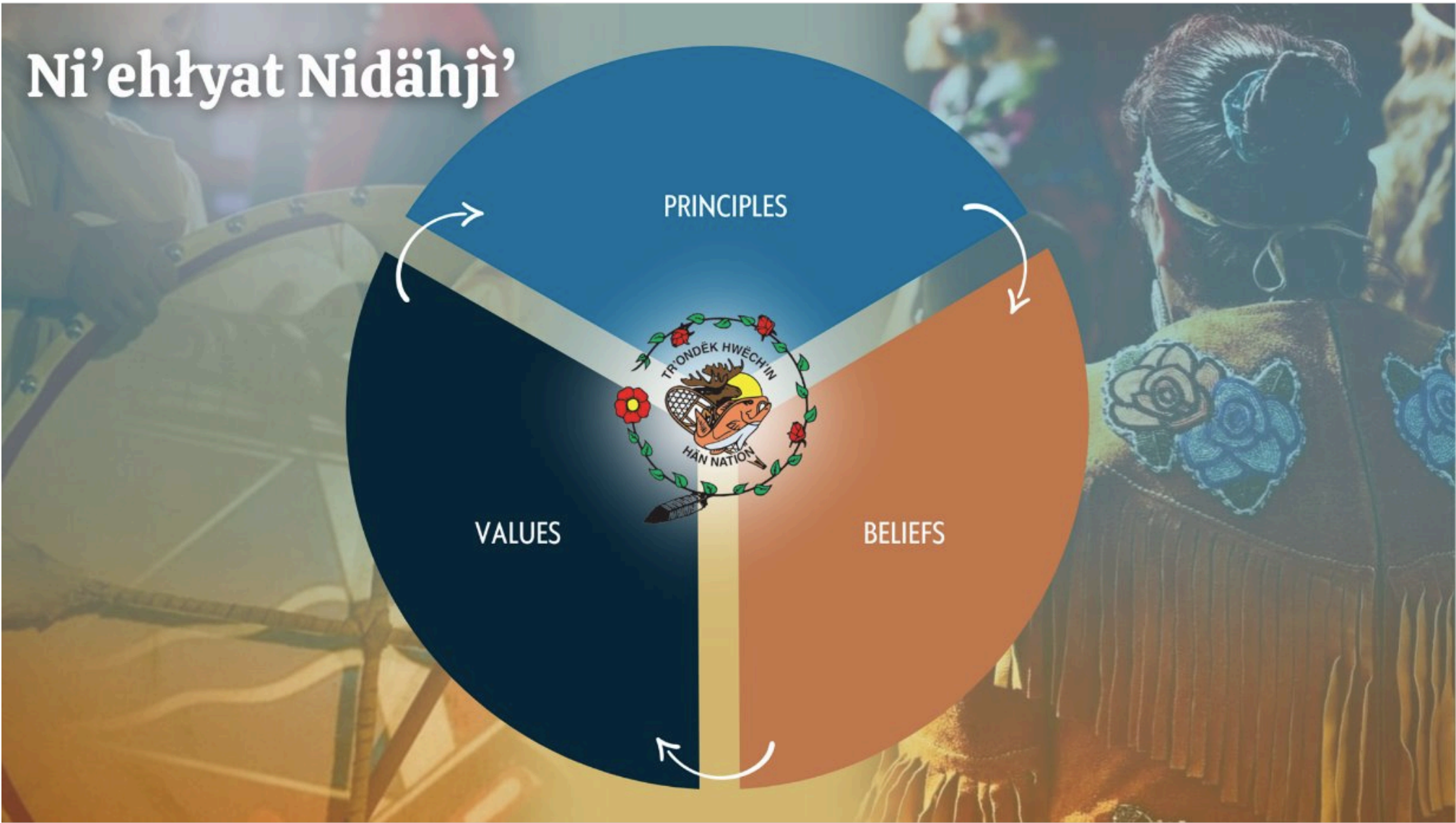
Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' seeks to restore balance to our families, community, and nation through restorative practices that honor our children, youth, and families. We have set out guiding principles that will serve as the foundation for all work that we do including:

- Accepting what is without judgement.
- Supporting families without blaming or shaming. Our focus is healing and caring.
- Mentoring through a combination of modeling, storytelling, and observation.
- Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in community is intergenerational and interconnected. For example, childcare and education are often shared by parents, grandparents, and other relatives. By including a child's holistic network of supporters, we ensure that the responsibility for a child's wellbeing is being shared.
- We will always treat children and families with respect. Respect is demonstrated through listening, supporting, and providing opportunities for learning and healing.



