Healing from the drum: Wholistic experiences of Indigenous drum circle

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Integral nature of the drum in Indigenous peoples’ lives

- Song and drum are interconnected
- Song is an everyday experience and woven into all that Indigenous peoples do

Drum Beat is the Heart Beat

Heart beat of our mother
The Circle and Interconnectedness of All Our Relations

- The circle is an expression of Indigenous peoples’ knowing, being, seeing and doing.
- The circle is a reminder that we are all related and interdependent on one another.
- The circle teaches us that each person is responsible for living life in a wholistic way as what we do and don’t do impacts the circle of all our relations.

References: Cindy Baskin, 2016; Fyre Jean Graveline, 1995; Michael Hart, 2002; Calvin Morrisseau, 1999.
All My Relations
Wholistic Development of the Self in Relation to: Self, Family, Community, Nation, Land

North

Land, Water, Plants, Trees

Nation

Community

Family

Physical

Mental (thinking)

Emotional (relations)

Spiritual

Self in Centre

West

East
Colonization

• Colonization and efforts to assimilate Indigenous peoples have had tremendous impacts on their lives (spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically).

• The circle of relations have been impacted.

• Indigenous culture, identity and sense of belonging have been impacted.

Healing from the Drum

• Drumming is an act of resistance.
• Drumming is a way to return to Indigenous teachings
• Drumming contributes to Indigenous identity
• Drumming contributes to belonging

• References: Ghislaine Goudreau, Cora Weber-Pillwax, Sheila Cote-Meek, Helen Madill, & Stan Wilson, 2008; Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending.
“There’s a disconnection of people starving for spirituality or starving for something deeper and it’s because they are disconnected from the land. And the songs help us stay connected to everything around us and remind us that we are sacred[...] that everything is sacred[...] Our singing is ceremony[...]” (Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
I come from a small community [...] where community is everything [...] I lost that connection to my community because I’m here [...] Coming here and sharing music and sharing events and when we have our feasts, when we have socials together [...] it has given me a broader sense of what my community is because I feel that I’m missing that in my life [...]  

(Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
Mental (cognitive) Aspects of the Drum

“A lot of people have got a lot of knowledge. And without the circle how am I going to find people like that?” (Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
“It’s more than a physical circle. I like the fact that we do it in a circle. That we basically have all of our participation in a circle[...] The circle shows us that we are equal in the eyes of our beliefs. Not one of us is greater than the other[...]” (Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
“Sometimes when I’m at drum, sometimes just listening to everyone else sing [...] it just relaxes me [...] I can look over and everyone is smiling. It tells me that I don’t have to worry about being off beat. Because it is not about being off beat [...]” (Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
“[…]drumming to me is not even about the music. It is about the connection to my culture. To the people I drum with and to the circle. It’s not the music[…]If I didn’t have the medicines. If I didn’t have other people together to sing with. If I didn’t have all of that I am learning in the circle and reinforcing what I do in my own life, I think I wouldn’t be here. That’s why I come.” (Kelly Laurila & Lee Willingham, pending)
Chi Miigwetch! Giitu! Thank You!

All my relations
References


