APPENDIX G

MEDICINE WHEEL / FOUR DIRECTIONS TEACHINGS
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The medicine wheel, or four directions teachings, are used by many (but not all) First Nations communities to teach about many aspects of life.

An excellent resource on such traditions is “Four Directions Teachings” (www.fourdirectionsteachings.com). This site provides oral teachings and teacher resources for Cree, Ojibwe, and Mohawk learning activities. You can also ask local Elders and cultural teachers about teachings appropriate for your community or region.

In essence, the four directions teachings demonstrate the importance of the circle in our life. The circle has four quadrants, with each one being represented by a colour and various elements of life (stages of life, seasons, animals, etc.)

There are different interpretations of the elements of the medicine wheel but the following images illustrate two of the most common in Ontario. The first of the two is the Anishnabeg Medicine Wheel and the second is a version of the Cree Medicine Wheel.  

Cree Medicine Wheel

Winter Season Eldership.
Place of achievement, reflection, deep connection to spirituality and understanding of life.

Spring Season time of planting, birth and first or second chance. Connection to the physical is in this place.

Direction of the North colour is white for the White Nation. Spirit animal put there by my teaching is the White Calf. Buffalo Woman brought to Native people the sacred Pipe and a way of prayers. Therefore we say it is the place of knowledge and wisdom. The place of freedom and selfishness. The place of personal power. The place of Eldership. We also place the element of Fire in that direction.

Direction of the East colour is yellow for the Yellow Nation. Spirit Animal put there by my teaching is the Eagle. The Sun rises in that direction. It is a new day. The beginning of new things. The Eagle brings focus and flies high in the sky. So we say we are walking close to Creator when we are honored with an Eagle Feather as it brings words to him. The Eagle gives us the ability to stay focused on our tasks at hand. We also place the element of Air in that direction.

Direction of the South colour is red for the Red Nation. The animal placed there by my teachings is that of the jumping mouse. The mouse multiplies and works hard. Therefore the lessons of family, hard work, integrity, honesty and truth. We also place the element of Earth in that direction.

Direction of the West colour is black for the Black Nation. Spirit animal placed there by my teachings is the brown medicine bear. We say it is the place of deep introspection and reflection. The sun sets in that direction. We ask for ability to go deep within to do the healing necessary. We place the element of Water in that direction.

Summer Season time of growth, adolescence, juvenile/development of mental capacities.

Fall Season time of harvesting, adulthood and deeper emotional understanding.