



BC FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE COUNCIL

Elders & Knowledge Keepers Council Wisdom Matrix for Justice & Community Well-Being

Introduction:

The Elders & Knowledge Keepers Council (the “EKKC”) represents the vast diversity of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and legal perspectives within our communities. Committed to upholding the inherent legal agency of First Nations and Rightsholders, the EKKC plays a pivotal role in guiding and supporting the work of the BC First Nations Justice Council.

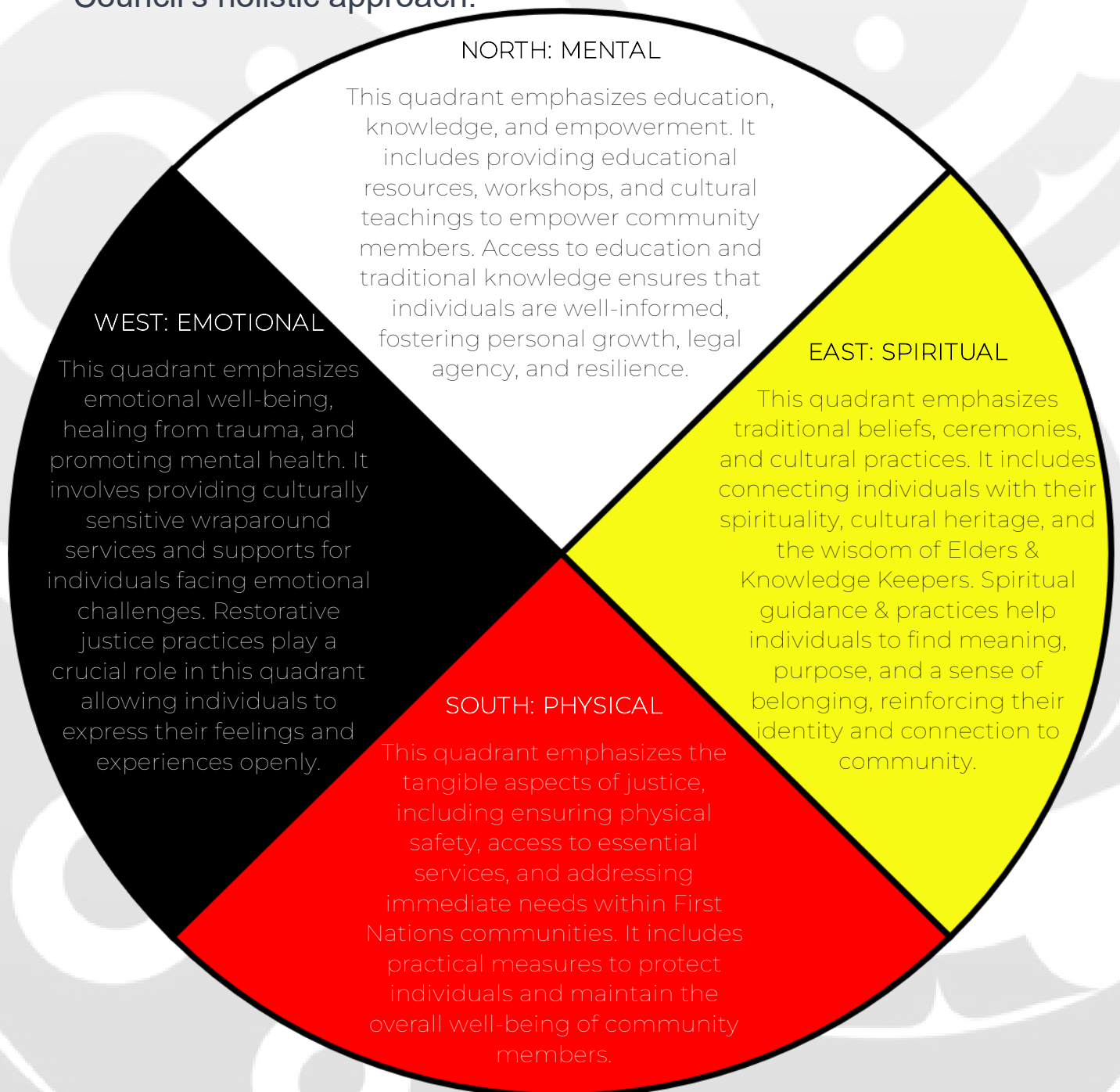
Purpose:

In recognition of the diverse and collective wisdom and lived experience of our Elders and Knowledge Keepers, this holistic matrix aims to embody the shared history, values, and legal principles of BC First Nations communities within the realm of

justice. Grounded in commonly shared community-based justice principles, this matrix embodies the shared values and legal principles of BC First Nations informing a culturally sensitive path toward the transformation of the colonial legal system and the resurgence of Indigenous Legal Orders.