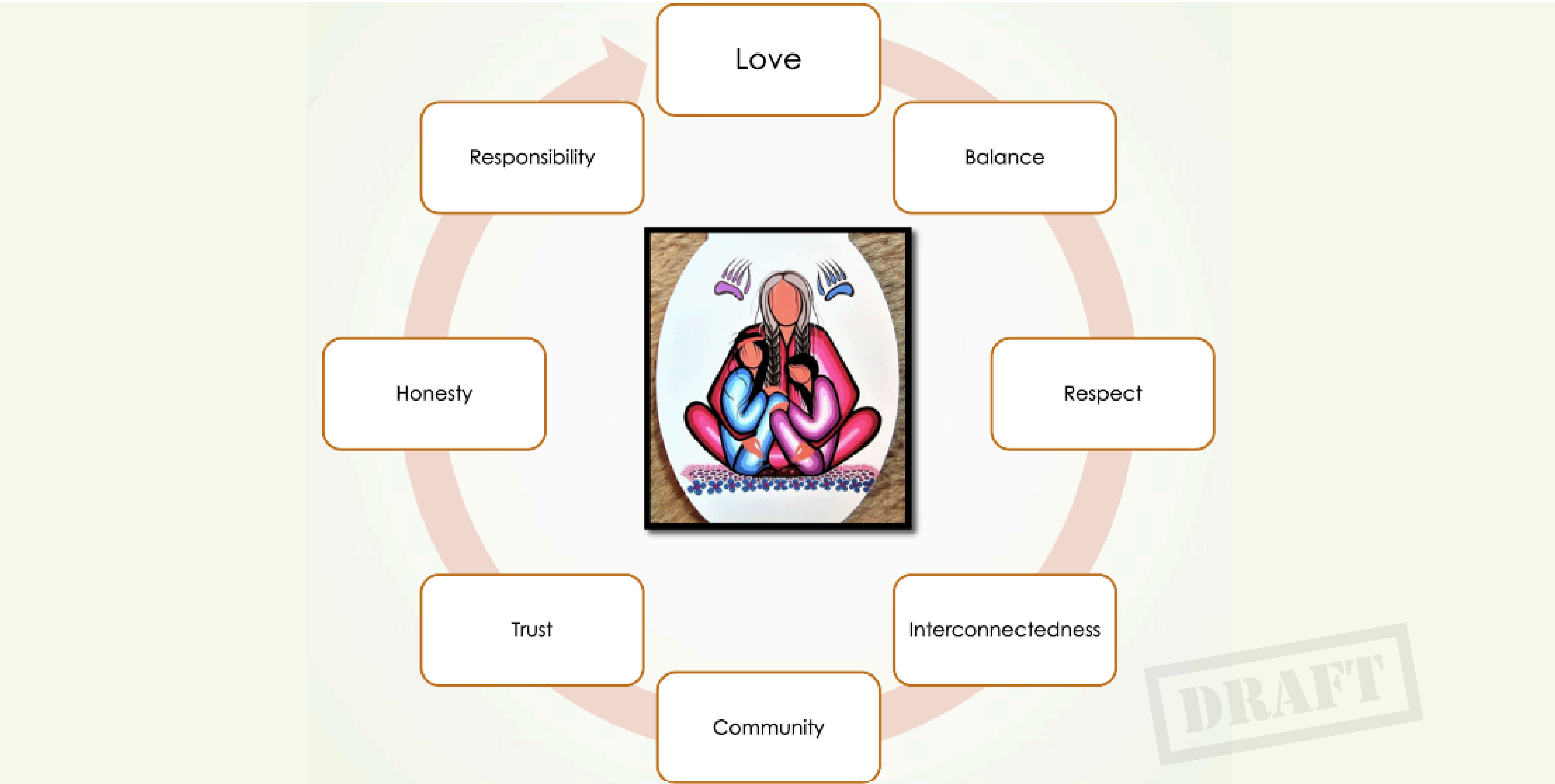


# OUR FOUNDATIONS



Our belief is that Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in will continue to preserve our identity and to exercise our inherent right with equality, understanding, and well-being in an environment of trust, respect, honesty, and open communication.

