

# **For our Children: Intersections of Alaska Native Governance and Well-Being**

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Tribal Court Conference  
Tanana Chiefs Conference  
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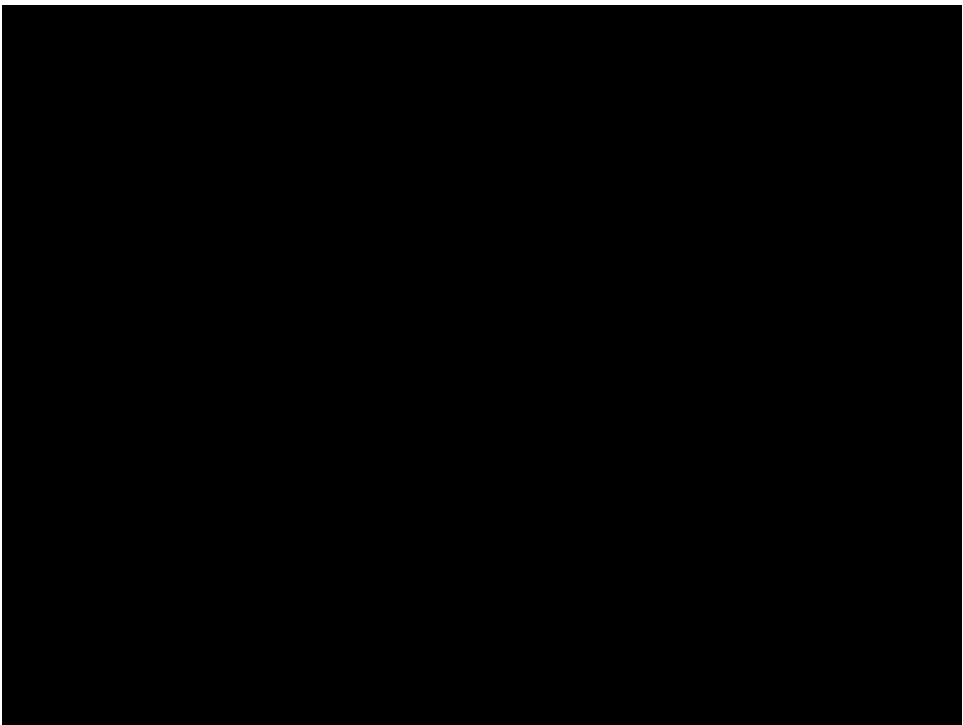
# Background and Education



**NICWA**  
National Indian Child Welfare Association  
*Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture*



# Vision



# Governance Defined

“We can think of governance as tools, the instruments that Indigenous nations use to address and solve the problems they face- maintaining good relations among themselves, surviving hard times, interacting with other nations, caring for the land, educating the young, and so forth.”” (Cornell, Jorgensen, & Kalt, p.59).

# Sovereignty/Governance: The Tools



Image created by Black, 2017.

# Sovereignty/Governance: The Tools

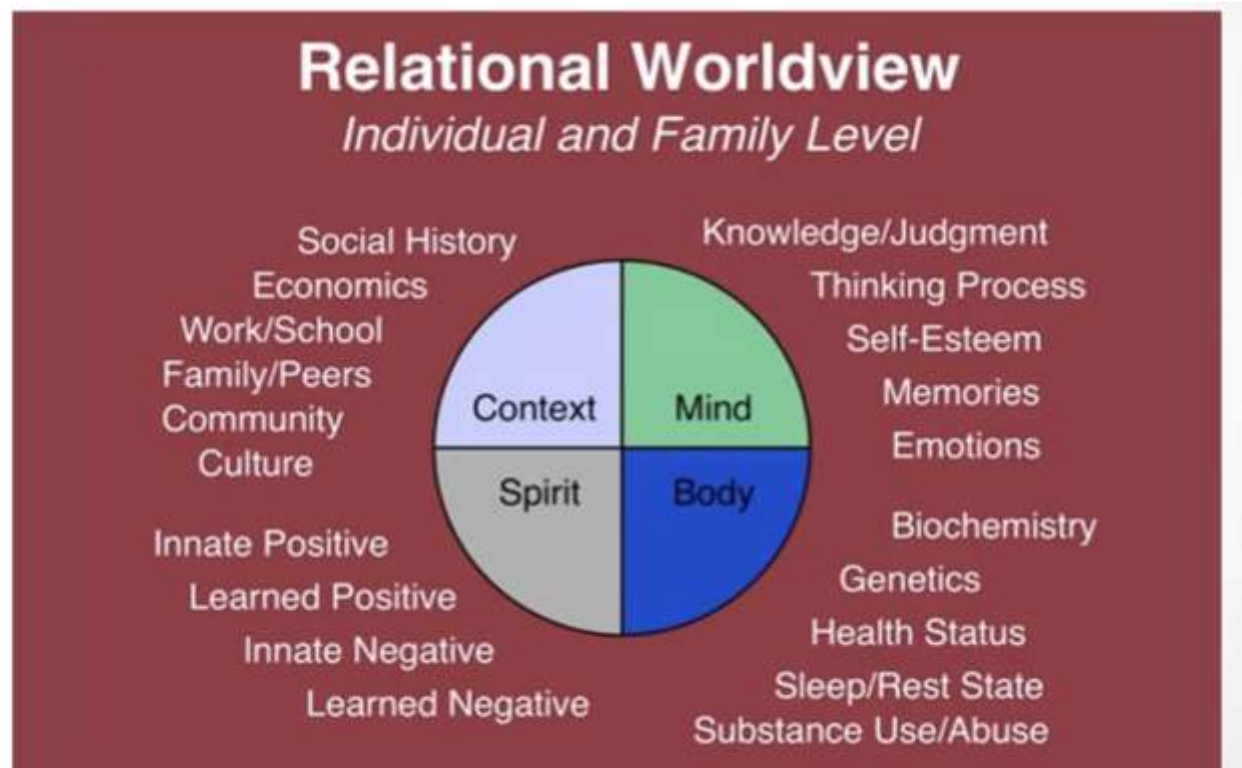


Image created by Black, 2017.  
Amended in 2021



# Well-Being

American Indian scholars describe well-being as a holistic and a multi-dimensional concept, including dimensions of spirit, body, mind, and context (as Cross, Hodge, Lim, and Weaver).



