

Seasonal Circle of Northern Life

a Different Way *of Living*



A Different Way of Living

Guidelines for Use of the DVD

Background:

This DVD entitled “*A Different Way of Living*” is the result of a Pan-Territorial Initiative spanning the three northern territories. The Departments of Health and Social Services of Nunavut, Yukon and Northwest Territories, working in collaboration with their respective Aboriginal partners, gathered information on northern Aboriginal history, culture and traditional practices, from the perspective of the community.

The Pan-Territorial Task Force membership included representation from the government in each territory and the Aboriginal population. Local Advisory Group membership is representative of the cultural groups within the NWT.

Prior to this project, few tools existed to prepare health and social service providers to work in northern and remote regions, with a diverse Aboriginal and unique cultural experience.

Purpose:

“*A Different Way of Living*”, is a “tool” for use in orientation and continuing development of health and social services (HSS) providers. The information in the DVD illustrates each Territory’s geography, Aboriginal groups and cultural practice, and the environments within which health and social services are delivered.

As an orientation tool, the DVD provides an introduction to traditional northern Aboriginal culture and traditional practices, and emphasizes cultural sensitivity and respect for the diversity of northern peoples. The stories are told from the community’s perspective, and include information that they have identified as important for health and social services providers to know about how the past has shaped the health and wellness of northern and remote communities.

The NWT Task Force and Local Advisory Group member’s hope is the DVD will help improve retention of staff. They encourage health and social services providers to keep an open mind, get out into the community and form their own opinions of the North and its people.

Seasonal Circle of Northern Life Concept

The NWT Task Force and Local Advisory Group (see Appendix A) discussed the medicine wheel's incorporation into this video. There was acknowledgement that the terminology "medicine wheel" fits with the First Nations and Métis, but not Inuit. There was consensus that there is value in using the wheel or drum, which is symbolic of wholism, as a framework, and using the terminology "circle of life" which is more inclusive, to describe a concept that all Aboriginal people in the NWT can relate to. Therefore, the circle of life concept was used to help frame the story told in this video. The cover page depicts the four seasons and some of the activities associated with the "circle of life" in the Northwest Territories.

- Fall (hunting and gathering activities)
- Winter (sports and trapping)
- Spring (Renewal; Carnivals)
- Summer (Fishing; community events "on-the-land" activities)

Man's interconnection to the land, the water, the plants and animals and the interdependence of the environment and all living things is central to the circle of life as a philosophy.

Feedback:

The Department of Health and Social Services is interested in hearing how the DVD has been used and its usefulness. A feedback form can be found in Appendix B. Please photocopy it and fax completed feedback forms to the number listed on the form.

Enjoy Learning about "A Different Way of Living".

Suggested Approaches:

It is recommended that one of the following options be used to maximize the learning and benefits of this DVD:

1. View this video with a group of new health and social services employees.
2. View this video with an Aboriginal person from the community who can explain similarities and differences and further inform you about who you should meet in the community to be able to learn more about the community.
3. Have a facilitated discussion with one of the community members following the video presentation to explore similarities and differences compared to your community. For example:
 - ✓ Provide information on the political environment of the region and the impacts on how the authority delivers services (e.g. transfers, self government, negotiations, and land claims).
 - ✓ Be prepared for further discussion on the historical factors that impact the NWT people and communities, such as: interruptions and disruptions in transmission of culture, language, and traditional knowledge (e.g. residential school).

Guidance for Consulting With Elders

1. Provide interview questions ahead of time.
2. Ahead of the interview, go through the questions before actually asking them. People will let you know if they're not comfortable, or not well versed enough to answer the questions. Ask if there are any things they really want to talk about.
3. Talk to them about the process and ask what works for them and what doesn't work for them? Be flexible and willing to adjust your approach.

Suggested Questions for Community Members:

1. When a new health or social services worker moves to the community, there is a lot for them to learn about the community, the territory, the language, the culture, and the people. What is the one thing you would like a new nurse or social worker moving to your community to know about life in the Northwest Territories?
2. How does the community as a whole view someone who moves to your community? What expectations does the community have of that new person?
3. How would you describe a healthy person? What does it mean to be physically and spiritually healthy? What resources are available to help people be healthy in your community outside of the health centre?
4. How important are traditional ways in being healthy? How has this changed?
5. What is the importance or value of each member of a family? What do they contribute to the family and the community? Has that view changed over the years?

Maps

Referring to the following maps will assist in orientation to:

- Health and Social Service Authorities in the Northwest Territories
- Official Languages of the Northwest Territories

