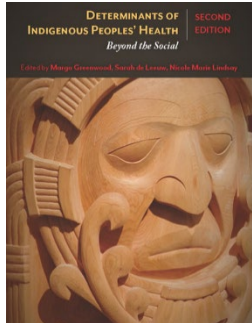




Beyond the Social: Author Interviews



Welcome to [Beyond the Social: Author Interviews](#), a video series produced by the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. The NCCIH focuses on innovative research and community-based initiatives promoting the health and well-being of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. All of the contributors interviewed in this video series, from the highly-acclaimed book [Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health in Canada: Beyond the Social](#), share a common concern with improving the health of Indigenous peoples in Canada and beyond. In sharing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit traditional knowledge alongside Western academic and medical knowledge, the authors demonstrate the potential gains of walking in two worlds, integrating the best of both Indigenous and Western knowledge, and honouring and respecting the diverse healing and medical practices available to us today.

Video - Chapter 2: Two-Eyed Seeing in Medicine, with Albert Marshall



Mikm'aw Elder Albert Marshall describes the practice of “Two-Eyed Seeing”—emphasizing the need to preserve ancient, traditional knowledge so that it can be used not only to heal the cultural starvation experienced by generations of Indigenous people subjected to residential schooling and destruction of their language and culture, but to benefit all people.

Transcript

My name is Albert Marshall and I reside in the community called Eskasoni in Nova Scotia. I'm really from Mi'gma'gi, the territory of the Mi'kmaq. The article we decided to put forth was based on this concept of “Two-Eyed Seeing”. Two-Eyed Seeing is a very encompassing word because it makes you look at everything from another perspective. Dealing and talking about health, for example, I think it is about time that we incorporate more of this concept because what I am witnessing and seeing at this juncture, of course, is that the health sector has the tendency only to look at symptoms and not the causes of those symptoms. In most cases, the healthcare givers will again only look at the symptom – we are not talking exclusively now for Mig'maw people, in my case – they will look at the sickness but not the cause of the sickness. Being an Aboriginal person today, especially those of us that are the products of the residential

schools, we realize today that we infested our children, our grandchildren, and our communities to the atrocities that we have somehow been subjected to.

People that are starving cannot and will not concern themselves about the state of the environment. The cultural starvation plays a role in those years in which we have been forced to be disconnected from who we are as Aboriginal people. Part of this disconnection that is felt and experienced today, of course, is not just a physical disconnect but also a spiritual disconnect, because there is very little separation between the physical and spiritual aspects of who we are. In order for us to maintain those two in balance and in a harmonious way, you have to not just utilize but nurture and incorporate into being able to understand what nature is telling us. The only way you can understand what she is telling you is in the language that you were born with. In our case it is “Mig’maw”.

So Mig’maw today is not used as a working language. It’s only used in a form that maintains it. But to bring back the essence of who we are, the very things that kept our forefathers alive and well, those have to be done through the language. So, if the language is absent, then how can the other domains be maintained in a balanced and harmonious way? Because of the interconnection, the interdependency of everything, that are the very essence of who you are, it is based and transmitted through the language. So, to me this is what cultural starvation is. If you force people to denounce or deny them to be who they are and to function who they are... not just as to how they go about in sustaining themselves, but how they structure their daily lives, this can only be done by preparing the next seven generations to the language of their birth.

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© 2017 The National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH). This publication was funded by the NCCIH and made possible through a financial contribution from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of PHAC.