



National American Indian and Alaska Native

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

**IOWA**

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# **Native Food is Medicine: Providing Emotional/ Resilient Support for AI/AN Youth through the Healing Power of Food Session 1**

June 9, 2022

10am-11:30pm CST

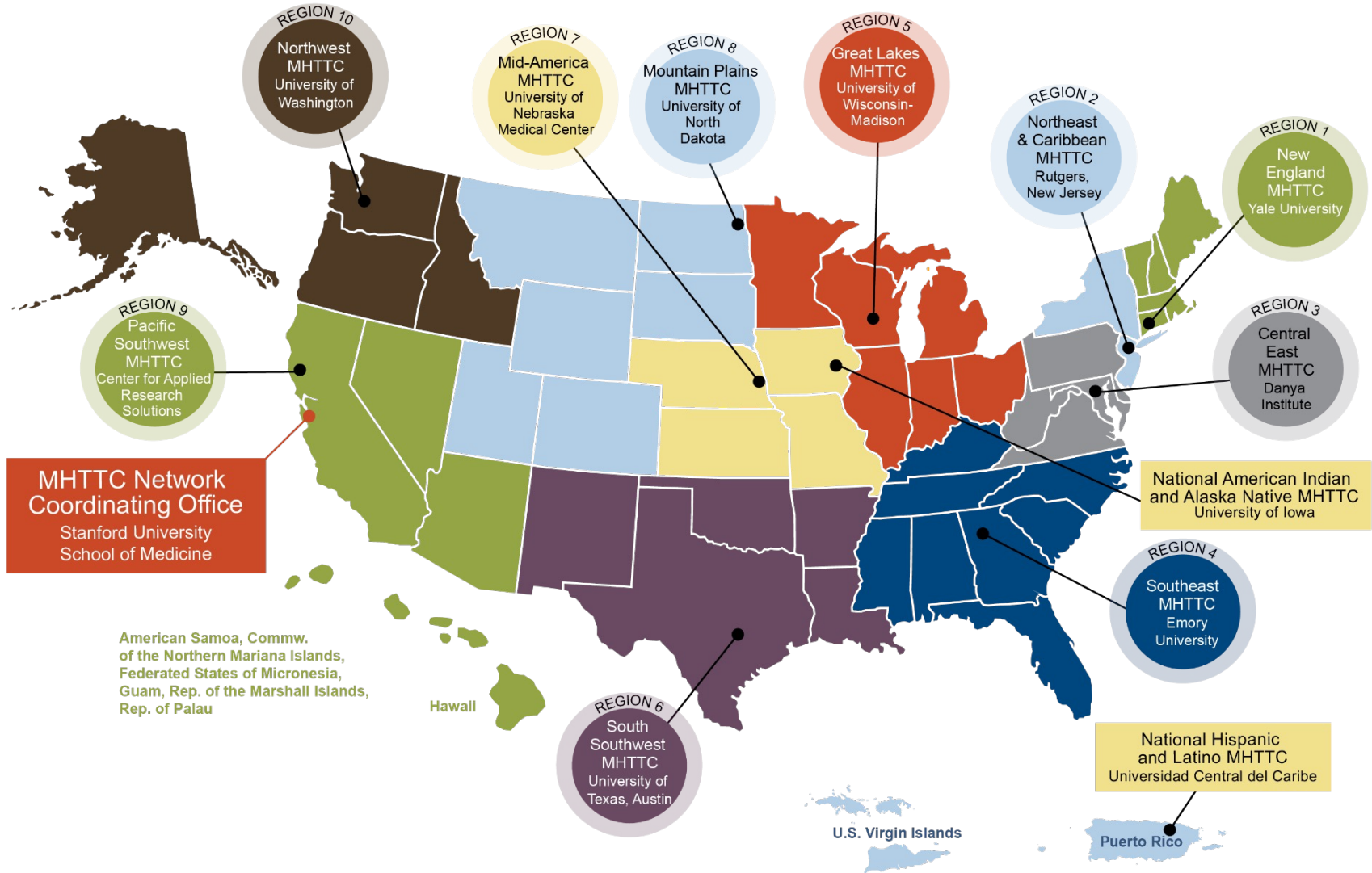


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American Indian & Alaska Native  
Mental Health  
Technology  
Transfer Center  
K-12 School Mental Health  
Supplement Project



# ***SAMHSA***

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

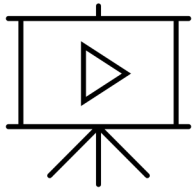
The National American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center is supported by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The content of this event is the creation of the presenter(s), and the opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of SAMHSA, HHS, or the American Indian & Alaska Native MHTTC.

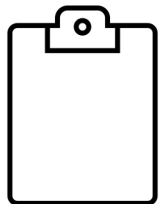


# Follow-up

Following today's event, you will receive a follow up email, which will include:



Links to the presentation slides and recording, if applicable



Link to our evaluation survey (GPRA)



# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to take this time to acknowledge the land and pay respect to the Indigenous Nations whose homelands were forcibly taken over and inhabited.

Past and present, we want to honor the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

This calls us to commit to forever learn how to be better stewards of these lands through action, advocacy, support, and education.

We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced occupation of Native American territories, and we respect the many diverse indigenous people connected to this land on which we gather from time immemorial.

While injustices are still being committed against Indigenous people on Turtle Island, today we say thank you to those that stand with Indigenous peoples and acknowledge that land reparations must be made to allow healing for our Indigenous peoples and to mother earth, herself.

Dekibaota, Elleh Driscoll, Meskwaki and Winnebago Nations  
Ttakimaweakwe, Keely Driscoll, Meskwaki and Winnebago Nations  
Keokuk, Sean A. Bear, 1<sup>st</sup>. Meskwaki Nation





Teresa Brewington  
Co-Director



Bethany Walzcak  
Graduate Research Assistant





# MHTTC K-12 Program Co-Director

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**Teresa Brewington** works for the Native Center for Behavioral Health at The University of Iowa. She is the Co-Director for the National American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health TTC – K- 12 School Supplement and the Co-Director for the National American Indian and Alaska Native Child Traumatic Stress Initiative – Category II. She is an enrolled member of the Coharie Tribe and a descendent of the Lumbee Tribe. She holds a Master’s in Educational Leadership, a Master’s in Business Administration, and has 36 credit hours towards a Master’s in Counseling. She has held positions as a director at several mental health agencies and worked as a school guidance counselor serving primarily Hispanic/Latino students. She has also served as a foster care agency supervisor, where she worked directly with the Salt River Pima Indian Community placing Native American children in foster homes. Her last position was as the Elementary School Principal for Native children at the Meskwaki Settlement, located in Iowa, where she currently resides.





