




**STRENGTHENING OUR CONNECTIONS TO PROMOTE LIFE:**

# **A Life Promotion Toolkit by Indigenous Youth**





The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is a leading culturally centred voice across Canada on First Nations mental wellness, substance use and addictions. The organization supports an integrated and wholistic approach to healing and wellness serving First Nations and various levels of government, through research, training and education, policy and partnerships, and communications. Thunderbird strives to support culture-based outcomes of Hope, Belonging, Meaning and Purpose for First Nations individuals, families and communities. Thunderbird's mandate is to implement the Honouring Our Strengths: A Renewed Framework to Address Substance Use Issues Among First Nations People in Canada (HOS) and the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum (FNMWC) framework.

The Thunderbird Partnership Foundation is a division of the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation Inc.



[thunderbirdpf.org](https://thunderbirdpf.org)



Thunderbird Partnership Foundation. (2021).  
*Strengthening our connections to promote life: A toolkit by Indigenous Youth.*  
National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation, Inc.

*This toolkit features artwork by: Page Chartrand, Cynthia Edwards, Carly G Morrisseau  
Cover art by Page Chartrand (Instagram: @pagechartrand\_)*

## Honouring the Gift of Life

I am pleased to welcome you to our Indigenous youth life promotion toolkit. It has been my privilege and honour to participate with and support our Indigenous team of youth from across Turtle Island who have developed this exciting and inspiring toolkit. It is our hope that this toolkit supports our youth across our lands to aspire to live long and good lives. The knowledge and wisdom of our ancestors from before colonization created healthy lifestyles that frequently lead to our relatives living much longer and healthier lives than many of us experience today. Our youth have also told us for many years that they are more interested in learning how to promote life as opposed to how to prevent death.

Through the ideas shared within this life promotion toolkit, our youth team is inviting you to explore and reform the wisdom from our ancestors to once again lead you to live healthier and longer lives. We hope that you discover, as we have, the excitement about cherishing and honouring our Creator's gift of life. In doing so, it is our hope that you also discover from this journey how to promote your life to be a long and good one.

In peace and love,

**(Elder Ed) Waubinabenasi kwekwetchgun**  
*Eastern Thunderbird Sounding*

## **Introduction**

Background	4
Who is the Youth Action Group for Life Promotion?	5
What is Life Promotion?	11
Statement on Life Promotion	
From Youth Action Group for Life Promotion	
What Does Life Promotion Mean to You?	
Creating Safe and Brave Spaces	12
The Importance of Having Gentle Teachers	13
Before You Begin	14
What to Do if Someone Checks-Out?	

## **Connection to Land**

Preface	16
Full Moon Activity	19
Food Sovereignty, Gardening, and Food Programs	20
Living Off the Land and Building Your Own Fire	21
Seasonal Activities/Exploring Communities Capacity for Land Based Activities	22
Medicine Walks, Harvesting, and/or Foraging	23
Connection to Nature Using Mindfulness	24
Identifying Local Knowledge Keepers	25
Movement is Medicine	26
Closing Reflection	28
Resources	29

## **Connection to Self**

Preface	32
Introducing Yourself in the Language	35
Knowing My Response-Ability	38
Changing the Way We Speak	39
The Power of Affirmations	40
Creativity Activity ( <i>Music, Drawing, Journaling</i> )	41
Fidgeting and Its Importance	42
Creating a Self-Care Kit	43
Morals and Values Activity	44
Self-Reflection Activity	45
Stretching Activity	46
Exploring Our Identities	47
Meditation	48
Healthy Communication and Boundaries	49
Ceremony With Intention	50
Resources	51

## **Connection to Community**

Preface	54
Engaging Role Models for Mentorship and Peer Support	57
Craft Night	58
Communal Challenge/Repair Activity	59
Festivals	60
Family Tree Activity	61
Sharing Circle Activity	62
Tea Talks for Intergenerational Healing	63
Ceremony With Communal Intention	64
Resources	65

## **Connection to Spirituality**

Preface	68
Naming Ceremony	71
Making a Traditional Dwelling	72
Creating Spiritual Items	73
Learning Your Creation Story	74
Drumming and Singing	75
Resources	76

## **Resources**

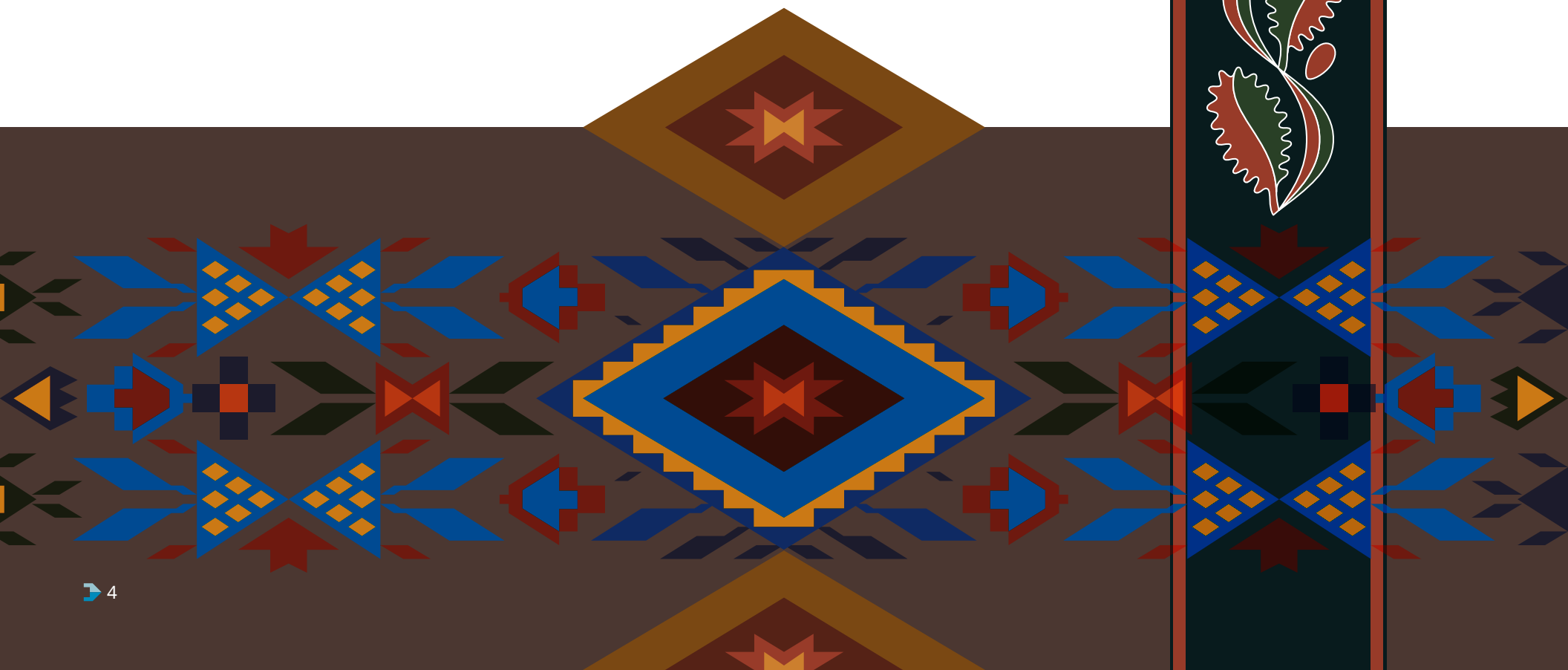
Community Contacts and Resources Sheets	77
Tools and Templates	77
Indigenous Multimedia	78
Friendship Centers in Canada by Province and Territory	79
Post-Secondary Institutions With Indigenous Councils/Resources	81
Life Promotion Videos	82

## **Wise Practices for Engaging Youth**

83

## Background

*Strengthening Our Connections to Promote Life: A Life Promotion Toolkit by Indigenous Youth* was proposed in 2019 to develop a youth-focused and youth-led response to suicide, mental wellness, and substance use in Indigenous communities. A life promotion lens was used in the creation of this guide, which will be presented at the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference. The conference was scheduled for 2020 but was pushed ahead to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme of the conference is Strength in Our Communities. Originally the guide was to be developed over one year with in-person gatherings, but the Youth Action Group for Life Promotion had to adapt in response to the pandemic, and everything was done virtually.



## Who Is the Youth Action Group for Life Promotion?

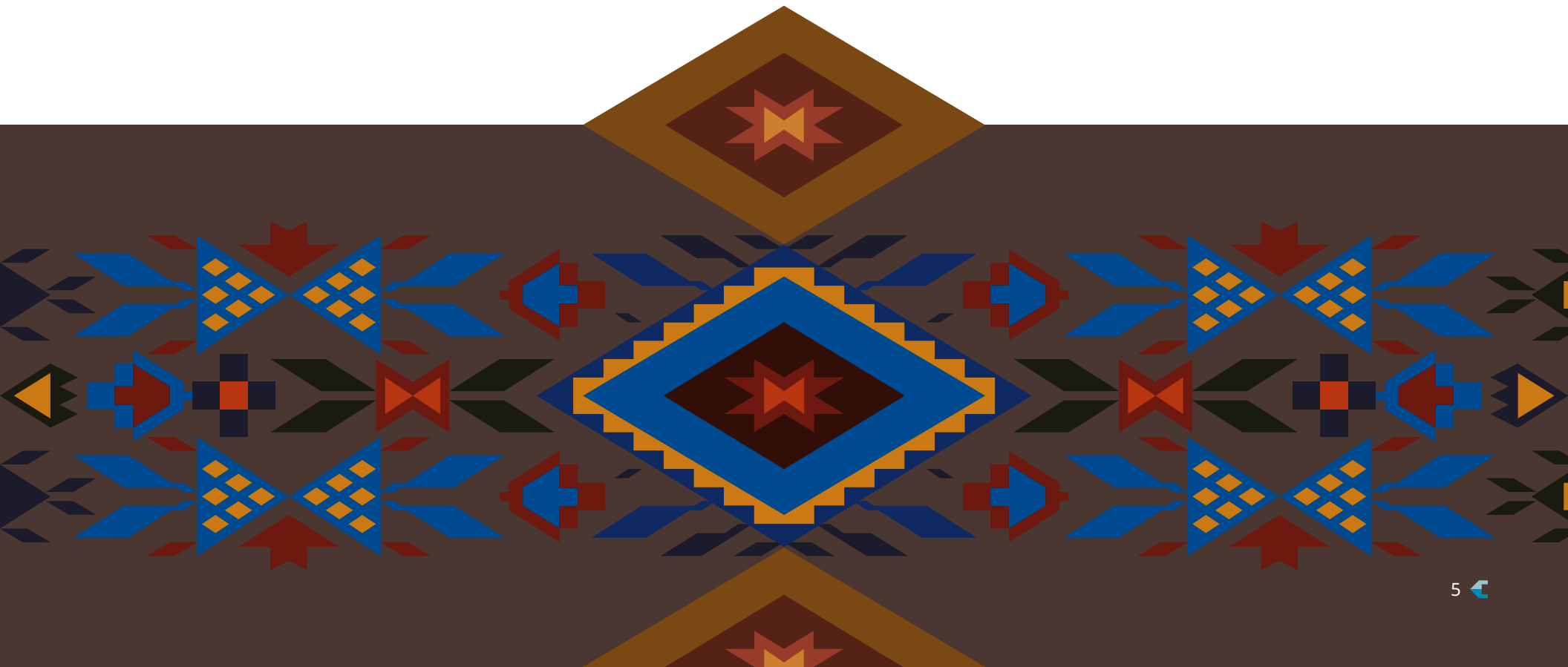
Our Youth Action Group for Life Promotion is a collective of Indigenous youth across Turtle Island. Through weekly virtual meetings, and with the support of Elder Dr. Ed Connors and Thunderbird, our group was able to learn from each other and create this toolkit focusing on life promotion in Indigenous communities.

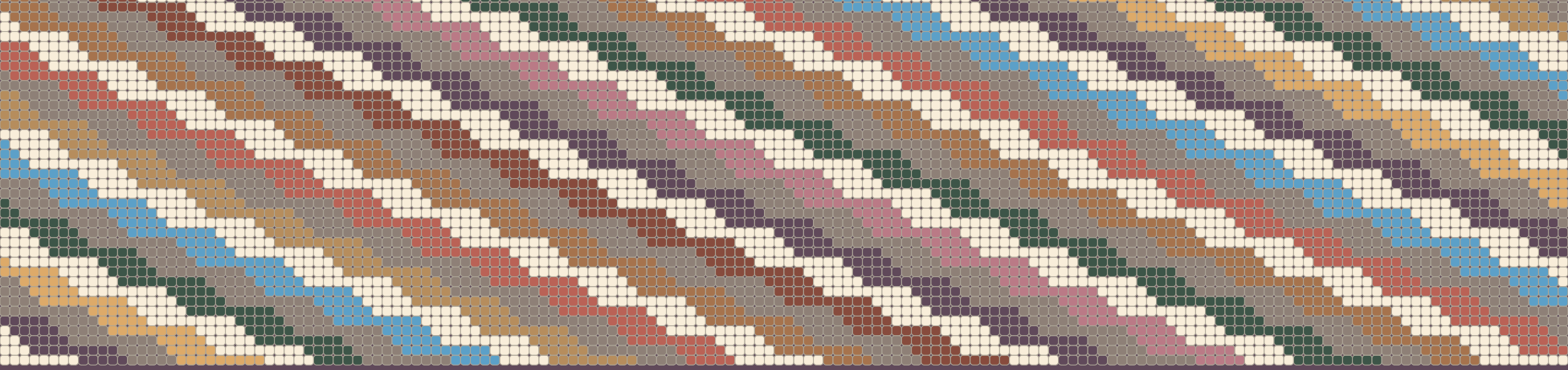
*As is our custom, we would like to introduce ourselves.*

Over the following pages, we invite you to read more about each member of the Youth Action Group: to learn more about who we are, what Nations and territories we come from, and what strengths we each contributed to create this new resource to support living life!

In peace and friendship,

**The Youth Action Group for Life Promotion**





## **Elder Dr. Edward A. Connors**, PH.D. C.PSYCH.

**Waubinabenasi kwekwetchgun** (*Eastern Thunderbird Sounding*) – **Wolf Clan**

Ed is a Psychologist registered in the Province of Ontario. He is of Mohawk and Irish ancestry and is a band member of Kahnawake Mohawk Territory. He has worked with First Nations communities across Canada since 1982 in both urban and rural centres. His work over this time has included Clinical Director for an Infant Mental Health Centre in the city of Regina and Director for the Sacred Circle, a Suicide Prevention Program developed to serve First Nations communities in Northwestern Ontario. While developing the latter service, Ed worked with Elders and apprenticed in traditional First Nations approaches to healing. Today his practice incorporates traditional knowledge about healing while also employing his training as a Psychologist.

Since 1993, he and his wife Donna, have managed Onkwatenro'shon:'A, a health planning firm which provides health consultation and psychological services to First Nations individuals, families and communities throughout the Georgian Bay Muskoka region.

Dr. Connors has been a board member and vice-president of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention between 1990 – 1998 and 2012 to the present. He is currently on the advisory council for the Ontario Suicide Prevention Network. He was a member of the Family Caregivers Committee of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (2008-2010). He

also serves as an Elder/advisor for Enaahtig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre and the First Peoples Wellness Circle.

Some of his current work includes consultation and community training to assist First Nations in the development of Restorative Justice and health programs and a board member of the Waypoint Mental Health Centre Penetanguishene. (*September 2009-present*).

Ed's work has included membership on the Family Caregivers Committee of the Mental Health Commission of Canada between 2008 and 2010. During this work he consulted with the First Nations Inuit and Metis Advisory Committee of the Commission on their cultural safety/relational practice/cultural competency project. Ed has consulted with the University of British Columbia on the adaptation of the Indigenous Cultural Competence Training Program that was developed for the B.C. Health Authority. This model of on-line training has been culturally adapted for use with Ontario Health care providers.

Over the past several years Ed has worked with John Rice and many other community members in the development of Feather Carriers Leadership for Life Promotion. This work includes a partnership with the Canadian Foundation for Health Care Improvement to develop Life Promotion projects with regional Health Authorities across Canada.



## Taylor Behn-Tsakoza

(She/Her) Age 25 – Dene

Fort Nelson & Prophet River First Nations, BC Treaty 8 Territory

Taylor Behn-Tsakoza is a Dene cis woman from the Fort Nelson & Prophet River First Nations in BC Treaty 8 Territory. She holds a degree in Health and Physical Education and a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Sport and Recreation Management. Currently, Taylor works as a community educator bringing sexual health and harm reduction workshops to youth across BC using a holistic wellness model and traditional teachings. She is passionate about elevating youth voices and addressing the need for programs that connect youth to culture and community. Having been guided by her grandparents, mother, aunties and mentors, Taylor is a language learner in the Dene K'e (South Slavey) dialect and is an emerging artist of traditional Dene crafts. When she is not out in the community delivering programs, you can find her out on her traditional territory with her family exercising their treaty rights.

*"My goal is to help other Indigenous youth realize their potential and feel empowered to live a long and good life"*



## Gabrielle Dawn Jubinville – Youth Leader

(Her/She & They/Them) Age 25

Maskêkosihk (Enoch Cree Nation)

Gabrielle Jubinville is half plains Cree and European background of quarter Scottish and quarter English. Gabrielle worked toward becoming a successful athlete playing basketball at the Junior college level in New Rochelle, New York at Monroe College and went on to play at the highest level of the sport at Alcorn State University NCAA Division 1 basketball, earning her numerous scholarships to play basketball and get educated across the United States. While getting educated, Gabrielle found her passion for advocacy for those who could not help themselves, breaking the cycle of Indigenous People's stigma and labels through setting an example. While playing basketball competitively Gabrielle's strong cultural background in traditional teachings grounded her in her success and continues to do so to guide her in a good way. Currently residing in Brandon, MB she is studying at Brandon University. She is majoring in Natives Studies and minoring in Sociology: mainstream crime and community, in hopes of achieving a higher education and creating content as an inspiring influencer. Gabrielle is involved with We Matter, as an Ambassador of Hope where her main goal is to uplift Indigenous youth all over Canada with the We Matter Campaign along with other ambassadors. Gabrielle sits on the Brandon Women Bear Clan Council, where she volunteers her time with other women to help the less fortunate.

*"My goal is to help others, achieve my basketball dream of playing overseas, and continue to lead by example."*



## Connor Lafortune

**(He/Him) Age 19 – Bird Clan, Anishinaabek  
Dokis First Nation, Robinson-Huron Treaty Territory**

*Nimkiins ndizhinikaaz bineshiinh ndondem Okidendawt ndonjiibaa Anishinaabe nini ndow.*

Connor “Little Thunder Spirit” Lafortune is a second-year student of the Indigenous Studies program with a double major in Law and Justice as well as Race and Gender Studies. He is the acting Male Traditional Coordinator and Vice-President of the Indigenous Student Circle at Laurentian University. He occupies various roles on boards in Sudbury Ontario as both a Francophone and Indigenous person. Since high school, Connor has been a youth facilitator for La Fédération de la Jeunesse Franco-Ontarienne, where he runs workshops, activities, and speaks on panels for Franco-Ontarian high school students. In high-school, Connor sat on the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit council for his school board, where he still sits as a community member and had acquired an internship on his First Nation working alongside O’gema and council. Throughout his post-secondary career, he was able to participate in various Indigenous symposiums, panels, and policy paper writing sessions that aim to give a voice to Indigenous post-secondary students.

In the future, Connor aspires to attend Law School in Moncton, travel to Northern First Nations during his year of articling, and thereafter return to his First Nation to open his own Law practice. He would like to major in Indigenous law, human rights for Indigenous Peoples, and law and timber claims.

*“My goal is to give a voice to those who have had theirs taken away  
– and to encourage their words in the language their ancestors spoke”*

*You can reach Connor on Facebook by name, or on instagram @connorrandy9.*



## Will Landon – Youth Leader

Waabishkigaabo (Will Landon) is a citizen of Wauzhushk Onigum Nation which is on the northern shores of Lake of the Woods in Ontario. He is of the Lynx Clan, and is Seventh Generation from the signing of Treaty #3. He is the proud father of a daughter.

