



# Holistic Wellness

For Métis people, holistic wellness is more than just physical health. It is the interconnection of our body, mind, heart, and spirit—a balance that has been passed down through generations. We understand that true health isn't simply the absence of illness, but achieving balance in all aspects of our being. Healing occurs when we nurture and care for every part of ourselves—our bodies, emotions, thoughts, and spirits.

This approach to wellness is rooted in the teachings of our ancestors, who used plant medicines, the wisdom of Elders, and the rhythms of nature to maintain balance and health. For Métis people, healing is a collective process—it happens within the community, through connection to each other and the land, and through the stories and teachings we continue to pass on.



“Water is sacred, and so are your tears. Replenish yourself. We are holistic beings, and emotions are a key part of who we are. The Medicine Wheel is not static; it is always moving.”

Tanya Ball, (She/Her), co-host of masinahikan  
iskwêwak: the Book Women Podcast,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba (Treaty 1 Territory)

Disclaimer: These worksheets are for educational purposes only. For medical advice, consult a trusted healthcare provider who respects your cultural values and needs.

## Healing with the Land

Healing is not just about treating illness; it's about restoring balance. Our ancestors recognized the deep connection between health and the land. The plants, the seasons, the moon cycles, and the wisdom of Elders all played vital roles in maintaining wellness.



## Understanding Sexual and Reproductive Health through a Holistic Lens

When it comes to sexual and reproductive health, applying a holistic perspective means recognizing that these aspects of well-being are connected to all areas of our lives. For Métis women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, and Two-Spirit people, our sexual and reproductive health is not separate from the rest of our health. It is part of a larger whole that includes community, culture, and spirituality.

Holistic wellness is about caring for our whole self—body, mind, heart, and spirit. It's about understanding that when we feel good emotionally, it can improve our physical health. Likewise, when we honour our spirit, we help to heal our minds. The Medicine Wheel serves as a powerful guide, teaching us that health is not just the absence of illness, but the presence of balance in every part of our being.

## The Medicine Wheel: A Guiding Symbol for Holistic Health

The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of balance and interconnectedness. The four quadrants - Mental, Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual - remind us that true health, including reproductive and sexual health, is a balance between all these areas.



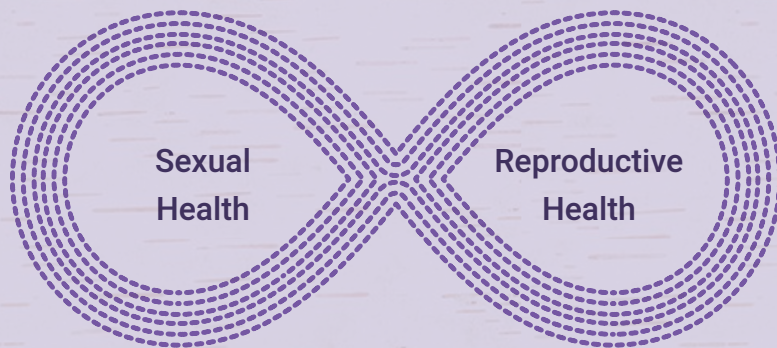
- \* Mental health is nurtured by the stories we tell, the wisdom passed down through generations, and the knowledge we gather from our Elders.
- \* Physical health is supported by practices like movement, nutrition, and rest—including the use of traditional foods and medicines.
- \* Emotional wellness is grounded in our relationships—family, community, and kinship—and understanding how our emotions shape our overall well-being.
- \* Spiritual health connects us to our culture, ancestors, and the land, offering us a sense of purpose and connection.

For Métis people, wellness is a journey, not a destination. It is a process that shifts and evolves, just as the seasons change and life moves forward.



## Integrating Holistic Care into Sexual and Reproductive Health

Clinicians are trained in an illness-focused or symptom-focused model in sexual and reproductive health - one that doesn't always integrate or address our emotional, spiritual or cultural needs. However, in a holistic care model, every part of our being is considered—our emotions, thoughts, culture, and relationships with others. This holistic approach is essential when considering sexual and reproductive health because it is not isolated to the body.



The holistic care approach extends to how we perceive our bodies and sexuality in the context of our Métis culture. Traditional roles and practices passed down through generations play a vital part in shaping our sexual and reproductive health experiences. These practices include teachings on childbirth, menstruation, fertility, and menopause. Sexual and reproductive health is not isolated to the body; it is shaped by our culture, our connection to the land, and our spiritual beliefs. Two-Spirit individuals, in particular, have long been respected for their roles as healers, spiritual leaders, Knowledge Holders, and community mediators. They held vital roles in teaching, herbalism, childrearing, and even in ceremonial practices. These roles are central to understanding sexual and reproductive health from a Métis perspective.

By integrating traditional Métis knowledge into sexual health care, we acknowledge that holistic care is essential for maintaining health. A holistic lens brings balance between community care and individual needs.