# MHTTC K-12 Program Manager

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**Dr. Allison Baez**, Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation. For over 25 years her focus has been on students' and their families' academic success. Dr. Baez shares her expertise that implements the best practices from a Native cultural lens intended to strengthen and empower individuals, families, and communities. Through collaborative efforts she applies culturally responsive approaches and methodologies to serve Indigenous populations. She received her PhD from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, TX.

# Today's Speaker

Thank you for joining us as we share our cultural connection to food, apply a balanced way of eating, and incorporate Indigenous traditions into our lives with the healing power of food. We welcome Dr. Vanessa Quezada (Kickapoo/Chichimeca). She is a pharmacist and founding member of SanArte Healing and Cultura clinic. Her work is at the intersections of Native traditional healing, food sovereignty and renewable energy that build more life-giving systems.

Participants will become knowledgeable in providing emotional/ resilient support for AI/AN youth. Our school communities will develop healthier eating habits for successful outcomes in and out of the classroom.

We will reflect upon our cultural connections to food and discuss the importance of sugar stability in the body as related to mental health support. We will learn how to adapt a balanced way of eating and discuss the role of stress, sleep and exercise. Together, we will develop plans for improving access to our traditional foods.

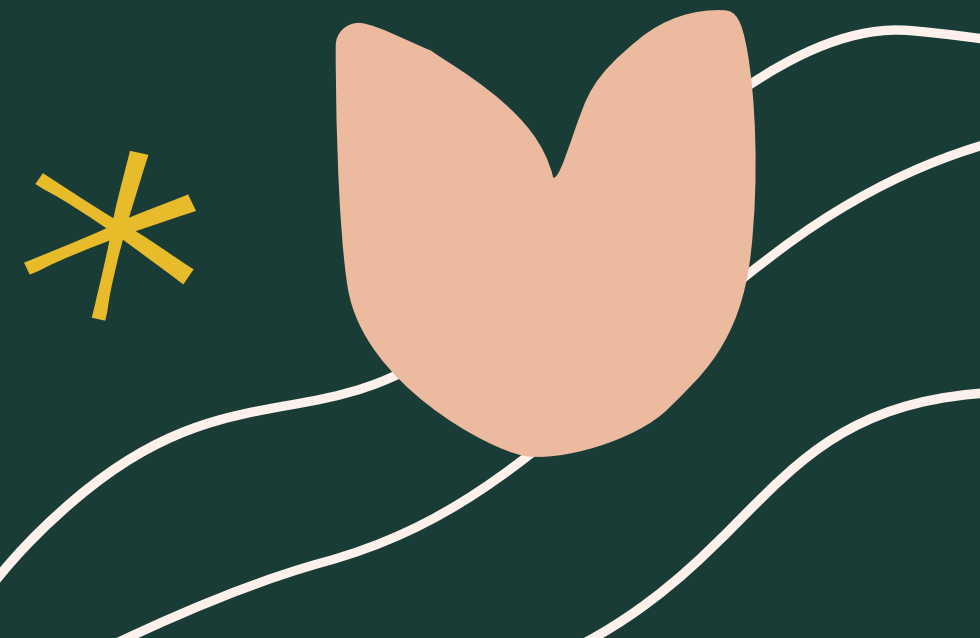




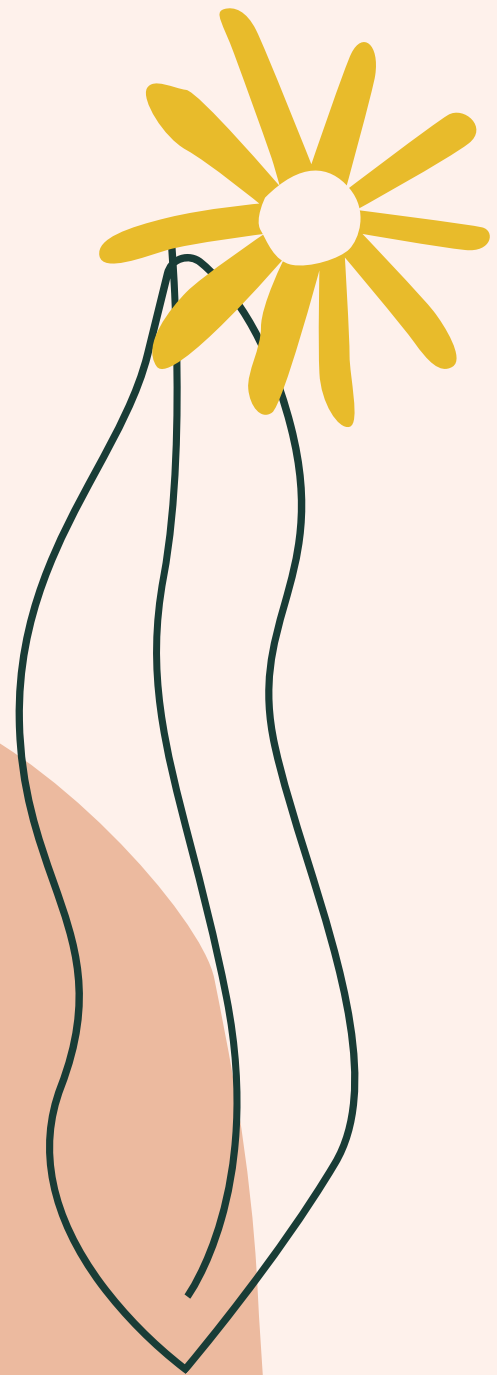
# NATIVE FOOD IS MEDICINE

Vanessa Quezada, PharmD

June 9, 2022

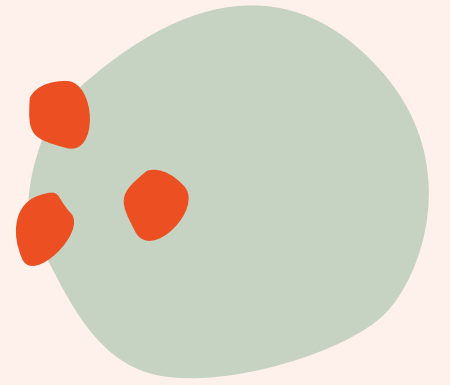




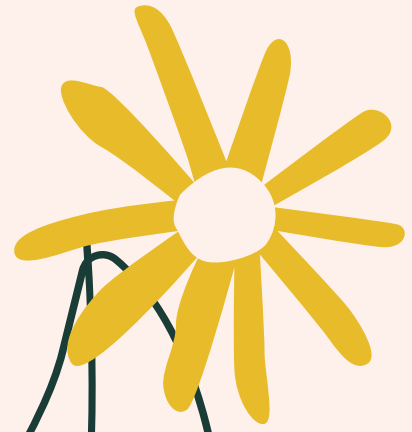


# Land Acknowledgement

## Yanaguana, Coahuilteco Estok G'na







# Vanessa Quezada, PharmD Kickapoo, Chichimeca





# Overview

Prayer for the Seeds

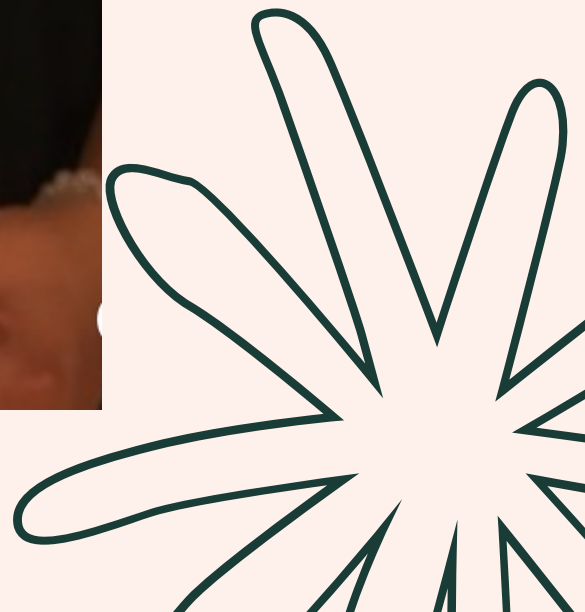
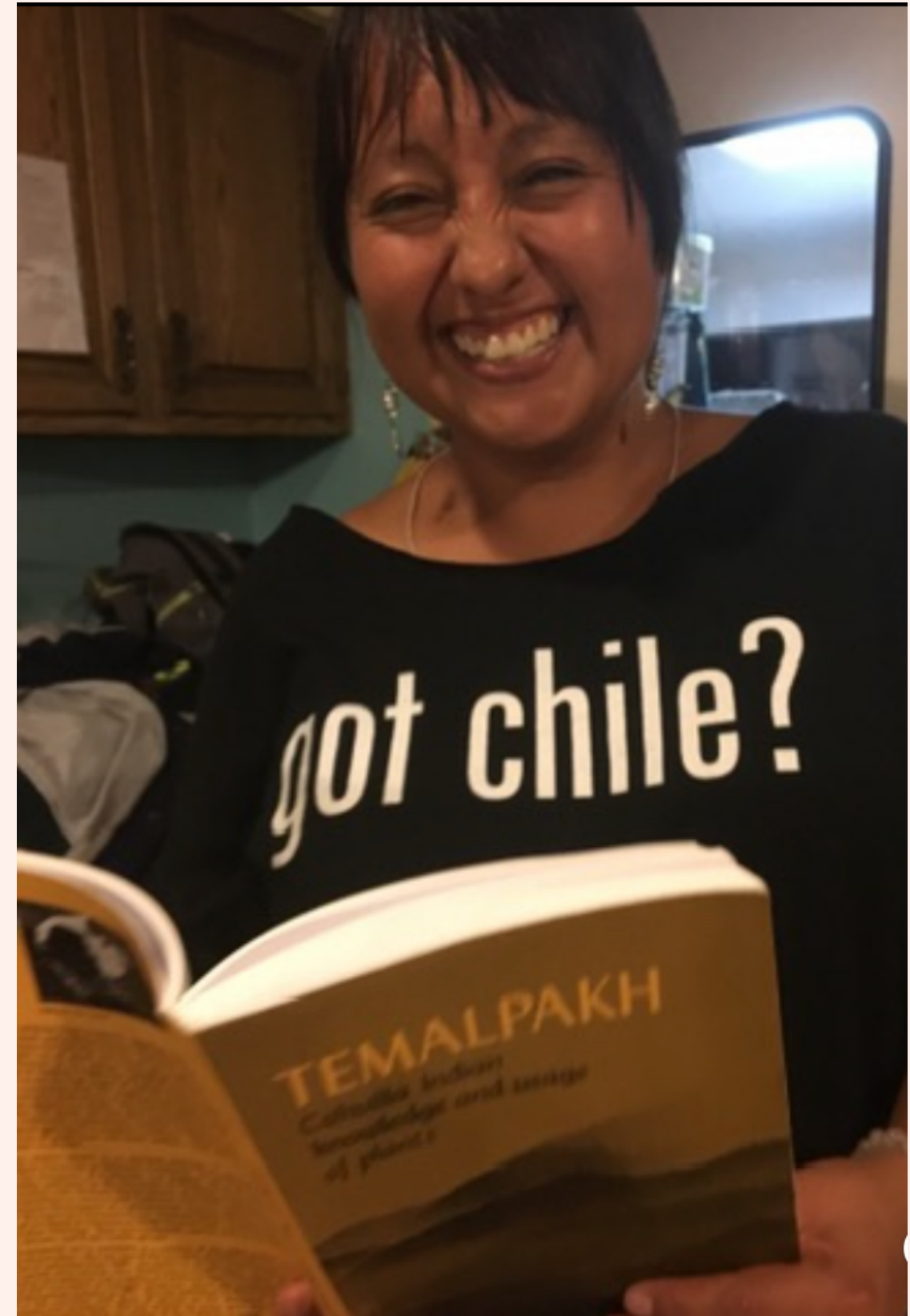
Why are native foods important?