Waabishkigaabo studied Political Studies at the University of Manitoba and represented Indigenous students as the Indigenous rep on the Student Union. From University he was elected to multiple youth representative positions at Grand Council Treaty #3, Ontario First Nation Young Peoples’ Council, and AFN National Youth Council. Holding multiple portfolios but focused primarily on mental health, treaty issues, social policy, and health policy. He has since used his experience to elevate the work of health policy organizations and Western institutions in improving Indigenous quality of life outcomes.





## Megan Metz

qándauᖃ (She/They) Age 22 – Blackfish Clan  
Haisla Nation

*nugᖃ Megan ti qándauᖃ ᖃe'ábexᖃeᖅlayu gáiqelan címaúcíxi ᖃá'is'la núgᖃa hélᖃ'iniᖃᖃen.*

Megan Metz, traditional name qándauᖃ, hails from the Haisla Nation on the Northwest Coast of BC and belongs to the blackfish clan. Megan recently graduated from Okanagan College with an Associates Degree in Arts. Now, she is working on completing a First Nations Language Certificate in ᖃá'isłákala from the University of Northern British Columbia. She is one of the founding members of the Life Promotion for All My Relations youth advisory committee, an Indigenous youth-led initiative put forth by First Nations Health Authority, Fraser Health, and the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement. On this committee, Megan receives mental health and wellness skills training and helps provide input toward initiatives and organizations in BC. She is passionate about mental health advocacy, language, and cultural reconnection. Megan openly shares the lessons she has learned on her wellness journey in a presentation which she gives at the annual Haisla Youth Cultural Camps. Preserving and passing on the knowledge that has been shared with her is of the utmost importance to Megan. This is something she practices often in her role as the Digitization and Preservation Technician with Haisla Nation Council. In this position, she has the opportunity to work with and contribute to her Nation's Library and Archives, something she has grown to love and sees herself continuing to pursue in the future.

*"My goal is to empower our communities to reconnect to their culture and language. When we turn inward and begin to better understand ourselves, we can then start to find peace from within."*



## Marshall Morrisseau – Youth Leader

(He/Him/They) Age 24  
Opaskwayak Cree Nation

Marshall Morrisseau is a First Nations, Metis advocate. Currently residing in Brandon Manitoba and attending University, Marshall is studying a Bachelor of Arts Degree for the purpose of pursuing law. Marshall is involved with community organizations such as Brandon Bear Clan Patrol where he coordinated a youth mock patrol. This opportunity lets him build positive relationships in the community, educate future generations about harm reduction philosophies and traditional teachings. Marshall also takes part in the We Matter Campaign as a National Ambassador of Hope, delivering messages of hope, culture, and strength for Indigenous youth. In the beginning of 2020, Marshall attended the United Nations Drug and Crime Commission as a Youth Delegate. He now is involved with the International Youth Initiative to help develop and deliver drug prevention strategies. They are now working with the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation to help develop youth led projects.

*"My biggest goal in life is to help all my relations in a meaningful way and ensure that the next seven generations are agents of culture and traditional worldviews."*



## Tia Piché

(She/Her) Age 27

Tia is a 27 year old Métis female born in Leaf Rapids, Manitoba on Treaty 5 land. Tia is a registered social worker who graduated in May of 2020 with her BSW. She is now a mental health worker with youth in crisis. Tia aspired to be a mental health worker from a young age when she had a tragic experience losing a very close friend to suicide. It is her hope that she is making a difference for others, and helping to heal herself. In her role, she has the opportunity to engage with youth and their caregivers, understand their needs, and advocate for those needs to be met.

Tia is a proud mother of a kind, empathetic son who is learning to be a support to others, standing up for what is right. Living in the Hub of North, Tia gets to experience the beauty of the Boreal Forest and the resilience of the Northern people. Tia is a spiritual individual, currently on the path of finding her true self. Tia practices using a wholistic approach when it comes to her own needs and the needs of others.



## Tristen Schneider

(She/Her) 24-year-old curvy, plus size Anishinaabe/Dene sister

Tristen is an Anishinaabe-Dene facilitator, advocate, and entrepreneur from Shawanaga First Nation Ojibway Territory. She is a forthcoming young woman distinct in various trilateral political advocacy work for First Nations Youth focused on Mental Health and Life Promotion initiatives through previous networks; the Independent First Nations, Ontario First Nations Young People's Council, Feathers of Hope: Justice and Juries Youth Advisory, Chiefs of Ontario, and the Thunderbird Partnership Foundation.

She is the owner of Flourishing Embers, an upcoming Indigenous-owned business focusing on sexual health and life promotion. She is celebrating the strong stories of Indigenous sexuality by creating a resource platform for Indigenous People to begin having healthy conversations on sex and body positivity. Tristen has continued to thrive by allowing the intimate energy to flourish in her creativity to promote the understanding of Indigenous worldview of sex to educate around consent, well-being, gender, and identity.

Tristen has been actively involved with Life Promotion since 2014. She is a registered Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIST) Trainer and Suicide Alertness for Everyone (SafeTALK) Trainer with LivingWorks. She has previously facilitated the work for "Stories from our Roots" a regional wide youth led program for First Nations youth in Ontario, that was supported by the youth steering committee.

# What is Life Promotion?

## Statement on Life Promotion from the Youth Action Group for Life Promotion

When confronting obstacles in our lives, we have always turned to our Elders for guidance. Through storytelling and knowledge transfer, we have collected the tools and strength to overcome the hardships that we may face. This toolkit was developed in response to our communities who desired to implement life promotion initiatives. As the first step to suicide prevention, life promotion aims to build on the intergenerational strength of our relations who came before us. This toolkit aims to restore Hope, Belonging, Meaning, and Purpose to our Indigenous young people. By relying on our stories and wise practices, we work to empower our communities and ensure that intergenerational resiliency can be passed on from our ancestors to the present and the future. Life promotion encourages people to strengthen a connection to land, community, self, and spirit, equipping them to live a long prosperous life.

### What does life promotion mean to you?

1. In a group or individually, reflect on what life promotion means to your community
2. If it is beneficial, develop a collective statement for life promotion signed by participating youth in your community

## Creating Safe and Brave Spaces

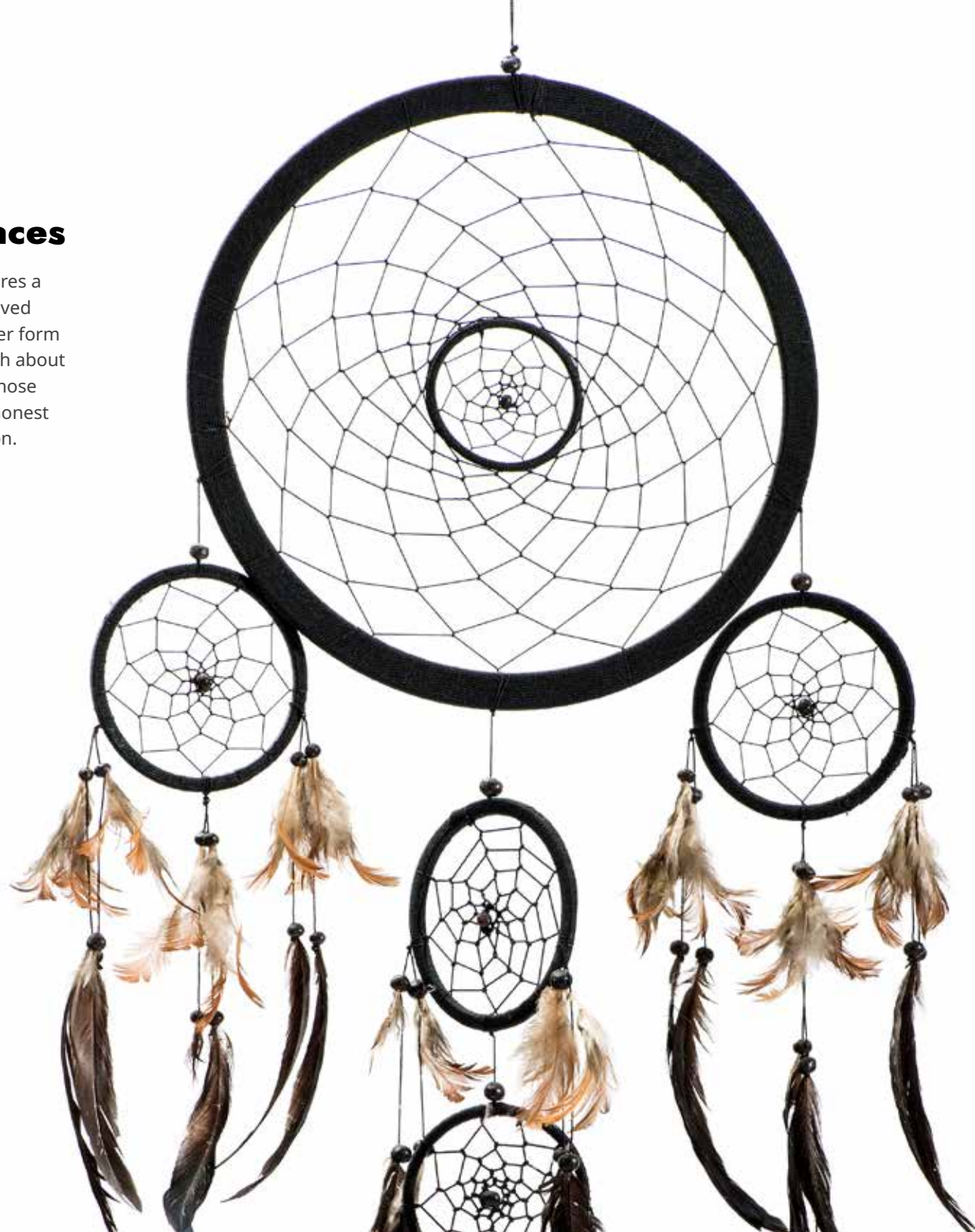
Safe spaces refer to a physical and emotional area that ensures a comfortable and secure environment, which is free of perceived ideologies, discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other form of emotional and physical harm. A safe space can be as much about the physical area as it is about the emotional space left for those found within it. Safe spaces are created to foster open and honest conversations and promote the usage of safe communication.

### Tips for making safe spaces:

1. Create inclusive and diverse spaces
2. Avoid segregation
3. Make sure to clearly open the dialogue and ensure everyone understands the speaking protocols
4. Ensure that everyone who chooses to is allowed the time to speak
5. Have a mental health support or cultural support person present
6. Make it clear that the space is safe and ensure everyone in the space follows the rules set in place
7. Create a “here and now” protocol that implies what is said here stays here, and what is learnt here can leave here
8. Make the physical space comfortable and inviting
9. Create a community agreement on safe spaces

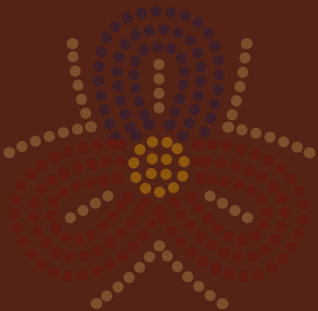
### Resources

- [10 tips for creating a safe space | IofC](#)
- [Safe Space Checklist](#)
- [Creating a Safe Space: Psychological Safety of Healthcare Workers \(Peer to Peer Support and Other Support Models\)](#)
- [Creating Safe Spaces](#)
- [“Make Your Meetings a Safe Space for Honest Conversation.” \(2019\)](#)




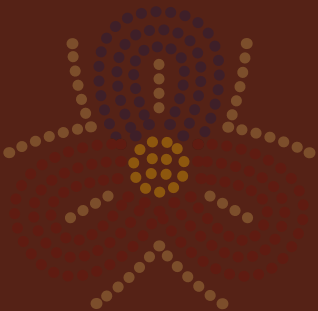


## The Importance of Having Gentle Teachers



A gentle teacher creates a comfortable learning environment where everyone is welcome to ask questions and begin to heal and reconnect. Gentle teachers encourage learning and growth for those around them and do not shame, embarrass, or laugh at anyone for making a mistake. Instead, gentle teachers nurture each learner's curiosity and meet them where they are at. They help provide necessary support in the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next, effectively rebuilding the cycles of knowledge transfer that were interrupted by the residential school system.

A crucial part of this journey of reconnection is learning to heal the wounds of our past; part of this learning journey involves turning inward to see what parts of our trauma we may be deflecting onto others. The goal is not to repeat history, but rather, to allow our history to inform the decisions we make moving forward so we may grow and learn from it. Many of us will make mistakes along this journey, some may have negative experiences approaching people with requests for knowledge. In such instances, we must remember that many of us are still healing from our past so these negative interactions should not be taken to heart. As long as we continue to learn from these experiences, we will feel the wounds slowly begin to heal within ourselves. Each of us is on different points of this journey and all are valid and worth tending to. Everyone deserves to heal and reconnect to their culture and language. A gentle teacher understands these sentiments and respectfully guides those willing to learn.



*"The greatest power is the Creator.  
But, if you want to know the greatest strength..  
That is gentleness."*

*Chief Leon Shenandoah, Onondaga Nation*

## Before You Begin

During the creation of this toolkit, the Youth Action Group acknowledged that much of this information can be new to certain individuals. We spent months discussing the topics, activities, and resources provided in order to ensure that we are creating and maintaining a safe space. Throughout the toolkit, you may be presented with unfamiliar content— we have prided ourselves on creating an open and honest space, thus introducing pieces that can affect you in various ways. We encourage you to embrace those thoughts, emotions, and feelings, and to put them into the work you're accomplishing throughout the toolkit. Keeping in mind that if we do not address something, we can not begin to fix it, the Youth Action Group included topics of discussion that can push the boundaries of what you know. This being said, we have included tips, tricks, and resources to help address your feelings towards the information such as *Creating Safe and Brave Spaces*, *The Importance of Having Gentle Teachers*, and *Knowing my Response-Ability*. We encourage you to use this information to empower yourself within your Indigeneity.

## What to Do if Someone Checks Out?

### For facilitation purposes

During the facilitation of toolkit's such as this, it can be common for some individuals to check out and detach themselves from the content. If this happens, we encourage using traditional medicine, berries, water, and any other item that is used as medicine in your community. We also recommend you begin with the mention of safe and brave spaces (*please refer to page 12 to understand the concept if needed*). The content provided may bring upon emotions, they are welcomed and encouraged. We encourage the usage of non-verbal cues, quick assessment tools, and self-reflections in order to maintain those safe and brave spaces. Once we understand what affects us, we can begin to move past it and heal!

*Connection to Land*

נחמה ופירות האדמה

אשר

אשר יצא



## Perspectives from the Youth Action Group

Our connection with the land helps us foster healthy habits. The relationship is different depending on someone's location. However, Indigenous Peoples must develop this connection for our well-being. Connection to land is not only dependent on the physical territories we find ourselves on, but also on the stories found within them. By rekindling the relationship with those stories, we can begin to understand our own.

### Rural/Remote Perspective on Land

As Indigenous People who grew up within our communities, we have faced many of the hardships that our nations currently face, such as overcoming substance misuse and intergenerational traumas. However, despite the privilege of growing up in our home territories surrounded by nature, sacred sites, language, stories, and Knowledge Keepers, the connection to our identity was not one of them. As a result, we have built a grounded connection to our ancestors and past since childhood, we have thus rooted ourselves within our traditional teachings and rely on them to survive. Connection to land for us refers to more than simply what's physically before us, but also the stories told within it. ~ *Will and Connor*

### Urban Perspective on Land

When we are living away from our traditional territories, communities, and families it can become difficult to find the connection to land; the best way to strengthen the connection to land is by being a good relative. In our Indigenous culture we recognize all our relations, as we are all one people on Turtle Island; it's understanding how each of us is here to support one another, it's the intersectionality of our nation community as Indigenous People. ~ *Tristen*

Being an urban youth or adult can be hard due to the odds stacked against you in the education system, justice system, child welfare system, and poverty. The systems are filled with Indigenous Peoples and the stigmatization of being Indigenous is hard in and of itself to navigate. Just know there is land everywhere you are. The water, grass, trees, wind, and rocks are there to support you on your journey while living in an urban setting. Learn to explore the land when you do not think you have that connection to land yet. Be open. Just remember even though you lost your identity and connection to the land, your ancestors are still looking over you and are connected to land.

~ *Gabrielle*

*Do these perspectives make sense to you?  
Please reflect on what connection to land  
means to you in your current context.*



## Learning Objective

In this section you will learn that you have a relationship to the land, that the land has a relationship with you, and how to define, maintain, and navigate this for yourself.

*“The beauty of the trees, the softness of the air, the fragrance of the trees... speaks to me. The summit of the mountain, the thunder of the sky, the rhythm of the sea... speaks to me. The faintness of the stars, the freshness of the morning, the dew drops on the flower... speaks to me. The strength of fire, the taste of salmon, the trail of the sun and the life that never goes away. They speak to me and my heart soars.”*

*Chief Dan George, Tsleil-Waututh Nation*

*“What we do to the land, we do to ourselves”*

*Chief Seattle, Earth Day*



## Reflections from Youth Action Group

### **What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?**

Accessibility is often a challenge when we refer to our connection to the land. Some communities may not have access to sacred, safe, or calm sites where the people can connect to the land. Transportation in and around the community can also be a challenge, if one cannot get to the sites because of their location/accessibility, or the sites have been compromised, i.e. from pollution, flooding or fire. Traditional limits can also pose a challenge— access to Elders, understanding protocols, and approaching others for help. Although these limits may discourage some from renewing their connection to land, we encourage you to find solutions in breaking down these barriers.

### **What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?**

Accessing land can be both a question of resources and environment, however our connection to land does not need to depend solely on our access to nature. Connection to land and spaces can be created even in urban settings. We encourage communities to create safe, positive, and accessible sites. Whether they are out in nature, in a school gym, or on a front lawn, a safe space can allow for open conversations, appreciation for the terrain, and an overall sense of connection to the things, people, and spaces around you.

Communities may choose to follow oral histories and traditions to guide them. By identifying Elders and kind teachers, a community can begin to heal and create protocols for approaching Elders and Knowledge Holders. Youth in partnership with their communities may consider coming up with a budget and a plan to cover the costs of spending time on the land, sharing circles, video teachings, travel, and providing other resources to access outdoor activity equipment, i.e. canoes, camping gear, tipis, etc. Indigenous communities may find it beneficial to follow traditional ways of learning by seeing, speaking, and doing.

## *Community Reflection*

On chart paper, together or in a small group, reflect on the questions below in regard to connection to land:

- What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?
- What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?
- What resources does your community have that promote a connection to land? (parks, forest, water, mountain, wind, hunters and fishers, etc.)
- What resources would your community need to foster a healthy connection to land?

# Full Moon Activities

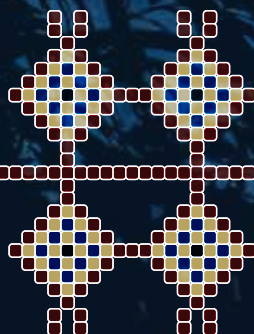


## Activity

1. Full Moon meditation. Go outside barefoot to feel the connection to the land along with the energy from the full moon. I like to find a comfortable spot to sit under the moonlight, close my eyes, and visualize the moon's beam filling the space around me and my body. I then start to focus on my breathing and imagine the moonlight purifying my body, mind, and spirit.
2. Moon Water. I like to leave a bottle of water in the moonlight to charge overnight. Make sure you grab it before the sunlight hits it; if you sleep in and forget, that is okay it's still moon water but with some sun energy. With this moon water, I like to drink it, use it in a bath, or clean my floors around my house. When I make moon water, I can feel the energy in the bottle that it carries from the moonlight. It is said that this water is only good for three days, after that it no longer holds the energy of the full moon.
3. Cleansing. This is a time when I reflect and allow myself to let go of things from the past. I also cleanse myself and my home by smudging, taking a bath, decluttering, and releasing any negative energy I have building up inside.
4. Self-Reflection. This is a time where I engage in some self-reflection—where I am currently at, any patterns or behaviours of my own that do not serve myself or others, and any relationships that are no longer serving me. I allow this time to let go or simply question why these relationships/behaviours are still there.
5. Dream. I absolutely love the full moon and when I see the moon shine so bright in the sky, my eyes are locked in. Staring at the moon I feel its energy radiating through my body. Sometimes I become emotional and cry about what was, what is, and what will be. When I stare at the full moon, all my wishes, hopes, and dreams are sent into that energy of light. I make sure I set pure intentions that will not bring others or myself harm.