From the laws of Tr'ëhudèy and Dä'olè , the traditional values that will guide our policy and practice are:





# OUR TRADITIONAL VALUES



*Love, Balance, Respect, Interconnectedness, Community, Trust, Honesty and Responsibility will guide our practice.*

## What does it mean to uphold these traditional values in our practice?

- Love:** Offer caring and kind supports to children and families through listening and developing a plan of care together based on their own identified needs.
- Balance:** Offering holistic supports that balance the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical well-being.
- Respect:** Acknowledge that families have the expertise and best knowledge of their own circumstances and walk alongside them through their struggles.
- Interconnectedness:** Create opportunities for families to connect with the land, all generations and relatives including our four-legged and winged relatives.
- Community:** Build a community of safety, respect and cultural continuity through programming and culturally-appropriate supports.
- Trust:** Build honest and respectful relationships with our citizens and ensure their personal information remains confidential.
- Honesty:** Maintain a culture of honesty and transparency, addressing sensitive issues through a place of loving justice.
- Responsibility:** Maintaining a responsibility to our children and future generations to honor and preserve our traditional knowledge and values and distinct identity.

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# ŁIHE TR'ADAL: OUR PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



Our traditional Dënezhu values guide the work that we do, coming together as family, a community and a nation walking together on this journey of growth, healing, and restorative practice.

Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' will live, breathe, and walk by our traditional values, supporting individuals and families where they are at while strengthening our community's holistic well-being through ceremony, nutritional supports, trauma-informed care, traditional knowledge, and on-the-land cultural programming.





# TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

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*To respect the spirit of the land and to conduct ourselves as it teaches us, is to honor our place in the world as Dënezhu.*

Traditional knowledge guides the work that we do, encompassing Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in values, beliefs and principles.

Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' will practice in a manner that is restorative and responsive to the realities of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in families and their unique history and context.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in traditions and practices are fundamental to supporting the well-being of our children, youth, and families.

A practice approach inclusive of traditional knowledge means that we ensure our practice aligns with Tr'ëhudè and Dä'olè, maintaining a holistic approach that promotes living in balance and maintaining focus on traditional values such as: integrity, justice, balance, interconnectedness and respect.





# CULTURAL CONTINUITY

**Our ancestors, Elders, family, extended family, and community pass along knowledge and practices to our sacred children and youth who will share this knowledge with generations to come.**

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in community is and always has been intergenerational and interconnected.

Mentoring through a combination of modeling, storytelling, and observation was how our ancestors traditionally passed on knowledge, teachings, and the values of our nation from one generation to the next.

Our practice approach will ensure cultural continuity and cultural safety through maintaining and upholding these traditional practices.





# TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

*To heal a nation, we must first heal the individual, the family and the community.*

*A trauma-informed approach to working with our citizens is deeply connected to our values of respect and honesty.*

The history of colonization and intergenerational impacts thereof, in addition to ongoing systemic racism, have had and continue to have a profound impact on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Citizens. This framework provides a pathway towards restorative practice based on Tr'ëhudè and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in values, beliefs, and traditional practices.

For centuries, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in lived in harmony with the land and as a nation. They were self-determining and self-sufficient with traditional governing structures and a distinct worldview.

Honoring and understanding the impacts of harmful colonial institutions and systemic racism is key in healing our Citizens, families, and nation. Operating and practicing from a place of restorative and loving justice and trauma-informed care, is the mandate of Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' to support better outcomes for our children, youth and families and evidently, our nation.





