3.1: Introduction

Learning Objectives

• Identify the differences between your own worldviews and Indigenous worldviews.
• Critique how different worldviews affect leadership decisions.
• Recognize Indigenous leadership structures within Indigenous communities.
• Determine the advantages of working with Indigenous community members.

Leadership is about being grounded by our principles rooted in the values and practices of our culture.

—Norma Rabbitskin, 2017

Being an effective leader involves developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes that foster good working relationships with Indigenous communities, leaders, and individuals. Nichols (2004) points out that nursing schools prepare people to become nurse leaders, but do not prepare people to become leaders “in the Indian way” (p. 177). Other researchers (Julien, Wright, & Zinni, 2010) recognize that current leadership theories often reflect cultural ideas of Western societies and do not take into account Indigenous worldviews. This chapter presents selected Indigenous worldviews and challenges students to compare their own understandings of Indigenous culture with those presented in the chapter. In addition, recommendations and examples are provided on how leaders can negotiate and make sense of the different cultural worlds they work with and dwell in. While this chapter discusses Indigenous perspectives, it is important to recognize that Indigenous cultures in Canada are extremely diverse, not only from one treaty territory to the next, but also among neighbouring communities. However, there are still common norms that apply to many Indigenous
communities. In this chapter, the authors will share selected stories and their knowledge of nursing leadership with the intention of providing students with a better understanding of how to work in their roles as nurse leaders alongside Indigenous leadership.