



Maawanji'idiwag: Ending The Year In A Good Way

Thoughts, Tips and Ideas for Living Our Summer by
Our Teachings

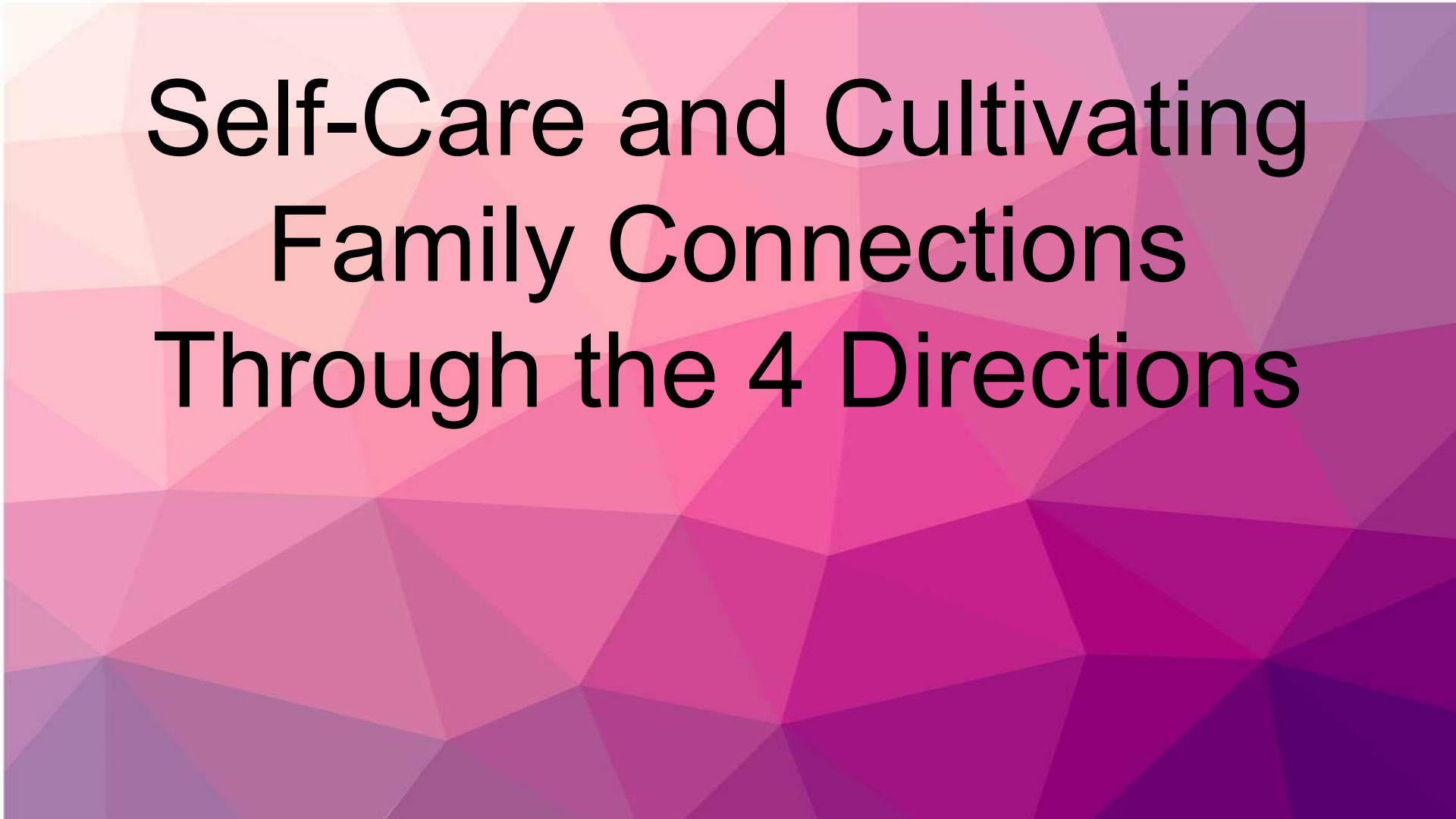
By Emily Blackmoon, MSW, RSW and Tsitra McKay, MSW,
RSW

Things may look a little different this summer...

- Many parents may already be feeling a sense of burnout from being home all the time, mental health of parents and children is vital at this time
- This summer may not have the same experiences for families as it usually does
- Most services and supports available at this time are online, getting a Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter account to assist you in finding out what services and supports are available for your family
- Take a moment to think: Given the current restrictions with COVID-19, what's the best possible plan for your family to have a relaxed and enjoyable summer?