## Lessons

- The moon teaches us that we are always growing, changing, and evolving. The phases of the moon are constantly reminding us that this too shall pass, and that life is full of beginnings.
- It also teaches us that imperfection is beautiful, as the moon is full of rough patches and full of craters, yet it is always so beautiful lit up in the sky.
- What I learned from the full moon is it allows me to be calm, compassionate, and to find light in the darkness
- I feel more connected to the land when I meditate under the full moon light; I learned to release the past and heal from old wounds.





## Food Sovereignty, Gardening, and Food Programs

### Activity

- Communal gardens and fields are encouraged to promote not only healthy land but also healthy communities.
- Gardening and food programs can be put in place to share goods and create a greater bond between community members, and to the earth.
- Communities are encouraged to reach out to food and gardening programs or create their own program themselves.

### Lessons

- Communities learn how to be self-sufficient and rely on each other in time of need.
- This activity returns the community to traditional times where each community was responsible for growing, harvesting, and sharing foods and goods.
- Communities learn to use the land as a way to serve themselves and begin to understand the impact healthy land can have on a community.

### Examples of programs:

1. *Canada | Improving First Nation Nutrition — Food Security Programs*
2. *Indigenous Foodways — Nourish Health*
3. *Creating space for Indigenous culture through food programs*
4. *Beyond the Three Sisters Garden: Indigenous Communities and Public Gardens in Dialogue*



# Living Off the Land and Building Your Own Fire



## Activity

1. This activity encourages communities to create an overnight trip in the woods and try to live while only relying on the land to eat and sleep; think of this as a survival activity that is done safely and without any real threat.
2. Communities may choose to create their own shelter or use ready-made shelters such as tents.
3. Communities may also choose to fish/hunt/harvest their own foods or to bring ready-made food and simply cook the food in nature.
4. This activity is adapted according to the community's needs, wants, and capacities.
5. Communities are also encouraged to learn how to build their fire and teach everyone how to do the same (*this can be a ceremonial or survival fire*).
6. Around the fire, communities may choose to share stories, teachings, and rebuild communication between generations.

## Lessons

1. Communities can learn how to rely on the land for their needs as well as rely on each other.
2. They are encouraged to each play their part in their mock "survival".
3. They may each learn how to create a shelter, hunt/fish/harvest, create their own fire and cook over the fire.
4. Traditional knowledge is encouraged.

## Exploring Community Capacity for Land Based Activities

### Activity

1. This activity is dependent on the climate, environment, and traditions of the community.
2. It aims to engage the communities in an outdoor activity that evolves some challenges and teachings along the way.
3. It is recommended to reach out to someone who knows these activities before doing them *(for example an experienced canoeer or hunter)*.
4. Activities involving animals are to be done according to traditional teachings.
5. Activities on the water or snow aim to push your physical boundaries a little and allow you to listen to the earth.
6. Embark on a canoe journey, a kayaking journey, or walk with your snowshoes and make your own path.

### Lessons

1. Lessons may depend on the activity performed.
2. Things that can be learned from land-based activities include patience, hard work, strength, doing something from start to finish, accomplishment, listening.
3. The goal is to embark on a journey related to the land and to learn how she can both work with and against you in given situations.
4. You are challenged to learn to move with the earth and begin to understand how you can hear her as you do so.
5. Through this activity, you may regain or create a deep connection with the earth, along with appreciation.

### Examples of activities:



Hunting



Fishing



Spearfishing



Fishing  
with Nets



Trapping



Kayaking



Canoeing



Snowshoeing



Hiking



## Medicine Walks, Harvesting, and/or Foraging

### Activity

- We encourage communities to seek out the holders of knowledge regarding natural medicines and plants.
- Communities can sit, learn, talk, and walk with those Knowledge Holders through the trails, paths, and beside the water to learn how to forage, harvest, and seek out traditional medicines.
- Medicines can be used for a variety of things: smudging, teas, gum, nutrition, etc.
- Each community may have its way of doing and knowing, we encourage communities to follow their teachings or seek out this knowledge if it cannot be found in their community.
- We also encourage communities to create an information board that includes their community's plants, their uses, and a picture.

### Lesson

1. The lessons surrounding this activity can vary according to the traditions of the community and the willingness to share.
2. Communities may begin to understand that the earth can provide us with everything we need to survive.
3. This activity takes us back to a time when foraging was our greatest way to survive.
4. With the help of Knowledge Holders or medicine walkers, communities are able to learn which plants will serve them, possibly begin to wean off of pharmaceutical medicines and to understand what the earth can give us.
5. This activity could become a daily or seasonal practice for community members to harvest and use traditional plants and medicines.



### Examples of plants and medicines that can be harvested:

*(please consult someone before harvesting the plants)*

- Fern tea
- Sage
- Tobacco
- Sweetgrass
- Cedar
- Wild rice

### Examples of websites that can be used:

1. [\*Native Foods Nursery – Buy native plants that you can eat!\*](#)
2. [\*15 Wild Plants You Can Eat – Outdoor Canada\*](#)
3. [\*Native Plants for Edible Landscaping\*](#)

## Connecting to Nature Using Mindfulness



### Activity

1. As a group, go outside and find a quiet spot in a greenspace that is nearby.
2. Using your five senses, quietly reflect on your environment.
3. What comes to mind during your time? A memory, a thought, an “ah-ha” moment to something that’s been bugging you? Keep that in mind.
4. Head back inside and share what came to mind with the group if you are comfortable, which sense triggered the thought?

### Lesson

1. Our Elders have become adept at connecting to nature around them to receive messages, wisdom, or lessons from their life journey.
2. Land is integral to our identity as Indigenous People, it is important to maintain our connection by being able to listen to what it has to tell us.
3. This connection should help you build a deeper understanding of yourself and your journey.







### *Helpful Tip*

If you are unsure how to approach someone with these requests for knowledge, try to find a community member who is well versed in local protocols. This ensures you are well informed on how to approach Knowledge Keepers respectfully.

Written by Megan Metz

## Identifying Local Knowledge Keepers



### **How to Identify Local Knowledge Keepers**

- Reach out to your local friendship centres, Elders centres, and youth centres to see what kind of resources they have available. They may have already established contacts with the local community, including mentors, role models, and Knowledge Keepers.
- Ask your group what kinds of things they are interested in learning about them put a call out on social media for individuals with experience in those areas. Outline the reason you are seeking this knowledge, who it will be taught to, and why.
- Seek out individuals in the community who have specialized knowledge and ask if they would be willing to share their skills and experiences. (Examples: harvesting plants and medicines, hunting, weaving, carving, beading etc.) In doing so, you play off the strengths of your community and build up members, encouraging them to pass on what they've learned to the next generation.

### **How to Approach Knowledge Keepers**

- After you have been informed of the local protocols on how to respectfully approach a Knowledge Keeper, it is typically best practice to have an explanation prepared on what knowledge you are seeking, for what, why, and for whom.
- Ensure you have brought an appropriate gift if necessary, to acknowledge the Knowledge Keeper for considering your request.

### **How to Thank Knowledge Keepers**

- Knowledge Keepers should be compensated for their time, energy, and knowledge sharing, whether through financial honoraria or a suitable gift following local protocol.
- They may also appreciate copies of any photos or videos taken on the day of the event.
- Sending them thank you cards and invitations to return is encouraged.
- Gifting them traditional foods or medicines is another great way to express your thanks.



## Movement is Medicine

### Activity

Movement is important because it is a part of life and helps to keep one's body, mind, and spirit healthy. Indigenous Peoples were never static, they were always outdoors. Indigenous Peoples had healthy ways of being on the land and with movement before the contact of colonizers. Following contact with colonizers, Indigenous Peoples have become prone to diseases such as obesity, diabetes, addiction, etc. It is vital for Indigenous People to take it upon themselves to take back their power and learn to move by taking care of fires, sweats, medicine walks, dance powwows, hunting, sports, etc. Preparing for a ceremony is not easy and takes lots of work from people in a community and involves movement and learning about the land around them.

Starting to move can be difficult. Maybe you're not familiar with moving. The key is to just start. Your journey with movement is going to be a roller coaster until you can find what works best for you. In addition, a key point to remember is movement is not about losing weight it is about developing a healthy habit to keep you moving because it is a blessing that your body can move. You do not always need weights to achieve the best workout, use what is around you for example, rocks, trees, big water bottles, and detergent. Movement should be what you want it to be, for example, it can be difficult to earn results you want, it can be for mental health, or just enjoyable.



### Access to Movement

A way to access movement is by going on YouTube, searching up videos, following influencers that you love.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eI2gnTZh0-I&t=11s>  
(Powwow dancing)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eos-Xx-TNvQ>  
(N7 fitness inspiration)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-D7ncAC9rQ>  
(Simple 10 min workout)









### Ideas for Movement

- Walking (*the easiest form of movement*)
- Yoga/stretching
- Strength training
- Cardio (*slow jog, bike ride, playing sports, powwow dancing, nature walk, stairs*)
- Mindfulness is not static either
- Chopping wood, taking care of fire
- Camping
- Mobility movement
- Learning how to pick medicines
- Hunting





## Healthy Indigenous Influencers

-  @newo.wellness
-  @wellforculture (they also have a podcast)
-  @shayla0h
-  @jennarobar
-  @kendrajessie
-  @notoriouscree (focus on dancing)
-  @ashleycallingbull
-  N7 has video on YouTube

The list of Indigenous influencers is robust. Remember to look within your communities at home whether in an urban or rural setting. Do not be afraid of moving. Your ancestors always moved, travelled, and were not given the same chance to practice their ways of healthy movements. Choose to move as your ancestors did. Learn about traditional foods, learn how to take care of your body. Your body is your temple, it takes care of itself and no matter how you treat her/him it always takes care of you.

## Resources

- [Well For Culture](#)





## Closing Reflection

Although the connection to the land is subjective and different for everyone, much of our identity, stories, and histories are land-centred, therefore this connection is essential for us to maintain our sense of self and sense of place.



## Resources



### Traditional Medicines

- [\*Article Indigenous Peoples' Medicine in Canada\*](#)
- [\*The Four Sacred Medicines – Indigenous Website\*](#)
- [\*First Nations Traditional Plants and Uses\*](#)

### Health Benefits for Mental, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional Wellness

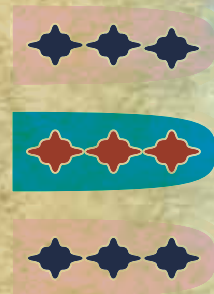
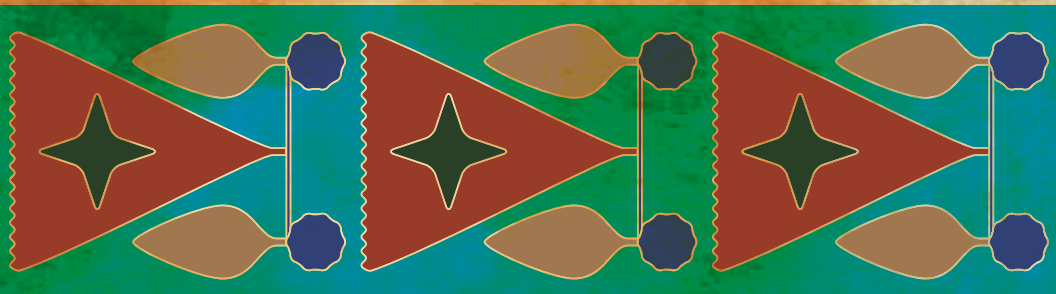
- [\*First Nations Perspective on Health and Wellness\*](#)
- [\*Incorporating the Medicine Wheel in the Treatment of Aboriginal Communities: Brad Lafortune\*](#)
- [\*The Medicine Wheel and the Four Directions - Medicine Ways: Traditional Healers and Healing - Healing Ways - Exhibition - Native Voices\*](#)
- [\*The Medicine Wheel\*](#)
- [\*Aboriginal traditional healing\*](#)
- [\*Traditional Healing and Wellness\*](#)
- [\*What is Land-Based Treatment and Healing\*](#)

### Knowing Your Responsibilities to the Land

- [\*First Nation Relationship to the Land\*](#)
- [\*Creative spirits - Meaning of land to Aboriginal people\*](#)

### Books About Edible Plants and Medicines

- [\*Edible & Medicinal Plants of Canada\*](#)  
– Andy MacKinnon, Linda Kershaw, John Arnason
- [\*A Field Guide to Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms of North America\*](#)  
– Charles Kingsley Levy and Richard B. Primack
- [\*Indian Herbarology of North America\*](#)  
– Alma R. Hutchens
- [\*The Boreal Herbal. Wild Foods and Medicine Plants of the North\*](#)  
– Beverley Gray





*Connection to Self*



## Perspectives from the Youth Action Group

Our connection to self is foundational in developing confidence and the comfort to be ourselves. This connection requires learning, understanding, and adaptability. Connection to self refers to the ability to understand what does not work for us and choose to continue and search for what does. As people, we are constantly changing— the connection that we have with ourselves does too. Knowing ourselves is a constant journey that we find ourselves on. We are continuously searching to find our goals, passions, and what we value. Our journeys are not stagnant and neither are we— we constantly have to adapt to completely understand and accept ourselves for who we are or who we might become. We each can listen to our wants and needs, and take action to address them. Determining your strengths and values will help you face and overcome challenges that life may give you.

### Connection to Self (Mind and Body)

#### **What does connection to myself look like for me?**

In a group or individually reflect on what connection to self means to you and your community.

#### **What does the strongest connection to self look like to you?**

For Indigenous Peoples, identity can present a challenge. We are constantly bombarded with identity challenges that could make it difficult to find a place and a sense of belonging. These identities are not only limited to our Indigeneity, but also our linguistic identity, sexual orientation, and gender. That is where connection to self steps in— when we can ground ourselves within our being, we can begin to change how we see the world. The connection we have with ourselves informs all the other connections we have. During difficult times, we may find ourselves turning to the question “who am I? Where am I from? Where do I belong? What is my purpose? Who am I accountable to?” As Indigenous Peoples, we often return to the concept of balance. We must constantly nurture every part of our being, the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

When you are connected to yourself, you are aware of your limits and boundaries. Knowing what your triggers are can better help you cope, prevent, and understand any emotional outbursts.



## Learning Objective

In this section, you will learn how to use the tools, guides, and resources provided to facilitate a better connection to yourself. Through activities, self-reflection, and the information in this toolkit, you will be able to understand the importance of connecting with yourself and begin the process of maintaining or reaffirming that connection, thus, improving the quality of your life and relationships with others.

*Connecting with yourself means seeing all of you and choosing to believe you can do better.*

~ Nimkiins/Connor Lafortune

*Healing is a subjective and adaptable journey.*

~ Will Landon



## Reflections from Youth Action Group

### What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?

There is a plethora of challenges that can arise when we speak about the connections we have with ourselves and maintaining that connection. Communities may have a history of lateral violence, societal expectations and pressures, the need for validation, and/or the pull away from our spirit.

### What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?

We can begin to break down these barriers by setting goals for ourselves and achieving them slowly every day. Authenticity, honesty, and respect can be helpful virtues to establishing a healthy relationship within ourselves. We encourage individuals to do what makes their spirit feel good, whether that be a daily walk, journaling, or simply taking a bath. Communities can begin to spread lateral kindness in the place of pain, practice their culture in the way they feel comfortable doing so, and begin to speak to themselves in a possessive way.

### *Community Reflection*

On chart paper, together or in small groups, reflect on the questions below in regard to connection to self:

1. What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?
2. What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?
3. What resources does your community have that promote a connection to self?  
*(mental health support)*
4. What resources would your community need to foster a healthy connection to self?



kwe kwe · Haih · ᑕᑭᑭ · Tansi ·  
ᑕᑭᑭ · dahooja · 'alhwá7acw ·

## Introducing Yourself in the Language

We encourage you to learn to introduce yourself, say thank you, and say hello in your language. Due to the nature of our backgrounds, we have not been able to include every Nation's language. If you do not see your language, feel free to seek out this knowledge. If your dialect is different then please use it in your way, if you are unsure reach out to an Elder or Knowledge Holder. If you need help finding a gentle teacher please refer to the section on gentle teachers in this toolkit.

Knowing our language and introducing ourselves can be a first step in building a connection with ourselves.

baaqiidaᑭaʔlik? · ya'uc · lów ·  
čečhaθeč · Nanjit dahonch'e ? ·  
Yáu · 'uy' skweyul · Kwe · Shé:kon ·  
gilakas'la · k Kwīngu-néewul ·  
Alo · ʔéxk<sup>w</sup>h · Lukw'ilaam · ʔaʔaa ·  
Boozhoo · Y, SCÁĆEL HÁLE ·  
'Nit · ʔedlanet'e · Taa haanach'e' ·  
Hunilht'ih · kwatchexw ʔet ʔiy ·  
Weyt-k · Dànìt'ē · 'Siingaay'laa ·

### Cree (6-7 dialects in Cree)

- Hello Tansi
- Thank you Ekosi

### Moose Cree

- Hello wâciye
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ nitišiniᑎāson
- My age is \_\_\_\_\_ nitahtopiponesin
- Where I am from \_\_\_\_\_ nitōhcīn
- My clan \_\_\_\_\_ nitašikān
- Where I work \_\_\_\_\_ nitāpatisin

### Anishinaabemowin

- Hello Aanii/boozhoo
- Thank you miigwetch
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ ndizhnikaaz/ndigoo
- My age is \_\_\_\_\_ ndoo-sidboonez
- Where I am from \_\_\_\_\_ ndoonjibaa
- My clan \_\_\_\_\_ ndoondem
- Where I work \_\_\_\_\_ ndoo-nokii

### Mohawk

- Hello Shé:kon
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ iónkiats

### Inuktitut

- Hello and goodbye aingai
- Thank you nakurmiik

### Michif

- Thank you maarsi
- Hello taan-shi
- I am \_\_\_\_\_ niya

### Mi'kmaq

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ teluisi
- Hello kwe'
- Thank you wela'lin

### Blackfoot

- Hello oki
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ niitanikko
- Thank you nitsiniyi'taki

### Sioux

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ emáčiyapi
- Hello hau
- Thank you pilamaya

### Oji-Cree

- Hello waachi'ye

### Français

- Hello bonjour
- My name is je m'appelle \_\_\_\_\_
- My age is j'ai \_\_\_\_\_ ans
- Where I am from je viens de \_\_\_\_\_
- My clan mon clan c'est \_\_\_\_\_
- Where I work je travaille à/au \_\_\_\_\_

### Athabaskan

- Hello edlanete
- Thank you chin'an gu nin yu

### Cayuga

- Hello sgé:no'
- Thank you nyá:wəh

### Stoney

- Hello âba wathtec

### Squamish

- Hello nú
- Thank you huy chexw

### Dene K'e

- Hello Doh'náni
- My name is Sazee clah \_\_\_\_\_ ot'é
- I am from \_\_\_\_\_ gots'əh á aht'e
- Thank you Mussi

### Oneida

Source: Oneida Language & Cultural Centre

<https://oneidalanguage.ca/oneida-culture/enjoy-some-oneidalanguage-videos/introducing-myself/>

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Hello                    | Shekoli                      |
| • Thank you                | Yaw^ko                       |
| • ____ is my name          | ____ ní: yukyáts             |
| • ____ is my clan          | ____ niwaki'taló:aḷ          |
| • ____ is my nation        | ____ niwakuhtsyó:tḷ          |
| • ____ is where I live     | ____ nú: teknakéhle'         |
| • ____ is my mother's name | ____ né: yutatyáts aknulha   |
| • ____ is my father's name | ____ né: luwa:yáts lake'niha |

### ḡ á'islaḡ ala

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| • Hello fellow villagers/community members                   | ya'uc gúkwelut         |
| • My name is   | ____ kelásu nugwá      |
| • I come from Snag Beach/Kitamaat Village (over there, away) | gáiqelan ímáuúíxi      |
| • I come from Snag Beach/Kitamaat Village (right here)       | gáiqelan ímáuúígaḡ     |
| • ____ and ____ are my parents                               | ____ du ____ wíwáitenc |
| • ____ is my mother  | ____ 'ebúk^wenc        |
| • ____ is my father  | ____ 'áupenc           |

x<sup>w</sup>əniwən ce:p k<sup>w</sup>θəθ nəwəyət  
 ?əmi ce:p k<sup>w</sup>ət x<sup>w</sup>iləm ?i ?ə tə ná šx<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəma?t  
 təməx<sup>w</sup>, tə šx<sup>w</sup>?aməts tə shəŋqəminəmqən.