Finding balance in our nervous systems  
understanding the mind-gut connection

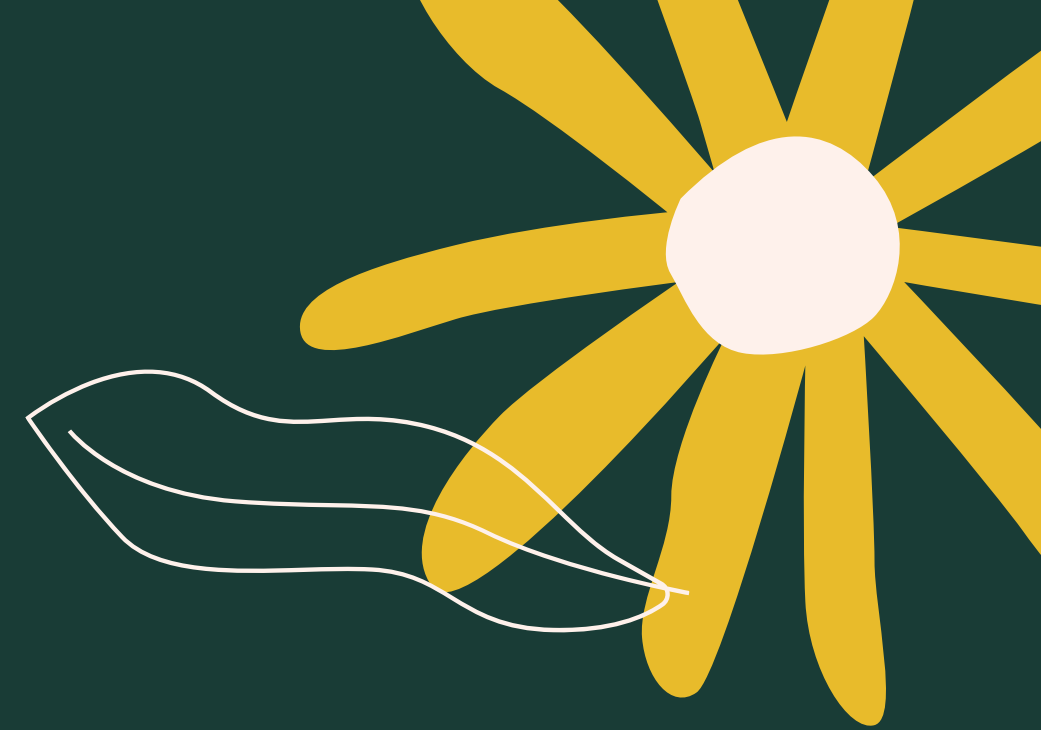
Sugar dependency, traditional vs. processed

Sugar stabilization with PFC

Traditional food examples







# Prayers for the Seeds





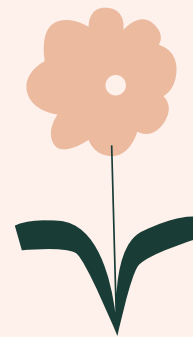
# Why is native food so important?



Culture



Kinship



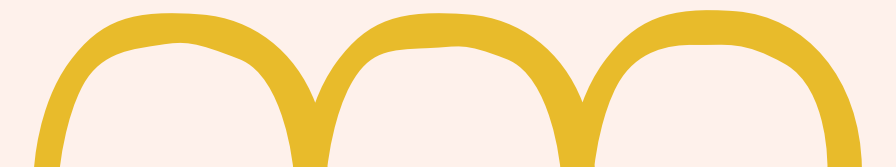
Memory



Survival



Healing





# Why Native foods?

## RESTORES OUR KINSHIP WITH THE LAND

Be in right relations

Example: Lucille Contreras - Texas Tribal Buffalo Project



## PHYSIOLOGY

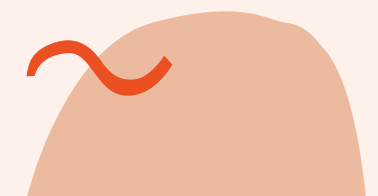
Indigenous Sustainable Community Design Course

20 generations for our DNA to adapt to a location

Roxanne Swentzell "The Pueblo Food Experience"

## POWERFUL WAY TO HEAL OURSELVES IN COMMUNITY

Relationship to ceremony, gathering, part of our spiritual healing - remembering how to treat each other as family.





Breakout groups:

Why are native foods  
important to you?








# CHILDREN & YOUTH CHALLENGES

## STRESS

Family instability  
Substance  
dependency  
Extractive labor  
Overwhelm  
social media  
the state of the world

## MENTAL ILLNESS

Anxiety  
Depression  
Oppositional defiant disorder  
conduct disorder  
Attention-defecit/Hyperactivity  
disorder  
Post-traumatic Stress disorder  
substance abuse



## IN THE CLASSROOM

Externalized Stress  
=

Acting out  
(outbursts, anger)

Internalized stress  
=

shutting down  
(lack of focus, apathy)



# Finding Balance: Nervous system

Survival Mode - intergenerational trauma

SLEEP we need 7.5 hours!

EXERCISE

Walking 20mins/day = anti-inflammatory

15 mins/day reduced mortality 14% &  
extended life expectancy by 3-years



Matthew Walker "Why we Sleep"

<https://www.livescience.com/57498-exercise-reduces-inflammation.html#:~:text=The%20researchers%20found%20that%20this,inflammatory%20response%2C%20the%20researchers%20said.>



# Neurotransmitters



## "Stress Gut"

Serotonin - sleep appetite, mediates moods, inhibits pain, digests food (spiritual connection to emotions) good bacteria decrease inflammation and increase digestion

"90% of serotonin receptors .. are located in the gut. So, for example, when we eat something sweet or sugary, it produces dopamine (the feel-good hormone) and serotonin (the happiness hormone). The neurotransmitters carry those chemicals to the brain, and we feel happy."

Melatonin - influence of blue light



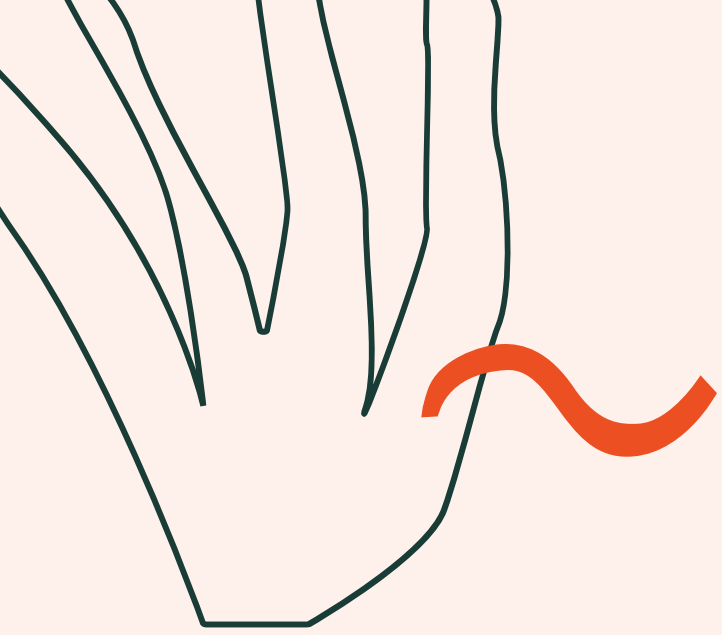
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22314561>

<https://hbr.org/2021/08/weirdly-true-we-are-what-we-eat>


<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/blue-light-has-a-dark-side>







What's  
sugar got  
to do  
with it?



