

IA² and The 4Ms Framework

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International Association for Indigenous Aging (IA²)



**AMERICAN INDIAN
and ALASKA NATIVE**
RESOURCE CENTER FOR BRAIN HEALTH



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
INDIGENOUS AGING**



Embracing the cultural and spiritual values of the communities in which we work



Native American Elder Justice Initiative (NAEJI)

WHAT IS NAEJI?

The Native American Elder Justice Initiative (NAEJI) Resource Center provides culturally-relevant technical assistance and training on elder justice to tribal communities across the United States. NAEJI is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and rights of older adults, specifically focusing on addressing and preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT US](#)

National Healthy Brain Initiative (NHBI)



Identify and feature locally-tailored, culturally relevant activities to address Native disparities in the burden of ADRD.

- The expertise of the IA² team was vital in helping ensure that the Road Map reflects the unique needs and perspectives of Indigenous elders and their communities.
- Address strategies and action items from the [Road Map for American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples](#)
- Deliverables include the development of resources
- Year 5



Road Map for American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples



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IA²'s Content Creation Process

The River of Life Flows Through Your Heart to Protect Your Mind and Body

Your heart health plays a big part in the health of your brain. Your heart is like the start of a flowing river. Blood vessels that take blood to and from your heart are like connected streams that flow through your body. They feed your brain with oxygen and energy.

You can do things to keep the streams freely flowing through your body, so your heart and brain stay strong and healthy.

Working with Your Doctor

- Make an appointment for a "wellness" check
 - You will get tests and screenings to make
 - They are usually free with Medicare Part D
 - If you have concerns about your memory
- Have your blood pressure checked and know
 - Your blood pressure should be less than 130/80
 - If you do not know how to take your blood pressure
- Have your weight checked regularly and know ask your doctor about:
 - The right number of calories for your body
 - Ideas for healthier food choices
 - Support for losing weight
- If you smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco, ask your doctor about quitting
- If you do not have diabetes, have your blood sugar checked. Your blood sugar should be less than 100 mg/dL
- If you do have diabetes, go to regular doctor levels checked. Your doctor will tell you what to do
- Talk with your doctor about all the medicine you are taking to make sure they do not cause any problems with you

Other Steps You Can Take

- Aim for 20 minutes of physical activity a day or 2 1/2 hours a week.
- Read food labels to see how much salt (sodium) or fat is in your food.
- Limit alcohol. No more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 for men.
- Get at least seven hours of sleep each night. Talk to your doctor if you have trouble sleeping.

Healthy Heart, Healthy Brain...

Keep Your Heart and Body Healthy to Protect Your Brain

Everyone slows down as they get older, both in body and mind. Big changes in memory or thinking that make it hard to get through the day are not a normal part of aging. These changes could be signs of early dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

1 in 9
People in the U.S. ages 65+ has Alzheimer's dementia

1 in 3
American Indian people ages 65+ develops dementia

You are more at risk of developing dementia if you have:

- high blood pressure,
- diabetes, or
- you smoke cigarettes

You can protect your body, heart, and mind

- Schedule a "wellness" visit and health screenings every year with your doctor, even if you feel ok.
- Keep a healthy blood pressure.
- Be active or walk every day.
- Maintain a healthy weight for your body size.
- Eat a healthier diet with more fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fish.
- Stop smoking cigarettes or chewing tobacco.
- Get help managing your high blood pressure, diabetes, or to lose extra weight.
- Talk to your doctor about how you feel because your mental health can affect your brain and physical health.
- If it is hard for you to get through the day because of forgetfulness or memory problems, see your doctor right away.

You can do these things today to protect your mind and reduce the risk of or slow down dementia.

Turn over for your checklist to keep your river of life flowing freely

- Our products are **DESIGNED BY** and **DESIGNED FOR** American Indian and Alaska Native nations
- Development Process
 - Listening Sessions
 - Talking Circles
 - Community Surveys
- Targeted Community Input From
 - National Advisory Board
 - Elders
 - Title VI
- Communities from 28 States have ordered printed materials

Recognizing Early Signs of Alzheimer's

There are 6 versions of the 10 Signs flyers available on the IA² website. You can download them or order them to be shipped to you. **FREE!!!**

10 SIGNS of Thinking or Memory Changes that Might be DEMENTIA


Do you have any of these 10 signs? If so, talk to your doctor.
As we get older, we may slow down a bit. This is a normal part of aging. Changes in memory or thinking that make it harder to get through the day are not a normal part of aging. These may be early signs of dementia. American Indian and Alaska Native people have a high risk of dementia. So, it is important to know the warning signs.