# A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PRACTICE

*Like the medicine wheel shows us, it is necessary to balance our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being.*

*Taking a holistic approach to supporting the individuals and families we work with, through ceremony and traditional knowledge and practices, we can restore balance.*





# THE LIFE CYCLE, CEREMONY & CULTURE



Through enrollment with Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì', our goal is to honor all children and families from family planning to adulthood, through holistic practices, ceremony, and culturally-led programming.

Leading with prevention and providing supports that are culturally-relevant, culturally-safe, family-centered, strengths-based, trauma-informed, and holistic, our vision is to keep our families strong and Citizens connected to self, to each other, to our land, to our food and to our animals.

Our goal is to restore balance to our families, community and nation through restorative practices that honor our children, youth, and families.

Culture, ceremony, and a holistic approach to practice focusing on the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the individual will guide our work, ensuring Tr'ëhudè and Dä'olè, living in a good way and in balance are deeply engrained in all that we do to support our Citizens and families.



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# THE LIFE CYCLE, CEREMONY & CULTURE



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# FAMILY-CENTRED/INDIVIDUALISTIC SUPPORTS



**Family is a link to the past and a bridge to the future.**

*As First Nations peoples, we rely on those who came before us to have passed on the essential knowledge of what it is to be human and a member of our group.*

*We are trustees of knowledge—not holders, owners or creators of knowledge – just as we are the trustees of the lands that are bound up in our identity.*

*-Cindy Blackstock*

Family-centered approaches to practice are necessary for healing the collective colonial traumas of our people. The sacredness of family and parenting has been broken by residential schools and the colonial histories of removing children from their homes and communities.

A family-centered practice approach is Ni'ehłyat Nidahji's response to these complex current and past realities.

Working with families, as well as with individual members of the family, to support the family as a whole, meanwhile attending to each individual members' needs, will support in restoring traditional parenting practices and healing throughout our community and nation.







Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' (Our Families, Our Future) is truly a resemblance of this photo taken years ago at Moosehide.

It shares the importance of a community creating a strong framework to support families and children along the journey of life, through the rough waters and the smooth.

This will be a department focused on bringing Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in culture, values, and teachings back to the forefront of our policies, procedures, and how we support one another as we raise our children in a way they will thrive.

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# TOGETHER AS A NATION

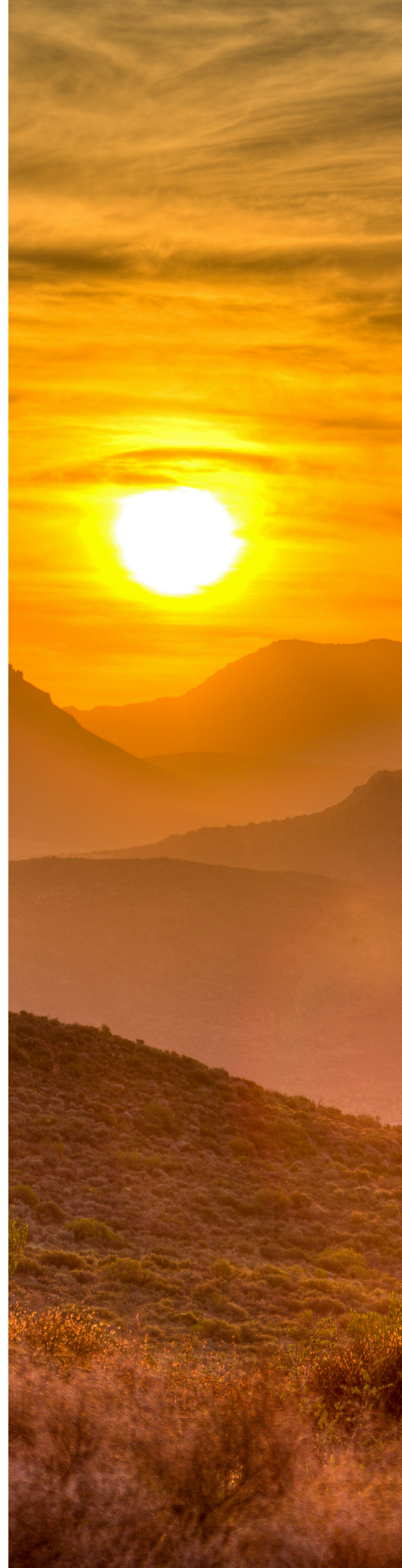
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We all carry a role in ensuring the success of the Ni'ehłyat Nidähjì' Practice Framework, and we all have an individual and collective role in ensuring the framework is implemented and promoted.