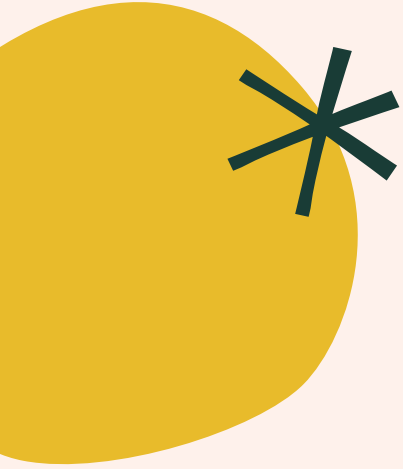
## Processed Sugar & Opiate Receptors

includes high fructose corn  
syrup, sucrose, dextrose,  
fructose...

"Evidence for sugar  
addiction: Behavioral and  
neurochemical effects of  
intermittent, excessive  
sugar intake"

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2235907/>





# SUGAR FROM THE AMERICAS

Note: processed sugar is 99.5% sugar and 0.5% water

## MAPLE SYRUP

Good Fats  
Vitamin B1, B2  
antioxidants  
zinc, calcium,  
potassium, magnesium  
Awakening of Mother  
Earth

## MESQUITE

13% protein  
36% sucrose  
carbohydrates  
calcium, iron  
minerals

## HONEY

carbohydrates,  
fats, proteins  
Vitamin C, Vitamin B5 & B6  
copper, iron, potassium, zinc  
antioxidants

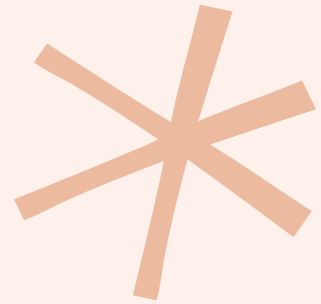
## SUGAR CANE

10-15% sugar  
water  
fiber  
enzymes  
vitamins  
mineral

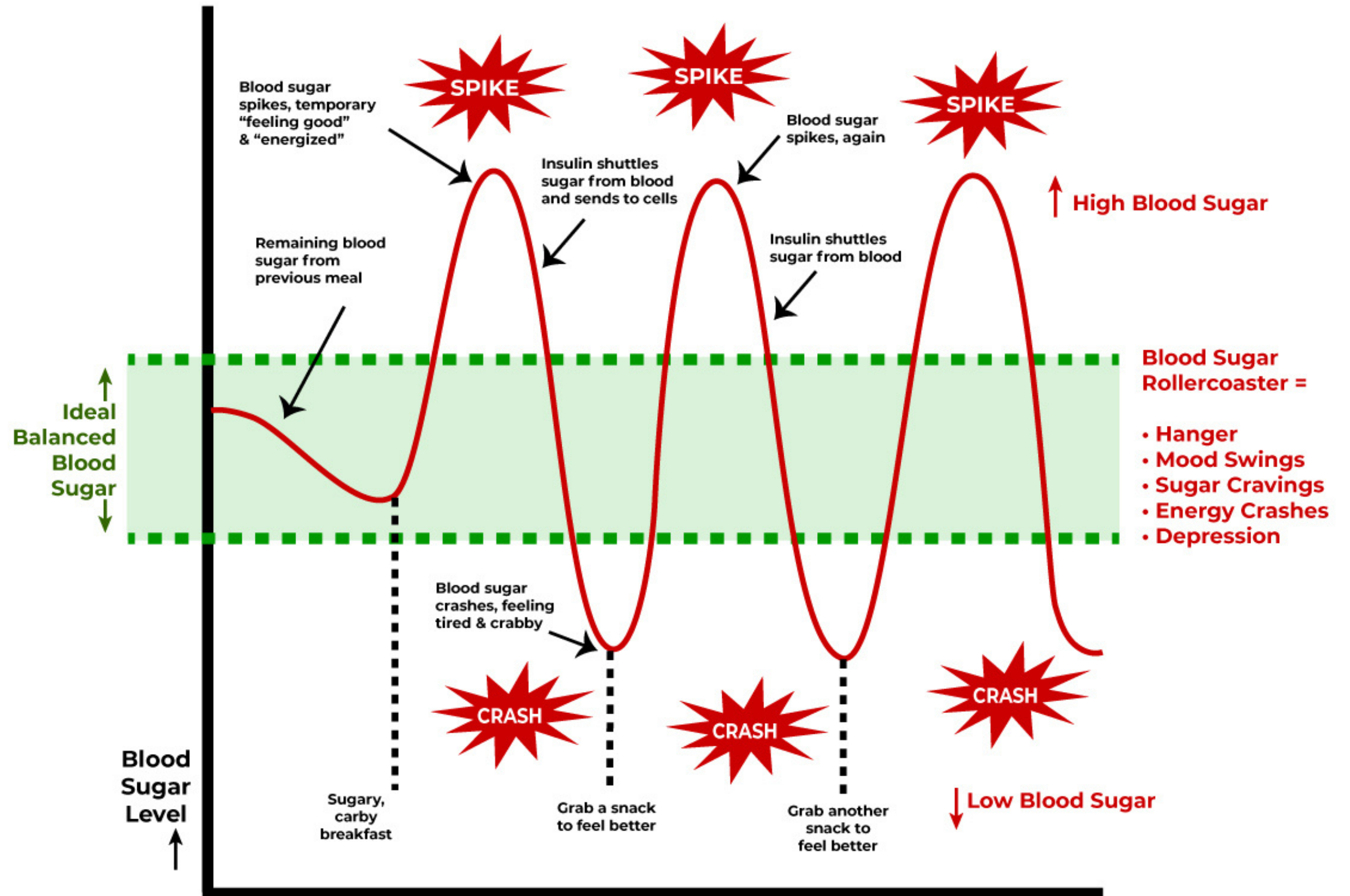




# Blood Sugar Stabilization



## THE BLOOD SUGAR ROLLER COASTER





Breakout questions:

What do YOU feel like when your blood sugar is low?

What would you have to do to eat every 3-4 hours?