- 1 Memory loss that affects your daily life.** You may:
 - Forget events or important dates
 - Repeat yourself
 - Rely more often on lists or sticky notes to remember things more often
- 2 Trouble planning or solving problems.** You may have a harder time:
 - Paying bills
 - Cooking recipes you have used for years
- 3 Get confused about the time, date, or where you are.**
- 4 Daily tasks are getting harder, including:**
 - Driving
 - Making a grocery list or going shopping
- 5 Trouble with how your eyesight and thinking work together that gets worse.** This includes:
 - Tripping, falls, or problems with your balance
 - Spilling or dropping things more
- 6 New trouble talking or writing.** You may have a harder finding the words you want to say. For example, you may say "that thing on your wrist that tells time" instead of "watch."
- 7 Lose and cannot find things.** For example, you:
 - Can't find the coffee pot that you use every day
 - Might put your car keys in the freezer
- 8 Notice changes in mood or personality, such as being:**
 - Easily mad or sad in everyday situations
 - More fearful (scared) or suspicious (not trusting)
- 9 Act different and make poor choices.** This may make you more likely to:
 - Spend money you do not have or be a scam victim
 - Stop washing up regularly or pay less attention to how you look
 - Forget to take care of your pet
- 10 Pull away from friends and family because it is harder to keep up.** You may not want to do things you used to enjoy, like sporting events, church, music, or sex.

This flyer is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$348,711 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

10 SIGNS OF THINKING OR MEMORY CHANGES THAT MIGHT BE DEMENTIA

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10 SIGNS OF THINKING OR MEMORY CHANGES THAT MIGHT BE DEMENTIA

MAIN POINTS

- American Indian and Alaska Native people have a high risk of dementia.
- Big changes in memory or thinking that make it hard to get through the day are not a normal part of aging.
- Changes in memory or thinking that make it harder to get through the day, are not a normal part of aging. These may be early signs of dementia.
- American Indian and Alaska Native people have a high risk of dementia. So, it is important to know the warning signs.



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Do you have any of these 10 signs? If so, talk to your doctor.

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American Indian and Alaska Native people have a high risk of dementia.

Big changes in memory or thinking that make it hard to get through the day are not a normal part of aging. These may be early signs of dementia.




Healthy Food Healthy Brain Rack Cards

HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN MAKING CHANGES

Making small changes in what and how you eat can make you feel better and stay healthier longer. Healthy food choices may be good for your brain, energy, mood, and health.

Little changes that make a big difference

- Start today!
- Write down what, when, and how much you eat for three days
- Set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Timebound), like: "I will eat one piece of fruit at breakfast three times this week."
- Make just 1 or 2 changes at a time until they become a habit
- Focus more on eating healthy food versus not eating unhealthy food
- Make a game plan for the times you get tempted to eat unhealthy foods
- Involve the whole family in setting goals
- Name your main reason to eat healthier and feel better, like "More energy to go to church and tribal cultural events."

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT HEALTHIER EATING TO MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER AND STAY HEALTHIER LONGER

When it comes to traditional foods, for me it's something more than just food, it's my heritage. Cissimarie Juan (Tohono O'odham Nation)

Making small, practical changes can help you achieve your health goals.

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MAKE THIS AT HOME

O'odham White Tepary Bean Stew



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried tepary beans, rinsed & picked through (substitute Navy Beans or Great Northern beans)
- 10 cups of water
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 lb. ox tails, beef short ribs, deer, rabbit, or chicken

Put beans, water, and salt in a stockpot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, covered, for one hour and a half. Add meat to the bean mixture, cover and cook for one more hour, or until beans are tender and meat is falling off the bone. If using a...



HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN FOOD SWAPS

We make about 200 food choices each day. This means there are a lot of chances to make healthier choices. Simple "food swaps" are healthier choices that help you cut down sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. These healthy food swaps can improve your brain and overall health. What more can you think of?

Try these healthy food swaps

Swap That	For This
Butter and Lard	Vegetable Oil
Chips	Nuts
Candy	Fruit
Fried Chicken	Baked Chicken
Ground Beef	Ground Bison or Turkey
8 oz glass of 100% Fruit Juice	4 oz glass of 100% Fruit Juice
Sweetened Coffee or Tea	Unsweetened Coffee or Tea

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT MORE HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICE SWAPS

For me, indigenous food means hope, it means there's a connection to our ancestors and roots for our future. Elena Terry (Ho Chunk Nation)

1-2 healthy food swaps each day can make a difference in your overall health

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HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN NUTRITION LABELS

Nutrition labels are a helpful tool that gives information about the foods you eat. They can help you pick out healthier foods while grocery shopping.

