

Creation of Myaamia *nahi mehtohseeniwinki* 'living well' Model

Haley Shea

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Myaamia Center, Miami University
strasha@miamioh.edu

The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began an *eemamwiciki* 'awakening' of the Myaamia language and culture in the early 1990's. Tribal leadership subsequently worked to establish a tribally-directed research center at Miami University called the Myaamia Center (MC) in 2001, attempting to reconnect tribal citizens to their traditional knowledge system. Through decades of language dormancy, cultural knowledge about what it means to 'live properly' as Myaamia people also stopped being shared across generations. Throughout the *eemamwiciki*, tribal leaders noticed positive changes in the tribal community and tasked the *Nipwaayoni* 'Knowledge' Acquisition and Assessment Team (NAATeam) at the MC to identify ways of understanding how the revitalization movement has impacted the community. Health was a domain the NAATeam struggled to conceptualize for two major reasons: first, health is a complex and culturally/tribal-specific construct and second, academics and health institutions traditionally define it through a deficit perspective, which does not align with Myaamia ways of knowing. Thus, the NAATeam undertook a project to define *nahi mehtohseeniwinki* 'living well' from a Myaamia perspective using knowledge from the language and documentary records, alongside a measurement tool to determine the status of living well for Myaamia people. This presentation will outline three key processes: (1) using Indigenous (Myaamia) ways of knowing to elicit community-specific epistemology, (2) translating community knowledge systems to measurable constructs, and (3) using data to inform tribally-developed health promotion efforts.