

Dibaajimowin: My Personal Story of Navigating Wellness

NCCIH Webinar, First Nations, Inuit, & Métis Peoples and Physical Activity During Covid-19

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Boozhoo/Hello

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Overview

- Strategies and innovative approaches to remove barriers to physical activity during Covid-19.
 - Dibaajimowin/personal story in navigating chronic illness and physical and mental wellness during Covid-19.
- Goal is to shed a light on the daily struggles and to create shifts in mindset about physical activity.

Struggle

Like many, Covid-19 amplified struggles with holistic wellness

- Adjusting to family working/studying from home
- I found a tendency for overwork
- Could not centre my physicality: gyms closed etc.
- Mental wellness was disrupted
- All of these responses to being isolated from family, friends & community were 'normal'. Be gentle, no shame.

Pre-Covid Wellness Practices: Shaming Myself

During isolation, I hyper focused on *what I used to do*:

- Run
- Lift heavy weights
- Teach kettlebell classes
- Brazilian Jiu jitsu/Muay thai practitioner
- I used to be fitter, stronger, healthier, more committed to ...

These thoughts are a "shame spiral" (Brené Brown) and are harmful to wellbeing.

Addressing Unbalance

Majority of Covid-19 my chronic illness became worse (for 20+ years have lived with Hashimoto's hypothyroidism & adrenal fatigue)

- Stress and overwork; persistent insomnia
- Lack of balance with physical activity and nutrition
- Pushing myself through fatigue, made it worse
- Multiple and lasting flare-ups; depression
- Not present in relationships

I am no longer going to be a willing participant in undoing my wellbeing.

Learning, Adapting, Thriving

Amy Porterfield: we experience body grief when we begin to live with a differently abled body due to chronic illness.

Grief: not connecting to community through physical activity

I let go of the grief of what 'I used to be' able to do. And instead:

- Began journaling, daily meditation practice, reading, limiting social media
- Weight training based on where I am at (not on what I used to do)
- Family walks
- Focusing on good sleep and nutrition for wellness (not for 'diet')
- Being gentle, non-shaming, and kind to myself
- Rest without judgement



A Lasting Journey

Not looking for a fix or a one-stop solution. I now understand that *my wellness is a journey* that needs to be flexible and adapt to where I am at.

Lean into my communities (and ceremony):

- **Radical Academic Iskwêwak Goddesses (RAIG):** Enacting ceremony to build an Indigenous-women wellness in the academy (Drs. Gaudet, Whiskeyjack, McGuire, Ms. Ward (Phd.C))
- **Re-Creation Collective:** Is a gathering of Indigenous, racialized, disabled, Muslim, 2SLGBTQIA scholars and sport practitioners who have been working together to create deeply intersectional methodologies and frameworks for transforming sport into a more equitable, accessible, and affirming experience for those impacted by multiple systems of oppression.

“Wellbeing is not a state of being, but a state of action” (Nagoski and Nagoski, 2020, p. 28).

Conclusion & Miigwetch!

- “Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do” (John Wooden, basketball coach).
- Daily practice of non-judgmental movement/physical activity.
- Lessen the grief and shaming of “what I used to...”
- Return to the dibaajimowinan shared by Anishinaabekweg
- Journey is about mindset and what thoughts I am choosing to align with (Acuff, 2021)



List of Resources

Books:

- Jon Acuff (2021) Soundtracks: The Surprising Solution to Overthinking
- bell hooks (2002). Communion: The Female Search for Love
- McGuire-Adams (2020). Indigenous feminist gikendaasowin: Decolonization through physical activity.
- Nagoski, E., & Nagoski, A. (2020). Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle.

Podcasts:

- Imagine Otherwise Podcast, in particular Koritha Mitchell on episode 117.
- Talking Body Podcast, Amy Porterfield

Instagram:

- Ashley Nichols, 5 x World Muay Thai Federation Champion
- KwePack Runners
- Thosh Collins
- Latinasrunning
- Girls Gone Strong
- GRRRL Clothing

- Meditation: Insight Timer (free app)