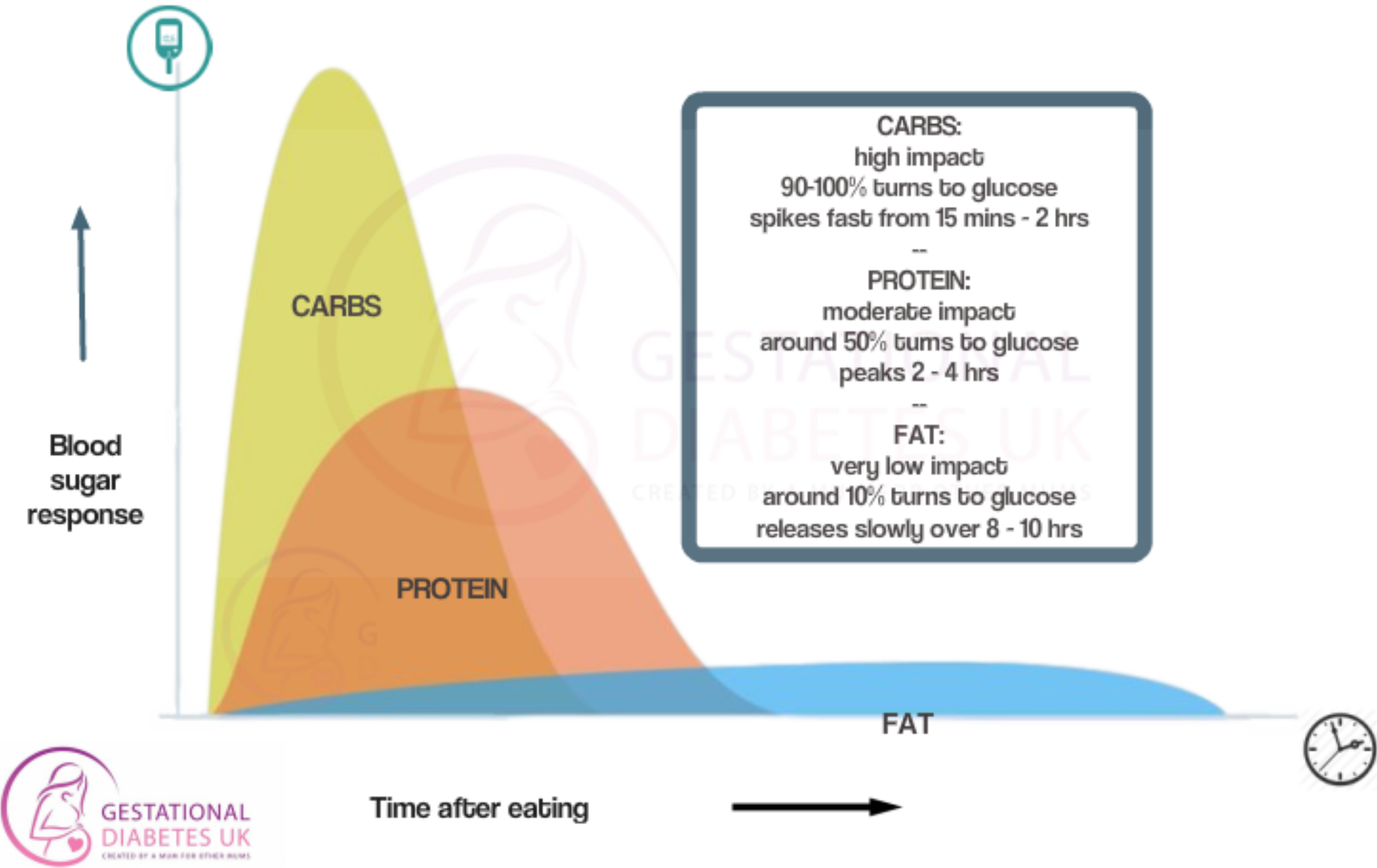
How can your students have this timing as well?



# Blood Sugar Stabilization



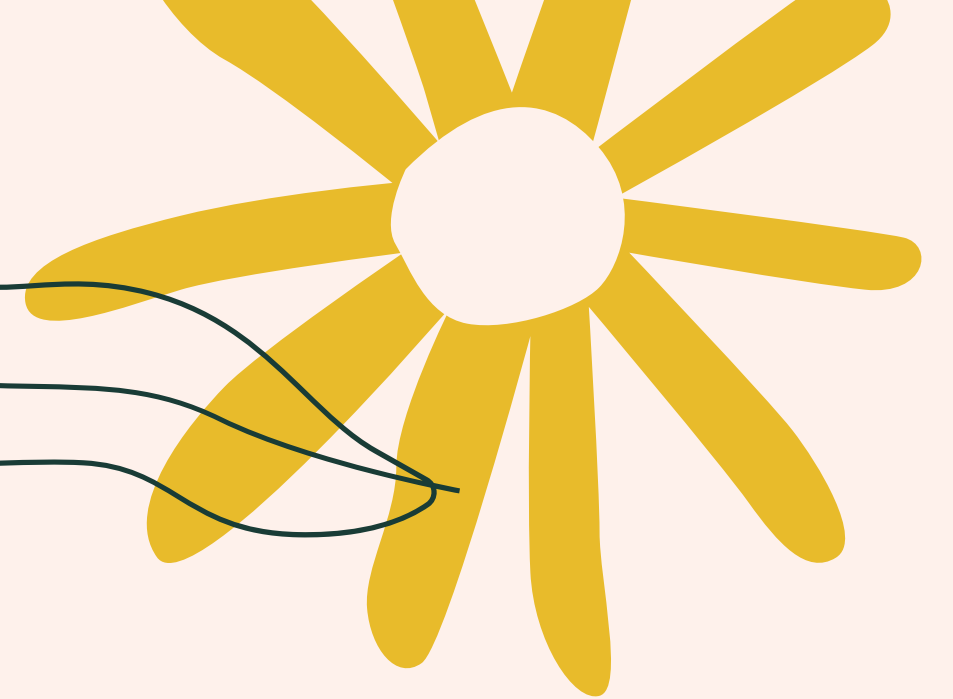
## The impact of macronutrients on blood glucose levels





# THE NAME OF THE GAME

## PFC: PROTEIN, FAT, CARBOHYDRATE



### PROTEIN

Traditional meats, fish, birds, eggs, insects

Wild game - lean

Organ meats

Bone Soup/Broth (Ca)

Salmon, cod, others

Canned fish bones in (Ca)

Organic beef & chicken

More in Fall & Winter

### (GOOD) FAT

Lard

"Guts and Grease"

Sunflower Seeds

Pecans, pinenuts

Acorns, hazelnuts

Avocado

### CARBOHYDRATE

Vegetables, Fruit, Grains

Corn, Beans, Squash

wild roots (camas, cattail...)

