



Atlantic Summer  
Institute on  
Healthy and Safe  
Communities  
l'Institut d'été  
sur les collectivités  
sûres et en santé au  
Canada atlantique

## Atlantic Canada Showcase Presentation

### ***Spinning the Medicine Wheel for Safer Communities: Understanding Aboriginal Language and Culture***

#### ***Description of Presentation***

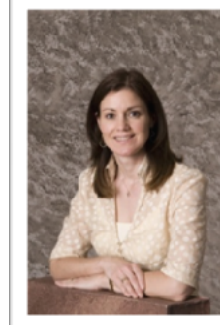
Aboriginal people have used the Medicine Wheel concept in their day-to-day lives since the beginning of time. Both literacy and health are based on holistic world views embodied in the Medicine Wheel. The impact is that indigenous definitions of literacy describe both a diverse set of skills and a pathway to determination and empowerment of spirit. Language, stories and symbols are important.

Through traditions passed down from one generation to another, learn how the health and justice departments of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI use the Medicine Wheel concept in their programs to address health, safety and literacy.

- Understanding the Medicine Wheel approach to conflict resolution. Indigenous people come from an oral tradition and culture. Aboriginal people depend greatly on the wisdom, knowledge and experiences to make healthy decisions. We will look at a talking circle model and how it works.
- Using the Medicine Wheel to build a safer and healthier community. There are many levels of understandings found within each quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. We will look at each quadrant (spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual) to understand the link between health, safety, literacy and learning.

#### ***Presenters***

Lori St. Onge and  
Roseanne Sark



Lori and Roseanne are employees of the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI (MCPEI) and band members of the Lennox Island First Nation. In July 2007, Lori took on the role as the Aboriginal Justice Coordinator for the MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program. She graduated from the University of PEI with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, a Public Administration diploma, and a certificate in Human Resource Management.

Roseanne Sark is the Director of Health. She graduated from Carleton University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology/Anthropology with a minor in History; certified in Reality Therapy; and is a Circle Keeper with the MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program and Certified in Conflict Resolution. Lori and Roseanne sit on numerous volunteer committees and executive boards where they contribute to the well-being of First Nations people. Their goal is to be role models for Aboriginal people and to provide them with the tools



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### MCPEI Aboriginal Justice Program

- Aboriginal Justice Circles
- Healing Circles
- Education/Prevention
- Support/Referrals

to help them make good decisions. Lori and Roseanne have committed themselves to help improve the lives of Aboriginal people on PEI.

### MCPEI Health Program

- Health Emergency Management
- Health Tripartite
- Sports and Recreation
- Health Promotion in Nutrition/Diabetes Education

### **How you will benefit**

- You will learn the significance and use of the Medicine Wheel, specifically connecting restorative justice with indigenous cultural traditions.
- Learn about the benefits of the Medicine Wheel and how it works as an holistic paradigm for health, safety and literacy.
- Engage in discussion about the Medicine Wheel's approach to healthy and safe communities.

### **Handouts**

Available during the presentation

### **Resources**

- Smylie, J., Williams, L, Cooper, N. Culture-based Literacy and Aboriginal Health. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*; May/June 2006; 97.
- Website: [www.mcpei.ca](http://www.mcpei.ca)

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