

medicine cannot be integrated without building a two way relationship of trust and respect. The TAAM group built their research plan by working with community representatives including Elders, the Grand Council of the Cree, and the Cree Board of Health to explore the possibility of a collaborative project. Through open discussions with partners and Elders, the team was able to understand the needs and beliefs of community members and then modify their project to best suit the community. From this, the team identified and incorporated six key aspects of ethical Aboriginal health research, which can be used to guide similar projects in the future:

- Respect for culture and knowledge.
- Transparency about the project.
- Sharing ideas and knowledge, with Elders in a central role.
- Inclusion of community members and academics on project steering committees.
- Protection of traditional knowledge and related intellectual property.
- Reciprocal knowledge translation.

Aboriginal Elders and healers in Canada hold a wealth of traditional medical knowledge that has the potential to greatly improve the health of Aboriginal Peoples. It is important that research continues to examine the safety and efficacy of these traditional medicines both when used alone and in combination with Western treatments. This field of research must continue to be community-based, with Elders and other community representatives directly consulted and involved at every level.

Traditional medicines have existed since time immemorial and 80 percent of the world still relies on them. Now, researchers are partnering with communities and Elders to learn about and integrate this knowledge into a Western context. This is a reminder that many of the medicines used today are derived from traditional medicine.

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