# Well-Being from an Indigenous perspective

## Elements of Individual Well-Being



## Elements of Community Well-Being





## Athabaskan Cultural Values

- Self-sufficiency and Hard Work
- Care and Provision for the Family
- Family Relations and Unity
- Love for Children
- Village Cooperation and Responsibility to Village
- Humor
- Honesty and Fairness
- Sharing and Caring
- Respect for Elders and Others
- Respect for Knowledge & Wisdom from Life Experiences
- Respect for the Land and Nature
- Practice of Native Traditions
- Honoring Ancestors
- Spirituality



Source: **DENAKKANAAGA ELDERS CONFERENCE**- 1985

# Sovereignty/Governance: Guided by Values



# Self Sufficiency and Hard Work

- This starts early, as our Panelist Jolie Murray shared yesterday. Engaging our youth from an early age in building self sufficiency, hard work, and the skills critical to building tribal leadership.

“I Can’t wait to start my senior year classes, leaving home soon to finish school in Fairbanks. I enjoyed working at the tribe this summer, definitely learned a lot... I’m so happy that I had the opportunity to spend time at home this summer with many boat rides, swimming, spending time with family, camping and driving jetskis.”

# Love for Children

- Love for our children is why we all show up everyday for our work.
- Our very own tribal courts are working hard to keep children in their homes, families safe from violence and thriving in their own Native communities.
- We are working on teaching our languages, our cultural traditions, and how to care and respect others.
- We are healing from traumas and breaking cycles so our children can thrive and reach their full potential and loving who they are!



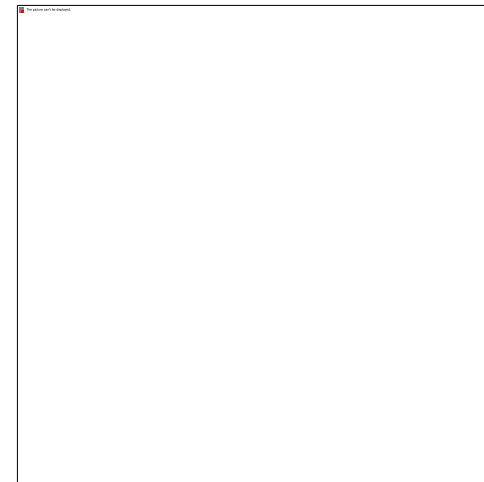
Image retrieved from Fairbanks Native Association Website



Image retrieved from Mohawk Council of Akwesasne website

# Practice of Native Traditions

- A major approach Alaska tribes have taken to put governance into action is through the practicing our Native traditions - it's a way of saying, "we're still here", a way of loving our children, a way of keeping our young people active and away from activities that would bring them into our courts, it's a way of healing from past traumas and feeling grounded as we navigate the future and a changing world.





# Indigenizing Salmon Science and Management in Alaska Project

Document the breadth and depth of Indigenous values, knowledge, and governance systems connected to salmon across Alaska, and to use this wisdom to improve current salmon science and management processes for all



# Governance is an everyday activity

- **Honor our children** - we can do this through involving them in all that we do, from the youngest ages all the way through college
- **Recognition and partnership** [by the SOA and other governing bodies] of Indigenous peoples, Tribal Sovereignty, the long-term stewardship Indigenous peoples have engaged in for millennia. But we can't wait to act -> we need to continue to teach our children the important values that they need to grow and thrive. It's truly about the next seven generations.
- Continue to **make space for learning to take place**: to share, and learn from each other - what is working in different communities. How did things get started?. Learning "in place" is powerful tool.
- **Indigenous Research by Indigenous Researchers** - answering those questions that remain unanswered. Leaning on cultural strengths and values to guide us.
- **Breaking down any silos that exist** – it's hard to address problems when we are looking at them through disparate lens. We need to bring people together, cross collaborative, and generate new ideas. Bring different programs together run by the tribe for innovative solutions. If something doesn't work, you "find a new eddy".

# Our Tribal Courts are Powerful... let us “Be the Change”

Bill for tribal recognition would put relationship with state on firmer foundation, supporters say

By Greg Kim, KYUK - Bethel - May 3, 2021



Retrieved from Alaska Public Media

## Alaska Leads COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts by Coordinating With Tribes and Receiving Territory Vaccine Allocations

Alaska has received plaudits for its ability to get COVID-19 vaccines to its residents. Here's how the state is doing it.

Part of Alaska's success in vaccinating so many of its population is its ability to receive vaccine allocations from various sources, including the Indian Health Service (IHS), to account for Alaska's 229 sovereign tribes as well as its large veteran population. Per the state dashboard, a large amount of the vaccines have gone to Native American and Alaska Native residents.

## THE RURAL ALASKAN TOWNS LEADING THE COUNTRY IN VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

By Caroline Lester  
February 21, 2021



Retrieved from U.S. News, 2021

Retrieved from the New Yorker, 2021



# **The Native Value of Humor**