

CYCLICAL WORLDVIEW

UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FROM A FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVE

Linear means a straight line. A **linear worldview** is orderly, progressive, and certain, with a beginning and an end. The world can be understood by a cause-and-effect relationship between separate events.

Common to Indigenous peoples and many other cultures is a **cyclical worldview** that is continuous, uncertain, recurring and fluid. All events are connected, regardless of when the event occurs.

Worldviews, shaped by culture and experience, determine how we see the world around us.



Looking Through Portals, acrylic on canvas, Norval Morrisseau, circa 1992/95. Copyright Estate of Norval Morrisseau

“Life is a Great Circle of Relations between all beings.” - Georges E. Sioui, Huron Wendat

The circle is a sacred symbol for First Nations, as it represents life and renewal. The talking circle emphasizes equality and inclusiveness. The circle forms the Medicine Wheel, willow hoop, dream catcher and is used in teepee and sweat lodge construction.

Circles represent ideals of equality and balance, and to First Nations, health exists only when things are in balance or harmony. By honouring cyclical worldviews and approaches we can help address the questions, “What are the holistic and complex relationships that have disrupted the balance in our environments and affect our health? * What can we do to create harmony in our environments?”

What we do to the earth - we ultimately do to ourselves

Environmental Health refers to the **relationship** between our well-being and the indoor and outdoor environments in which we live. Environmental health is part of public health and focuses on preventing disease and creating health-supportive environments.

First Nations approach environmental health in a holistic manner that includes the welfare of all living things and physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of health.



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FIRST NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH INNOVATION NETWORK

RÉSEAU D'INNOVATION EN SANTÉ
ENVIRONNEMENTALE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS



Contact FNEHIN secretariat at:
Assembly of First Nations
473 Albert St. 9th fl. Ottawa ON K1R 5B4
613-241-6789 / 1-866-869-6789
www.afn.ca
environment@afn.ca

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