This means:

- ✳ Caring for the body through Métis cultural practices, such as using traditional foods and medicines.
- ✳ Addressing mental and emotional wellness through storytelling, ceremonies, and community involvement.
- ✳ Recognizing the spiritual elements of sexual and reproductive health, including our relationship with the land, nature, and our ancestors' teachings.
- ✳ Providing space and opportunity for traditional Métis birthing practices to be honoured and supported within care settings.

We are not just sexual bodies. We are not only reproductive bodies. We are whole beings, expressing the different parts ourselves if, when and how it feels right to us. By centering the relationship between sexual and reproductive health, we can find a balance that is true and healthy for each of us.





Photo credits: LFMO Grandmother Linda  
Boudreau-Semaganis, 2024

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✿ Sexuality is a vital part of being human, fluidly changing as we transition through the seasons, emotions, and life stages represented by the medicine wheel.

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## Create Your Holistic Care Approach

Métis traditions teach us that health care is deeply personal, shaped by individual experiences and community support.

To guide your journey towards holistic care, reflect on these questions:

### **What values are important to me in caring for my sexual and reproductive health?**

(E.g., respect for my body, connection to land, community care, cultural practices)

### **How do these values shape my health practices?**

(Consider how these values influence your daily choices around diet, movement, and health.)

### **How do I incorporate traditional Métis practices into my daily life?**

(E.g., attending community gatherings, using plant medicines, practicing storytelling)

### **What practices support my mental wellness?**

How do I integrate Métis cultural practices like ceremonies, crafting, or storytelling to nurture my emotional health?

### **Consider how your relationship with the land, family, ceremonial practices, and your own spirit shapes your understanding of health.**

Disconnection from ourselves — from our spirit, intuition, or sense of belonging — can surface during important moments in our sexual and reproductive health journeys. Healing begins with remembering who we are.

### **How does my community support my health?**

Who are my support systems? How do my family, community Elders, and healthcare providers help me on my wellness journey



## Healing Together: A Métis Story

The Métis way of healing mirrors the delicate art of weaving—a tapestry of threads that come together to create something stronger than any single strand alone. Just as a skilled weaver intertwines colorful threads to craft a beautiful piece, our health and well-being are woven from the support of our communities, our traditions, and the land that nourishes us. The land is the fabric; the culture, the thread; and our identity, the pattern that gives us shape and meaning.

In the Métis way of life, healing is deeply connected to the land, culture, and identity. These connections restore and sustain us, not just in body, but in spirit. Our communities—built on relationships, shared history, and mutual support—give us the strength to heal and grow. As we care for one another, we also care for our roots, our culture, and the land that sustains us. Together, we create a web of care and support, where every person, every story, and every effort contributes to the health of all.

For the Métis people, healing is a shared journey, one where each step is connected to those around us. Our health is not something we carry alone; it is strengthened by the love, care, and support of our community. Just as each thread in a Métis sash contributes to its beauty and strength, each person in our community adds richness to our collective health.

Our culture and identity guide us, shaping our path toward a healthier future. The land, like the loom on which a sash is woven, provides the foundation, grounding us in who we are. As we care for each other, we weave a strong and vibrant community—one that can heal together, piece by piece.

When we come together, our stories intertwine like the threads of a Métis sash. Each story, each person, adds depth to the fabric of our collective healing. Healing is not a solitary journey; it is a shared path, built on love, respect, and community.

As we weave together our stories and traditions, we strengthen not only our individual lives but our shared well-being as Métis people.



Cultural identity is a critical determinant of Métis peoples' health.

Auger, 2021. "The strengths of our community and our culture": Cultural continuity as a determinant of mental health for Métis people in British Columbia, Canada. Turtle Island Journal of Indigenous Health. (In press)





# Understanding Sexual and Reproductive Health

Sexual and reproductive health is more than just the physical—it includes mental, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. For Métis people, our sexuality is deeply intertwined with who we are as a people, how we relate to each other, how we relate to the land and the teachings we carry. Our sexual health, our relationships, and how we care for our bodies are influenced by our culture, stories, and beliefs. Métis knowledge tells us that the seasons of our lives, the rhythms of the moon, and the teachings from Elders, all play important roles in how we approach our sexual health and reproductive journeys.



“Tears are necessary, not a luxury”

Grandmother Linda Boudreau-Semaganis

# Holistic Wellness is a Lifelong Journey

Holistic wellness isn’t something that can be achieved overnight. It’s a continuous journey connecting us to our culture, land, community, and ancestors. We can reclaim our health and body sovereignty by honouring all parts of ourselves.

For Métis people, holistic health is not just about treating illness—it’s about creating a balanced, connected life where all parts of us are valued and nurtured. It’s about knowing that we come with our own medicine and start our journey here as well, healthy and whole.

A holistic approach to sexual and reproductive health within Métis communities ensures that we recognize and respect the interconnected roles of culture, spirituality, and community. By integrating these aspects into health care, we can build a healthier, more balanced future for all Métis individuals, embracing our history and wisdom for future generations.