**Remember your teachings**

Welcome to the ancestral homeland of the  
 hənqəminəm speaking Musqueam people.



## Knowing My Response-Abilities

*Understanding what you're good at and what you can do.*



### Purpose of the Activity

Our responsibilities often refer to our ability to respond. If we understand what we can undertake, we can better accomplish our tasks. This activity is a self-reflection, you will be presented with a list of questions and you are challenged to answer them about yourself. Your responses can be done orally, written out, or shared with a trusted person. You can choose to answer all the questions, some, or simply one. These questions and your answers challenge you to determine how you can manage your responsibilities. Understanding our “response-abilities,” better prepares us to succeed in accomplishing what is expected of us. This activity aims to determine your strengths, capabilities, and ability to respond.

### Questions

1. What skills have helped you thrive?
2. What activities make you feel empowered?
3. What comes to you naturally?
4. How do you spend your free time?
5. What do others think you're good at?
6. What are you passionate about?
7. Do you overwhelm yourself with tasks?
8. Do you have enough time in your day to accomplish everything you set out?
9. Do you need to limit the things you undertake?
10. Do you take control of your life?
11. Do you learn from those around you?
12. Do you keep an open mind?
13. What is one thing you would change about your ability to respond to challenges?
14. How will you work to change it?

### Resources

- [\*8 Steps To Help You Answer The Question “What Am I Good At?” – Zippia\*](#)
- [\*Responsibility - Response-ability - ability to respond and react the way you want\*](#)
- [\*Ways of knowing for ‘response-ability’\*](#)

## Changing the Way We Speak

*Understanding language.*

### What?

Language is one of the many ways we have learned to communicate as people. However, how we use language can influence how we make others feel, and how we feel. This activity/practice aims to change how we speak to ourselves. This practice can be done when speaking about ourselves to others, and when we self-talk. When we change the narrative, we can begin to notice its positive effects on our lives.

1. When speaking about work, we often state *"I have to go to work tomorrow"* \*sigh\* We are challenging you to change that narrative. Instead, say *"I get to go to work tomorrow."* Using a positive language can help affirm you. When we acknowledge that others may not have a job and that we are lucky to have one, we begin to see the privilege we have in working.
2. When creating a list of things that need to get done, we often title it a *to-do* list. This practice does not help show initiative and urgency. We encourage you to instead write a *will-do* list. How we use language can subconsciously encourage us to get things done. When we say we have a *will-do* list, we are encouraged to get things done. This being said, we do not recommend adding everything to this list and overworking yourself, we do however recommend you create yourself small, accomplishable, *will-do* lists and complete them daily.
3. This practice can be adapted in various ways. Once we learn how to use language within ourselves positively, we can include it in every aspect of our lives. Instead of saying *"I procrastinated all day,"* say that you *"prepared yourself for tomorrow."* Instead of saying you *"did nothing all day,"* say that you *"took time for yourself to breathe and recharge."*
4. Studies show that it takes nine positives to combat one negative. This statistic does not only include the negative comments that we make about ourselves in our heads but also speaks to the negative way we speak of ourselves to others. Changing the way we speak about and to ourselves can be challenging, however, it is immensely beneficial to our mental health. Language impacts us in various ways, why not let it **positively** impact us!?



## The Power of Affirmations



Affirmations are positive statements we can say to ourselves to reframe a negative mindset. It is not a practice of ignoring our negative feelings or experiences, but rather a practice of replacing negative self-talk with positive self-talk. The way we speak and think about ourselves impacts our outlook on life significantly. Your thoughts become your reality. What you think about and focus on is what you attract in life. This is why positive affirmations can be so powerful.

### Examples of positive affirmations:

- I am worthy
- I deserve happiness and healing
- I love and care about myself
- I nourish and fuel my body with healthy food
- I am enough
- I love being me
- I believe in myself

### Resources

- [Self-Talk: Why It Matters](#)
- [How to Change the Way You Talk to Yourself](#)
- [How to Change How You Talk to \(and See\) Yourself](#)
- [Motivation & Goals What is Positive Self-Talk? \(Incl. Examples\)](#)
- [Positive Self-Talk: Benefits and Techniques](#)
- [Mayo Mindfulness: Overcoming negative self-talk – Mayo Clinic News Network](#)
- [Power Of Words - How Words Affect Our Lives & Behavior](#)
- [Effect of Daily Affirmations \(Positive thoughts\) on Subconscious Mind, Health and Happiness - Wholesome Ayurveda](#)
- [Positive Affirmations \(apuzzledmind.com\)](#)





# Creativity Activities

(Music, Drawing, Journaling)

## Activity

Challenge your creative self. This can be done in various mediums such as visual art, written art, and auditory art.

1. Gather some art supplies (*paint/pencils/crayons/canvas/paper*) and create an artistic piece.
2. Grab a pen and paper or journal and write about your day, your feelings, or create a story. Journaling can be beneficial as it can let out pent-up thoughts and act as a release.
3. Auditory art can include listening to music, playing music, and singing. This can be both traditional and modern music. Create a self-care playlist, dance to your favorite songs, or go for a drive and listen to the radio.

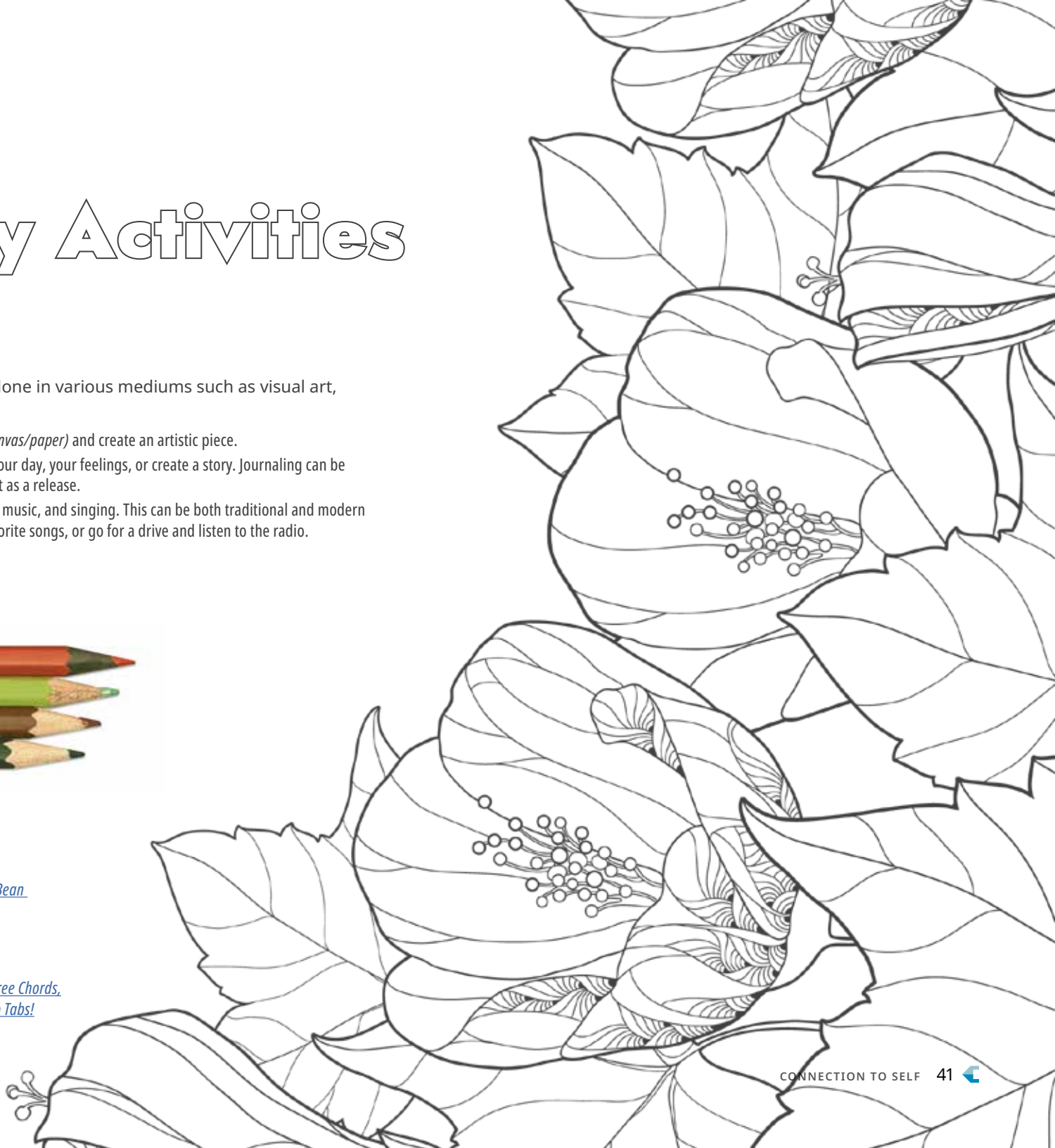
## Lessons

1. Releasing pent-up emotions.
2. Allowing yourself to be free.
3. Having fun alone.
4. Learning to take care of yourself mentally.

## Resources

- [17 Journaling Tips For Beginners \(And How To Start\)](#)
- [75 Journaling Prompts for Your Best Life — The Bliss Bean](#)
- [How To Create A Self-Care Playlist](#)
- [100 Silly Drawing Prompts to Engage Your Students](#)
- [ArtPrompts | A Prompt Generator for Artists](#)
- [Ultimate Guitar Tabs - 1,100,000 songs catalog with free Chords, Guitar Tabs, Bass Tabs, Ukulele Chords and Guitar Pro Tabs!](#)

Written by Connor Lafortune



## Fidgeting and Its Importance

### Backstory

Anxiety is very prevalent in Indigenous communities due to various factors. It is manifested physically in a plethora of ways:

- Movement
- Shaking
- Tapping
- Deconcentration
- Panic
- Silence
- Shyness
- Avoiding eye contact
- Not knowing what to do with your hands

Fidgets allow the body to use up its energy and calm down. Anxiety often involves the looping of thoughts— if an activity is done continuously instead, the mind does not have to continue its cycle. Fidgets help to reduce that anxiety— keeping the body occupied so the mind can rest.

For many, fight or flight occurs even when one is not in danger. To be stagnant might make some feel vulnerable; like the canoe, if we keep floating along we are consistently going somewhere. When one does not have control of their environment, situation, or in this case, a presentation, having something they can control can be euphoric.

For many, movement means safety due to the nature of having control.

### Finding Your Roots

Movement and sounds can be grounding— like placing our feet on the earth and taking a breath, movement can allow our bodies to find comfort in a space. Fidgeting often causes sound, although this can be bothersome, a light tapping sound, the sound of keyboard keys, or the clicking of a pen can allow for comfort, much like the sound of the wind, the waves, or the rain.

### Anxious Minds, Anxious Bodies

The restless mind makes the body move— when one cannot find structure in their thoughts, one often searches for a physical manifestation of that structure. A structure can simply be a drawing, a doodle, or writing on a piece of paper. When anxious thoughts arise, it can be difficult to focus on anything else, therefore, having something to manifest that anxiety physically allows your mind to rest.

### Concentration by Deconcentrating — Action vs Thought

For some individuals, having to focus on only one thing can cause a lot of stress. These individuals often require a second activity to make their experiences more enjoyable. The concept of concentration by deconcentrating is something that can be used when reading, writing, or learning something new on an instrument. By doing two or three things at once, you allow your brain to not hyper-focus one thing but rather to naturally act.

### Drawing Distracts You From Unwanted Thoughts

Art can be relaxing; it is a way to express yourself and be creative. It does not have boundaries— said simply, you can colour outside the lines without consequence or worry of reprimand.

### Things that can be used to fidget:

- Fidget spinner
- Fidget blocks
- Colouring books
- Pens/markers/crayons/pencils and paper
- Slinkies
- Beadwork kits
- Hand sewing project
- Mr. Tangle
- Rings/necklaces/jewelry
- Pen caps
- Bobby pins
- Elastics
- Tape
- Magnets
- Playdough

### Resources

- [\*Anxiety Disorders and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: The Current State of Knowledge and Directions for Future Research\*](#)
- [\*Drawing for Anxiety: Benefits, Easy Exercises, & More.\*](#)
- [\*12 Effects of Anxiety on the Body\*](#)
- [\*Aboriginal Mental Health: The statistical reality | Here to Help\*](#)

## Creating a Self-Care Kit



### Why?

Creating a self-care kit can be both beneficial and practical. Your kit is customizable, it aims to help comfort you in times of need. This kit is meant to help you feel more relaxed and give you a break from stress. While creating your kit, you can add various things to keep your morals high when you are in need. For example, you might want to add positive notes to yourself, affirmations, words of advice, or your favourite quotes.

### How to Create Your Kit

We recommend you gather up items that make you most comfortable, this can range from activities, food, clothing, etc, and store them in one place. Create a self-care basket, bag, or bin that can include all your favourite things. This kit is meant to be accessible and fun. This kit can be used every day, periodically, or only when you need to relax. Self-care is an important activity that can be done simply for yourself.

### Examples of things to put in your kit:

- Bath products
- Your favourite snacks
- A list/playlist of your favourite songs
- Movies
- A journal
- A sketching pad
- Stress balls
- Fidget toys
- Your favourite activity (*video games, baseball glove, beadwork kit*)
- Your favourite blanket
- Comfy clothes (*PJ's, a hoodie, jogging pants, cozy socks*)
- A book
- Words of affirmation
- Face masks
- Candles
- Your traditional medicines
- Tea/coffee
- Teddy bear
- Pictures
- Essential oils/diffuser/incense



# Morals and Values Activity



## Activity

1. Provide a bunch of small stones and smooth rocks for the youth to pick from or let the youth go outside and pick one for themselves. Ensure that the rocks can be written on and that they are approximately 2 inches in diameter.
2. Provide the youth with a list of morals and values, encouraging them to come up with some on their own as well. *(A list will be attached at the end of the activity.)*
3. Tell the students to pick five values or morals that they believe in.
4. Once they have five, tell them they need to leave one behind. This typically works better if you create a story, for example, you are headed on a trip and your suitcase can only fit four values, which one are you taking with you?
5. Afterward, tell them they need to leave two more behind, for example, you can only have a carry-on this time, two more must be left behind.
6. Now you need to make them choose one out of the two they have left, for example, you can only carry a backpack on your journey, you can only fit one value.
7. Once the youth have picked their one value, explain that just because they left the others behind doesn't mean they aren't part of their values, but they are not the most important one at this time.
8. After the youth has reflected on their value, have them write it on their stone on one side, and the date on the other.

## Purpose of the Activity

The youth can deduce what is important to them at this moment. They can bring the stone home and every time they look at it, they can see a value that they find important. Placing the date is also important as it reminds them how people can change and what one believes is the most important thing right now, might not be the most important thing later on. It can also help remind them in what direction they are headed and remind them of all the activities you might have done that day.

## Examples of values:



## Self-Reflection Activity

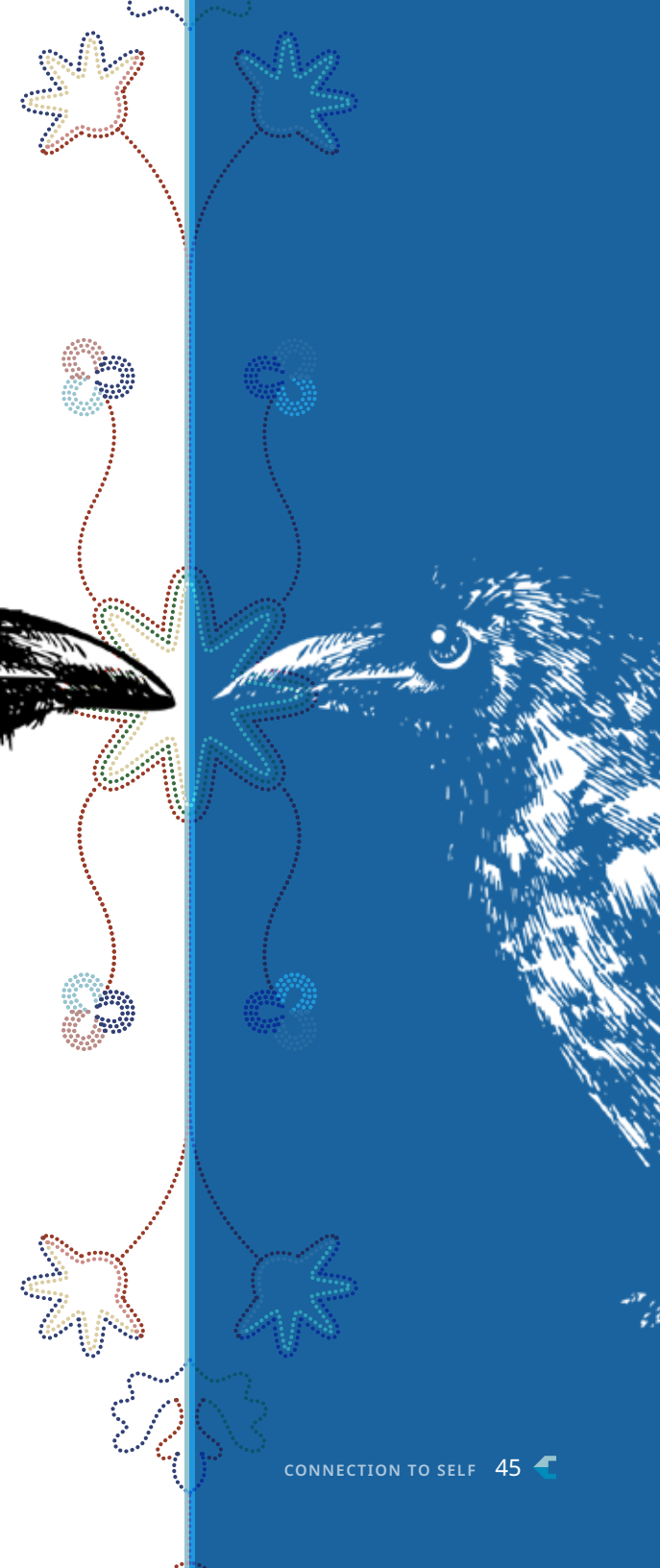


### Activity

1. Grab a piece of paper and something to write with (*crayon, pencil, marker*).
2. Close your eyes and think about this statement “*how are you feeling today?*”.
3. Draw the image that came to mind with a lot or a little detail.

### Self-Reflection on Activity *(this can be shared as well)*

- How did the visualization of your thoughts/emotions make you feel?
- Were you able to see a clear picture?
- Was physically seeing your thoughts/emotions helpful?
- Would you ever use this practice to express yourself if you could not find the words to do so?



## Stretching Activity

### Cobra Pose

1. Lie on your stomach with your hands under your shoulders, your arms tight to your chest, and your fingers facing forward.
2. Pushing through your hands, lift your upper torso off the ground as you straighten your arms. Tilt your head back if you want to make the stretch deeper.
3. Hold the position with a slight bend in your elbows for 30-60 seconds.

### Neck Rolls

1. Relax and sit upright with your head aligned over your shoulders.
2. Roll your head forward and then to the right so you feel a stretch in the left side of your neck. Hold for 10 seconds.
3. Return to the starting position and repeat on the other side.

### Knees to Chest

1. Lie flat on your back and bring one knee to your chest.
2. Hold it in position with your arms or hands.
3. You can also do this with both knees to your chest at the same time.
4. You can also bring both knees to your chest, put both hands on either knee and create circular motions with your knees to give your lower back a nice massage. Repeat in the opposite direction.