Together, we can realize a future that is built on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in ways of knowing, being, and doing. We can realize a future in which policies and practices support and honor Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in children, youth and families.

It is our shared responsibility to:

- Understand our shared history and its ongoing influence on the present
- Implement practices and policies that are restorative and holistic
- Ensure policies, practices, and services effectively meet the needs of our families
- Use this practice framework to work with and support all Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in families
- Recognize the strengths and benefits to embedding traditional knowledge into our practice approaches
- Support our children, youth, and families together as a nation.





# APPENDIX A: WHAT IS A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



A Practice Framework includes the theories and practices that guide the work of supporting children and families. There are commonalties that exist across practice and policy development. However, Indigenous nations are taking an individualistic approach as to what practice looks like based on their unique approaches to traditional governance and family wellness. Defining family wellness looks different across cultures, across nations, across families. There are concepts, principles, beliefs, and values that can guide the work, yet it is necessary to develop practice in a way that meets families where they are at and what their culture as a family may be. This includes incorporation and consideration of a broad range of factors, such as:

## HOW?

- TH Beliefs and Values guiding practice
- Include broader research to inform practice.
- TH Worldview/Community-Led
  - Dream together how different the world could be without colonial practices and systems.

## WHO?

- Acknowledge Intersectionality
  - Social Determinants of Health
  - No one size fits all approach
- Youth-led, Child-Centered
- Elders & Knowledge Keepers
- Family
- Community
- Survivors

## WHERE?

- At Home
  - Never stranger placements!
- Community
- Infrastructure
  - Family Support Homes

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# APPENDIX A: WHAT IS A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



Every Practice Approach includes:

- Theory (Belief) (Desired outcome: if we do x then \_\_\_\_\_)
- Practice (Principle) (Specific way of carrying out work to achieve desired outcome)
- Values (The reasoning why something is done in a specific way)

For example:

We want to carry out social work practice in a way that is supportive of Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in ways of knowing, being and doing to reclaim inherent rights, empower individuals to connect with their culture and have a strong identity, embrace their unique strengths and support one another as a community and Nation.

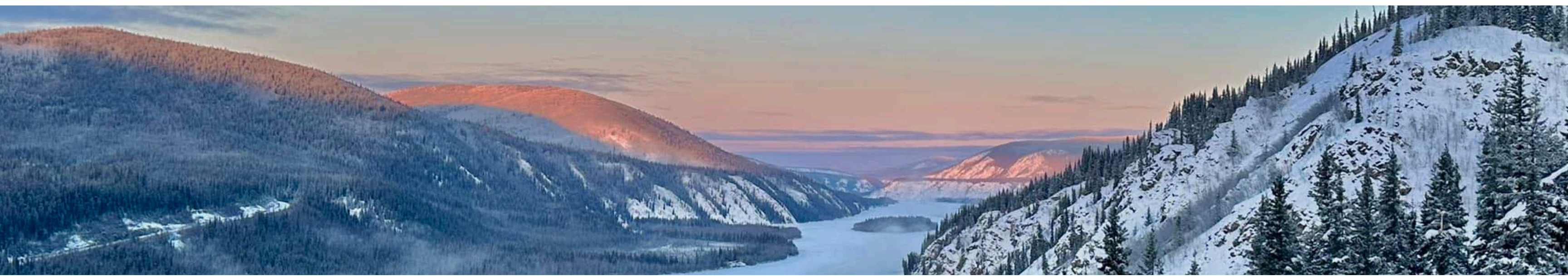
A Practice Framework entails how we are going to achieve that?  
What is going to be done differently than the territorial model that currently exists?