Serving size

Multiply the nutrition information by the amount of servings you eat

Check calories

Needs differ depending on your age, sex, and physical activity level

Limit these

Saturated fat & sodium may increase your risk of developing heart disease & high blood pressure

Get enough of these

Quick guide to

Shows the percent of nutrients in a serving of food compared to a total daily diet, which is based on 2,000 calories per day, 5% or less per serving is low

Pay attention to the serving size and be aware of how many servings you are consuming

Eat foods high in: vitamins, minerals, fiber, potassium, calcium

Limit foods high in: saturated or trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars

Is this nutrition label from an unhealthy or a healthy food?

Answer: Unhealthy

NUTRITION FACTS

8 servings per container

Serving size 8 fl oz (240mL)

Amount per serving

Calories 110

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g 0%

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 5mg 0%

Total Carbohydrate 27g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Total Sugars 25g 50%

Includes 25g Added Sugars 46%

Protein 0g 0%

Vitamin D 0mcg 0%

Calcium 0mg 0%

Iron 0mg 0%

Potassium 0mg 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a diet of other people's secrets.

†The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories is used as the basis for calculation.

MAKE THIS AT HOME

Acorn Squash & Wild Rice Stuffing



Cut acorn squash in half & turn cut-side down. For 20 minutes or bison on med. heat & spinach, stir until will cut-side up, cool 10 m so it lays flat. Widen the desired amount of fill mixture and mix. Scoc salt, pepper, & chili per top of squash is gold. Makes 4 servings.



Culture is your Tribe's tradition, you, your



For more information, visit www.iasquared.org

National Institute on Aging <https://bit.ly/NIAfoodshifts>

National Health System <https://bit.ly/NHSFoodSwaps>

Johns Hopkins Medicine <https://bit.ly/JHFoodShifts>



AMERICAN INDIAN and ALASKA NATIVE RESOURCE CENTER FOR BRAIN HEALTH

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MAKE THIS AT HOME

Choctaw Chickasaw Banana Bread



INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cornmeal
- 1 1/2 cups hot water
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Corn shucks (boil about 10 minutes before using)

Mix dry ingredients. Add water until mixture is stiff enough to handle easily. Form small oblong balls the size of a tennis ball and wrap in corn shucks. Tie in middle with corn shuck string, or use oblong white rags 8 x 10 inches, cut from an old sheet. Drop covered in water.



HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN

Everyone slows down as they get older, both in body and mind. Eating healthier food can help your overall health, including brain health. It may also reduce your risk for memory loss and problems thinking.

Healthier steps to protect your brain

- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lower-fat milk
- Use less salt and added sugar
- Eat more fish, chicken, turkey, beans, and nuts
- Cut down on bad saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and red meat
- Buy fresh, not packaged food when you can
- Limit how much alcohol you drink
- Learn your daily calorie needs for your body size
- Take care of your mental and spiritual health to support your physical and brain health

Small changes can make a big difference for better brain health.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT MORE STEPS TO HEALTHIER FOOD CHOICES

Without the elk, salmon, huckleberries, shellfish, and cedar trees we are nobody Valerie Segrest (Muckleshoot)

www.iasquared.org

MAKE THIS AT HOME

Grilled Salmon and Veggie Packets



Cut asparagus pieces. Cut large enough layers). Add olive oil, sea salt with a piece around food minutes. Ca



For more information, visit www.iasquared.org

Choose MyPlate | USDA

About Brain Health Resource Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Brain Health

www.AIANBrainHealth.org

CDC Alzheimer's Disease Program www.cdc.gov/aging



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HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN BE ACTIVE

Regular physical activity is important to help you think, solve problems, and sleep better as well as reduce anxiety and depression. It can also reduce your risk of cognitive decline, including dementia.

Physical Activity Guidelines:

- 2 1/2 hours a week of aerobic physical activity. Try walking briskly, traditional dancing, running.
- Muscle strengthening activities 2 times a week: carry groceries, lift weights, or garden.
- Balance exercises 3 times a week. Things like standing on one leg or walking backward all count. Use a chair or table to help you balance.

