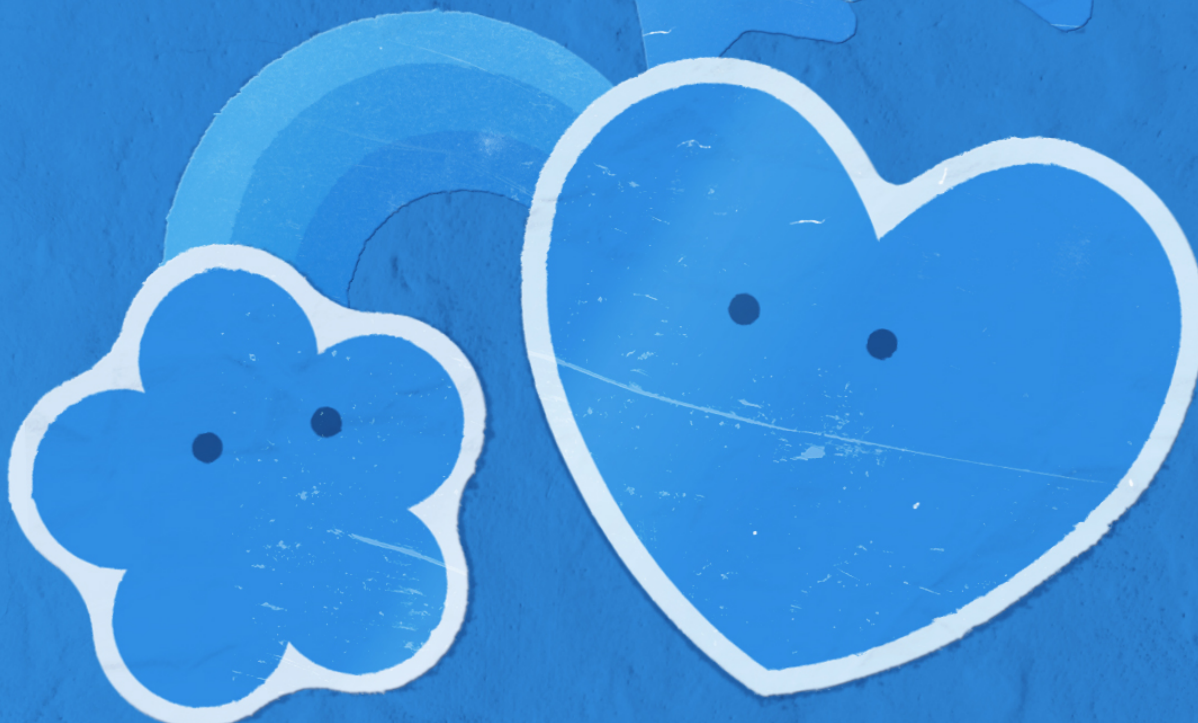


**Lesson Plan****Grade 9-11****60–75 min**[Home](#) > [Classroom Resources](#) > [Many Ways to Wellness:](#)

Learning from Indigenous Perspectives on Mental Health

This lesson explores Indigenous perspectives on wellness, highlighting diverse supports—nature, laughter, relationships, creativity, animals, and personal reflection.

Healthy Living**Seeking Help****Accessing Resources****Coping Strategies****Self-Care****Resilience****Self-Awareness****Indigenous****Healthy Living****Boundaries****Supporting Yourself****Wellness****Stress**

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Before You Teach

Before you teach, we recommend you review our supporting resources:

🔗 [Mental health 101 | Teaching Guide](#) →

🔗 [Classroom Discussion Guide | Teaching Guide](#) →

🔗 [Safer Language | Teaching Guide](#) →

Please note that this lesson serves as a brief introduction to the topic of supporting someone who is struggling with their mental health. This lesson should be used in the context of additional lessons discussing warning signs, coping strategies, and help-seeking information.

