

ONE IN THE SAME BASKET: HEALTH AND EQUITY

An Indigenous Model for Health Equity from
the National Indian Health Board
with Support from NTHC Workshop Participants

Carrie Field, MPH, cfield@nihb.org
Alanna Cronk, acronk@nihb.org
National Indian Health Board

BACKGROUND AND

METHODS

“When I think of those two words, they're the same thing, because if you have inequity, you can't have health.”

- This poster is a product of the interactive session “Towards an Indigenous Model of Health Equity” at the National Indian Health Board’s (NIHB) 2023 National Tribal Health Conference (NTHC).
- During these sessions, presenters shared four existing models of health equity and social/structural determinants of health.¹
- Participants engaged in small group discussions and provided their insights on the strengths and weaknesses of the models, as well as offered their own insights into how best to understand and visualize an Indigenous perspective of health equity.

MAJOR THEMES

Interconnection and Relationality

- When a health equity model does not connect its components together, it can suggest issues are separate matters and ignore their potential relationships.

Contrast

- Showing protective factors and barriers side by side displays their influences in a way that can be easily contrasted.

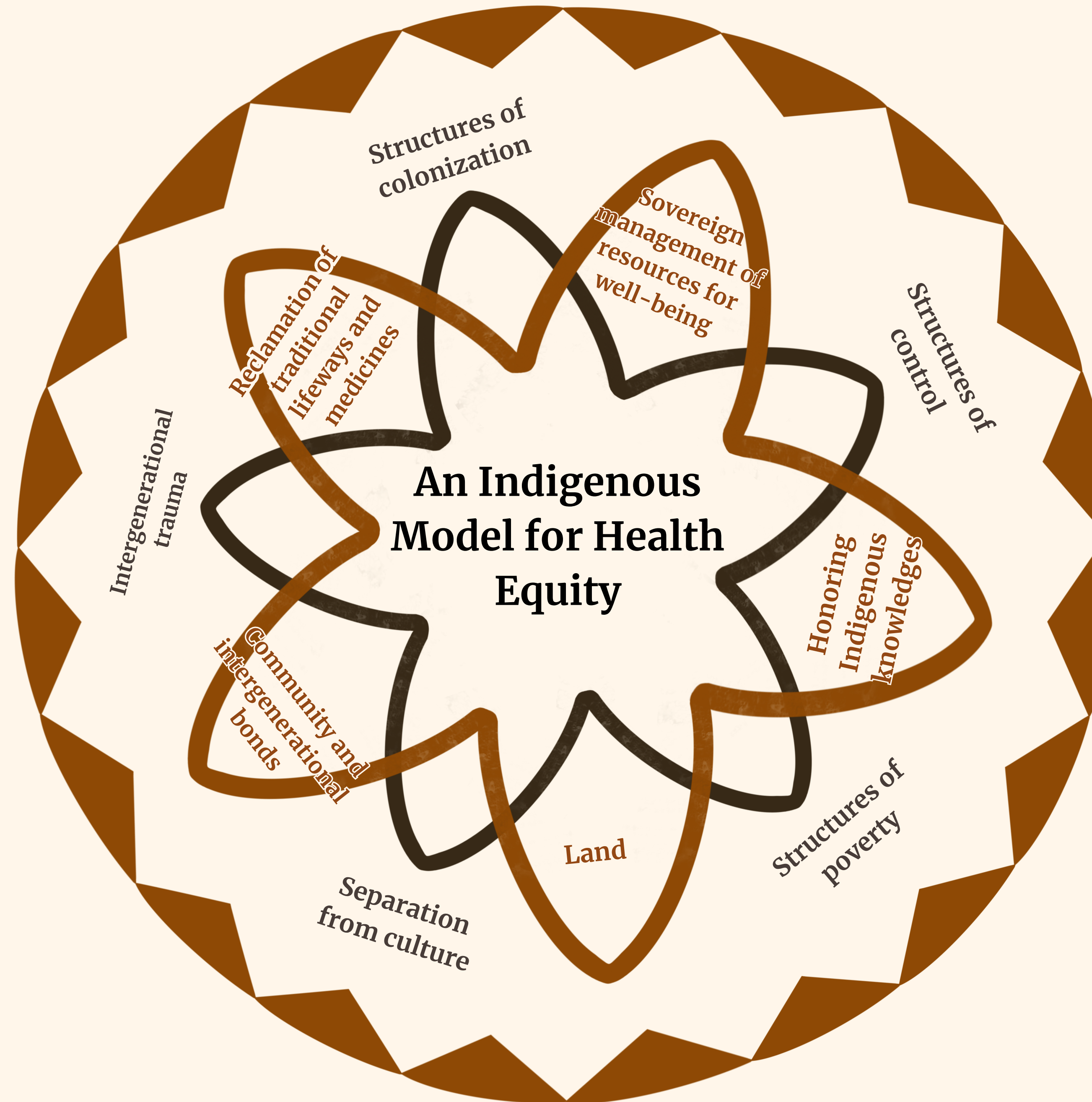
Basketry as a Culturally Relevant Model

- Basketry offers a ready source of aesthetics to convey Indigenous worldviews and can capture interconnectedness and contrast.

Community Accessibility

- Many existing frameworks feel over-adapted for an academic audience rather than the communities they seek to engage.

ONE IN THE SAME BASKET: HEALTH AND EQUITY



Protective Factors

- **Land:** water, medicines, built environments
- **Honoring the many Indigenous knowledges:** tailoring priorities, programs, and methodologies to each nation
- **Sovereign management of resources for well-being and growth:** access to medical, therapeutic, and educational opportunities
- **Community and intergenerational bonds:** elder roles, intergenerational knowledge transmission, gatherings
- **Reclamation of traditional lifeways and medicines:** reclaiming traditional ecological knowledges, re-Indigenizing wellness, language reclamation

Barriers to Health and Equity

- **Structures of colonization:** land theft, broken treaties, unfulfilled obligations
- **Systems of control:** governments, criminal justice
- **Systems of poverty:** commodification, debt structures, worker exploitation
- **Systematic separation from culture and community:** boarding schools, outlawing of traditional spirituality, bans on Native languages
- **Intergenerational trauma:** legacies of boarding schools, mission systems, and forced displacement

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

AND RESOURCES

Refining the Model

- The model presented here is a work in progress; we continue to solicit input from across Indian Country to refine this model.

Tools for Tribal-led Solutions

- Developing Indigenous models is essential to supporting Tribal-led solutions as our communities and advocates work to champion health and equity for Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous Thought Leadership

- Incorporating Indigenous models of health equity is an important step to making public health a space where Indigenous people are not only included but prioritized in the fundamental understanding of current issues and efforts.

Advocacy

- NIHB advocates on behalf of all federally-recognized Tribes to improve federal laws and policies to support Tribal health. This model will guide our advocacy and help us inform our federal partners about priorities for health equity in Indian Country.

SPECIAL THANKS

NIHB would like to convey its deepest thanks to the participants of the “Towards an Indigenous Model of Health Equity” workshop for sharing their valuable insights and knowledge.

REFERENCE

¹ Read more about the four models at nihb.org/health-equity.

The models referenced include:

- Frizzell (University of Minnesota School of Public Health) and Ischcomer (National Indian Health Board). (2016). “American Indian and Alaska Native Health & Wellness Equity Model.”
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. (2023). “Indigenous Determinants of Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”
- National Indian Health Board. (2023). “Web of Causation: Structural and Social Determinants of American Indian and Alaska Native Health.” Unpublished.
- Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative. (n.d.). “A Public Health Framework for Reducing Health Inequities.”