

# Interconnectedness and Balance

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Within Indigenous communities, a common practice of wellness is recognizing the importance of balance. As taught by my elders, balance is the **interconnectedness** of your mental, spiritual, physical, and social spaces within who you are. The key word in this definition is “interconnectedness” and without this, balance cannot exist. It is believed that when we are not in balance, we experience mental and emotional stress that can manifest into physical sickness and/or other personal ailments. Interconnectedness can include the importance of food, sleep/rest, boundaries, *community*, introspection, relationships, and movement.



We understand and know that strong organizational skills, study skills, time/energy management, project management and other related skills can produce the outcomes identified by yourself or the systems in which you are involved in. Yet, how are these skills developed so we as individuals can practice them efficiently? One contribution is *through identifying your personal priorities and confidently setting healthy boundaries*. I must admit, I have been in the process of learning and practicing setting healthy boundaries with others and this is not a small task. Identifying your personal priorities and setting healthy boundaries is a practice that *focuses on the process over the outcome*.

We currently live in a world that is outcome driven. Placing value in the process over the outcome creates the opportunity to strengthen practices, allowing space for multiple perspectives we can learn from, and further learning opportunities. Before we can effectively balance our scheduling and calendars, we must identify what our priorities are. If not, we run the risk of creating a false sense of balance by creating calendars and schedules based on someone else’s values and priorities resulting in an ineffective understanding of what balance truly means. This focus on process before and over outcome is a skill that is just as, if not *more important to share with our youth* in their journey of development as it is to practice as an adult.

Within my position as the CTE Tribal Engagement Specialist, one of my main goals is to assist and provide support in developing culturally relevant workforce development and career readiness programs for our youth. Within this goal, I strongly advocate to our youth that having a strong sense of self, identifying personal priorities, and setting healthy boundaries are strong foundations to have when stepping into the space of adulthood. These three foundations contribute to the interconnectedness of balance and wellness.

Wellness and balance are a process, a process vital to the development of our youth and ourselves.



There are several Indigenous Wellness initiatives and programs that provide information, curriculum, resources, workshops and trainings focusing on wellness for anyone who may have an interest in understanding wellness through an Indigenous perspective.



### [The Native Wellness Institute](#)

“Promoting the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of North America’s indigenous peoples is our labor of love. The goal of the Native Wellness Institute is to continue bringing about positive changes in the lifestyles, relationships, education, and overall wellness of Native Americans. As the Native Community’s leading social-services resource, our current and future objectives focus on the following main areas: Healthy Relationships ,Youth Leadership and Development, Adult Leadership and Development, Workplace Wellness and Staff Development, Strategic Planning and Program Development, Community Wellness Gatherings, Retreats, and Training”

If you or someone you may be interested in attending a workshop or training hosted by The Native Wellness Institute [training calendar](#), please view their calendar and register! CEU’s are available for trainings and I highly recommend the [Native Youth Leadership Academy](#) and [Adults Working with Native Youth](#) trainings.



Thosh Collins and Chelsea Luger creators and founders of [Well For Culture](#) an Indigenous Wellness Initiative. Their vision statement reads, “Strong Indigenous nations are built by strong individuals. We acknowledge the strength and healing power of our ancestral teachings, and we aim to guide others toward applying these values and ideas to achieve optimal wellness today. We have been taught that life is all about balance - mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional. All of these elements are interconnected, and wellness should be approached holistically, just as our ancestors have taught us to approach the human experience.”

Please take the time to listen to their podcast “The Seven Circles of Wellness-Episode 2”, “Circle six is identified as “Sacred Space”. Sacred defined by Thosh and Chelsea in this episode is something not necessarily religious but what values you prioritize, and space is defined as the space and energy around you including your home, office, classroom, the people who surround you, and the mental space you hold. One way of keeping your space sacred and recognized is through your scheduling and produced calendars.



[Young and Indigenous \(YAI\)](#) is a podcast hosted by youth members of the Lummi Nation. In collaboration with and supported by Children of the Setting Sun Productions, YAI brings youth to the forefront of interconnectedness creating a space to unify community. Our youth hold a special power and highlighting YAI is a privilege I am honored to share with you all.

[Season 1, Episode 3 “Balancing Wellness”](#) YAI youth create space to listen to an elder Steve Point, who shares his experiences and wisdom from his annual Healing Wellness Conference and

a perspective on Indigenous wellness where several lessons can be pulled from. I raise my hands to YAI and their important work will not go unnoticed.