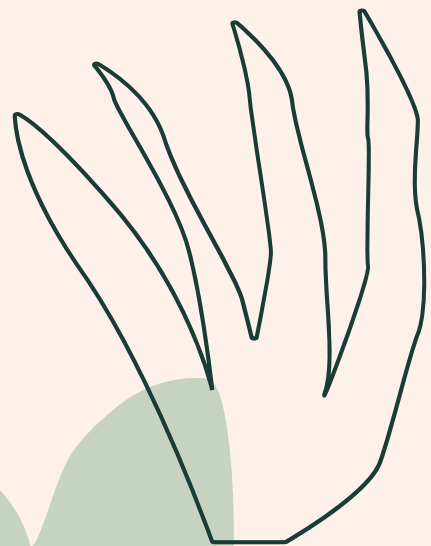
dandelion greens

Wild rice, Wild oats

amaranth

lentils, quinoa

wild berries





Breakout question:

Write out 3 meals that would follow protein, good fat and carbohydrate with at least ONE traditional food from your region per meal.







# Anishinaabe Creator



## Hunter-Gather Traditional Foods Pyramid

Eating the foods the  
Creator gave us  
will honor Him and  
give us good health.



AVOID processed, man-made things like sugar, artificial sweeteners, (aspartame, Splenda, saccharin, etc.), soda pop, bleached flour, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, most packaged foods, convenience and fast food.

**A NOTE on DAIRY:** Dairy, while included in "American" food pyramids, is **not** a traditional food for Anishinaabe Hunter-gathers.

Traditional Calcium and Mineral Sources Included:

- Breast milk for babies and children under two years
- Bone soup or broth
- Fish head soup
- Canned fish with the bones
- Vegetables and greens

Processed homogenized dairy products have been found to increase risk of Type 2 diabetes, while only **raw milk from healthy cows** is a healthy and beneficial addition to a traditional diet. Cultured dairy (yogurt, kefir, buttermilk, etc.) from raw milk is digestible for those who are otherwise lactose intolerant.



# Eat According to the Seasons & the Land

## Colder Weather

Increases the need for heavier foods such as **meat (venison, buffalo)**, it's naturally occurring **fat** (like lard) and **starches** found in **potatoes, winter squash** and **wild rice** (and other foods which can be stored over the winter months). This might also include **dried jerky (pemmican)**, **dried berries, corn (hominy)**, **canned goods, etc.**

WINTER

## Spring Time

is a time of renewal. **Fish, eggs, fresh shoots** (such as horsetail and cattail sprouts) and **tender greens** (such as lambs quarters which is also known as wild spinach, dandelion, plantain, perslane, mint, wintergreen, nettles, wood ferns, and creeping snowberry leaves) help us to cleanse our systems from the heavy winter foods.

SPRING

## Fall or Autumn

is a time to enjoy the harvest and to prepare for the winter months. Cooler weather brings hunting season, some which is dried or smoked to save for winter. **Squash, tubers** (like potatoes, yams and carrots), **corn, apples** and other fall harvested **fruits and vegetables and nuts (acorns, etc.)** are collected and many are stored for winter use.

FALL

## Summer Time

In the summer we tend to be more active and need more high energy foods like **berries, nettles** and **fish**. An abundance of **fresh greens and vegetables** from gardens are available now to be enjoyed, some are canned for winter use. Summer is not a good time to hunt game because of ticks, bacteria and it's too warm to hang the animal. In late summer wild rice is harvested and prepared for winter use.

SUMMER

## FOCUS on LOCAL



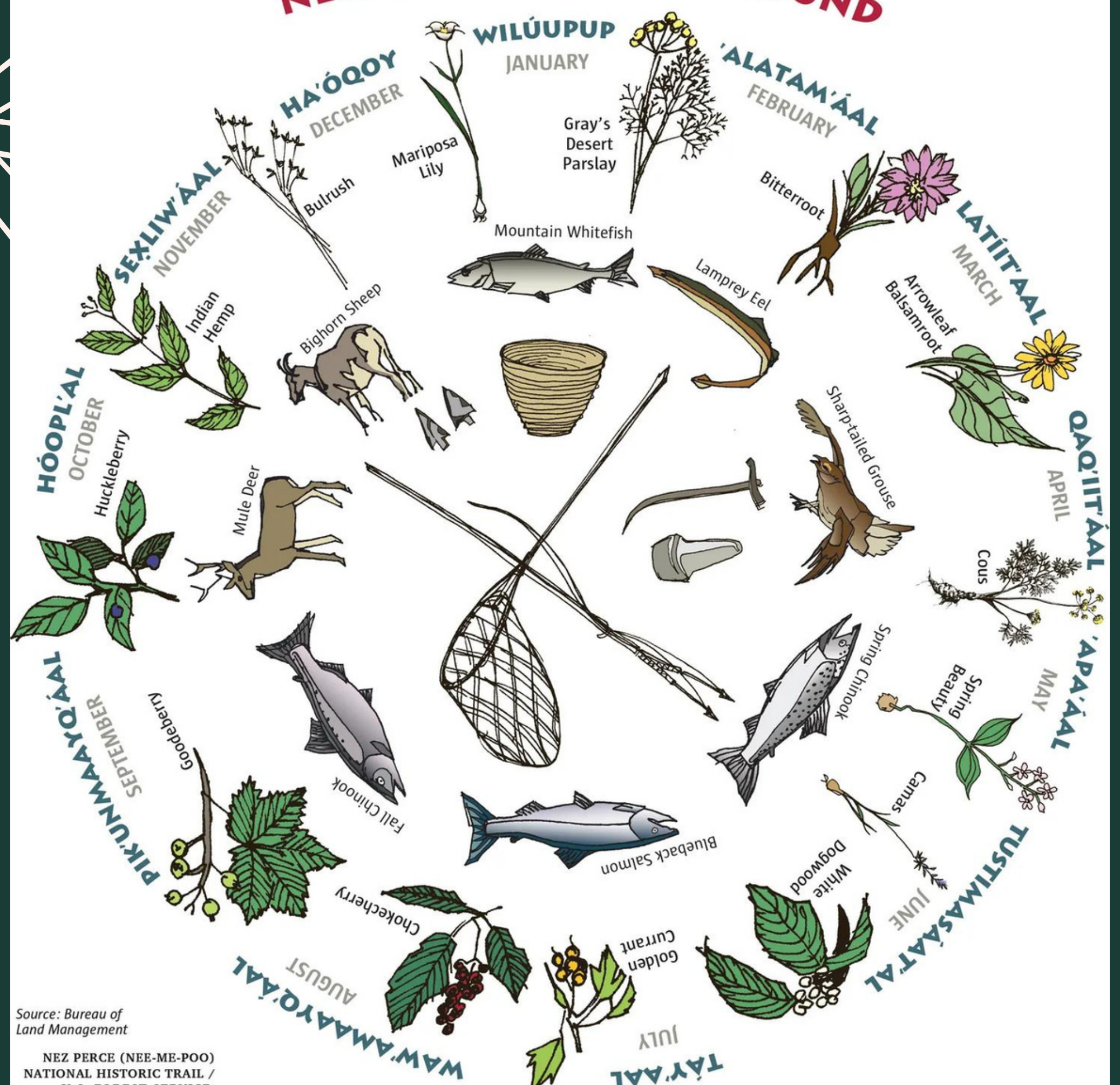
Eating the foods that are grown in the soil and climate that you live in is very important. These **STAPLE** foods provide the specific nutrients your body needs. The Creator has given us everything we need literally within walking distance from where you live (wild rice, fish, deer, corn, various greens, and the other traditional foods mentioned above.) How else could people have survived without modern transportation? ... and they did so for thousands of years.