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# APPENDIX A: WHAT IS A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



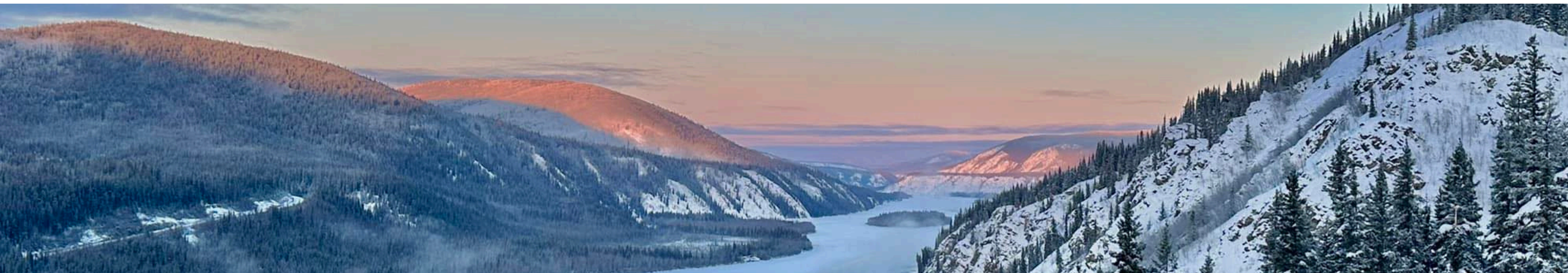
MODEL	THEORY	PRACTICE	VALUE
Strengths-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building from strengths will empower individuals in turn reinforcing areas of weakness.</li><li>• Strengthening individual identity is crucial to mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building collaborative, person-centered relationships that treat individuals as unique focusing on their personal, relational and community strengths.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community  (Have to know who you are to make sense of where you are going in this life.)</li></ul>
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early intervention and wrap-around supports leads to less protection and safety concerns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supporting families from family planning, pregnancy to parenthood</li><li>• Mentoring healthy families</li><li>• Sharing experiences of communal knowledge</li><li>• Community-driven approach</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Belonging</li></ul>

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# APPENDIX A: WHAT IS A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



MODEL	THEORY	PRACTICE	VALUE
Family-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Working with families to help them make their own decisions and develop an individualistic approach to supports and needs will lead to meaningful change through addressing issues/concerns that are at the root of the problem.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support families based on their individual needs.</li><li>Work in collaboration to develop a plan that supports the family in reaching their goals.</li><li>Recognize that the family knows what is best for them and their needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Respect/Humility</li></ul>
Child-centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Involving children and youth in planning and decision-making will centre the child's voice and needs rather than the adults around them.</li><li>Mentoring children and youth from a young age will lead to healthier communities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Involve children and youth through meaningful participation in decisions that impact their lives.</li><li>Honor their rights and needs to help them find their voice to become leaders.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Respect/ Honor</li></ul>

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# APPENDIX A: WHAT IS A PRACTICE FRAMEWORK



MODEL	THEORY	PRACTICE	VALUE
Culturally-Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understanding Cultural safety and respectful engagement that addresses systemic power imbalances is necessary for decolonizing former practices and policies.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage respectfully, addressing systemic imbalances through providing practice that responds to Indigenous rights, realities and needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Truth</li></ul>
Trauma-informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognizing and understanding trauma is necessary for establishing physically and psychologically safe therapeutic environments.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Practicing from a trauma-informed lens requires understanding and responding to the impacts of trauma on people’s lives (including their development and well-being) to prevent re-traumatization and empower individuals to re-establish control of their lives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wisdom</li><li>Respect</li></ul>

