



# Roots of Psychology

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# Expressions:

- Have you ever heard the expression "Pavlov's Dog" or a "Freudian Slip"?
- What do they mean? Who are they referring to?

# Roots of Psychology

- Throughout human history spiritual leaders, shamans, medicine people, were responsible for the mental well-being of their people
- The roots of psychology can be broken down to philosophical, scientific, and cultural traditions
- The beginning of modern psychology is hard to pinpoint
- There are differences and similarities between western, non-western, and Indigenous perspectives

# What does "Western" refer to?

Individualism – focus on self / profit over community

Christianity

White Supremacy

Capitalism

Colonialism

US, Europe, Australia, New Zealand  
Canada, S. Africa

scientific method

hamburgers

policing

# What does “Western” mean?

Western culture refers to the social norms, customs, traditions, and values that have developed primarily in countries within the Western hemisphere, including Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

At its core, Western culture is characterized by:

- individualism - personal freedom, self-expression, and self-reliance
- democracy – open-elections
- capitalism – free markets
- science and progress`

# What does "non-Western" refer to?

ASIA , AFRICA , SOUTH AMERICA

Smaller communities

natural

Indigenous communities

holistic

Connection to family and land

Spiritual

# What does “non-Western” refer to?

Non-Western culture refers to diverse traditions, beliefs, and values found outside of Western countries

Locations include regions such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Includes Indigenous cultures

These cultures often prioritize:

- collective harmony
- respect for elders
- communal living
- spiritual interconnectedness

# Western Perspectives

- If we think of psychology as a formal study of the mind, then we can trace back modern psychology to ancient Greece
- Aristotle is the founder of modern/western psychology as a science (384 BC – 322 BC) who investigated mind and behaviour
- Psychoanalysis emerged with Sigmund Freud in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, emphasizing the role of the unconscious mind.
- Today the field incorporates many different theories and practices





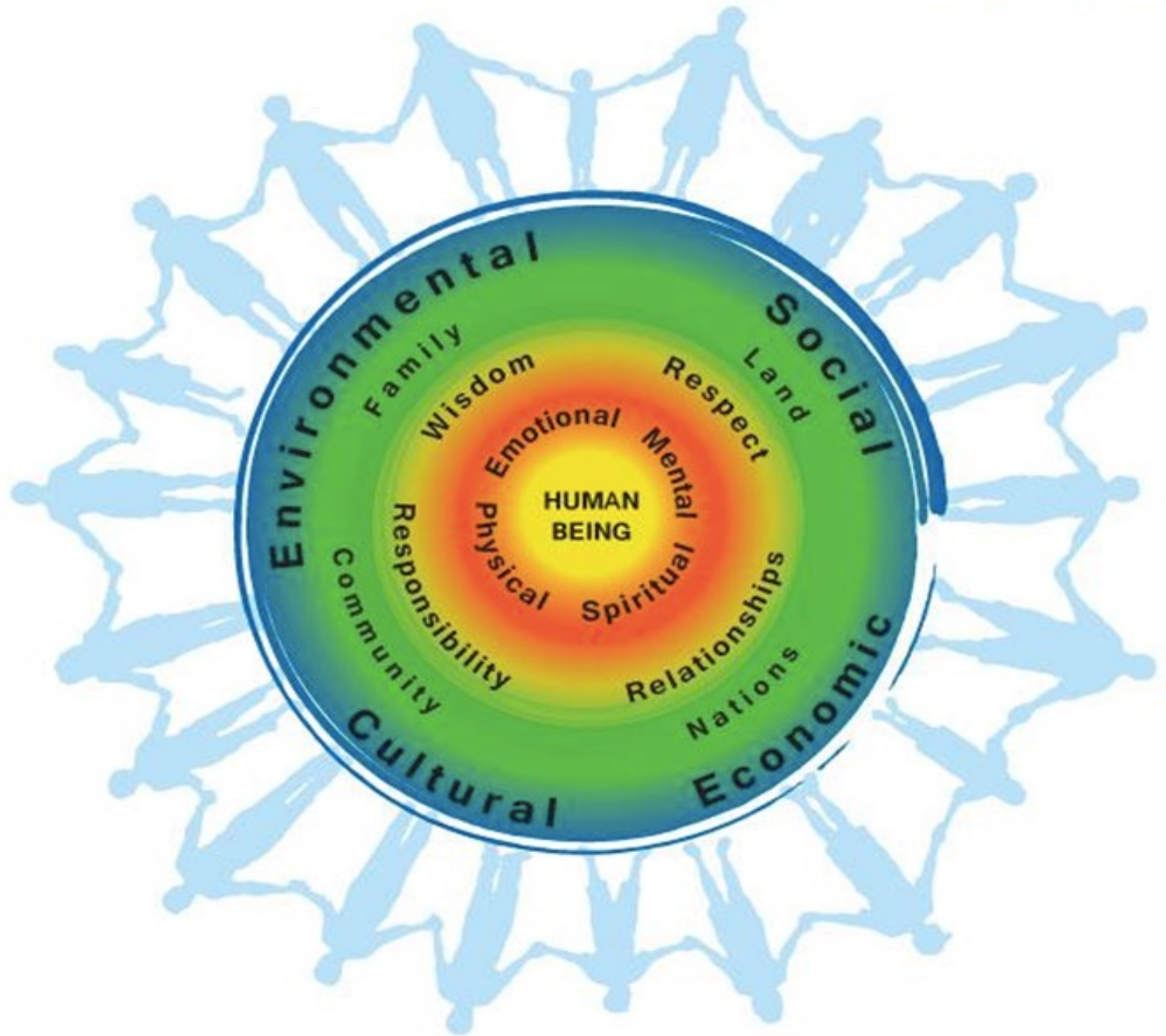
# Indigenous Perspectives

- Indigenous peoples around the world have practiced healing techniques for thousands of years which share some principles of modern psychology
- Indigenous people in BC have always practiced traditional healing and wellness based on a holistic model of health
- The balance and inter-relationships of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of a being



# First Nations Perspective of Wellness

- A visual expression of the First Nations Perspective on Wellness – the way it has always been.
- Passed down from our Elders and traditional healers.
- Wellness belongs to every human being and their reflection of this Perspective will be unique.



# Comparing Western and Indigenous/non-Western Perspectives

- Indigenous Psychology focuses on decolonization by creating cultural understandings of emotions. Different cultures value distinct emotions for well-being
- Western culture prioritizes happiness and self-esteem, while non-Western perspectives emphasize concern for children or elders and with an emphasis on cultural expectations.

↳ in some non-Western cultures

# Comparing Western and Indigenous/non-Western Perspectives

- Western paradigms emphasize the individual, contrasting with most cultures viewing selves as embedded in family, culture, and nature.
- Psychology often relies on **WEIRD** samples (Western, European, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic), comprising only 12% of the global population.
- Many studies involve undergraduates from **WEIRD** societies, further narrowing the representation of the world's population.

# Discussion and Reflection

1. How do Western and Indigenous perspectives differ in their understanding of the self and its relationship to community and nature?
2. What are the limitations of relying on WEIRD samples in psychological research?
3. Why is it important to consider cultural perspectives in psychology, and how can this improve the field?