Avoiding Burnout

- Take it one day at a time
- It takes a village: Ask for help. No one is supposed to feel like they have to raise their children in isolation. Connect with safe and supportive grandparents, aunties, uncles, family and community members. It's ok to ask them to help you
- Know which agencies you can connect with if you feel overwhelmed and need help
- Take a moment every day for yourself, even if it's small (a cup of coffee, a shower, time before bed, etc.)
- Don't try to "do it all" - less is more
- If all you did today was keep your kids healthy and safe, that's more than enough
- Take breaks from things that stress you out. Take a break from social media/news/family and friends who cause anxiety, etc. The most important person to focus on is you and your kids
- Get outside as much as possible. Being outside will help support feelings of relaxation and calmness



Self-Care and Cultivating Family Connections Through the 4 Directions

Ideas for Spiritual and Cultural Wellness

- Smudge
- Pick medicines
- Look up Youtube videos about your language and start practicing
- Teach your children about your family history
- Reach out to your Band/Community Council to see if any culture-based supports are available online or over the phone
- Try beading, working with fur or hide, or other kinds of traditional arts. Many organizations have online beading or traditional crafting groups
- Learn to make bannock or fry bread
- Learn a traditional song
- Teach your family to pray for water, pray for the Grandmother moon etc.
- Connect with Elders by phone through places like Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Feast your sacred items
- Talk to your kids about taking care of Mother Earth: clean up a park, talk about recycling, etc.

Ideas for Emotional Wellness

- Do a daily check in with your child: What was the highlight of your day? What was the lowlight?
- Eat together. Turn off devices and TV, if possible, and focus on each other
- Step back and breathe. If you are feeling overwhelmed by your children, give yourself a minute to “cool down”
- Connect with other supportive and safe friends and family members who are parents You’re not alone
- Pick your battles
- Listen to fun music, dance, sing and be silly with your children
- Try videos of positive affirmations on Youtube
- Get acquainted with your own boundaries. Try not to take on too much
- Journal
- Do a daily review of everything you accomplished that day: Who did you help? Who did you support? Who did you keep safe?

Ideas for Mental and Intellectual Wellness

- Talk to your children about ideas, values, philosophies and beliefs. Ask them what they think and support them in developing their thinking skills
- Read together
- Take a break from TV if you can do to something mentally stimulating as a family, like a board game, a trivia game, or a puzzle
- Journal: Take time to reflect on who you are, not just as a parent, but as a person
- Listen to interesting podcasts while cooking, driving or doing other tasks
- Be mindful of how you speak about yourself. If you wouldn't say it to your best friend, why say it to yourself?
- Remember to give your brain a break too!

Ideas for Physical Health and Wellness

- Listen to your body, and encourage your children to listen to theirs
- Cook and bake together. Try new recipes!
- Allow for lots of sleep and rest. Know that small children and teenagers need more sleep than adults
- Get outside as much as possible
- Stretch
- Check in with your family doctor or pediatrician. It's always ok to go in for a check-up
- Move in fun ways - try dancing, yoga, zumba, etc. Find a fun Youtube class or online class to take
- Drink water
- Check in with your relationship to your body. Encourage yourself and your family to have a positive body image

Indigenous Services Available Over the Summer

Anishnawbe Health Toronto

- Beendigen “Walk-In” Phone Counselling – for families and individuals - Mon to Fri, 10am to 5pm
Service users can be referred for ongoing counselling
- Some health services still available, call for more details **416-657-0379**

TASSC (Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council)

- Supports for resources and emergency food hampers, Call 647-957-8372 or email support@tassc.ca
Form to fill out: <https://tassc1.typeform.com/to/LUZhPa>

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto:

- On-going virtual programming (Culture Nights, Storytelling, Fitness, etc.)
Check out NCFST instagram for an up-to-date list (@nativechildoftoronto)
- Child, Individual and Family Counseling and Youth Outreach still ongoing, call 416-969-8510 ext 3290
for a referral, or x 4119 for youth services

Council Fire – Ongoing virtual programming for families
Contact Youth and Little Embers Programming Staff at ylp@councilfire.ca

Native Canadian Centre of Toronto – Support for seniors and youth
Virtual programming, Housing support for youth
Call 416 964 9087 for programming, or contact Jennifer Upshaw or
Kirk Hodgson for housing – 416-964-9087 ex 227 or 228

INDIGENOUS HOTLINES


Indigenous COVID Pathways Hotline – for COVID-related questions and support call 437-703-8703, Open daily 4pm to 9pm

Hope For Wellness Hotline – 24/7 Counseling Support for Indigenous Peoples – 1-855-242-3310

Talk 4 Healing – Indigenous Women's Crisis and Support Line – 1-888-200-9997 (Crisis), 1-855-554-4325 (Counseling)

Kids Help Phone (has Indigenous counselors for children) – 1-800-668-6868

Mental Health TO, - Counseling for children, youth and parents – 1-866-585-MHTO



Thoughts? Questions?

Have a great summer! Baamaapii!!

Thinking Ahead to September

- Regardless of what school looks like in September, staff at the Urban Indigenous Education Centre will continue to do our community work, which includes:
- Social Work support
- Child and Youth Counseling support
- Student Success support
- Cultures and Traditions support
- Instructional Leader support for Teachers and Schools

If you are interested in having your child connected to our services in the fall, please connect with UIEC staff or speak with your school's administrator for a referral form.