Holistic Approach to First Nations Justice:

In the context of First Nations justice, the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel represent essential aspects of the Justice Council’s holistic approach.



Core Values:

The EKKC's justice work is guided by core values shared among BC First Nations:

Respect:

Recognizing the inherent worth, dignity, and legal agency of all living beings, recognizing the interconnectedness of all life forms and the natural world.

Culture:

Upholding the diverse cultural values, customs, and legal traditions of BC First Nations communities, ensuring that our justice services are delivered in a manner consistent with Indigenous legal principles.

Community:

Emphasizing the importance of unity, cooperation, and solidarity within the Justice Council in a manner that prioritizes the collective well-being of BC First Nations over individual interests and ensures the Justice Council maintains equal regional representation.

Interconnectedness:

Acknowledging the interconnectedness of all living beings, respecting the interdependence of humans, mother earth, and the spirit world, and understanding the ripple effects of our decisions and actions on the communities and populations we serve.

Balance:

Promoting balance and harmony within our communities through restorative justice practices, focusing on diversion, healing, reconciliation, and addressing the root causes of conflict and crime within our communities.

Pillars of Wisdom:

The EKKC embodies wisdom through the combined contributions of its members and six key pillars:

Pillar 1: Cultural Heritage & Legal Traditions

- ❖ Honouring, preserving, and revitalizing the history, customs, and traditions passed down through generations.
- ❖ Resurging traditional legal practices, incorporating Indigenous laws, customs, and dispute resolution mechanisms, ensuring legal orders are rooted in cultural heritage.

Pillar 2: Spiritual Connection & Cultural Protocols

- ❖ Honouring and fostering a deep understanding and appreciation for the spiritual beliefs and cultural protocols that guide our communities.

Pillar 3: Community Harmony

- ❖ Promoting unity and peace among community members by resolving disputes and conflicts with fairness and empathy.

Pillar 4: Education & Empowerment

- ❖ Providing Indigenous legal orders education to community members, legal professionals, and youth, empowering them to understand, interpret, and participate in the Indigenous legal resurgence process.

Pillar 5: Diversity & Equitable Representation

- ❖ Recognizing the diverse cultures and traditions of First Nations in British Columbia, promoting equitable regional representation on the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council, ensuring voices from all communities are heard and respected.

Pillar 6: Connections to Community

- ❖ Valuing the deep connections of Elders and Knowledge Keepers to their communities, appreciating the wisdom derived from lived experiences, and acknowledging the importance of these connections in shaping just and culturally relevant decisions.

Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles of the EKKC are rooted in respect, balance, and Indigenous legal traditions:

Cultural Continuity

Ensuring the transmission of legal knowledge, traditions, and practices to younger generations, fostering a strong cultural and legal identity within our communities.

Healing Focused

Embracing traditional restorative justice principles, where individuals gather to discuss, heal, and resolve conflicts, guided by Elders and community members, promoting understanding, empathy, and holistic healing.

Community Engagement

Supporting First Nations communities in the development and revitalization of Indigenous legal orders, fostering a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the justice system.

Community Based Justice

Supporting the development of community-based justice systems, allowing communities to establish their own legal processes, procedures, and sentencing practices, ensuring local autonomy and cultural relevance.

Collaboration & Partnerships

Collaborating with external entities, governments, and legal institutions in a manner that respects First Nations legal sovereignty, ensuring meaningful partnerships that uphold Indigenous Rights and Legal Orders.



**Adaptability
&
Innovation**

Advocating for flexibility and innovation in the development and adaptation of colonial legal systems, so they recognize and support the resurgence of Indigenous Legal Orders in a manner that recognizes and preserves core cultural values.

**Social
Equity &
Justice**

Upholding principles of social equity, fairness, and justice within Indigenous Legal Orders, addressing historical injustices caused by the imposition of colonial laws, and promoting social well-being for all community members.