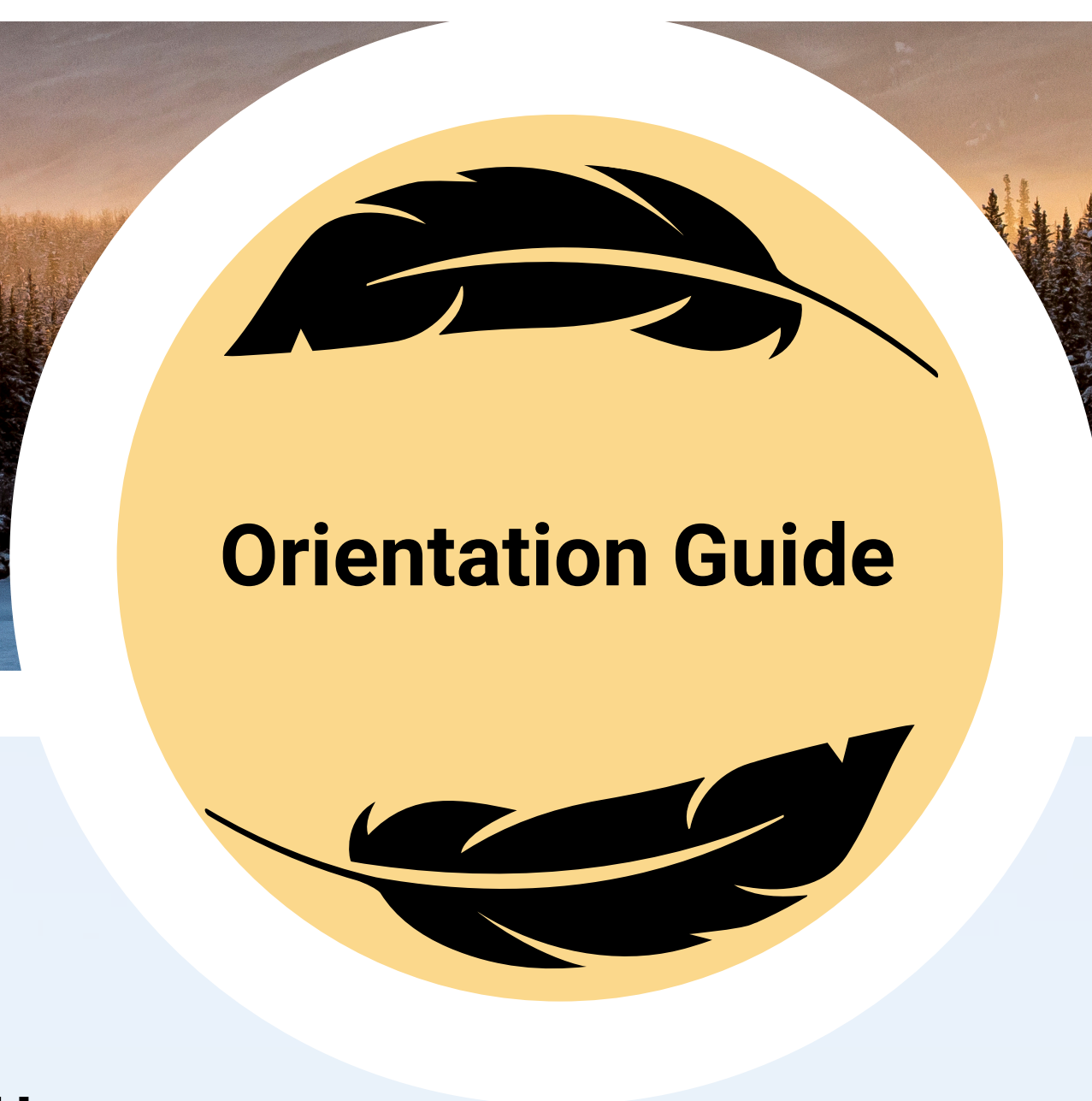
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# APPENDIX B: THE FIVE CORE APPROACHES

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## **TRADITIONAL APPROACH**

The land, animals, and our ancestors teach us, and we have a responsibility to apply and pass on what we learn for future generations. Traditional Knowledge and values are the foundation of all that we do and must be drawn from in supporting families and developing wellness plans.

## **CULTURAL APPROACH**

Culture is the foundation of wellness. Culture must be respected and drawn from to support individual and family wellness.

## **TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH**

A trauma-informed approach ensures that individuals working with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens are aware of the result of colonial impacts and work with an awareness throughout all engagements.

## **HOLISTIC (COLLABORATIVE) APPROACH**

A holistic approach requires consideration of the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being of an individual. This requires a circle of support that is drawn from various departments.

## **HARM REDUCTION (SAFETY) APPROACH**

A harm reduction approach ensures strategies are aimed at making safer choices and leading with prevention.