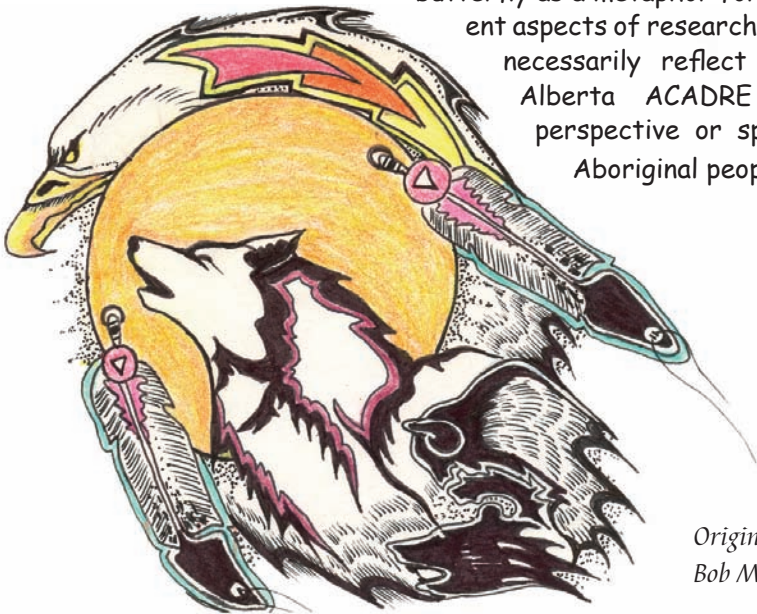


# TEACHINGS OF THE BUTTERFLY USING THE MEDICINE WHEEL; HONOURING OUR NATIONS, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR ANCESTORS

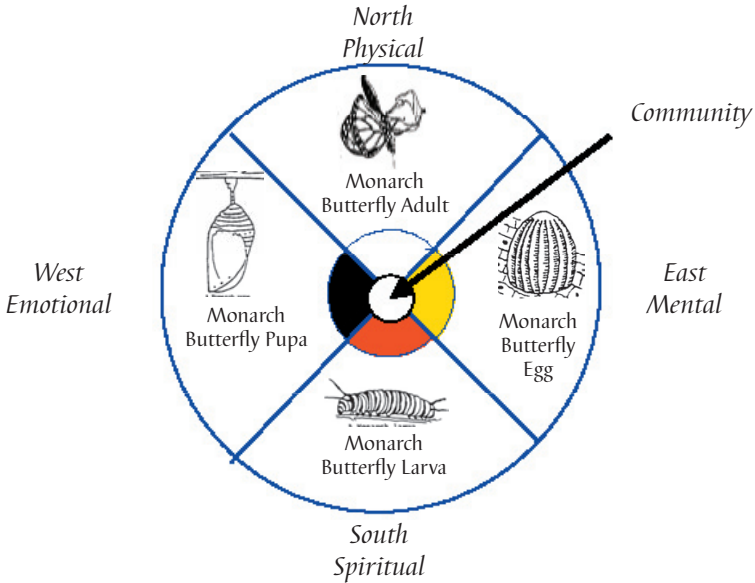
MAJ. (RET'D) ED BORCHERT MMM, CD

This article presents a philosophy of health research with Aboriginal people. It is one of many possible philosophies. It uses the Medicine Wheel to represent the Aboriginal perspective. It uses the Aboriginal Capacity And Developmental Research Environments program, funded by the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health and the Canadian Institute of Health Research, as an example of an institutional organization involved in health research with Aboriginal people. It uses the life cycle of the butterfly as a metaphor for the different aspects of research. It does not necessarily reflect either the Alberta ACADRE Network's perspective or speak for all Aboriginal people.



*Original artwork by  
Bob Martial*

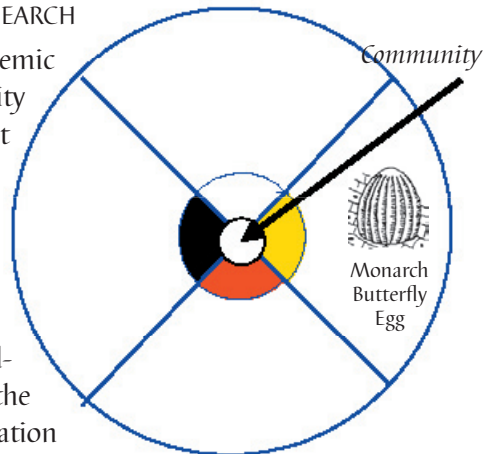
# THE MEDICINE WHEEL



The Medicine Wheel is a healing tool used by many Nations to teach their people about the many gifts of the Creator. In this teaching the Butterfly teaches us the cycle of life using the Medicine Wheel in a good way. In this teaching, the four directions teach us about the Community, which is at the center of the wheel surrounded by all the colors of man: white, yellow, red, and black, all working together in a good way. The development of the Butterfly from egg to an adult also teaches us about the ethical research process from the mental conception to the physical delivery of the completed project.

## MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH

Research born out of the Academic World or the Aboriginal Community is like the egg of the Butterfly. It requires the nurturing and guidance of the Creator to survive. The Elders provide this very essential guidance. ACADRE (Aboriginal Capacity And Developmental Research Environments) is the hardened shell of the egg, protecting the Community from unethical exploitation



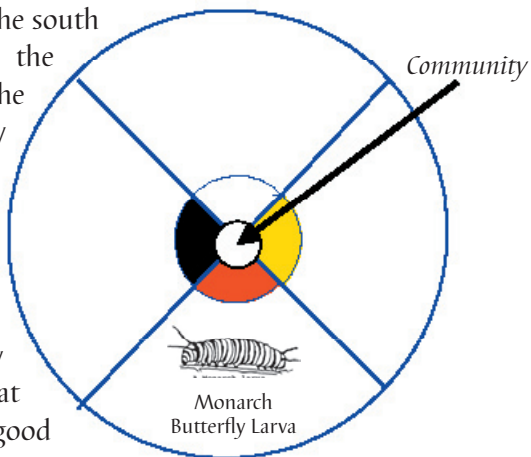
Teachings of the Butterfly Using the Medicine Wheel

working with the Elders. With the warm sun of each new day the Research Project takes form within the egg. Guided by the Creator, ACADRE and the Elders it is finally approved to go out to the Community.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH

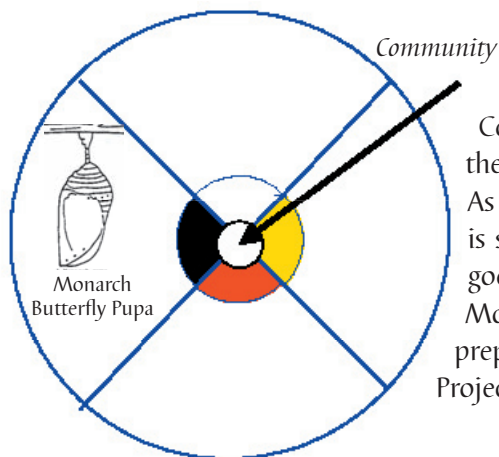
With the warm winds of the south the caterpillar emerges from the egg. This is the same for the Research Project nurtured by ACADRE and the Elders. It emerges from conception to the Community.

In the Community the Research Team is guided by the Governance of the Community and the Elders to ensure that ethical research is done in a good way. The ACADRE Elders and ACADRE Network closely monitor the project to ensure no harm is done to community members or the traditional ways, and that culture is respected. The Research Team feeds on the knowledge of the Community until its appetite is full and all information has been gathered.

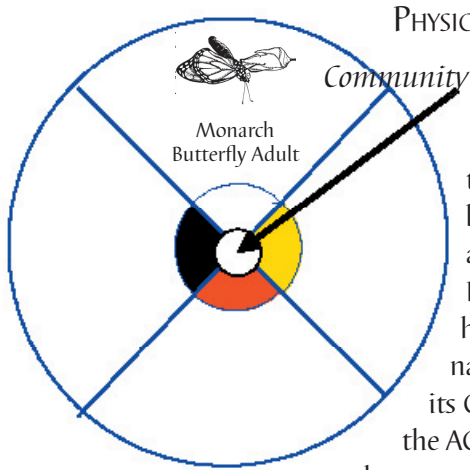


EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH

The Research Team presents their initial findings to the Community respecting the ownership of any disclosure or knowledge and the *Emotional* harm that their research may bring to the Community. The blanket of comfort for the



Community is the fabric woven by the Elders and the ACADRE Network. As day falls to night the Community is safe as all Research was done in a good way guided by the Creator and Mother Earth. The Research Team prepares to write up their Research Project.



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH

The Research Team reviews their project and writes their findings. The Research Project takes on a new life of its own guided by the Creator through the Elders and the ACADRE Network. Once the Project is complete the Research Team has an Ethical duty to share their final findings with the Community and its Governance. The ACADRE Elders and the ACADRE Network will be there to help them stretch their new wings. Once approved

by the Community the Butterfly is ready to spread its wings and to move from community to community sharing its findings in its published form. The Research Team must ensure the Community and its Governance receive published copies and an Executive Summary in language that the Community understands.

## CONCLUSION

Ethics in Research is more than making new discoveries. The Aboriginal Community is the most studied community in Canada. But, Research Teams and the Academic Community many times forget the impact of their Research on our communities. When their Research is published and their pockets are filled with the money from their work, our problems still exist. Their work is done. The Aboriginal Community's problem that caused the need for Research has only gained another well-documented need.

Ethical Research should also provide positive solutions and partnerships with Canadian, Provincial or Territorial governing bodies that will assist the Aboriginal Community. This assistance must follow the recommendations from the published Research Project.