### Upper Back Stretch

1. Sit on the edge of your bed, chair, or stand up.
2. Interlock your fingers and reach up towards the sky, bending from your middle back.
3. Stretch with your hands up towards the sky and slowly stretch over to your left side and hold for 10-20 seconds.
4. Bring it back to the middle, then bring it over to your right side and hold for 10-20 seconds.

### Lesson

- Improves circulation
- Relieves stress
- Improves sport performance
- Improves your posture
- Increases flexibility

### Resources

- [\*Yoga With Adriene\*](#)
- [\*The Benefits of Stretching and Why It Feels Good\*](#)
- [\*10 morning stretches to help kick-start your day\*](#)



## Exploring Our Identities



The goal of this reflection activity is for us to explore our ideas behind our identities. Taking the time to honestly answer these questions can help us better understand ourselves so we can feel grounded as we move through the many phases of life. It's important to note that our answers may change over time as we continue to strengthen our identity and learn more about who we are at our core. When we truly begin to feel comfortable with ourselves, our confidence grows, and we can flourish spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically.

### Who Am I?

This first question helps us explore the many intersections that make up each of our unique stories. As we start to think about who we are as individuals, we can uncover more of our history. This can include our family history as well as our clan and tribal history. Reflecting on our connections to family crests and houses can help deepen our understanding of our place within these cultural contexts, helping us find our sense of Belonging. Other areas of life to explore with this question include sexual orientation, gender, and linguistic identities.

### Where Do I Come From?

This second question helps us explore our nation and tribal connections. As we reflect on what communities we come from, we can start to find Meaning for life through our respective cultural worldviews. Another way to approach this reflection could be: who am I accountable to?

### Why Am I Here?

This third question aims to help us narrow down our self-identified Purpose. What work fuels and energizes you? What or who inspires you to do the work that you do? Who is this work for? In what moments do you find you feel the happiest? Who or what is around when you feel this way? Answering these questions openly and honestly can help us understand the passions that drive us to do the work that we do.

### Where Am I Going?

This fourth question helps us begin to visualize the future we desire for ourselves. When faced with difficult life decisions, it's important to take a step back and ask ourselves *"does this decision support the life I envision for myself? Does this decision make me happy?"* When we can picture and feel excited about our future, we can then have Hope for what is to come.

### Resources

- [The Four Essential Questions — Regional Feather Carriers](#)



# Meditation



## Activity

1. Dim the lights in the room.
2. Empty the lungs of air.
3. Breathe in quietly through the nose for 4 seconds.
4. Hold the breath for a count of 7 seconds.
5. Exhale forcefully through the mouth.
6. Repeat the cycle up to 4 times.
7. While breathing focus on your breath and chest, ensure you are filling up your entire diaphragm which involves engaging your stomach muscles.

## Lesson

1. The diaphragm is key to improving the way we breathe; it encourages our body to make more use of oxygen, which slows our heart rate, lowers blood pressure, and overall improves our mental wellbeing.
2. Being able to connect with yourself quietly is a crucial step to healing as these moments also offer a chance to take stock of the day with a clear mind, thinking of both the good and the areas in which we need to improve.

## Resources

- [\*Headspace: Meditation for Beginners\*](#)
- [\*Diaphragmatic Breathing\*](#)





## Healthy Communication and Boundaries



Communication plays an important role in our relationships as it is what allows us to express our thoughts and feelings. Practicing effective communication is something many of us continue to learn as we try to better connect with each other. If we find ourselves struggling to share our point of view, we risk a situation where our information can be misunderstood. Misunderstandings can also arise when we are not listening attentively and respectfully. Thus, we should work to communicate in a healthy, efficient manner while actively listening when others speak.

Communication also comes into play when we need to express our boundaries within our relationships. Healthy boundaries help us maintain our values as well as our sense of self. They help establish mutual respect in our relationships and let those around us know how we wish to be treated. If we start to feel uncomfortable in specific situations, it can act as an indicator to us that a boundary may need to be communicated.

Practicing healthy communication is often easier said than done. Many struggle and feel the need to constantly justify the reasoning behind their boundaries. The fear of saying no and experiencing backlash may cause some to resort to people-pleasing, meaning we put the needs and comfort of others before our own. When we do this on a regular basis, it can result in us feeling burnt out or feeling as if we've lost our sense of self.

Luckily, there are ways to build these communication skills so we can create healthier relationships with ourselves and others. An example of an exercise you can do to practice involves the Setting Boundaries worksheet found below. The goal of this exercise is to help us understand our boundaries, and know what to do when setting them. There are some examples of what we can say to communicate effectively. Another example below teaches us the acronym: J.A.D.E. This acronym stands for don't justify, argue, defend, or explain. It can act as a helpful reminder for us in cases where we may be experiencing difficulties with codependency or gaslighting in our relationships.

### Resources

- [Worksheet: Setting Boundaries](#)
- [Dealing with Difficult Family Members: Don't Justify, Argue, Defend, or Explain](#)
- [Effective Communication - HelpGuide.org](#)

# Ceremony With Intention



## Activity

We encourage individuals to enter into ceremonies with themselves. Although ceremonies are often done with larger groups of people, ceremonies conducted with only oneself can help develop individual spirituality. We have listed some ceremonies that can be performed, however, there are many others. These ceremonies do not need to be elaborate, time-consuming, or difficult, they simply aim to engage your spiritual side. For many, ceremony means taking the time for yourself, listening to Creation, or engaging in the four parts of oneself (*physical, mental, emotional, spiritual*). For certain ceremonies, namely fasting ceremonies and naming ceremonies, we recommend individuals reach out to Elders and Knowledge Holders to conduct and learn from the ceremonies. Individuals must also ensure their safety at all times. Ceremonies could be as simple as going for a walk or journaling, or as elaborate as a fast. The ceremony is defined according to the intentions put into it. These intentions need to be set before entering into the ceremony. We recommend this be the first step after having chosen what ceremony will be done. Individuals may feel free to do one, some, or all of the ceremonies listed. Many can be performed daily if one chooses to do so.

## Purpose of the Activity

The activity aims to put your spiritual needs at the forefront of your mind. Our spirituality is something we need to continuously feed and nurture, much like our bodies themselves. Through these activities, you may learn to reconnect those ties to your spirituality and yourself as well.

## Examples of ceremonies:

- Smudging
- Being in nature
- Naming ceremony
- Learning your colours
- Taking a cedar bath
- Having a cedar tea
- Berry fast
- Vision fast
- Putting down tobacco
- Learning your clan

## Resources

- [\*Ode' imin, Ceremony and Law\*](#)
- [\*Article Vision Quest\*](#)
- [\*Everyday Wellness - Cedar\*](#)
- [\*How to make cedar tea\*](#)
- [\*Tobacco Offering Protocol - Centre for Indigenous Initiatives\*](#)



## Resources



### How to Create Healthy Boundaries

- [\*Setting Emotional Boundaries in Relationships\*](#)
- [\*Positive CBT How to Set Healthy Boundaries: 10 Examples + PDF Worksheets\*](#)
- [\*The Guide to Strong Relationship Boundaries\*](#)

### Building Healthy Relationships

- [\*Building healthy relationships | healthdirect\*](#)
- [\*13 proven ways to maintain a healthy relationship\*](#)
- [\*Read: Tips for Building a Healthy Relationship\*](#)

### Sexual Health Resources

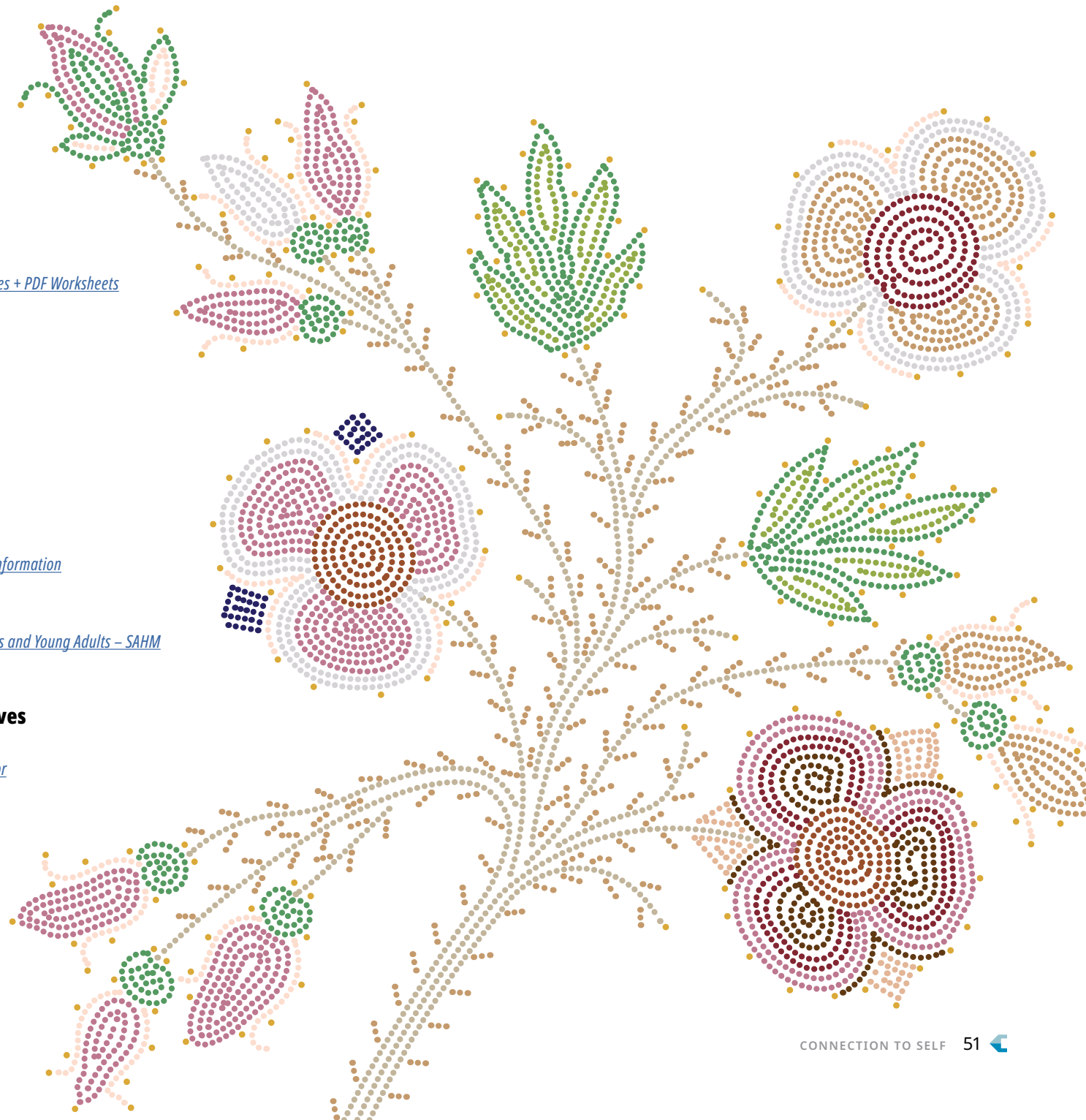
- [\*Sexual Health Ontario | your source for sexual health information\*](#)
- [\*Sexual Health Resources\*](#)
- [\*Resources\*](#)
- [\*Sexual & Reproductive Health Resources For Adolescents and Young Adults – SAHM\*](#)

### Water and the Way We Speak to Ourselves

- [\*The Hidden Messages in Water\*](#) – Masaru Emoto
- [\*Power Of Words - How Words Affect Our Lives & Behavior\*](#)

### 7th Generation Principle

- [\*What is the Seventh Generation Principle?\*](#)
- [\*7th Generation Principle\*](#)





# *Connection to Community*



## Perspectives from the Youth Action Group

Community is a broad term that is not limited to blood relatives. A community can be friends, work-family, ceremonial family, your parish, your teammates, etc. A community refers to a group of people sharing a common goal, attitudes, and interests. It can also refer to the pride we have in our home territories and our relations to nature and the animals. They can give us a sense of belonging—we are united by our Clans, our Nations, our territories, and our names. Our community is a vital support system—the importance of building meaningful relationships helps us excel in many aspects of our lives. Furthermore, a reciprocal relationship with our communities promotes opportunities to engage in activities, events, and ceremonies.

*“In the place of intergenerational trauma, we encourage intergenerational healing, kindness, and communication as a foundation for all else.”*

~ Nimkiins/Connor Lafortune

*“A community is where you feel at home”*

~ Nimkiins/Connor Lafortune

*Our communities are who we turn to for support and knowledge sharing. Through our connection to community, we can find healing and a sense of belonging.”*

~ qándaux / Megan Metz

*“Indigeneity is rooted in community and connection. Community is what guides us to have a connection to ourselves and the land”*

~ Taylor Behn-Tsakoza

*“Connection to community is knowing your neighbours and lending them a hand if needed; smiling and waving to your community members as you pass by.”*

~ Tia Piché

*Do these perspectives make sense to you?*

Please reflect on what connection to community means to you in your current context.



## Learning Objective

In this section, individuals are encouraged to evaluate their relationship with one another to strengthen their community. Individuals may feel free to first define their community, then work to restore, create, and maintain the connection to them.



## Reflections from Youth Action Group

### **What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining a connection to the community?**

Due to the injustices suffered as Indigenous Peoples, many of our Knowledge Holders no longer understand the significance of their knowledge. Further, the younger generations may not see the importance of gathering this knowledge and sharing it. Our communities may have suffered the effects of segregation, racism, and isolation. To foster a healthy communal connection, we need to recreate the spaces that were taken from us.

### **What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?**

To rebuild the connections we have with our communities, we need to begin the conversations of healing. Sharing circles, designating cultural sites, and communal activities such as gardens can be implemented to begin healing together. The designated areas could include traditional teachings, the promotion of cultural practices, and the preservations of ancient knowledge. Indigenous Peoples often return to traditional ways of speaking, to begin that healing process – creating safe spaces to share, regaining the connection between the Elders and the younger generation, and fostering the conversations between community members. To break the barriers and achieve a strong connection to the community, we must rebuild those intergenerational connections and pave the way for lateral kindness.

### *Community Reflection*

On chart paper, together or in a small group, reflect on the questions below in regard to connection to community:

1. What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?
2. What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?
3. What resources does your community have that promote a connection to the community?  
*(e.g., community centres, sports programs, youths programs)*
4. What resources would your community need to foster a healthy connection to the community?





## Engaging Role Models for Mentorship and Peer Support

### Purpose

Peer support is the key for developing a healthy lifestyle and promoting positivity through action. Role models are individuals that lead by example. They have the ability to demonstrate compassion for others, encourage, and uplift. Being a role model is about taking on expectations and accountability. If one pursues being a role model, they must accept the responsibility that comes with it!

### Activity

1. As a group, or by yourself, create a list of people in your life that you consider to be role models. Think about certain situations where someone was a role model.
2. Ask yourself, are they engaged in the activity? Are they taking the lead? Are they supporting everyone's input with feedback? Once completed, reflect as a group and share what you reflected on.

### Lesson

- The objective of this exercise is to reveal natural qualities that emerge when called upon to be a role model. Additionally, as a collective, you will draw out your own observations that can describe a role model. You may also find that a role model could have been anyone in your life, a parent, older sibling or cousin, friend, teacher, coach, etc. It is important to understand anyone is capable of being a role model in any given situation. Yes, some folks are gifted and these qualities are already a part of their character. However, with practice and genuine effort, anyone can become a successful role model.

### Example phrases:

- Good job!
- I really value your comments and thoughts.
- Please take your time.
- It's ok if you don't have an answer.
- I like that idea! I also think...(elaborate on their input)
- Is there anything I can do to help?

### Remember....

*Empathetic listeners use direct eye contact while listening and give their full attention. Avoid being on your phone or any other distractions while listening. Also provide feedback on what was said! This is a good step to developing your ability to become a good role model.*

### Examples:

- **Person 1:** I really think that we should take this approach with the event. I feel that if there's going to be a younger audience that we should include content for them.
- **Role Model:** That's a great idea! Thanks for pointing this out, maybe we can provide cartoon segments?

### Hint:

*A good response should be modeled as follows:*

*Respond,*

*Acknowledge,*

*Feedback.*

## Craft Night



### Activity

- Gather as a community and have a craft night.
- These crafts can be a combination of traditional and non-traditional crafts.
- The crafts/activities are dependent on the community's needs, capabilities, and wants.
- If the community would like to hold a traditional craft-making night, Knowledge Holders can be contacted to properly facilitate the event.
- Communities are encouraged to gather in a common area (gym, community centre, hall), set up tables, provide materials, and craft together. Individuals are also encouraged to bring their supplies.
- These activities can be combined with music, snacks, and movies.

### Purpose of the Activity

Communities are encouraged to step out of their creative comfort zone and create something together. Although this craft night is highly adaptable, we encourage communities to share knowledge, tips and tricks, crafting material, and even to gift the piece that was worked on. Communities may learn to better communicate, share, and gain a better understanding and appreciation for crafts, art, and traditional items.

### Examples of crafts:

1. Beading
2. Sewing (ribbon skirts, ribbon shirts, aprons)
3. Carving
4. Painting
5. Drawing
6. Drum making
7. Rattle making
8. Regalia making
9. Origami
10. Scrapbooking
11. Hide tanning
12. Mitt making
13. Moccasin making
14. Birch basket making
15. Pottery
16. Sculpting
17. Knitting/crocheting
18. Roach making
19. Dream catcher making
20. Suncatcher making



## Communal Challenge/Repair Activity

### Activity

- Communities are encouraged to find a challenge in the community and find ways to address it and fix it together.
- This activity can be completely adaptable to each community.

### Examples:

- Pick up garbage on the roadside.
- Help to paint someone's home.
- Have a clothing drive.
- Start an afterschool program.
- Help a neighbour with their garden.
- Mow someone's lawn.

### Lesson

Communities will learn how to work together to accomplish something. This communal activity can range from a garbage clean-up to an after-school sports program. The goal is to address a challenge that the community faces and fix it together. Communities are encouraged to use everyone's skills and talents to help fix things in the community. This activity aims to bring back a communal sense of responsibility and the sharing of tasks and goals.

### Resources

- [\*Community repair: a pop-up alternative to the throwaway society\*](#)
- [\*60 Ways to Better Your Community: Ideas for Community Service Projects\*](#)
- [\*101 small ways you can improve your city\*](#)
- [\*100 ways make a difference in your community through kindness\*](#)



## Festivals



### Annual Winter/Summer/Fall Festivals

Festivals are great ways in which communities can come together to showcase various talents and strengths in a fun and healthy way. Below are just some ideas that can get the ball rolling. What other activities do you know about or that your community does every year?

#### Activities

- Pumpkin carving contest
- Rock painting contest
- Talent show
- Dancing
- Mazes/Obstacle courses
- Tug of war
- Fishing derbies
- Three-legged races
- Eating contests
- Face painting
- Sack races
- Pie throwing
- Scavenger hunt
- Animal calling
- Jigging contest

#### Lessons

- The community gets together and hosts a variety of outdoor games and contests, alongside serving food and the opportunity to get to know each other.
- Opportunity for participation, volunteering, communication skills, and attracting tourists into your community.
- Building relationships and positive memories with your community and community members. *(I reflect on my days in my hometown and dearly miss the annual festivals/games my community would put together. It brought us all together and made us feel more connected to "home").*



## Family Tree Activity



### Purpose of the Activity

This activity can be done communally or within families. The activity challenges communities to learn about and draw out familial ties. We encourage communities to use this time to showcase these family trees and begin to reconnect the lines between families.

### Potential material

- Photos
- Poster board
- Pencils/markers/pens
- Glue
- Piece of paper to sketch on

### Activity

1. Collect the photos of the people you want to include in your family tree.
2. Sketch out your family tree on scrap paper and write out the names that you want included, along with their generations.
3. Add the last generation (*youngest generation*) at the bottom of the poster board and work your way up the branches. Don't forget to leave room for the pictures!
4. After you're done writing out the names, glue each photo in its proper spot along with the date of birth, if you wish.
5. You may also want to include marriages and deaths if you'd like.
6. Try and see how far up the family tree you can go!
7. Post your family tree in a prominent place such as in each home or the community centre.