Tips to boost your daily physical activity:

- Get active while watching TV. Keep a list of quick activities (lift small weights) by the remote.
- Use the stairs or park in the back of the parking lot to make activity part of your day.
- Go to family, volunteer, cultural activities, and community events that get you moving.
- Take a class. Check with your local senior center to see what they offer or find one online.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE INCREASING YOUR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IF YOU HAVE A HEALTH CONDITION OR HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN A LONG TIME

The Hawaiians knew which varieties [of kalo] to plant. They were so in tune with their environment that their varieties were adapted to various conditions. That's how we survive Jerry Konanui (Native Hawaiian)

Start small. Set goals to get a little more active each day. Every little step counts!

www.iasquared.org

For More Information About Healthier Eating Choose MyPlate | USDA

About Brain Health Resource Center for American Indian and Alaska Native Brain Health

www.AIANBrainHealth.org

CDC Alzheimer's Disease Program www.cdc.gov/aging



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MAKE THIS AT HOME

Luau Stew



INGREDIENTS

- 1lb luau leaves (spinach, collard greens, cabbage)
- 1 thinly sliced sweet Maui, yellow, or white onion
- 2-1/2 piece of ginger, minced (allspice, cinnamon)
- 1 pound pork shoulder or fish, cut into 2-1/2 inch cubes
- 1-2 tsp table salt
- Cooking oil
- Optional: cooked rice, soy sauce

Toss cubes of meat with 1 tsp of salt. Set aside. Brown oil and meat in a large pot. Set aside. Add sliced onions and minced ginger to the pot. Cook on medium until onions are clear. Place leaves over the pot. See with



HEALTHY FOOD HEALTHY BRAIN MY NATIVE PLATE

A balanced diet full of nutritious foods help to keep your brain and body healthy. My Native Plate can help you achieve those goals.

- Fill half your plate with vegetables like wild greens, tomatoes, or summer squash
- Fresh, frozen, and canned all make great choices.
- Fill the other half with a grain/starch & protein
- Foods like whole wheat breads, rice, corn tortillas, root vegetables, corn, and winter squash are all a grain/starch. Proteins include wild game, bison, eggs, beans, nuts, and cheese.
- Add fruit (like berries, cherries, or pears) as a snack, side, or a dessert.



Pictured here: Peaches, salad, beef and vegetable stew, cornbread, water

STAY ACTIVE | DRINK WATER | USE A 9-IN. PLATE

Get creative! Try out a new recipe or food you have not tried before

Food is the one thing that centers all of us. It's the one thing that we all have in common, no matter who we are Sean Sherman (Ojibwa Lakota)

www.iasquared.org

The River



Resources | International Association for Indigenous Aging (iasquared.org/resources)

IA² has a current and evolving resource library covering a variety of topics. IA² provides free subject matter expert consultation and referrals to tribal and urban Indian organization staff and state, local, and tribal public health entities nationwide. If you would be interested in connecting with the team at IA² to learn more or discuss the potential of further collaboration or IA² be sure to reach out.

10 SIGNS OF THINKING OR MEMORY CHANGES THAT MIGHT BE DEMENTIA

As we get older, we may slow down a bit. This is a normal part of aging. Changes in memory or thinking that make it harder to get through the day, are not a normal part of aging. These may be early signs of dementia. Because American Indian and Alaska Native people have a high risk of dementia, it is important to know the warning signs.

Do you have any of these 10 signs? If so, talk to your doctor.

- Memory loss that affects your daily life. You may:
 - Forget events or important dates
 - Repeat yourself
 - Rely more often on lists or sticky notes to remember
- Trouble planning or solving problems. You may have a harder time:
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 - Following recipes you have used for years
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- Pull away from friends and family because it is harder to keep up. You may not want to do things you used to enjoy, like sporting events, church, music, or sex.

To learn more, visit: www.AIANBrainHealth.org or www.cdc.gov/aging

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INDIGENOUS AGING

AMERICAN INDIAN, ALASKA NATIVE, AND CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS STATE PLANS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INDIGENOUS AGING

TRIBAL LAW AND POLICY AND ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RELATED DEMENTIA ISSUES

PREPARED BY SPLAINE CONSULTING
OCTOBER 27, 2021

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Help Reduce Your RISKS OF DEMENTIA
Things You Might Be Able To Change

Early Life

- More Education

Mid Life

- Manage Blood Pressure
- Prevent & Treat Hearing Loss
- Keep a Healthy Weight
- Prevent Heart Injury
- Limit Alcohol

Later Life

- Do Not Smoke
- Connect with Friends & Family
- Be Active
- Avoid Air Pollution
- Treat Depression
- Manage Diabetes

HEALTHY FOOD HELPS A HEALTHY BRAIN

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- ✓ Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grain and lower-fat milk
- ✓ Use less salt and added sugar
- ✓ Eat more fish, chicken, turkey, beans, and nuts
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Fresh, frozen, and canned all make great choices.

