

Our Story as Nutsihpiluwewicik



Nutsihpiluwewicik began its journey in 2008 when the Faculty of Nursing established the Aboriginal Nursing Initiative (ANI) at the University of New Brunswick. ANI strives to provide culturally appropriate support and experiences that would assist Indigenous students on their academic journey. Since its establishment, we have increased the number of Indigenous nursing graduates in the nursing program. In 2017, Wolastoqiyik Elder Imelda Perley gifted ANI with the name Nutsihpiluwewicik, which is a Wolastoqiyik word for healing clan or clan of healers.

The name Nutsihpiluwewicik challenges us to think about its meaning and whether our actions are in line with its teachings. In 2020, work began to understand the meaning to ensure we are moving forward in a way that honors Nutsihpiluwewicik. Over the course of many conversations within our faculty about what Nutsihpiluwewicik means to them, there was opportunity to hear from our Indigenous Elders. It became clear that Nutsihpiluwewicik includes a diverse community of teachers and learners who support each other and work together to understand and respect the diversity and sacredness of cultures in our practice.

Nutsihpiluwewicik was fortunate to receive support and attention to allow for the development of academic priorities and guidance statements that will provide us with direction on how to continue to move forward in a good way. Our Nutsihpiluwewicik community is committed to actively supporting each other as we work together to understand and respect diverse and sacred cultures by building trusting relationships with each other and those we are caring for. The community also identified our responsibility to create opportunities to enhance the collaboration of traditional Indigenous healing knowledge with Western nursing knowledge, to ensure respectful nursing practices in the Faculty of Nursing program.

The Nutsihpiluwewicik community represents *the branches of our tree*, constantly growing and changing colors as our seasons change.

Nutsihpiluwewicik honors the support and guidance from our Indigenous elders and our community, as well as our traditional grandfather teachings. The elder's traditional Indigenous knowledge is placed at the core of our community, the *inner most rings of our tree* that are what tie our efforts and actions together as one and ensure that we all work together towards our next steps. The Ojibway traditional grandfather teachings of love, wisdom, honesty, truth, respect, humility, and courage are the *roots of our tree*.

The *outermost rings and the bark of our tree* are our collective visions and commitments that will help us work in a forward sense and will support our people, our mother earth, and our environments, while being strong and resilient for our community. The commitments Nutsihpiluwewicik makes are to strive to include cultural teaching and understanding and apply it to the field of nursing. Through the spirit of teamwork and mentorship, our community appreciates a holistic approach to wellness based on Indigenous knowledge, teachings, and guidance as we foster healthy circular relationships in our environment.

Our tree is still growing, as is our community in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick. We will work towards ensuring that our tree is given the resources, support, encouragement, and knowledge necessary to continue to blossom in the years to come. As Nutsihpiluwewicik teachers and learners, we will provide a meaningful and purposeful experience throughout our collective learning journey, and beyond.