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Religion and Healing in Native America: Pathways for Renewal (Religion, Health, and Healing)

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What it means to be healthy or to heal is not universal from culture to culture, from religion to religion. Indeed, in many cultures religion and healing are intimately tied to each other. In Native American communities healing is conceived as the place where ideas about the body and selfhood are brought to light and expressed within healing traditions. Healing is defined as self-making, and illness as whatever compromises one's ability to be oneself. This book explores religion and healing in Native America, emphasizing the lived experience of indigenous religious practices and their role in health and healing. Indigenous traditions of healing in North America emphasize that the healthy self is defined by its relationship with its human, spiritual, and ecological communities.

Here, Crawford brings together first-hand accounts, personal experience, and narrative observations of Native American religion and healing to present a richly textured portrait of the intersection of tradition, cultural revival, spirituality, ceremony, and healing. These are not descriptions of traditions isolated from their historical, cultural, and social context, but intimately located within the communities from which they come. These portraits range from discussions of pre-colonial healing traditions to examples where traditional approaches exist along with other cultural traditions-both Native and non-native. At the heart of all the essays is a concern for the ways in which diverse Native communities have understood what it means to be healthy, and the role of spirituality in achieving wellness. Readers will come away with a better understanding not just of religion and healing in Native American communities, but of Native American communities in general, and how they live their lives on an everyday basis.

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