American Indian Well-Being Model in Higher Education

Pillar 1: SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING (individual)

Definition:
Sense of relatedness or connectedness; create meaning and purpose in life; having a belief in and a relationship with power higher than the self. (WSU WELL BEING SITE, 2009)

Key Word: PURPOSE

Question: Why am I attending college?

Example: Daily prayer, career goals, achievement, success, leadership, life fulfillment and happiness, elder teachings, belief system, your “calling in life.”

Example of Resources: Elders; advisors; role models

List three sources that add to your sense of spiritual well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your spiritual sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Pillar 2: CULTURAL WELL-BEING

Definition: Developing your unique identity and the acceptance of all cultures. It’s basically knowing who you are, where you are from, and where you are going in life. (Tohajilee Tribal Elders, 2009)

Key Word: IDENTITY

Question: How do I balance my culture and the modern world while I am in college?

Example: sense of belonging, cultural practices, song, dance, stories, sense of community, language, community involvement

Example of Resources: Language teachers; artists, cultural specialists

List three sources that add to your sense of cultural well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your cultural sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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**Pillar 3: PROFESSIONAL WELL-BEING**

Definition: Planning a successful college experience and professional career.

Key Word: PLANNING

Question: What are my goals for my college and professional career?

Example: Financial literacy, planning, money management, career development, training, life goals, etc.

Example of Resources:

List three sources that add to your sense of professional well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your professional sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Pillar 4: SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Definition: Our ability to interact successfully within a community and throughout a variety of cultural contexts while showing respect for ourselves and others (WSU Well Being site, 2009).

Key Word: NETWORKING

Question: Do I have adequate networking skills to succeed in college?

Example: Time management, reading, writing, speaking, listening, mentoring, rewarding oneself, intimacy, cooperation, dialogue with professor/student, circle of positive friends.

Example of Resources:

List three sources that add to your sense of social well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your social sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Pillar 5: MENTAL WELL-BEING

Definition: A state of well being that an individual realizes his/her own abilities, coping skills, and learning how to think in a variety of ways. Can also be referred to as “intellectual well being” (WBU Well Being Site, 2009).

Key Word: THINKING

Question: Am I academically prepared to meet the rigors of college?

Examples: Study skills, learning styles, problem solving, test preparation, research, creativity, technology, and challenging one’s self.

Example of Resources: educators, engineers, scientists, professors, etc.

List three sources that add to your sense of mental well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your mental sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Pillar 6: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Definition: Emotional well-being is “The ability to recognize and manage your emotions- they are neither right nor wrong but are simply messages that the brain interprets in order for you to make appropriate decisions” (Women’s Vitality & Health.com).

Key Word: FEELINGS

Question: Do I know how to balance my emotions to succeed in college?

Example: Stress management, anger management, anxiety, responsibility for self and others, character development, listening, humor, positive attitude, and grieving processes.

Example of Resources: Psychologists, counselors, elders, advisors, best friend, etc.

List three sources that add to your sense of emotional well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your emotional sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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**Pillar 7: PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

Definition: The ability to understand what can make our body most efficient and ability to recognize and respect our own limitations (WBU Well Being Site, 2009). Your body is very sacred—there is no one that can replace you in this world—Take care of yourself and others.

**Key Word: BODY**

**Question:** Can I take care of myself and my body while I’m in college?

**Example:** Personal hygiene, exercise, sports, diet, food and alcohol awareness, sex education, hobbies, sleep and rest, motivation.

**Example of Resources:** coaches, counselors, teachers, dietician, doctors, etc.

List three sources that add to your sense of physical well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your physical sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Pillar 8: ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

Definition: The aggregate of surrounding things, conditions, or influences that shapes the life of a person or group of people. (Webster’s Dictionary, 2009).

Key Word: PLACE

Question: Is the college that I plan to attend a good fit for me and my goals?

Example: Campus climate, positive role models, respect for culture and animals, student support services, land, and navigating educational resources and services.

Example of Resources: Resident Assistant, tour guides, hosts,

List three sources that add to your sense of environmental well-being.

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If any, list three ways how your environmental sense of well-being can be affected when you go to college.

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List a couple ways how you can cope with these changes.

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Elder’s Wisdom:

“What does this mean to you?

“Always remember who you are, where you are from, where you are going in life.”

“Don’t just look at things one way—Learn from others.”

“The creator chose you to be here.”

“Life is like a circle. Always be kind to others—you will eventually see them again.”