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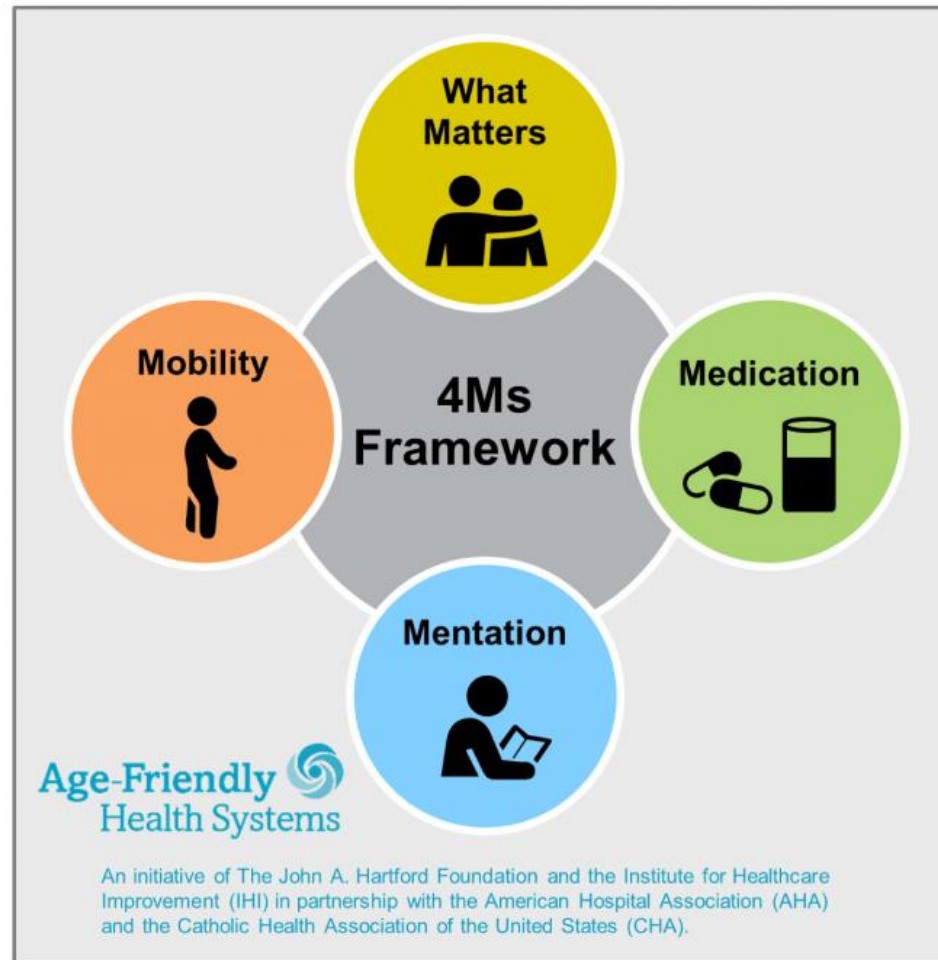
Add fruit (like berries, cherries, or pears) as a snack, side, or a dessert.

HEALTHY FOOD HELPS A HEALTHY BRAIN FOOD SWAPS

With about 200 food choices each day, there are a lot of chances to make healthier choices. "Food swaps" are healthier choices that cut down sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. Healthy food swaps can improve your brain health. What more can you think of?

Swap That	For This
Butter	Vegetable Oil
Crackers and Chips	Nuts
Ice Cream and Candy	Fruit
Chicken	Baked Chicken
Ground Beef	Ground Bison or Turkey
100% Fruit Juice	4 oz glass of 100% Fruit Juice
Instant Noodle Soup	Unsweetened Coffee or Tea

The 4Ms Image



For related work, this graphic may be used in its entirety without requesting permission.
Graphic files and guidance at ihi.org/AgeFriendly

What Matters

Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.

Medication

If medication is necessary, use Age-Friendly medication that does not interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.

Mentation

Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.

