

# BEING MINDFUL THROUGH THE MEDICINE WHEEL

## Understanding this Medicine Wheel framework:

The Anishinaabek people use the Medicine Wheel as a teaching tool to maintain a balance within the self and with creation. The Medicine Wheel is used for many different teachings, but here we are using it as a wellness circle that includes four aspects of the self: Spiritual, Emotional, Mental and Physical.

As a student at U of T, it's important to work toward balance in your life, especially with the amount of mental activity you're doing every day.

- Without Spiritual practices that connect you to the world, you might feel isolated from society and nature.
- Without a positive outlet for your Emotions, negative feelings like grief, anger and guilt might take over.
- Without Mental balance, you might feel overloaded by work and worries.
- Without Physical self-care—which includes exercise, sleep and nutritious food—you likely will feel tired, sore and less motivated.

Cultural wellness strategies can help you deal with everyday stresses, thoughts and feelings. They can also help you grow positive energy in and around the self; pay attention, and increase understanding and clarity. For instance, you might:

- use traditional medicines to smudge, pray, bathe or connect with an Elder for spiritual support.
- talk with family or friends, find reasons to laugh or give yourself permission to cry to feel better emotionally.

- meditate or do yoga to find some mental calm, or try new activities to stimulate your brain in new ways, such as traditional arts like beading.
- walk or run, work out or stretch, get some sleep or rest, or eat something nutritious to support your body.

All four parts of our Being are connected. Maintaining balance depends on you and what you derive from these and other activities. Exercise, for instance, can be good for both your physical and your mental well-being.

## To review your balance of personal wellness through the Wellness Circle:

1. Write down the date of this review.
2. List the feelings you're experiencing today and your current activities associated with each section—Spiritual, Emotional, Mental and Physical—in the upper boxes.
3. In each of the boxes below, list two or three things you could do to improve your balance in that aspect. Choose activities you can do now that will work best for you.
4. Schedule a time to review your completed Wellness Circle in a few weeks or a month to see what changes have occurred in your state of well-being. You can redo these steps periodically, change or add new activities, and continue to review personal change over longer periods of time.



My wellness circle (date):

**PHYSICAL**

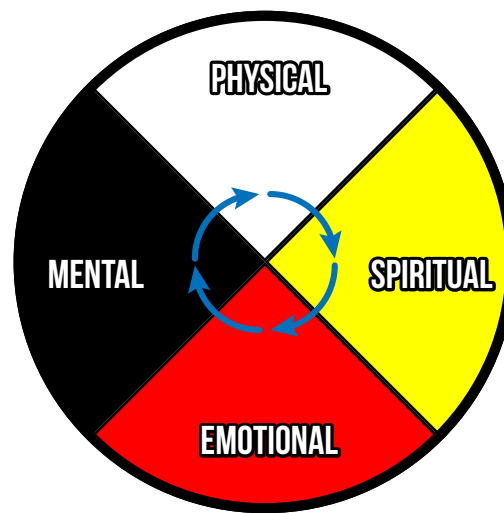
*CURRENT FEELINGS & ACTIVITIES:*

*NEW ACTIVITIES:*

**SPIRITUAL**

*CURRENT FEELINGS & ACTIVITIES:*

*NEW ACTIVITIES:*



**EMOTIONAL**

*CURRENT FEELINGS & ACTIVITIES:*

*NEW ACTIVITIES:*

**MENTAL**

*CURRENT FEELINGS & ACTIVITIES:*

*NEW ACTIVITIES:*

**Want to know more?**

Academic Success has resources, workshops, events and appointments to support you:

- look us up online at [uoft.me/AcademicSuccess](http://uoft.me/AcademicSuccess)
- register for appointments and events at [CLNx.utoronto.ca](http://CLNx.utoronto.ca)
- or email us at [mail.asc@utoronto.ca](mailto:mail.asc@utoronto.ca)

**First Nations House for Indigenous Student Services**

- academic excellence, spiritual growth, leadership
- online at [fnh.utoronto.ca](http://fnh.utoronto.ca)
- email us at [fnh.info@utoronto.ca](mailto:fnh.info@utoronto.ca)