### Note:

*If the activity is done as a community, we encourage families to set up in a communal area and sit at tables with their immediate family. As everyone does their trees, communities can begin to draw the lines between family trees and see the interconnectedness. This activity can be combined with music, snacks, and movies.*



## Sharing Circle Activity



### Activity

1. Communities are encouraged to gather either in small groups or in their entirety. This activity can be done indoors (*gym, hall, school*) or outdoors (*sacred sites*).
2. Knowledge Holders, circle facilitators, and someone to facilitate counseling is needed for this activity.
3. Everyone is encouraged to gather in a common space, sit in a circle and share safely.
4. The first step in the sharing circle is to have everyone understand the importance and values found within the circle. This can be done in various ways according to the community's teachings, customs, and knowledge.
5. Talking sticks, stones, feathers, or any other object are encouraged to better facilitate conversation and allow for the respect of each person's words.
6. A Knowledge Holder may open the circle in their way (*prayer, smudge, song*) and explain how the circle should proceed.
7. Each participant is welcomed to speak, going around the circle.
8. The circle may go around once, twice, or more times depending on the needs and time constraints of the community.

### Purpose of the Activity

Communities are encouraged to share openly and honestly. This can help reignite the connections between community members and families. This activity is completely adaptable according to the community's needs, wants, teachings, and capacities. These circles can be done in various ways as long as they respect the basic principles found within the community's teachings.

### Resources

- [Sharing Circles – Pass The Feather](#)
- [Learning from Indigenous Peoples - Sharing Circles | Do Justice](#)
- [Talking Circle: Fact Sheet – Talking Together](#)
- [Talking Circles Overview from the First Nations Pedagogy Online Project](#)
- [About Sharing Circles](#)

# Tea Talks for Intergenerational Healing



## Goal

Bring together Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, and your community to promote knowledge sharing and intergenerational healing through story-telling. After the Elders and Knowledge Keepers have shared their stories and answered any questions, the event can end with an optional activity that reinforces self-reflection and lessons learned.

## Purpose

When we share our stories in this way, we are effectively recreating what we would have done in the past. Storytelling was a method used by many nations to share their history as well as pass on knowledge, life lessons, and values. Through sharing and reclaiming our stories, we can inspire others and begin to break down barriers that many of us face in our lives. We are also given the opportunity to learn more about our true histories which can help us better relate to and understand one another. Re-establishing these healthy community connections can increase our sense of belonging, continue the transfer of knowledge to the next generations, as well as provide a space for healing for all involved.

## Event Ideas

- Create a comfortable learning environment by offering some tea, coffee, water, and snacks.
- Provide space for elders and Knowledge Keepers to engage in storytelling with the community. Some examples can include creation stories or tribal history.
- Provide space for Elders to share their personal life stories with the community. Some examples of topics can include important life lessons learned, advice or wisdom, experiences with intergenerational trauma, and ways to promote healing.
- Ensure proper cultural support is present when heavy topics and stories are going to be shared.

## Activity

- Begin writing and reclaiming your story using the *Native Storytelling Handout*.

## Resource

- [Native Storytelling Handout](#)



# Ceremony with Communal Intention



## Activity

We challenge communities to perform a ceremony. These ceremonies can differ according to the community's needs, traditions, and capabilities. Ceremonies could be as simple as a feast or as elaborate as a powwow. Listed below are a set of potential ceremonies that could be done. These ceremonies can either be all completed, or just one specific ceremony can be chosen. When beginning to plan a ceremony, the proper Knowledge Holders must be contacted and the protocols must be followed. Each community may define what a ceremony looks like to them.

## Significance of the Activity

Ceremonies aim to heal us, show gratitude, give us purpose, honour our histories, and allow us to gather. Each ceremony may bring a different type of gratification and teachings. It is up to the community to define what intentions are set out, how the ceremony will be facilitated, and what is expected. Ceremonies may also be defined according to the community's understanding. This activity aims to reconnect communities to themselves, each other, and the ancestors and spiritual world.

## Examples of ceremonies:

- Sweat Lodge
- Smudging as a community
- Pipe ceremony
- Blanket ceremony/teaching
- Powwow
- Round Dance
- Socials
- Drumming Circles
- Feasts and Giveaways
- Moon Time Ceremonies
- Potlatches

## Resources

- [Ceremonies and Socials – Our Stories](#)
- [Symbolism and Tradition](#)
- [Potlatch](#)
- [Ceremonial Spaces](#)
- [Indigenous Ceremonies \(7 Most Common Native American Ceremonies & Rituals\)](#)
- [Article Sweat Lodge](#)
- [Article History of Powwows](#)
- [How Indigenous communities are holding Round Dances virtually](#)





## Resources



### Lateral Kindness Declaration

- [Lateral Kindness - Declaration of Commitment \(PDF\)](#)
- [Lateral Kindness Gram \(PDF\)](#)
- [Practise Lateral Kindness to Help Reduce Stigma and Fear of COVID-19](#)
- [Let's use Lateral Kindness to "lift each other up"](#)

### Fostering Communal Healing

- [2020: The Power of Communal Healing — Listen First Project](#)
- [Communal Healing: An Interview with Camesha Jones](#)
- [Addressing the Healing of Aboriginal Adults and Families within a Community-owned College Model](#)
- [A Year Long Wellness Approach](#)

### Healing Through Story-Telling

- [Understanding the Healing Power of Storytelling](#)
- [Storytelling in Native American Cultures](#)
- [The Power of Indigenous Storytelling](#)

### How Colonization Fractured Our Communities

- [The Effect of Colonization on First Nations](#)
- [The Impact of Colonization and Western Assimilation on Health and Wellbeing of Canadian Aboriginal People](#)

### The Impact of the Dismantling of Women's Traditional Roles

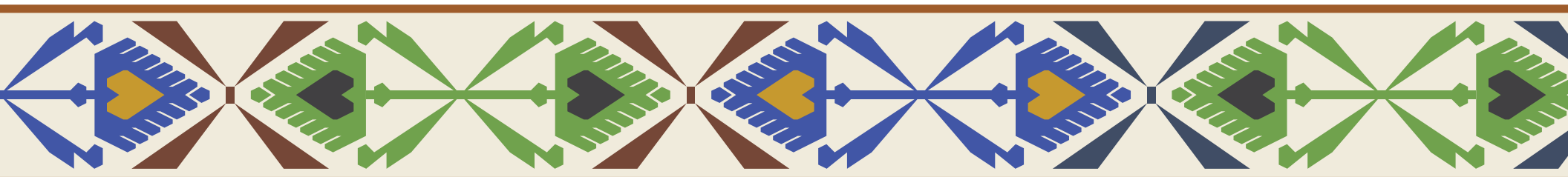
- [Aboriginal Women and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge \(ATK\)](#)
- [Gender Identities – Our Stories](#)
- [Indigenous Women: A Gender Perspective](#)
- [Marginalization of Aboriginal women - Indigenous Foundations](#)

### Healthy Relationships

- [Healthy Relationships \(nativewellness.com\)](#)
- [Healthy Youth Dating Relationships - Canadian Red Cross](#)

### Creating Healthy Relationships and Partnerships

- [Healthy Relationships \(nativewellness.com\)](#)
- [Healthy Youth Dating Relationships - Canadian Red Cross](#)
- [Read: Tips for Building a Healthy Relationship](#)
- [How to build a healthy romantic relationship: 5 tips](#)
- [Quizzes - The 5 Love Languages®](#)
- [What Are the Five Love Languages?](#)
- [Healthy Friendships and Relationships \(ct.gov\)](#)





# *Connection to Spirituality*





## Perspectives from the Youth Action Group

As a chance to reflect on our previous sections, the action group concluded that “spirituality” is one of the most unique perspectives we can have. As our relationship with Spirit is individual, we felt it was best to write in our own words what it meant to each of us and encourage you to do the same.

### Acknowledgement

The Youth Action Group acknowledges that spirituality is a complex system of beliefs with varying approaches. We acknowledge the following approaches may not reflect the beliefs of religious ideologies, atheism, values, and other worldviews. These perspectives are informed by personal experiences and teachings. We acknowledge that our team members come from a place of Indigenous spirituality however, we welcome all spiritualities, worldviews, faiths, and religions.

*“To me, spirituality is how I conduct myself in my daily life, the act of living is ceremony within itself”*

- Waabishkigaaboo/Will Landon

*“Spirituality is what connects me to everything around me. It’s an intentional act to connect to the higher powers in our universe”*

- Taylor Behn-Tsakoza

*“Spirituality is something we turn to for strength, wisdom, and purpose. It is a belief in a higher power that we can connect to and learn from, which helps us find meaning in many different aspects of our life. When we are grounded in our spirit, we can then feel connected to and appreciative of everything around us.”*

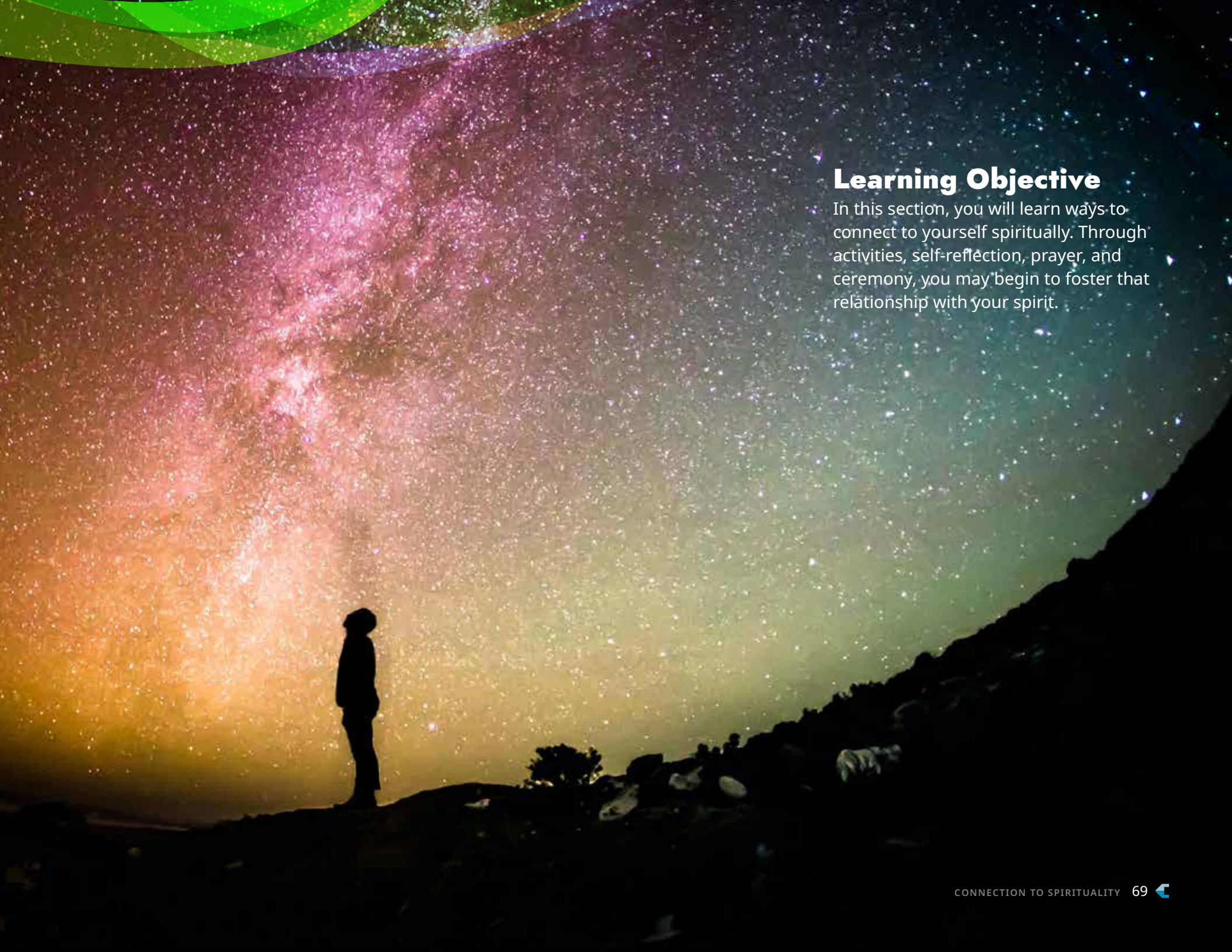
- q̄andauᖃ / Megan Metz

*“Spirituality for me is vested in my connection with my Elders and all of my relations. As beings, we walk this earth searching: searching for our dreams, our goals, and our answers. Spirituality is not only a way of thinking, but rather a way of breathing, seeing, and living. To live spiritually means to continuously nurture our being and all living beings around us. To be spiritual means to see the world in two dimensions but chose to search for the third.”*

- Nimkiins/Connor Lafortune

*“Spirituality to me means something bigger than myself in my human form. I often find myself searching within for my purpose and meaning in this life. It is connecting myself to the higher power and learning to trust my gut and intuition. Through connection to spirituality, I find calmness, peacefulness, understanding, and forgiveness. It is a great reminder for me to be in the present moment and not fear the future or dwell on the past. It reminds me to treat everyone and everything with kindness, empathy, and understanding.”*

- Tia Piché



## Learning Objective

In this section, you will learn ways to connect to yourself spiritually. Through activities, self-reflection, prayer, and ceremony, you may begin to foster that relationship with your spirit.



## Reflections from Youth Action Group

### **What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining a connection to spirit?**

Due to the various historical challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples, a connection to self is often compromised. Communal shame, loss of connection to self, culture, and community, and intergenerational trauma all play their part in the threat to one's connections to spirit.

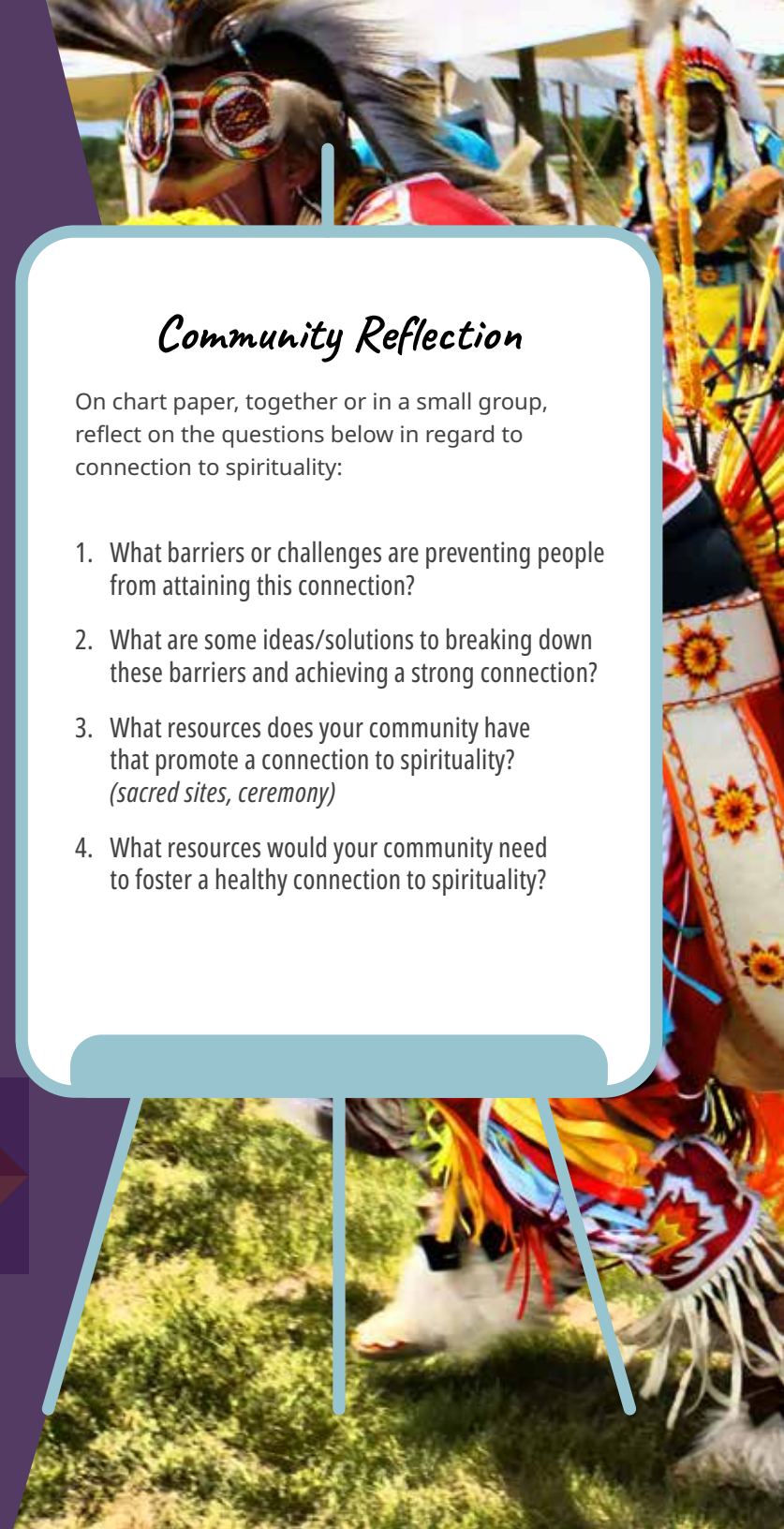
### **What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?**

When we lose the connection to ourselves, we often find ourselves searching for connection through another medium. This connection can be with Elders, friends, church, family, and Knowledge Holders. If we know where we came from, we can begin to understand where we are going— when we hear our Creation stories we are better able to understand ourselves within the world. Other ways of achieving a strong connection include the normalization of differing world views, the normalization of languages, and the understanding of ourselves as living beings affected by everything around us.

### *Community Reflection*

On chart paper, together or in a small group, reflect on the questions below in regard to connection to spirituality:

1. What barriers or challenges are preventing people from attaining this connection?
2. What are some ideas/solutions to breaking down these barriers and achieving a strong connection?
3. What resources does your community have that promote a connection to spirituality?  
*(sacred sites, ceremony)*
4. What resources would your community need to foster a healthy connection to spirituality?



# Naming Ceremony

## Activity

- Naming ceremonies can be done in various ways. According to different nations, practices, and traditions, the ceremony itself can mean various things. We encourage individuals to reach out to their local Knowledge Holders and inquire about their area's naming practices.
- A naming ceremony most often refers to a time when a child, youth, teen, or adult is given a second name in their traditional language, although some Indigenous cultures give these names at birth.
- Due to the overwhelming difference between each ceremony and practice, we can not provide a clear example of what a naming ceremony might look like for you. However, we have included various resources that describe different naming ceremonies.

## Lesson

A naming ceremony is a time when a family gathers to let the spirits and the ancestors name an individual. These names also come with protection and wisdom from the spirits. These ceremonies are often conducted in conjunction with other ceremonies and ceremonial objects and practices. Our spiritual names can help to connect us to our spirituality, our culture, and our ancestors. When we are given these names, we must cherish and honour them.

