

THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS TO HISTORY AND FIRST NATIONS CULTURE

Some suggest that the TC prototype is ancient, present in all forms of communal healing and support (Mowrer, 1977; Slater, 1984). For example, the Dead Sea scrolls at Qumron detail the communal practices of the Essenes, including a section on the “Rule of the Community.” Decrying “the ways of the spirit of falsehood,” this Essene code addressed the problems of greed, lying, cruelty, brazen insolence, lust and “walking in the ways of darkness” (Slater, 1984). Adherence to the rules and teachings of the community was the process to living in harmony.

Today the TC has strong influences from and similarities with First Nations Culture which are evident in the importance of family and the value of extended family. We heal in community by practicing traditional values, ceremonies and rituals. At the core of the change process in the TC is the relationship between the individual and the community. The change occurs when the individual fully immerses themselves in the community and internalizes its teachings creating a coming of age process. The concepts of mutual and self respect within the hierarchical structure of the TC mirrors the traditional practices of North American First Nations ways of living. As we move forward with the TC our history guides the way to our future. When we return to our roots we develop a healthy identity, learning self-care, self-control, self-management, and self-understanding.

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Of the 31 inmate residents in the Nanaimo 11 are First Nations (36%)