Northwest Territories

Health and Social Services Authorities



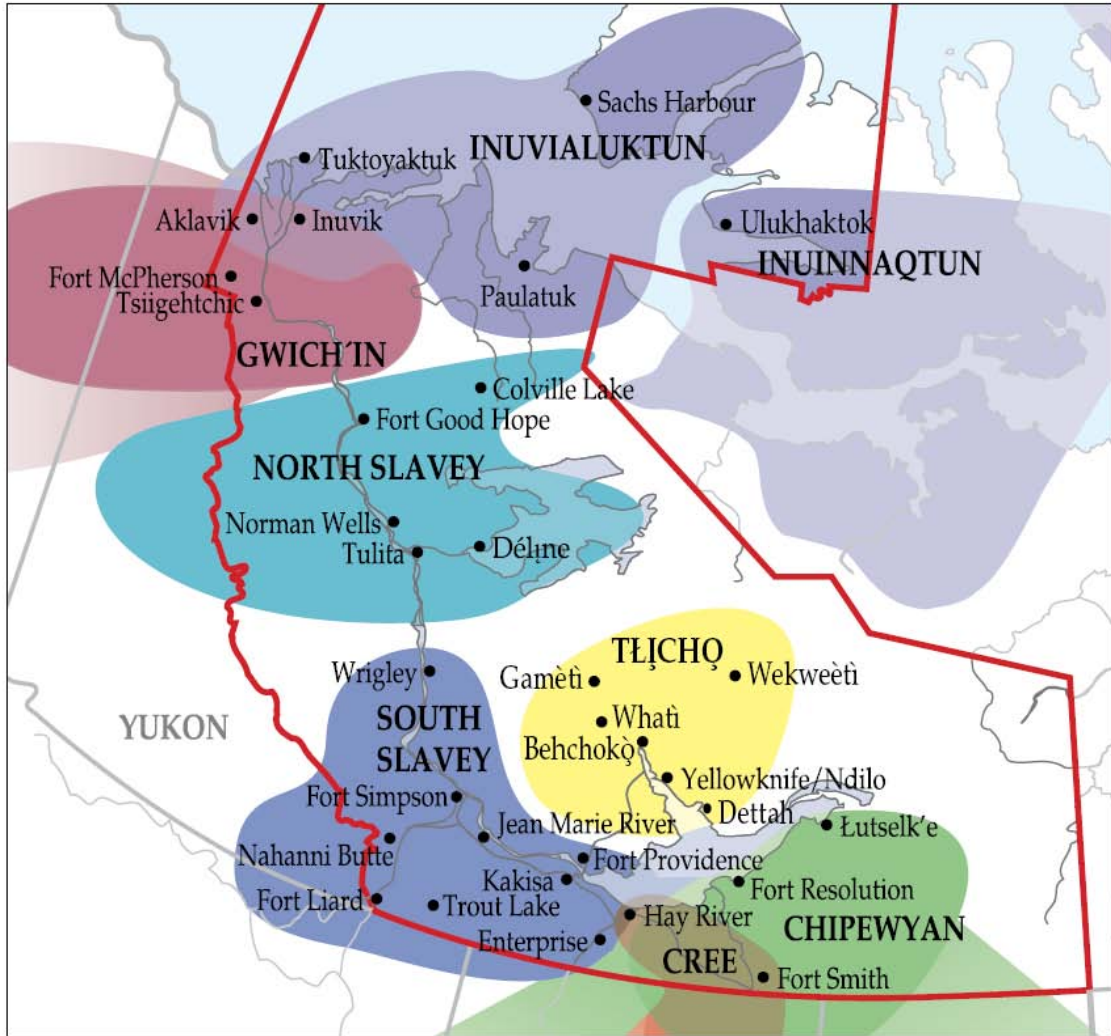
★ Administrative Centres

1	Beaufort-Delta HSS Authority
2	Sahtu HSS Authority
3	Deh Cho HSS Authority
4	Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency
5	Yellowknife HSS Authority
6	Stanton Territorial Health Authority
7	Hay River HSS Authority
8	Fort Smith HSS Authority



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Official Languages of the Northwest Territories



FRENCH is mostly spoken in Hay River, Fort Smith, Inuvik and Yellowknife.

ENGLISH is spoken throughout the Northwest Territories.

INUKTITUT is mostly spoken in Yellowknife.

Websites of Interest:

Maps

<http://www.daair.gov.nt.ca/what-we-do/maps.html>

This site provides several maps to assist in orientation to the Northwest Territories, Political Areas and Aboriginal Claimant Areas.

Aboriginal Claimant Groups and Land Claims Settlements

http://www.daair.gov.nt.ca/resources/historical_overview.html

This site is intended to provide a brief summary of the history surrounding the political evolution of the Northwest Territories, as well as negotiations for lands, resources and self-government and Treaty land entitlement.

Lessons From the Land

<http://www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/>

Lessons from the Land is a collection of online cultural explorations based upon the traditional travel routes of the Northwest Territories' Aboriginal peoples. This online exhibit of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre explores the relationship between people and the land and highlights sites of cultural and historical significance throughout the territory.

Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Online Exhibits

<http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/exhibits/index.htm>

Language Commissioner of the Northwest Territories

<http://www.gov.nt.ca/langcom/welcome.htm>

Languages of the Land

<http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/aborig/land/page1.htm>

Yamózha Kúé Society (Formally Dene Cultural Institute)

<http://www.deneculture.org/>

Civilization.ca – the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic

<http://www.deneculture.org/>

Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute

<http://www.gwichin.ca/>

Appendix A:
NWT Task Force Members

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Ngan Trinh, Communications Officer, GNWT DHSS

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Frank Hope, Community Justice Worker, GNWT Justice

Local Advisory Group Members

Jessica Carrier, Manager, Hay River Health and Social Services – Métis

Denise Kurszewski, Gwich'in Tribal Council – Gwich'in

Delphine Pierrot, ISDM Liaison Coordinator, Health and Social Services – Sahtu

Donna Kisoun, Inuvialuit Regional Corporation – Inuvialuit

Raymond Sonfrere, Yamoza Kue (formerly DCI) –South Slave Dene

Audrey Zoe , Executive Director, Native Women's Association

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Anna Beals , Director, Tlicho Community Services Agency – Tlicho

Minnie Letcher Director, Dehcho Health and Social Services Authority – Dehcho