Mobility

Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

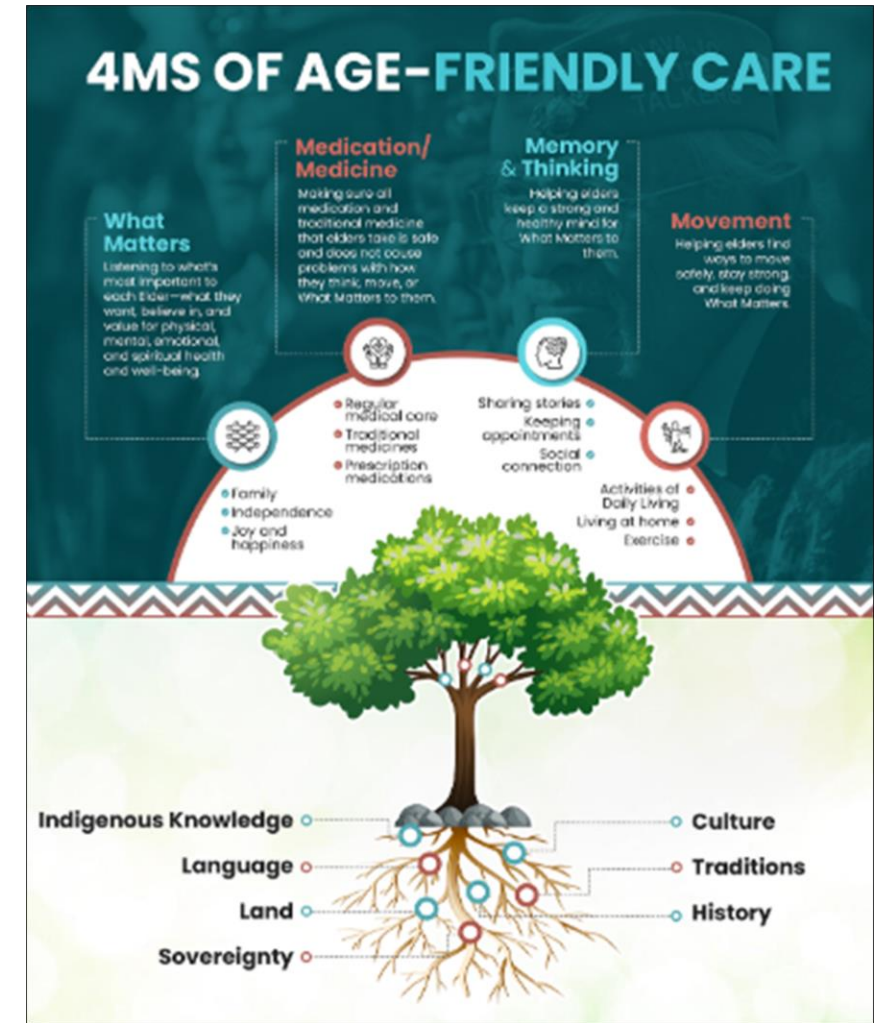
The Team

- In partnership, The International Association for Indigenous Aging (IA²) and the Yale COACH GWEP team sought to adapt the language and visual imagery associated with the 4Ms to be more relatable and relevant to American Indian and Alaska Native communities
- Through an iterative process including tribal organization leaders, brain health advocates, tribal elders and care partners, we arrived at a tool that reflects the individual 4M components and also incorporates cultural elements



Yale SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
COACH 4M

Yale Connecticut Older Adult Collaboration for Health

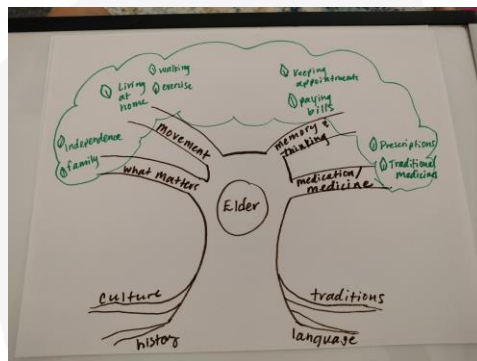


INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
INDIGENOUS AGING

The Adaptation Process

Methods:

1. Phase 1: Listening session with IA2 constituents; A total of 15 participants from 10 states joined the sessions; Internal discussion, - IA2/GWEP team
2. Solicitation for graphic designer - tree image
3. Phase 2: Presented the resource during two virtual learning sessions in May 2025. Shared with advisory council; California Indian Manpower Consortium meeting; NICOA meeting;
4. Meetings with IHI-input
5. Further feedback from original listening session participants



Learnings From Listening

- Center Indigenous culture through concepts like physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
- Acknowledge traditional medicine and ways of being.
- Replace medical jargon with accessible language for elders, caregivers, and community members.
- Consider cultural imagery such as the Medicine Wheel, the Sacred Tree, or Totem Poles.
- Center What Matters and provide examples.
- Participants requested that we consider adapting and/or creating other resources to support elders, caregivers, and community-based workers.