While citrus and other tropical fruits may be a healthy treat for us, their nutrition is better geared for those who live in the regions they are grown in. If the Creator would have thought we needed bananas or pineapple or coconut he would have had them grow here, but they cannot. This does not mean we cannot ever enjoy them, they simply **should not be the STAPLES** of our diet.





# NEZ PERCE SEASONAL ROUND



Source: Bureau of Land Management

NEZ PERCE (NEE-ME-POO)  
NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL /  
U.S. FOREST SERVICE





"We must take responsibility for our health and for the wellbeing of our children. In doing so, we pass on a legacy of self-respect and tribal strength for future generations."

- Davon A Mihesuah (Recovering our Ancestor's Gardens)

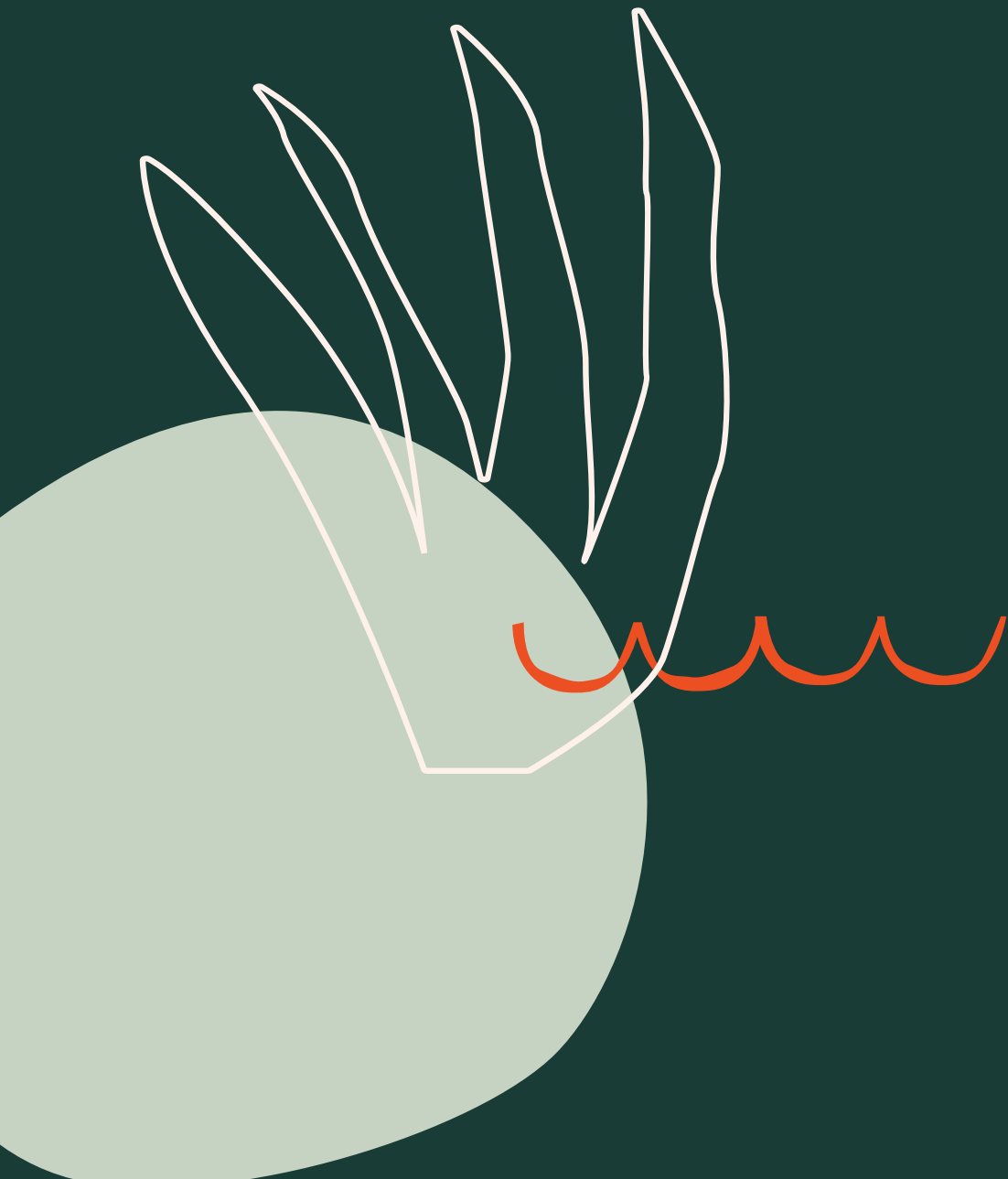
## CONTACT

### EMAIL

vquezad@gmail.com

### WEBSITE

[www.sanartecommunity.com](http://www.sanartecommunity.com)





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# Questions or Comments?



# About National AI/AN MHTTC K -12

## National AI/AN School Mental Health Contact Information:

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### Program Manager

- [c-allison-baez@uiowa.edu](mailto:c-allison-baez@uiowa.edu)

## K thru 12 Program Information

- [K-12 Program guide.pdf](#)