Lesson Summary

This lesson introduces your students to diverse, culturally grounded approaches to mental health, inspired by Indigenous perspectives shared in the video. Your students will explore how wellness can be supported through connection to land, laughter, creativity, relationships, and animals alongside supports that are often more talked about in school or media. Through discussion, reflection, and creating a personal “Wellness Map,” they identify multiple strategies for coping with stress and maintaining mental well-being. The lesson emphasizes the importance of diversifying supports and respecting different cultural approaches to healing.

Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand that mental health support can take many forms, including culturally grounded approaches.
- Identify diverse strategies for maintaining mental wellness.
- Recognize the role of community, land, creativity, and relationships in Indigenous approaches to healing.
- Reflect on their own wellness supports and ways to diversify them.

Materials

- Teacher computer, projector, and speakers
- Slide Deck

 [Many Ways to Wellness Slide Deck →](#)

- Videos

 [Ways to Wellness | T'áncáy and Lindsay: Creative ways to access help Video →](#)

- Handouts

 [Ways to Wellness | Handout 1: Transcript →](#)

 [Ways to Wellness | Handout 2: Student Post-Viewing Discussion Guide →](#)

Additional Materials

- Teacher computer, projector, and speakers
- Paper, markers/pencils
- Whiteboard or chart paper

 [Ways to Wellness | Handout 2: Teacher Answer Key →](#)

 [Ways to Wellness | Extension Activity: Wellness Map \(optional\) →](#)

Learning Overview

- Part 1: **Minds On** (5 – 7 minutes)
- Part 2: **Action Tasks** (45 – 60 minutes)
- Part 3: **Consolidation** (8 – 10 minutes)
- Part 4: **Extension Activities**

Lesson Procedure

Note: All parts of the lesson procedure can be found in the slide deck provided.

▶ **Many Ways to Wellness Slide Deck** →

Part 1: Minds On

(5–7 minutes)

Activity: “What Helps You Cope?” Quickwrite & Pair Share

- Students spend 2 minutes writing about one thing they do when they feel stressed or overwhelmed.
- In pairs, they share their coping strategy and discuss whether it involves people, places, activities, or something else.
- Ask for volunteers to share strategies that they use OR have heard about.
- Point out the variety in the room to connect with the video’s message about multiple avenues of support.

Part 2: Action Tasks (45 – 60 minutes)

Content Note: Mentions Intergenerational Trauma and Anti-Indigenous Racism

Video/Transcript Exploration (5 – 10 minutes)

- Provide students with Handout 1: Transcript.

📄 **Ways to Wellness | Handout 1: Transcript** →

- Play the video clip (2:47) or read aloud from the transcript.

🎥 **Ways to Wellness | T’ánc’háy and Lindsay: Creative ways to access help** Video →

- Ask students to make note of...new/interesting/important...as they watch, and provide them with time after viewing to review the transcript for additional ideas.
 - *Students should aim to highlight or jot down three ideas that stand out to them.*
- Brief whole-class discussion:
 - *What stood out to you in the video?*
 - *What are some of the different kinds of mental health supports T’ánc’háy and Lindsay mention?*
 - *How do T’ánc’háy and Lindsay describe mental health challenges in Indigenous communities?*

Discussion: A Deeper Look (25 – 30 minutes)

Step 1: Use Handout 2: Post Viewing Guide to help facilitate a guided conversation linking the video to bigger mental health literacy concepts listed below.

 [Ways to Wellness | Handout 2: Student Post-Viewing Discussion Guide →](#)

 [Ways to Wellness | Handout 2: Teacher Answer Key →](#)

Choose the best discussion format that suits the needs of your students (e.g. full class talking circle, small group, partners).