## Resources

- [\*What having a naming ceremony for my kids meant to me\*](#)
- [\*Claiming a Name | This is a Canadian Issue: Reflecting on TRC Calls to Action\*](#)
- [\*Naming Ceremony\*](#)
- [\*When A Child Is Given An Anishinaabe Name\*](#)



# Making a Traditional Dwelling



## Activity

- Originating with the Plains people, the tipi is a Lakota word, *thípi*, meaning *dwelling* or *they dwell*. A tipi is a cone-shaped dwelling traditionally made using animal hide and 8-15 wooden poles. Today's tipis are often made with a canvas tarp and poles made of various types of materials.
- Originating with the Algonquian people, the wigwam is an Algonquian word, wigwam, meaning *their house*. A wigwam is a long-term dwelling ranging in shape from cones to rounded-edged houses. Traditional wigwams are made with small dried and bent trees, bark, hide, and matting. Wigwams were typically used during colder months. Today's wigwams are often covered with a synthetic canvas cover.
- Originating from the Inuit people of the Arctic, the igloo (iglu) is the word for house in Inuktitut. An igloo is a rounded dwelling made of blocks of snow that have been strategically cut to slowly incline into a half sphere. The typical size of an igloo for one family is 3 to 3.5 metres high and 3.5 to 4.5 metres in diameter. Different materials were used as well such as animal skins to line the inside.
- Originating with the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, namely the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, Nuu-chah-nulth, Nuxalk, Haida, and many others, the plank houses were commonly used for community and ceremonial purposes. Although every nation had their own way of contracting these structures, they typically all relied on heavy timbers and were decorated with various symbols.
- Making these dwellings can be a spiritual activity if the right intentions are put into it. Since every nation may make their dwelling differently, we have included various resources.
- Knowledge Holders always encourage to properly prop up your tipi or wigwam, however, you can make do without if needed.
- They can be made the traditional way with dowels made of trees and an animal hide cover, or as a modern way with synthetic tarp and metal poles, as desired.
- These dwellings can then be used as shelters, to cook, for ceremonies, or other spiritual reasons.
- If your community traditionally used a different type of dwelling, we encourage the construction of that, when possible!

## Resources

- [How to Build a Teepee | The Pioneers](#)
- [How to Erect a Tipi](#)
- [How to set up a canvas tipi and liner](#)
- [Making a Wigwam](#)
- [Building a Wigwam \(Time Lapse\)](#)
- [Wigwam Building](#)
- [Building a Wigwam with Natural Materials | Bushcraft Shelter \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Wigwams - Basic Wigwam Construction](#)
- [How to Build an Igloo](#)
- [How to Build an Igloo - National Geographic](#)
- [Building a Native American Plank House](#)
- [Chinookan Plank Houses - Native American Domestic Architecture & Culture](#)

## Lesson

Creating our People's original dwellings can help reconnect us to our ancestors and our spirituality. The creations of these dwellings also help to humble us as people. We often live in a materialistic world that aims to consume quickly. When we take the time to create our shelter or spiritual site, we can begin to see how the world once worked, and learn how to incorporate what we have learned into our modern life. The dwellings may also provide us with a specific location where we can practice our spirituality and invite others to do so as well. Not only does this activity promote our spiritual selves, but it also promotes our community engagement in spirituality. These sites can then be used by whole communities to reignite their spiritual flame.



Written by Connor Lafortune



## Creating Spiritual Items



### Activity

- Spiritual items can be defined differently depending on individual's traditions, nations, and practices. The creation of spiritual items can help ground us in our spirituality by giving us a physical representation of it. Below we have provided a list of spiritual items that may be created, however we encourage you to also come up with some of your own.
- Spiritual items can be created individually or in groups. For more elaborate items, such as a drum that comes with many teachings, we encourage you to reach out to Knowledge Holders.
- Spiritual items do not need to be elaborate! They can range from an entire regalia to a simple tobacco pouch. The monetary value and effort put into creating the item do not matter, only the desire to do so is important.

### Examples:

- Tobacco pouch
- Drum
- Drumstick
- Rattle
- Decorating an eagle feather
- Medicine bundle
- Regalia
- Ribbon skirt
- Ribbon shirt
- Beadwork

### Lesson

By creating our items, we can begin to reconnect with our spiritual selves. These items can also allow us to reconnect to our spiritual community. Each item may have a different meaning, teaching, and lesson; we encourage you to seek those lessons on your own. These teachings may also vary according to the practiced culture. For example, a drum often represents the heartbeat of our people and the manifestation of our ancestors. Different drums can represent different people, for example, a hand drum may be a grandmother, whereas the big drum can represent our grandfather.

### Resources

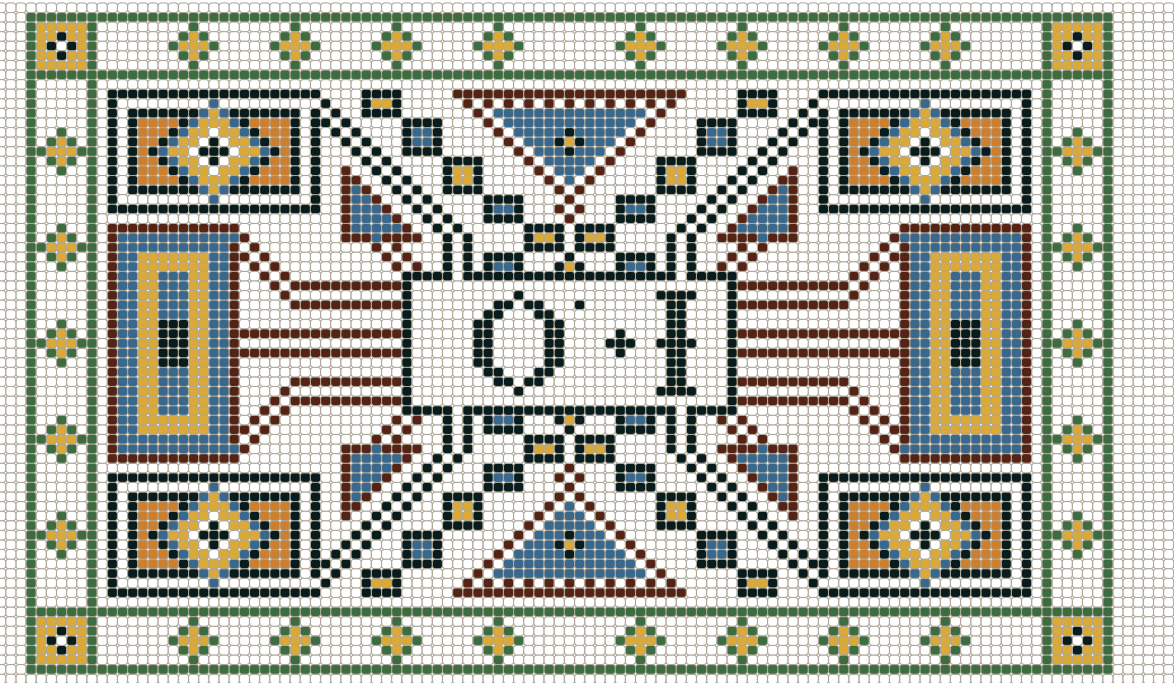
- [Ribbon Skirt Tutorial With Billie Jo Kruger](#)
- [Simple AF Ribbon Shirt Tutorial Part 1: Measuring and Pattern Drafting](#)
- [Simple AF Ribbon Shirt Tutorial Part 2: Cutting Fabric and Sewing](#)
- [Sacred Items and Bundles – Indigenous Website](#)
- [Cultural ignorance at heart of skirt-shaming controversy](#)
- [Beads: Symbols of Indigenous Cultural Resilience and Value](#)
- [Tribal Spirit Hand Drum Kits](#)
- [Medicine Bags or Bundles – Legends of America](#)



# Learning Your Creation Story ✨

## Activity

We encourage individuals to learn their nation's Creation Story. These first stories can help us reconnect to our original instructions and our spirituality as a whole. These stories can be learned from videos, audio files, in written form, or through conversations with others. We acknowledge that everyone's Creation Story is different. We have provided variations of Creation Stories across several nations below. However, we encourage you to reach out to Elders, or the holders of this knowledge in your community if you can do so.



## Examples of Creation Stories:

- [\*An Anishinaabe creation story - Pukaskwa National Park\*](#)
- [\*The Creation Story – Turtle Island For the Ojibway/Anishinabe people. Long ago, after the Great Mystery, or Kitchi-Manitou\*](#)
- [\*The Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Haudenosaunee Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Raven: A Haida Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Elder Bill Reid: The Haida Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Oneida Creation Story Oneida Sign Language 2017\*](#)
- [\*The Mohawk Story of Creation | Lee Claremont | TEDxPenticton\*](#)
- [\*Grandmother : Creation Story | Opening to the World | Culture\*](#)
- [\*The Legend of Weesakayjack - First Nation Legend - How North America came to be - Canada\*](#)
- [\*Creation Stories - The Origins of Culture\*](#)
- [\*Cree Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Métis—Stories of Long Ago - Voices of Métis - Our Voices, Our Stories - Library and Archives Canada\*](#)
- [\*The Creation Story – Historical and Contemporary Realities: Movement Towards Reconciliation\*](#)
- [\*Algonquin Creation Myth - An Algonquin Legend\*](#)
- [\*The Creation of the World | The Tribal Council\*](#)
- [\*Mi'kmaq Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Blackfoot Creation Myth – Legends of America\*](#)
- [\*Blackfoot Creation and Origin Myths\*](#)
- [\*Creation Story \(Iroquois/Haudenosaunee\)\*](#)
- [\*Onondaga Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*The Inuit Creation Myth\*](#)
- [\*Sedna, by Heather Dale - The Inuit creation myth retold in American Sign Language\*](#)
- [\*Inuit Creation\*](#)
- [\*A Dakota Creation Story\*](#)
- [\*Tlingit Creation Story \(Raven\)\*](#)
- [\*Creation Myths -- Iroquois Creation Myth\*](#)



## Drumming and Singing



### Lesson

Drumming and singing is a ceremonial and cultural aspect that is practiced by Indigenous People across Canada. The drumming and singing styles can be different among the groups with some even having a distinction between powwow style singing and traditional style. It is used as a way in which to communicate with the spirits and call them to the drum, as particular songs have particular uses and it is important to sing the song that fits the needs of the community, meeting, etc.

### Anishinaabek Water Song

*Wichita do ya do ya do ya  
Wichita do ya do ya heh  
Wichita do ya do ya do ya  
Wichita do ya do ya heh  
Wacha tonaya hey ya hey ya  
Wacha tonaya hey ya hey  
Wacha tonaya hey ya hey ya  
Wacha tonaya hey ya hey*

### A.I.M. Song

#### Lead:

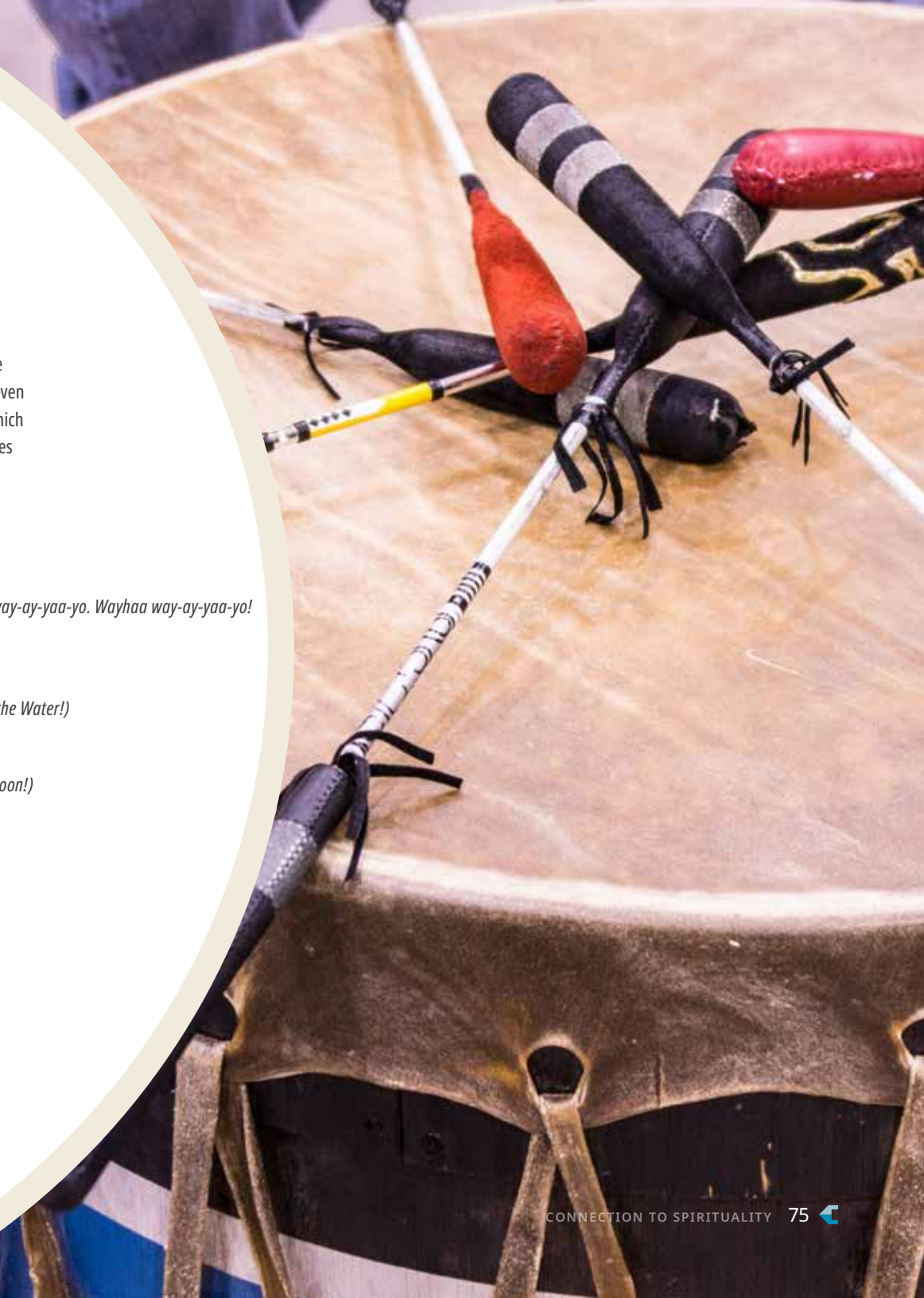
Maamwi gida-maashkozimin o hey ya hey o  
Together we should be strong  
Maamwi gida-maashkozimin o hey ya hey o  
Together we should be strong

### Anishinaabek Nibi Song

*Wayaa hay-yaa away ya hay-yaa yo, way-haa way-ay-yaa-yo. Wayhaa way-ay-yaa-yo!  
Miigwech, Manitou! (Thank you, Great Spirit!)  
Wayaa way-ay-haa-yo wayaa way-ay-haa-yo  
Miigwech Ikwe! (Thank you, Woman!)  
Mee-ay Nibi Kinagajitoyan! (Who takes care of the Water!)  
Miigwech Benesiak! (Thank you, Thunderbirds!)  
Wayaa way-ay-aa-yo wayaa way-ay-haa-yo  
Miigwech Nokomis! (Thank you Grandmother Moon!)  
Wayaa way-ay-yaa-yo wayaa way-ay-haa-yo*

#### Verse:

Niizhwaasing ishkode gii-boodawewaad  
The seventh fire has been lit by them  
Boochigo Anishinaabemyang  
We have to all speak Anishinaabemowin  
Minobimaadziyang  
We are living well  
Minobimaadziyang  
We are living well  
O hey ya hey o



## Resources



### Learning About Kinship, Identity, Nationalship, and Clanship

- [Kinship ~ Walking Together](#)
- [Traditional Indigenous Kinship Practices at Home: Being Child-Centered During the Pandemic](#)
- [Reviving Indigenous Kinship — Freedom Rising](#)
- [What is Indigenous Identity?](#)
- [Clans – Indigenous Website](#)
- [Article Clan \(Indigenous Peoples in Canada\)](#)
- [Aboriginal Identity & Terminology](#)
- [Governance](#)

### Indigenous LGBTQ+2S Identities

- [Researching for LGBTQ Health](#)
- [OACAS Library Guides: LGBTQ2S+ identities and child welfare: Two-Spirit identities](#)
- [Two Spirit and LGBTQ Identities: Today and Centuries Ago - HRC](#)
- [An Introduction to the Health of Two-Spirit People: Historical, contemporary and emergent issues](#)
- [Indigenous Sexualities: Resisting Conquest and Translation](#)

### Indigenous Spiritualities

- [What is Aboriginal spirituality?](#)
- [WRC-2017: \(2/9\) Indigenous Spirituality and Canadian Values](#)
- [Article Religion and Spirituality of Indigenous Peoples in Canada](#)

### The Different Forms of Spirituality

- [What is spirituality](#)
- [What is Spirituality?](#)
- [The Mental Health Benefits of Religion & Spirituality](#)
- [What is spirituality? Is it different from religion? What if I don't go to church or belong to a faith community?](#)
- [What is Spirituality](#)
- [Coping – Faith and Spirituality](#)
- [The Role of Spirituality and Religiosity in Subjective Well-Being of Individuals With Different Religious Status](#)



## Resources

## Community Contacts and Resource Sheets

### Health Services

- [Health care services for First Nations and Inuit](#)
- [Health services and social programs for Indigenous Peoples - Canada.ca](#)

### Youth and Adult Support Lines

- [Indigenous crisis supports – Life Voice workshops](#)

### Youth Funding

- [Jordan's Principle | The Caring Society](#)
- [Updates on Jordan's Principle](#)

### How to Create a Resource List for Your Community

- [How to Create a Community Resource Guide](#)

## Tools and Templates

### Writing a Letter

- [How to Write a Letter: Letter Writing Tips and Examples](#)
- [Letter Format Example and Writing Tips](#)

### Budgeting Worksheet

- [How to make a budget](#)

### Brainstorming Activity Worksheet

- [Brainstorming Printable Worksheets](#)

### Personal Self-Care and Self-Reflection Template

- [22 Self-Care Plan Checklists & Printables for a Happier & More Productive You](#)

### Event Organization Checklist

- [The Event Planning Checklist Used By Top Event Planners](#)

### Resume Template

- [Resume-Now](#)

### Cover Letter Template

- [Cover Letter](#)

### Goal Setting

- [Personal Goal Setting Templates - Download PDF](#)

### How to Apply for School Funding Template

- [50+ Scholarship Application Forms](#)

### Applying to Scholarships Template

- [50 Free Scholarship Application Templates & Forms - TemplateLab](#)

# Indigenous Multimedia



## Tiktok

@daybirdBeauty	@desertndn	@willowredstar
@drivethethecommonman	@shinanova	@jacob_sinclair16
@ticaks2.0	@lavinahoule	@aliciakayley
@kendrajessie	@tiamiscihk	@motoriouscree
@ladybeardesigns	@ojibwaylegacy	@deadlyconway
@4generationscreations	@aichella	@haraqiq
@tabilaahmvrinn	@allytrick_	@ladybird_ra
@jayroymakokis	@raybaans	@geronimo.warrior
@feathernews	@bannockkash	@dreadfulbird
@twochiefs	@aungelle	@rez_reports
@chiefladybird	@eric_assinewai	@sherry.mckay
@sequinwapimikwan	@youngdreama	@monikkamcgregor
@scottwabano	@sillygoosekalei	@modern_warrior_
@aptnnews	@ohkairyn	@the_land
@tomaskarmelo	@darrellbrertronjr	@beccajewels

## Instagram

@odeminn_giizis	@decolonizemyself	@nativereacts
@naanokaazii_designs	@cedarfoxbeads	@manitobah
@nimkii_shkode	@yellowtail	@_pourfection
@myminingtee	@mangeshig	@kokum_scrunchies
@teribeads2019	@otsitdesigns	@ntvsclathing
@adenibkwe_singers	@assinewjewelry	@ginew_usa
@divingloon.co	@katielongboat.beadwork	@indigenousfriends
@ntvdsn	@monarch.beadwork	@sweetmoonphoto
@indigenoussupplies	@chiefladybird	@anishinabeknation
@ella_wholesale	@blueberrybead	@oxdxclothing
@dineh_largo_jewelry	@reclaimyourpower	@urbannativeera
@smudgetheblades	@cheekbonebeauty	@realnativesonly
@powwowjackets	@sarafox	@beadeddreamsca
@rockymountain.designs	@zazegaakwe	@jocy.bird
@kanatan_health_solutions_inc	@mini.tipi	@notoriouscree
@western_varieties	@ravenrising.ca	@ashleycallingbull
@beadworkbylib	@raven_reads	@nikitaelyse
@najinisowin	@officialsherrymckay	@kendrajessie
@tsista.kennedy	@natalierosestudios	@singsinthetimber
	@redbird_beads	