Adapted

They apply regardless of the number of functional problems an older adult may have, or that person's cultural, racial, ethnic, or religious background.

What **M**atters



What **M**atters **M**ost

Medication



Medicine

Mentation



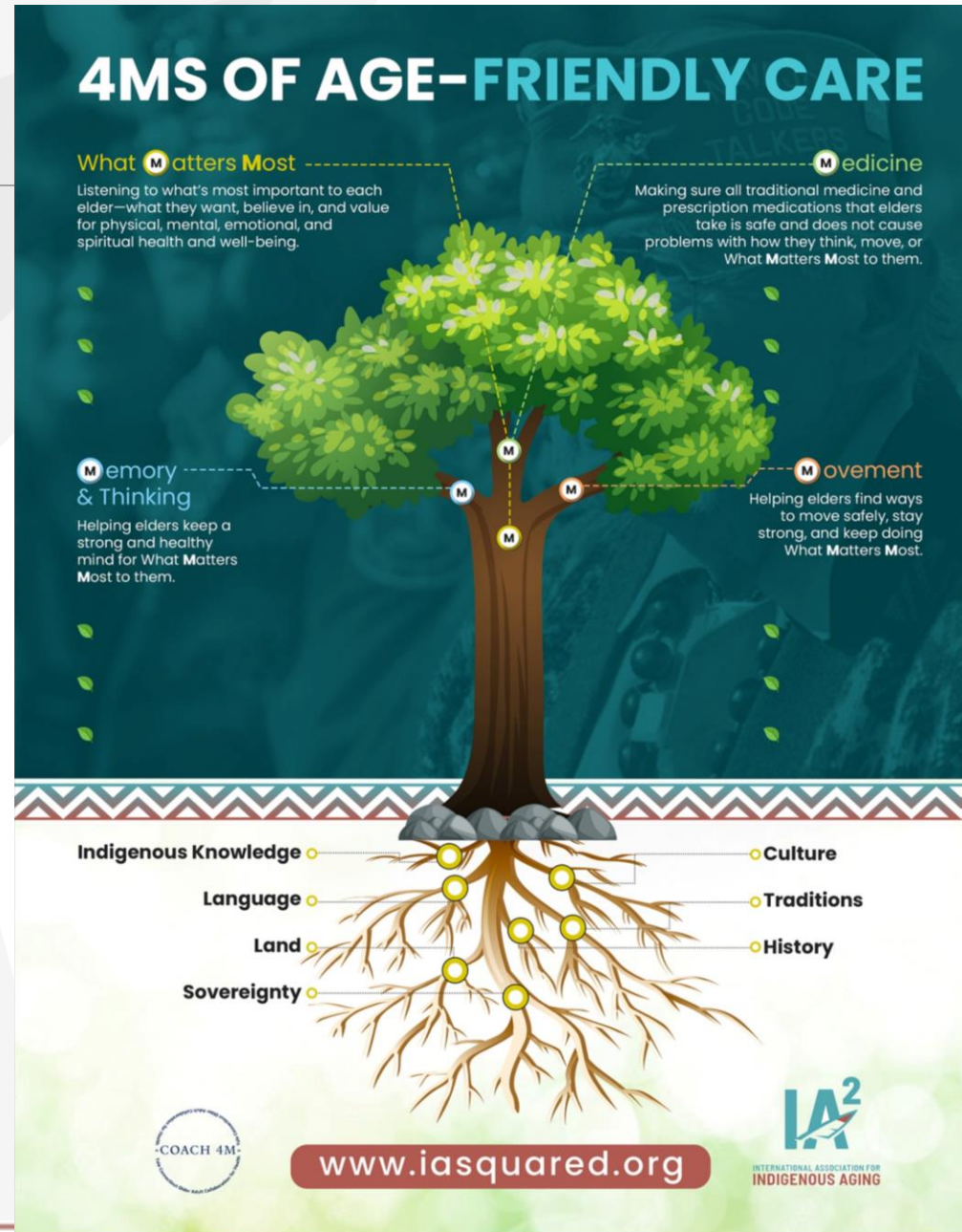
Memory and Thinking

Mobility

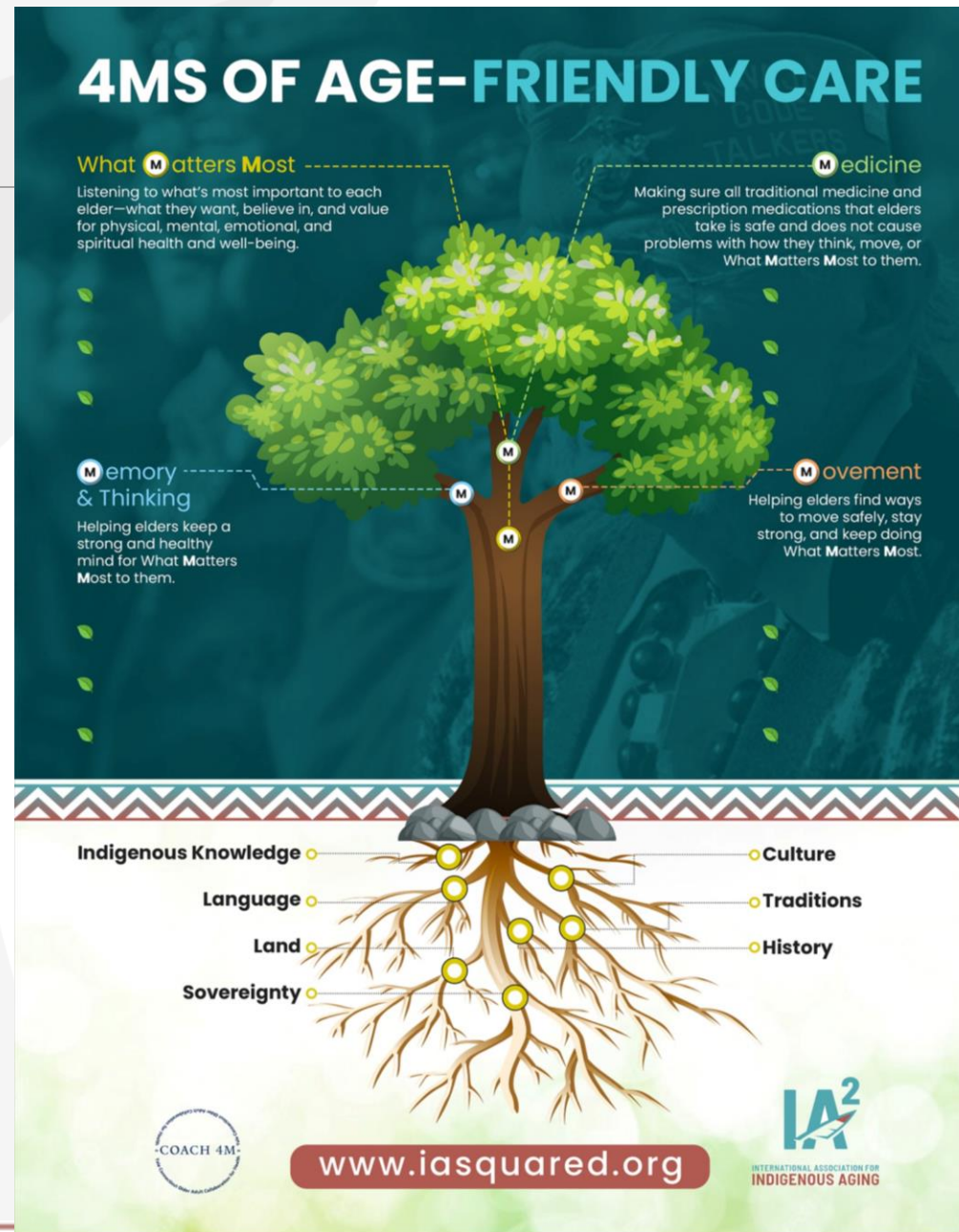


Movement

The Tree



Activity



The Vision

- This version of the 4Ms was intentionally created to be interactive and to face both directions, the providers **AND** the Elders and their families are involved.
- If “What Matters Most” to the Elder is central, then the Elder should know that.
- It is designed to create a conversation between providers and patients.
- American Indian and Alaska Natives often have a distrust for Western Medicine or Health Care. Trust is formed through building a relationship. This conversation can be the foundation for that.
- Example:
 - What Matters Most to Ron
 - Ron’s Family Medical History



Conclusion

- This version has been well received with every community in which IA² has shared it.
- There are requests to work on an adaptation for Native Hawaiians.
- This can be a bridge to providing better health care to American Indian and Alaska Native Elders.

- What do you think?

Connect With Us!

www.iasquared.org

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