1. Access to Help

- *What did T'ánocháy and Lindsay say about the differences in getting mental health support in some Indigenous communities compared to cities?*
- *Why might it be harder to get certain kinds of help in some places?*

2. Connection to Nature

- *What examples did T'ánocháy and Lindsay give about using the land, water, or trees to feel better?*
- *How might being outside or in nature help with mental health?*

3. Laughter and Joy

- *Why do T'ánocháy and Lindsay call laughter “medicine”?*
- *How can humour and having fun help you when you're feeling stressed or sad?*

4. Different Ways to Get Support

- *Besides talking to a counsellor, what other ways did T'ánocháy and Lindsay mention for getting help?*
- *Which of these ways are new to you? Which ones have you tried or heard of?*

5. Not Relying on Just One Thing

- *Why do T'ánocháy and Lindsay think it's important to have more than one type of support?*
- *What could happen if you only had one person or one way to help you when you're struggling?*

Step 2: Invite students to record their ideas on the board under **4 categories of wellness:**

1. Nature-based (river, tree, land)
2. Social/Relational (friends, laughter)
3. Creative/Digital (books, videos)
4. Animal Companions (pets)

Activity: Personal Wellness Map (15 – 20 minutes)

- Students create a Wellness Map showing at least 6 supports they could use for mental health.
- Must include:
 - 2 *nature-based or sensory activities*
 - 2 *social/community supports*
 - 2 *creative or personal joy activities*
- They can illustrate or write them.
- Optional: Include a “new to me” strategy learned from the transcript.

Note:

Formative assessment of this activity can include:

- Observation of participation in discussions.
- Review of Wellness Maps for variety of supports and evidence of understanding.

If you would like to use this activity as a larger assessment, we have included an expanded version (including detailed instructions, reflection questions, and suggested assessment criteria) under Extension Activities.

Part 3: Consolidation (8 –10 minutes)

Sharing & Wrap-Up

Invite volunteers to share 1–2 ideas from their map.

Summarize:

- Mental health supports can be diverse, culturally grounded, and personal.
- Indigenous perspectives remind us that healing can come from land, laughter, creativity, and community, not just formal counselling.

End the lesson with a circle check-out. Each student shares one word about how they feel or one new idea they’re leaving with.

- Students may always choose to pass.
 - Responses can be shared with a gesture, drawing, or object instead of words.
 - Students can also write their response on paper and decide if they want to read it aloud.
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Extension Activities

- Invite an Indigenous mental health advocate to speak to the class.
- Encourage students to research Indigenous wellness models specific to the nations whose territory they are learning from (for example, the Medicine Wheel where it is culturally relevant), and compare these with Western approaches to mental health.
- Create a “Laughter Wall” in class where students add jokes, comics, or uplifting moments.
- Assignment: My Wellness Map (handout 3)

 **Ways to Wellness | Extension Activity: Wellness Map (optional) →**

Curriculum Connections

Ontario

Healthy Active Living, Grade 10 (PPL2O)

- C1. demonstrate an understanding of factors that contribute to healthy development

Specific Expectations

- C1.1 demonstrate an understanding of factors that enhance mental health and emotional and spiritual well-being

Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Issues and Perspectives, Grade 11 (NDA3M)

- B3. Cultural Understanding and Cultural Leadership

Specific Expectations

- B3.2 make inferences about the ways in which various forms of racism and cultural stereotyping have affected and continue to affect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities, drawing on political, social, and/or economic evidence to support their conclusions (e.g., intolerance of and prejudice against two-spirited Indigenous individuals; stereotypical depictions of Indigenous peoples in sports team names and insignia; racial profiling; barriers to employment and/or social services such as appropriate medical treatment and education; incarceration rates; political inattention to discrimination affecting Indigenous women)

Health for Life, Grade 11 (PPZ3C)

- *B1.* demonstrate an understanding of the concept of personal wellness, the factors that influence it, and ways of maintaining and enhancing it

Specific Expectations

- *B1.4* describe complementary and alternative health care services and therapies that can support personal wellness (e.g., treatment methods such as acupuncture, osteopathy, homeopathy, naturopathy, chiropractic, reflexology, massage therapy; stress management techniques such as yoga, meditation, deep breathing; traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit healing remedies)
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