

Holistic Health Care

The Giver of Life Braid

Developed by Lucy Barney, Lillooet Nation, RN, BScN, UBC MSN Student (revised 2011)

Aboriginal people and wellness; what can Aboriginal people do to heal or live well with so many mental and physical health issues? Healing does not necessarily mean to be cured of an illness, but to have the feeling of wellness. It is the ability to cope with whatever the person is experiencing. The Giver of Life Braid will explain how healing or prevention can occur.

The Giver of Life Braid consists of looking at the Mind, Body and Spirit. Braids have three strands: one strand represents the Mind, the second represents the Body and the third represents the Spirit. When our hair is braided, it is said we are feeling proud and worthy. When it is not braided, it is said we walk with humbleness. For example, we do not take care of our looks and do not fix up our hair to look attractive.

The Mind (strand) consists of everything and includes emotions, thoughts, addiction issues and feelings. Usually people feel fine but when low self-esteem, depression, loneliness, loss of identity, lower education levels and addictions exist, people experience poor emotional and mental health.

The Physical (second strand) aspect of our body is our physical health. When our immune system is healthy we are able to fight off disease efficiently. When we do not take care of our bodies we develop physical diseases. Examples of physical diseases include diabetes, HIV, alcoholism, heart disease, obesity, arthritis, etc.

Spirituality (third strand) has been absent for some time in the Aboriginal community. The strengths of spirituality provide Aboriginal people with a sense of belonging, pride, culture, ceremony, traditional education, prayer, responsibility, traditional medicine, respect, spirituality (as opposed to religion), dance, song, etc. It is not the fact that culture was lost, but that spirituality was lost. Without spirituality our bodies develop illness.

Braiding the mind, body, and spirit creates a healthy holistic person. The Giver of Life Braid can be used as a framework for health care providers.



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Giver of Life Braid

MIND

Addictions:
 • alcohol
 • drugs
 • cigarettes

Teen pregnancy

White Coat Syndrome

Poverty

Lack of support network

Uninformed consent

Decreased perinatal education

Depression

Postpartum depression

History of trauma

Family disruptions

Cultural disruptions

Absent fathers

Lower education

Poor self-esteem

Oppression

BODY

Access to prenatal care

Gestational Diabetes

Increased BMI

HIV / AIDS

SIDS

FASD

Availability of care close to home

Increased C-section rates

Smoking

Birth complications

High birth rates

Larger families

Neonatal morbidity

Neonatal mortality

Travel to larger birthing centres

Pre-term birth

Type II Diabetes

SPIRIT

Relationship ceremony

Birthing ceremony

Placenta ceremony

Naming ceremony

Vision

Welcoming ceremony

Sage

Traditional Midwifery

Traditional Aunties (doulas)

Prayer

Sense of family

Sacred space

Gatherings

Cradleboard

Elders

Traditional healers

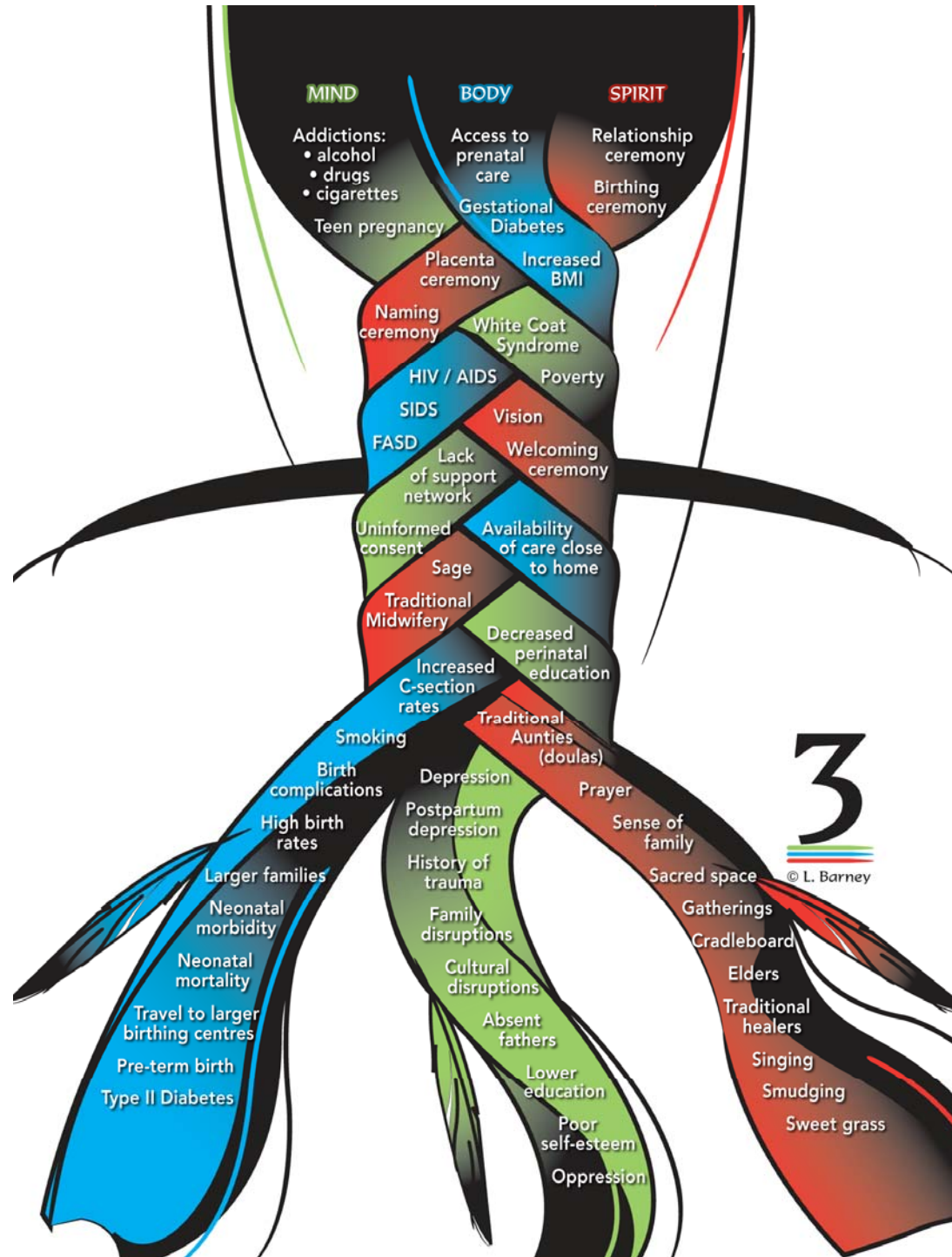
Singing

Smudging

Sweet grass

2

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3

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