## Books/Articles/Writers

<i>Mishomis book</i> - Benton-Banai-baa	<i>#IndianLove: Poems</i> - Tenille Campbelle
<i>Ojibway ceremonies</i> - Basil Johnston	<i>The Inconvenient Indian</i> - Thomas King
<i>The Truth about stories</i> - Thomas King	<i>The Back of the Turtle</i> - Thomas King
<i>Indigenous Relations</i> - Bob Joseph and Cynthia F Joseph	<i>Medicine River</i> - Thomas King
<i>21 things you may not know about the Indian Act</i> - Bob Joseph	<i>Truth and Bright Water</i> - Thomas King
<i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i> - Robin Wall Kimmerer	<i>BreadfulWater</i> - Thomas King
<i>Indigenous healing</i> - Rupert Ross	<i>Green Grass, Running Water</i> - Thomas King
<i>Seven Sacred Teachings</i> - David Bouchard	<i>Medicine Walk</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Ways of Knowing</i> - Yale D Belanger	<i>One Native Life</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Ojibway Heritage</i> - Basil Johnston	<i>Keeper'n me</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>The Sacred Pipe</i> - Black Elk	<i>Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>47,000 Beads</i> - Koja and Angel Adeyoha, illustrated by Holly McGillis	<i>Ragged Company</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Indian Horse</i> - Richard Wagamese	<i>One Story, One Song</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Jonny Appleseed</i> - Joshua Whitehead	<i>Starlight</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Firekeeper's Daughter</i> - Angeline Boulley	<i>Dream Wheels</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Return of the Trickster</i> - Eden Robinson	<i>For Joshua</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Nedi Nezu (Good Medicine)</i> - Tenille K. Campbell	<i>One Drum: Stories and Ceremonies for a Planet</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>A History of My Brief Body</i> - Billy-Ray Belcourt	<i>Him Standing</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>Indians On Vacations</i> - Thomas King	<i>A quality of light</i> - Richard Wagamese
<i>The Break</i> - Katherena Vermette	<i>Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government</i> - John Borrows
<i>This Place: 150 Years Retold</i> - Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm	<i>Ground-Rules: Indigenous Treaties in Canada and New Zealand</i> - John Borrows
<i>NDN Coping Mechanisms</i> - Billy-Ray Belcourt	
<i>This Wound Is a World</i> - Billy-Ray Belcourt	

# Indigenous Multimedia



## Movies/Documentaries/Talks

- Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked The World
- Indian Horse
- Smoke Signals
- We Were Children
- [\*The Late Elder Don Cardinal, sharing at the 2nd Annual Igniting the Fire Gathering \(2007\) - Part 1\*](#) (Don Cardinal Talk)
- [\*Onaubinisay at the 2018 Parliament of the World's Religions \(Onaubinisay Talk\)\*](#)
- The Grizzlies
- Angry Inuk
- Trick or Treaty?
- Monkey Beach
- The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open
- Blood Quantum

## Music/Artists

- A Tribe Called Red
- Keith Secola
- Jim Boyd
- Willie Nelson
- Link Wray
- Redbone
- Snotty Nose Rez Kids
- DOKIS
- Faceless Bassist
- Jimi Hendrix
- Buffy Saint-Marie
- Cody Coyote
- Quantum Tangle
- Greyson Gritt
- Jeremy Dutcher

## Visual Art/Beadwork/Painters

- Tehatsistahawi Kennedy
- Bill Reid
- Christi Belcourt
- Charles Edenshaw
- Tim Restoule
- Norval Morrisseau
- Kenojuak Ashvak
- Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty
- Skye Paul (*Running Fox Beads*)
- Molina Jo
- Elias Jade Not Afraid
- Lenise Omeasoo
- Tania Larsson
- Bobby Dues
- Hollis Chitto
- Catherine Blackburn
- Daphne Odjig
- Kenojuak Ashevak
- Tanya Tagaq
- Robert Davidson
- Alanis Obomsawin
- Susan Aglukark
- Freda Diesing
- Micheal Nicoll Yahgulanaas
- Kananginak Pootoogook
- Nicotye Samayualie
- Drezus
- Elle-Maija Taifeathers

## Podcasts

- Well for Culture
- All My Relations
- Coffee with My Ma
- Missing and Murdered
- Métis in Space
- New Fire with Lisa Charleyboy
- Secret Life of Canada
- The Henceforward
- This Land
- Unreserved
- Red Man Laughing
- Stories From The Land
- Coffee & Quad
- Toasted Sisters
- While Indigenous
- Kiwew
- Think Indigenous
- 2 Crees in a Pod
- Young and Indigenous
- Indigenous Urbanism
- Well for Culture
- Nation to Nation
- Native Calgarian
- Urban Indianz

# Friendship Centres in Canada



## Ontario

- Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre
- Brantford Regional Indigenous Support Centre
- Wawa Native Network
- United Native Friendship Centre
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Timmins Native Friendship Centre
- Thunderbird Friendship Centre
- Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Sarnia-Lambton Native Friendship Centre
- Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
- The Indigenous Network2
- Parry Sound Friendship Centre
- Odawa Native Friendship Centre
- North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Nogojiwanong Friendship Centre
- Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Ne-Chee Friendship Centre
- N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre
- N'Amerind Friendship Centre
- M'Wikwedong Native Cultural Centre
- Ininew Friendship Centre
- Indian Friendship Centre
- Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
- Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre
- Dryden Native Friendship Centre
- Can-Am Friendship Centre of Windsor
- Barrie Native Friendship Centre
- Atikokan Native Friendship Centre

## New Brunswick

- Under One Sky Friendship Centre

## Northwest Territories

- Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre
- Deh Cho Friendship Centre
- Tlicho Friendship Centre
- The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre
- Zhahti Koe Friendship Centre
- Soaring Eagle Friendship Centre
- Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre

## Yukon

- Skookum Jim Friendship Centre

## Prince Edward Island

- Native Council of Prince Edward Island
- Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI

## Nova Scotia

- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre

## Newfoundland

- Labrador Friendship Centre
- First Light St. John's Friendship Centre Inc.
- People of the Dawn Indigenous Friendship Centre

## Québec

- Le Regroupement des Centre d'Amitié Autochtone du Québec
- Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
- Maison Communautaire Missinak
- Native Montreal
- Centre d'amitié Eenou de Chibougamau

## Alberta

- Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association
- High Level Native Friendship Centre
- Sagitawa Friendship Centre Society
- Nistawouyou Association Friendship Centre
- Grand Prairie Friendship Centre
- High Prairie Native Friendship Centre Society
- Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre Society
- Athabasca Native Friendship Centre Society
- Lac La Biche Canadian Native Friendship Centre Association
- Hilton Friendship Centre Society
- Edson Friendship Centre
- Canadian Native Friendship Centre
- Rocky Native Friendship Centre Society
- Red Deer Native Friendship Centre
- Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary
- Miywasin Friendship Centre
- Sik-Ooh-Kotoki Friendship Centre Society
- Napi Friendship Centre Association
- Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre Society
- Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre Society
- Bonnyville Canadian Native Friendship Centre

## British Columbia

- Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society
- Fort St. John Friendship Society
- Tansi Friendship Centre Society
- Nawican Friendship Centre
- Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert
- Kermodé Friendship Society
- Dze L K'Ant Friendship Centre
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre
- Quesnel Tillicum Society
- Cariboo Friendship Society
- Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre
- Wachiy Friendship Centre
- Port Alberni Friendship Centre
- Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society
- Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship)
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association
- Mission Friendship Centre Society
- Lillooet Friendship Centre Society
- Conayt Friendship Society
- Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society
- North Okanagan Friendship Centre
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre
- Ooakakane Friendship Centre

## Manitoba

- Brandon Friendship Centre
- Selkirk Friendship Centre
- Dauphin Friendship Centre
- Flin Flon Friendship Centre
- Lynn Lake Friendship Centre
- Portage Friendship Centre
- Riverton and District Friendship Centre
- Elbert Chartrand Friendship Centre
- The Pas Friendship Centre
- Ma Mow We Tak Friendship Centre
- Winnipeg Friendship Centre

## Saskatchewan

- Battlefords Indian & Métis Friendship Centre
- Buffalo Narrows Friendship Centre
- Ile a la Crosse Friendship Centre
- Indian and Métis Friendship Centre of Prince Albert
- Kikinahk Friendship Centre
- La Loche Friendship Centre
- Newo Yotina Friendship Centre
- North West Friendship Centre
- Qu'Appelle Valley Friendship Centre
- Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre
- Yorkton Friendship Centre

## Nunavut

- Pulaarvik Friendship Centre

## Useful Resources

- [\*Friendship Centres — The National Association of Friendship Centres \(NAFC\)\*](#)
- [\*Find a Friendship Centre - OFIFC\*](#)
- [\*Aboriginal Organizations in New Brunswick\*](#)
- [\*BCAAF - Working together for a brighter future\*](#)
- [\*Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres \(MAC\)\*](#)
- [\*Guide to Indigenous Organizations and Service in Alberta\*](#)



# Post-Secondary Institutions With Indigenous Councils/Resources

## Ontario

- Algoma University, Anishinaabe People's Council
- Algoma University, Anishinaabe People's Council
- Algonquin College, Indigenous Education Council
- Brock University, Aboriginal Education Council
- Cambrian College, Circle for Indigenous Education
- Canadore College, Indigenous Circle on Education
- Carleton University, Indigenous Education Council
- Centennial College, Aboriginal Education Council
- Collège Boréal, Comité d'éducation Autochtone
- Confederation College, Negahneewin Council
- Durham College, Indigenous Education Council
- Fanshawe College, Indigenous Education Council
- Fleming College, Indigenous Student Services
- George College, Sahkitcheway Indigenous Education Council
- Georgian College, Indigenous Services
- Humber College, Humber Indigenous Education & Engagement
- Lakehead University, Ojimaawin Indigenous Education Council
- Lambton College, Indigenous Student Centre
- Laurentian University, Indigenous Student Circle
- Loyalist College, Indigenous Student Council
- McMaster University, Indigenous Education Council
- Mohawk College, Indigenous Education Council
- Niagara College, Indigenous Education Services
- Nipissing University, Indigenous Council on Education
- Northern College, Indigenous Council on Education
- OCAD University, Indigenous Education Council
- Ontario Tech University, Indigenous Education and Cultural Services
- Queen's University, Aboriginal Council
- Ryerson University, Aboriginal Education Council
- Sault College, Indigenous Student Council
- Seneca College, Indigenous Education Council
- Sheridan College, Indigenous Education Council
- St-Clair College, Indigenous Student Services
- St. Lawrence College, Indigenous Education Council
- Trent University, Indigenous Education Council
- University of Guelph, Indigenous Student Society
- University of Ottawa, Indigenous Education Council
- University of Toronto, Aboriginal Advisory Council
- University of Waterloo, Indigenous Advisory Circle
- University of Windsor, Aboriginal Education Council
- Western University, Indigenous Student's Association
- Wilfrid Laurier University, Indigenous Education Council
- York University, Indigenous at York University

## British Columbia

- British Columbia Institute of Technology, First Nations Technology Council
- Camosun College, Indigenous Advisory Council
- Capilano University, First Nations Student Services
- Coast Mountain College, First Nations Council
- College of New Caledonia, Aboriginal Resources
- College of the Rockies, Indigenous Student Services
- Douglas College, Indigenous Student Services
- Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Avoriginal Gathering Place
- Justice Institute of British Columbia, Indigenous Advisory Council
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Langara College, Indigenous Education & Services
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Elders Council
- North Island College, Indigenous Education Council
- Northern Lights College, Aboriginal Services
- Okanagan College, Aboriginal Education Council
- Royal Roads University, Indigenous Education Advisor
- Selkirk College, Indigenous Services and Elders Program
- Simon Fraser University, Office for Aboriginal Peoples
- Thompson Rivers University, Aboriginal Human Resource Council
- University of British Columbia, Indigenous Education
- University of Northern British Columbia, Aboriginal Governance
- University of the Fraser Valley, Aboriginal & Non-Aboriginal Relations
- University of Victoria, Indigenous Academic Advisory Council
- Vancouver Community College, Indigenous Services
- Vancouver Island University, Services for Aboriginal Students

## Saskatchewan

- Briercrest College, Indigenous Centre
- Champion College, Relations with Indigenous Peoples
- Carlton Trail College, Aboriginal Initiatives
- Cumberland College, First Nations and Métis Advisory Council
- Great Plains College, Indigenous Awareness and Truth and Reconciliation: Speaker Series
- Horizon College, Northern College Indigenous Council on Education
- Lakeland College, Indigenous Student Committee
- Luther College, Indigenous Initiatives
- North West College, North West Indigenous Council
- Northlands College, Indigenous Cultures Centre
- St. Peter's College, Indigenous Youth Leadership Program
- The First Nation University of Canada
- University of Regina, Office of Indigenization
- University of Saskatchewan, Indigenous Engagement and Aboriginal Mentorship Program

## Alberta

- Alberta Bible College, Canadian Indigenous Ministry Committee
- Alberta College of Art and Design, Arts Aboriginal Student Council
- Ambrose University College, The Road to Reconciliation
- Athabasca University, Various Aboriginal Organizations
- Bow Valley College, Advisory Council
- Concordia University College of Alberta, Indigenous Directions Leadership Council
- DeVry Institute of Technology, Indigenous Council on Education
- Grande Prairie Regional College, Circle of Indigenous Students
- Grant MacEwan University, Kihew Waciston Centre
- Keyano College, Aboriginal Student Centre
- Lakeland College, Indigenous Student Committee
- Lethbridge College, Niitsitapi Strategy and Indigenous Services
- Medicine Hat College, Indigenous Support Office
- Mount Royal University, Office of Academic Indigenization
- NAIT, Nisôhkamâtotân Centre
- NorQuest College, Wakhôhtowin and Indigenous Student Services
- Northern Lakes College, Indigenous Council on Education
- Olds College, Indigenous Services
- Portage College, Advisory Committee
- Red Deer College, Indigenous Student Services
- SAIT, Chinook Lodge Aboriginal Student Alliance
- St. Mary University College, FNMI Committee
- University of Alberta, Aboriginal Student Council
- University of Calgary, Indigenous Student Advisory Council
- University of Lethbridge, Aboriginal Council

## New Brunswick

- Mount Allison University, Indigenous Student Support
- St. Thomas University, Indigenous Student Support
- Union of New Brunswick Indians Training Institute, Union of New Brunswick Indians
- Université de Moncton, Service Autochtone
- University of Fredericton, Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre
- University of New Brunswick, Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre

## Manitoba

- Assiniboine Community College, Indigenous Affairs
- Brandon University, Aboriginal Student Collective
- Red River College, Indigenous Advisory Circle
- University College of the North, Ininiwi Kiskinwamakewin Centre
- University of Manitoba, Indigenous Students' Association
- University of Winnipeg, Aboriginal Students' Council



## Post-secondary Institutions With Indigenous Councils/Resources

### Newfoundland and Labrador

- Memorial University of Newfoundland, Office of Indigenous Affairs

### Nova Scotia

- Acadia University, Indigenous Student Society of Acadia
- Cape Breton University, Mi'kmaw Band Council
- Dalhousie University, Indigenous Student Support
- Mount Saint Vincent University, Aboriginal Student Centre
- Nova Scotia Community College, Indigenous Student Supports

### Prince Edward Island

- Holland College, Indigenous Resources
- University of Prince Edward Island, Mawi'omi Indigenous Student Centre

### Northwest Territories

- N/A

### Nunavut

- Yukon University, Indigenous YukonU and First Nations Initiatives
- University College of the North, Ininiwi Kiskinwamakewin Centre
- Cumberland College, First Nations and Métis Advisory Council
- University of Saskatchewan College of Law, Indigenous Law Centre
- First Nations University of Canada

### Yukon

- Yukon University, Indigenous YukonU and First Nations Initiatives

### Québec

- Bishop's University, Indigenous Student Support
- Centennial College, Aboriginal Education Council
- Collège d'Ahuntsic, Espace d'autochtonisation
- Concordia University, Centre culturel autochtone
- Dawson College, First Peoples Centre
- John Abbott College, Indigenous Student Resource Centre
- McGill University, Indigenous Support
- Séminaire de Sherbrooke, Santé autochtone
- Université Laval, Réconciliation autochtone
- Vanier College, Indigenous Circle

## Life Promotion Videos

*Life Promotion: A Strength-Based Approach to Indigenous Wellness*

– Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

*How to use the First Nations Wellness Continuum Framework*

– Thunderbird Partnership Foundation

*Life Promotion Photovoice Project*

– Collateral Damage Project

*Suicide Prevention 1, Suicide Prevention 2*

*"I Choose... to Live" First Nation youth life promotion video*

– Loretta Seshequin

*Tseshah Life Promotion V2*

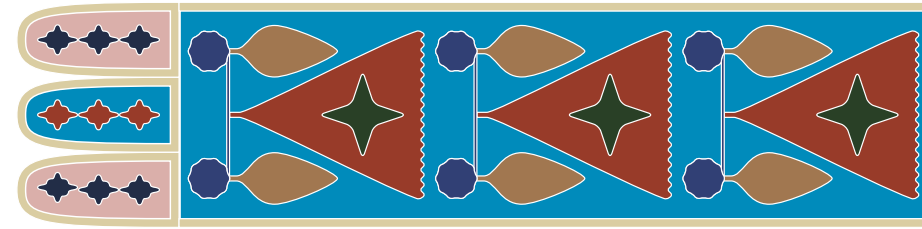
– Imagination FX

*Life Promotion for All My Relations*

– FNHealthCouncil

# Wise Practices for Engaging Youth

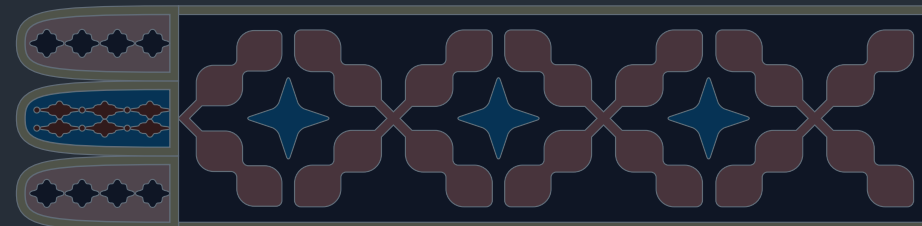
Throughout the life promotion toolkit, the Youth Action Group had come up with the best ways to engage youth. Below, we have listed various ways youth can be better engaged:

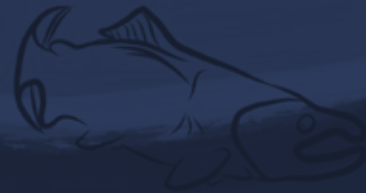


<i>Telling stories and listening</i>	<i>Giving cultural teachings and stories</i>	<i>Having updated videos and content (remove outdated materials)</i>
<i>Having youth leaders and facilitators</i>	<i>Sharing personal experiences</i>	<i>Having a relaxed appearance to make them comfortable (jeans)</i>
<i>Keeping it real (ie. honesty, authenticity)</i>	<i>Showing a movie, documentary, or videos</i>	<i>Using visuals aids (flip charts, sticky notes, posters)</i>
<i>Having the youth be heard and seen</i>	<i>Giving them something physical to take home (ie. plant a seed, a rock with a message, a mind map)</i>	
<i>Providing meals, snacks, and drinks</i>	<i>Giving them question sheets</i>	<i>Incorporating grounding techniques and breathing exercises</i>
<i>Using icebreakers and ensure that you do proper introductions</i>	<i>Giving breaks (giving them time to get up and stretch or to switch seats)</i>	
<i>Giving away prizes for asking or answering questions, and giving away swag or take-home bags for everyone</i>		
<i>Utilizing technology and media (iPads, phones, and computers)</i>	<i>Providing fidget toys, coloring books, markers, crayons, playdough, rocks, crafts, etc</i>	
<i>Having a PJ day, with blankets, pillows, and couches</i>		<i>Having social media take-overs</i>
<i>Stick to engaging activities rather than presentations, we encourage speaking with the youth rather than at them and utilizing games and activities.</i>		

## Creating a Safe Space

- Having trigger warnings
- Using non-verbal cues for checking-ins/check-outs
- Having a support person from mental health emergencies
- Having constant follow-ups
- Physically making the space safe  
*(using circles, spacing individuals, avoiding obstacles, controlling the temperature, controlling the amount of noise, having blankets)*





[thunderbirdpf.org](http://thunderbirdpf.org)